

MUḤAMMAD'S BODY: PROPHETIC ASSEMBLAGES
AND THE BARAKA NETWORK

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ABSTRACT

MICHAEL MUHAMMAD KNIGHT: Muhammad's Body: Prophetic Assemblages and the Baraka Network
(under the direction of Juliane Hammer)

This dissertation examines representations of Muhammad in early Sunnī biographical (*sira*) literature and hadith collections, focusing on the ways in which these sources describe Muhammad's body. A significant gap persists between Islamic studies and contemporary theories of the body. Additionally, within Islamic studies engagements of gender and explorations of Muslim masculinities remain critically underdeveloped. This dissertation begins to address those gaps, employing contemporary theories of the body as a framework for exploring representations of Muhammad, thus contributing to studies of the hadith and biographical literature beyond the question of their historical authenticity. With attention to the Deleuzo- Guattarian question, "What can a body do?" it tracks change in the sources' representation of Muhammad's bodily boundaries, powers, and limits, exploring the ways in which his body enables connections to other bodies toward the achievement of a greater body with expanded powers, a prophetic assemblage.

Charting treatments of Muhammad across the development of hadith and biographical sources from approximately the 9th to 11th centuries CE, this dissertation demonstrates that the sources reflect a growing investment in Muhammad's power to achieve intercorporeal linkage with other bodies, through which the prophetic body

extends beyond its expected boundaries. Muhammad's Companions, transformed by these connections, become authorized in the literature not only as eyewitness reporters of Muhammad's sayings and actions, but also as intensely embodied traces of Muhammad's corporeality. This dissertation also demonstrates that while Muhammad's body grows in its capacity for extending its power through other bodies, this movement does not reflect an absolute transformation or sweeping erasure of past narratives. Across the hadith and sira corpus, the prophetic body and its powers remain significantly in flux, reflecting the multiplicity and heterogeneity of reporters and networks contributing to these literatures.

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Introduction: What Can a Prophetic Body Do?

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body...to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it...to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body.

--Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari¹

While working as a medical doctor at the Islamic University of Medina's hospital in the 1960s, Muhsin Khan found his professional and religious trajectories transformed by a dream encounter with the Prophet Muḥammad. In the dream, Khan observed Muḥammad in a state of intense perspiration and realized that the best means by which he could help the Prophet was to swallow his sweat. Informed by his readings of prophetic traditions that if someone saw Muḥammad in a dream, it was *really* Muḥammad, Khan later sought to understand the meanings of his encounter. He reported the details of the dream to renowned Salafī scholar Shaykh 'Abd al-Azīz bin Bāz, who interpreted Khan's drinking of the prophetic sweat to signify that Khan would "do service to the Sunna." As a fluent English speaker living among esteemed religious scholars in the city of the Prophet, Khan subsequently decided that he would make it his life's work to translate the Qur'ān and ḥadīth literature into English.² Khan's translation of the Qur'ān with Muhammad Taqi-ud-

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 257.

² Yasir Qadhi, "Collector's Edition: An Intro to Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī." University of Calgary, Calgary. 5-7 June 2015. Seminar.

Din al-Hilali ultimately came to supplant Yusuf Ali's translation as the preferred text for Saudi-networked English media, and Khan also provided these networks with a translation of the most prestigious Sunnī ḥadīth collection, Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.³

Relating Khan's dream to an AlMaghrib Institute class in Calgary, Yasir Qadhi paused and addressed a palpable tension in the room: "Of course," he explained, gesturing to his own arm and signifying the flow of fluids from bodies, "this is *baraka*, to drink the Prophet's sweat."⁴ Baraka, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, popularly appears in English translation as "blessings."⁵ While some students in Qadhi's class might have felt discomfort at the notion of a medical doctor such as Khan desiring the ostensibly irrational and perhaps soteriologically dangerous act of drinking sweat from another man's body—even the body of the Prophet—Qadhi bypassed Bin Bāz's metaphorical interpretation to focus on the prophetic sweat itself as a site at which baraka could be accessed. The dream functioned not only as a text that Khan could subject to analysis, but also a genuine flow of baraka from Muḥammad's pores into Khan's stomach.

While Khan's encounter with Muḥammad's sweat occurred within the context of a dream, the dream's imagery related to a popular theme in textual representations of Muḥammad's life: the association of his body and its by-products with baraka, and the desire of his earliest followers, the Companions (*al-aṣḥāb*), to acquire and even consume

³ Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan. *The Meanings of the Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (Medina: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1998).

⁴ Qadhi, "Collector's Edition."

⁵ Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

materials that had been produced within his body. In the cases of both Khan's dream of ingestion and the Companions' pursuits of Muḥammad's bodily by-products, such connections become modes by which Muḥammad achieves an extended corporeality, transcending his bodily boundaries and seemingly merging his body with others to form a greater body. This expanded prophetic body can be envisioned as a power grid composed of the bodies through which a baraka-suffused Muḥammadī ontology circulates. On this power grid, connections with extrahuman (divine and angelic) bodies transform Muḥammad's body into a conduit of baraka, through which baraka flows into other human bodies. These bodies in turn link other bodies into the grid, those in the post-Companion classes of the Followers (*al-tābi'ūn*) and Followers of the Followers (*tābī al-tābī'in*). Beyond these three privileged generations, the prophetic body continues to expand its reach through the thousands of traditionists reporting his sayings and actions, their narrations contributing to a cumulative representation of Muḥammad, crystallized via an immense literary *corpus*, a written body. This textual representation, which includes numerous versions of Muḥammad's promise that he can make genuine appearances in dreams, opens portals by which believers such as Muhsin Khan can achieve their own intercorporeal links with Muḥammad and thus enter into the power grid of his extended body.

This study examines the imaginary of Muḥammad's body that emerges within the genres of *sīra*/maghāzī and Sunnī ḥadīth literature from the earliest sources through the 11th century CE. Focusing on Muḥammad's corporeal boundaries and limits—that is, the questions of where Muḥammad's body begins and ends, and how his body can extend those boundaries through connection to other bodies—I track change in regard to the prophetic

body's representation. Charting treatments of Muḥammad in *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth collections, I argue that the sources reflect a growing investment in his power to achieve intercorporeal linkage with other bodies, through which Muḥammad's body reaches beyond the expected boundaries of his own flesh. Muḥammad's Companions, transformed by these connections, become authorized in the literature not only as eyewitness reporters of Muḥammad's sayings and actions, but also as intensely embodied traces of Muḥammad's corporeality. I also demonstrate that while Muḥammad's body grows in its capacity for extension through other bodies, this movement does not reflect an absolute transformation or sweeping erasure of past narratives. Rather, as narrations of Muḥammad's bodily powers intensify significantly through the development of the literature, early and later traditions often coexist while in tension with each other, producing an unstable representation of prophetic corporeality. Muḥammad's body does not emerge in this literary corpus with clearly drawn boundaries, but grows increasingly unpredictable in terms of its limits and powers. The considerable incoherence of prophetic corporeality reflects particular methodological commitments among Muḥammad's reporters, along with the heterogeneity of voices that participate in the textual making of his body.

This study contributes to an effort within ḥadīth studies to move away from the "authenticity question," that is, the problem of whether premodern Muslim methods of ḥadīth evaluation can successfully deliver the historical Muḥammad, and more broadly the degree to which sifting through traditions to retrieve the origins of Islam is even possible. This study does not presuppose a singularly authentic or "original" account of Muḥammad that later tradition either preserves or distorts, nor does this study reflect a stake in retrieving the "real" Muḥammad. Rather than chase after the origins, I join a number of

scholars who are asking new questions of the sources. In particular, this study brings ḥadīth studies, and Islamic studies more generally, further into conversations between theories of the body and religious studies. For the salience of gender to my investigation of Muḥammad's body, examining the ways in which gender informs the boundaries and powers of prophetic corporeality, this discussion also contributes to the nascent study of Muslim masculinities.

Baraka and Prophetic Corporeality

The sources examined in this study abound with reports of direct contact with Muḥammad's body producing extraordinary change in the bodies of his Companions. One tradition, for example, presents Muḥammad rubbing the chest of a boy who had been afflicted with demonic possession. Through his touch and prayer, Muḥammad causes a creature resembling a black puppy (*mithl al-jirwi al-aswad*) to come crawling out of the boy's mouth.⁶ Muḥammad's touch even contributes to his successful preservation by reliable reporters: Muḥammad rubs his hands upon Abū Hurayra's cloak, the wearing of which then endows Abū Hurayra with a flawless capacity for remembering and narrating ḥadīths.⁷ Narrating this ḥadīth himself, Abū Hurayra thus authorizes his claim to truthmaking power through an account of his personal transformation by the prophetic body. Prophetic skin, as the boundary separating the interior of Muḥammad's body from the outside world, operates as an interface at which his Companions can engage the

⁶ Abū Muḥammad Abd 'Allāh al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, ed. Mustafa Dib al-Bugha (Beirut: Dar al-Mustafā, 2011), #19.

⁷ Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (IslamWeb), #3398.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=146&hid=3398&pid=101873.

powerful energies that flow through Muḥammad's body, the site upon which the Qur'ān descends in revelation.

Muḥammad's skin, as is the case with most borders, does not preserve an absolute separation between inside and outside. Like all bodies, the surface of Muḥammad's body offers points at which leakages can cross the border. These leakages include not only the typical fluids and disjecta from human bodies, such as saliva, sweat, blood, urine, feces, sexual discharge, and discarded hair and fingernail trimmings, but also substances that demonstrate the prophetic body's exceptional ontology, such as the water that miraculously flows out of his hands to answer the needs of his Companions. Muḥammad exceeds his corporeal boundaries when he penetrates other bodies, and also when he is penetrated, as in the tradition of angels cutting open Muḥammad's chest to wash his heart, as well as accounts of Allāh personally injecting knowledge into Muḥammad's body through the penetrating touch of Allāh's cold hand. The revelation of the Qur'ān itself, as an event internal to Muḥammad's body that produced observable effects on his body, also appears as a penetration of divine forces into his body. This dissertation's treatment of prophetic corporeality focuses on points at which the distinction between Muḥammad's inside and outside, and thus the boundary marking his body from other bodies, becomes less clear. Through these penetrations and bodily modifications, Muḥammad's body mediates between human and extrahuman forces, and between physical and metaphysical worlds.

I ground this discussion of Muḥammad's corporeal border crossings in the notion of *baraka*. In the Qur'ān, the *b-r-k* root appears chiefly in verb form, signifying an action performed by Allāh and directed upon objects that include human beings, spatial

designations such as lands and cities, natural phenomena such as trees and the rain that Allāh causes to fall to earth, and divinely revealed discourses that descend to humankind from the heavens.⁸ The Qur’ān also describes Allāh himself (and in fact exclusively Allāh) as *tabāraka*, which could render the translation of baraka as “blessing” somewhat theologically complicated, if describing Allāh as “blessed” provokes the question of who or what blesses him.⁹ In its references to the bestowal of baraka upon material objects (such as living things or human cultural constructions such as cities) or units of time (such as the Qur’ān’s revelation during a *laylatin mubārakatin*, a “baraka-laden night”¹⁰), Allāh’s opening of baraka between the heavens and earth,¹¹ and of course the Qur’ān’s self-identification as mubārak,¹² the Qur’ān opens possibilities for considering baraka’s relation to space and time.

Ḥadīth sources expand these possibilities, identifying high concentrations of baraka in particular locations, such as sheep or the foreheads of horses.¹³ Baraka also seems to move and can be transferred from one location to another. A well-circulated tradition reports Muḥammad telling his Companions to eat food from its edges, rather than its center, because baraka descends into the center; to delay consumption of the center

⁸ For examples, see Qur’ān 7:137, 17:1, 21:71, 21:81, 27:8, 34:18, 37:113, 41:10.

⁹ As in Qur’ān 67:1, “*Tabaraka* is he in whose hand is dominion, and he has power over every thing.”

¹⁰ Ibid, 44:3.

¹¹ Ibid, 7:96.

¹² Ibid, 6:155.

¹³ Al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, #1980.

ostensibly enables a greater accumulation of baraka for the consumer to ingest.¹⁴

Muḥammad recommends using olive oil both for eating and for treating the skin, since it comes from a *shajaratīn mubārakatin*, a tree with baraka.¹⁵ Baraka appears in such narrations to exist within designated things of this world and become accessible through one's proximity to them. Such traditions present objects infused with baraka as capable of transmitting their baraka through physical contact. This study focuses on the capacity of human bodies to act as transmitters to other human bodies.

Baraka, popularly translated as “blessings,” has been more precisely defined by G.S. Colin as a “beneficient force, of divine origin, which causes superabundance in the physical sphere and happiness in the psychic order.”¹⁶ Academic treatments of baraka as a force or energy flowing between human bodies often focus on the powers of saints (*awliyā'*) in Ṣūfī traditions. Ahmet T. Karamustafa conceptualizes baraka as “the holy power inherent in a saintly figure that set him/her apart from everyone else; it was normally conceived as a fluid force that emanated from the saint, alive or dead, and permeated the places, persons and objects around him, and its ultimate proof was the saintly miracle, *karāma*.”¹⁷ Joseph Meri describes baraka as an “innate” and “emotive” force that emanates from saintly bodies and can remain accessible even after their deaths through pilgrimage to their tombs and

¹⁴ Ibid, #1974.

¹⁵ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1998), #16150, 16151. The olive tree is most famously designated as mubārakatin in the Qur'ān's “verse of light,” 24:35.

¹⁶ G.S. Colin, “Baraka,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, et al (Brill Online, 2016).

¹⁷ Ahmet T. Karamusta, *Sufism: the Formative Period*. Berkeley: (University of California Press, 2007), 130.

material relics associated with them (including clothing, hair, and fingernails). While noting that in premodern sources, baraka does not receive the same scholarly attention and theorization as sainthood (*walāya*), Meri identifies a tension between different conceptualizations of baraka. For thinkers such as Damascene jurist Ibn Taymīyya (d.1328), baraka exists not as a force or energy that can be accessed materially through special baraka-emitting objects, but rather as something closer to a point system in which Allāh awards credits for religious knowledge and obedience to divine command.¹⁸

Omid Safi calls attention to baraka's social consequences as a bargaining chip in relations between rulers and the saintly figures whose bodies, operating as baraka's material conduits, can convey baraka and thus political credibility to rulers. Safi thus warns against conceptualizing baraka as simply an abstract "'spiritual' blessing bereft of any earthly ramifications." Rather, Safi argues, "Baraka is, as much as anything else, about power: the spiritual power of the saint, the power of the saints to interact with mighty rulers, and the power to lend them legitimacy."¹⁹ If special bodies, living or dead, function as sites at which baraka can be accessed, relationships to those bodies can also mark privilege and map power relations between a variety of other bodies.

The question of where believers can locate baraka and how one should go about accessing or obtaining it provokes meaningful consequences for debates over authentic Muslim practice and locating a center of gravity for the tradition. Much of the academic attention granted to baraka concerns Ṣūfism and popular religion, exploring baraka chiefly

¹⁸ Josef Meri, "Aspects of Baraka (Blessings) and Ritual Devotion Among Medieval Muslims and Jews," *Medieval Encounters* vol. 5, issue 1 (1999): 46-49.

¹⁹ Omid Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka: Persian Sufism, 'Mysticism,' and Pre-modern Politics," *The Muslim World*, vol. 90, issue 3/4 (2000): 259-288.

for its salience to the authorization of mystical elites and shrines at which the bodily remains of saints and prophets or material traces of their presence (worn sandals, cloaks, preserved hair, etc.) are treated as locii of baraka. In particular, a growing body of anthropological literature has touched upon baraka's popular conception as an "active energy" that can heal and protect, as well as its significance in material culture and the demarcation of physical spaces as sites at which transcendent forces can be accessed.²⁰

In this study, baraka gives a name to the beneficent intercorporeal flows and linkages between Muḥammad's body and those of his community. The power of Muḥammad's body to connect with other bodies and merge with them into a greater assemblage²¹ appears in no small part as the power to transmit baraka. This study's exploration of prophetic corporeality through the Deleuzo-Guattarian question, "What can a body do?" demonstrates "baraka" to be the acceptable short answer. Baraka is what the prophetic body does.

Muḥammad's body first operates as a conduit of baraka in its capacity as the site through which Allāh reveals the Qur'ān to humankind. Multiple traditions attest to

²⁰ Allen F. Roberts and Mary Nooter Roberts. "Mystical Graffiti and the Refabulation of Dakar," *Africa Today*, vol. 54, issue 2 (2008): 51-77.

²¹ To describe the connections between Muḥammad and other bodies as producing an "assemblage" takes on particular significance within a study informed by Deleuze and Guattari, given the prominence of the term throughout their work. In conversation with Deleuze and Guattari, designating the Muḥammad-Companion formation an "assemblage" emphasizes that the prophetic body as it emerges within these literary representations, extending its powers through intercorporeal linkages, does not reflect a singular and self-contained body endowed with its own unity, but rather a construct defined by relations between multiple forces that remain in motion. The prophetic assemblage expresses its internal multiplicities and heterogeneities as Muḥammad's corporeal powers and boundaries alternately expand or constrict through his relations to other bodies, whether human, angelic, or divine. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 8.

Muḥammad's reception of divine revelation producing observable effects on his body, such as profuse sweat or a dramatic increase in his weight. In representations of Muḥammad within *sīra*/maghāzī literature and the ḥadīth corpus, baraka often appears as a contagion within Muḥammad's body that he transmits to other bodies in the same modes as more typical contagions: baraka can pass from Muḥammad's body into another via touch, breath, or contact with Muḥammad's bodily fluids. Various reports describe Muḥammad or Companions mentioning baraka in reference to Muḥammad's corporeal flows and traces, such as his saliva, sweat, the water that pours forth from his hands, or water that he had used for ritual ablutions. The Companions' acquisition and even ingestion of these materials enable transmissions of baraka from Muḥammad's body into their own. Through their status as extensions of Muḥammad's prophetic corporeality, the Companions likewise become carriers of his bodily baraka to later generations. They provide links to Muḥammad not only for their positions in ḥadīth reports' chains of transmission as his eyewitness reporters, but also for the transformation of their own bodies by heightened exposure to his baraka.

In this study's focus on the significance of corporeality for textual representations of Muḥammad, I speak to a developing theoretical interest in the body within Islamic studies and an underexamined dimension within the *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth literature. As with baraka, the most salient discussions of the body in Islamic studies for this project have focused on Ṣūfī traditions. Scott Kugle's *Sufis & Saints' Bodies* (2007) examines imaginaries of the body within Ṣūfī traditions, particularly saintly hagiographies, analyzing representations of saints' bodies as "symbolic resources for generating religious meaning,

communal solidarity, and experience of the sacred.”²² In particular, Kugle’s fourth chapter, “Body Enraptured: The Lips of Shāh Ḥussayn” discusses the motif in Ṣūfī hagiographical traditions of initiation through intercorporeal exchange (in this case, a kiss between master and disciple) and the power of bodily fluids such as saliva to transmit knowledge and metaphysical grace.²³ Shahzad Bashir’s *Sufi Bodies* (2011) looks to the significance of corporeal themes in literature and paintings as a window into what he calls “the Persianate social and religious world” from the 14th to 16th centuries CE.²⁴ Bashir introduces his project with a reference to prophetic corporeality, discussing the tradition in which Muḥammad promises intercession not only for the man who shakes his hand, but also the man who shakes that man’s hand, and the man who shakes *his* hand, and so on, up to seven degrees of separation from the touch of Muḥammad’s hand.²⁵

The Ṣūfī traditions discussed by Kugle and Bashir bear not only discursive links to the sīra/maghāzī and ḥadīth corpus, but also, as highlighted in Bashir’s mention of the hand-shaking tradition, an intensely embodied connection to Muḥammad. Nonetheless, the present Ṣūfīcentrism of theoretical treatments of the body within Islamic studies threatens to construct Ṣūfī themes of embodiment as somehow exceptional or isolated from those found in other Muslim traditions—as though Ṣūfī intellectuals have not drawn from the ḥadīth corpus or contributed to that corpus as ḥadīth transmitters themselves. The

²² Scott Kugle, *Sufis & Saints’ Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, & Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 8-9.

²³ Ibid, 181-220.

²⁴ Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

²⁵ Ibid, 1-2.

disproportionate attention given to traditions marked as “Şūfī”²⁶ in Islamic studies considerations of the body might ironically contribute to a trend that Bashir seeks to correct in *Sufi Bodies*: the academic and popular representation of Şūfism as an “Islamic ‘heterodoxy’ produced from the accretion of alien elements onto a religion thought to be centered on law and jurisprudence in its essence.”²⁷ Such representations position Şūfī master-disciple intercorporeality as a departure from notions of the body found within canonical ḥadīth collections. Parallel to an imaginary of Şūfism as the singular place in Islamic studies where interesting conversations about the body can happen, the ḥadīth corpus finds popular representation as the foundational source material for shrine razers and Sunnī textual revivalists who would shut down possibilities for the body as a locus of baraka.²⁸ The authorizing discourses for modern destroyers of saints’ tombs, however, draw from a textual canon that also celebrates the transmission of baraka through intercorporeal encounters; it would be an untenable oversimplification to claim that Şūfīs uniquely celebrate the powers of the body and that their opponents deny these powers altogether. Moreover, an essentialist treatment of the 9th-century “Ḥadīth Folk” networks and their intellectual heirs erases the complexity of figures such as ḥadīth master Aḥmad

²⁶ My analysis of Şūfism’s prominence in Islamic studies discussions of the body comes with recognition of the difficulties inherent to discussing Şūfism itself, starting with the challenged assumption that the term “Şūfism” holds sufficient explanatory power to signify a coherent and historically stable entity. Ibid, 9-10.

²⁷ Ibid, 11.

²⁸ Kugle moves in this direction in his conclusion to *Sufis & Saints’ Bodies*, in which he presents Şūfī valorizations of corporeality as the antithesis to a “Wahhabi” strawman characterized by “distrust of the human body” and “denial of spiritual value to the human body” that can “sustain itself only by pushing the body toward death.” Kugle, *Sufis & Saints’ Bodies*, 287-289.

bin Ḥanbal (d.850), who was not only recognized in Ṣūfī literature as a Ṣūfī himself,²⁹ but was also buried with three hairs of Muḥammad—one on each eye, and the third under his tongue—that he had treasured while alive.³⁰

In studies of biographical traditions concerning Muḥammad, narrations of the prophetic body surface incidentally. M.J. Kister, for example, has produced helpful articles that survey variations in reports of Muḥammad having eaten meat that had been dedicated to pre-Islamic goddesses prior to his prophethood,³¹ as well as the question of whether Muḥammad had been born circumcised.³² In the former, Kister points to exercises in editorial sovereignty on the part of the stories' reporters, arguing for a growing investment in Muḥammad's protection from sin. Kister's student, Uri Rubin, has similarly provided useful studies of Muḥammad's textual representation, arguing for changes in Muḥammad's biographical details as reflections of shifting investments and anxieties on the part of Muḥammad's reporters. These details include narrations of Muḥammad's body, such as the marking of his prophethood with a material signifier on his back (the *khātam* or "seal"), though the body does not receive attention in these works as a focus of theoretical

²⁹ Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Ma'mun* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 111.

³⁰ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Virtues of the Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: Volume Two*, trans. Michael Cooperson (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 271.

³¹ M.J. Kister, "A Bag of Meat': A Study of an Early Ḥadīth," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 33, issue 2 (1970): 267-275.

³² Idem, "...And He Was Born Circumcised...': Some Notes on Circumcision in Ḥadīth," *Oriens*, vol. 34 (1994): 10-30.

consideration.³³ While drawing from the insights of these investigations in terms of tracking change within the sources, I suggest that heightened attention to the problem of Muḥammad's body, placing the *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth literature in conversation with theorists of the body, can uncover fruitful sites of further inquiry. In the case of Muḥammad and the "bag of meat" tradition, the problem of Muḥammad possibly eating meat that had been slaughtered in a false deity's name can be examined not only in relation to prophetic infallibility and protection from sin, but also for the *material* dangers to his body from consuming polytheists' sacrifices. In other words, the meat matters because when the meat enters Muḥammad's stomach, it *becomes Muḥammad*. Apart from the question of Muḥammad's capacity for sin, moral error, or misguided belief, can the meat impose changes from within Muḥammad's digestive tract that render his body somehow less Muḥammad-like? If so, what does it mean to have a Muḥammad-like body in the first place?

In *Sufis & Saints' Bodies*, Kugle notes, "It is surprising how little has been written on Islamic conceptions of the body," adding that when the body does receive attention, it is usually within the context of legal regulations.³⁴ Beyond the developing study of Ṣūfī corporealities, not much has changed in the decade following Kugle's observation. Investigating the representation of Muḥammad's body within early *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth collections as a conduit through which baraka flows between bodies, this study

³³ Uri Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder: the Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims: a Textual Analysis* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995).

³⁴ Kugle, *Sufis & Saints' Bodies*, 9.

addresses a critical gap in Islamic studies and seeks to further a slowly developing conversation within the field.

Ḥadīth Studies, the Body, and Queer Theory

This project joins a growing body of scholarship that broadens the study of early sources on Muḥammad's life beyond the "authenticity question" that has dominated the field.³⁵ Stated plainly, this project does not aim to retrieve the historical Muḥammad, nor to deliver a verdict as to whether premodern Muslim ḥadīth scholars' methodologies for assessing ḥadīth reports could reliably distinguish between authentic and fabricated narrations. This study examines the sources with a lens of discursive analysis informed by theoretical considerations of the body, particularly frameworks associated with queer theory.

A number of works have given attention to the historical processes by which the ḥadīth corpus reached its recognizable form, focusing on the producers of this corpus rather than testing their methods of ḥadīth evaluation. Scott C. Lucas's *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal* provides a compelling argument for recognition of 9th-century CE ḥadīth scholars as founder figures of Sunnī tradition, despite their typical neglect in favor of theologians such as al-Ash'arī.³⁶ Lucas points to the doctrine of

³⁵ Kevin A. Reinhart, "Juynbolliana, Gradualism, the Big Bang, and Ḥadīth Study in the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 130, issue 3 (2010): 413-444.

³⁶ Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

Muḥammad's Companions possessing universal probity as reliable ḥadīth transmitters, having developed alongside the formulation of ḥadīth transmitter criticism and shared narratives of Muslim intellectual history, as critical to the formation of communal Sunnī identity in the 9th century.³⁷ In his work on Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*, Lucas also examines the relative marginalization of legal reports attributed directly to Muḥammad in early ḥadīth scholarship.³⁸

Jonathan A.C. Brown's *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* examines the process by which the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of Bukhārī and Muslim, widely regarded as the most prestigious and authentic works in the Sunnī ḥadīth corpus, achieved their status and additionally informed the crystallization of shared Sunnī consciousness among competing legal schools.³⁹ Additionally, Brown complicates the zero-sum game to which both academic and popular discourses often reduce the authenticity question, providing a closer look at the ways in which seminal ḥadīth scholars themselves perceived historical truth and even demonstrated a willingness to employ ḥadīths that they had deemed unreliable.⁴⁰

Sebastian Günther has argued for the relevance of literary theory to ḥadīth studies, particularly pointing to theories of fiction. For Günther, thinking of ḥadīth narrations as

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Idem, "Where are the Legal Ḥadīth? A Study of the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba," *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 15, issue 3 (2008): 283-314.

³⁹ Jonathan A.C. Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

⁴⁰ Idem, "Even if it's Not True: Using Unreliable Ḥadīths in Sunni Islam," *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 18, issue 1 (2011): 1-52.

fiction does not require charges of dishonesty or faulty memories against their narrators: rather, Günther calls attention to the exercise of authorial agency inherent to every act of storytelling. This means that even if a report attributed to ‘Ā’isha indeed comes from the “real” ‘Ā’isha, and ‘Ā’isha is assumed to be an entirely trustworthy reporter of what she witnessed and experienced, her narrations still constitute “fiction” in the sense that ‘Ā’isha must exercise her editorial powers over the narration at every step. She decides first that there is a story worth telling; she then makes choices in terms of the story’s beginning and end, the necessity of proper contextualization, the details that must be included, the collapsing of time (for example, describing a period of several months within a few short sentences), and a preferred perspective (that is, whether to report as an omniscient narrator above the fray or explicitly as a memoirist “I” who was present for the event and perhaps a participant in it). Günther offers a compelling case for the usefulness of literary theory in asking new questions of ḥadīth collections, expanding the texts’ possibilities for inquiry beyond forensic attempts to prove their authenticity or fabrication.

A small but helpful number of recent works seeks to bring ḥadīth studies into closer contact with gender studies. Asma Sayeed and Denise Spellberg offer salient examples of discussing these sources independently of the authenticity question in their respective monographs, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*⁴¹ and *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of ‘A’isha Bint Abi Bakr*.⁴² In the former, Sayeed examines ḥadīths’ chains of transmission in canonical Sunnī collections with an eye for the

⁴¹ Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴² D.A. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of ‘A’isha bint Abi Bakr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

inclusion or marginalization of women as reporters. Sayeed explains that her analysis does not depend on the transmissions actually coming from the reporters to whom they are attributed: “Even if they are wholesale forgeries, they are still valuable because they reveal the perceptions that Muslims had of the early female narrators as dependable transmitters.”⁴³ In *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, Spellberg likewise exempts her project from the problem of locating verifiable data of ‘Ā’isha’s “real life” in the sources. Rather, examining ‘Ā’isha’s significance for the men who write about her, Spellberg tracks the development of ‘Ā’isha’s textual representations without having to first decide upon “authentic” history or retrieve ‘Ā’isha’s genuine voice.⁴⁴

This project places the study of *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth literature in conversation with critical engagements of the body, starting with the collaborative corpus of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Writing in conversation with Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari call attention to bodies as assemblages characterized by internal multiplicities of forces in changing relations, rather than fixed entities and unitary wholes; in their unstable relations to each other, these forces continually construct and reconstruct the body as an ongoing process.⁴⁵ Such a rhizomatic model of the body rejects “aborescent” notions of a transcendent sovereign exercising centralized control over the body, whether a solitary god’s intelligent design or the mind of the individual subject. In the case of Muḥammad’s body as a textual representation, thinking of prophetic corporeality as an assemblage resists the notion of a singular authorial sovereign behind this body’s literary

⁴³ Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, 14.

⁴⁴ Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 9-16.

⁴⁵ Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2008), 144.

construction, denying the artificial unity of “the Companions” or “Ḥadīth Folk” as categories. For Deleuze and Guattari, again building on readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche, the principal question to ask of a body—already a composite of forces and energies in ongoing flux—concerns not its material boundaries but its capacity for affecting other composite bodies, extending its powers by entering into relations that in turn produce greater composites.⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, as Elizabeth Grosz observes, have not produced their own systematic theory of the body;⁴⁷ nonetheless, their work has informed numerous theorists who read them with interest in ways of rethinking corporeality.⁴⁸ Foremost among such thinkers for the purposes of this study, Grosz engages Deleuze and Guattari for their complex significance to gender theory, and provides a helpful interlocution with figures such as Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler.⁴⁹ My use of Deleuze and Guattari also draws inspiration from Alexander G. Weheliye’s “methodological breather” in *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, in which he cites Grosz among thinkers such as Jasbir Puar, Manuel DeLanda, and others who have creatively engaged and appropriated Deleuze and Guattari for their projects. Such scholars, while evading “the quagmire of orthodox Deleuzanism,” create “novel assemblages and insights that only become possible when these ideas are put to

⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 257, 260-261.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), 167.

⁴⁸ Joe Hughes and Laura Guillaume, eds. *Deleuze and the Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

⁴⁹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*.

work in milieus (e.g., racialized minority discourse or queer theory as in the case of Puar) beyond the snowy masculinist precincts of European philosophy.” In Weheliye’s analysis, such selective appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari remains faithful to them, heeding their “invitation to plunder their ideas in the service of producing new concepts and assemblages.”⁵⁰ Like the critical study of race or queer theory, Islamic studies constitutes a milieu outside Deleuze and Guattari’s reach or clear investment. Deleuze and Guattari make rare references to Islam or Muslims, and these mentions amount to little more than repetitions of Orientalist tropes and racial essentialism.⁵¹ My project draws from questions that Deleuze and Guattari ask of bodies without requiring a clearly defined Deleuzo-Guattarian system of the body or, for that matter, a meaningful relation to Islam or Muslims in their work.

Despite a proliferation of scholarship on questions of gender in Muslim traditions, the study of Muslim masculinities remains critically neglected. Amanullah DeSondy endeavors to initiate an academic conversation in his recent monograph, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (2014). In resonance with a longstanding prioritization of the Qur’ān and its exegetical literature (*tafsīr*) over ḥadīth literature in Islamic studies scholarship on

⁵⁰ Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 47.

⁵¹ In “587 BC – AD 70: On Several Regimes of Signs,” for example, Deleuze and Guattari make reference to the Qur’ān’s supposed resistance against interpretation and commentary (with Islam being unique in its absolutist centering of the “sacred written Book”). In “1227: Treatise on Nomadology—the War Machine,” they invoke racially essentialist imaginaries of “the nomad” as relating to early Islam, while simultaneously critiquing and enforcing Orientalist tropes of Muḥammad exploiting religion to build a “war machine.” The critique consists entirely of mentioning that European Christians also created their own religion-fueled war machine. *A Thousand Plateaus*, 127, 380-384.

gender,⁵² DeSondy identifies the Qur'ān, rather than biographical representations of Muḥammad, as the intuitive starting point for discussing Muslim masculinities.⁵³ While the conversation between Islamic studies and gender studies remains undeveloped at the point of masculinity studies, the significance of Muḥammad's prophetic masculinity goes largely ignored even within that conversation. Framing its investigation of sīra/maghāzī and ḥadīth sources within critical theories of the body, calling attention to the ways in which these sources contribute toward the construction of a prophetic masculinity, this study contributes to a gap in existing scholarly literature at the intersection of Islamic studies and gender studies.

This study offers a corrective by examining textual representations of Muḥammad through a lens of queer theory. Similar to Günther's advocacy for literary theories as tools for examining ḥadīth texts, Aisha Geissinger's work offers a compelling demonstration of queer theory's value as an analytical framework for ḥadīth studies.⁵⁴ My engagement of

⁵² At the intersection of Islamic studies and gender studies, one can find a number of significant monographs that examine gender within the Qur'ān and tafsīr. Recent examples include Ayesha Chaudhry's *Domestic Violence in Islamic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Karen Bauer's *Gender Hierarchy in the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). The confessionally engaged scholarship of Muslim intellectuals identified with "progressive Islam" have also privileged the Qur'ān as the site for reform: seminal works include Amina Wadud's *Qur'ān and Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Scott Kugle's *Homosexuality in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), the latter identifying its project as "liberating" the Qur'ān (challenging the Qur'ān's interpreters while preserving the text's transcendence and innocence) while "critiquing" ḥadīth (deauthorizing the ḥadīth corpus through recourse to the authenticity question).

⁵³ Amanullah DeSondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

⁵⁴ Aisha Geissinger, *Gender and Muslim Construction of Exegetical Authority: a Rereading of the Classical Genre of Qur'ān Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

foundational contributors to queer theory⁵⁵ prompts the question of whether I identify this study as a queer theory project. This study engages queer theory in its treatment of bodies as constructed and reproduced through discursive repetition, particularly in my focus on the prophetic body as a specific genre of body, the construction of which employs gender and sexuality toward the marking of some types of bodies as exemplary and others as marginalized or even monstrous. This study also participates in queer theory in the sense that its analysis could potentially *queer* texts and imaginaries of the prophetic body itself, which in Kent Brintnell's articulation means "to question, to interrogate, to trouble: it signifies a process by which the familiar, the dominant, the coherent are rendered strange, marginal, unstable."⁵⁶ As Brintnell observes, this notion of queer theory has found some circulation among religious studies projects that emphasize the "unacknowledged strangeness" of religious discourses, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality.⁵⁷ However, I also take seriously Brintnell's misgivings regarding queer theory as a claimed method, not only due to the frequent carelessness with which scholars have used the term, but also the unfortunate irony of defining and regulating a theoretical framework that has been developed precisely to critique and resist such normalizing processes.⁵⁸ With awareness for those concerns, this study does maintain that naming queer theory as a

⁵⁵ This includes Deleuze and Guattari, whose interlocutors have brought their work into conversation with queer theory. Chrystanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr, eds. *Deleuze and Queer Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

⁵⁶ Kent L. Brintnell, "Queer Studies and Religion," *Critical Research on Religion*, vol. 1, issue 1 (2013): 51-61.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

project's set of priorities facilitates a meaningful intervention in the meeting of Islamic studies and gender studies.

Organization

This study examines representations of Muḥammad's body through four chronological stages, tracking the development of the corpus between the earliest sources through the 11th century CE. Each chapter identifies four areas of focus as reflective of change in textual imaginaries of Muḥammad's bodily powers, particularly the modes through which Muḥammad can link to other bodies and extend his corporeality through them. These areas include Muḥammad's bodily products, such as saliva, sweat, blood, urine and feces, fingernails, and hair; narrations in which Muḥammad's body undergoes modification by extrahuman forces, as in the angelic surgery performed upon his chest, the placement of a material Seal of Prophethood on his skin, and the transmission of knowledge by the touch of Allāh's own hand on Muḥammad's body; the condition of Muḥammad's body postmortem; and finally, the significance of Muḥammad's sexed body to prophetic corporeality.

The first chapter, "Dust, Sperm, and Clot: the Qur'ān and Early Sīra/Maghāzī Literatures," examines the earliest extant sources on Muḥammad's body, namely the Qur'ān and early sīra/maghāzī works, while introducing theoretical considerations that will remain salient throughout the project. This chapter, while drawing comparisons between the sources and later ḥadīth collections, also calls attention to significant diversity among these sources themselves in terms of their representations of prophetic corporeality,

reflecting multiple possibilities for imagining Muḥammad's body, its powers, and boundaries.

The second chapter, "A Lump Formed and Unformed: Early Ḥadīth Collections," discusses the prophetic body as represented in ḥadīth scholarship of the first half of the 9th century CE, including sources such as the *Muṣannaḥ* works of Ibn Abī Shayba (d.849) and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Sanānī (d.826) and *Musnad* works such as the seminal collection of Ibn Ḥanbal, among others. Additionally, this chapter includes among its sources the *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* of Ibn Sa'd (d.845), an important biographical dictionary that begins with narrations of Muḥammad's life organized in mostly chronological *sīra* style. This chapter describes a proliferation of reports concerning Muḥammad's bodily powers, which appear to some degree as a departure from earlier sources. While demonstrating an intensified investment in the extension of prophetic corporeality, however, this chapter also presents lingering ambiguities, tensions, and instabilities in terms of precisely conceptualizing Muḥammad's body as a conduit of *baraka* and its limitations.

The third chapter, "Skeletizing the Baraka Machine: the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan Era," examines ḥadīth collections in the second half of the 9th century and start of the 10th century CE, marked by an increasing emphasis on methodological rigor and inclusion of only the most stringently evidenced narrations. This is the context in which the seminal ḥadīth collections that would later come to be canonized together as the "Six Books," most famously the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* works of Bukhārī and Muslim, emerged. At first glance, the shrinking of these collections in comparison to Ibn Ḥanbal's massive *Musnad* suggests a constriction of Muḥammad's bodily powers. However, the representation of Muḥammad's body remains significantly unstable, not only between collections in the Six Books canon

but even within particular collections. Moreover, in sources examined in this chapter that rest beyond the Six Books, such as the archive of Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim (d.900), Muḥammad’s powers for intercorporeality and baraka transmission continue to expand.

The fourth chapter, “Nabī Without Organs: Sunnī Ḥadīth Collections in the Shī‘ī Century,” covers sources following the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement roughly to the end of the 11th century CE, regarded as a conclusion to the formative period of Sunnī ḥadīth literature.⁵⁹ In contrast to significant constrictions of the corpus achieved by the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan works of Bukhārī and his contemporaries, the 10th and 11th centuries CE also witness an expansion of the corpus through collections often displaying less rigorous methodologies.⁶⁰ The imaginary of Muḥammad’s body produced within these collections displays greater powers of intercorporeality and baraka transmission than in previous works. However, as these collections include narrations of Muḥammad’s body that could be read in tension with the expansion of his corporeal powers, Muḥammad’s body also appears in these collections at its most unstable.

The conclusion, “Secreting Baraka,” brings together the arguments made throughout the preceding chapters, tracks change across the chapters within representations of Muḥammad’s body, and calls further attention to the heterogeneity and multiplicity of reporters and networks contributing to these representations, providing a summation of the dissertation’s broader argument. In this concluding chapter, I also explore possibilities for further work on the literary representations of Muḥammad that places the corpus in

⁵⁹ Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2011), 41-42.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 47-55.

conversation with theoretical frameworks that move beyond questions of recovering the
“real Muḥammad.”

1. Dust, Sperm, and Clot: the Qur'ān and Early Maghāzī/Sīra Literatures

Introduction

This chapter examines the Qur'ān and early biographical representations of Muḥammad for what they contribute to an imaginary of Muḥammad's body, with special attention paid to his body's boundaries and capacity for extending beyond them to form connections with other bodies. In Deleuzo-Guattarian terms, this chapter seeks to investigate flows of baraka between Muḥammad's body and those of his Companions (including his family), through which Muḥammad's corporeal baraka-transmitting capacity and the Companions' desire for him can merge their bodies into a new assemblage, characterized by new powers.⁶¹ I focus on points at which insides and outsides access each other, challenging bodily borders in ways that can be alternately represented as productive or threatening: substances and fluids that emerge from Muḥammad's body, modifications imposed upon his body by divine or angelic forces, the condition of his postmortem body, and the sexing of his body as male.

I read for these themes in conversation with the notion of the abject as presented by Julia Kristeva and her interlocutors, Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz. Kristeva's concept of abjection draws both from a psychoanalytic foundation and the anthropological work of Mary Douglas, who conceptualizes the body as a site upon which social anxieties and

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 257.

ideologies are mapped in relation to corporeal purity and filth. For Kristeva, insecurities regarding the border between self and other find signification in troublesome substances such as blood, feces, urine, vomit, pus, saliva, and sweat. These abjected products of the body, which are exiled from the body yet retain some degree of relationship to it, subvert the distinction between self and other and threaten to dissolve that boundary or expose it as illusory.⁶² Such substances, Grosz writes, “attest to the permeability of the body” and the “perilous divisions between the body’s inside and the outside.”⁶³

Kristeva’s work faces a critical challenge from feminist theory for her centering of abjection on motherhood and her treatment of the maternal body. For this concern, scholars have sought to build from Kristeva’s notion of abjection without full adherence to her system. In her work on medieval discourses concerning blood, for example, Bettina Bildhauer draws from Butler’s critique of Kristeva to argue for a “more future-oriented” process of abjection (as opposed to one defined by a broken primordial unity between the self and the maternal body), in which the subject continually emerges through a “repeated and regulated expulsion of bodily matter” as more useful for her considerations of blood as a concern of bodily integrity.⁶⁴

Kristeva holds similarly complex significance for the developing field of “disgust studies,” which interrogates the ways that language of bodily repulsion serves to express

⁶² Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 3.

⁶³ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 194.

⁶⁴ Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 13-14.

moral judgments, draw communal boundaries, and establish hierarchical relationships.⁶⁵

Disgust theorists engage Kristeva's insights to varying degrees without necessarily binding themselves to the particulars of Kristeva's theory or its psychoanalytic foundation.⁶⁶

Kristeva's notion of the abject, and the bodily phenomena that provoke the danger of abjection, also suffers from limitations as a universalizing theory. Certainly, Kristeva does not write as a scholar of "Islamic tradition" in its broadest conceivable definition, much less the specific historical settings in which early ḥadīth scholars and sīra chroniclers produced their works; nor does she write with concern for the varied ways in which Muslim sources represent human bodies and bodily substances.

Muslim jurisprudence, particularly matters of ritual purity, can offer a potential point for conversation between Kristeva's abjection and Islamic studies. While considerable overlap appears between the bodily events and substances that provoke Muslim jurists' concerns for ritual purity and the corporeal phenomena that comprise Kristeva's category of the abject, the violators of Muslim ritual purity do not perfectly align with Kristeva's abjection. In her examination of early Muslim debates regarding ritual

⁶⁵ William Ian Miller conceptualizes disgust through these discursive operations in *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁶⁶ For a salient example, Susan Signe Morrison makes a case for the usefulness of what she terms "fecal theory" in her monograph, *Excrement in the late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Martha Bayless's *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine* (New York: Routledge, 2012) explores the significance of filth and dung in medieval Christian theological sources, while addressing the body's symbolic order and the moral meanings projected upon body parts and bodily processes. Finally, Alexandra Cuffel's *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007) is especially helpful in its examination of bodily disgust as a shared vocabulary through which Jews, Christians, and Muslims articulated moral disgust in their polemics against one another. Cuffel argues that Jews, Christians, and Muslims from late antiquity through the mid-14th century shared a view of human bodies as disgusting and incompatible with the transcendent purity of the divine.

purity law, Marion Katz further complicates the problem by calling attention to the considerable diversity of logics and dissenting opinions offered by Muslim jurists. Investigating Muslim debates over whether (non-menstrual) blood canceled ritual purity (and by what conditions—that is, whether it was exclusively *flowing* blood that polluted a body, or any instance in which blood was visible on the body), whether a man’s semen polluted his body due to the *event* of ejaculation or the *substance* of semen itself (or whether semen could even be regarded as substantively impure), or the pollution of living bodies by contact with dead bodies, Katz points to the challenge of treating Muslim ritual purity as a unified code that scholars can decode.⁶⁷ “It may be futile,” Katz suggests, “to attempt theoretical readings of Islamic purity as a whole.”⁶⁸ Katz cites the example of Hanafī logic, which ostensibly defines ritual impurity through the transgression of corporeal boundaries when a body ejects substances from inside out, though Hanafī scholars do not regard tears, sweat, or spit as affecting change in one’s ritual purity.⁶⁹ Katz offers a possible decoding in her emphasis on stomach-related phenomena as a locus of impurity and the importance of material change within the body (as in the stomach’s transformation of material from food into feces),⁷⁰ but nonetheless observes considerable differences of opinion in an early “archaic stage,” during which “even the basic lineaments

⁶⁷ Marion Holmes Katz, *Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunni Law of Ritual Purity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 135-139.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 140.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 139.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 175.

of the idea of purity were still largely undefined.”⁷¹ Muslim jurists such as Shāfi’ī regarded purity codes as “essentially the arbitrary decrees of an inscrutable God,” rather than operating on a consistent logic that humans could decipher.⁷² Examining Muslim jurisprudence as a phenomenon on the ground, this reflects the challenge of searching for a singular Muslim construction of the body, its limits, or the threats to its bodily integrity and ritual purity. Rather than a universal system through which Muslim jurists defined and regulated bodies, discourses of ritual purity reveal an internal heterogeneity, an assemblage of voices and logics that intersect and merge into each other to produce a textual tradition with the appearance of self-contained unity. In short, Kristevan abjection and Muslim ritual impurity are not collapsable into each other; Kristeva does not speak for all times and places; for a bodily substance to be ritually polluting is not reducible to its perception as “icky;” nor is there a united, internally coherent Muslim theory of abjection that can be contrasted to Kristeva for the sources considered here. With consideration for the limits of Kristeva’s attempt at a universal theory of abjection, as well as the problems of reducing Muslim ritual purity to questions of abjection or disgust, Kristeva’s insights inform this chapter’s examination of early sources regarding Muḥammad with interest in the insides and outsides of his body, the question of where one begins and the other ends, and the permeability of the border dividing them.

In addition to his body’s production of typical abject substances, Muḥammad’s corporeal boundaries are potentially threatened in a narration that represents his body as containing a demonic element that must be removed prior to his prophetic mission. The

⁷¹ Ibid, 143.

⁷² Ibid, 154.

tradition depicts angels as holding down Muḥammad and cutting open his torso in order to purify his insides, a process accompanied by the surgical extraction of an undesirable morsel of flesh from his body. The removed flesh, color-coded as black and identified with Shayṭān, appears as both part of Muḥammad and his absolute opposite, an incorporation of the monstrous. The flesh constitutes a fragment of Muḥammad's body, but the abjected fragment that must be denied in order for Muḥammad to be more fully Muḥammad-like.

Abjection also confronts Muḥammad's body in narrations concerning his death and postmortem condition. Kristeva identifies the corpse as the ultimate manifestation of waste-related abjection: death exposes the entire body as "waste, transitional matter, mixture."⁷³ As the corpse, in Kristeva's analysis, stands for "above all the opposite of the spiritual, of the symbolic, and of divine law," this section examines early biographies of Muḥammad for their treatments of his body's relationship to the abjection typical of postmortem bodies.⁷⁴ In this section, I demonstrate that early sīra/maghāzī literatures produce ambiguities regarding Muḥammad's possible vulnerability to normal human processes of decay and rot.

Informed by Grosz, who calls attention to the sexual specificities of bodies and their knowledges, and Kristeva, who identifies sexual difference as a primary category of abjection,⁷⁵ I investigate the early sources' representations of Muḥammad as inhabiting a sexed body. This section questions the argument furthered by Amanullah De Sondy in *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* that the Qur'ān's representation of prophets serves to

⁷³ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 109.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 71.

destabilize masculinity.⁷⁶ I argue that the sources uphold and enforce prophethood as an inescapably masculine performance. Drawing from Butler's approach to gender as performative, marked not by what one *is*, but rather what one *does*, I demonstrate that these texts construct prophethood as a way of *doing* masculinity that claims a fantasy of the "natural" body as its guarantor.⁷⁷ Reversing De Soudy's question of whether Muḥammad's masculinity contributes to a particular notion of prophethood, this section asks whether the very concept of prophethood contributes to an idea of Muḥammad's body. I argue that the sources' construction of prophethood produces a script to which Muḥammad's body must adhere, and that the script locates prophethood so thoroughly within male-sexed bodies that the majority of premodern Sunnī schools disqualify women from prophethood altogether; feminine prophethood becomes thinkable only to outliers and with gendered restrictions.⁷⁸ Within conformity to this script, Muḥammad's sexed body becomes a site at which his prophethood is marked: Muḥammad's sexed body and prophetic masculinity establish him both as a man and distinguished from other men.

This chapter's exploration of Muḥammad's capacity for abjection relates to the question of how early sources produce Muḥammad's body and its limits in relation to other

⁷⁶ De Soudy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*.

⁷⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 191-193.

⁷⁸ Maryam's potential status as a prophet, along with the very possibility of women prophets, was widely rejected. Ibn Hazm, an exception for his argument that Maryam and other women from sacred history were indeed prophets, maintains a gendered distinction between *nubuwwa* (prophethood) and *risālah* (messengership). According to Ibn Hazm's formulation, even if Maryam merits recognition as a prophet, she remains excluded from the elite class of messenger-prophets to which Muḥammad belongs. Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77.

bodies. Performing mediation between metaphysical and physical realms, Muḥammad's body becomes a point of encounter and a conduit through which human beings can access extrahuman forces and energies. This chapter examines Muḥammad's bodily by-products for their potential to transmit baraka or extend Muḥammad's corporeality beyond the concrete limits of his body; the ambiguities and complexities of such materials and a prophetic body that can produce undesirable, abjected substances; the potential for a prophetic corpse to become abject in the manner of normal human corpses; and the relation of prophetic bodies to other human bodies, all of which are marked as sexually specific (including those that are represented as ambiguous or challenging to a sexual binary). Finally, this chapter's discussions also contribute towards a tracking of change across the development of the corpus, as examined in future chapters.

Sources

Fred Donner has convincingly argued for an "early Qur'ān" that can be located at least within the generation following Muḥammad. Against revisionist scholarship that would place the Qur'ān's origins as late as the aftermath of the 'Abbāsīd revolution, Donner makes his case in part through demonstrating that the Qur'ān and seminal ḥadīth collections, which emerged in the 3rd/9th century, depart from one another so severely in vocabulary and content that it seems untenable to locate their productions within the same historical setting.⁷⁹ This chapter follows Donner in privileging the Qur'ān as the text most reliably connected to the earliest Muslim community, which Donner terms the "Believers'

⁷⁹ Fred Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998), 35-61.

Movement.”⁸⁰ As shall be seen, this provides both opportunities and challenges, considering the Qur’ān’s noted dearth of information regarding Muḥammad.

In addition to the Qur’ān, this chapter gives attention to *sīra*/maghāzī literatures through the mid-9th century, which are distinguished from other genres of ḥadīth literatures in terms of methodology, organization, and the positionality of their producers. Dividing *sīra*/maghāzī from the larger body of ḥadīth literature also provides a roughly chronological organization, as the biographical representations examined here tend to predate the ḥadīth collections that will be considered in future chapters. Scholarly argument over whether a prophetic biography closer to the generation of the Companions can be reconstructed from the collected reports of early scholar ‘Urwa ibn al-Zubayr does not concern the supposed retrieval of a lost *sīra*/maghāzī text (contrary to later assertions, ‘Urwa had not composed a *sīra*/maghāzī⁸¹) so much as it pursues the “authenticity question” that has dominated ḥadīth studies.⁸²

What would be the oldest surviving *sīra*/maghāzī work, Wahb ibn Munabbih’s (d.ca.730) *Maghāzī Rasūl Allāh*, has been preserved only in fragments.⁸³ The *Maghāzī* of

⁸⁰ Idem, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁸¹ Gregor Schoeler, “Urwa b. al-Zubayr” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

⁸² For the “‘Urwa’s *Sīra*” debate, consider Andreas Görke and Gregor Schoeler, “Reconstructing the Earliest *Sīra* Texts: The *Hiġra* in the Corpus of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr,” *Der Islam* 82.2 (2005): 209-220. Their argument undergoes critical reassessment in Stephen J. Shoemaker, “In Search of ‘Urwa’s *Sīra*: Some Methodological Issues in the Quest for ‘Authenticity’ in the Life of Muḥammad,” *Der Islam* 85.2 (2011): 257-344. Görke, Schoeler, and Harald Motzki respond in “First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad? A Debate,” *Der Islam* 89.1/2 (2012): 2-59.

⁸³ Raif Georges Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972).

Ibn Ishāq (d.767 CE), typically considered the earliest extant biography of Muḥammad, is accessible through the recensions of later scholars such as Ibn Hishām (d.833) and Yūnus ibn Bukayr (d.814). The *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* of Wāqidī (d.823) follows that of Ibn Ishāq by decades, but Wāqidī's work appears as a contemporary to the Ibn Hishām and Ibn Bukayr recensions.⁸⁴ These works represent a stage of prophetic biography prior to the development of ḥadīth scholarship as a formalized specialization with unique tools, methodologies, and normative expectations (evidenced by inconsistent attention to the isnād).⁸⁵ The *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* of Ma'mar ibn al-Rāshid (d.770), which bears the strongest connection to the Medinan scholarly networks that scorned Ibn Ishāq, survives through its inclusion in the ḥadīth collection of his student 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Sanānī (d. 826).⁸⁶

Rather than the work of a singular author, the typical sīra/maghāzī text appears as an assemblage of teacher-student chains and scholarly networks. Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, for example, can be reimagined as an assemblage formed by his teachers (most prominently seminal traditionist Shihāb al-Zuhrī [d.741]), his teachers' teachers (such as al-Zuhrī's teacher and one of the "seven jurists of Medina," 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr) *their* teachers (such as 'Urwa's aunt, 'Ā'isha), and his student, 'Abd al-Razzāq.⁸⁷ Rethinking these works as assemblages rather than monographs, characterized by internal heterogeneity, highlights

⁸⁴ Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wāqidī, *The Life of Muḥammad: al-Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, trans. Rizwi Faizer, Amal Ismail and Abdulkader Tayob, (New York: Routledge, 2011).

⁸⁵ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Maghāzī and the Muḥaddithūn: Reconsidering the Treatment of 'Historical' Materials in Early Collections of Hadith," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 1-18.

⁸⁶ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions: An Early Biography of Muḥammad*, trans. Sean W. Anthony (New York and London: New York University Press, 2014).

⁸⁷ Ibid.

overlaps and intersections that complicate the attempted clarity of the border between *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth collection genres. Of course, *sīra*/maghāzī works are also ḥadīth collections, and the producers of *sīra*/maghāzī were ḥadīth experts in their own right. Teacher-student relationships additionally bring the worlds of *sīra*/maghāzī writers and traditionists together. While Ibn Ishāq and Ma'mar ibn Rāshid differed in their methodological orientations, they shared a mentor in al-Zuhrī, who himself was alleged to have compiled a maghāzī work.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, the genre of *sīra*/maghāzī was largely disdained by ḥadīth partisans such as Ibn Ḥanbal (d.855) for its scholars' apparent lack of rigor, as betrayed by inconsistent commitments to the chains of transmission and nascent modes of transmitter evaluation, as well as a willingness to combine variant reports into coherent narratives.⁸⁹

Beyond tracking change between these sources and later ḥadīth collections, the *sīra*/maghāzī works vary among themselves in their representations of Muḥammad's body. In comparison to Ibn Ishāq and the *Maghāzī* of Wāqidī, Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* is decidedly the most conservative in regards to the boundaries of prophetic corporeality.⁹⁰ Ibn Ishāq (and

⁸⁸ Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 148.

⁸⁹ Robert G. Hoyland, "History, Fiction, and Authorship in the First Centuries of Islam," in *Writing and Representation in Early Islam*, ed. Julia Bray (New York: Routledge, 2006), 16-46.

⁹⁰ It also bears noting that diverse imaginaries of the prophetic body emerge even between sources within a specific scholar's body of work. While Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* expresses a conservative imaginary of the prophetic body in comparison to the other *sīra*/maghāzī works examined here, his *Kitāb al-Jāmi'*, also found in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf*, offers an intensified investment in prophetic corporeality. The text's *bāb al-nubuwwa* section, for example, reports the tradition of Muḥammad ejecting miraculous water from his hands, as well as a Companion's attestation to having visually witnessed the distinctive mark between Muḥammad's shoulders. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-San'ānī, *Muṣannaf* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2000), #4929-4934. Furthermore, as 'Abd al-Razzāq's most prominent

his editors) and Wāqidī expand upon the special properties of the prophetic body, its powers and transcendent perfection. Despite frequent overlap in the writers' scholarly interlocutors, these departures reflect heterogeneity in the discourses on Muḥammad's body between various epistemological and geographic distinctions. Muḥammad's body emerges from these sources as an assemblage constructed by jurists and historians, ḥadīth transmitters and folklorists, and Medinan and Irāqī networks, working in both competition and collaboration.

Bodily Products

In her discussion of body image, Grosz gives attention to objects that she terms "intermediate," existing "midway between the inanimate and the bodily;" this category includes the abjected "'detachable' parts of the body" such as excrescence.⁹¹ In Grosz's analysis, abjection "involves the paradoxically necessary but impossible desire to transcend corporeality...a refusal of the defiling, impure, uncontrollable materiality of the subject's embodied experience."⁹² While expelled from the body, abjected substances continue to threaten the desire for a stable and coherent body image: these products are not exactly parts of the body, nor fully distinct from it. Grosz argues, "Detachable, separable parts of the body...retain something of the cathexis and value of a body part even when they are

teacher, Ma'mar also appears throughout asānīd in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* as a source for narrations of prophetic corporeality.

⁹¹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 81.

⁹² Idem, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 72.

separated from the body. There is still something of the subject bound up with them.”⁹³ As such products remain “magically linked to the body” and “psychically invested,”⁹⁴ abjection potentially bears profound consequences for a human body that transmits divine communications and energies to other human bodies. In the following discussion of the Qur’ān and sīra/maghāzī literatures, I examine ways in which the Companions relate to Muḥammad through these ambiguous products of/from him. While a mediator between extrahuman and human, Muḥammad’s body also produces potentially objectionable materials such as spit, sweat, blood, and feces. As Grosz calls attention to the power of such substances to reveal the body’s permeability and “perilous divisions between the body’s inside and its outside,” I discuss the implications of these products for prophetic bodies and consider the limits of Muḥammad’s body as defined by what it expels.

Examining the Qur’ān with an interest in Muḥammad’s body means reading almost entirely for silences. To the frustration of scholars seeking to investigate the earliest Muslim community, the Qur’ān provides little concrete information regarding Muḥammad’s life and community. In terms of Muḥammad’s body and its by-products, the Qur’ān is silent. If the Qur’ān in its recognizable form is to be understood as a source contemporary to Muḥammad’s own lifetime or the decades immediately following his death, it becomes striking that the Qur’ān neither responds to nor prescribes Companions’ investment in Muḥammad’s body or substances related to his body. If the Qur’ān’s only acknowledgment of Muḥammad’s bodily by-products appears in prescriptions regarding ritual purification, the text renders his body unexceptional insofar as his processes and products result in the

⁹³ Idem, *Volatile Bodies*, 81.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

same pollutions as those of his Companions; the bodies of Muḥammad and his wives, therefore, are referenced only for instructional purposes. The psychical investment in Muḥammad's body and its detachable parts first appears in later sources that are presented not as contemporary to Muḥammad's lifetime, but rather as Companions' recollections of Muḥammad after his death to those who had not known him.

In Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, interest in substances from Muḥammad's body is referenced only through an enemy's observation of the Companions' behavior. A report depicts 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī as shocked by the intensity of the Companions' love for Muḥammad, particularly its embodied expressions in their treatment of his bodily fluids. "When the Messenger of Allāh hawks up his phlegm," 'Urwah exclaims, "one of these men catches it in his hand and smears it on his face and skin...and when he performs his ablutions, they nearly kill themselves over the ablution water."⁹⁵ While the Companions are represented as desiring enhanced closeness to Muḥammad through his bodily ejections, whether the Companions value these substances specifically for their potency as baraka transmitters remains unclear in 'Urwah's remark. Otherwise, reports of Companions expressing desire for contact with products from Muḥammad's body are absent from the text. Nor does Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* offer reports of Muḥammad's saliva or other bodily products being employed toward the performance of miraculous acts.

Ma'mar's treatment of Fāṭima's wedding to 'Alī, however, does include an account that depicts Muḥammad using his saliva in ceremony. In Ma'mar's first account of the wedding, Muḥammad uses water but not saliva: he recites words over a vessel of water, then uses the water to anoint 'Alī's chest and face, and sprinkles some on Fāṭima. In

⁹⁵ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 33.

Ma'mar's second account, Muḥammad spits into the vessel and uses the mixture of water and saliva to wash his own face and feet. He then pours it onto Fāṭima, accompanying the act with a prayer for Allāh to purify Fāṭima as he had been purified, as "she is from me, and I am from her." Muḥammad requests a second basin of water and performs the same action for 'Alī, which he supplements with another prayer. This account additionally portrays Muḥammad applying his saliva to the celebratory dinner, reporting that he spat on it and blessed it (*fatafala fihi wa bāraka*).⁹⁶ Though Muḥammad appears in Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* to have an investment in the efficacy of transferring his saliva to water and food (and through them, to people who receive the substances), the precise mode by which these transfers benefit their recipients—that is, whether Muḥammad affects the act of consumption by following a particular ritual script that involves saliva, or through innate qualities already present within his saliva that are physically contagious—goes unsaid.

Muḥammad makes similar use of his saliva in Wāqidī's *Maghāzī*, giving water in which he had washed his hands and mouth to the bereaved mother and sister of Ḥāritha ibn Surāqa, who drank the water and splashed it on their chests. Muḥammad's saliva appears to act as a psychotropic medication: the report adds that after this incident, they became the most content and joyful women in Medina.⁹⁷ Muḥammad also applies his saliva to the dead: he commands that Ibn Ubayy's corpse be removed from the grave, after which Muḥammad sprays his saliva over the body, then dresses the body in his own shirt (which, the text notes, was one of two shirts that Muḥammad was wearing, and the one that had

⁹⁶ Ibid, 272-279.

⁹⁷ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 48.

been in closer contact with his skin).⁹⁸ In contrast to the relative conservatism regarding Muḥammad's body in Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, Wāqidī's *Maghāzī* presents Muḥammad's saliva as clearly endowed with exceptional powers, providing several incidents in which Muḥammad uses his saliva to cure the injured and sick, either by spitting directly onto the wounds or into a handful of soil, with instructions for the sick person to heat the soil with water and consume.⁹⁹ Wāqidī also portrays Muḥammad spitting his ablution into a fatigued camel's mouth and pouring the rest over its body, which empowers the camel to run. After the camel completes its journey, the owner's brother sacrifices it and distributes the meat as charity.¹⁰⁰ The episode represents baraka as a flow that moves both through substances and intentions. Water from Muḥammad's ritual washing, charged by contact with Muḥammad's skin and also mixed with his saliva, becomes a conductor of forces and energies between Muḥammad (who himself operates as a conductor and mediator between extrahuman powers and the world) and an animal, charging the camel's muscles with baraka. The camel in turn becomes a vehicle through which baraka flows to others: its owner's brother, who slaughters the camel and then distributes its meat, and then the recipients of his charity, who are eating the meat of an animal that had conceivably absorbed Muḥammad's saliva into its own flesh. Divine favor, blessings, and/or energy move between human and animal bodies in this report both through a chain of substances (the ablution water, Muḥammad's skin, his saliva, and potentially their energies within the camel's meat when consumed) and actions performed with devotional intention (the ritual

⁹⁸ Ibid, 518.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 95, 120, 171, 268.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 14.

script of ablution, the giving of blessed meat in charity). The narration's detail of the camel's slaughter suggests that even if the owner's brother does not necessarily ingest baraka through the meat itself, he recognizes a special property to the meat and is rewarded by distributing it piously. It becomes apparent that Muḥammad's bodily fluid transfers a special property to the camel; through his spit and used water, Muḥammad extends his corporeality into a nonhuman animal which then carries a trace of Muḥammad and his effects across a long journey to be accessed by others.

Elsewhere, contact with Muḥammad's saliva engages a power that can both destroy obstacles and provide material abundance. In Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra*, Muḥammad spits into water and then pours the water over a large rock that trench diggers had not been able to break or move; the mixture of water with prophetic saliva crushes the rock into powder.¹⁰¹ Another report presents Muḥammad's mouth (and thus likely saliva) as a source for contacting baraka, as Muḥammad splits a morsel of meat with his teeth before throwing it back into a communal dish; through this intervention, a quantity of food small enough to have been consumed by a single person feeds the entire group to satisfaction.¹⁰²

Sīra/maghāzī sources present Muḥammad's use of bodily products as extended corporeality virtually exclusively as a deployment of saliva, provoking the question of why other bodily products go unexploited. As a substance that Muḥammad could produce from his body instantly, at seemingly any time, and without bodily harm or other complications, saliva would appear to be his most intuitive choice. Apart from their utility and abundance,

¹⁰¹ 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. A. Guillaume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 451.

¹⁰² Ibid, 117.

however, products from the body also bear a variety of significations. In conversation with Kristeva and Douglas, Grosz observes that body fluids are subjected to “different indices of control, disgust, and revulsion...a kind of hierarchy of propriety governing these fluids themselves.”¹⁰³ In these presences and absences, Muḥammad’s bodily substances are represented as unequally capable of extending his corporeality’s baraka into other bodies.

Prophetic sweat does receive some attention in these literatures, though not yet attaining the prominence of later sources. In the early *sīra*/*maghāzī* texts, the Companions’ sensory experiences of Muḥammad’s sweat are discussed in ocular terms. Observations of Muḥammad’s sweat serve to confirm his prophetic station through both the context in which the sweat appears and the substance itself: Companions report his sweat as a side effect of the Qur’ān’s descent, and also recall the sweat’s unique appearance. These traditions authorize not only Muḥammad as the locus of divine activity, but also the Companions themselves as witnesses to the event of the Qur’ān and privileged accessors to the baraka of Muḥammad’s body.

In *maghāzī* and *sīra* texts of the early 3rd/9th century, Companions recall Muḥammad sweating during revelations, even in cold weather. Both Ibn Ishāq’s *Sīra* and Wāqidī’s *Maghāzī* include ‘Ā’isha’s narration that after Muḥammad receives the revelation that confirms her innocence, she observes sweat falling from him as he sits up. In Ibn Ishāq’s version, ‘Ā’isha compares the sweat to “drops of water on a winter day;”¹⁰⁴ Wāqidī’s

¹⁰³ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 195.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 497.

version represents ‘Ā’isha as likening the sweat drops to pearls.¹⁰⁵ Wāqidī additionally includes an episode in which a convulsion that overtakes Muḥammad causes observers to suspect that he is receiving revelations, and the resultant drops of sweat from his brow are compared to pearls.¹⁰⁶

In this economy of fluids dominated by the relatively benign saliva and sweat, a notable outlier appears in the report that when Muḥammad’s face was injured in battle, Mālīk ibn Sinān sucked blood from the wound and swallowed it. Wāqidī’s *Maghāzī* narrates that when two helmet rings were removed from Muḥammad’s cheeks, blood began to flow “as though from a water bag.” Mālīk ibn Sinān consumed the blood, prompting Muḥammad to remark, “Whoever desires to see one who mixes his blood with mine, let him look at Mālīk ibn Sinān.” Muḥammad is also quoted in the report as stating, “Whoever touches his blood and my blood, the fire of hell will not wound him.” When asked if he drank the blood, Mālīk would answer, “Yes, I drank the blood of the Messenger of Allāh.” The narration goes on to describe Mālīk’s son, prolific ḥadīth narrator Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, kissing Muḥammad’s knees, and Muḥammad exclaiming to him, “May Allāh reward you in your father.”¹⁰⁷ In Ibn Ishāq’s version, Muḥammad remarks that the person whose blood mixed with his own would not be touched by the hellfire.¹⁰⁸ The tradition is reported through Abū Sa’īd to his grandson, Rubayḥ ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥman ibn Abū Sa’īd. In Mālīk’s consumption of Muḥammad’s blood, Muḥammad effectively bleeds *into* Mālīk’s

¹⁰⁵ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 212.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 161.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 121-122.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 754.

body. As in the previously discussed incident of Muḥammad spitting into a Companion's wound, the wound produces a threshold at which Muḥammad enters his Companions. Muḥammad's insides cross the threshold out of his body to mix with Mālik's insides, transmitting baraka that extends from Muḥammad to Mālik and beyond both of their bodies to affect the body of Mālik's son.

This representation of Muḥammad's blood is not consistent across the sources. The blood-drinking tradition does not appear in Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, which again stands as an outlier among the sources for its relative lack of investment in Muḥammad's detachable parts and fluids. Another Companion who encounters prophetic blood in Ibn Ishāq's material, Muḥammad's daughter Fāṭima, wipes the blood from Muḥammad's face and treats the wound, but does not display a personal interest in the substance as a means of connection.¹⁰⁹ While it may seem intuitive that Fāṭima does not need to ingest her father's blood to achieve the corporeal intermixture with him that other Companions desire, her lack of interest in the blood is notable, as these sources do not present Fāṭima as having necessarily inherited her father's relationship to baraka.

While Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* makes no reference to the collection of Muḥammad's hair or nails, Wāqidī's *Maghāzī* includes a report of Khālīd ibn Walīd coveting Muḥammad's hair, placing it on his mouth and eyes and carrying it in his cap,¹¹⁰ as well as Suhayl placing Muḥammad's hair on his eyes.¹¹¹ Wāqidī additionally provides a narration from 'Ā'isha in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 542.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 300.

which she is questioned by her father regarding hairs in her possession. She explains that Muḥammad had distributed the hairs from his head-shaving at ḥajj, and that she was among the recipients: “We took what the people took.”¹¹² The narration does not name a specific benefit related to the hair, nor does ‘Ā’isha articulate her own interest in possessing her husband’s post-hajj trimmings. These narrations are accompanied by a report in which Muḥammad is said to have ordered the burial of his hair and nails.¹¹³

Beyond the ambiguous fluids and materials produced from typical human bodies, Muḥammad also produces what I term “baraka water,” which flows from within his body, often providing enough water to suffice for multitudes of people. Similar to miracles in which Muḥammad’s spit or skin contact causes a dry well or empty vessel to overflow,¹¹⁴ Muḥammad’s production of baraka water answers the needs of his communities with miraculous intervention. Baraka water is distinguished from Muḥammad’s bodily products that come into being through normal human processes (such as blood or waste), however, in its unexplained origins and ejection from his body through his hands. In Wāqidī’s *Maḡhāzī*, Muḥammad is portrayed as placing his fingers into an empty pot, at which point water begins to flow from between his fingers. The water gushing from Muḥammad’s hands provides ample water for not only the people (numbering thirty thousand), but also their ten thousand horses and twelve or fifteen thousand camels to all quench their thirst.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 509-510.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Within these *sīra*/*maghāzī* sources, products emerging from Muḥammad's body preserve an ambiguous status. They are neither part of Muḥammad nor absolutely differentiated from him. They often (but not consistently) appear to be capable of transporting *baraka* from within Muḥammad's body to other bodies, yet apparently remain bound to a hierarchy that would construct some substances as more desirable resources than others. When emerging from the body of Muḥammad, polluting substances such as blood become sites of tension as to whether the substance is properly defined by its legal status as a tangible impurity or its origins within the prophetic body. The volume of reports concerning Muḥammad's saliva overwhelms the singular account of a Companion desiring his blood. Moreover, in comparison to Muḥammad's uses of his saliva, the narrative of Mālik ibn Sinān consuming Muḥammad's blood grants Muḥammad a greater degree of distance from the encounter. The incident is characterized not by Muḥammad imposing his blood on Mālik, but Mālik's desire for the fluid to connect their bodies. Whereas Muḥammad confidently manipulates his saliva to energize tired camels, treat wounds, and break rocks, Mālik rushes to ingest Muḥammad's blood without having received Muḥammad's prior instruction or even permission, and Muḥammad only reveals his blood's soteriological efficacy after the fluid had already been appropriated. Despite its marvelous effects, the incident also remains isolated. Though Mālik's act of oral incorporation leads to the remarkable knowledge that swallowing Muḥammad's blood can shield one from hellfire, *sīra*/*maghāzī* sources do not depict this episode provoking further interest in his blood among the Companions.

These sources leave certain substances unacknowledged as potential linkages to Muḥammad's body and the energies accessible through it. *Sīra*/*maghāzī* texts remain silent

as to whether consuming Muḥammad's vomit or pus would produce the same effect as ingesting his saliva and blood, for example. Muḥammad's urine and feces are notably excluded from discussion of his bodily by-products as conductors of baraka. The sources contribute to ambiguity and uncertainty regarding Muḥammad's precise relationship to the materials expelled from his body, as well as the power of these materials to redraw his body's boundaries and potentially merge him to other bodies. The possibilities and limits for intercorporeality between Muḥammad and his Companions through fluids and other by-products remain unpredictable, varying both from one text to another and within the sources themselves.

The Modified Body

"Abjection," in Grosz's articulation, "involves the paradoxically necessary but impossible desire to transcend corporeality. It is a refusal of the defiling, impure, uncontrollable materiality of the subject's embodied existence."¹¹⁶ As seen in the preceding discussion of bodily waste, abjection concerns anxieties surrounding substances produced within and ejected from the body, which retain ambiguous relationships to that body. Abjection enforces the image of a coherent and united body through disgust and discomfort at the substances and processes that undermine that image: Kristeva writes that these phenomena signify what one must "thrust aside in order to live."¹¹⁷ Narrations in which extrahuman forces perform modification upon Muḥammad's body, particularly reports in which these forces subject Muḥammad to invasive surgery, produce a tension between

¹¹⁶ Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, 72.

¹¹⁷ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3.

spotless prophetic corporeality and notions of the abject. The tradition of Muḥammad's surgery represents his torso as containing an undesirable "black spot" (*nuqta sawda*) or "share of Shayṭān" (*ḥaẓẓ al-Shayṭān*) that must be removed. The extraction of this impurity from Muḥammad and subsequent washing of his insides, presented in *sīra*/maghāzī literature as an incident prior to his prophetic career, ostensibly achieves the transformation of his body into an exceptional one that can act as mediator between metaphysical and physical worlds. Simultaneously, the location of "Shayṭān's share" existing within Muḥammad's chest presents his body as one that is naturally impure and imperfect prior to angelic intervention. The *sīra*/maghāzī literature presents a prophetic corporeality threatened by elements internal to itself. The presence of shayṭānic material within Muḥammad's body, specifically in or near his heart, demonstrates—as Grosz writes of the abject—"the impossibility of clear-cut borders, lines of demarcation, divisions between the clean and unclean, the proper and the improper, order and disorder."¹¹⁸

In addition to the event of Muḥammad's chest opening, this section examines the presence of a mark on Muḥammad's back that communicates his prophetic destiny to others. This "Seal of Prophethood" establishes Muḥammad as matching the description of a prophet whose coming was announced in Jewish scriptures, enabling connections between Muḥammad and divinely revealed scriptural sources through observable signs on his flesh. Between these traditions, Muḥammad's body emerges as an assemblage of signs that can be modified and interpreted to disrupt or produce linkages and interconnections: angels remove pieces of Muḥammad's body to sever Shayṭān's connection to him, while biblical

¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, "The Body of Signification," in *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, ed. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 2012): 80-103.

scholars reading Muḥammad's body discover pathways between his corporeality and their textual knowledge.

The Qur'ān makes references to an opening of Muḥammad's chest and the Seal of Prophethood, though both in treatments that are not self-evidently embodied; nor does the Qur'ān place the chest opening and the Seal in relation to each other. The first ayat of Sūrat al-Sharḥ (94:1) asks Muḥammad, "Did we not open your chest for you?" (*A-lam nashraḥ laka ṣadrak?*), but there is no mention of a "black spot" or unfavorable portion that is removed from inside him; nor does the verse explicitly represent the act of Muḥammad's chest opening as a corporeal event. Narrations of Muḥammad's life, however, do describe an incident in which his body is subjected to surgical intervention and seemingly modified to purify him or prepare him for prophethood. In Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra*, the account of Muḥammad's bodily opening appears among a number of signs from his early life that evidenced his future significance, such as astrological signs, miracles of abundant milk (in Muḥammad's own wetnurse as well as animals that he shepherded), the fact of his having taken part in the prophetic vocation of shepherding flocks, and the light shining from his mother during her pregnancy with him.¹¹⁹ It is reported here that during Muḥammad's childhood, two men dressed in white seized him, held him down, opened his stomach, and began "stirring it up;" Muḥammad is quoted as later narrating that the men were searching inside him, for what he did not know. The *Sīra* provides another account in which Muḥammad narrates that two men in white approached him with a gold basin containing snow, seized him, opened his body, took out his heart, and split it. They then removed a black spot from his heart, threw it away, and washed his heart and stomach with the snow.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 71-72.

They weighed Muḥammad against ten of his people, finding that he outweighed them; he was then weighed against one hundred of his people, then a thousand, with the same result, causing one of the men to remark that Muḥammad would outweigh all of his people. When Muḥammad's wetnurse reports the incident to his mother and confesses her fear that Muḥammad had been possessed by demons, his mother confidently states that he will be fine, revealing the miracle of light that had shone from her body during pregnancy with him.¹²⁰

The Qur'ān refers to Muḥammad as the *khātam al-nabīyīn*, "Seal of Prophets" (33:40), though this appears to reflect a particular status rather than a feature of his body. Biographical representations of Muḥammad, however, not only preserve the Seal of Prophets as a distinct title for Muḥammad, but also describe a material *khātam al-nubuwwa* or "Seal of Prophethood" that can be located and observed on his flesh. This material Seal serves to mark Muḥammad's body with proof of his status, rendering his body as a clear sign for those who can understand it intertextually with their prior knowledge. In the account of Muḥammad's flight to Medina in Wahb's *Maghāzī*, the mere sight of the Seal sparks a conversion experience for Muḥammad's hired trail guide. Upon observation of this corporeal sign when Muḥammad's cloak falls from his shoulder, the learned 'Abd Allāh ibn Urayqat (described in the account as "a man who was passionate about reading books") immediately recognizes the mark on Muḥammad's body as a signifier of prophethood. He kisses Muḥammad (possibly on the Seal itself, as the Arabic does not allow for distinction between "him" and "it") and bears witness to the oneness of Allāh.¹²¹ The account does not

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih*, PB 11 (148-149).

clarify whether the Seal constitutes an organic part of Muḥammad's body, as in a cyst or mole, or something that happened to his body, like the literal stamping of a seal.

Nonetheless, the Seal operates as a center of gravity on Muḥammad's body, an attractor to which people are drawn and through which they come to perceive Muḥammad as extraordinary.

Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra* treats the Seal as an apparently organic birthmark by which witnesses (particularly those with access to sacred literatures) can recognize Muḥammad's exceptional status both before and after the start of his mission. In Muḥammad's youth, the Christian monk Baḥīra recognizes him as a future prophet in part through witnessing the Seal. Observing a number of signs in Muḥammad, Baḥīra looks at Muḥammad's back and finds the Seal as it had been described in his books; Ibn Hishām's notes compare the Seal's appearance to the mark left by a cupping-glass.¹²² The *Sīra* also makes reference to the Seal in the conversion narrative of Salmān. Under the tutelage of a pious and learned man, Salmān learns of a future prophet in Arabia who would be known in part by the Seal of Prophethood between his shoulders. When Salmān later meets Muḥammad, he turns to look at Muḥammad's back; when Muḥammad realizes what Salmān desires, he removes his cloak for him. Salmān recognizes the Seal and weepingly kisses Muḥammad, bearing witness to the prophetic body as the site at which he encountered the fulfillment of divine promise.¹²³ The Seal contributes to an assemblage consisting of Muḥammad's flesh, sacred history, and those who can read his body intertextually in conversation with scripture, enabling bodies and texts to form connections and combine their powers.

¹²² Ibid, 80, 709.

¹²³ Ibid, 96-97.

In both the chest-opening and Seal traditions, Muḥammad's prophethood is demonstrated by events and signs located at his body. These evidences, however, produce a multiplicity of effects: the conjurings of abduction, incisions, blood, demonic black morsels, surgery, wounds, scars, stitches, and cysts not only point to Muḥammad's special place in human history but also threaten his body with abjection, revealing his body's vulnerability, permeability, and failure to transcend its own fleshy materiality. Later chapters will demonstrate exercises in editorial sovereignty over these traditions that result in less complicated imaginaries of Muḥammad's body and the consequences of extrahuman modifications upon it.

Muḥammad Postmortem

For Kristeva, abjection toward corporeal waste finds its most intense expression in horror at the corpse, in which the body at large becomes waste and transitory, mixed matter.¹²⁴ This section investigates the problem of Muḥammad's corpse potentially becoming Kristeva's "utmost of abjection," "death infecting life," and "the border that has encroached everything."¹²⁵ Could Muḥammad's body signify what his Companions must "permanently thrust aside in order to live?"¹²⁶ The Qur'ān speaks of Muḥammad's death as a likely future, but does not self-evidently anticipate questions regarding his postmortem body. In early sīra/maghāzī works, mixed messages emerge concerning the prophetic

¹²⁴ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 2-4.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 3-4.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

cadaver's relationship to abjection and therefore the cadaver's capacity for producing affects upon other bodies and forming linkages with them.

In Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, Muḥammad's uncle, 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib answers 'Umar's refusal to accept Muḥammad's death with a statement that would have sparked controversy in a later age: "Indeed, his flesh decays like any other person's" (*Fā'inahu ya'sinu kamā yāsin an-nās*).¹²⁷ In contrast, Ibn Hishām's recension of Ibn Ishāq reports that Muḥammad's postmortem body was unlike ordinary corpses, but does not provide further detail on what made his cadaver unique.¹²⁸

In these sources, Muḥammad's dead body appears as a site of uncertainties. The corporeal matter has been ostensibly evacuated of the divine energies that once flowed through it, and can no longer transmit these energies to other bodies. Moreover, the body that had once served as a forum for divine communication displays potential after death for provoking revulsion among those who had cherished that body. Postmortem, the breaking down of Muḥammad's bodily coherence produces new effects, as the potential disintegration of boundaries between Muḥammad and other bodies threatens an unwanted nearness rather than hope for one body to seep into another. It seems noteworthy that maghāzī/sīra literatures report of Muḥammad's bodily by-products displaying miraculous properties, and Companions desiring connection to Muḥammad and his bodily baraka through them—even ingesting his blood directly from a wound—these narratives only relate to Muḥammad's body while he remains alive. After the life is gone and the fluids dried up, the power of Muḥammad's body to transmit baraka appears to have vanished. By

¹²⁷ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 185.

¹²⁸ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 688.

all appearances, Companions who possessed hairs of Muḥammad had obtained them during his life; the sources do not report of Companions expressing desire for fragments and traces of the prophetic cadaver. There is no depiction of Companions attempting to salvage hairs, nails, teeth, or other traces from his dead body, and no one seeks the ultimate connection of consuming his flesh. While by-products from Muḥammad's living body could be cherished after his death, Muḥammad's decomposing flesh does not provide his Companions with connective tissue that can bring their bodies together. Possibilities for Muḥammad's baraka to extend from his mortal remains into his community are further denied in the narration found in Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, attributed to 'Ā'isha and Ibn 'Abbās, in which Muḥammad invokes curses upon the Christians and Jews for having established their prophets' graves as places of worship.¹²⁹

Despite an apparent abjection of the prophetic corpse, the sources also reflect uncertainties. While subjected to normal processes of material rot, Muḥammad's corpse remains protected when threatened with the exposure of his nakedness; though emptied of prophetic life, the flesh retains sufficient prophetic ontology to warrant divine intervention on its behalf.¹³⁰ Both Abū Bakr and 'Alī show affection for the corpse: Abū Bakr in removing the shroud to kiss Muḥammad's face, 'Alī in his remarks on Muḥammad's persisting sweetness as he washed the body.¹³¹ Finally, al-Mughīra's boast of entering Muḥammad's grave and becoming the last person to have touched him complicates the absolute abjection of his corpse. The *sīra*/maghāzī literatures thus produce an unstable

¹²⁹ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 178-179.

¹³⁰ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 688.

¹³¹ Ibid.

relationship of Muḥammad's postmortem body to abjection and an unpredictable capacity for connecting with other bodies and transmitting baraka to them.

The Sexed Body

The following section examines ways in which the literature constructs prophethood to include some sexually specific bodies as prophetic possibilities and exclude others, and their creation of a mold into which the discursive construction of Muḥammad's body will be poured. Additionally, this section presents Muḥammad's sexed body as a signifier of his prophetic status. Counter to De Sony's assertion that the Qur'ān's representation of prophets reveals the text to be lacking a stable construction of masculinity, I argue that the Qur'ān and sīra/maghāzī literatures participate in a reification of gender by constructing prophethood as a gendered performance. While De Sony considers the discursive ingredients that go *into* the category of prophethood, that is, the representations of prophets as having relatively diverse heterosexual practices, I consider the category itself as productive of the prophets, examining the degree to which the Qur'ān and sīra/maghāzī sources produce gendered frames for prophethood that demand a particularly sexed body as its prerequisite for inclusion. Informed by Butler's observations regarding the performativity of gender and gender's production of sex, I contend that for Muḥammad to be a prophet achieves a performed repetition of gender that inscribes masculinity upon his body.¹³² Membership among the prophets produces Muḥammad as an exemplar of masculinity no less than chronicles of his marriages or valor on the

¹³² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 191-193.

battlefield; furthermore, as prophethood inscribes sex on Muḥammad, his sexed body also operates as a site at which his prophethood is evidenced.

A survey of prophets as represented in the Qur'ān and sīra/maghāzī literatures, including Muḥammad as well as pre-Islamic prophets both within and beyond biblical rosters, reveals three traits common among them that are so obvious that they go completely unexamined, invisible while in plain sight. First, all of the prophets are humans. Angels deliver divine communications to human prophets, but angels as a species do not themselves require an angelic prophet to teach them. The possibility of jinn prophets, while not explicitly denied in the Qur'ān or maghāzī/sīra literatures, does not appear to have been a thinkable question.¹³³ Nor do the sources provide consideration of prophets among nonhuman animal species. Second, prophethood appears among human beings as experiences of/in their *bodies*. As described vividly in Companions' recollections of Muḥammad (and Muḥammad's own narrations of his first private meeting with Jibrīl, in which Jibrīl nearly crushes him¹³⁴), revelation takes place within the prophetic body, inflicts violence and trauma upon it, and produces observable side effects through which the event of divine communication can be recognized by eyewitnesses.¹³⁵ It is through the violence performed on Muḥammad's body that his reception of divine discourse becomes demonstrable. Third, this embodied performance constitutes a gendered performance, as

¹³³ The Qur'ān's wording in 6:130, which calls upon humans and jinns collectively to reflect upon divine guidance that had come to them in the past, enables some ambiguity as to whether "Did there not come to you messengers from among you" (*a-lam ya'tikum rusulun minkum*) includes jinns along with humans as having received their own prophets, or treats jinns as recipients of guidance from human messengers.

¹³⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 106.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 497. Wāqidi, *The Life of Muhammad*, 212.

prophethood does not only appear to be the exclusive domain of human bodies, but more specifically human bodies that are sexed masculine, as the Qur'ān names only men as prophets.

While acknowledging the Qur'ān's gendered representations of prophethood, De Sony contends that from a careful reading of prophets' lives, "what emerges is not one ideal Islamic masculinity but a tableau of exemplary men found in situations far from textbooks."¹³⁶ Examining depictions of Ādam, Yūsuf, Muḥammad, and 'Īsā, focusing primarily on their sex lives, De Sony concludes that the Qur'ān's treatment of prophets provides a model for imagining masculinity as open and destabilized.¹³⁷ According to De Sony, Ādam and Ḥawwā' are defined by their mutual partnership and do not have sex until after the exile from paradise;¹³⁸ Yūsuf demonstrates restraint and control over "base desires;"¹³⁹ Muḥammad's plural marriages contrast with Yūsuf's abstinence to destabilize masculine sexuality;¹⁴⁰ 'Īsā's celibacy undermines assumptions of masculinity as dependent upon an active sex life.¹⁴¹ De Sony's analysis notably excludes Ibrāhīm, whose sex life includes both a wife and concubine, and Lūt, whose representation in the Qur'ān is so centered on his condemnation of sexual intercourse between men that ḥadīth sources and

¹³⁶ De Sony, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 95.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 115.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 103.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 109.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 115.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 117.

interpretive literatures ironically name the act after him (*liwāt*).¹⁴² Apart from the question of De Soudy's choices and the inconsistency of his framework (arguing for an unstable masculinity *within* the text of the Qur'ān while relying selectively on extra-Qur'ānic sources such as tafsīr and ḥadīth literatures), De Soudy betrays a blind spot with his assertion that the Qur'ān's construction of prophethood "includes no task which could be carried out only by men."¹⁴³ Possession of a penis appears to have been a quality of all prophets, a prerequisite that is not undermined or threatened by a prophet having sex with one woman, multiple women, or no women.

Muḥammad's work in the gendered office of prophethood brings him into interaction with a system of transcendent masculine forces. As mediator between metaphysical and physical realms, Muḥammad's body is acted upon by extrahuman beings, namely Allāh and angels, all of whom are gendered masculine. To have a body, in Grosz's analysis, is to be sexually specific. In light of Grosz's observations regarding male/mind vs. female/body oppositions and her assertion, "the specificities of the masculine have always been hidden under the generality of the universal, the human,"¹⁴⁴ I argue that rendering Allāh as a mind without a body and transcendent beyond gender ironically marks Allāh with sexual specificity as masculine. With or without Arabic grammatical constraints that require Allāh to take a gendered pronoun, Allāh registers as masculine insofar as the sources privilege masculinity as generically human and do not specifically mark Allāh as

¹⁴² Ed., "Liwāt," in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

¹⁴³ De Soudy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 94.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 198.

feminine.¹⁴⁵ Between masculine Allāh, masculine angels, and masculine prophets, the event of revelation becomes bounded within a homosocial triangle and sexually specific economy of knowledge.

Contrary to De Sonny's suggestion that "one cannot be sure whether angels have genders,"¹⁴⁶ the Qur'ān's angelology relies on clearly drawn sexual difference to distinguish between genuine angels and false idols. In polemic against polytheists who worship goddesses as angels and daughters of Allāh,¹⁴⁷ the Qur'ān condemns the naming of angels with feminine names as constitutive of unbelief and the attribution of daughters to Allāh as a slight against him, since the polytheists only desire sons for themselves.¹⁴⁸ While not exactly "men," angels are sexed masculine and represented in the Qur'ān as experiencing embodiment with the forms of men.¹⁴⁹ In *sīra*/maghāzī literature, angels appear as men on the battlefield, distinguished by the whiteness of their skin and robes, the varying colors of

¹⁴⁵ In Grosz's analysis, the representation of an actor as having a mind but not a body would not relocate that actor beyond gender, but in fact affirm the actor's masculinity, given imaginaries of the mind as masculine and women as excessively corporeal and "more biological" than men. *Volatile Bodies*, 14.

¹⁴⁶ De Sonny, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 98.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 134, 137.

¹⁴⁸ The Qur'ān denounces the attribution of children, whether male or female, to Allāh as a slight against him (6:100). In its polemic against Christians, the Qur'ān also rejects the notion of Allāh begetting a son; belief in Allāh having daughters, however, is rejected in explicitly gendered terms as a particular insult. Sūra 53, also 17:40, 37:149-153, 43:16-19, 52:39.

¹⁴⁹ For example, "Our Spirit" who appears to Maryam in the form of a man of sound or well-proportioned body (*basharān sawīyān*). Qur'ān 19:17.

their turbans, and their wool helmets, to participate as soldiers on behalf of Muḥammad.¹⁵⁰ Muḥammad's cousin Zubayr ibn 'Awwām, distinguished for wearing a yellow turban in battle, narrates in Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* that angels at the battle of Badr shared his preference, wearing yellow.¹⁵¹ Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* represents Jibrīl as seen by several Companions riding a white mule with a saddle covered by brocade; these eyewitnesses mistakenly identify Jibrīl as a specific man from the community, Diḥya al-Kalbī.¹⁵² Wāqidī reports that when Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr died while carrying the Muslims' flag at Uhud, an angel in Muṣ'ab's form appeared and picked up the flag in his place. When Muḥammad addressed the angel as Muṣ'ab, the angel replied, "I am not Muṣ'ab," Muḥammad instantly recognized him as an angel."¹⁵³ The report is followed by an account of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, narrating that during battle he witnessed "a man, white, with a beautiful face, whom I did not know; later, I thought he must be an angel."¹⁵⁴ For angels to assume the form of human feminine bodies seems to be more unthinkable than their taking nonhuman animal bodies: Jibrīl

¹⁵⁰ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 39-41, 116, 200, 445. Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 87. Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Muhammad*, 303.

¹⁵¹ Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Muhammad*, 39.

¹⁵² Ibid, 461. "The very name Diḥya," Suliman Bashear writes, "which is non-Arabic, and probably of Latin/late Greek origin, has a distinctly 'angelic' ring to it." The name literally signifies "chief;" Bashear notes the appearance of the word in traditions stating that every day, 70,000 *diḥyas*, each accompanied by 70,000 angels, enter the Celestial House. Bashear also suggests that representations of Diḥya's resemblance to Jibrīl can prove useful in tracing "the existence, in the second and third centuries, of conflicting currents concerning anthropomorphism in Islam." "The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī and the Situation in Syria," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 14 (1991): 173-207.

¹⁵³ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 115-116.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

preserves his masculinity while shifting between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic embodiment, as demonstrated in Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* when he takes the form of a camel.¹⁵⁵ Khadīja, who does not see Jibrīl, also seems to masculinize Jibrīl in her test to determine whether her husband's extrahuman informant is an angel or demon. After exposing herself and inviting Muḥammad to sit in her lap, Khadīja asks whether Jibrīl is still present; Muḥammad answers that Jibrīl has left the room. By Jibrīl's proper response to naked feminine bodies, Khadīja recognizes him as a genuine angel.¹⁵⁶ Iblīs/Shayṭān additionally appears in the form of a man, even impersonating specific individuals.¹⁵⁷

These sources engage imaginaries of extrahuman beings marked as feminine in their discussions of pre-Islamic goddesses. Ma'mar reports episodes of both Abū Bakr and 'Umar insulting polytheists through directing embodied vituperations at their goddesses: Abū Bakr telling 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī, "Suck on Allāt's clitoris,"¹⁵⁸ and 'Umar responding to Abū Sufyān's question, "What shall I do with al-'Uzzā?" with the answer, "Defecate on her."¹⁵⁹ While these embodied expressions of moral disgust do not necessitate that Abū Bakr and 'Umar believe in the goddesses' existence, an altogether different representation can be found in Wāqidī's *Maghāzī*, which depicts an encounter between Khālīd bin Walīd and a fully corporeal and apparently *alive* al-'Uzzā. The

¹⁵⁵ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 135.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 107.

¹⁵⁷ Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih*, vol. I, PB 5.

¹⁵⁸ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 30-31.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 96-97.

narration depicts Khālīd destroying al-‘Uzzā’s icon in Nakhla, after which he is confronted by a naked black woman with wild hair. Khālīd kills her with his sword and reports the incident to Muḥammad, who tells him, “That was al-‘Uzzā,” adding that she despaired of no longer being worshiped.¹⁶⁰ The tradition portrays al-‘Uzzā as having an empirically observable existence and physical body (at least before Khālīd cuts that body in half), as opposed to merely being a false construct of her worshipers’ imagination. While ostensibly an actor in the metaphysical realm from which humans seek baraka, al-‘Uzzā exists entirely as an abjected outsider in relation to the divine/angelic system. The narration marks her as such with the body of a wild and unrestrained black woman, embodied in gender-coded and color-coded opposition to the angels who appear as white men in clean white robes.¹⁶¹ Al-‘Uzzā is rendered simultaneously more corporeal and yet less “real” than Allāh, who does not appear with an observable body, at least not within these literatures, enacting the binary of male/mind vs. female/body as distinct and unequal opposites that Grosz examines in *Volatile Bodies*. Al-‘Uzzā’s unmanageable corporeality invokes the threatening “metaphorics of uncontrollability” that Grosz observes in imaginaries of menstruation: “the association of femininity with contagion and disorder, the undecidability of the limits of the female body.”¹⁶² For her exposed and out-of-control body, al-‘Uzzā’s self-mourning also seems to resonate with contemporary anxieties regarding women’s public funeral

¹⁶⁰ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 429.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. Wāqidī provides a short chain of ‘Abdullah b. Yazīd < Sa’īd ibn ‘Amr al-Hudhalī. Ibn Hishām’s account does not include an isnād. Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 565.

¹⁶² Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 203.

lamentations in Kūfa.¹⁶³ The gendered moral disgust with which the sources judge polytheism becomes intensified with the presence of al-‘Uzzā not as an abstract conceptual problem, but as a naked and disordered feminine body, a monster out of bounds.

The nexus of women’s corporeality and the demonic is further articulated in Ibn Ishāq’s account of a temple in Yemen, which emerges in significantly different iterations between the recensions of Ibn Hishām and Ibn Bukayr. Both recensions portray a temple maintained for the worship of a shayṭān who deceived people with oracles and demanded sacrifices. The Ibn Hishām version narrates that the king gave two rabbis permission to destroy the temple; prior to the temple’s destruction, the rabbis commanded a black dog to come out of the temple and then killed it.¹⁶⁴ The Ibn Bukayr version describes a golden temple at which the shayṭān was presented with offerings of animal sacrifice that were performed on a menstruous garment: the animal’s throat would be cut on the garment, allowing the garment to absorb its blood, at which point the shayṭān would come to receive the doubly blood-soaked garment and provide oracles. In this version, the Jews convinced the king to accept their faith if they could drive out the shayṭān. They then recited divine names until the shayṭān emerged and then fell into the sea.¹⁶⁵ Menstrual blood figures powerfully in Kristeva’s third category of abjection, the markers of sexual difference.¹⁶⁶ In contrast to Mālik ibn Sinān’s consumption of blood from the masculine prophetic body granting him exemption from hellfire, this narration presents menstrual blood as adding to

¹⁶³ Leor Halevi, *Muhammad’s Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 127-135.

¹⁶⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 2, 12-13.

¹⁶⁶ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 71.

the horror of shayṭān worship. Even as the two recensions of Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra* depart from one another in their treatments of this story, they share a compelling overlap. The Ibn Hishām version signifies the shayṭān with the presence of a black dog, while the Ibn Bukayr version does not describe the precise form in which the shayṭān appears, but renders the shayṭān an eater of menstrual blood. The signification achieved in one version of the Yemeni temple episode with a shayṭānic black dog is achieved in the other through association with women's corporeal flows.

Muḥammad's encounters with other human beings in paradise, limited to pre-Islamic prophets, are also entirely homosocial; he does not, for example, interact with Maryam or other esteemed women from sacred history. Some representations of women in the sources may complicate the importance of gender to this transcendent economy, though such representations may simultaneously enforce masculine-exclusive prophethood. Most famously, the Qur'ān's depiction of Maryam, who receives divine communication and advanced knowledge of future events and whose body becomes a site of miraculous extrahuman modification, seems to challenge the male monopoly on prophethood. However, for Maryam to ostensibly meet all of the qualifications of prophethood without being named as a prophet also enforces the male-sexing of prophetic bodies more explicitly than if she had not been mentioned at all. Ambiguities and silences in the Qur'ān's discussion of Maryam represent prophethood as so entrenched in sexual specificity that her own prophetic potential is too radically unthinkable to be considered or denied.

A narration within *sīra*/maghāzī works that also serves to simultaneously challenge and affirm the masculine gendering of prophethood appears with 'Ātika bint 'Abd al-

Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad's aunt, who experiences a dream that Muḥammad's opponent mocks as a woman's claim to prophecy. The episode is reported by both Wāqidī and Ibn Ishāq, neither providing a complete chain of transmitters: Wāqidī prefaces the narration simply with "They say," while Ibn Ishāq cites an unnamed "person above suspicion" who transmitted the report to him with an isnād of 'Ikrima < Ibn 'Abbās and Yazīd bin Rūmān < 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr.¹⁶⁷ In this tradition, 'Ātika dreams of a rider on a camel shouting warnings and then throwing a rock that shatters into numerous pieces, with every home in Mecca damaged by a fragment. For fear of what the dream might foretell, she seeks out her brother 'Abbās and confides in him regarding the dream's contents. 'Abbās in turn tells his friend Walīd ibn 'Utba, and soon word of the dream begins to spread throughout Mecca. Muḥammad's opponent Abū Jahl confronts 'Abbās with the charge that the descendants of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib are not satisfied with only their men prophesying, but now their women prophesy as well.¹⁶⁸ 'Ātika's dream does not itself run counter to the prevailing gender logic of the sources, as other episodes report of women having similar experiences.¹⁶⁹ Women soothsayers and visionaries seem to have been part of the pre-Islamic landscape; Ibn Bukayr's recension of Ibn Ishāq even reports that prior to Muḥammad's prophethood, Khadīja used to hire an old woman of Mecca to heal her husband when he suffered from the

¹⁶⁷ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 290.

¹⁶⁸ J.M.B. Jones, "Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī: The Dream of 'Ātika and the Raid to Nakhla in Relation to the Charge of Plagiarism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 22, No. 1/3 (1959): 41-51.

¹⁶⁹ Sarah Mirza, "Dreaming the Truth in the Sīra of Ibn Hishām," in *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, ed. Özgen Felek and Alxeander D. Knysh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012): 15-30.

evil eye.¹⁷⁰ However, mockery of 'Ātika as a supposed prophet sets her outside this mode of knowledge, identified with a biblical roster that appears to have been regarded as entirely comprised of men. Abū Jahl's specific use of the verb *naba'a* links 'Ātika's dream to Muḥammad's mission with the suggestion that for this woman to claim prophetic activity embarrasses her nephew's claim and exposes a radical arrogance in the Banū Muṭṭalib.¹⁷¹

The sources present a universe of extrahuman forces and interventions in which a masculine Allāh speaks to masculine prophets through masculine angels, who sometimes appear as organized and well-dressed white men to join in battle against polytheists who worship goddesses that take the form of naked, uncontrollable, disruptive black women. Polymorphic angels can take the forms of animals but not women. Maryam and other women who receive extrahuman communication that could distinguish men as prophets remain excluded from that category. Polytheism is linked to the demonic, which is in turn linked to the pollutions of animality and menstrual blood. These narratives participate in a construction of prophethood that requires the inscription of sex on Muḥammad's body. Contrary to De Soudy's assertion, for one prophet to marry multiple women while another remains celibate does not alone destabilize the operational logic concerning bodies and sexual specificities in which these sources render feminine prophethood unintelligible.

Muḥammad's prophetic masculinity precedes his materialization as a body in the world. Challenging the argument furthered by Kathryn M. Kueny's work on the discursive construction of maternity in Muslim traditions, the Qur'ān's affirmation of a "two-seed"

¹⁷⁰ A. Guillaume, *New Light on the Life of Muhammad* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960), 7-8.

¹⁷¹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 290-291.

model of human reproduction, in which women and men both produce “semen” that contributes equally to the material of the fetus, is not immediately self-evident.¹⁷² Though one reference describes the semen (*nutfa*) that produces a fetus in the womb as “mixed,” the text of the Qur’ān consistently represents human reproduction as derived singularly from a man’s deposit in the womb, which Allāh then molds through various stages.¹⁷³

The capacity for prophethood appears in the Qur’ān to be significantly a patrilineal transmission, an inheritance between fathers and sons. Prophets can have unrighteous sons, as Nūḥ has an unnamed son who dies in the flood. Other than Adam’s fratricidal son Qābil, however, no prophet in the Qur’ān has a named son who is not designated as a prophet himself: Ibrāhīm has two prophetic sons and is also the uncle of Lūṭ, Ibrāhīm’s son Ishāq is the father of Yakūb and the subsequent line of Israelite prophets, including Dāwūd, his son Sulaymān, and descendent ‘Isa. In contrast, the only mention of a prophet’s daughter appears in the story of Lūṭ, who offers his daughters to men as an alternative to their expressed desire for sex with other men.¹⁷⁴ Lūṭ’s daughters are not named or represented as holding any agency of their own; their appearance in the narrative serves only to illumine the characters of the men to whom their bodies have been offered.

In its treatment of Muḥammad’s genealogy and conception, Ibn Ishāq’s *Sīra* constructs Muḥammad’s body as chiefly a product of men, several of whom were prophets themselves. The *Sīra* presents the lineage of Muḥammad’s father ‘Abd Allāh through

¹⁷² Kathryn M. Kueny, *Conceiving Identities: Maternity in Medieval Muslim Discourse and Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013).

¹⁷³ Qur’ān 16:4, 18:37, 22:5, 23:13-14, 35:11, 36:77, 40:67, 53:46, 75:37, 76:2, 80:19.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 11:78, 15:71.

Ibrāhīm to Adam on patrilineal terms, naming all of his male ancestors (while also naming the mother of Ismā'il's sons as Ra'la bint Muḏāḏ bin 'Amr al-Jurhumī, who herself is assigned a genealogy of male ancestors).¹⁷⁵ The *Sīra* provides a considerably shorter treatment of Muḥammad's matrilineal descent, listing his mother Āmina, her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and asserts that Muḥammad was endowed with superior lineage on both sides.¹⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Muḥammad's paternal lineage is prioritized. This resonates with Ibn Ishāq's treatment of Muḥammad's conception, in which Muḥammad materializes as a direct transmission of light from his father to his mother. Prior to conception, a woman observes this light as a "white blaze" or blaze "like the blaze of a horse" shining between 'Abd Allāh's eyes, and offers 'Abd Allāh sexual intercourse. 'Abd Allāh refrains, marries Muḥammad's mother Āmina and consummates with her, and then encounters the woman again. This time, however, the woman has no interest in 'Abd Allāh, noting that the white blaze that she had observed between his eyes was now gone, and that his wife must have conceived the anticipated prophet. The *Sīra* also reports that according to "popular stories," this light emanated from Āmina's body during her pregnancy, allowing her to see castles in Syria. The "other woman" in this narration, recalling the light that had shone between 'Abd Allāh's eyes, states, "I invited him hoping that that would be in me."¹⁷⁷ In whatever capacity Muḥammad's mother contributes to his materialization (that is, whether his conception is imagined within a one-seed or two-seed model), her womb does not actively generate the light that shines from it,

¹⁷⁵ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 3-4.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 68.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 68-69.

but rather provides a nesting place for the light from Muḥammad's father. Muḥammad-as-light shines from within Āmina's womb as evidence of an exceptional deposit from outside, a transmission from 'Abd Allāh's body to hers through the vehicle of his seminal fluid.

The association of prophethood with sonship drives David S. Powers's contentious analysis of Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab, who had been married to his adopted son Zayd, and the Qur'ān's nullification of adoption which establishes her as a legal wife for Muḥammad.¹⁷⁸ Within a singular sūra, the Qur'ān prohibits adoption, settles the question of Muḥammad marrying Zayd's wife, and makes the declaration, "Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Seal of the Prophets" (*khātam al-nabīyīn*), while the verses regarding Zayd and the Seal of Prophets specifically appear within the same five-verse sequence.¹⁷⁹ Within 33:40, which provides the Qur'ān's only reference to the Seal, the Qur'ān articulates a relationship between Muḥammad's conclusion of prophethood and his lack of sons who lived to maturity. Muḥammad inherited the capacity for prophethood through his descent from Ibrāhīm, but could not transfer that capacity to his own heirs. The inheritance of prophethood in this construction would be at once exclusively between fathers and sons but not exclusively biological, as Muḥammad's adopted son threatens the finality of prophethood in ways that Muḥammad's biological daughter cannot. The conclusion of prophethood is established with a repudiation of Zayd as Muḥammad's adopted son, but not brought into question by the survival of Muḥammad's daughter

¹⁷⁸ David S. Powers, *Muhammad is Not the Father of Any of Your Men: The Making of the Last Prophet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹⁷⁹ Adoption verses: 33:4-5; Zayd and Zaynab: 33:35-40; Seal of Prophets: 33:40.

Fāṭima. Like the daughters of Lūṭ, and unlike Zayd, Fāṭima is not named or considered to have any relation to her father's vocation as prophet.

Beyond Muḥammad's light and patrilineal inheritance, the gendering of prophetic bodies becomes more explicitly corporeal in representations of Muḥammad's marked penis as a signifier of his mission. Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* reports the legend of Roman emperor Heraclius determining through astrological calculations that an anticipated "king of the circumcised" had arrived. Heraclius's courtiers advise him that only Jews practice circumcision, and that he can therefore eliminate the king of the circumcised by simply ordering the execution of all Jews in his cities. After hearing of Muḥammad's emergence in Arabia, Heraclius orders his courtiers to find out whether Muḥammad had been circumcised. His courtiers report, "They have looked, and he is circumcised," and recognize that Muḥammad is indeed the anticipated king.¹⁸⁰ Muḥammad's status as circumcised appears to be confirmed by visual inspection—"They looked" (*naẓarū*)—rather than the assertion that Jews were not the only people to perform circumcision, but that they shared this practice with Arabs.¹⁸¹ The *Sīra* presents a version of this tradition in which Heraclius attains knowledge of the anticipated king through a dream, rather than astrological reading. An Arab man is later brought to Heraclius's court, claiming that a prophet has emerged from among his people. Heraclius orders the man to be stripped naked, revealing the man to be circumcised. Having been shown that the Arabs practice circumcision, Heraclius commands his officials to locate the coming prophet among them.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 43.

¹⁸¹ Kister, "...And He Was Born Circumcised," 10-30.

¹⁸² Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 654-655.

In addition to the details of his anatomy, Muḥammad's naked masculine body demonstrates his prophetic station through the protection of his nakedness from observation. The *Sīra* reports an episode from Muḥammad's childhood in which, as he carries stones while in a state of bodily exposure, Muḥammad is slapped by an "unseen figure" and told to cover himself.¹⁸³ Narrations of Muḥammad's funeral preparations also reflect concerns over the exposure of his nakedness. One report from the *Sīra* portrays 'Alī as performing the ritual washing of Muḥammad's body, adding clarification that 'Alī did not remove Muḥammad's clothing, but instead used it to wash Muḥammad's body without direct contact between the body and his own hand.¹⁸⁴ In another narration, 'Ā'isha recalls disagreement among the Companions as to whether or not Muḥammad's clothing should be removed for his washing. She reports that as they argued, Allāh caused them all to fall deep asleep, after which the voice of an unidentified being told them to keep Muḥammad fully clothed as they washed his body—which they achieved by rubbing Muḥammad's body with his clothing, not their hands.¹⁸⁵ One recension of the *Sīra* quotes 'Ā'isha as saying, "Had I known at the beginning of my affair what I knew at the end of it, none but his wives would have washed him."¹⁸⁶ This cryptic statement leaves unresolved ambiguities regarding the washers' degree of encounter with Muḥammad's corpse and what had changed in 'Ā'isha's knowledge.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 81.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 687-688.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 688.

In Wāqidī's *Maghāzī*, Muḥammad's modesty remains guarded even against his wives: 'Ā'isha states that she had only seen Muḥammad naked once, when his garment fell as he rose to meet Zayd, and does not clarify whether she had seen Muḥammad from the front or back.¹⁸⁷ As Muḥammad's body emerges in these sources' narrations as a heterogeneous assemblage of bits and pieces, parts and by-products, that allow or deny linkages to other bodies, 'Ā'isha and 'Alī both stand as gatekeepers between Muḥammad's sexed body and communal memory, denying access to his nakedness. The irony of these narrations is that while Muḥammad's private parts are shielded from becoming public parts that might be subjected to a collective textual gaze, they simultaneously produce his genitals in their very acts of denial as objects of analysis and proofs of his unique status.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have examined the Qur'ān and early sources of *sīra/maghāzī* literature, seeking the particular imaginary of Muḥammad's body to which these literatures contribute. Between the Qur'ān, which is presented as divine revelation to Muḥammad and his community, and the *sīra/maghāzī* literatures, which situate Muḥammad's life as a definitive historical event, multiple possibilities for imagining Muḥammad emerge. Muḥammad's corporeality in these sources remains unfixed; the body has not yet organized itself or its powers.

¹⁸⁷ Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 278, 550.

The Qur'ān participates in the sexing of Muḥammad's body, presenting him as a man in sexual relationships with women and located within the class of human beings marked as prophets—a class comprised entirely of men who receive revelations from angels whose masculinity is upheld as an article of faith, and who communicate on behalf of a masculinized Allāh. Otherwise, the Qur'ān says virtually nothing on Muḥammad as a body in the world. Within the *sīra*/*maghāzī* genre, these sources differ in the representations that they produce. Ma'mar's *Maghāzī*, in comparison to the works of Ibn Ishāq and Wāqidī, presents a prophetic body that is essentially unspectacular. Companions desire this body's fluids and by-products, but Ma'mar does not present a self-evident claim that these substances are endowed with special powers. By all appearances, Ma'mar's depiction of Muḥammad preserves his body as subject to natural processes of decay. In contrast, Ibn Ishāq and Wāqidī display a greater investment in Muḥammad's flesh as a point of contact with extrahuman powers, though not without possible cracks and uncertainties that could destabilize the powers of that flesh.

Muḥammad emerges from his textual production within these sources as a fragmented body, an assemblage of disjecta that are not capable of acting together in their significations. Muḥammad's saliva can heal the sick and perform a variety of wonders, and his blood can save its consumer from hellfire; other fluids and products, however, are denied or left unremembered, their powers unexamined. Despite their extraordinary properties, the abundance of Muḥammad's saliva and blood within his own body does not preserve his life. He dies, the fluids dry up, and some Companions deny his death while others expect that the corpse will rot. A hint is provided that Muḥammad's postmortem condition differs from that of normal corpses, but the distinction is not articulated. The

prophetic body remains unpredictable. Muḥammad preexists his body as a masculine light that finds transmission from patriarch to patriarch and glows between his father's eyes until his father deposits it into his mother, from whose womb its brilliance illuminates castles in distant Syria. Upon his fully corporealized reemergence from her body, however, Muḥammad's heart contains an undesirable portion, coded black and associated with Shayṭān, that requires extraction by angels who cut open his torso and perform invasive surgery upon his heart. Muḥammad's body reveals its ambiguity and possible abjection (considering, as Kristeva argues, that abjection itself is ambiguity¹⁸⁸) in this detachable part of him, the expulsion of which reconstitutes Muḥammad's corporeality as more true to his prophetic self. Insofar as it originates within his body and its separation from him cannot be absolute, the black spot appears as the height of abjection: simultaneously *ḥazz al-Shayṭān* and *ḥazz Muḥammad*, the black spot presents the threat of an extreme other within Muḥammad's corporeal boundaries. The unasked question of what a Companion should do if s/he happens to stumble upon the remnants of this material ambiguity—that is, whether to avoid and perhaps even destroy the rejected scrap of flesh as demonic waste or covet and preserve it as a trace of Muḥammad's bodily presence—reveals the inability of the prophetic body, like all bodies according to Kristeva, to protect its identity as such, its system, and the boundaries on which the system depends.

Muḥammad's body becomes capable of de-abjection in its power to conduct baraka and display greater coherence as a prophetic body, both of which undergo elaboration in ḥadīth sources: the former in an expansion of prophetic body products' capacity to enable flows of baraka between Muḥammad and his Companions, including through his otherwise

¹⁸⁸ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 9-10.

abjected by-products; the latter, in edits of Muḥammad's body that include, among other details, the erasure of the black spot from his textual record. Reading Muḥammad's body through the Deleuzo-Guattarian questions of what this body can *do*, rather than what it *is*, and how it joins or severs relations with other bodies (perhaps to merge together into a greater body) calls attention to the consequences of his body as produced within different literary genres. Works in the *sīra*/*maghāzī* genre, presenting Muḥammad's life as an event in history, enable particular relations between his and other bodies while generally sustaining focus on Muḥammad as an individual subject. Ḥadīth collections, as future chapters demonstrate, present Muḥammad's life as a collection of revealed knowledges, legal precedents, decontextualized and isolated events, and relations with his community of Companions. In these relations, the ḥadīth collections offer new possibilities for Muḥammad's body to serve as a conduit through which *baraka* flows through him to his Companions. While the *sīra*/*maghāzī* sources afford Muḥammad a particular degree of extended corporeality, ḥadīth sources participate in their own redrawing of the prophetic body, its limits and capacities for connecting with other bodies.

2. A Lump Formed and Unformed: Early Ḥadīth Collections

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the Qur'ān and early works of sīra/maghāzī literature for the ways in which their representations of Muḥammad could enable or prohibit an extension of his corporeality into other bodies, namely those of his Companions, as a larger network of baraka transmissions. Special attention was paid to the question of Muḥammad's relationship to abjection for its salience to his body's potential for linking to other bodies. Finally, the chapter examined ways in which differently gendered bodies achieve different possibilities for connection with the prophetic body. This chapter follows the previous chapter's line of inquiry, seeking to examine ways in which the significant ḥadīth collections of the early 9th century CE alternately expand and constrict the possibilities for extended prophetic corporeality offered in the Qur'ān and sīra/maghāzī works.

The earliest extant ḥadīth collection, the *Muwāṭṭa'* of Imām Mālik ibn Anas (d. 796), operates almost entirely as a collection of legal and ritual precedents, displaying virtually no investment in special qualities of Muḥammad's body.¹⁸⁹ However, in the *Muwāṭṭa'*'s chapter, "the Attributes of the Prophet, Allāh Bless Him and Give Him Peace," Mālik provides a report in which the Companion Anas ibn Mālik gives a short description of

¹⁸⁹ In regard to the dating of Mālik's *Muwāṭṭa'*: see Wael B. Hallaq, "On Dating Malik's *Muwatta*," *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law*, vol. 1 (2002): 47-65.

Muḥammad that includes details of his physical appearance. Anas states that Muḥammad was neither too tall, nor too short; neither too white, nor too dark; his hair was neither excessively curly nor lank; Allāh commissioned his prophethood at the age of forty; he spent a decade in Mecca, followed by a decade in Medina; Allāh caused him to die at the age of sixty; and there were less than twenty white hairs on his head or in his beard.¹⁹⁰ Variations of this tradition, attributed to Anas and other Companions, appear throughout the ḥadīth collections discussed in this chapter.¹⁹¹ Some versions attributed to ‘Alī conclude with his recollection, “The likes of him had not been seen before him or since,”¹⁹² while Abū Hurayra and Anas variants make it even more personal: “I have not seen his likeness since.”¹⁹³

Muḥammad’s body does not immediately appear in this tradition as one whose internal systems and processes facilitate flows of baraka between metaphysical and physical dimensions. Nonetheless, the prophetic body does become a proof in its perfect proportion and balance, free from the negative character judgments that contemporary physiognomy would relate to various bodily excesses.¹⁹⁴ Descriptions of Muḥammad in

¹⁹⁰ Mālik ibn Anas, *Al-Muwattā* (IslamWeb), #1641.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=19&pid=2353.

¹⁹¹ A number of versions appear together in Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*, ed. Muhammed Abd al-Qader ‘Ata (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2012), Vol. 1, 316-7.

¹⁹² ‘Alī: “*Lam ara mithlahu qablahu wa lā ba’dahu...*” Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shayba fī al-Aḥādīth wa’l-Āthār* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2005), #31796, 31798. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #947.

¹⁹³ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 316-7.

¹⁹⁴ Robert Hoyland, “The Islamic Background to Polemon’s Treatise,” in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon’s Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, ed. Simon Swain, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 227-280.

these accounts, calling attention to his moderation of bodily proportions, hair texture, body hair, and skin color (in particular, variants describing his skin as white mixed with red¹⁹⁵) share considerable overlap with Polemon's description of "the man who loves knowledge" in his *Physiognomy*, which appeared in Arabic as a result of the 'Abbāsīd translation movement.¹⁹⁶

In addition to authorizing Muḥammad himself, the account of his bodily details also authorizes the eyewitness reporter as one who had personally encountered the prophetic body. Narrating Muḥammad's body to those who had not seen it with their own eyes, Anas, 'Alī, and Abū Hurayra themselves become extensions of prophetic corporeality, the means by which Muḥammad achieves a bridge to other bodies. As these authorized reporters of the prophetic body, transmit their knowledge to a new generation of students, Muḥammad becomes a flow through which these Companions also extend their own corporeality. In the linkages achieved by their narrations of Muḥammad's appearance, the prophetic body becomes a collectivity.

These ḥadīth compilations, offering an immense corpus in comparison to the sources of the previous chapter, often reflect intensified investments in prophetic corporeality in comparison to the sīra/maghāzī texts. In the case of Muḥammad's sweat, for example, these ḥadīth sources depict prophetic perspiration not only as a symptom of revelation, but also as an object of the Companions' desire, a source of both sensory pleasure and baraka. Such narratives seemingly de-abject Muḥammad's body,

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #947. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #31796, 31798.

¹⁹⁶ Robert Hoyland, "A New Edition and Translation of the Leiden Polemon," in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, ed. Simon Swain, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 330-463.

reconstructing prophetic corporeality as incapable of provoking offense or disgust among others. However, within this expanded body of texts, ambiguities persist that undermine a crystallized, systematic theory of the prophetic body and its relationship to the material transmission of baraka. In the matter of Muḥammad's postmortem condition, for example, conflicting narrations in these sources assert both that the bodies of prophets cannot decay and that Muḥammad's death was confirmed by gruesome evidence of his corpse's decomposition. While numerous traditions present Muḥammad's body as a signifier of his exceptional nature, other voices within the same sources render the prophetic body to be rather mundane. When asked about Muḥammad's housework, 'Ā'isha answers, "He was a human like humans; he removed lice from his garments" (*Kāna basharān min al-bashr; yaflī thawbahu*).¹⁹⁷ While movement within the developing ḥadīth corpus moves prophetic corporeality in a particular direction, Muḥammad's body remains a site of assemblage formed by the intersection and collision of multiple bodies and forces.

I argue that between the sources of the previous chapter and these early ḥadīth collections, Muḥammad's body undergoes a dramatic expansion of powers and possibilities for transmitting baraka into other bodies, thus enabling intensified linkages between Muḥammad and his Companions. However, I demonstrate that this movement remains inhibited by narrations that represent Muḥammad's body as one that remains susceptible

¹⁹⁷ 'Ā'isha goes on to say that Muḥammad milked his goats and served himself. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #26724. While 'Ā'isha's narration of lice removal depicts Muḥammad's body as one subject to typical human phenomena, this representation of a lice-ridden prophetic body does not hold the same consequences for all readers. "In contrast to popular opinion today," explains Ian C. Beavis, lice in the ancient Mediterranean milieu "were not regarded as having any particular association with uncleanness: infestation by them was considered as a perfectly normal and inevitable, if undesirable, fact of life in all sections of society." *Insects and other Invertebrates in Classical Antiquity* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1988). 112.

to abjection and disgust. Finally, I call attention to the divergences in representations of Muḥammad's body as offered by different Companions, evidenced particularly in comparison of narrations attributed to 'Ā'isha and Anas, which destabilize the notion of a singular construction of the prophetic body shared by all of its reporters.

Sources

This chapter draws from ḥadīth collections in the first half of the 9th century CE, corresponding roughly to the early 3rd century AH. These sources are organized in the subgenres of *musnad* and *muṣannaf*; the former providing ḥadīths arranged by the Companions to whom they are attributed, the latter arranging ḥadīths by topic. In different ways, these subgenres and their internal structures express and further contribute toward the Companions' collective authorization as reporters. Scott C. Lucas argues that the utilization of Companions as ḥadīth reporters regardless of their positions in intra-Companion conflicts—as evidenced powerfully in Ibn Ḥanbal's massive *Musnad*—contributed forcefully toward resolution of intra-Companion conflict as an epistemological crisis.¹⁹⁸ The *muṣannaf* collections, organized by topic rather than narrator, operate on the assumption of the Companions' collective probity and similarly contribute to its acceptance. The *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba includes a section devoted to the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of various prophets and Companions, similar to those found in the later collections of Bukhārī and Muslim. Lucas explains that the *faḍā'il* chapters, praising Companions who had actively opposed each other in the power struggles of the early community, serve to

¹⁹⁸ Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 19-20.

smooth over the intra-Companion conflicts and construct the “Companions” as a united category in which all members possess authority as reporters.¹⁹⁹

In addition to these ḥadīth sources, the following discussion includes the earliest extant biographical dictionary, the *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* of Ibn Sa’d (d.845). Organized as a chronological and geographically arranged compilation of traditionists and other prominent historical figures, the *Ṭabaqāt* begins with a two-volume collection of ḥadīths concerning Muḥammad. The traditions are organized by topic; those pertaining to specific historical events are arranged chronologically, presenting Muḥammad’s life in a *sīra*-styled narrative. The *Ṭabaqāt*’s treatment of Muḥammad could therefore be regarded as a liminal text between the genres of *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth collection and also between the networks that produced them. Ibn Sa’d’s intellectual genealogy places him as an heir to the writers of *sīra*/maghāzī (his primary teacher was Wāqidī), though he was also a ḥadīth partisan, and his immense biographical dictionary serves the ideological and scholarly interests of ḥadīth transmitter networks in delineating generations and cataloguing reporters. Along with the Companions’ utilization as ḥadīth transmitters and the devotion of chapters extolling their merits, Lucas regards the biographical collection, exemplified in Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt*, as a significant means by which ḥadīth scholars reconciled their methodological investments in the Companions to the history of Companions opposing one another in politics and even the battlefield.²⁰⁰

Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt* also appears as a liminal artifact for its particular constructions of Muḥammad’s body. The *Ṭabaqāt*’s treatment offers a prophetic body that is

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

simultaneously more transcendent and more abjected than what is found in the *sīra*/maghāzī works. Hovering between the depictions of Muḥammad characterized by Ma'mar and those in the ḥadīth collections, Ibn Sa'd's liminal text produces a prophetic body that excels the Muḥammad of other sources in its capacity for transmitting baraka and extending his corporeality into and through other bodies, but also one that remains more vulnerable to becoming an undesirable body through typical human experiences of filth and decay. The *Ṭabaqāt* could stand between the genres of *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth collection in terms of its representations of the prophetic body and its potential for producing or overcoming abjection. Muḥammad's body, as assembled by a multiplicity of voices in the *Ṭabaqāt* and these sources at large, remains significantly unstable in regard to its powers and limits.

Bodily Products

The ḥadīth collections of the early 9th century CE elaborate upon the comparatively bare treatments of Muḥammad's body products in the *sīra*/maghāzī literatures. Substances such as Muḥammad's digestive waste, while ignored in *sīra*/maghāzī works, receive attention in the ḥadīth sources as representing possible evidences of Muḥammad's divine favor and even as resources of baraka for those who encounter it. However, the intensified investments in Muḥammad's bodily by-products and their relationship to Muḥammad's capacity for abjection do not shift unilaterally in these sources. Rather, the literatures examined here produce points of tension regarding the properties of substances that have been ejected from Muḥammad's body.

The powers of Muḥammad's saliva, the most prolific of his baraka-transmitting bodily substances in the *sīra*/maghāzī sources, are granted further attention in the ḥadīth collections. In addition to the ability of Muḥammad's saliva to heal injuries and produce water miracles, the ḥadīth sources also report his saliva transmitting baraka to newborn boys. Several narrations represent Muḥammad using dates as vehicles to transfer his saliva to male infants. The reports associate (but do not exactly conflate) this act with his practice of *taḥnīk*, the rubbing of a baby boy's palate with a date by his father.²⁰¹ Though Muḥammad was "not the father of any of your men," as the Qur'ān reports,²⁰² he performed the patriarchal act of *taḥnīk* and saliva transferral for male infants in his community. These practices do not appear in the *sīra*/maghāzī works but can be found in ḥadīth collections. Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* and Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf* include accounts, attributed to Anas, of his mother Umm Sulaym or stepfather 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Ṭalḥa bringing their newborn son to Muḥammad; longer versions of this narration depict Umm Sulaym losing a baby, then becoming pregnant again after Muḥammad prays for Allāh to send baraka to her and her husband (*Allāhumma bārik lahumā*). When she gives birth, Muḥammad performs *taḥnīk* for the boy and names him 'Abd Allāh.²⁰³ Ibn Abī Shayba also reports Muḥammad naming Abū Mūsa's boy Ibrāhīm and giving him *taḥnīk*, and presents 'Ā'isha describing *taḥnīk* as a regular prophetic practice.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Avner Gil'adi, "Some Notes on *Taḥnīk* in Medieval Islam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47 (1988): 175-9.

²⁰² Qur'ān 33:40.

²⁰³ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 8, 318-9. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #23471. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #12826, 13242.

²⁰⁴ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #23473, 23474.

In Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* and Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaḥ*, Asmā' bint Abī Bakr narrates that she brought her infant son, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, to Muḥammad, who asked for a date, chewed it, and then spit into the baby's mouth. Asmā' thus narrates, "The first thing that entered his stomach was the saliva of the Messenger of Allāh." Muḥammad then performed *taḥnīk* with the date, prayed for the baby, and gave him baraka or literally "did baraka on him" (*bāraka 'alayhi*).²⁰⁵ In the case of Ibn al-Zubayr, Muḥammad offering his saliva as a baby's first food forges a connection between the prophetic body and a figure who would later become controversial. Amidst the turmoil and division that characterized the community after Muḥammad's death, Ibn al-Zubayr appeared repeatedly as a rebel against the caliphate—first siding with his aunt 'Ā'isha and father al-Zubayr against his father's cousin 'Alī, then with 'Alī's son Ḥusayn against Yazīd, and after Ḥusayn's death launching his own countercaliphate.²⁰⁶

In his discussion of *taḥnīk* and saliva transferral, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi notes the ideological stakes in narrations of who does or does not receive prophetic saliva. Specifically, Amir-Moezzi observes a curious absence of 'Alī and his sons in these narrations from Sunnī sources. For Muḥammad to have favored Companions in this patriarchal ritual while neglecting males of his own family, Amir-Moezzi argues, suggests that such narrations reflect an anti-'Alid project to authorize males outside the prophetic household.²⁰⁷ Amir-Moezzi rightfully points to the power of *taḥnīk* and saliva transferral

²⁰⁵ Ibid, #36611. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #27477.

²⁰⁶ H.A.R. Gibb, "'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr," in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

²⁰⁷ Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Belief and Practices* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2011), 38-39.

traditions to privilege or marginalize bodies in their relation to prophetic corporeal flows. However, the exclusion of ‘Alī and his sons from prophetic saliva transmission is not as absolute as Amir-Moezzi suggests, as Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* reports Muḥammad protecting ‘Alī’s son Ḥasan from afterlife punishments through mouth-to-mouth contact. Noteworthy for its potential political consequences, the witness who reports Ḥasan’s prophetic favor is none other than ‘Alī’s opponent:

Mu’āwiya said, “I saw the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, sucking the tongue (or Mu’āwiya said, “the lips”) of Ḥasan bin ‘Alī, blessings of Allāh on him, as whoever had his tongue or his lips sucked by the Messenger of Allāh would not have torment.”²⁰⁸

‘Alī also receives prophetic saliva, as Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* and both *Muṣannaf* collections report Muḥammad spitting into his infected eye. The *Muṣannaf* narrations connect the incident with Muḥammad handing his flag to ‘Alī on the day of the battle at Khaybar, and Muḥammad naming ‘Alī as one who is loved by, and loves, Allāh and Muḥammad. In Ibn Abī Shayba’s chapter on the excellences (*faḍā’il*) of ‘Alī, ‘Alī rejects the duties of flagbearer on the grounds that he cannot see anything; Muḥammad then spits into ‘Alī’s eyes and prays for ‘Alī to be protected from heat and cold. ‘Alī later narrates that he was not affected by heat or cold after that day.²⁰⁹ In the *Musnad*, ‘Alī states that he never experienced eye infection after Muḥammad spat into his eye.²¹⁰

Beyond the capacity of prophetic saliva to transmit baraka through direct contact, as in Muḥammad spitting into mouths or eyes, Muḥammad’s saliva also enables an extended

²⁰⁸ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #16972.

²⁰⁹ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #32071, 36872.

²¹⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #579.

prophetic corporeality through its potential to permanently alter the condition of water sources with which it makes contact. In the *Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Sa'd devotes an entire section to listing wells from which Muḥammad drank. All seventeen reports in this section were transmitted to Ibn Sa'd from his teacher, Wāqidi.²¹¹ Adding to the significance of Muḥammad having drunk *from* the wells are details of his adding material *to* them, namely water that had been in contact with his body or produced within it, which apparently alters the well for perpetuity. Some reports in this section add details of Muḥammad praising a particular well's water for its sweetness, performing ablutions with its water, or pouring his ablution water and/or saliva into a bucket and lowering the bucket into the well. One narration, attributed to Anas, presents Muḥammad's saliva as causing Bir Ghars, which had previously dried up, to overflow with water.²¹² Another report, attributed to Sahl ibn Sa'd, narrates that Muḥammad blessed Bir Buḍā'a with his ablution water and saliva, and then prescribed the well's water as medicine for the sick; the report notes its success for treating patients.²¹³ The commingling of Muḥammad's materiality with the water of a well transforms the well into a point of convergence between Muḥammad's body and the bodies not only of his Companions who drink from it, but also those of future generations after Muḥammad's death. For Anas to assert that Muḥammad "drank from this well of ours,"²¹⁴ given the contagious energies and forces that flow from within Muḥammad's body,

²¹¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 390-393.

²¹² Ibid, 391.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 392.

presents Anas's well (and those drinking from it, including of course Anas himself) as a linkage to Muḥammad that can outlast the life of the prophetic body.

Umm Sulaym and her son, prominent reporters of Muḥammad's saliva as a mode of contacting his baraka, appear at the center of another tradition that locates baraka in contact with Muḥammad's lips. The tradition, appearing in the *Ṭabaqāt's* entry on Umm Sulaym via two reports that share in their transmission from Anas to his grandson al-Barā', presents Muḥammad drinking from a waterskin that he found hanging in Umm Sulaym's house. Umm Sulaym then cuts out the waterskin's mouth and keeps it.²¹⁵ Like Anas's well from which Muḥammad drank, the waterskin mouth in Umm Sulaym's house offers a trace of the prophetic mouth and access to the baraka that passed through it.

In representations of the end of Muḥammad's life, Companions' encounters with prophetic saliva during his final illness produce his body as a map on which ideological struggles are inscribed. While Ma'mar and Wāqidī do not cover the death of Muḥammad in their *Maghāzī* works, and Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra* represents Muḥammad as dying in 'Ā'isha's arms, Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* gives coverage to opposing accounts that alternately position 'Ā'isha or 'Alī as the one holding Muḥammad for his final breath. In one of the pro-'Alī narrations, 'Alī states that Muḥammad reclined on his chest and did not stop talking until his saliva fell onto 'Alī. It was at that moment that Muḥammad expired and his body became heavy in 'Alī's lap. Muḥammad's saliva appears at the moment of his death to perform a final act of baraka transferral.²¹⁶ One pro-'Ā'isha narration asserts that as Muḥammad's shoulder

²¹⁵ Ibid, vol. 8, 315.

²¹⁶ Ibid, vol. 2, 202.

rested on his head, cold water poured from his mouth onto her collarbone, causing her to shiver.²¹⁷ In another pro-‘Ā’isha account, the favored relationship is established in a dramatically alterior fashion, since ‘Ā’isha does not receive Muḥammad’s saliva but the opposite: he receives hers. ‘Ā’isha narrates that Muḥammad desired a miswak to clean his teeth, but that she softened the miswak for him by chewing it herself. Muḥammad then used the miswak to clean his teeth until the moment of death, at which it fell from his hand. She thus narrates, “Allāh mixed my saliva with his in the last hour of his worldly life and the first day of the hereafter.”²¹⁸ ‘Ā’isha is represented here as privileging her connection to Muḥammad through the mingling of their fluids as he transitioned out of this world, though she reverses the direction in which these connections typically occur. The narration favors ‘Ā’isha through the event of her intimacy with Muḥammad during his last breath, rather than a bestowal of baraka through material transmission directly from his body to hers.

The capacity for Muḥammad’s sweat to transmit baraka and provide linkages between the prophetic body and the Companions also expands within these sources. In comparison to the *sīra*/maghāzī literatures, in which Muḥammad’s sweat serves primarily as a symptom of the event of divine revelation, ḥadīth sources present the sweat as a baraka-fused material that merits collection and preservation. Whereas the *sīra*/maghāzī works emphasize the ocular encounter with Muḥammad’s sweat as a sign of the Qur’ān’s descent, reports of olfactory encounters in the ḥadīth collections affirm Muḥammad’s body as a site of divine intervention while also privileging themselves as the generation that could directly access his body. Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* and Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt* include a

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 201.

tradition in which ‘Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib is asked by unnamed interlocutors to describe Muḥammad; among details such as Muḥammad’s height, stride, and color, and the statement that he had never seen Muḥammad’s likeness before or since, ‘Alī recalls that the drops of perspiration on Muḥammad’s face resembled pearls.²¹⁹ The *Ṭabaqāt* also provides Anas’s recollection of various details of Muḥammad’s body, including Anas’s statement that he had never smelled musk more pleasing than Muḥammad’s sweat or personal scent.²²⁰

Umm Sulaym appears at the center of a tradition that represents Muḥammad’s sweat as a coveted substance. In this tradition, Muḥammad falls asleep, with some narrations specifying that he does so on a leather mat (*niṭa*). During Muḥammad’s nap, he sweats. Upon awakening, Muḥammad discovers that Umm Sulaym is collecting or has collected his perspiration. Muḥammad then asks what Umm Sulaym is doing. In reports from Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* and the *Ṭabaqāt*, Umm Sulaym answers that she wants Muḥammad’s sweat for her perfume, in some variants adding that his sweat is superior to any other perfume.²²¹ Umm Sulaym also shares some of her prophetic-sweat-infused perfume with Ibn Sīrīn, whose father had been a slave of Anas.²²² Ibn Sīrīn arranges to have the perfume used in his own embalming; the source for this information in the

²¹⁹ Ibid, vol. 1, 316. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #1300.

²²⁰ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 317.

²²¹ Ibid, vol. 8, 315. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #12423, 14105.

²²² T. Fahd, “Ibn Sīrīn,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, et al (Brill Online, 2016).

Ṭabaqāt, Ayyūb bin Kaysān, adds that he still possesses a portion of what Umm Sulaym had given to Ibn Sīrīn.²²³

Umm Sulaym's rationalizations for collecting the prophetic sweat are not limited to its pleasing smell. In another report from the *Ṭabaqāt*, attributed to al-Birā'a bin Zayd, Umm Sulaym tells Muḥammad, "I take this for the baraka that exudes from you" (*Akhudhu hadhā li'l-baraka allātī takhruju minka*).²²⁴ Umm Sulaym locates baraka as a property within Muḥammad's body that can be accessed materially through the waste that streams from his pores. Like the body of the camel that had ingested Muḥammad's saliva, the collection of Muḥammad's sweat in a bottle can preserve his baraka and transport it to others when Muḥammad is absent or even deceased.

While examining the Companions' representations of Muḥammad's sweat as emitting a pleasurable fragrance, proving his prophetic station, and transmitting baraka, there remains the question of whether Muḥammad experienced his own sweat in this manner, as well as the ways in which Companions may depart from one another in their treatments of the sweat. In tension with these traditions of Companions finding pleasure in the smell of Muḥammad's sweat, Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* and Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* also contain a tradition, attributed to 'Ā'isha, in which Muḥammad appears to be displeased with his personal scent. In this tradition, a sheet is made for Muḥammad of black wool. In some versions, 'Ā'isha draws attention to the stark contrast between the blackness of the wool and the whiteness of Muḥammad's skin. Muḥammad wears the sheet, but is then

²²³ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 8, 314.

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 315.

displeased by the smell of the wool after he sweats. He throws it away, with ‘Ā’isha’s explaining that “He liked good smell.” At no point in the narration does ‘Ā’isha or another Companion express interest in the sweat-soaked wool as a conduit of baraka.²²⁵ Placing this tradition in conversation with reports of Companions fondly remembering Muḥammad’s personal fragrance and using his sweat for perfume, we find a potential departure between Muḥammad’s experience of his own body and his body as experienced by his Companions, in addition to diversity within the Companions’ perspectives. Though a handful of reports present the possibility of Muḥammad finding displeasure in the fragrance of his sweat, we do not encounter reports of Companions treating his bodily scent as anything less than sublime. Whether or not Muḥammad could find his own sweat to have an offensive odor, the Companions are represented as experiencing his sweat only as a sensory delight or sign of divine activity upon his person.

Nonetheless, Muḥammad’s unfavorable perception of his own scent also enters into the sources through the attributed mediation of a Companion, his wife ‘Ā’isha. These reports depict ‘Ā’isha as explaining matter-of-factly that Muḥammad did not like the smell of his sweat in the black wool garment, and that he threw the garment away because he preferred good smells. As previously discussed, ‘Ā’isha does mention Muḥammad’s sweat elsewhere as a visual signifier of revelation, but does not offer recollections of its scent. In the narrations of the black wool garment, she does not personally confirm or deny that the smell that upset Muḥammad would have also registered as unpleasant to others, let alone that she had smelled the sweaty garment herself and found it offensive. While not explicitly stating her opinion of the fragrance of Muḥammad’s sweat, ‘Ā’isha does not

²²⁵ Ibid, vol. 1, 350. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #25517, 26364.

appear threatened or surprised by the possibility of her husband smelling bad, nor does she express a clear investment one way or the other.

In the case of Muḥammad's blood, the sources considered here tend to shut down possibilities for linkage that the *sīra*/maghāzī texts allow. While the tradition of Mālik ibn Sinān consuming Muḥammad's blood appears in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*, prophetic blood all but disappears as a baraka transmitter.²²⁶ Ibn Sa'd also devotes a section of reports to Muḥammad's participation in cupping, providing reports that cover topics such as cupping's efficacy for treating various ailments, payment of the cupper's wages, the points on Muḥammad's body at which he would get cupped, the days of the week and month on which to get cupped, and Muḥammad's cupping while in the mosque, the state of iḥrām, or fasting. One ḥadīth narrates that a Companion who was unfamiliar with cupping expressed shock that Muḥammad paid a man who ripped his skin, until Muḥammad explained the practice. Multiple reports authorize cupping as an order that Muḥammad had received from Jibrīl and other angels. In regard to the substance of Muḥammad's blood, the section only narrates that Muḥammad ordered for his blood to be buried so that no dog might search for it, and that he advised this method of disposal as a general practice for others. Muḥammad states that whoever "sprinkles this blood" will not be harmed, but the section's reports read as a prophetic prescription for cupping rather than a claim specifically regarding his own blood's special qualities.²²⁷

²²⁶ The present study generally uses the 2012 Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah edition, though this edition suffers from an exclusion of material, including the above tradition. The narration of Mālik ibn Sinān drinking Muḥammad's blood finds inclusion, however, in the critical edition of Dr. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānjī, 2001), Vol. 4, 363. For discussion of the *Ṭabaqāt*'s complex publishing history, see Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 206.

²²⁷ Ibid, 342-7.

As with the *sīra*/maghāzī works, these ḥadīth collections do not treat Muḥammad's urine or feces as vehicles of baraka, though Muḥammad's acts of making waste receive attention both as imitable precedents and as proof of his prophethood. In the *Ṭabaqāt*, reports associated with Muḥammad's defecation and urination call attention to his control over forces of nature and the divine protection of his modesty, rather than the substances themselves. Ibn Sa'd's section regarding signs of prophethood (*'alāmāt al-nubuwwa*) that followed the start of Qur'ānic revelation includes two reports in which Muḥammad is traveling and feels the need to relieve himself, but has no shelter from the eyes of his Companions. He then instructs a Companion (either Ibn Mas'ūd or Ya'lā ibn Murra, depending on the version) to inform two trees that he had ordered them to come closer together for him. The Companion relates Muḥammad's command to the trees, causing one to move closer to the other to veil Muḥammad from view. After Muḥammad has finished, the tree moves back to its original place.²²⁸ In another ḥadīth from this section, 'Ā'isha asks Muḥammad why she cannot detect any traces of his having made waste. Muḥammad explains that the earth swallows what prophets excrete so that none of it can be seen.²²⁹ These traditions present the forces of nature as compelled to protect Muḥammad's dignity, shielding not only Muḥammad's nakedness and vulnerability in the act of making waste, but also the material waste as an artifact that can cause embarrassment to him. The actions of the earth and trees to guard Muḥammad against humiliation present evidence of Muḥammad's membership in the category of prophets.

²²⁸ Ibid, 135.

²²⁹ Ibid.

Left ambiguous in these reports is the nature of the waste itself. There is no portrayal in the *Ṭabaqāt* of Muḥammad's urine or feces holding special properties. In contrast to narrations concerning Muḥammad's sweat, in which the sensory experience of the waste brings pleasure to his Companions, the earth's concealment of his excreta could suggest that Muḥammad's waste was typical in its capacity to be offensive, unpleasant, or embarrassing. As in the question of Muḥammad's sweat, 'Ā'isha constricts the possibilities for Muḥammad's excreta, suggesting that there is nothing particularly noteworthy about substances from her husband's body. Nor do reports in the *Ṭabaqāt* represent Muḥammad's Companions more broadly as maintaining an investment in his digestive excreta as a source of baraka. Similarly, though Muḥammad experienced the same violations of ritual purity as his Companions and gave prescriptive instructions for dealing with these bodily processes, I could not find narrations that reported specific incidents of prophetic gas or Companions' olfactory witness of Muḥammad breaking wind.

In addition to Muḥammad's urine and feces, his semen becomes a new topic within these ḥadīth sources. However, discussions of Muḥammad's semen treat the substance exclusively in relation to ritual purity, through which Muḥammad's personal habits establish legal norms and an imitable model, rather than as a potential conduit through which Muḥammad's bodily baraka might become accessible to others. Attributed to 'Ā'isha, the reports describe her observation of semen's traces on his clothing, the methods undertaken by Muḥammad or herself to remove semen from garments, and his performance of prayer in the cleaned clothing.²³⁰ Though the possibility of baraka's

²³⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #24565, 24882, 25166, 25449, 25522, 25549, 26716, 26967. Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2013), #1607.

transferral through semen would have obviously privileged Muḥammad's wife, 'Ā'isha's narrations grant no significance to the substance of the semen itself. Nor are there narrations of other Companions observing traces of Muḥammad's semen on his clothing and expressing interest in the material as a mode of accessing baraka: no one attempts to touch the wet spot, for example; nor does a Companion express desire for clothing that bears prophetic sexual stains. Presenting prophetic semen strictly as an undesired material to be removed, 'Ā'isha again preserves Muḥammad's body as having a typical relationship to bodily abjection and incapable of transmitting baraka through its fluids and by-products into other bodies, even her own.

Thematically faithful to their representations in the *sīra*/maghāzī literatures, the ḥadīth collections present Muḥammad's hair and fingernails as efficacious extensions of prophetic corporeality. These items bestow Muḥammad's bodily baraka upon their possessors, and also intensify their possessors' power as corporeal links between Muḥammad and later generations that could not have witnessed him in person. In the *Ṭabaqāt* and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, Anas narrates that as Muḥammad got his hair cut, the Companions would gather around him, with every hair falling into someone's hands.²³¹ Though Muḥammad's hair and nail clippings do not appear as the focus of miracle accounts from his lifetime, they are reported to have remained in the community's possession after his death and prized as traces of his bodily baraka. In Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, Anas narrates that as a barber cut Muḥammad's hair, men caught the clippings as they fell; his stepfather

²³¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #12390, 12427. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, 139.

Abū Ṭalḥa took one of the hairs to Umm Sulaym, who mixed it in her perfume.²³² Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Sa'd provide accounts of Umm Sulaym keeping a hair of Muḥammad and showing it to visitors.²³³ Ibn Sa'd shares two accounts in his *Ṭabaqāt* of Mu'āwiya, the first Umayyad caliph, giving instructions for Muḥammad's hair and fingernails to be used in his own burial. In one report, Mu'āwiya asks to be clothed in Muḥammad's shirt and buried with Muḥammad's fingernail parings that he had stored in a bottle; in the second report, he requests for both the hairs and fingernails that he had collected from Muḥammad to be placed in his mouth and nose.²³⁴

One tradition involving Muḥammad's hair reveals that his bodily products, while potentially operating as pathways for baraka to travel between his body and those of his Companions, can also facilitate undesired connections and expose him to malevolent forces. The tradition reports of Jewish sorcerer Labīd ibn 'Aṣim acquiring hairs from Muḥammad, which renders Muḥammad vulnerable to Labīd's technologies of harm. Using Muḥammad's hairs, the sorcerer manages to temporarily impair Muḥammad's sexual performance before angelic intervention restores him. The tradition of Labīd's attack is mentioned only briefly in the *Sīra* (mentioning the sorcery against Muḥammad's sexuality but not the use of his hairs), but appears with greater detail and some variation in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, the *Ṭabaqāt*, and both *Muṣannaf* collections.²³⁵ In order for his assault

²³² Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #13542.

²³³ Ibid. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 336.

²³⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* ('Umar edition), Vol. 6, 30.

²³⁵ Michael Lecker, "The Bewitching of the Prophet Muḥammad by the Jews: A Note a Propos 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb's *Mukhtaṣar fī l-Ṭibb*," *Al-Qantara*, 13, 2 (1992): 561-9.

against Muḥammad to work, Labīd needs material from Muḥammad’s body. Labīd’s use of Muḥammad’s hair as a weapon operates on a perceived relationship between the body and its by-products (or even inorganic artifacts marked by intimate interactions with the body, such as the teeth of Muḥammad’s comb). Muḥammad’s hair remains sufficiently bound to him, even after a barber has severed its connection to his body, to empower a sorcerer’s attack. While Labīd can temporarily bring harm to Muḥammad by manipulation of his hairs, however, there is no indication that Labīd derived further personal benefit from possessing them, as though the baraka within the hairs might have been indiscriminately contagious.

As in the *sīra*/maghāzī works, numerous ḥadīth sources—the *Musnad* collections of Ibn Ḥanbal and Ṭayālīsī, Ibn Abī Shayba’s *Muṣannaf*, and Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt*—present Muḥammad as ejecting “baraka water” from his hands, providing water to large numbers of his Companions in times of need, whether for the purposes of drinking or ritual ablution.²³⁶ Prominent narrators of these incidents include Anas, Jābir, and Ibn Mas’ūd, who quotes Muḥammad as calling people in varied phrasings to blessed purification and/or baraka from Allāh, and also narrates that he filled his stomach with what had flowed out of Muḥammad’s hands.²³⁷ While the water comes from inside Muḥammad’s body, it is not stated to be *of* his body as though a product of a system internal to him; the baraka water is not necessarily made *by* his body. While Muḥammad’s precise relationship to the water

²³⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #13277, 12373, 14565, 14921. Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, #1935. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #31713.

²³⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #3808, 4392. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #31713.

that flows from his hands remains unarticulated, these reports affirm his body as a site of divine activity and locus of baraka for those who encounter its emissions.

The capacity of materials produced by Muḥammad's body to retain his baraka and communicate it to others, established within the *sīra*/*maghāzī* sources, undergoes significant amplification in the developing *ḥadīth* corpus. These sources' elaborations in regard to prophetic bodily products serve to further shield the prophetic body from vulnerability to abjection. Reports of the earth concealing Muḥammad's urine or feces and a woman collecting his sweat for perfume, while producing different implications regarding his waste, both reflect the preservation of his body from typical disgust. Nonetheless, these reports demonstrate variation in the ways that extrahuman energies circulating through Muḥammad interact with the waste substances that he emits from different parts of his body. The accounts of Muḥammad's corporeal by-products do not create a fixed, coherent, or systematized conception of prophetic bodies or their relationship to baraka. Consideration of Muḥammad's corporeal ejections reveals a prophetic body that emerges through these texts not as an intact whole, but rather as an assemblage of parts.

The Modified Body

As in the *sīra*/*maghāzī* sources, *ḥadīth* literatures of the early 9th century CE depict Muḥammad's body undergoing modification at the hands of transcendent forces. These modifications either prepare Muḥammad for his prophetic career, as in the opening and cleansing of his torso, or provide material evidence of his prophethood, as in the appearance of the Seal on his body. With some variation, traditions regarding Muḥammad's chest opening and the Seal persist through the *musnad* and *muṣannaf* works.

Points of departure between the *sīra*/maghāzī literatures and ḥadīth collections (as well as within the ḥadīth collections themselves) hold potential consequences for the relationships between these phenomena, the possibility of Muḥammad's body containing an abject or even demonic portion, and the degree of Allāh's personal involvement in modifications upon Muḥammad's body. In contrast to the *sīra*/maghāzī sources, which present divine alterations of Muḥammad's body as performed by angelic intermediaries, the ḥadīth sources of this period offer reports of Allāh directly (and in some cases corporeally) intervening to transform Muḥammad's condition.

As provided in the ḥadīth collections, the opening of Muḥammad's chest and angelic work performed upon his internal organs retain much of the content found in *sīra*/maghāzī literature. Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* includes reports in which Jibrīl comes to young Muḥammad and performs the act of cutting open Muḥammad's torso, removing his heart and extracting a clot (*'alaqa*), then washing the heart with Zamzam water before restoring it to Muḥammad's body. Jibrīl explains to Muḥammad regarding the clot, "This is Shayṭān's share of you" (*Hadhihi ḥazz al-Shayṭān minka*).²³⁸ In other reports from Ibn Ḥanbal, however, Shayṭān is not named in association with the removed portion.²³⁹ In their treatments of Muḥammad's angelic surgery, these collections reflect tensions in regard to Shayṭān's share of Muḥammad. While the reports maintain that Muḥammad's body requires some act of internal purification, these sources display less confidence in asserting

²³⁸ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #14115, 12534.

²³⁹ Ibid, #21613, 21453.

that within Muḥammad's body existed an element of evil or demonic association, hence the nondescription of the extracted flesh in Ṭayālīsī's *Musnad* as simply "what Allāh willed."²⁴⁰

Narrations of the chest opening also differ in the point of Muḥammad's biography at which they locate the event. Ḥadīth sources contain reports that repeat the *sīra*/maghāzī literature's placement of the event in Muḥammad's childhood, but also include narrations that locate the chest opening after the start of Muḥammad's prophethood, as preparation for his heavenly ascension.²⁴¹ Anas narrates the childhood version, though he was born years after the event would have taken place. Anas recovers his authority with reference to the observable physical evidence: "I used to see the trace of stitching in his chest."²⁴² The scar from Muḥammad's operation marks an event inside his chest with evidence on the body's surface. The exterior of Muḥammad's body also testifies to his exceptional status through the Seal of Prophethood, usually described as a birthmark located between his shoulders. Reports tend to discuss *either* the Seal *or* the opening of Muḥammad's chest without mentioning the other. I could not find reports in which both the Seal and the chest opening (or the traces of Muḥammad's stitches) appear within the same narrative unit but are otherwise treated as unrelated; the sources do not provide reports that refer to Muḥammad's stitches while also describing the Seal as an organic growth on his body.

Two outliers from these collections combine the opening of Muḥammad's chest and the placement of the Seal into a single event, transpiring not in Muḥammad's childhood but at the start of his prophetic mission. In Ṭayālīsī's *Musnad*, the opening of Muḥammad's

²⁴⁰ Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, #1643.

²⁴¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #17987.

²⁴² Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 120.

body occurs immediately prior to the first revelation (the report is also unique in that it places Khadīja in the cave with Muḥammad). Jibrīl descends to perform the surgery alone, though the report notes Mikā'il remaining at a midpoint between heaven and earth; Jibrīl removes "what Allāh willed" from Muḥammad's belly, then seals Muḥammad's back (*Thumma khatama fī zahrī*) until Muḥammad feels the Seal (*hattā wajadatu al-khātam*); it seems to be suggested here that Jibrīl had cut into Muḥammad's body through his back, rather than his front, and that the Seal of Prophethood served to close the wound. Jibrīl then commands Muḥammad to recite the 96th sūra, as in other accounts of the first revelation. The report departs significantly from other variants of the "chest opening" tradition both in its details—the association of the cutting with the first revelation, the presence of Khadīja and Mikā'il, and the cutting into Muḥammad's back—and its chain of transmission, traced to 'Ā'isha rather than Anas.²⁴³ In a report from Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, Muḥammad is asked about the "start of your affair" and responds with a story in which two "white birds like eagles" descended upon him, cut open his torso, and extracted his heart. The birds split his heart and removed from it two black clots (*'alaqatayn sawdāwayn*), then washed his heart with ice and snow. The birds installed *al-sakīna*, which can be understood as a pious tranquility and its assorted characteristics,²⁴⁴ into his chest. After the washing of Muḥammad's heart and its restoration within his body, the birds closed the

²⁴³ Motzki's *isnād-cum-matn* method of forensic ḥadīth analysis would find this report, isolated from more prominent versions both in attribution and content, to be a later variant. The isnād is Baṣran and incomplete: Ṭayālīsī reports from Ḥammād ibn Salama, who reports from Abū 'Imrān al-Jawnī, who reports from "a man" who had narrated on the authority of 'Ā'isha. Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, #1643.

²⁴⁴ T. Fahd, "Sakīna," *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, et al (Brill Online, 2016).

incision with the Seal of Prophethood.²⁴⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal also includes reports in which Muḥammad's chest is cut open and purified by Jibrīl prior to the heavenly ascension, but these narrations do not connect the Seal to the incision.²⁴⁶

The *Ṭabaqāt* includes four narrations in which a Companion perceives the Seal as requiring medical treatment, thus pathologizing the prophetic body. All four narrations convey the experience of a physician who visits Muḥammad, and are related by the Companion Abū Rimtha. In three of the narrations, Abū Rimtha himself is the physician; of these, two mention that he is accompanied by his son. The fourth account presents Abū Rimtha himself as the son, accompanying his physician father. In each of these four reports, the physician, upon observation of the Seal, offers to treat it; in two of these, the Seal is diagnosed as a cyst (*sil'a*). One report portrays Abū Rimtha as stating that he could perform medical treatment and Allāh would then “cure” (*shafā*) his prophet. In another, Abū Rimtha's son trembles in fear or awe (*Ur'ad min hībatihī*) upon seeing Muḥammad, which is immediately followed by Abū Rimtha suggesting that Muḥammad allow him to treat the Seal. In each of the reports, Muḥammad declines the offer, answering variously that the Seal's only physician is he who created it (*Ṭabībuhā alladhī khalaqahā*), that it will be treated by he who placed it (*Yudāwīhā alladhī waḍa'ahā*), or more explicitly that it has no physician except Allāh (*Lā ṭabība lahā illā Allāh*).²⁴⁷ The Abū Rimtha cluster of reports presents the Seal as pathologized by a physician, who qualifies his medical authority by

²⁴⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #17798.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, #21453, 21613.

²⁴⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 328.

descent from a family of physicians, as a wound in need of care. Muḥammad does not exactly correct the physician's diagnosis, but simply defers its treatment to Allāh.

A tradition in the *Musnad* depicts a man from the Banū 'Āmir asking Muḥammad, "Show me the Seal that is between your shoulders, for I am the best healer of people." Muḥammad responds simply by asking the man if he wants to see a sign (*āyat*), to which the man answers in the affirmative. Muḥammad then shows bushels of dates becoming animated by his verbal command, after which the man announces to his people that he had never seen a more magical man (*rajulān aṣḥara*) than on that day.²⁴⁸ In this representation of a doctor's meeting with the Prophet, Muḥammad's body becomes a site at which access is denied in favor of an alternative demonstration of his prophetic status.

The nature of Muḥammad's interaction with Allāh, as represented in some narrations within these sources, offers a radical departure from the *sīra*/maghāzī works. The question of whether Muḥammad had encountered Allāh directly is left ambiguous within the text of the Qur'ān, as evidenced by conflicting identities that exegetes have assigned to the mysterious "one fierce in power" (*shadīd al-quwwa*) whom the 53rd sūra describes as having descended from the heavens into close proximity with Muḥammad.²⁴⁹ The *sīra*/maghāzī literatures do not represent Muḥammad witnessing Allāh with his eyes, nor having an encounter with Allāh that would potentially locate Allāh in physical space and time. In the ḥadīth sources, however, the possibility of Muḥammad directly encountering Allāh becomes reopened.

²⁴⁸ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #1954.

²⁴⁹ Qur'ān 53:5-9.

A controversial tradition, represented in the sources as contested even among the Companions, describes an incident in which Muḥammad witnesses Allāh's appearance in a visibly observable body. Ibn 'Abbās appears prominently among reporters of the vision, while 'Ā'isha gives the most pronounced denials of Muḥammad seeing Allāh, insisting that Muḥammad only saw Jibrīl and that anyone who claims otherwise has lied.²⁵⁰ Some accounts state only that Muḥammad saw his lord, while extended versions narrate an encounter in which Allāh appears to Muḥammad, asks questions that Muḥammad cannot answer, and then touches his palm between Muḥammad's shoulders. In the moment that Muḥammad feels the coolness of Allāh's touch between his nipples, he obtains knowledge and can answer Allāh's quiz. A version from Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* describes the touch as revealing to Muḥammad everything between the heavens and earth.²⁵¹ Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf* includes an account in which Muḥammad asks Allāh to teach him; Allāh then places his hand between Muḥammad's shoulders. Muḥammad recalls that after the touch, "He did not ask me anything except that I knew it" (*fā-mā sa'alanī 'an shay'in illā 'alimtuḥu*).²⁵²

Muḥammad's mention of the physical sensation, emphasizing the corporeality of his contact with Allāh, affirms the encounter as an event in space and time, one body modifying another through direct contact. Through the power of touch, Allāh penetrates the body of Muḥammad and implants knowledge into it. In his discussion of the encounter, Melchert offers a reminder that in antiquity, the heart, rather than the brain, was perceived as the

²⁵⁰ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #31794. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #24731.

²⁵¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #23597.

²⁵² Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #31697.

seat of cognition.²⁵³ The Qur'ān reflects this perception in its frequent treatment of knowledge, ignorance, faith, and disbelief as conditions of the heart.²⁵⁴ Similar to the angelic purification of Muḥammad's heart and injection of wisdom into his body through the incision in his chest, Allāh transmits knowledge to Muḥammad by physically engaging his organ of intelligence.

As demonstrated elsewhere in these materials, contact with Muḥammad's body or its by-products can communicate baraka from within his body to others. Reports of Allāh's "cold hand" insert Allāh's body directly into the matrix of relations through which baraka flows between bodies: to touch or be touched by Muḥammad places a Companion within just one degree of separation from physical contact with Allāh himself.

Still another tradition in the *Ṭabaqāt*, attributed to Anas, describes the placement of an extrahuman hand between Muḥammad's shoulders in connection to his receiving knowledge; in this account, the touch comes not from Allāh but rather Jibrīl, and is not a cold palm but a punch. After Jibrīl punches Muḥammad between the shoulders, Muḥammad leaves to a tree in which he finds things resembling birds' nests. Muḥammad sits in one "nest," Jibrīl sits in another, and the two then ascend until reaching the junction of east and west at such a height that Muḥammad can touch the heavens. He then turns on his side and faces Jibrīl, whose appearance is described as resembling a saddle blanket. At this point in the narrative, Muḥammad recalls, "I recognized the excellence of his knowledge of Allāh" (*Fa'ariaftu faḍla 'ilmihi bi-llāh*). The gates of the heavens are opened

²⁵³ Chris Melchert, "The Early Controversy Over Whether the Prophet Saw God," *Arabica* 62 (2015): 459-76.

²⁵⁴ For one example, 22:46 describes humans as having "hearts with which they reason" (*lahum qulūb ya'qilūn bihā*) and describes their disbelief as a blindness of the heart.

for Muḥammad and he sees a veil (*ḥijāb*) adorned with precious stones; at this point, “Allāh revealed to me what he willed to reveal” (*Awḥā Allāh mā shā’ an yūḥā*).²⁵⁵ The narration represents Jibrīl punching Muḥammad between the shoulders—again, the locus of his cognition—as provoking an ascension in which Muḥammad transcends the limits of this world, achieves Jibrīl’s level of knowledge, and then receives access to whatever Allāh chose to reveal for him at or behind the veil. In resonance with an assortment of narrations that depict Muḥammad in embodied interactions with Jibrīl (being squeezed by Jibrīl, seeing him with his eyes, and traveling with him through the heavens), this narration in particular appears to represent the punch from Jibrīl’s body as a catalyst for Muḥammad’s transformation. The angelic fist sparks a sequence of events that leads to Muḥammad attaining and then perhaps transcending angelic degrees of knowledge and access to Allāh.

Reports of Muḥammad encountering Allāh do not locate the event at a specific stage in Muḥammad’s prophetic career (some later sources, discussed in future chapters, situate the touch within narratives of Muḥammad’s ascension, as with the chest opening); nor do they clearly link the touch to the chest opening or the Seal. With traditions of the chest opening and the Seal, however, the “cold hand” tradition shares an investment in Muḥammad’s torso as the site at which Muḥammad’s prophetic station requires modification of his body. With or without reference to a corrupt or corruptible part of Muḥammad extracted from his heart, the opening of Muḥammad’s body specifically shares a focus on the heart with the Seal and “cold hand” traditions. The Seal is typically located on Muḥammad’s back, between his shoulders; Allāh places his palm on Muḥammad’s back, between his shoulders, causing him to sense its coolness between his nipples; both

²⁵⁵ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 135.

traditions place divine activity and its trace in the neighborhood of Muḥammad's heart. The "cold hand" tradition departs from the chest opening tradition in that while the two share a theme of extrahuman forces acting upon Muḥammad's torso to alter his condition, the "cold hand" narrations treat Muḥammad's body as one that requires modification without that body necessarily containing an abjected "black spot" or "share of Shayṭān."

In the matter of Muḥammad's ocular or tangible experience of Allāh, ambiguity persists throughout the sources. Reports attributed to different Companions oppose one another on the precise character of Muḥammad's interactions with Allāh. Narrations from 'Ā'isha serve to emphatically deny the possibility of unmediated encounter between Muḥammad and Allāh, using Qur'ānic verses to argue that vision of Allāh is impossible and that in the ambiguous visionary experience related in sūra 53, Muḥammad had witnessed Jibrīl instead.²⁵⁶ Within sources of the early 9th century CE, 'Ā'isha's vehement rejections of Muḥammad's direct interaction with Allāh place her in conflict with reports from Companions such as Ibn 'Abbās, affirming Muḥammad's vision of Allāh and/or the placement of Allāh's physical hand upon Muḥammad's body as a mode of transmitting knowledge and baraka.²⁵⁷

In addition to modifying Muḥammad's body through direct contact and angelic mediation, Allāh also performs interventions in Muḥammad's condition by modifying the demonic bodies that could otherwise achieve destructive effects upon him. In multiple reports from the *Musnad*, Muḥammad explains that every human being has been given a

²⁵⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #24731.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, #2080, 2634, 16738.

companion (*qarīn*), with variants reporting either that each human has both a jinn *qarīn* and an angel *qarīn* or that each human has a *qarīn* strictly from among the devils. When Muḥammad's interlocutors inquire as to whether this also pertains to him, Muḥammad answers that he has a *qarīn* of his own but that Allāh has caused it to surrender; Muḥammad's *qarīn* thus commands him only toward good (*khayr*) or truth (*ḥaqq*).²⁵⁸ While Muḥammad remains vulnerable to the effects from his *qarīn*, the *qarīn* and its effects in turn remain subject to Allāh's interventions, rendering the prophetic body as a site at which numerous forces act upon each other.

These traditions represent Muḥammad's body as undergoing modifications to become the body that can perform prophetic work of mediating between divine and angelic forces on one side and the world of humans on the other (while shielded from interference by demonic forces). However, even the modified prophetic body's access to the divine and angelic remains vulnerable to the effects of other humans. The significance of Companion corporeality to prophetic mediation finds reflection in a report of Muḥammad complaining about the bodies with which he must interact. While Muḥammad provides access to divine and angelic forces for his community, members of his community inhibit the process of revelation by failing to properly modify and maintain their own bodies:

It was said to him: "O Messenger of Allāh, Jibrīl has slowed down on you" (*abṭa'a 'anka Jibrīl*). He said, "And why would he not slow down on me when you around me do not clean your teeth and you do not cut your fingernails, and you do not cut your moustaches, and you do not clean your finger joints?"²⁵⁹

The narration, attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and found in the *Musnad*, presents connections between angelic, prophetic human, and non-prophetic human bodies as

²⁵⁸ Ibid, #3648, 3802.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, #2181.

enabled or disabled by conditions of the bodies themselves. Though angels and even Allāh personally modify Muḥammad's body and impose changes upon it, the dirt and disgust of Companion bodies can apparently render the prophetic body unacceptable, even abject in relation to angels, and thus cause Jibrīl to "slow down" in his visits. The report highlights the flow of intercorporeality between Muḥammad and his Companions as moving in both directions, as their bodies appear to affect his access to extrahuman forces as much as his body facilitates such access for them. As members of the Muḥammadī assemblage, they join angels and the divine as forces acting upon prophetic corporeality, modifying Muḥammad's body and enacting change in its powers. The significance of Companion corporeality in this tradition calls attention to the instability of Muḥammad's body, the limits and possibilities of which remain linked to the powers of other bodies.

Muḥammad Postmortem

As discussed in the previous chapter, Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* quotes Muḥammad's uncle, 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, as telling 'Umar that Muḥammad's flesh "decays like any other person's."²⁶⁰ While Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* survives through its inclusion in the *Muṣannaf* of his student, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-San'ānī, 'Abbās's casual attitude towards prophetic decay remains significantly at odds with the representations of Muḥammad's dead body in early ḥadīth collections. Examination of the ḥadīth sources reveals an intensifying stake in the preservation of Muḥammad's postmortem remains, which develops in answer to a soteriological crisis. Questions regarding Muḥammad's ongoing relationship to his

²⁶⁰ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 185.

community appear in these sources to provoke Muḥammad's promises that his body will remain intact and continue to be operational as a prophetic body.

This change in treatments of Muḥammad's postmortem condition is not absolute within the sources considered here, as observed in the archive of Ibn Sa'd. The *Ṭabaqāt* includes reports that Companions had delayed Muḥammad's burial until they were certain that he had died (as opposed to having ascended like Jesus or entered into a 40-day occultation like Moses); certainty is attained by the observable signs of Muḥammad's body having started the process of typical human decomposition. These reports mention details of Muḥammad's deteriorating postmortem condition that helped to confirm his death, such as his stomach bloating, an unspecified change in his little finger, and his fingernails turning green.²⁶¹ An isolated report in the *Ṭabaqāt* also treats the disappearance of the Seal from Muḥammad's body as proof that he had died. According to this narration, Asmā' bint 'Umayy places her hand between Muḥammad's shoulders, after which she states that his death is confirmed because the Seal had disappeared from his body.²⁶² Despite these explicit depictions of a cadaver that can possibly elicit revulsion and horror, Ibn Sa'd also includes a report in which Muḥammad promises that the earth does not hold sway over the bodies of prophets (*fa-inna al-arḍa lam tusallit 'alā ajsādi al-anbiyā'*).²⁶³

²⁶¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, 210.

²⁶² Ibid, 208. The narration specifically describes the Seal's disappearance as a raising or lifting of the Seal from between Muḥammad's shoulders (*rufi'a al-khātam min bayna katafīhi*), possibly conceiving the Seal as an inorganic supplement to Muḥammad's body rather than a birthmark.

²⁶³ Ibid, 229.

The collections of Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Abī Shayba report a tradition attributed to Aws ibn Aws, in which Muḥammad promises that the earth has been divinely prohibited from “eating the bodies of prophets.”²⁶⁴ In these narrations, Muḥammad attests to the preservation of his corporeal integrity in response to Companions asking how he can hear their prayers after he has died. According to the operational logic of this tradition, Muḥammad needs an intact body to continue bearing witness to the deeds of his community. His body must be protected from typical postmortem decomposition in order to maintain its linkages to his Companions, which appear to be necessary for their soteriological welfare. According to a tradition found in the *Ṭabaqāt*, the postmortem remains of Muḥammad’s relations also appear to receive a degree of protection. When Hind bint ‘Utba chews the liver of Muḥammad’s uncle Ḥamza bin ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib on the battlefield of Uhud, she is unable to swallow it, since this would have meant that when Hind receives her due punishment in the afterlife, a portion of Ḥamza’s flesh goes into the fire with her. In this tradition, Muḥammad explains, “Allāh did not allow for anything from Ḥamza to enter the fire.”²⁶⁵ Though Ḥamza’s flesh is subjected to mutilation in this world, Allāh protects it from absorption into the matter of an unbeliever’s eternally condemned body. The tradition reflects a shared logic of bodies with the previously discussed tradition of Mālīk ibn Sinān drinking Muḥammad’s blood, by which Mālīk becomes exempted from hellfire due to his having “mixed” prophetic blood with his own.

²⁶⁴ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #8697. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #16262.

²⁶⁵ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3, 9. Nadia Maria El Cheikh locates Hind’s attempted cannibalism within a broader representation of pre-Islamic irrationality and violence, with special attention to the gendering of this construction: “It is a female who became, ultimately, the principal locus for the cultural monstrosity that defined jahiliyya.” *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 27.

The tradition of a corporeally intact Muḥammad who can hear prayers and bear witness to his community's righteousness from within his grave, his body preserved as a resource for connection between Companions and himself, exists within the sources alongside Muḥammad's reported condemnation of those who make their prophets' graves into places of worship (*masājid*). Variants of the tradition tend to refer to earlier communities that had been cursed for this transgression, often specifying Jews and Christians; one version includes 'Ā'isha's explanation that had it not been for the Jews' and Christians' excesses, Muḥammad would have been placed in a grave that surpassed all others, but he had feared that people would treat his grave as a mosque.²⁶⁶ In these collections, Muḥammad's postmortem body both opens and closes relations, simultaneously enabling continued access to beneficent energies for his community and functioning as a site of prohibition and danger, a boundary marking the limits of proper piety against disobedience. While the sources present detached satellites of Muḥammad's body, such as his preserved hairs or bottled sweat, as baraka generators that remain operational long after his death, the notion of his buried body as a transmitter of baraka meets heightened (yet inconsistent) resistance.

The Sexed Body

The network of extrahuman forces with which Muḥammad's body makes contact, including deceased humans (as in prophets inhabiting paradise), angels, and Allāh, remains homosocial in the ḥadīth sources as in the *sīra*/maghāzī texts. The closest to an outlier that I could find in these sources appears in a report from Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, in which Ibn

²⁶⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #1884, 10727, 22117, 24561, 25018, 25407, 26708.

‘Abbās narrates that during his visit to paradise, Muḥammad smelled the fragrance of Fir‘awn’s daughter’s hairdresser, who was martyred with her children for her monotheism.²⁶⁷

While the previous chapter offered a Groszian reading to Allāh’s supposed transcendence of gender, arguing that Allāh remains masculinized in the Qur’ān and sīra/maghāzī sources even if transcending corporeality, this chapter points to a heightened corporealization and gendering of Allāh in the ḥadīth sources. Muḥammad’s experience of Allāh’s cold hand, discussed earlier in the present chapter, corporealizes the masculinizing of Allāh through Muḥammad’s visual and sensory experience of a divine body in the “best form” (*aḥsan ṣūra*).²⁶⁸ The best form for a body, in dominant medical and legal discourses that gendered bodies less through a binary system than a spectrum of completion and perfection (in which women were conceptualized as inferior men, rather than as a fully separated category of human),²⁶⁹ must necessarily be masculine: the hand through which divine knowledge penetrates Muḥammad’s body may not belong to a “man,” but cannot be represented as feminine.

Jibrīl consistently appears in fully corporeal masculinity, as in Muḥammad’s description of revelation coming to him via the likeness or image of a man (*ṣūrat al-rajul*)

²⁶⁷ Ibid, #2822.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, #16738.

²⁶⁹ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). For a critical engagement of Laqueur’s argument within Islamic and Middle East studies: Ze’evi, Dror. *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 22-24.

who talks to him.²⁷⁰ Jibrīl finds fuller embodiment in multiple narrations as coming to Muḥammad and his Companions specifically in the form of a white-robed, “intensely black-haired” (*shadīd sawād al-shi’r*) man, and sometimes as a specific man from the community, as Muḥammad reports Jibrīl’s appearance to him in the likeness of Dihya al-Kalbī.²⁷¹ The most famous of these corporeal Jibrīl traditions, known popularly as the “Ḥadīth of Jibrīl,” represents Jibrīl as appearing before Muḥammad and a number of the Companions in masculine embodiment and subjecting Muḥammad to a short quiz.²⁷² In a version from Ibn Abī Shayba’s *Muṣannaf*, Jibrīl approaches and sits close to Muḥammad until their knees are touching, then places his hands on Muḥammad’s thighs and asks him, “O Muḥammad, When is the time?” to which Muḥammad replies, “The asked does not know more than the asker, but from its signs: the slave woman gives birth to her mistress, and you see the barefooted, naked shepherds excelling in buildings.”²⁷³ The *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal includes a narration from the Companion Ḥārith bin al-Nu’mān, who recalls seeing the angel and prophet together. As he passes them, Ḥārith extends the greeting of *salām* to Jibrīl, apparently under the impression that Jibrīl is a human male. Muḥammad later asks Ḥārith, “Did you see who was with me? That was Jibrīl. He returns the *salām* to you.”²⁷⁴ In a version of the famous “Ḥadīth of Jibrīl” narrated by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Jibrīl appears again as an

²⁷⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #25766.

²⁷¹ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 4, 189.

²⁷² Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick use the “ḥadīth of Gabriel” to frame their introduction to Islam, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1994).

²⁷³ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #37547.

²⁷⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #24077.

unknown man with intensely black hair and white clothing. Though a stranger to the local community, he shows no signs of wear and tear from having traveled. He again sits facing Muḥammad, touching knees and placing his hands on Muḥammad's thighs, and asks him to explain concepts such as surrender, goodness, charity, and faith, along with information concerning the end of time. After their exchange, Jibrīl leaves and Muḥammad informs the group, "That was Jibrīl. He came to you to teach you your *dīn*."²⁷⁵ Throughout these interactions, Muḥammad's presence appears to facilitate the Companions' access to Jibrīl, and Muḥammad's explanation enables them to recognize the experience as an angelic encounter. Though requiring Muḥammad as an additional degree of mediation, the Companions' witness of Jibrīl and exchanges of salām with him achieve an intensified access to the realm of the otherwise unseen. All of the known participants in these accounts—Muḥammad, Jibrīl, and the Companions narrating the episodes and their own parts in them—are men, or, in Jibrīl's case, performing human masculinity in a temporary embodiment.

In addition to the representation of Allāh and angels with sexed bodies, prophethood undergoes increasing articulation in these sources as a masculine office. Numerous traditions suggest ontological inequality between masculine and feminine bodies; examples include Muḥammad differentiating between the urine of a baby girl and that of a baby boy, naming the former as the greater impurity,²⁷⁶ and traditions in which Muḥammad describes the bodies of women as interrupters of prayer along with the bodies

²⁷⁵ Ibid, #367.

²⁷⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #757, 1149, 27412, 27416.

of donkeys and dogs.²⁷⁷ More specifically, women's bodies are disqualified from prophetic perfection in the narrations of Muḥammad naming two gendered deficiencies for which women constitute the majority of people in the hellfire: a deficiency in religious duty (*dīn*), illustrated in women missing days of the Ramaḍān fast due to menstruation, and a deficiency in intellect (*'aql*), as evidenced by women's testimony equalling half that of men.²⁷⁸

The previous chapter examined the gendering of prophethood in part as a patrilineal inheritance, passed from fathers to sons, as evidenced in the apparent relationship between Muḥammad's status as the final prophet and the Qur'ān's dissolution of Muḥammad's adoptive paternity of Zayd. In the early ḥadīth corpus, the hereditary quality of prophethood is more explicitly gendered in discussions of Muḥammad's son Ibrāhīm, who died in infancy. Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* and Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* contain Anas's assertion that if there were to be prophets after Muḥammad, Ibrāhīm would have survived, and that Ibrāhīm would have been a righteous man and prophet (*ṣiddīqān nabīyān*).²⁷⁹ The *Ṭabaqāt* also includes reports that if Ibrāhīm had lived to maturity, Muḥammad would have exempted Copts from the poll tax and freed Ibrāhīm's maternal uncles from bondage (given Ibrāhīm's Coptic heritage through his mother, Marīya).²⁸⁰ The claim that Ibrāhīm would have become a prophet if he lived to adulthood establishes prophethood as a masculine

²⁷⁷ Ibid, #3241, 12920, 20848, 21754.

²⁷⁸ G.H.A. Juynboll, "Some *Isnād*-Analytical Methods Illustrated on the Basis of Several Woman-Demeaning Sayings from *Ḥadīth* Literature," *Al-Qantara* 10, 2 (1989): 343-384.

²⁷⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #12383. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 112.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 115.

vocation, a possibility for prophets' sons but not their daughters. Repeating the *sīra*/maghāzī literatures' neglect of Fāṭima, the narrative of Ibrāhīm's unfulfilled prophetic potential is not matched by consideration of prophetic potential for Fāṭima, who reached maturity, outlived Muḥammad, and received the designation "master of women" (*sayyida al-nisā'*) from her father during his final illness. The collections of Ibn Abī Shayba, Ṭayālīsī, and Ibn Ḥanbal provide this narration of Fāṭima's gendered prestige, with variations specifying the precise domain of women under her mastery: she is the master of women of both worlds (*al-ālamīn*), Muḥammad's umma, or the people of paradise (*ahl al-janna*); some versions provide exceptions to Fāṭima's mastery in Maryam, Āsīya, and Fāṭima's mother Khadīja, or her sharing mastery (after Maryam) with Āsīya; a report additionally names Fāṭima's sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn as masters over the youths of the people of paradise (*sayidā shabāb ahl al-janna*).²⁸¹ Though Fāṭima's relation to Muḥammad privileges her in the society of paradise, her rank in the afterlife remains gendered, authorizing her only above other women, while her sexed body prohibits her from inheriting her father's rank in this world. The question of how Muḥammad's son might have impacted history by surviving into adulthood requires that his daughter's survival has no bearing on the issue. After the death of Ibrāhīm, Fāṭima's gender handicap forces the end of prophethood.

The exclusive homosociality of triangulated encounters between Allāh, Muḥammad, and angels such as Jibrīl finds additional support in an exception that proves the rule:

²⁸¹ Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, #1470. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, #32167, 32168, 32170. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #11546, 22718.

‘Ā’isha’s assertion in the *Ṭabaqāt*, “I saw Jibrīl and no other woman saw him except me.”²⁸² This would privilege ‘Ā’isha even above Muḥammad’s first wife, Khadīja, who has no knowledge of Jibrīl’s presence without Muḥammad telling her when the angel comes and goes.²⁸³ ‘Ā’isha’s claim, appearing within a list of her exclusive privileges, is potentially undermined by Umm Salama’s narrations of encounters with Jibrīl, as well as the tradition of Muḥammad’s angelic chest-opening (presented in some versions as witnessed by his wet-nurse), not to mention the Qur’ān’s account of Maryam.²⁸⁴ While the *sīra*/maghāzī and ḥadīth literatures have been shown here to abound with men’s narratives of witnessing angels, ‘Ā’isha’s claim operates on an assumption that women are generally excluded from observing angels (or at least Jibrīl). In the visions of Jibrīl reported by both ‘Ā’isha and Umm Salama, Jibrīl not only occupies a masculine embodiment but specifically resembles Dihya al-Kalbī.²⁸⁵ Claiming to have been the only woman to witness Jibrīl, ‘Ā’isha enforces the closing of prophetic experience to women; she becomes the exception that proves the rule. Additionally, Denise Spellberg notes that in the reports of both ‘Ā’isha and Umm Salama, each woman’s encounter with the angelic requires mediation through her prophetic husband, who explains to her that the mysterious man was Jibrīl.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, some reports deny her vision. The sources give variations of this tradition in which the detail of Muḥammad extending Jibrīl’s greetings of *salām* to ‘Ā’isha is preserved,

²⁸² Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 44.

²⁸³ Ibid, 46.

²⁸⁴ Qur’ān 19:17-21.

²⁸⁵ Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 41-44.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

but without references to ‘Ā’isha seeing Jibrīl with her own eyes; some versions present ‘Ā’isha as emphatically stating that she had not seen Jibrīl and that Muḥammad saw what she could not.²⁸⁷ These reports raise ‘Ā’isha’s station through the honor of salām from Jibrīl while upholding or even intensifying a barrier that isolates women from angels. In another tradition found in the *Musnad*, Muḥammad defends ‘Ā’isha against the jealousy of her co-wives by privileging her with a special proximity to revelation that simultaneously enforces the gendering of prophethood. When Umm Salama demands equitable treatment, Muḥammad tells her not to bother him regarding ‘Ā’isha, since she was the only woman in whose presence he received revelation (and while sharing a single blanket no less).²⁸⁸ ‘Ā’isha’s status becomes elevated with the suggestion that women are not only incapable of receiving revelation, but generally act as inhibitors of the prophetic faculty in men.

As in the *sīra*/maghāzī literatures, details in the marking of Muḥammad’s body as male contribute to the marking of his body as prophetic. In the *Ṭabaqāt*, Muḥammad’s circumcised status becomes not only a sign of foretold events coming to fruition, but additionally a marvel in its own right, as Ibn Sa’d reports that Muḥammad was born already circumcised and with his umbilical cord cut. Upon learning of these signs, Muḥammad’s grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib takes joy in recognizing them as promises of Muḥammad’s future greatness.²⁸⁹

Muḥammad’s penis also demonstrates his exceptionality through its capacity for function. Narrations in Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt*, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*, and Ibn Ḥanbal’s

²⁸⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #25081, 25369. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #25685, 32276.

²⁸⁸ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #25914.

²⁸⁹ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 82.

Musnad depict Muḥammad's sexual vigor as superhuman, measured in comparison to the combined power of thirty or forty men;²⁹⁰ additional reports from 'Abd al-Razzāq measure Muḥammad's sex power as that of forty to forty-five men.²⁹¹ These narrations are not attributed to Muḥammad's wives, but rather male Companions such as Anas. According to a tradition that appears in more than one report in the *Ṭabaqāt*, Muḥammad's sex power becomes extraordinary due to further angelic modification of his body. Muḥammad explains his vigor as having resulted from Jibrīl bringing him a kettle (*qidr*); when Muḥammad ate from the kettle, he became endowed with the sexual vigor of forty men.²⁹² In addition to enhancing Muḥammad's sexual power, angelic intervention also defends his sexual performance against enemies' sabotage, as shown in this chapter's discussion of Labīd ibn 'Āṣim employing sorcery to prevent Muḥammad from having intercourse with his wives.

Reports of Jibrīl's interventions in Muḥammad's sexuality mark both prophethood and masculinity with a shared act of embodied performance. Ibn Sa'd connects Muḥammad's sexual strength of forty men to performative masculinity more broadly, as the section of his *Ṭabaqāt* devoted to Muḥammad's sex power also includes the report of Muḥammad physically overpowering Rukānah, the great wrestler.²⁹³

In this chapter's section regarding Muḥammad's bodily products, I argued that the sources represent Muḥammad's semen as substantively unremarkable in terms of its

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 282. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #14155. 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, #14129.

²⁹¹ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, #14126, 14127, 14128.

²⁹² Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 282.

²⁹³ Ibid.

relation to prophetic baraka. This means that despite Muḥammad engaging in a superhuman amount of sex with his multiple wives on a nightly basis, and his bodily substances working in other contexts as transmitters of baraka, the women who regularly access prophetic semen are not represented as seeking unique benefits from contact with the material.

Despite the absence of a report in which Muḥammad names a specific benefit of contact with his semen or his Companions themselves conceptualize his semen as a source of baraka, Muḥammad's body does appear to transform other bodies through ejaculation into them. These transformed bodies can then operate as transmitters of Muḥammad's baraka into other bodies through the corporeal connections achieved by milk kinship. In the *Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Sa'd begins his entry on famed preacher and ascetic Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.728) with a report of Umm Salama's breastmilk facilitating a baraka transmission to Ḥasan from Muḥammad, who had died a decade before Ḥasan's birth:

...They say that his mother was perhaps absent and the child would cry. Umm Salama gave him her breast to keep him busy with it until his mother came. Her breast flowed and he drank from it. They are of the opinion that [Ḥasan's] wisdom and eloquence are from that baraka.²⁹⁴

Early Muslim discourses on breastfeeding share a guiding assumptions that a woman's moral character flows into the infant's body with her milk, and also that her milk is not entirely her own: in the logic of *laban al-faḥl* ("sire's milk"), a woman's milk production is directed by her husband's (or owner's) semen.²⁹⁵ By virtue of his semen's involvement, the woman's husband or owner becomes implicated in the familial

²⁹⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, 114.

²⁹⁵ Avner Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 79-81.

connections forged by her acts of breastfeeding, which become most immediately salient in legal discourses concerning marital incest.²⁹⁶ In the event of Umm Salama rendering Ḥasan al-Baṣrī a “milk son” of the baraka-transmitting prophetic body, laban al-faḥl brings added consequences: the interface of Umm Salama’s breast and Ḥasan’s mouth enables the material flow of a relation to Muḥammad from one body into another. Through her sexual relationship with Muḥammad, her body retains a trace of his body’s baraka that persists after his death; the *Ṭabaqāt* acknowledges Umm Salama’s milk as an emission of this baraka directly into Ḥasan’s digestive system that produces observable effects, namely enhanced wisdom and eloquence. Through the mediation of Umm Salama’s breast and its gendered flows, Muḥammad’s gendered flows can reach other bodies, connecting them to his prophetic corporeality and thereby transforming them.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ ‘Ā’isha, who did not have children, employs the logic of milk kinship to form connections in a markedly different way. Though ‘Ā’isha’s body does not become a conduit of Muḥammad’s bodily baraka through releasing milk that could be linked to her intercourse with Muḥammad, she does rely on the logic of milk kinship to solve a legal problem, namely norms of gender segregation that restrict her access to men. As milk kinship changes the status of men to *maḥram* (closely related to the point of becoming unmarriageable), ‘Ā’isha uses milk kinship to circumvent gender segregation; by having adult men drink the milk of her sister Umm Kulthūm, she turns these men into close relations and thereby within the limits of her social access. Harald Motzki explains that in this context, “suckling” would have signified the men consuming a few drops of milk from a dish or in a drink, rather than directly from Umm Kulthūm’s body. ‘Ā’isha defends the practice by referencing an incident in which Muḥammad had allowed Sahla bint Suhayl to “nurse” her adopted son in order to deregulate their interactions in the home. ‘Ā’isha’s rationale meets with strong disapproval from luminaries among the Companions, including two *rashidūn* caliphs (‘Umar and ‘Alī), early Qur’ān exegete Ibn Mas’ūd, and ‘Ā’isha’s own co-wives, most notably her rival Umm Salama, who regards Sahla’s permission as an isolated incident rather than the establishment of a legal norm. Harald Motzki, Nicholet Boekhoff-van der Voort, and Sean W. Anthony, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical, and Maghāzī Ḥadīth* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 39. Also Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, 30-31.

While the sources do not represent Muḥammad's semen as having been a prized conductor of baraka for those who directly accessed it, reports do seem to reflect an anxiety concerning the precise nature of his ejaculations and their relationship to prophetic corporeality. Numerous reports attributed to multiple Companions, including 'Ā'isha, describe Muḥammad waking up in a state of major ritual impurity (*janāba*) during the month of Ramaḍān, for which he would take a bath and continue his fast. These narrations, reported in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* and Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*, specifically mention that Muḥammad's ritual impurity was *not* the result of nocturnal emission.²⁹⁸ What's exactly at stake in distancing prophetic sexuality from nocturnal emissions does not become self-evident within the reports. However, another tradition found in these same collections represents Muḥammad as distinguishing between two types of dream: the *ru'ya* or visionary dream, which comes from Allāh, and the *ḥulum*, the wet dream, which comes from Shayṭān.²⁹⁹ In some reports, Muḥammad advises those who experience ḥulum to spit three times to the left and seek refuge in Allāh from the harm of the dream.³⁰⁰ For Muḥammad to experience sexual dreams and ejaculate while asleep represents the threat of a Shayṭānic intervention upon his body. Another narration from Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf* presents nocturnal emissions as simply an embarrassment, as a house guest of 'Ā'isha attempts to hide the fact of his wet dream from her; 'Ā'isha complains that rather than ruin the sheet with water, he could have simply scratched out the semen with his

²⁹⁸ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #26016, 27165, 27184, 27201. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #9070, 9077.

²⁹⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #22892, 22932, 22964, 22970. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #29535.

³⁰⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #22932, 22970, 22964, 22892.

finger nail, as she had done with Muḥammad's semen.³⁰¹ Whether the nocturnal emission amounts to demonic interference or a source of humiliation, the sources' efforts to distance Muḥammad's ritual impurity from the possibility of a wet dream uphold the perfection of his prophetic sexuality.

The sexed prophetic body also demonstrates its privileged station in the protection of Muḥammad's nakedness from the view of others. Narrations in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* discuss the episode from Muḥammad's pre-prophetic years in which he and other youths used their clothing to carry stones during the reconstruction of the Ka'ba, and an unknowable but seemingly extrahuman voice tells Muḥammad to cover himself. One version ends with the reporter's statement, "He was not seen naked after that," suggesting the possibility of a time, perhaps prior to sexual maturity, in which Muḥammad's nakedness could have been witnessed by human eyes.³⁰² In the *Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn 'Abbās notes, "His private parts (*'awra*) were not seen after that day." Ibn 'Abbās also identifies the episode as the earliest evidence of Muḥammad's destiny, "the first thing that the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, saw of prophethood."³⁰³

In the previous chapter, I discussed ways in which traditions from *sīra*/maghāzī literature construct the shielding of Muḥammad's nakedness as a demonstration of his prophethood, with 'Ā'isha's narrations in particular denying the possibility of Muḥammad's naked body being witnessed even by his sexual partners. Ibn Ḥanbal reports 'Ā'isha's

³⁰¹ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, #920.

³⁰² 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, #1105. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #24210.

³⁰³ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 124-5.

declaration, “I never looked at the genitalia of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, nor did I see the genitalia of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace.”³⁰⁴

In the *Ṭabaqāt*’s section on signs of Muḥammad’s prophethood that preceded the start of revelation, Ibn Sa’d follows his placement of the Ibn ‘Abbās narration with a report of ‘Ā’isha’s statement, “I never saw that of the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace.”³⁰⁵ ‘Ā’isha’s reference to “that” is not clarified apart from Ibn Sa’d’s placement of her report next to Ibn ‘Abbās’s narration that Muḥammad’s private parts had not been seen since his youth.³⁰⁶

In another contribution from the *Ṭabaqāt* to this imaginary of prophetic nakedness, the one shielding Muḥammad is not ‘Ā’isha but ‘Alī. The narration relates to the ritual washing of Muḥammad’s body after his death. ‘Alī recollects:

I urged that no one wash the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, other than me, [as he said:] “No one has seen my private parts except that his eye was oliberated.” Al-Faḍl and Usāma presented me water from behind a curtain, and their eyes were blindfolded. I did not take a limb except that it was like thirty men were attending to him with me until I finished his washing.³⁰⁷

‘Alī’s narration presents the vision of Muḥammad’s exposed genitalia as theoretically attainable, but at a cost of devastating injury to the viewer. ‘Alī insists that he should be the one to perform the funerary washing on the grounds that anyone who sees the naked prophetic body will be permanently disabled. Muḥammad’s genitalia, therefore, remains a site at which connections between the prophetic body and other bodies are

³⁰⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #24848.

³⁰⁵ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 124-5.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, vol. 2, 213.

simultaneously forged and denied. ‘Alī’s insistence on washing the body alone, with an implication that the physical danger of witnessing Muḥammad’s exposure does not apply to ‘Alī’s own eyes, renders prophetic nakedness as a mode of achieving or demonstrating a privileged relationship. Muḥammad’s genitalia and ‘Alī’s eyes form a linkage that is prohibited even to ‘Ā’isha, who denies her own witness of Muḥammad’s naked body.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the Qur’ān and sīra/maghāzī literatures construct prophethood as an exclusively masculine office. The sources examined in this chapter intensify the gendering of prophethood through representations of Allāh with embodied and gendered anthropomorphism, the gendering of access to angels, associations of prophethood with supernaturally enhanced masculine sexuality, attention to the sexed body of Muḥammad as a site at which prophethood is established, and various traditions that establish an ontological inequality between masculine and feminine bodies. These traditions within the ḥadīth sources construct prophethood as an ultimate performance of masculinity, while also presenting a male-sexed body as a prerequisite for prophethood.

Conclusions

Attempting a Deleuzo-Guattarian assessment of the prophetic body not for what it is, but what it can do—its potentials and limits for extending beyond itself through linkages with other bodies—I have demonstrated that the early ḥadīth sources significantly elaborate upon the capacities of Muḥammad’s body to form connections with others, opening new portals through which extrahuman energies (baraka) can move between human bodies. Furthermore, variations and unresolved tensions in Companions’ reports of Muḥammad’s bodily powers and limitations construct his body not as a unified, coherent

whole, but rather as fragmented and incoherent, an ongoing series of collisions between forces in an unfinished process of assemblage.

While multiple imaginaries of the prophetic body emerge in these sources, it can be asserted that the early ḥadīth collections emerging in the first half of the 9th century CE offer extensions of Muḥammad's corporeality in nearly every regard. Muḥammad's corporeal by-products find increasing definition through their productions within his baraka-powered body, rather than as mundane or even disgusting waste. The powers of his saliva and sweat are expanded, with his saliva transferring baraka to wells into which he spits, and his sweat functioning both as a pleasant scent for perfume and a potent carrier of baraka. In both of these cases, Muḥammad's bodily baraka might persist after his death: depositing his saliva into a well affects a permanent transformation upon the water, and his sweat is bottled to be employed as a resource in his absence. Similarly, his hair and nails retain a prophetic ontology to the degree that men ask to be buried with them for the benefit of their baraka.

The tradition of Muḥammad having a corporeal encounter with Allāh, emerging within these sources, further empowers Muḥammad's body as a site of access to divine energies: to have physical contact with Muḥammad is to touch the body that touched Allāh's body. This newly corporeal modification of Muḥammad's body by direct encounter with Allāh also entrenches gender more deeply within the prophetic body's network of extrahuman exchanges. Allāh's masculine-gendered body enters into a set of interactions that is already homosocial: Muḥammad, in the exclusively masculine office of prophethood, interacts with masculine angels and now an embodied masculine god, and mediates between the homosocial metaphysical realm and a largely homosocial scene of

Companions. Prophetic bodies are further masculinized in narrations concerning the patrilineal heritage of prophethood (and the exclusion of Fāṭima as a potential prophet), ḥadīth reports concerning women's deficiencies of dīn and intellect, and even the tradition of 'Ā'isha's interactions with Jibrīl, which privileges (and, in some narrations, constrains) her own authority while presenting all other women as typically disqualified from this degree of access to the angelic. Finally, narrations of Muḥammad's supreme sex power, presented as resultant from an angelic intervention, further present the prophetic body as confirmed by supreme performance of its gender.

Examination of specific reports concerning the possibilities of Muḥammad's body provokes not only the question of which potentials for encounter and connection become opened or closed, but *who* does the opening and closing. Most notably, reports attributed to 'Ā'isha consistently appear to shut down possibilities of linkage and baraka transmission through Muḥammad's body. Of the post-Qur'ān sources considered thus far, the text displaying the least articulated investment in the bodily powers of Muḥammad, Ma'mar's *Maghāzī* (as preserved in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaḥ*) is also the source most closely connected to 'Ā'isha, considering Ma'mar's relationship to the corpus of traditions from 'Urwah, 'Ā'isha's nephew.³⁰⁸ In the ḥadīth sources, 'Ā'isha discourages the portrayal of Muḥammad's body or its by-products as endowed with transcendent qualities or special powers at virtually every turn. In her treatment of the ascension, 'Ā'isha keeps Muḥammad's body on the ground, presents the journey as a dream or vision, and vehemently condemns the claims of Muḥammad having experienced a visionary witness of Allāh. In 'Ā'isha's accounts, Muḥammad's sweat appears to be capable of offending him, his

³⁰⁸ Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, xxii.

excreta is hidden by divine order with the apparent implication that it could bring shame to him if exposed, his naked body goes unreported, and his semen is rendered completely mundane. ‘Ā’isha also presents Muḥammad as capable of having offensive breath, as she points out in her complaint after Muḥammad returns from the home of her co-wife Zaynab.³⁰⁹ ‘Ā’isha’s reports do allow that corporeal mechanisms such as saliva, breath, and touch can enable bodies to act upon each other (or themselves) for purposes of healing, protection, and the harnessing of baraka, but she does not present this ritual efficacy as the exclusive domain of prophets.³¹⁰

‘Ā’isha’s corpus of narrations, consistently closing possibilities for baraka-transferring linkages between Muḥammad’s body and those of his Companions, can be read in opposition to the traditions that enable an increasingly extended prophetic corporeality. In these traditions, another Companion figures prominently: Anas ibn Mālik. Anas appears in association with wells that are blessed by Muḥammad’s acts of drinking, spitting, and

³⁰⁹ Jealous of the time that Muḥammad spends with Zaynab, ‘Ā’isha tells Muḥammad that she smells the ill-odored maghāfir beverage on him; Muḥammad asserts that he had been drinking honey instead. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #26377. ‘Ā’isha is not the only reporter suggesting that Muḥammad could have bad breath. Another tradition, associated with Jābir, asserts that Muḥammad not only discouraged eaters of garlic from visiting mosques, but personally avoided garlic out of concern for his angelic interlocutors, who were offended by the same odors as humans. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #10226, 15078.

³¹⁰ ‘Ā’isha recalls Muḥammad describing earth mixed with “the saliva of some of us” as having healing capabilities, without specifically noting this as an exclusively prophetic privilege. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #19171. During Muḥammad’s fatal illness, ‘Ā’isha attempts to imitate Muḥammad’s healing practices, for which she uses both of their bodies. ‘Ā’isha breathes on Muḥammad, following his practice of breathing on the sick (after reciting the final two sūras of the Qur’ān, essentially exhaling the Qur’ān onto the sick body); she imitates Muḥammad’s practice of rubbing his hands on the sick person’s body by applying Muḥammad’s hand to his body, rather than rub his body with her own hand. ‘Ā’isha’s healing technology appears to reflect both the efficacy of her own body’s acts and the possibility of a special privilege inherent to Muḥammad’s prophetic body. Ibid., #25342, 26793.

ablution; his mother, Umm Sulaym, appears as the collector of Muḥammad's sweat, hoping for its baraka to extend to her children; he witnesses the scars from Muḥammad's stitches, testifying to the angelic opening of the prophetic torso. Between the collected reports of 'Ā'isha and Anas emerge divergent visions of Muḥammad's body and the possibilities for baraka to flow between bodies. Prophetic sexuality provides an example: while Anas boasts of Muḥammad's sexual vigor in comparison to multitudes of men, 'Ā'isha narrates the tradition of Muḥammad's performance becoming vulnerable to one man's magical assault. This possibility for rupture and fragmentation becomes highlighted or minimized in relation to the constraints of genre: collections in the *musnad* genre, organized by Companions rather than topic, preserve specific Companions as distinct individual reporters (or networks of reporters), producing different conceptions of the prophetic body's boundaries when a reader moves from 'Ā'isha's *musnad* to that of Anas. In contrast, the thematically organized *muṣannaf* genre and chronologically narrative *sīra*/*maghāzī* works enable intensified imagination of Muḥammad's body as having been collectively reconstructed through a more or less singular and united communal memory, in which the varying prophetic bodies constructed by two Companions such as 'Ā'isha and Anas blend into each other to form a new assemblage.

When read for its departures from other Companions' *musnads*, 'Ā'isha's *musnad* calls further attention to the highly gendered structure of corporeal baraka transactions. In these traditions, baraka performs the work that Sedgwick attributes to desire, becoming "the affective or social force, the glue...that shapes an important relationship."³¹¹

³¹¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 2.

Sedgwick's treatment of desire resonates with the Deleuzian desiring-machine, forged by connections between bodies. The desiring-machines produced by Muḥammad's baraka exchanges are inescapably gendered, as gender identification determines the kinds of access that Companions can have to Muḥammad's baraka-conducting body. In these narrations, baraka reads as an animator of male homosocial relationships and desire. Even the tradition of Umm Sulaym bottling Muḥammad's sweat (with some versions creating additional distance between Muḥammad and herself through the detail that she procured the sweat from a leather mat, not by direct contact with Muḥammad's own skin) presents her as a point of mediation between Muḥammad and her son, Anas. Muḥammad is touched by the hand of a beautifully and perfectly masculine god; Muḥammad spits in the eyes of men, not women; he sprays his saliva on male corpses; men covet his phlegm and ablution water; a man drinks his blood; men collect his hair and fingernails; men praise him for his tremendous sex power; and men offer highly detailed reports of his beautiful appearance. Muḥammad's performance of taḥnīk and saliva transferral takes place as an exclusively homosocial exchange, positioning him as a father who initiates male infants into the community. Baraka circulates most fluidly and prolifically between male bodies. Operating within the constraints of gendered interactions, Muḥammad's bodily baraka produces a homosocial and patriarchal structure in which men (and/or extrahuman males) transmit baraka primarily between each other. Women have limited access to this largely closed economy, foremost through the capacity of men to extend their corporeality through sexual access to women's bodies. Women can give birth to baraka-conducting sons, as exemplified in Muḥammad's own conception (his father transferring light to his mother), or transmit their sexual partners' baraka into other bodies through milk kinship, as in Umm

Salama breastfeeding Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Otherwise, women act as carriers of prophetic baraka by facilitating access, preserving Muḥammad's bottled sweat for their children or presenting male infants to Muḥammad for him to transfer his saliva.

If the sources represent material substances from Muḥammad as endowed with baraka while generally excluding women's bodies as conduits of baraka, a point of tension appears with Fāṭima, who is simultaneously a woman and a product of Muḥammad's baraka-transmitting body. The literatures considered here do not present Fāṭima as having inherited her father's power: her saliva does not heal the sick or cause wells to overflow, and Companions do not treat substances associated with her as locii of baraka; I could not find reports of her ablution water or menstrual garments conducting baraka to those who encounter them. 'Ā'isha, meanwhile, does not have Fāṭima's potential advantage of being Muḥammad's progeny, nor does she clearly pursue baraka through Muḥammad's bodily products in the manner of other Companions. 'Ā'isha's reports do serve to privilege her authority by virtue of bodily intimacy to Muḥammad, but operate in a different relationship to the homosocial structure of the baraka economy than reports from privileged male Companions. In addition to the variety of sectarian projects and geographically divergent networks that can inform the narratives attributed to particular Companions, gender and sexuality also contribute to the ways in which Muḥammad's body becomes open or closed to his Companions and provide diverse modes of authorization for his reporters.

The early ḥadīth collections considered in this chapter mark a dramatic extension of prophetic corporeality and its powers in comparison to the Qur'ān's virtual disembodiment of Muḥammad and even the miraculous prophetic body as represented in the *sīra*/maghāzī texts. The complexities of Muḥammad's bodily powers, demonstrated through the tensions

and conflicts in reports of his body's baraka-transmitting linkages to others, also display Muḥammad's body less as a coherent, bounded unit with clear potentials and limits than a Deleuzo-Guattarian assemblage. The prophetic body emerges as a product formed, reformed, and destabilized by ongoing collaborations and interferences, subject to shifting relations between the forces that comprise it. Amidst changes in the currents that produce the ḥadīth corpus, Muḥammad's body continues to undergo expansions, constrictions, openings, and closings.

3. Skeletizing the Baraka Machine: the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan Era

Introduction

The ongoing formation of the ḥadīth corpus over the course of the 9th century CE is marked by an increasing trend towards using only the most rigorously evidenced ḥadīths, whether by evaluation of a report's chain of transmitters or by widespread scholarly acceptance.³¹² In contrast to Ibn Ḥanbal and the master critics of his generation, whose massive collections included numerous reports that satisfied varying standards of evidence, scholars in their students' generation produced collections with boasts that they had only included the most rigorously authenticated reports and discarded weaker narrations. These collections, comprising the *ṣaḥīḥ* and *sunan* genres, are regarded as expressions of a "Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement" that in many ways departed profoundly from the preexisting culture of ḥadīth transmission.³¹³ Six of the collections from this phenomenon enjoy widespread canonical authorization as the "Six Books" (*Kutub Sitta*); two of these Six Books, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d.870) and Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d.875), are especially privileged as foundational texts for Sunnī intellectual tradition.³¹⁴ The following discussion examines treatments of Muḥammad's

³¹² Brown, *Hadith*, 31.

³¹³ Ibid, 31-32.

³¹⁴ Ibid, 32.

body in sunan/ṣaḥīḥ works roughly corresponding to the second half of the 9th century CE, considering the impact of methodological and ideological shifts upon the prophetic body's powers and limitations.

While intensified attention to isnād-based criticism certainly produces consequences for the texts (and even if these isnād critics were more open to assessing reports by textual content [*matn*] than they were often willing to admit³¹⁵), I suggest that observable patterns within these works do not amount to a discursive unity or a sweeping and absolute transformation in the corpus's treatment of Muḥammad's body. Some narratives do appear to be empowered or marginalized within the texts of this period; specific possibilities for prophetic corporeality are privileged, erased, or appear in completely new traditions without observable precedents in previous collections; and broad trends regarding imaginaries of Muḥammad's body and its capabilities can be observed. Despite significant developments in the corpus during this period, however, Muḥammad's body resists a uniform construction across the literature. While these sources, particularly the collections that would become the Six Books, may appear to give the prophetic body increased structure or "skeletalization," the prophetic body remains significantly fluid and capable of change from one report to another.

Sources

Six of the collections examined in this chapter are marked by inclusion in a canonical roster known popularly as "the Six Books." These are the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of

³¹⁵ Jonathan A.C. Brown, "The Rules of Matn Criticism: There Are No Rules," *Islamic Law and Society*, vol.19, issue 4 (2012): 356-396.

Bukhārī (810-870) and Muslim (815-875), the *Sunan* works of Nasā'ī (829-915), Abū Dāwūd (817-889), and Ibn Maja (824-887), and the *Jami'* of Tirmidhī (824-892). The “Two *Ṣaḥīḥs*” (*al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*) of Bukhārī and Muslim achieved an especially prestigious status in the 10th-11th centuries CE, established as the foundation for a canonical roster that would come to include the other collections.³¹⁶

With the exception of Ibn Maja, the compilers of these works shared in a deeply interconnected network of ḥadīth scholars centered around hubs such as Ibn Ḥanbal, as demonstrated in their considerable overlap of reported traditions and sources.³¹⁷ Within the construct of the Six Books, Ibn Maja's *Sunan* stands as a significant outlier. James Robson describes Ibn Maja's collection as having a “somewhat chequered career” and mixed critical reception prior to its achieving inclusion into the Six Books.³¹⁸ Brown argues that Ibn Maja's *Sunan* was gradually admitted into this six-collection canon precisely because Ibn Maja existed outside the scholarly network that linked the other collectors,

³¹⁶ J. Robson, “Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

³¹⁷ Jonathan A.C. Brown, “The Canonization of Ibn Majah: Authenticity vs. Utility in the Formation of the Sunni Hadith Canon,” *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 129 (2012): 169-181. While Ibn Maja appears as an outsider for the scholarly networks in which he collected transmissions, however, representation of the rest of the Six Books' compilers as a homogenous group betrays some internal diversity. Nasā'ī, for example, was fatally beaten in Damascus due to his preference for 'Alī over Mu'āwīya, having narrated on the exceptional virtues of the former while refusing to do so for the latter. Christopher Melchert, “The Life and Works of al-Nasā'ī,” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 59 (2014): 377-407.

³¹⁸ James Robson, “The Transmission of Ibn Majah's 'Sunan,’” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, vol. 3, issue 2 (1958): 129-141.

which meant that his archive included numerous traditions that could not be found in their collections and therefore expanded the corpus of canonical reports.³¹⁹

While the collections of Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Maja would gradually come to achieve collective canonical status as the “Six Books,” it is important to recognize that their canonization arrived through an historical process, rather than as an intuitive fact from the moment of their release into the world. Treating the Six Books as a self-evident canon projects later judgments upon them, falsely assuming a natural unity among the sources as well as consensus in their reception. This particular arrangement of sources was by no means the only option, as traditions of Sunnī ḥadīth scholarship offer multiple possibilities for imagining the canon. Some scholars’ lists of preferred sources, for example, shunned Ibn Maja’s *Sunan* in favor of collections such as Malik ibn Anas’s *Muwaṭṭa*.³²⁰ Moreover, that there would be a roster of six canonical works was not a natural given; some scholars favored shorter or longer lists of authorized collections. Ibn Khaldūn refers to a five-book canon while believing a six-book canon to represent the opinion of eastern Muslims,³²¹ while Ibn Ḥajar’s ranking of the ten most trustworthy sources after the Six Books could present a sixteen-book canon.³²² This chapter does refer to the seminal ḥadīth collections of Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Maja as the collective “Six Books,” but with significant caution in regard to overstating the discursive unity of these texts.

³¹⁹ Brown, “The Canonization of Ibn Majah.”

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Robson, “The Transmission of Ibn Majah’s ‘Sunan.’”

³²² Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 80.

In addition to his *Sunan*, Tirmidhī also produced a collection that appears to be particularly salient for this chapter’s discussion: his *Kitāb al-Shamā’il*, dedicated to describing qualities of Muḥammad’s physical appearance, possessions, and habits. The *Shamā’il* appears to be modeled after organizational elements of Ibn Sa’d’s treatment of Muḥammad in his *Ṭabaqāt*.³²³ In the case of Nisā’ī’s *Sunan*, this chapter examines two collections, his “greater” and “lesser” versions. Nasā’ī’s *Sunan al-Ṣuḡhrā*, a refined version of his immense *Sunan al-Kubrā* boasting heightened rigor for authentication, provides the *Sunan* that finds inclusion in the Six books.

Beyond the compilers whose works would come to be privileged within the Six Books rubric, this chapter examines significant collections from latter 9th-century CE by scholars such as ‘Abd Allāh al-Dārimī (d.869), whose *Sunan* is regarded by some traditionists as more authentic and worthy of the canonical roster than the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja.³²⁴

Bodily Products

Ḥadīth collections examined in the previous chapter elaborate upon the representations of Muḥammad’s bodily products found in the *sīra*/maghāzī literature, expanding the potential for substances from Muḥammad’s body to transmit baraka and extend his corporeality in linkage to other bodies. Between the *sīra*/maghāzī literature and early ḥadīth collections, narrations consistently privilege Muḥammad’s saliva as an

³²³ G.H. Juynboll, “Al-Tirmidhī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

³²⁴ J. Robson, “al-Dārimī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

instrument for forming linkages with the bodies of his Companions. The ḥadīth collections of the later 9th century CE preserve the imaginary of Muḥammad's saliva as ritually efficacious and a transmitter of the beneficent energies that flow through his body. Traditions such as Jābir's narration of Muḥammad covering the body of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy with his shirt and saliva, Yazīd bin Abī Ubayd's report of Muḥammad healing Salama's leg by spitting into his wound, and Muḥammad healing 'Ālī's eyes by spitting into them, find representation in the Six Books.³²⁵ Moreover, saliva remains unique among Muḥammad's bodily products as a mode of mediation and corporeal linkage to be recognized by 'Ā'isha. 'Ā'isha's narrations of Muḥammad performing taḥnik and saliva transferral to infants (specifically 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr) and incorporating his saliva into rituals of healing, as well as her assertion that saliva had poured from Muḥammad's mouth onto her during his final illness, appear throughout the sources.³²⁶ In addition, 'Ā'isha also reports that she had softened Muḥammad's miswak with her own mouth, causing her saliva to mix with his at the time of his death.³²⁷ 'Ā'isha's narrations establish the efficacy of saliva in ritual practices, but do not self-evidently establish prophetic saliva

³²⁵ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #1197, #3909. Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (IslamWeb), #4982. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=158&hid=4203&pid=0. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra* (IslamWeb), #2131. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=315&pid=137573. *Sunan al-Sughra*, (IslamWeb), #1885. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=319&pid=146831. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, (IslamWeb), #1513. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=173&pid=109011. Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Sunan* (IslamWeb), #3398. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=184&pid=113467.

³²⁶ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #2885, 3645. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3645.

³²⁷ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #2885, 4842.

as special in this regard, as narrations from other Companions attest to members of the original Muslim community using their own saliva in healing practices.³²⁸ For ‘Ā’isha to attest to Muḥammad employing his saliva for ritual purposes does not itself betray her general lack of investment regarding his body’s powers.

As in the treatment of Muḥammad’s saliva, the Six Books and contemporary sources do not offer meaningful departures from earlier ḥadīth collections in their representations of Muḥammad’s sweat. Prophetic perspiration continues to signify a special relationship to divine forces when seen or smelled by Companions. Bukhārī includes a narration from Anas in which Anas recalls that he has never smelled perfume sweeter than Muḥammad’s sweat; in the narration, Anas also mentions that he had never touched silk softer than the palm of Muḥammad’s hand.³²⁹ In a report of the Umm Sulaym perfume tradition, Bukhārī adds that as Anas’s death approached (roughly 80 years after the death of Muḥammad), Anas still possessed the perfume made from Muḥammad’s sweat, and that Anas requested for the perfume to be mixed with the *ḥanūṭ* that would be used in his funeral preparations.³³⁰

As in the works of the previous generation, these reports of transcendent qualities in Muḥammad’s sweat are countered by ‘Ā’isha’s narration of the black wool cloak that Muḥammad throws away, which she attributes to him not liking its smell after he sweats in

³²⁸ Ibid, #4648. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4088. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi’* (IslamWeb), #1989. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=195&pid=120459. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #2968. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, #2147. Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #10367.

³²⁹ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3319.

³³⁰ Ibid, #5836.

it. The tradition appears in Nasā'ī's *Kubrā* collection and Abū Dāwūd's *Sunan*.³³¹ Also consistent with earlier sources, 'Ā'isha appears as a source for the representation of Muḥammad's sweat as a symptom of divine activity upon his body, namely the descent of the Qur'ān. In reports included by Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, and Tirmidhī, 'Ā'isha quotes Muḥammad as explaining the various forms in which revelation came to him, adding her own remark that she had witnessed profuse perspiration from his forehead even on an intensely cold day.³³² Another set of reports from 'Ā'isha directly relate Muḥammad's excessive sweat during his reception of revelation with her exoneration from rumors of adultery, as 'Ā'isha observes Muḥammad sweating profusely prior to his announcing that Allāh had confirmed her innocence.³³³ Though 'Ā'isha's narrations do not treat the sweat itself as endowed with special qualities, the change in Muḥammad's bodily condition serves to establish his body as the site of mediation between Allāh and Muḥammad's community; the appearance of profuse sweat reveals that Muḥammad's judgment is not his own, but a divine revelation.

As in earlier sources, the Six Books and most sources from the period considered do not generally treat prophetic urine as remarkable. In relation to the transmission of baraka through substances produced by Muḥammad, his urine seems to remain unthinkable as a resource. The silence of the sources is observable in 'Ā'isha's account of Muḥammad on his deathbed from Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il*, in which 'Ā'isha reports that before expiring, Muḥammad requested a container in which he could urinate; consistent with 'Ā'isha's broader corpus of reports concerning Muḥammad's body, the narration does not present

³³¹ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #3554. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #9182, 9280.

³³² Tirmidhī, *Jamī'*, #3596. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #994. *Sunan al-Sughra*, #10615. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #2.

³³³ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #2518. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #2770.

Muḥammad's final urination as anything beneficial for those who have access to the product. No one is portrayed as desiring contact with the urine or hoping to bottle it, as Umm Sulaym had done with his sweat.³³⁴ This tradition can be found in sources such as the *Ṭabaqāt* and Nasā'ī's *Sunan* works, though in most reports it is unclear whether Muḥammad receives the container and manages to urinate before passing away.³³⁵ Tirmidhī's version mentions the detail that prior to the moment of his expiration, Muḥammad did urinate, but makes no mention of what the Companions did with the urine after Muḥammad's death. Though the corpus provides numerous reports of Companions treating substances from Muḥammad's body as ways of accessing his special properties, these reports do not present the Companions as imagining that Muḥammad's urine could provide the same beneficent energies as his sweat, saliva, blood, hair, or fingernails. Though Muḥammad's deathbed saliva specifically appears in traditions of his final illness as a mode of meaningful connection to other Companions ('Alī or 'Ā'isha), his deathbed urine is neglected.

Muḥammad's excretory system receives attention in the Kutub Sitta collections for the salience of his personal habits to questions of correct practice and ritual purity, not the substance of his waste itself. The collections offer reports on questions of whether

³³⁴ Tirmidhī, *Shamā'il* (IslamWeb), #374.

http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=193&pid=119467.

³³⁵ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, 200. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #33. *Sunan al-Kubra*, #6223. Tirmidhī, *Shamā'il*, #374.

Muḥammad stood or squatted to urinate,³³⁶ the direction that he faced,³³⁷ and the manner in which he cleaned himself.³³⁸ A minor tradition, found in the collections of Nasā'ī and Abū Dāwūd, represents Muḥammad as keeping a vessel under his bed for the purpose of urinating at night.³³⁹ Again, these reports serve purely legal considerations, answering the question of whether keeping a vessel for such purposes (and therefore having urine in the house, which some reporters would condemn as a repellant to angels³⁴⁰) is permitted. Information on Muḥammad's acts of making waste present these events as establishing precedents rather than narrations of proximity between the Companions and baraka-laden materials. Companions who assisted Muḥammad by carrying water or providing him with stones³⁴¹ might become privileged and authorized by their degree of intimacy with Muḥammad, but these collections do not portray them as caring specifically about the feces or urine that had been produced within the prophetic body.

³³⁶ While traditions differ as to how Muḥammad urinated, 'Ā'isha vehemently condemns those who report that Muḥammad stood while relieving himself. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, #12. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #29; *Sunan al-Kubra*, #25.

³³⁷ Jābir, for example, reports that Muḥammad had prohibited urinating while facing the direction of Mecca, but adds that he witnessed Muḥammad doing so in the final year of his life. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, #9. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #12.

³³⁸ For learning their toilet practices from Muḥammad, polytheists reportedly mocked the Companions. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #391.

³³⁹ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #22. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #32; *Sunan al-Kubra*, #31.

³⁴⁰ Ibn Abī Shayba provides a tradition stating that angels will not enter a house in which there is urine. *Muṣannaf*, #1845.

³⁴¹ One example includes 'Urwa bin al-Mughīra, who appears in isnāds as the source for a narration that his father carried water for Muḥammad to clean himself after relief. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #119. Ibn Maja, *Sunan*, #538.

For consideration of what Muḥammad's body can do—how this body connects to the transcendent forces that modify, act upon, and flow through it, and how it connects in turn with the Companions, who rely on his body for access to those forces—prophetic urine provokes further attention. In a departure from the practice-centered narrations found in these collections, one source from the period does present Muḥammad's urine as a conduit of baraka. The tradition of Muḥammad urinating into a jar that he kept under his bed, presented in two of the Six Books as relevant for questions of praxis, appears in Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's *al-Aḥād wa al-Mathānī* as a narrative of encounter between a Companion and Muḥammad's bodily baraka:

The Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, used to have a bowl from date-palm that he urinated into and then put under his bed. Then came a woman—they say that she was Baraka, who came with Umm Ḥabība from al-Ḥabasha (Ethiopia)—and she drank it, and the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, looked for it. They say: Baraka drank it and when he asked her, she said, “I drank it.” He said, “You have been brought from the fire,” or he said, “protection” (*junna*) or its meaning.³⁴²

Salvation from afterlife punishments emerged from Muḥammad's body as a literal flow from his penis that could be successfully accessed by ingestion. Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's source for the report of Baraka's drinking, 'Alī bin Maymūn al-'Aṭṭār, relates from the same *isnād* of Ḥajjāj < Ibn Jurayj < Hujayma < Umayma as shorter versions in the collections of Nasā'ī and Abū Dāwūd, which state that Muḥammad urinated into a vessel that he kept under the bed but make no mention of the urine being consumed. The account of Baraka consuming prophetic urine adheres to the narrative formula found in other accounts of Companions interacting with Muḥammad's bodily products. As in the tradition of Umm Sulaym

³⁴² Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *al-Aḥād wa-l-Mathānī* (IslamWeb), #2983.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=277&pid=129843.

obtaining Muḥammad's sweat for her perfume and Mālik ibn Sinān consuming Muḥammad's blood directly from his open wound, Baraka drinks Muḥammad's urine without Muḥammad first having a chance to approve or disapprove. Similar to the episode in which Umm Sulaym bottles his sweat, Muḥammad must ask Baraka for an explanation. As in the case of Mālik ibn Sinān and the bloody wound, Muḥammad then approves with an announcement of his urine's soteriological benefits for its consumer. Unlike Umm Sulaym, who explains to Muḥammad that his sweat makes for the greatest perfume (and in one variant, reveals hope that baraka from his sweat will benefit her children), Baraka's interest in Muḥammad's urine is not articulated. The report does not address Baraka's perception of the substance, that is, whether or not she recognized it as urine (or specifically as Muḥammad's urine) before or during her consumption. Nor is it clear whether she believed that beneficent energies could pass out of a prophetic body through his urine and that she could access these energies for herself by drinking it. While the report does not display investment in Baraka's subjectivity, its departure from other versions of the "bowl under the bed" tradition opens a new portal through which Companions can experience the material flow of baraka from Muḥammad's body.

Ibn Abī 'Āṣim provides another outlier among these sources in his report of an encounter between 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and Muḥammad's blood. As discussed earlier, Ibn al-Zubayr had received a transmission of Muḥammad's saliva directly into his mouth as an infant. In the decades after Muḥammad's death, Ibn al-Zubayr engaged in repeated rebellions against the caliphate, first aligning with his aunt 'Ā'isha against 'Alī as her infantry commander in the Battle of the Camel, then with 'Alī's son Ḥusayn against Yazīd, and finally leading his own revolt after Ḥusayn's death, during which he was killed in 692

CE.³⁴³ Distinguished in traditions by his ingestion of Muḥammad's saliva or blood, Ibn al-Zubayr's interior nature and future significance become marked (or produced) in part through his body's modes of consuming portions from the prophetic body. At the time of the encounter, Ibn al-Zubayr, who was born roughly two years after Muḥammad's migration to Medina, could not have been more than eight years old. The account appears as Ibn al-Zubayr's recollection of the event a generation later to his own son, 'Āmir ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr. 'Āmir reports of his father:

[‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr] came to the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, while he was getting cupped. When he finished, he said, “O ‘Abd Allāh, go with this blood and pour it out so that no one will see it.” When he stepped away from the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, he took the blood and drank it. [Muḥammad] said, “O ‘Abd Allāh, what did you do with the blood?” [Ibn al-Zubayr] said, “I put it in a hiding-place where I thought that it would be hidden from the people.” [Muḥammad] said, “Perhaps you drank it.” [Ibn al-Zubayr] said, “Yes.” [Muḥammad] said, “O ‘Abd Allāh, why did you drink the blood? Woe to you from the people, and woe to the people from you” (*Wayl laka min al-nās wa wayl lil-nās minka*).³⁴⁴

While prophetic blood reemerges with this tradition as a thinkable resource for baraka, Muḥammad's response to Ibn al-Zubayr reflects ways in which different products and portions of Muḥammad's body, when detached from his body, acquire different meanings and values. Ibn al-Zubayr, after all, also appears in the sources as the newborn baby who is brought to Muḥammad and receives taḥnīk from him; the first food to enter the baby's belly, the sources report, was Muḥammad's saliva.³⁴⁵ In contrast to the Kūfa-based saliva tradition in which Ibn al-Zubayr becomes privileged for his reception of

³⁴³ H.A.R. Gibb, “‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

³⁴⁴ Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *al-Aḥād wa-l-Mathānī*, #538.

³⁴⁵ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4006, 4008. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3644, 3645, 5072.

prophetic saliva, this Baṣra-based tradition presents Ibn al-Zubayr's act of drinking blood as a perverted attempt at intercorporeality that Muḥammad seems to reject (or at least read as an ominous indicator of Ibn al-Zubayr's destiny as defeated rebel and slain "anti-Caliph"³⁴⁶). In the hands of different narrators who describe Ibn al-Zubayr's consumption of prophetic saliva or blood, his mouth becomes a machine that succeeds or fails at achieving connections to Muḥammad through prophetic corporeal flows.

As a transmitter of baraka, Muḥammad's hair appears to be less complicated than his blood. While I could not find reports of people directly ingesting hairs from Muḥammad, reports do present prophetic hairs as potent transmitters of baraka, particularly to liquids in which they have been placed. In Bukhārī's report of Umm Sulaym making perfume from Muḥammad's sweat, the mixture also includes prophetic hairs.³⁴⁷ Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* additionally preserves reports in which Umm Salama shows men hairs of Muḥammad that she keeps in a container; in one narration, 'Uthmān bin 'Abd Allāh recalls his people sending him to Umm Salama with a bowl of water, explaining that anyone suffering from the evil eye or other ailments would send water to Umm Salama; he also mentions the small container in which she kept hairs of Muḥammad, adding that he had looked into the container and seen the red hairs for himself.³⁴⁸ By dipping the hairs into the water, Umm Salama transmits Muḥammad's healing baraka to the water. In turn, drinking the water becomes a mode by which the ill person can ingest traces of prophetic baraka from the hair. Umm Salama thereby extends the reach of Muḥammad's body across

³⁴⁶ Gibb, "'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr."

³⁴⁷ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #5836.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, #5473.

space and time, healing those who are both geographically distant (as ‘Uthmān narrates, “My people sent me”) and living in the generations after Muḥammad’s death. Possession of the prophetic hairs also empowers Umm Salama as a controller of access to prophetic baraka in a post-prophetic time. For Bukhārī, this representation of Muḥammad’s hair speaks less to a need for discussing prophetic ontology than questions of praxis in a post-prophetic age: the report’s value consists in offering an eyewitness account of the hair’s appearance to determine Muḥammad’s personal practice. Bukhārī’s organization of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* does not present these reports with an expressed interest in theorizing about the corporeal transmission of baraka, but rather places them in his section, *bāb mā yudhkar fī al-shayb* (“What is Said About Gray Hair”) for the salience of Muḥammad’s red hairs to questions of using dye.³⁴⁹

In resonance with earlier collections, traditions of what I have called “baraka water,” the flowing of water from within Muḥammad’s body, particularly his hands, find strong representation within the sources. Traditions of Muḥammad producing water for drinking and/or ablution from his body, attributed to Companions such as Anas, Jābir, and Ibn Mas’ūd, appear in four of the Six Books, including both of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*.³⁵⁰ In a version of the tradition from Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, reported by Sālīm bin Abī al-Ja’d on the authority of Jābir, locates the metaphysical flows of baraka in the material flows of water from Muḥammad’s hands:

[Jābir] said, “I was with the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, and the time for ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr came and we had no water except a remnant that was

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, #195, 3329. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4231. Tirmidhī, *Jamī’*, #3595. Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #75.

put in a vessel and brought to the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace.” He said, “He put his hand in it and [water] ejected from between his fingers,” and he said, “[Muḥammad] said, ‘Hurry, people of wuḍū’. The baraka is from Allāh.” He said, “The people did wuḍū’ and drank.” He said, “I eagerly tried to put what I could in my stomach, as I knew that it was baraka.” I said to Jābir, “How many of you were there?” He said, “One thousand, four hundred.”³⁵¹

Jābir not only reports that Muḥammad had identified the water as divinely gifted baraka, but adds that he had recognized the powerful gains to be achieved by ingesting this baraka into his body. Baraka water is not typical water that happens to come from atypical origins; nor does its emergence from within Muḥammad’s body serve only as an intellectual proof by which sound minds can recognize his prophethood. Rather, Jābir’s narration presents Muḥammad’s baraka water as a mode by which baraka becomes materially accessible. The water offers a vehicle by which baraka can be ejected from Muḥammad’s body and ultimately into Jābir’s stomach, producing a new Companion body infused with material linkage to the prophetic body and its flows. Jābir’s narration, therefore, not only represents Muḥammad’s body as connecting to other bodies through its by-products, but Jābir’s own body as one affected by its reception of those by-products, having consumed and ingested Muḥammad’s baraka.

The ḥadīth sources of the later 9th century, both building upon the musnad and muṣannaf works of the previous generations and narrowing the field of usable ḥadīths, remain thematically consistent with the earlier collections. The most public and immediately accessible substances from Muḥammad’s body, his saliva and sweat, retain their privileged positions in regard to transmitting baraka from the prophetic body to others. Muḥammad’s blood, represented in one narration from the sīra/maghāzī literature

³⁵¹ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #5235.

as consumed by a Companion, remains neglected in the ḥadīth corpus as a site of encounter between the Companions and Muḥammad's internal baraka. The foremost departure offered within these sources, found only in the reports of Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, introduces Muḥammad's urine as such a potent baraka transmitter that drinking it exempts a Companion from hellfire. The report of Baraka drinking prophetic urine does not achieve inclusion in the sources that would become privileged as canonical. Nonetheless, Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's report appears as a variant of reports within the Six Books corpus (via Nasā'ī and Abū Dāwūd) concerning Muḥammad's nighttime urination, closely connected to these reports both in textual content and a shared chain of transmitters. While Nasā'ī and Abū Dāwūd report Muḥammad's nighttime urination and the container under his bed strictly for its relevance as an authorizing precedent, Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's longer version introduces urine as a salvific agent through which Muḥammad's body can modify the bodies and afterlife conditions of his Companions. Despite the significant constriction of the corpus that the texts of the later 9th century are supposed to have achieved, uncertainty regarding the powers of Muḥammad's bodily fluids persists between collections. The question of whether waste substances produced by Muḥammad's body represent the limits of his corporeality, being from him but not *of* him, or enhance his body's power to penetrate and merge with other bodies, remains open and unstable.

The Modified Body

The Six Books and contemporary ḥadīth sources preserve the representation of Muḥammad's body as one subjected to modification by angelic or divine forces. The significant shrinking of the corpus that occurs between Ibn Ḥanbal's massive *Musnad* and

the less inclusive texts of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*/Sunan movement serves to constrain some of the variation within these traditions. In *Eye of the Beholder*, Uri Rubin examines this constriction of the corpus in regard to the tradition of Muḥammad's angelic surgery, arguing that changes in representations of the opening of Muḥammad's chest reflect a rigid and systematic editorial project among the ḥadīth scholars and *sīra* authors.³⁵² Rubin argues that a definitive change in the imaginary of Muḥammad's body establishes itself at a clear moment in the development of the corpus. As Brooke Olson Vuckovic points out in her critique of Rubin's thesis, however, Rubin overestimates the coherence of this trend within the *sīra* and ḥadīth literatures.³⁵³ While sources do appear to move away from a childhood chest-opening in favor of narrations that relocate the angelic surgery prior to Muḥammad's ascension, Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* retains a report, attributed to Anas, in which Jibrīl cuts open and cleanses Muḥammad's body during Muḥammad's childhood. The narration includes Anas's remark that he observed the marks of the stitching on Muḥammad's chest, and also describes Jibrīl's removal of a clot from Muḥammad's chest with the explanation that the clot represents Shayṭān's share in him.³⁵⁴ While the reports included in these sources certainly marginalize the possibility of a *ḥazz al-Shayṭān* or "black spot" and additionally favor the surgery taking place later in Muḥammad's life, reading the chest-opening tradition for a DeleuzoGuattarian question of "What can a body do?"—examining Muḥammad's body as the sum of its powers and limits in relation to forming

³⁵² Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 59.

³⁵³ Brooke Olson Vuckovic, *Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns: The Legacy of the Mi'raj in the Formation of Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 18.

³⁵⁴ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #240.

interconnections with other bodies—the sources continue to present a degree of instability.

Between the possibilities for the chest opening found in these sources, the narrations present different consequences for Muḥammad's body. The representation of the surgery as taking place prior to Muḥammad's ascension presents bodily modification as a prerequisite for Muḥammad's physical entry into another realm and interaction with a host of extrahuman forces. These narrations do not make reference to an undesirable or abjected portion of Muḥammad's body that must be removed, but nonetheless establish that his body requires purification and the corporeal implantation of enhanced wisdom and belief. These interventions upon properly modify Muḥammad's body to enable its entry into a physical space beyond the world of living humans. Muslim's outlier ḥadīth, meanwhile, does not clearly specify the function of the surgery beyond removal of a demonic portion from within Muḥammad's body. Without fully subscribing to Rubin's assertion of a mass expunging and the sweeping rigid ideological cohesion that his thesis demands, it remains noteworthy that the tradition of pre-ascension surgery becomes privileged within the sources over variants placing the surgery in Muḥammad's pre-prophetic childhood.

Beyond Muslim's outlier report and the collections that would later attain canonical prestige as the Six Books, reports on the chest opening further destabilize the coherence of the prophetic body for his representation of the forces acting upon that body. The

collections of Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim and Dārimī both preserve the narration in which two white birds perform the surgery on young Muḥammad’s chest.³⁵⁵

The collections display greater coherence in their clear detachment of the chest opening episode from the presence of the Seal on Muḥammad’s body. The Seal appears consistently throughout the sources as an organic birthmark, described as a protrusion of flesh or mound of hairs, rather than a trace of surgical intervention.³⁵⁶ Traditions included within the sources also serve to deny the Seal as a potential site of medical pathologization and abjection. The tradition of Abū Rimthā seeing Muḥammad appears in the collections of Abū Dāwūd and Nisā’ī, and both Tirmidhī’s *Jami* and his *Shamā’il*, though these versions make no reference to a physician (either Abū Rimthā or his father) diagnosing the Seal as a cyst or wound needing medical care. These versions do not mention the Seal at all, but instead offer descriptions of Muḥammad’s green garments, Muḥammad’s use of henna in his beard, or a statement that Muḥammad makes on the relationship between the deeds of a father and those of his son.³⁵⁷ The pathologization of the Seal found in the *Ṭabaqāt*’s narrations completely disappears from the generation of the Six Books, enabling further de-abjection of the prophetic body.

The capacity for Muḥammad’s body to form linkages with a divine body, either through the divine body’s direct modification upon Muḥammad through tangible encounter or Muḥammad witnessing the divine body with his physical eyes, undergoes some

³⁵⁵ Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *al-Aḥād wa al-Mathānī*, #1246. Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, #13.

³⁵⁶ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #185, 3299, 4335, 5265, 7222. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4335. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi’*, #3606.

³⁵⁷ Tirmidhī, *Jāmi’*, #2756. *Shamā’il*, #64. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #3676. Nisā’ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #1560.

regulation in the sources. Of the Six Books, only Tirmidhī's collection preserves the intimately corporeal encounter between Muḥammad and Allāh, in which Allāh appears in the "best form" (*aḥsan ṣūra*) and transmits knowledge into Muḥammad's body by placing his cold hand between Muḥammad's shoulders. This account, attributed to Ibn 'Abbās through a chain of transmitters that includes 'Abd al-Razzāq reporting from Ma'mar, specifies that Allāh came to Muḥammad at night and includes the narrator's note, "I think he said, 'in a dream'" (*aḥsabuhu qāla fī al-manām*), serving to disclaim the report from a fully corporeal anthropomorphism.³⁵⁸ Tirmidhī also provides a version of 'Ā'isha's emphatic rejection of Muḥammad seeing Allāh,³⁵⁹ as well as Abū Dharr's ambiguous compromise, in which Muḥammad is portrayed as stating only that he only "saw light."³⁶⁰ Finally, Tirmidhī offers a narration in which 'Ikrima recalls his argument with Ibn 'Abbās over the issue, presenting Ibn 'Abbās's engagement of both 'Ā'isha's Qur'ān-based objection to the vision and Abū Dharr's report of light:

He said, "Muḥammad saw his lord." I said, "Did Allāh not say, 'No vision captures him, but he captures all vision?'" [ṣūra al-An'ām, verse 103]. He said, "Woe to you, that is when he manifests his light. Muḥammad saw his lord two times."³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, #3176.

³⁵⁹ Ibid, #3013.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, #3223.

³⁶¹ Ibid, #3220.

Muslim's collection includes Abū Dharr's report of Muḥammad seeing an undefined light,³⁶² along with an Ibn 'Abbās report that Muḥammad "saw with his heart,"³⁶³ as well as 'Ā'isha's rejection.³⁶⁴ Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* stands most resolutely against the vision, including only 'Ā'isha's perspective.³⁶⁵ Melchert attributes Bukhārī's approach to his "general wariness of anthropomorphism," as in the case of traditions suggesting that Allāh created Adam in Allāh's own form.³⁶⁶ Even more challenging than Muḥammad's vision was the tradition of body-to-body contact, in which Muḥammad felt the physical touch of a divine hand. While the possibility of Muḥammad seeing Allāh receives mixed treatment in the Six Books, only one collection includes the tradition of the cold hand, and with the cautionary disclaimer that the encounter *probably* happened in a dream.

Beyond the Six Books, Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal's *Kitāb as-Sunna* includes reports affirming Muḥammad's vision of Allāh.³⁶⁷ Dārimī and Ibn 'Abī 'Āsim specifically preserve the tradition in which Allāh comes to Muḥammad in the "best form," briefly quizzes him, and then places his hand between Muḥammad's shoulders, causing Muḥammad to feel the coolness of the divine hand between his nipples. In the moment of

³⁶² Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #267.

³⁶³ Ibid, #262.

³⁶⁴ Ibid, #265.

³⁶⁵ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3013, 4502, 6856.

³⁶⁶ Melchert, "The Early Controversy Over Whether the Prophet Saw God." Also Melchert, "God Created Adam in His Image," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 13, issue 1 (2011): 113-124.

³⁶⁷ 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad, *Kitāb as-Sunna* (IslamWeb), #1009, 1010, 1055.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=282&pid=133155.

the divine touch, Muḥammad receives knowledge of all things in the heavens and earth; afterwards, he can successfully answer Allāh's quiz, to which he had previously responded by confessing his lack of knowledge. Both Ibn Abī 'Āṣim and Dārimī's reports of the cold hand encounter lack a location of the event within Muḥammad's sleep.³⁶⁸

Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's *Kitāb as-Sunna* presents numerous reports of Muḥammad's theophanic vision in separate chapters distinguishing reports of Muḥammad's vision with his eye from accounts of the vision taking place in a dream (with affirmations that prophets' dreams are not less real than wakeful reality).³⁶⁹ In his chapter, "What has been mentioned of the Prophet's vision of his lord," Ibn Abī 'Āṣim includes a report of Muḥammad's statement, "I saw my lord" without further content or clarification, while also providing the tradition that Allāh had favored Ibrāhīm, Mūsa, and Muḥammad respectively with intimate friendship, speech, and vision, as well as the compromise tradition of Muḥammad seeing an unnamed light.³⁷⁰ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim specifically provides versions of the "best form" tradition in a separate chapter (also including the touch of the divine hand), further isolating an account in which the vision of Allāh's best form takes place within a dream in its own chapter.³⁷¹ These chapters on Muḥammad's witness of Allāh appear within a cluster of chapters concerning Allāh's accessibility to believers, including the sight

³⁶⁸ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb as-Sunna*, #474. Dārimī, *Sunan*, #2073.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, #470-480.

³⁷⁰ Ibid, #449-451.

³⁷¹ Ibid, #474-480.

of Allāh (and specifically Allāh's face) in the afterlife³⁷² and Allāh's communication to believers in dreams,³⁷³ as well as polemically loaded traditions prominent in debates over corporeal anthropomorphism and the location of Allāh in a measurable spatial relation to this world. Such traditions include Allāh's creation of Ādam in "his own form,"³⁷⁴ Allāh's descent into the lower heaven for greater proximity to the believers,³⁷⁵ descriptions of Allāh's throne,³⁷⁶ and the "Ḥadīth of the Goats."³⁷⁷ In Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's collection, accounts of Allāh making himself visible and tangible for Muḥammad serve to simultaneously privilege Muḥammad's unique position and more broadly establish the possibility of human access to Allāh.

Abū Dāwūd notably reports a tradition in which Muḥammad appears on the opposite side of the cold-hand encounter: Muḥammad places his hand between a Companion's nipples, and the coolness of Muḥammad's hand penetrates the Companion's body to be felt at his heart. The report does not represent the touch of Muḥammad's cold hand as transmitting knowledge into the Companion's body, but rather as a diagnostic method by which Muḥammad can determine the illness from which the Companion suffers.³⁷⁸ While the capacity of Muḥammad's body to act upon the bodies of his

³⁷² Ibid, #433-436.

³⁷³ Ibid, #496-498.

³⁷⁴ Melchert, "God Created Adam in His Image."

³⁷⁵ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-Sunna*, #499-520.

³⁷⁶ Ibid, #537-539.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, #589, 590.

³⁷⁸ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #3379.

Companions with extrahuman powers remains intact, these reports of Muḥammad's access to Allāh negotiate with concerns regarding the very possibility of a divine *body* as such.

Through the powers of his body, Muḥammad performs modifications on the bodies of his Companions, healing wounds and ailments and transmitting baraka both through his deliberate interventions and even Companions' access to Muḥammad's baraka-endowed corporeality without his prior knowledge or approval. On the other side of Muḥammad's position as mediator between transcendent and earthly realms, Muḥammad is subjected to modifications by extrahuman forces that purify and supplement his body for this prophetic vocation. The relative prominence and marginalization of specific reports concerning Muḥammad's corporeal modifications can speak to shifting imaginaries of the prophetic body and its relationship to abjection, as well as the consequences of crystallizing theological norms for the prophetic body. Tracking these changes, however, does not self-evidently support the thesis of an absolute editorial purge on behalf of the ḥadīth scholars, but continues to reveal persistent degrees of instability, ambiguity, and variegation among the traditionist networks and the corpus emerging from their project.

Muḥammad Postmortem

Within what would become the bounded canon of the Six Books, the preservation of Muḥammad's remains against normal decay triumphs over the possibility that his body could decompose. While the collections of Bukhārī, Muslim, and Tirmidhī remain silent on the matter, the collections of Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī, and Ibn Maja affirm the preservation of Muḥammad's remains against decay and the earth's prohibition from consuming prophets'

bodies.³⁷⁹ Though Muslim does not provide reports specifically relating to the condition of Muḥammad's body, he joins Nasā'ī in reporting the tradition in which Muḥammad witnesses Moses praying in his grave, evidencing a special state for postmortem prophets.³⁸⁰ Outside the Six Books, more possibilities for ambiguity persist: Dārimī's *Sunan* includes reports of both Muḥammad's promise that the earth had been forbidden from eating prophets' bodies³⁸¹ and 'Abbās's flippant remark that Muḥammad's body would be subjected to normal decomposition.³⁸² In terms of Muḥammad's vulnerability to postmortem decay, the sources are most compelling in their silence: Dārimī's preservation of the report in which prophetic bodies appear to decompose stands as a departure from the other sources.

Dārimī also departs from the Six Books in his presentation of a tradition in which 'Ā'isha calls attention to the powers of the postmortem prophetic body. 'Ā'isha, as in the collections of earlier ḥadīth scholars, appears throughout these sources as a prominent reporter of Muḥammad's statement that Allāh had cursed Jews and Christians for taking their prophets' graves as houses of worship (*masājid*).³⁸³ However, Dārimī's introduction to his *Sunān*, within a subsection titled, "Allāh's Honors upon His Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) After His Death" (*Mā akram Allāh ta'āla nabiyyahu ba'd mawtihi*),

³⁷⁹ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #885. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #1359. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, #1075, 1626, 1627.

³⁸⁰ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4387. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #1623-1627. *Sunan al-Kubra*, #1310-1312.

³⁸¹ Dārimī, *Sunan*, #1535.

³⁸² Ibid, #83.

³⁸³ Ibid, #1375.

presents 'Ā'isha advocating for the prophetic grave as a site at which believers can access and engage the transcendent forces that had been accessible through Muḥammad's body in his lifetime. Aws bin 'Abd Allāh narrates:

The people of Medina were suffering an intense drought, so they complained to 'Ā'isha. She said, "Look to the grave of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, and make a window from it to the sky until there is no roof between the grave and the heaven." They did, and we received rain until the grass grew and the camels grew fat until they burst open from fatness, so it was called the "year of bursting open."³⁸⁴

According to another report from 'Ā'isha, Muḥammad stated that when a prophet was placed in his grave, 70,000 angels descended upon it.³⁸⁵ While 'Ā'isha reports that communities earn divine curses for turning their prophets' graves into places of worship, she nonetheless affirms the postmortem remains of prophets as sites at which connections to transcendent forces become intensified. In 'Ā'isha's corpus, the question is not whether prophets' graves are host to special energies, but rather the appropriate manner of engaging them.

The Sexed Body

The Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement's constriction of the ḥadīth corpus does not reflect a meaningful change in the gendering of prophetic bodies. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the tradition of Muḥammad seeing Allāh finds inclusion in various forms (alongside 'Ā'isha's objections) in the Six Books. The tradition of Allāh imparting

³⁸⁴ Ibid, #92.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, #94.

knowledge to Muḥammad through corporeal touch, though found in only one of the Six Books (and negotiated in that account with the implication of Muḥammad's encounter taking place in a dream), does not disappear entirely, and remains well represented in contemporary sources beyond this particular construction of canon. The collections of Dārimī and Ibn Abī 'Āṣim include variants of a tradition in which Allāh's act of sitting upon the throne causes it to groan from Allāh's size and weight. In the latter's archive, the throne moans like a camel when mounted in a new saddle due to the heavy burden.³⁸⁶ In Dārimī's version, Muḥammad explains to Ibn Masūd the meaning of the "Praised Station" (*al-maqām al-maḥmūd*), both locating Allāh as an apparent body with tremendous mass and granting Muḥammad a privileged proximity to that body:

That day Allāh descends upon his throne, it will grown like a new saddle from its tightening with him, and its range is like that between the heavens and the earth. And he will bring you barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised. The first to be covered will be Ibrāhīm. Allāh will say: "Cover, my friend (*khalīlī*)."³⁸⁷ He will be presented with two white shirts from the garments of paradise. Then I will be dressed after him. Then I will be stationed, standing on the right side of Allāh, envied by the ancients and others.

The significance of Muḥammad's body in this tradition is established with the promise of a future in which his corporeal matter, reassembled (depending on one's stance concerning the decomposition of prophetic bodies), resurrected, and clothed, occupies the most prestigious relation to Allāh's incalculably immense body. Subjecting this divine corporeality to the Deleuzian question of what a body can do, it appears that Allāh's body can locate itself in relation to other bodies and thereby establish relations and connectivities between them. In other words, Allāh has a body that privileges the station of

³⁸⁶ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-Sunna*, #586.

³⁸⁷ Dārimī, *Sunan*, #2697.

Muḥammad through their proximity in physical space. The tradition not only authorizes Muḥammad's body as closest to Allāh's body and an essential article of the paradisaical landscape, but in turn authorizes the Companions for their relation to Muḥammad: theirs are the bodies that touched the body that will stand next to Allāh's body.

Collections that report Allāh's appearance in the *aḥsan ṣūra* leave the nature of this "best form" unexplained. However, Bukhārī's contemporary and fellow ḥadīth partisan, Ibn Qutayba (828-889), mentions one variant of a tradition that does not find inclusion within these sources, though Ibn Qutayba engages the report as well-circulated and authenticated. Discussing the "cold hand" tradition in his *Kitāb Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, Ibn Qutayba refers to a report in which Umm Ṭufayl narrates that Muḥammad "saw his lord in sleep in the form of a youth with abundant hair (*ṣūratī shābban mūrfin*) in green, reclining on his bed of gold, wearing sandals of gold."³⁸⁸ The imaginary of Allāh produced within this tradition refers to sexuality at once rendered illicit and affirmed as powerful within the sources. The eroticized imaginaries of handsome youths in poetry contemporary to the sources, as well as the anxieties of jurists and the very ḥadīth traditionists who compiled these collections, has been thoroughly discussed in academic literature.³⁸⁹ In *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*, for example, Khaled el-Rouayheb discusses ḥadīth transmitter Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.778) fleeing from an attractive boy in a bath because he believed that seventeen devils accompanied every beardless youth, compared to only one devil for every girl; el-Rouayheb also provides evidence of Ibn

³⁸⁸ Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, trans. Che Amnah Bahari (Perpustakaan Negara: International Islamic University Malaysia Press, 2009), #66.

³⁸⁹ Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). 12-37.

Ḥanbal and Abū Ḥanīfa acknowledging the dangers of attraction to handsome boys.³⁹⁰ Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* briefly touches on intergenerational sex between males with the ostensible implication that for a man to penetrate a youth does not provoke the capital punishment prescribed for sex between two adult men: Muḥammad's statement, "Whoever plays with a boy and enters into him cannot marry his mother" (*fīman yal'abu bi-l-ṣabī in adkhalahu fīhi falā yatazawwajanna ummahu*) appears within a larger report on prohibited marriages in Bukhārī's *kitāb al-nikāḥ* chapter.³⁹¹ As discussed further in the next chapter, the "desiring-machine" formed between Muḥammad and the desire-producing masculine god engages notions of desire that the sources simultaneously condemn as illicit and affirm as powerful.

While the sources reflect varying levels of comfort or discomfort regarding Allāh's potential to be accessed *as a body* that can be seen or even touched, Allāh's gendering as masculine remains unambiguous, with or without a body. The ontological inequality between masculine and feminine bodies, established in earlier ḥadīth collections (as in the "women's deficiencies" tradition discussed in the previous chapter) persists throughout these sources. The treatment of prophethood as a patrilineal inheritance also appears in the Six Books via Bukhārī, who includes the tradition that if there were to have been another prophet after Muḥammad, Muḥammad's son Ibrāhīm would have lived.³⁹² Throughout the sources, Fāṭima remains privileged by narrations that she represents a

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 113.

³⁹¹ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, kitāb al-nikāḥ, bāb: mā yaḥilu mina al-nisā'i wa mā yaḥrum.

³⁹² Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #5753.

part of Muḥammad, and that one who angers her also angers him,³⁹³ as well as the tradition of her receiving secret information from Muḥammad of his imminent death and her being the first of his house to join him,³⁹⁴ along with her exceptional rank as master over women (specified in varying reports as the women of paradise, both worlds, Muḥammad's umma, or the believers).³⁹⁵ Nonetheless, the fact of Fāṭima surviving her father is not presented as comparable to the hypothetical survival of his son as having any impact on the continuation of prophethood.

The Six Books and contemporary sources present 'Ā'isha's interaction with Jibrīl in versions that prohibit 'Ā'isha from an unmediated encounter; neither an exchange of greetings nor 'Ā'isha's awareness of Jibrīl's presence are possible without help from 'Ā'isha's prophetic husband. The tradition of 'Ā'isha claiming an exceptional status for having been the only woman to see Jibrīl with her own eyes, present in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*, fails to enter into these sources. The Six Books and other collections favor narrations in which Muḥammad informs 'Ā'isha of Jibrīl's presence and greetings; in several of these reports, 'Ā'isha concludes her narration with the statement that Muḥammad sees "what we do not see."³⁹⁶ Who is the "we" in this tradition? If placed in conversation with other traditions within the corpus, most notably the famous "Ḥadīth of Jibrīl," in which a group of

³⁹³ Ibid, #3460, 3473, 3507. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4490. Tirmidhī, *Jamī'*, #3833. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #8049.

³⁹⁴ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3377, 3461. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4493.

³⁹⁵ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #5839. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4494, 4495. Ibn Maja, *Sunan*, #1610. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #6810.

³⁹⁶ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3377. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4493.

Companions (unidentified apart from the narrating witness, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb) observe Jibrīl appearing as a man and quizzing Muḥammad,³⁹⁷ ‘Ā’isha’s denial of angelic vision becomes gendered. ‘Ā’isha appears to deny the witness of Jibrīl specifically to women, at least other than Maryam. In turn, ‘Ā’isha’s restrictions of women’s angelophanic experience presumably genders the group of Companions in the Ḥadīth of Jibrīl as homosocially male. ‘Ā’isha’s proximity to prophetic experience, while remaining privileged among women for Jibrīl’s greeting to her, is distanced further from the possibilities for male prophets and their male Companions. Despite ‘Ā’isha’s increasing exclusion from access to Jibrīl, however, an outlier narration preserves the possibility for women to witness him with their eyes, as the tradition of Umm Salama observing Jibrīl in conversation with Muḥammad and misidentifying Jibrīl as Diḥya al-Kalbī appears within Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*.³⁹⁸ Despite ‘Ā’isha’s privileged position among the wives of Muḥammad and earthly women at large, her relationship to transcendent angelic forces remains ambiguous: though honored with a greeting from Jibrīl, she loses her privileged vision of him, while ‘Ā’isha’s chief rival among her co-wives sees Jibrīl in beautiful embodiment and also seems to hear Jibrīl’s conversation with Muḥammad.³⁹⁹ Whatever the degree to which

³⁹⁷ Ibn Maja, *Sunan*, #62. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi’*, #2552. Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Sughra*, #498.

³⁹⁸ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3385, 4622.

³⁹⁹ Tensions between ‘Ā’isha and Umm Salama highlight the significance of relations to Muḥammad’s body (and relations to angelic bodies through their positionality with Muḥammad) for relations of power among his wives and conceivably the Companions at large. As discussed previously, Umm Salama’s complaint to Muḥammad for equitable treatment is shut down by Muḥammad’s statement that ‘Ā’isha was his only wife in whose presence he could receive divine revelations—even while they were under the same blanket. The privileging of ‘Ā’isha or Umm Salama in relation to angelic bodies and revelation also comes with sectarian consequences, given their positions on opposing sides of the Battle of the Camel and Umm Salama’s narrations lauding the virtues of ‘Alī, Fāṭima,

women can interact with angels, however, their access to angels consistently remains connected to a man's sexual access to them; that is, the specific women who are represented as having either direct or mediated access to angels are wives of Muḥammad. In the representations of linkages formed between angels and women, prophetic sexuality appears as the crucial connector that facilitates their interactions.

The tradition of Muḥammad's extraordinary sex power persists throughout these sources. The Six Books also preserve a degree of thematic overlap between prophetic sexuality and angelic interventions upon the prophetic body, found in reports of angels defending Muḥammad's sexual performance from a sorcerer's assault.⁴⁰⁰ However, the tradition of Muḥammad deriving his privileged sexual vigor from angelically provided supplements, as in the *Ṭabaqāt's* narration of Jibrīl providing Muḥammad with a kettle of performance-enhancing food from the heavens, fails to achieve inclusion in these collections. Repeating earlier sources, Muḥammad's vigor is compared in these collections to that of multitudes of men, but apart from the angels' defense of Muḥammad against Labīd, his sexual performance does not appear to have resulted from angels modifying his body.⁴⁰¹

As in the earlier *musnad* and *muṣannaḥ* works, representations of Muḥammad's extraordinary sex drive in sources of the later 9th century do not depict prophetic semen as a special substance in itself, but do reflect concerns over the character of prophetic

and their descendents. Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Authority in Islam*, 38.

⁴⁰⁰ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3046, 5939. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4066. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, #3543. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #7312.

⁴⁰¹ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #262. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #8698.

ejaculations. These sources, describing Muḥammad's practices of ritual purification after waking up in a state of sexual defilement during Ramaḍān, make it clear that Muḥammad's state of janaba had not been the result of a wet dream.⁴⁰² The sources follow earlier collections in providing reports that present wet dreams as the result of demonic interventions upon the dreamer's body, which require the seeking of refuge with Allāh from the Shayṭān's harm.⁴⁰³ The clarification that Muḥammad did not become ritually impure through an involuntary emission thus confirms his security against demonic forces. Just as the Shayṭān cannot appear in dreams with the form of Muḥammad's body, the Shayṭān cannot penetrate Muḥammad's mind and perform mastery over his body by causing him to ejaculate while asleep.

Questions of visual access to Muḥammad's naked body reappear in these sources, via familiar traditions such as the report of Muḥammad briefly exposing himself as a child.⁴⁰⁴ One narration repeats an episode found in Wāqidī's *Maghāzī*, in which Muḥammad rushes to see Zayd while in a state of in exposure. In this version, 'Ā'isha mentions that Muḥammad stood naked and embraced Zayd, but adds, "By Allāh, I had not seen him naked before nor after."⁴⁰⁵ Another narration addresses the issue of washing Muḥammad's body after his death, countering earlier narrations that present 'Alī as having

⁴⁰² Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #1874.

⁴⁰³ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3069, 5333, 6497, 6499, 6508, 6515. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #4202, 4203. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #4369. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, #3907. Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, #2208. Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #10253.

⁴⁰⁴ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #354. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #520.

⁴⁰⁵ Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, #2675.

special access to a naked prophetic body that would otherwise blind those who witnessed it. Abū Dāwūd's *Sunan* repeats 'Ā'isha's narration from Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra* of Allāh's intervention in disputes among the Companions over the exposure of Muḥammad's corpse: Allāh causes the Companions to fall asleep, then instructs them to wash the body while keeping it clothed. The Companions wash the body with the shirt that covers it, rather than touching the body directly with their own hands. The narration also includes 'Ā'isha's statement that if she had known then what she knew later, only Muḥammad's wives would have washed him. As in the *Sīra*, the precise item of knowledge is not articulated.⁴⁰⁶

Considering the construction of "prophetic sexuality" through these sources' representations of Muḥammad's sexual body, its pleasures and functions, and the ways in which these pleasures and functions become representative of Muḥammad's prophethood, what do the sources yield? Muḥammad's sexuality relates him to typical bodies in that it remains under the discipline of ritual purity laws, but positions him as extraordinary in its capacity for performance. Prophetic sexuality is a performance of masculinity, as Muḥammad's sexual vigor is measured in comparison to the strength of multitudes of men. Prophetic sexuality benefits from divine protection in that angels defend Muḥammad's sexual functions against sorcerers' attacks, and demonstrates its privileged station in his exemption from the demonic phenomenon of wet dreams—between these traditions, however, the sources also reflect tension as to the precise (in)vulnerability of prophetic sexuality against the demonic. Finally, in the homosociality of prophethood and the transcendent masculinized forces with which prophets interact, prophetic sexuality becomes a portal through which privileged women can potentially access those forces.

⁴⁰⁶ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, #2735.

Though entire groups of men enjoy collective witness of Jibrīl, women appear to be generally barred from this experience or incapable of interacting with Jibrīl without the mediation of their prophetic husband. ‘Ā’isha and Umm Salama achieve their gendered access to Jibrīl through being sexually accessible to the prophetic body. The access of Muḥammad’s wives to his sexual body, meanwhile, is represented as restricted by the fact of Muḥammad’s prophetic station; ‘Ā’isha can engage in penetrative intercourse with the prophetic penis but not see it with her eyes.

Conclusions

The ḥadīth collections examined in this chapter, characterized as reflective of a “Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement,” represent an attempted tightening of the corpus through sharpened attention to isnād-based evaluation methods and ambitions to include only the most stringently evidenced narrations. The scholars behind these collections were literally “Ḥadīth Folk” (*ahl al-ḥadīth*), that is, participants in the insular ḥadīth-partisan circles associated with Ibn Ḥanbal, and heirs to Ibn Ḥanbal’s epistemological orientations. The ṣaḥīḥ/sunan works reflect not only archives of rigorously collected and vetted data but also polemical arguments on behalf of the theories, methods, and scholarly networks that produced them, as well as refutations of their opponents. Though these collections would grow in authority as representative of Sunnī knowledge and identity at large, they nonetheless emerged from a milieu in which the Ḥadīth Folk’s opposition included other schools that were not yet united in a shared “Sunnī” identity. The later canonization of

these works as expressive of collective Sunnī consciousness betrays what had once reflected a considerably narrower sectarian project in a “proto-Sunnī” milieu.⁴⁰⁷

In comparison to Ibn Ḥanbal’s massive *Musnad*, the ḥadīth collections of his students and their networks of contemporaries tend to constrict the corpus of usable ḥadīths through heightened standards of isnād-centered scrutiny and insistence on including only the most rigorously authenticated narrations. This becomes obvious when one compares the size of Ibn Ḥanbal’s collection to those of Bukhārī, Muslim, or their peers. In the case of Muḥammad’s postmortem condition, it does appear that shrinking the corpus did favor the preservation of his body, even if the most prestigious of sources from this period do not clearly express a position.

However, the later 9th century CE was also a time of prolific ḥadīth compilation, resulting in numerous collections informed by varying methodologies, scholarly networks, and compilers’ personal subjectivities even within the trend towards more strigent authentication. The extent to which collections of the later 9th century truly managed to regulate a vast corpus of narrations depends in part on the backwards projection of canonical status onto particular collections. A two-book canon consisting only of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections by Bukhārī and Muslim clearly produces a narrowed field of text, rendered even narrower by the overlapping reports that appear in both collections; a canon of five or six books expands the corpus, though within limits if all of the compilers had participated

⁴⁰⁷ “Proto-Sunnī,” in Muhammad Qasim Zaman’s usage, signifies “those groups of the late 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries which defined their identity in terms of what they saw as their adherence to the Prophet’s *sunna* and shared a “firm (but evolving and therefore not always consistent) commitment to the righteousness of the early Muslim community and the rectitude of the Prophet’s first successors.” Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics Under the Early ‘Abbāsids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1.

within the same teaching network; the addition of a relative misfit work such as Ibn Maja's *Sunan* as the canon's sixth book can allow for numerous marginalized traditions to find their way into canonical status. However, if Dārimī's *Sunan* had successfully triumphed over Ibn Maja's *Sunan* for inclusion in the Six Books, the canonically authorized imaginary for Muḥammad's postmortem condition would have changed. If Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's *al-Aḥād wa al-Mathānī* became one of the Six Books, reports of Companions drinking Muḥammad's blood and urine would have achieved a new degree of authenticity.

Avoiding the retroactive designation of "canon" onto privileged works and considering the ḥadīth collections of the period more broadly, one should expect to find a more fluid and malleable prophetic body. However, I argue that even if working with a canon that consists only of the Six Books or limited further to just the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Muḥammad's body remains significantly unstable in terms of its capacities, limits, and varying logics of prophetic, angelic, and divine bodies informing representations of those capacities and limits.

The possibility of deriving soteriological benefit from drinking Muḥammad's blood, which had been reported in an isolated narration in the *sīra*/maghāzī literature, remains absent from these ḥadīth collections, as in the collections of the preceding generations. However, drinking Muḥammad's urine emerges in an isolated report as a new mode of ingesting the baraka that flows through his body and protecting the drinker's body from hellfire (even if the drinker did not have prior knowledge of this benefit). Another tradition, appearing as an isolated report in the same collection, presents the drinking of Muḥammad's blood as a thinkable possibility, but one that Muḥammad personally rejects; of the various bodily substances that can provide transcorporeal bridges between

Muḥammad's body and others, blood is proposed and denied as a resource. In the Ibn al-Zubayr tradition, it even appears that drinking Muḥammad's blood can provoke negative consequences for the drinker.

Both the urine and blood traditions follow the formula of other encounters between Companions and Muḥammad's bodily fluids: the Companion accesses the substance without Muḥammad's prior knowledge or consent, after which Muḥammad learns what has transpired and then expresses his approval or names a specific benefit or harm. Saliva, the most prolifically reported of Muḥammad's bodily products as a portal through which his baraka might become accessible to others, appears as the primary departure from this formula; saliva remains the only bodily substance that Muḥammad employs with clear intention to produce effects in the bodies of Companions. Muḥammad also distributes his hair trimmings, but the reports do not reveal his intentions or their specific effects.

Despite their later prestige, the achievements of the Six Books' compilers did not conclude the ḥadīth collection as a literary genre, as scholars continued to assemble their own collections. Nor was the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement's attempted constriction of the ḥadīth corpus permanent; in the generations following these scholars, the corpus ballooned out yet again. Works of the 10th and 11th centuries CE, employing different methodologies than the canonical compilers (or, as in the case of al-Ḥākim's *Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, using Bukhārī and Muslim's own standards to advocate for traditions that they had excluded), expanded the corpus. In this growing sea of traditions, tensions and uncertainties proliferate as traditions open or close possibilities for extending the reach of the prophetic body.

4. Nabī Without Organs: Sunnī Ḥadīth Collections in the Shī'ī Century

Introduction

While the *Ṣaḥīḥ* works of Bukhārī and Muslim began to circulate and achieve some degree of canonical authorization from the 10th century onward,⁴⁰⁸ the corpus was not closed; ḥadīth scholars continued to produce their own collections. The collections examined in this chapter, emerging from the 10th and 11th centuries, broaden the literary genre of the ḥadīth collection increasingly beyond the proto-Ḥanbalī domain, as compilers such as al-Ṭabarānī (d.971), Ibn Khuzayma (d.923), Daraquṭnī (d.995), al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d.1012), his prolific student Bayhaqī (d.1066), and Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī (d.1038) reflect an ascendant nexus of Ash'arī theology and Shāfi'ī jurisprudence that would become dominant in the 11th century CE.⁴⁰⁹ These Shāfi'ī scholars varied in their relationships to the earlier Ḥadīth Folk networks, the seminal collections produced within those networks, and later Ḥanābila. For example, Ibn Khuzayma, compiler of his own *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, had studied directly under Bukhārī and Muslim.⁴¹⁰ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī

⁴⁰⁸ Christopher Melchert, "Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol.121, issue 1 (2001): 7-19.

⁴⁰⁹ Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 46.

⁴¹⁰ Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 85.

(d.1071), considered one of the most significant systematizers of Sunnī ḥadīth methodologies, started his career in the Ḥanbalī school and converted to Shāfiʿī affiliation, later falling into mutual hostility and polemical engagements with the Ḥanbalī scholars of his day.⁴¹¹ Historian Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d.923), “imām of ḥadīth historiography”⁴¹² and eponym for his own Jarīrī legal school who died before finishing his ḥadīth collection, became the target of vehement Ḥanbalī antagonism.⁴¹³ Despite the Ḥanbalī condemnation of Ṭabarī, however, the roster of teachers in Ṭabarī’s genealogy nonetheless shares significant overlaps with that of Ibn Ḥanbal’s son and chief transmitter, ‘Abd Allāh.⁴¹⁴ In short, the proliferation of proto-Sunnī ḥadīth scholarship, along with its contribution to the ongoing crystallization of collective Sunnī identity, meant that the Sunnī ḥadīth transmission universe could not be pinned down to the domain of a singular network, elite scholarly coterie, or theological orientation. The continuing expansion of ḥadīth transmitter networks is paralleled by the growth of the material. While the 9th-century Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement attempted to regulate what had already been a chaotic sea of narrators and their reports by imposing more stringent standards for acceptance, later

⁴¹¹ Fedwa Malti Douglas, “Controversy and Its Effects in the Biographical Tradition of Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī,” *Studia Islamica*, No. 46 (1977): 115-131.

⁴¹² Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 73.

⁴¹³ C.E. Bosworth, “Al-Ṭabarī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, and E. van Donzel et al (Brill Online, 2015).

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

sources challenged those texts' attempts at closure, offered competing claims, and even deregulated the corpus, reopening its possibilities. The result constitutes a discursive explosion of Muḥammad's corporeal possibilities.

The sources discussed in this chapter represent the prophetic body as more powerful than ever in terms of the materially facilitated baraka transmissions through which it can form connections with other bodies, merging into a greater assemblage. However, as narratives of Muḥammad's special prophetic ontology do not simply erase traditions that could emphasize his mundane humanity or deny such connections, these sources also preserve and even intensify the relative instability of the prophetic body found in earlier sources. Traditions in which Muḥammad's urine becomes an entirely de-abjected and efficacious transmitter of baraka coexist alongside traditions demonstrating Muḥammad's need to wash traces of his urine from his own body. Muḥammad's semen continues to appear in narrations concerned with praxis as mere waste to be scratched out of his garments with a fingernail, while alternative reports present prophetic semen as a material trace of Muḥammad's visit to paradise. The prophetic body, as defined in this growing sea of stories from Companions whose bodies entered into varying relations and encounters with it, does not appear as a rigorously bounded body with clear limits. Rather, as the literary corpus expands, the prophetic body grows increasingly unpredictable in both its borders and powers. Muḥammad's body, examined here for what it can do, emerges as an unstable construction subject to its relations. Through these relations, Muḥammad's bodily baraka spreads to other bodies, though the modes of baraka's transmission remain inconsistent and lacking systematization.

This chapter departs from its predecessors by dedicating a separate section to representations of Fāṭima. Examining Fāṭima's treatment from the earliest biographical literature on Muḥammad to these post-Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan collections, it becomes possible to trace her growing significance as an extension of Muḥammad's corporeality. In the sources of the 10th century CE, Fāṭima's own corporeality becomes a point of interest, as collections provide reports of Fāṭima having been conceived from a fruit that Muḥammad ate in paradise and distinguished from earthly women for having never experienced menstruation. Fāṭima remains a piece of her father, and could thus potentially increase the reach of her father's body and its capacity for connecting him to other bodies, transmitting baraka to them, and mediating between metaphysical and physical forces and planes of existence. The emergence of Fāṭima in these late sources as an operational extension of Muḥammad's corporeality, in turn subjected to focused discussion of her own corporeality and its properties, reflects broader developments in the representations of prophetic bodies. The imaginary of Fāṭima reflected in these sources challenges an academic master narrative concerning Fāṭima, articulated in Verena Klemm's assertion that Fāṭima's "transformation into a transcendent personality" occurred through Shī'ī sources from the 10th century onward that reached "beyond the enclosed, narrow world of the Sunnite representation of Fāṭima."⁴¹⁵ Contrary to Klemm's argument, reports of Fāṭima's paradisaical origins, status as an earthly ḥūrī, and exemption from menstruation, identified by Klemm as Shī'ī elaborations upon a Sunnī imaginary of Fāṭima lacking in transcendence,

⁴¹⁵ Verena Klemm, "Formation of an Islamic Legend: Fāṭima, the Daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad," in *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Arabic Literature and Islam*, ed. Sebastian Günther, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 181-207.

appear in sources recognized as Sunnī (or “proto-Sunnī”), perhaps complicating popular assumptions of the Sunnī-Shīʿī binary as it existed in the 10th century.⁴¹⁶ Such intersections and overlaps reflect what Maria Dakake has termed a “perforated boundary” between early Shīʿī communities and a broader Sunnī-majority *umma*,⁴¹⁷ as well as ideological heterogeneity within the “Sunnī” ḥadīth corpus.⁴¹⁸

Sources

This chapter examines works from a period in which the ḥadīth collection as a literary genre is popularly believed to have reached its conclusion: the complete transferral of existing prophetic traditions from oral transmission to a textual archive.⁴¹⁹ While scholars of subsequent generations continued to assemble their own ḥadīth collections, Bayhaqī’s massive *Sunan al-Kubra* from this period is widely perceived as representing the

⁴¹⁶ Ṭabarānī, whose collections devote significant space to narrations of Fāṭima’s transcendent ontology, himself serves as a deconstructive figure. Though recognized as a contributor to the Sunnī textual tradition, Ṭabarānī was also exiled from Isfahan for holding suspect views on Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Maribel Fierro, “Al-Ṭabarānī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, et al (Brill Online, 2016).

⁴¹⁷ Maria Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shi’ite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 241.

⁴¹⁸ For a discussion of ḥadīth transmitters deemed insufficiently “Sunnī” within sources bearing the prestige of “Sunnī canon,” see John Nawas, “Sectaries in the Six Books: Evidence for Their Exclusion from the Sunni Community,” *The Muslim World*, vol. LXXXII, no. 3-4 (July-October 1992): 287-295. Demonstrating the gradual marginalization of transmitters attached to undesirable schools of thought, Nawas measures these exclusions against more inclusive earlier periods, simultaneously calling attention to the policing of boundaries by ḥadīth compilers and the perforated nature of those boundaries.

⁴¹⁹ Brown, *Hadith*, 41-42.

end of “original” ḥadīth compilation,⁴²⁰ and Bayhaqī himself declared that all trustworthy ḥadīths had been collected.⁴²¹ Compared to the collections of Bukhārī and his contemporaries, which had sought to restrict the corpus to a stringently evidenced canon, Bayhaqī’s *Sunan al-Kubra* reflects an aim at comprehensiveness more akin to Ibn Ḥanbal’s archive. Similarly, the *Mu’jam al-Kabīr* (Great Lexicon) of Ṭabarānī, containing at least 30,000 reports, rivals the combined number of narrations in the entire Six Books roster.⁴²² However, the era also produced smaller *Ṣaḥīḥ* works via compilers such as Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Khuzayma, and Ṭabarānī’s corpus includes less daunting *Mu’jam* collections, his logically titled *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* (Medium Lexicon) and *Mu’jam al-Saghīr* (Small Lexicon). This chapter also considers narrations found in *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa* (“Proofs of Prophethood”) works, principally those of Bayhaqī and Abū Nu’aym, for the ways in which these explicitly named projects endeavor to mark the truth of Muḥammad’s station on and in his body. Bayhaqī’s significant theological project, his *al-Asmā’ wa l-Ṣifāt*, additionally provides a prophetological resource for considerations of Allāh’s interactions with Muḥammad’s body.

Following this era’s ostensible conclusion of original ḥadīth compilations, ḥadīth scholarship shifted from efforts to record previously unwritten ḥadīths toward a proliferation of commentaries on past collections. In these works, scholars often employed transmitter-based assessment to reconsider the judgments of master critics such as

⁴²⁰ Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 99.

⁴²¹ Brown, *Hadith*, 42.

⁴²² Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 92.

Bukhārī and Muslim. The *mustadrak* genre of ḥadīth collections emerged as an effort to broaden the ḥadīth field that the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan movement had narrowed, arguing for inclusion of traditions that Bukhārī and his contemporaries had excluded.⁴²³ A seminal example from this era, Ḥākim al-Naysāburī's *Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, reflects a scholarly effort to argue against Bukhārī and Muslim's exclusions and thus reopen the corpus.

Finally, biographical dictionaries from this period reflect an expanding corpus of traditions, most prominently Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's enormous *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām* (History of the City of Peace, or History of Baghdad), which includes numerous rare traditions. In addition to Khaṭīb's *Tārīkh*, this chapter also explores Abū Nu'aym's *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' wa-Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā'*, a biographical dictionary covering roughly the first four Muslim centuries. In the *Ḥilya*, as observed by Meis Al-Kaisi, Abū Nu'aym constructs a vision of Ṣūfī asceticism and piety as entirely "orthodox" through carefully curated representations of Muḥammad's Companions and Followers.⁴²⁴

Bodily Products

As has been shown in discussions of earlier sources, some by-products of Muḥammad's body have been identified as carriers of his prophetic baraka from nearly the beginning. Muḥammad's saliva appears in the earliest sources as a material that can crumble large boulders into dust or energize a fatigued camel to run; early sources also

⁴²³ Brown, *Hadith*, 42.

⁴²⁴ Meis al-Kaisi, "Sufi Apologia in the Guise of Biography: The Case of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā'*," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:1 (2015): 115-134.

associate his profuse sweat with the descent of Qur'ānic revelation. The substance that I have called "baraka water," which flows from Muḥammad's hands during his Companions' times of need, additionally appears early in the literature. These by-products of the prophetic body, widely reported as sites at which Muḥammad's potential for transmitting baraka into other bodies can be demonstrated, appear consistently throughout the corpus's constrictions and expansions.

Other materials originating from within Muḥammad's body experience mixed fortunes in terms of their consideration as vehicles for prophetic baraka. For example, while 9th-century materials do offer reports that link Muḥammad's acts of excretion with marvelous phenomena, such as trees moving to shield his modesty or the earth concealing his shameful waste from the perception of others, Muḥammad's urine and feces are generally excluded from imagination as baraka-transmitting substances. In ḥadīth collections following the Bukhārī-Muslim era, however, the field becomes wide open for ignored and marginalized substances to emerge anew or resurface as conduits of Muḥammad's baraka.

Urine finally receives attention as a prophetic bodily product that could transmit baraka to its consumers amidst the sources of the later 9th century, in a lone report from Ibn Abī 'Āṣim's *al-Aḥād wa al-Mathānī*. In this report, Muḥammad asks Baraka, an Ethiopian servant of Umm Ḥabība, what had happened to a vessel into which he had urinated, and she confesses to having drunk his urine. Muḥammad laughs and declares that in her choice to ingest his waste, she successfully shielded herself from the fire.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁵ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *al-Aḥād wa al-Mathānī*. IslamWeb. #2983.

In sources of subsequent generations, Muḥammad's urine undergoes a minor proliferation in reports of its powers, represented as miraculous in no less than three variations of the "drinking Ethiopian slave woman" tradition that vary in their claims regarding the consequences of consuming prophetic urine. Additionally, the 11th century offers a separate tradition in which Muḥammad's act of urination into a well permanently bestows baraka upon its water.

The narration in which Umm Ḥabība's servant drinks the urine is reported by Bayhaqī, whose *Sunan al-Kubrā* includes a section titled "His Relinquishing Rejection of Those who Drank His Urine and Blood" (*Bāb tarkihi al-inkār 'alā man shariba bawlahu wa damahu*).⁴²⁶ In this narration, Muḥammad asks Baraka why the bowl into which he has urinated is empty, and she confesses to having drunk his urine; the report does not provide Muḥammad's reaction or judgment. Ḥākim's *Mustadrak* and Abū Nu'aym's *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa* include a tradition in which a Companion drinks Muḥammad's urine, resonant with the narration reported by Ibn Abī 'Āṣim and Bayhaqī but also reporting Muḥammad's approval and attributing the act to another woman from his household. This version represents the drinker not as Umm Ḥabība's servant but another Ethiopian servant, also named Baraka though better known by her *kunya*, Umm Ayman. She had reportedly been a slave of Muḥammad's father and was later freed by Muḥammad.⁴²⁷ The narrations appear as Umm Ayman's firsthand account of her encounter with prophetic urine:

⁴²⁶ Aḥmad bin al-Ḥusayn Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra* (IslamWeb), #12410. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=673&pid=331361.

⁴²⁷ Abū al-Qāsim Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2007), 10:20748.

The Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, got up at night to a clay pot in a corner of the house and urinated into it. I got up in the night and I was thirsty, so I drank what was in the pot and I did not notice. When the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace, got up in the morning, he said, “O Umm Ayman, go to the pot and pour out what is in it.” I said, “I drank what was in it.” The Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, laughed until showing his molars, then said, “There will never be affliction in your belly after this.”⁴²⁸

The narration finds resonance not only with the other narration of an Ethiopian woman named Baraka, as well as the broader formula of Companions consuming or acquiring Muḥammad’s bodily substances without his knowledge, but also the mixed treatment of Umm Ayman throughout the sources. That Umm Ayman picks up a pot that Muḥammad uses for urination and drinks what she finds inside, apparently consuming *all* of the urine without ever realizing that it is urine, echoes her depiction in other reports. While Umm Ayman finds representation from the earliest sīra literature as a pious woman, various traditions also portray her as a bumbling, unintelligent, and somewhat comical character, for whom Muḥammad holds an undeniable affection despite her personality flaws. Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt* reports that she could not manage to learn the customary greeting of *as-salāmu ‘alaykum* (“Peace be upon you”), instead saying *as-salām lā ‘alaykum* (“Peace *not* upon you”) until Muḥammad instructed her to greet others with simply *salām*.⁴²⁹ Umm Ayman is also depicted as bickering with Muḥammad over the size of the camel that should transport her.⁴³⁰ In her analysis of Umm Ayman’s treatment in the

⁴²⁸ Al-Ḥākim Naysābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (IslamWeb), #6964. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=594&hid=4161&pid=0. Abu Nu’aym al-Isbahānī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa* (IslamWeb), #366. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=629&pid=324273.

⁴²⁹ Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, 55.

⁴³⁰ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*. Vol. 8, 179.

ḥadīth corpus, Asma Sayeed observes, “In spite of her proximity to the Prophet, she was clearly not regarded as a good vehicle for conveying his sunna.”⁴³¹

Despite her less than glowing representation and apparent role as a comic figure, Umm Ayman also appears as a devoted Companion who supported Muslim soldiers on the battlefield. Ibn Sa’d portrays Umm Ayman as the beneficiary of divine intervention. In the entry on Umm Ayman in his *Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Sa’d reports that during the Muslim community’s collective migration from Mecca to Medina, Umm Ayman found herself alone in the desert and without water. Umm Ayman feared that she would soon die of thirst, but was saved when a bucket of water descended to her from the heavens. Umm Ayman drank the water and never felt thirst for the rest of her life.⁴³² In later sources, Umm Ayman’s miraculous redemption by ingestion becomes a humorous episode, marked as such by Muḥammad’s own laughter. Tracking change between the sources demonstrates a profound de-abjection of Muḥammad’s body, in that his urine becomes capable of achieving the same medical transformations within Umm Ayman’s body as heavenly water delivered by angels.

A third version of this tradition represents the drinker as Bara, Umm Salama’s Ethiopian servant. The drinker in this version benefits not in this world but the next, as Muḥammad tells Bara that consuming his urine has shielded her from the fire. The Bara version appears in the *Mu’jam al-Kabīr* of Ṭabarānī, which additionally includes both the Baraka and Umm Ayman versions.⁴³³

⁴³¹ Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, 55.

⁴³² Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*. Vol. 8, 179.

⁴³³ Ṭabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, 10:19998.

Abū Nuʾaym's *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa* devotes a section to Muḥammad's digestive waste with the straightforward title, "His Urine or Feces" (*Bawlihi aw Gā'it̤ihi*). The section includes the Umm Ayman variant of the "drinking Ethiopian woman" tradition, as well as the tradition of ʿĀ'isha asking Muḥammad why she can observe no traces of his making waste, to which Muḥammad answers that the earth consumes what prophets excrete.⁴³⁴ The "His Urine or Feces" subsection includes a third report, narrated on the authority of Anas, which depicts pleasure and refreshment traceable to an act of prophetic micturation:

The Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, used to pray and make the standing long. The Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, urinated into a well in his house. He [Anas] said, "There was no well in Medina sweeter than it." He [Anas] said, "And when they used to come, I would refresh them with it, and in the pre-Islamic era (*Jāhiliyya*) it was called 'the Coolness' (*al-Barūd*)."⁴³⁵

As with the tradition of Umm Ayman's digestive system benefiting from her consumption of a baraka-fused liquid, in which one source's bucket of angelically provided water is another source's clay pot of prophetic urine, Abū Nuʾaym's "cool well" tradition echoes earlier literature. The tradition particularly resonates with the section in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* devoted to various wells that had received Muḥammad's baraka via his contact with their water, including acts of spitting into them.⁴³⁶ Between the Umm Ayman, ʿĀ'isha, and Anas traditions found in Abū Nuʾaym's "His Urine or Feces" subsection, the corpus reflects the significant incoherence of the prophetic body. The traditions of Umm Ayman and ʿĀ'isha both provide *dala'il al-nubuwwa*, "proofs of prophethood," while reflecting a tension in the collective imaginary of Muḥammad's bodily processes. In its representation

⁴³⁴ Abu Nuʾaym, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, #365, #366.

⁴³⁵ Ibid, #367.

⁴³⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*. Vol.1, 390-392.

of a woman finding and drinking Muḥammad's urine, the Umm Ayman narration establishes Muḥammad's prophetic station by demonstrating that waste products flowing from his body, when entering into the bodies of others, can connect their bodies to the flows of baraka. In contrast, 'Ā'isha's account of her inability to see or smell Muḥammad's waste constructs his body's prophetic perfection by erasing his acts of excretion and closing off the possibility of prophetic waste as an intercorporeal connection between Muḥammad and his Companions. Similarly, the contradictory consequences of the 'Ā'isha and Anas narrations reflect a broader tension between the bodies of reports associated with these two Companions. 'Ā'isha, whose musnad has been shown to deemphasize the powers of prophetic bodily substances, presents a Muḥammad in significant tension with the Muḥammad found in narrations attributed to Anas. For 'Ā'isha, the miracle of Muḥammad's waste, apparently repulsive in typical human fashion, is that no one can observe it. For Anas, Muḥammad's waste improves the quality of a well's water, seemingly extending his body's reach not only to his Companions but to generations after his death. The three reports included in Abū Nu'aym's "His Urine and Feces" chapter can reflect a consistent notion of baraka's relationship to bodily waste if, due to the presence of "feces" in the chapter's title, 'Ā'isha's narration reads as a statement specifically on Muḥammad's feces (as opposed to the other two reports, which refer specifically to his urine): in this case, Muḥammad's urine appears unambiguously as a transmitter of baraka, while his feces holds no extraordinary properties. Abū Nu'aym's chapter would then reflect tensions within a hierarchical order of Muḥammad's organs and internal bodily processes in their relation to baraka: in other words, prophetic body parts appear to remain unequal in their ability to convert digested materials into baraka-transmitting substances. Between 'Ā'isha

and Anas, the collective textual imaginary of Muḥammad remains fragmented and destabilized, reflective of the multiplicities inherent in the construction of the ḥadīth corpus.

Conflicting imaginaries of Muḥammad's digestive waste intersect in an obscure narration reported by Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī with a chain of transmission that includes Mālik ibn Anas and names its original source as Jābir. In this account, Jābir reports the episode in which Muḥammad commands trees to come together to shield him during his act of defecation, and also represents himself as Muḥammad's interlocutor who asks about the missing waste and learns that the earth conceals prophetic waste. Both the miracle of the trees and the earth's consumption of prophetic waste echo earlier traditions, of which Jābir himself appears as a narrator. Unique to this narration, however, is Jābir's expressed motive for asking why he cannot find Muḥammad's waste: "I pleaded with Allāh that [Muḥammad] might show me what he excretes from his stomach, that I could eat it."⁴³⁷ For its confession of a desire to eat rather than drink, this narration stands alone as the singular example that I could find of a Companion seeking to consume Muḥammad's solid waste in order to achieve a privileged closeness to Muḥammad or his baraka. Jābir's desire goes unfulfilled, since the earth acts to place prophetic feces beyond his reach; nor does he make his desire known to Muḥammad, which would have provided an opportunity for Muḥammad to approve or disapprove. Nonetheless, the expressed desire does operate within Jābir's apparent logic of prophetic bodies; this is the same Jābir who drinks the water that gushes forth from between Muḥammad's fingers, later recalling that he sought

⁴³⁷ Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ruwāt Mālik*; cited in Jalāl ad-Dīn al-Ṣuyūṭī, *Khaṣā'is al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2003), Vol.2, 50-51.

to fill his stomach with water from the prophetic body. Jābir explains his desire for consumption by stating simply, “I knew that it was baraka.” For Jābir, Muḥammad’s organs and the corporeal flows from the prophetic body are not hierarchically ordered: the prophetic anus works as effectively as prophetic hands to eject attainable baraka and achieve transformations within other bodies.

Like Muḥammad’s digestive waste, his blood receives increasing attention as a conceivable object of his Companions’ desire. The ingestion of Muḥammad’s blood as an encounter with the baraka running throughout his body, appearing in an isolated report in early sīra literature, all but disappears during the 9th-century formation of the ḥadīth corpus, appearing only in a tradition in which Muḥammad disapproves of Ibn al-Zubayr’s consumption and expresses woe for his future. The tradition remains marginalized among the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan works, included only in a collection that fails to achieve membership in the Six Books of later canonical authorization. In works following the Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan era, however, the possibilities reopen for prophetic blood as a carrier of contagious baraka. Ṭabarānī’s *Mu’jam al-Kabīr* restores the early sīra/maghāzī tradition in which Mālik ibn Sinān drinks Muḥammad’s blood directly from his wound and Muḥammad declares salvation for Mālik due to his having mixed their blood together. The incident appears in the *Mu’jam* with a full isnād that starts with Mālik’s son, Companion and prolific ḥadīth reporter Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, and extends through three subsequent generations of Mālik’s descendents.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁸ Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* (IslamWeb), #9331.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=475&pid=280455.

In addition to the resurfacing of the Mālik ibn Sinān tradition, the sources of this period include other narrations of Companions ingesting Muḥammad's blood. Al-Ḥākim's *Mustadrak* includes the previously discussed tradition of 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr ingesting Muḥammad's blood, reported by 'Abd Allāh's son 'Āmir bin 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, with a slight variation: a woeful Muḥammad asks Ibn al-Zubayr, "Was it your decision to drink the blood?" (*Wa man amrak an tashraba al-dam?*)⁴³⁹ An alternate version reported by Abū Nu'aym in his *Ḥilyat Awliyā*, attributed to Ibn al-Zubayr's client (*mawlā*) Kaysān, presents Salmān al-Farīsī as revealing Ibn al-Zubayr's actions to Muḥammad. The Kaysān account maintains Muḥammad's ominous if unclear forecasting of Ibn al-Zubayr's destiny, but expands the episode to provide both Ibn al-Zubayr's clear expression of a desire for Muḥammad's blood to enter his body and Muḥammad's assurance that the future countercaliph will be (mostly) immune to otherworldly punishment:

Salmān entered upon the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, as 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr had a basin and was drinking its contents. 'Abd Allāh entered upon the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace. [Muḥammad] said to him, "You emptied it?" [Ibn al-Zubayr] said, "Yes." Salman asked, "What is that, Messenger of Allāh?" [Muḥammad] said, "I gave him the leftovers from my cupping for him to spill." Salmān said, "He actually drank what you had dispatched him with." [Muḥammad] said, "You drank it?" [Ibn al-Zubayr] said, "Yes." He asked, "Why?" [Ibn al-Zubayr] said, "I loved that the blood of the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, was in my stomach." [Muḥammad] said with his hand on Ibn al-Zubayr's head, "Woe to you from humanity, and woe to humanity from you. The fire will not touch you except for the oath."⁴⁴⁰

Bayhaqī's *Sunan al-Kubrā* includes the tradition of Muḥammad's blood consumed by his *mawlā* Safīna (Mahrān bin Farūkh), which significantly mirrors the Ibn al-Zubayr

⁴³⁹ Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #6364.

⁴⁴⁰ Abū Nu'aym Isbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (IslamWeb), #1199.

http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=621&pid=319035.

tradition. In both, Muḥammad gives the Companion his blood after cupping with instructions for its disposal. In the Safīna tradition, Muḥammad tells Safīna to bury the blood in order to hide it from animals and birds (or humans and animals, as one transmitter in the isnād suggests). Safīna recalls, “I vanished with it and drank it. Then he asked me, and I reported to him, ‘I drank it.’ Then he laughed.”⁴⁴¹ Unlike the Mālik ibn Sinān tradition and other narrations of Companions consuming Muḥammad’s bodily substances, but in resonance with versions of the Ibn al-Zubayr blood-drinking tradition, Muḥammad does not name a medical or soteriological benefit to Safīna’s act of consumption. However, Safīna’s narration does adhere to the formula for other traditions in that the report minimizes Muḥammad’s agency in the matter, limiting his role to that of respondent. Muḥammad does not give Safīna instructions to drink his blood or give any indication that Safīna should do so; Safīna in fact disobeys Muḥammad’s instructions to pour out the blood and drinks it after leaving Muḥammad’s sight. The possible representation of Muḥammad as wanting to hide the blood from people could reflect an awareness of others’ interest in the substance, whether to consume for baraka as Safīna does or for the malicious purposes of sympathetic magic, as Labīd achieves through the acquisition of prophetic hairs. Upon discovery of Safīna’s action, Muḥammad laughs but does not give further comment: the significance of this corporeal border crossing is left unsaid. At the very least, Muḥammad’s laughter seems to reflect a lesser gravity than his ominous remarks to Ibn al-Zubayr. Finally, it should be noted that as in the traditions reported above, the narration expresses an intercorporeal connection between Muḥammad and its reporters: the isnād presents Safīna as narrating the event to his grandson, Ibrāhīm

⁴⁴¹ Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #12412.

bin ‘Amr bin Safīna, whose body can also become marked by his grandfather’s intercorporeality with the Prophet.⁴⁴² While the effects and meanings of drinking Muḥammad’s blood remain unstable among these traditions, all three traditions of Companions drinking Muḥammad’s blood enter into the corpus through narrators who are direct descendants of the drinkers. Their bodies, depending on one’s particular logic of baraka, are themselves linked to the Prophet by their ancestors’ consumption of his fluids.

Traditions in which Muḥammad’s saliva or sweat serve as vehicles to transport baraka from his body into others, established early in the development of the ḥadīth corpus, receive prominent attention in the later sources of the 10th and 11th centuries. As discussed in previous chapters, these substances represent the most public and immediately accessible products of Muḥammad’s body, available at essentially any time and without requiring injury, inconvenience, or severe intimacy. Muḥammad can transmit baraka with his saliva by simply spitting into a well from which his Companions drink and perform ablutions,⁴⁴³ for example, and his sweat can be retrieved from a leather mat on which he reclined.⁴⁴⁴ Nor do these bodily fluids provoke the anxieties or tensions that could arise from reports of a Companion drinking Muḥammad’s blood, caught between the exceptional ontology of the prophetic body and the Qur’ān’s explicit prohibition of blood as food. Similarly, the baraka water flowing out of Muḥammad’s hands produces no concerns for ritual purity; in fact, baraka water often materializes precisely in order to provide water for ablutions. What distinguishes the sources of the 10th and 11th centuries in terms of

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Idem, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, ed. ‘Abdul-Mu’ṭi Qal’aji (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2008), Vol. 1, 257.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 258.

imagining Muḥammad's bodily by-products is their increased willingness to provide reports in which Muḥammad's blood and urine become thinkable as resources for prophetic baraka. In these sources, it appears that materials coming from Muḥammad's body that would normally be considered repulsive, polluting to one's ritual purity, or even divinely prohibited for consumption are defined instead by their connections to Muḥammad's body, and therefore become possible extensions of that body's limits. However, as seen in the persistence of 'Ā'isha's assertion that the earth conceals prophetic waste from sight and smell, as well as the tensions between reports of Companions drinking blood, the expanded corpus does not provide a consistent theory of the prophetic body and its relationships to the substances ejected from it, but rather leaves the prophetic body destabilized and even incoherent.

Fāṭima

From the Qur'ān, which lacks clear references to Fāṭima, to the early sīra literature, which mentions Fāṭima in passing, to narrations of Muḥammad's special affection for Fāṭima in the ḥadīth collections of the 9th century CE, Fāṭima's significance can be observed growing alongside the expansion of the textual corpus. As discussed in previous chapters, ḥadīth archives of early 9th-century scholars represent Muḥammad as privileging Fāṭima: she is a piece of him, and whoever angers her has angered him; she is named the "master of women" (*sayyidat al-nisā'*), often with cautious disclaimers that clarify Fāṭima's proper relationship to Maryam and other great women of sacred history; and during Muḥammad's final illness, he allows her advanced knowledge that the deaths of both father and daughter were imminent, and that she would be the first from his house to see him again. Beyond

these traditions, it can be demonstrated that from the earliest sources to the turn of the 10th century, Fāṭima becomes increasingly salient as an extension of Muḥammad's corporeality and satellite of the baraka-transmitting prophetic body. Fāṭima's elaboration, while taking place in what has been called the "Shī'ī Century,"⁴⁴⁵ is not reducible to a Shī'ī project or a uniquely Shī'ī conception of the body that can be contrasted to Sunnī bodies. In this assemblage that has been termed the "Sunnī ḥadīth corpus," the intensified transcendence of Fāṭima's body reflects the significant heterogeneity of that corpus and the multiplicity of voices contributing to it.

While the ḥadīth collections of the 9th century do not explicitly reflect investments in special qualities of Fāṭima's corporeality, reports from 10th-century sources do represent Fāṭima's body as displaying characteristics that establish her exceptional relationship to baraka and the unseen. One such narration, appearing in Ṭabarānī's *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* and Khaṭīb's *Tārīkh*, assigns Fāṭima an origin that further establishes Muḥammad as mediator between paradise and earthly life. The report, presented as Muḥammad's recollection of his ascension, asserts that he carried a portion of paradise within his body as he returned to this world, after which the portion left his body and became his daughter. Muḥammad's body, therefore, becomes a vehicle by which remnants of paradise can be transferred into this world. Meanwhile, Fāṭima's body becomes significant not only for her being the daughter of the Messenger of Allāh, having originated within his baraka-laden corporeality, but also for having origins outside his body, as matter from paradise. Interestingly, the

⁴⁴⁵ Marshall Hodgson engages notions of the "Shī'ī Century" in his seminal *Venture of Islam*, but cautions against the term implying a Shī'ī domination over Sunnīs during this time. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Volume 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 36.

account of Muḥammad's words is attributed to 'Ā'isha, who provokes Muḥammad's explanation by expressing confusion over his affection for his daughter. The account's establishment of Fāṭima's ontological supremacy becomes provocative not only due to the reported rivalry between 'Ā'isha and Fāṭima, but additionally in the narration's departure from 'Ā'isha's usual treatment of prophetic bodies as mundane and generally unexceptional.

I saw the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, kissing Fāṭima. I said, "O Messenger of Allāh! I saw you doing a thing that I had not seen you do before." He said, "O Ḥumayra,⁴⁴⁶ when I ascended to the heavens, I was admitted into paradise. I stopped upon a tree from the trees of paradise of which I had not seen a better tree, nor whiter leaves, nor more delicious fruit than its fruits. I took one of its fruits and ate it; then it became semen in my sexual organs. When I descended to earth and had intercourse with Khadīja, she became pregnant with Fāṭima. When I long for smelling paradise, I smell Fāṭima. O Ḥumayra, Fāṭima is not like the Ādamic women (*nisā' al-ādamīyīn*), and she is not defective like they are defective."⁴⁴⁷

Through his journey to paradise and conception of Fāṭima, Muḥammad produces an embodied link between paradise and earthly life. Muḥammad's body deposits a remnant of paradise into his wife's body, thereby producing a daughter who exists as a material trace of paradise in this world; as with the superiority of Muḥammad's sweat to perfume, Fāṭima's natural scent reflects her exceptional relationship to flows of baraka. She is a flow of baraka herself, an extension not only of her prophetic father's corporeality into a new body but also an extension of one plane of existence into another: the presence of Fāṭima's body in the world complicates the spatial borders of paradise. While Fāṭima functions as a

⁴⁴⁶ Ḥumayra: Muḥammad's pet name for 'Ā'isha, diminutive of *ḥamrā'*, in reference to 'Ā'isha's fair ("red") complexion. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 113.

⁴⁴⁷ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 9:18433. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām* (IslamWeb), #1739.

https://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=717&pid=351023.

mode by which Muḥammad's body enables connections between his Companions and the realm of the unseen, Fāṭima's body also provides this linkage for her father with a body odor that soothes the pain of his separation from paradise.

Fāṭima's exceptional corporeality, remaining corporeal, also remains gendered. The sources affirm that believers will see Allāh and prophets in paradise, but Fāṭima appears to be privileged by the prohibition of witnessing her: Ṭabarānī reports Muḥammad stating that on the day of judgment, the people of assembly (*ahl al-jam'a*) will be told to lower their gazes when Fāṭima passes by, covered in green or red.⁴⁴⁸ Muḥammad also privileges his daughter as exempt from the defects of normal women. Whereas Muḥammad's interactions with extrahuman forces and metaphysical realms reconstruct him as an exemplar of performative masculinity (as in the narration of Jibrīl empowering Muḥammad's sexuality with performance-enhancing supplements⁴⁴⁹), Fāṭima's paradisaical origin grants her a degree of separation from markers of the feminine body. This separation undergoes further articulation in another report, appearing in al-Khaṭīb's *Tārīkh Baghdād*, in which Ibn 'Abbās narrates that Muḥammad said, "My daughter Fāṭima is an Ādamic ḥūrī. She has never had a period and she has never menstruated, and her name is Fāṭima because Allāh weaned her (*faṭamahā*) and those who love her from the fire."⁴⁵⁰ An Ādamic ḥūrī, Fāṭima's unique corporeality positions her body as liminal between earthly women and the extrahuman maidens of paradise; she has human parents, but also originates from paradise and, like the ḥūr, remains exempt from an experience of earthly

⁴⁴⁸ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 9:18432.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat al-Kubra*, #866.

⁴⁵⁰ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh al-Madīnat al-Salām*, #1739.

women.⁴⁵¹ Because she does not menstruate, Fāṭima also transcends the “deficiency in dīn” that Muḥammad ascribes to women for their loss of prayers and fasting due to ritual impurity.⁴⁵²

Reflecting the difference in ways that men’s and women’s bodily fluids are imagined as polluting and contaminating,⁴⁵³ Fāṭima’s bodily de-abjection brings a different set of gendered consequences than the de-abjection of her father. While Muḥammad’s blood is treated in some traditions as a facilitator of baraka’s flow, demonstrating his exceptional ontology through the power of his bodily products to achieve special effects, the sources do not represent Fāṭima’s gendered bleeding as endowed with baraka. Instead of converting menstruation’s threat of unwanted connections and violations of bodily boundaries into a desirable linkage to prophetic corporeality (treating Fāṭima’s menstrual garment, for example, as a point of contact with baraka or demonstration of her transcendent ontology in the same manner as a bowl of Muḥammad’s blood from his cupping), the sources erase menstrual flow and its dangers entirely from their imagining of Fāṭima’s body. Similarly, the sources do not represent Fāṭima’s waste, hair, sweat, saliva, or fingernails as

⁴⁵¹ Nerina Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 96.

⁴⁵² In this tradition, Muḥammad states that women are deficient in both dīn and intellect (*‘aql*). The deficiency in the former derives from women missing prayers and fasting due to the ritual impurity of menstruation; in the latter, their deficiency is evidenced by the inferiority of their testimony. In her discussion of what she calls “the most notoriously misogynistic ḥadīth in the established corpus,” Marion Holmes Katz calls attention to the relationship drawn in this ḥadīth between gender, uncontrolled bodies, and corporeal pollution. In particular, she notes the *‘a-q-l* root’s construction of a link between intellect and restraint, which informed premodern exegesis that linked women’s uncontrollable bodies to their deficient mental capacities. Katz, *Body of Text*, 196.

⁴⁵³ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 197.

transmitting baraka in the manner of her father, even despite her paradisaical origins and status as an earthly ḥūrī.

Fāṭima's sexed body first extends her father's corporeality and connects him to other bodies in her marriage to 'Alī. Ṭabarānī reports Fāṭima having "guarded her vagina" (*ḥaṣanat farjahā*) for which Allāh protected her and kept the fire away from her.⁴⁵⁴ In becoming sexually accessible to 'Alī, Fāṭima intensifies 'Alī's connection to Muḥammad. Fāṭima's body mediates between Muḥammad and 'Alī, who are already linked by their shared lineage, and enables them to form a new assemblage. In the *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, Fāṭima's function as a point of triangulation between Muḥammad and 'Alī positions her not only as a mediator of their relationship, but also subject to extrahuman mediations in the larger homosocial realm of divine, angelic, and prophetic communication. Ṭabarānī includes a narration in which Muḥammad announces that Fāṭima's marriage to 'Alī was a divine order that Allāh had communicated to him via Jibrīl.⁴⁵⁵ 'Alī's embodied connection to Fāṭima links him not only to her father's corporeality, but also to an extrahuman chain of command into which their marriage enters them as participants.

Muḥammad's extension of his prophetic corporeality through the marriage of Fāṭima and 'Alī reaches future bodies through their acts of reproduction. The complexity and instability of prophetic de-abjection finds reflection in the paradox of his daughter's body, which becomes pregnant without having a menstrual cycle. In her engagement of Kristevan abjection, Grosz writes of the "cultural horror of menstruation," which does not precisely signify the difference of male and female, but rather the difference between men

⁴⁵⁴ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 9:18451.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 5:10152.

and potential mothers.⁴⁵⁶ Fāṭima's maternal body, which has been exempted from the experience of menstrual bodies, enables future connections to Muḥammad's corporeal baraka by giving birth to his grandchildren, but without the menstrual body's threat of unwanted connections and violations of bodily boundaries.

Sources from this period represent familial connections to the prophetic body as enduring into a time at which other such lineages are broken, providing traditions in which Muḥammad states that on the day of resurrection, all families and relations will be broken except his own.⁴⁵⁷ Prophetic privilege enables connections between Muḥammad and Fāṭima's children beyond typical ways in which their relationship would have been socially constructed, as Ṭabarānī's *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tārīkh Baghdād* include narrations in which Muḥammad presents Fāṭima's children as the exception to conventions of patrilineal genealogy. In this tradition, Muḥammad states that while most lineages are traced through fathers, Fāṭima's children will trace their lineage through her, since Muḥammad is their lineage and guardian.⁴⁵⁸ Muḥammad's prophetic station positions him as a metapatriarch who can overrule 'Alī's paternity and rewrite the ancestral lines for his grandchildren. Ṭabarānī also includes the tradition in which Fāṭima brings Ḥasan and Ḥusayn to Muḥammad, declares them to be Muḥammad's sons, and asks that they inherit from him, to which Muḥammad responds by naming his exceptional

⁴⁵⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, "Body of Signification," in *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: the Works of Julia Kristeva*, ed. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 1990): 80-103.

⁴⁵⁷ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 8:16459. Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #12401. Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #4628.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, 2:2566, 9:18475. Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, #3800.

qualities that they will embody.⁴⁵⁹ According to a report that Ṭabarānī attributes to Ibn al-Zubayr's son Muṣ'ab, Fāṭima herself was known by a familial honorific (*kunyā*) that rewrote her lineal relations: Umm Abīhā, "Mother of Her Father."⁴⁶⁰

While the valorization of Fāṭima and her children appear in earlier sources, the collections of this period, most notably Ṭabarānī's *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, reflect growing investment in the relation of Fāṭima's corporeality to that of her father and the flows of beneficent energies taking place within his body. Fāṭima's body becomes an intersection of categories examined here: being Muḥammad's biological progeny, she appears as a bodily product and also as an extension of his sexed body. In contrast to treatments of Fāṭima in earlier sources, the late tradition of Fāṭima being conceived immediately after the ascension (from paradisaical fruit that became sperm in Muḥammad's body) significantly develops the powers of Muḥammad's body to stretch its reach. In this tradition, the prophetic digestive and reproductive systems enter into consideration as mediators between planes of existence, as Muḥammad's internal bodily processes convert paradisaical fruit into reproductive material and his penis deposits a trace of paradise into this world. The fruit tradition as reflected in this narration from Ṭabarānī stands as an extreme outlier in relation to 'Ā'isha's customary treatment of the prophetic body. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, 'Ā'isha consistently downplays the possibilities for Muḥammad's body to be imagined as substantively unique beyond its service as the medium for Qur'ānic revelation. For 'Ā'isha and her immediate interlocutors, Muḥammad's semen becomes relevant exclusively as a stain to be removed from clothing, with no special significance

⁴⁵⁹ Tabarani, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 9:18474.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 9:18418.

related to its emission from a prophetic or potentially baraka-transmitting body. The report of Fāṭima's paradisaical origin, in profound contrast, represents 'Ā'isha as confirming the power of Muḥammad's body to serve as a point of access, in large part through the event of that body traveling between worlds (which also stands in tension with 'Ā'isha's usual treatment of Muḥammad's ascension as strictly a dream or vision rather than a bodily event). The narration of Fāṭima's otherworldly origins represents an opening of Muḥammad's corporeal powers not only due to the content of the tradition itself, but for its attribution to an otherwise skeptical reporter of the prophetic body.

The Modified Body

As in earlier sources, these collections represent Muḥammad's body as subject to interventions by extrahuman forces, including angels and Allāh. Reports of modifications performed upon Muḥammad's body that had appeared in earlier generations as curious outliers or departures from more popular accounts, only to become marginalized amidst the Six Books' attempted purging of the corpus, resurface in post-Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan collections. Ḥākim's *Mustadrak* and Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il*, for example, include versions of the chest-opening tradition in which the operation is executed by two white birds "like eagles," rather than anthropomorphic angels. These reports also mention the birds' removal of two "black clots" (*'alaqatayn sawdāwayn*) from Muḥammad's heart, preserving the potential to imagine prophetic bodies as containing abjected portions that require surgical

intervention.⁴⁶¹ Perhaps even more remarkably, the Anas tradition of Muḥammad's body containing a specifically named "share of Shayṭān" (*ḥaẓẓ al-Shayṭān*), after experiencing significant (but not absolute) marginalization in the Six Books, flourishes in sources of the 10th and 11th centuries, included by Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim, Abū Ya'lā, Abū Nu'aym, and Bayhaqī in their collections.⁴⁶² Another tradition emerges with reports that when Jibrīl purified (*ṭahhara*) Muḥammad's heart, he also performed Muḥammad's circumcision.⁴⁶³ The reports that associate Muḥammad's heart cleansing with the removal of his foreskin do not mention the extraction of a demonic portion from inside Muḥammad's body, nor do they assign special significance to the abjected fragment removed from Muḥammad's exterior. The presence of these traditions amidst reports of Muḥammad's increasingly spectacular bodily power reflect possible points of tension and ambiguity in the literature's imaginary of prophetic corporeality. Muḥammad's abject waste is de-abjected in its capacity to heal and bless other bodies, but his own body continues to undergo representation as containing a demonic morsel.

The Seal of Prophethood, either an organic birthmark or a literal seal that closed Muḥammad's incision from his angelic surgery, appears throughout the sources as evidence of Muḥammad's prophetic station. Familiar traditions emerge from the sources,

⁴⁶¹ Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #4161. Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, vol.2, p.7-8.

⁴⁶² Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #3878. Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, vol.1, 147; vol.2, p.7-8. Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (IslamWeb), #6469, #6471. https://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=454&pid=263537. Abū Ya'lā, *Musnad* (IslamWeb), #3320, #3453. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=327&pid=155201. Abū Nu'aym, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, #168.

⁴⁶³ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, #5970. Abū Nu'aym, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, #96.

such as Salmān al-Farsī's recognition of Muḥammad by the mark on his back,⁴⁶⁴ along with descriptions of the Seal as resembling a bird egg.⁴⁶⁵ Such narrations, presented as Companions' recollections of the prophetic body to later generations that could not have known this body firsthand, authorize the Companions for their ocular and tangible experiences of the Seal. In Ṭabarānī's *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, Abū Zayd specifically describes an incident in which Muḥammad asks him to approach and touch his back. Abū Zayd reports, "I placed the Seal of Prophethood between my fingers" and is then asked by his interlocutor to explain what the khātam al-nubuwwa was. He answers, "Hair between his shoulders."⁴⁶⁶ Bayhaqī's reproduction of the "two birds" tradition in his *Dalā'il* presents the birds sealing Muḥammad's body with the Seal of Prophethood as the conclusion to their surgical intervention.⁴⁶⁷ Ibn Ḥibbān's *Ṣaḥīḥ* provides an unusual narration, attributed to Ibn 'Umar, in which the meaning of the "seal" (*khātam*) on Muḥammad's body appears to be informed by the seal with which he would sign letters: "The *khātam al-nubuwwa* was on the back of the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh bless him and give him peace, made of flesh, resembling a nut. On it was written, 'Muḥammad, Messenger of Allāh.'"⁴⁶⁸ In this isolated account, the bodily mark that evidences Muḥammad's prophethood reveals itself as such with an explicit claim, literally inscribing text upon Muḥammad's skin.

⁴⁶⁴ Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #6575.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, #4128. Abū Ya'la. *Musnad*, #7420.

⁴⁶⁶ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 6:13520.

⁴⁶⁷ Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, vol. 2, 7-8.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #6437.

The tradition of Muḥammad's body undergoing modification by direct contact with an apparently corporeal Allāh, presenting the touch of Allāh's cold hand as a condition for Muḥammad's knowledge, resurfaces after having been included in only one of the Six Books. The tradition finds inclusion in collections such as Ṭabarānī's *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* and Daraquṭnī's *Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, appearing in numerous variants and not always with cautionary notes of the event having taken place within a dream.⁴⁶⁹ In the sources of this period, narrations of Allāh touching Muḥammad with his hand also appear in conversation with an increasingly detailed imaginary of the divine body, via reports specifying Allāh's clothing and face veil, examined in this chapter's discussion of the sexed prophetic body.

Muḥammad Postmortem

In comparison to the ambiguity and tension at other points of prophetic corporeality, such as the potential powers of Muḥammad's bodily products, the status of Muḥammad's postmortem corporeality preserves significant coherence in the sources. The possibility for Muḥammad's corpse to decay in typical fashion, evidenced in earlier *sīra*/maghāzī discussions of his postmortem status and narrations in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* of Companions observing changes in his body, has been shut down: Muḥammad remains alive in some form while in his grave. The tradition of Muḥammad assuring his Companions that

⁴⁶⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Daraquṭnī, *Kitāb al-Ru'yā* (IslamWeb), #177, #181, #183, #185, #187, #188, #202.

http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=534&pid=305713.
Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 8:16640.

the earth has been prohibited from consuming prophets' bodies finds consistent inclusion.⁴⁷⁰ Additionally, the sources emphatically assert Muḥammad's continued sentence in the grave as a condition of his inhabiting a prophetic body. Abū Nu'aym provides the report from Anas of Muḥammad saying, "The prophets are praying in their graves" (*Al-anbiyā' fī qubūrihim yuṣālūn*).⁴⁷¹ Abū Ya'lā's version in his *Musnad*, also attributed to Anas, presents Muḥammad specifying, "The prophets are *alive* in their graves, praying" (*Al-anbiyā' aḥyā' fī qubūrihim yuṣallūn*).⁴⁷² Bayhaqī compiled an entire collection devoted to ḥadīths concerning the lives of prophets in their graves, the straightforwardly titled *Lives of the Prophets in Their Graves* (*Ḥayāt al-Anbiyā' fī Qubūrihim*).⁴⁷³ Among the collection's traditions, Bayhaqī includes the above traditions and another Anas report in which Muḥammad explains that no prophet spends forty days in his grave before arriving in the hands of Allāh until Allāh breathes life into their forms.⁴⁷⁴ For Muḥammad and other men with whom he shares in prophethood, the grave is not a site of bodily decay. His

⁴⁷⁰ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 1:588. Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #5530. Idem, *Sunan al-Sughra* (IslamWeb), #299.

http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=672&hid=299&pid=33020

3. Idem, *Ḥayāt al-Anbiyā' fī Qubūrihim* (IslamWeb), #10.

http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=680&hid=10&pid=0.

Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #967, #8786. Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, #508. Ibn Khuzayma. *Ṣaḥīḥ* (IslamWeb), #1642.

http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=345&pid=178557.

⁴⁷¹ Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, #1576.

⁴⁷² Abū Ya'la, *Musnad*, #3371.

⁴⁷³ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-Anbiyā' fī Qubūrihim* (Al-Mansura: Maktabat al-Iman, 1993).

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, 1, 2, 4.

corporeal integrity fully preserved, Muḥammad remains capable of not only hearing and bearing witness to the prayers of his community, but also performing his own acts of devotion.

Finally, the postmortem prophetic body retains its power to connect with other bodies, and through these connections provide greater access to baraka, in the merits of visiting Muḥammad's grave. Bayhaqī and Ṭabarānī both represent Muḥammad as promising, "Whoever performs ḥajj and visits my grave after my death is like whoever visited me in my life."⁴⁷⁵ Achieving this proximity to Muḥammad's postmortem body becomes a mode of accessing baraka, whether baraka should be understood here as a force emanating from the remains of Muḥammad's materiality or divinely awarded credits earned for approved devotional acts.

The Sexed Body

Muḥammad's sexed body continues in these sources to connect him with other bodies, whether in his entirely homosocial encounters with extrahuman beings, his mostly homosocial community of Companions, or his prophetic sexuality, through which his sexual access to women informs both his station (as in his marriage to Maryam, mother of 'Īsā) and theirs (as in his wives becoming privileged with intensified but still mediated access to angels). Finally, Muḥammad's sexed body also provides a site where his immunity to the manipulations and penetrations of Shayṭān becomes evidenced.

Compilers such as Khaṭīb, Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim, and Daraquṭnī include narrations of Allāh appearing in explicitly corporeal terms and making himself visible to Muḥammad.

⁴⁷⁵ Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #9523. Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, #3487.

Khaṭīb presents Muḥammad telling Anas, “The night of my ascension into the heavens, I saw my lord, powerful and sublime. Between him and I was a blazing veil. Then I saw everything until I saw a crown made from pearls.”⁴⁷⁶ Another narration from Khaṭīb, attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, quotes Muḥammad as recalling, “I saw my lord in the form of a beardless youth wearing a red cloak.”⁴⁷⁷ In Khaṭīb’s *Tārīkh* and Ṭabarānī’s *Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, a narration presents Muḥammad telling Umm Ṭufayl, “I saw my lord in the form of a long-haired youth dressed in green, wearing sandals of gold and a gold veil on his face.”⁴⁷⁸ Daraquṭnī also includes variations of the Umm Ṭufayl tradition.⁴⁷⁹ Among the versions of the encounter in Bayhaqī’s *Al-Asmā’ wa-l-Ṣifāt*, one narration describes Allāh as beardless and curly-haired, wearing a veil of pearls.⁴⁸⁰ Allāh appears in reports of Muḥammad’s theophanic vision as a passive object of the prophetic gaze (consistently reported with Muḥammad’s statement, “I saw”). With his eyes serving as lenses through which others can visualize the divine, Muḥammad’s perception of the divine masculine body provides a portal of mediated access between the metaphysical and physical worlds. In these narrations of divine-prophetic intercorporeality, Allāh undergoes representations as a body productive of desire. The reports reflect investments in erotic bodily foci of youthfulness, abundant or curly hair, and the face as either beardless or shrouded by a veil

⁴⁷⁶ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, #3347.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, #3735.

⁴⁷⁸ Ṭabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Kabīr*. 10:20854.

⁴⁷⁹ Daraquṭnī, *Kitāb al-Ru’yā*, #231, #232.

⁴⁸⁰ Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā’ wa al-Ṣifāt* (IslamWeb), #921.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=666&pid=329491.

of gold or pearls, along with the lush accessories of his red or green garments, golden sandals, and the crown of pearls presented as the culmination of Muḥammad's account, "I saw everything of him" (*fa-ra'aytu kulla shay'in minhu*).⁴⁸¹ The erotic power of such imagery finds affirmation within the sources via a report from Bayhaqī's *Sunan al-Kubra* in which Muḥammad prohibits gazing at the "beardless boy with a beautiful face" (*al-ghulām al-amrad al-jamīl wajhuhu*).⁴⁸² For Bayhaqī's *Al-Asmā' wa-l-Ṣifāt* to also provide versions of the "youthful god" tradition, as well as a report of the "cold hand" encounter (which he subjects to critical scrutiny through both isnād evaluation and allegorical readings of the divine embodiment),⁴⁸³ presents Allāh as an object of desires that Bayhaqī constructs elsewhere as illicit. In his appearance as a beautiful youth, Allāh produces the visual fascination and attraction that becomes prohibited when directed towards young men in this world, reflecting in Bayhaqī's personal corpus a tension between desires that simultaneously provoke the threat of unlawful sexual acts between masculine humans and inform believers' contemplation of the masculine divine.

The increasingly corporeal accounts of Allāh and his visual or tangible exposure to Muḥammad do not simply overtake the corpus to replace one construction of divine-prophetic encounter with another. While some narrations intensify the embodied divine anthropomorphism in treatments of Allāh's interaction with Muḥammad, the tradition of 'Ā'isha vehemently denying the possibility of theophanic vision does not disappear, but finds representation in collections such as Abū Ya'la's *Musnad* and Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il al-*

⁴⁸¹ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh al-Madīnat al-Salām*, #3347.

⁴⁸² Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, #12569.

⁴⁸³ Idem, *al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt*, #658.

Nubuwwa.⁴⁸⁴ The divine body, like the prophetic body and the possibility and limits of interactions between the two, retains significant unpredictability across these collected reports, even within an individual scholar's body of work.

If Allāh and the angels transcend categories of gender, these sources represent Allāh and Jibrīl as engaged in a drag performance, playing exclusively masculine characters. As in previous chapters, Jibrīl's participation as a mediator between prophetic and divine personalities remains embodied and concretely masculinized. Jibrīl appears with a male-sexed body, noted for his handsome face and hair, his turban, and the homosocial intimacy of his encounter with Muḥammad, when Jibrīl faces him and touches their knees together. Muḥammad himself likens Jibrīl to Dihya al-Kalbī.⁴⁸⁵ When Jibrīl is seen riding a mule or white horse on his way to Banū Qurayza, Companions mistake him for Dihya.⁴⁸⁶ Additionally, a narration from Anas supplements Muḥammad's comparison of Jibrīl to Dihya with Anas's personal recollection, "And he was a beautiful white man" (*Wa kāna rajulān jamīlān abyad*).⁴⁸⁷ While the gendering of angelic embodiment remains consistent throughout the development of the literature, the gendered restrictions on angelic contact with humans can change between reports. Previous chapters charted a gradual shutting down of the possibility that 'Ā'isha witnessed Jibrīl with her own eyes, with sources generally presenting their exchange of salām as mediated on both sides by her prophetic

⁴⁸⁴ Idem, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, vol.2, p.370-371. Abū Ya'la, *Musnad*, #4835.

⁴⁸⁵ Abu Nu'aym Isbahānī, *Akhhbār Aṣḥān* (IslamWeb), #1450.
http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=621&pid=319035.

⁴⁸⁶ Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, vol.7, p.66. Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, #1450.

⁴⁸⁷ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 1:757.

husband. Later sources such as Ḥākim's *Mustadrak* however, rehabilitates the tradition of 'Ā'isha seeing Jibrīl. In these reports, Muḥammad allows Jibrīl into 'Ā'isha's chamber, provoking 'Ā'isha to ask, "O Messenger of Allāh, who is this?" Muḥammad replies by asking, "Who does he look like?" 'Ā'isha answers that the man resembles Diḥya al-Kalbī, after which Muḥammad explains that he is Jibrīl. Jibrīl and 'Ā'isha exchange salām, with Muḥammad conveying the greeting from each to the other.⁴⁸⁸ Ṭabarānī's *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* includes a section specifically devoted to 'Ā'isha's witness of Jibrīl (*Naẓar 'Ā'isha ilā Jibrīl alayhi al-salām*), which provides narrations of 'Ā'isha seeing Jibrīl with her own eyes and misidentifying him as Diḥya, as well as her confessed inability to see Jibrīl; the section also includes narrations in which Muḥammad mediates the greetings of peace between 'Ā'isha and Jibrīl, leaving her vision of the angel neither clearly affirmed nor denied.⁴⁸⁹ In one report, 'Ā'isha witnesses Jibrīl as a man on a horse.⁴⁹⁰ Elsewhere in his *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, Ṭabarānī includes the parallel tradition, in which it is Umm Salama rather than 'Ā'isha who sees Jibrīl and mistakes him for Diḥya.⁴⁹¹ Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il* reports 'Ā'isha observing Jibrīl's embodied appearance and Muḥammad revealing the angel's identity to her,⁴⁹² and also

⁴⁸⁸ Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #6754.

⁴⁸⁹ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 9:18614-18627. Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #7255.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, 9:18625.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, 10:19240. Abū Ya'la, *Musnad*, #6866.

⁴⁹² Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, v.7, p.66.

provides chapters devoted to visions of Jibrīl and other angels by specific Companions, including figures such as ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbās, and Umm Salama.⁴⁹³

Previous chapters discussed the gendering of intercorporeal baraka transmission as demonstrated in Muḥammad’s acts of *taḥnīk* and saliva transferral for infants, a mode of achieving embodied linkage with Muḥammad accessible only to male infants. Ṭabarānī’s *Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, Bayhaqī’s *Sunan al-Kubrā*, and Khaṭīb’s *Tārīkh* include a tradition that represents homosocial intercorporeality with oral-genital contact. These narrations, attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh, and ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Laylā, report Muḥammad to have parted Ḥasan’s legs and kissed his penis.⁴⁹⁴

Muḥammad’s own penis remains unseen, both in ‘Ā’isha’s denial of having seen her husband naked⁴⁹⁵ and the tradition of young Muḥammad only briefly exposing himself during the reconstruction of the Ka’ba (with a Bayhaqī report including the coda, “His ‘awra was not seen after or before”).⁴⁹⁶ Though the prophetic penis remains shielded from view, Muḥammad’s sexed body continues to perform demonstrations of his special bodily properties in these sources. Bayhaqī and Abū Nu’aym include reports in their *Dalā’il* works, attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās narrating from his father, of Muḥammad having been born circumcised.⁴⁹⁷ Several collections provide the narration of Anas in which Muḥammad

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ṭabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, 2:2592. Ṭabarānī provides an identical isnād with slightly different wording in 6:12449. Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #591. Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, #1089.

⁴⁹⁵ Abu Nu’aym, *Ḥilya*, #9953, #12462.

⁴⁹⁶ Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, vol.2, p.54-55. Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, #7420.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid, vol.1, p.114. Abū Nu’aym, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, #95.

states, “Among my miracles (*karamātī*) of my lord upon me is that I was born circumcised and no one has seen my private parts (*sawatī*).”⁴⁹⁸ In addition to narrations of Muḥammad having been born circumcised, as discussed earlier in this chapter, Ṭabarānī’s *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* and Abū Nu’aym’s *Dalā’il* also report the tradition of Jibrīl personally circumcising Muḥammad, which is combined with his washing of Muḥammad’s heart as a single event.⁴⁹⁹

The tradition of Muḥammad having intercourse with each of his wives every night, attributed to his having been granted the power of multitudes of men (usually thirty), appears in collections of Bayhaqī,⁵⁰⁰ Ibn Ḥibbān,⁵⁰¹ Ibn Khuzayma,⁵⁰² Abū Ya’lā,⁵⁰³ and Ṭabarānī, whose variant of this tradition narrates that Muḥammad “went around eleven women at one time, and he was given the power of thirty” (*Yaṭūf ‘alā iḥdā ‘ashrata’ mra’atin fī al-sā’at al-wāḥida wa ‘uṭiya quwwat thalāthīn*).⁵⁰⁴ All of the above reports share an isnād that traces the accounts back not to someone who had experienced prophetic sexuality first hand, but rather Anas. Ṭabarānī’s *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* additionally provides a narration in which the Companion ‘Abd Allāh bin ‘Amr presents the claim in Muḥammad’s own words.

⁴⁹⁸ Abū Nu’aym, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, #94. Ṭabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ*, #6314. Al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Madīnat al-Salām*, #232. Ṭabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Sughra* (IslamWeb), #936. http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=476&pid=280759.

⁴⁹⁹ Ṭabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ*, #5970. Abū Nu’aym, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, #96.

⁵⁰⁰ Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubra*, #12356.

⁵⁰¹ Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #1230.

⁵⁰² Ibn Khuzayma, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #238.

⁵⁰³ Abū Ya’lā, *Musnad*, #2911, #3133, #3160.

⁵⁰⁴ Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmīyīn* (IslamWeb), #2546. https://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=480&pid=291747.

The report combines Muḥammad's superior capacity for sexual function with a similar but lesser privilege extended to normal believing men. Additionally, Muḥammad presents women in this ḥadīth as nine times more sexually driven than men, with their excessive lust balanced only by their modesty:

I was given the power of forty in strength and sexual intercourse, and there is no believer except that he is given the power of ten. And passion was made into ten parts, and nine parts were placed in women, and one in men. And if not for the shyness that was placed on women with their passions, every man would have nine women seized with lust.⁵⁰⁵

In reports provided by Ṭabarānī and Abū Nu'aym, Muḥammad's sexed body also demonstrates his privileged station through the specific bodies that he sexually accesses in paradise. The decontextualized narration represents Muḥammad as saying, "O 'Ā'isha! Don't you know that Allāh married me in paradise to Maryam bint Imrān, Kalthum the sister of Mūsā, and the wife of Fir'aun?"⁵⁰⁶ This polemically potent tradition not only counters 'Ā'isha's spousal prestige in paradise by naming three other women from sacred history with whom she must share her status, but also presents 'Ā'isha as the foil whom Muḥammad personally rebukes.

Muḥammad's sexual function performs some of the work of mediating between this world and the unseen. Apart from the tradition in which Muḥammad's body transmits digested fruit from paradise into Khadija to conceive Fāṭima, prophetic semen as a substance appears to be a point of concern only for the salience of learning Muḥammad's personal habits to ritual purity. A notable outlier appears in the body of Umm Salama, who becomes a transmitter of prophetic corporeality through Muḥammad's sexual access to her.

⁵⁰⁵ Idem, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, #583.

⁵⁰⁶ Tabarani, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*. 3:5353. Abu Nu'aym, *Akhhbār Aṣhāb*, #2250.

As in Ibn Sa'd's previously examined *Ṭabaqat*, Abū Nu'aym's *Ḥilya* presents milk kinship as a site at which Muḥammad's semen conveys baraka even after Muḥammad's death. In both sources, relating to Muḥammad's body through the logic of "sire's milk" endows Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with special properties. Abū Nu'aym reports:

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was the son of the neighbor of Umm Salama, wife of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace. Umm Salama called her neighbor in her poverty, as Ḥasan was in great need; taking pity on him, she took him in her room and fed her breast to him. It flowed to him and he drank from it, and it is said that Ḥasan's portion of wisdom (*al-ḥikma*) was from the milk that he drank from Umm Salama, wife of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace.⁵⁰⁷

Abū Nu'aym's account in his *Ḥilya* also includes a postscript concerning Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin 'Alī bin Ḥusayn (Muḥammad al-Bāqir), fifth Shī'ī Imām and Ḥasan's contemporary, who reportedly described Ḥasan as "that one whose speech resembles the speech of the prophets" (*dhāk alladhī yushabbihu kalāmuhu kalāma al-anbiyā'*).⁵⁰⁸ Writing on accounts that place Ḥasan in proximity to Muḥammad, Suleiman Ali Mourad argues, privileges Ḥasan as virtually a Companion: "Such anecdotes were meant to raise him, metaphorically at least, to that level, and elevate him above his generation of Successors."⁵⁰⁹ In the case of the fifth Shī'ī Imām affirming similarity between Ḥasan's discourse and the discourse of prophets—reflecting a wisdom and eloquence that Ḥasan received through the milk of Muḥammad's widow⁵¹⁰—Ḥasan's status advances even

⁵⁰⁷ Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, v.2, p.147.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Suleiman Ali Mourad, *Early Islam Between Myth and History: Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.110 H/728 CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 27.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, 25-28. Mourad calls the historicity of Umm Salama's status as Muḥammad's widow into question, and connects such representations to a broader trend of "mythmaking" that intensified connections between Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad. With or without

beyond a pseudo-Companion level to that of pseudo-*ahl al-bayt*. Ḥasan's milk kinship with Muḥammad does not merely advance his status "metaphorically" but reflects his material transformation by contact with prophetic milk, which endows him with wisdom and eloquence as a corporeal infusion.

Beyond the substance of Muḥammad's semen, the sources' treatment of Muḥammad's ejaculations continues to reflect a construction of prophetic sexuality as exceptional and divinely protected. Earlier sources represent nocturnal emission as the result of an intervention by Shayṭān, additionally making it clear in reports of Muḥammad's ritual impurity due to ejaculation that he had *not* experienced a wet dream. Ṭabarānī presents Muḥammad himself offering an emphatic clarification: "No prophet has had a wet dream. The wet dream is from Shayṭān" (*mā iḥtalama nabī qaṭṭu, inna-mā al-iḥtilām min al-shayṭān*).⁵¹¹ These narrations demonstrate the perfection of prophetic sexuality while denying an opening for connection between prophetic and demonic bodies: Shayṭān cannot exert control over Muḥammad's body by manipulating his dreams, just as he cannot assume the form of Muḥammad's body to impersonate him in the dreams of others.

Examining Muḥammad's body for its openings and closings of connection to other bodies, his *sexed* body and performance of prophetic sexuality become significant sites at which these openings and closings find expression. Muḥammad forms a desiring-machine in his erotically loaded interactions with a gorgeous youthful god; his sexuality mediates encounters between women and angelic masculinity; and demonic forces seek to assault

judgments on their historical veracity, the proliferation of such narratives further highlights the significance of prophetic corporeality to authorizing post-prophetic figures.

⁵¹¹ Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 5:11398.

him at the site of his sexuality, which remains invulnerable to their attack. Finally, Muḥammad's prophetic masculinity enables, mediates, and denies access between various beings and his baraka-laden ontology, as well as between these beings and each other.

Conclusions

In *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz remarks that Deleuze and Guattari “do not have a systematic account of the body.”⁵¹² Joe Hughes similarly notes in his introduction to the edited volume, *Deleuze and the Body*, “It is not clear what kind of work the concept [of the body] is supposed to do within Deleuze's corpus, and it is not immediately clear what we can do with it.”⁵¹³ Nonetheless, a growing corpus of literature around Deleuze (and Guattari) recognizes the significance of bodies to his/their thought, and frequently cites Grosz as a thinker drawing from their treatments of the body.⁵¹⁴

Deleuze and Guattari, Grosz explains, “see the body as elements or fragments of a desiring machine and themselves as composed of a series of desiring machines.”⁵¹⁵ In their paradigmatic example, a woman nursing an infant constitutes a desiring machine forged by the connection of a mouth-machine to a breast-machine. The mouth-machine and breast-machine themselves are composed of relations to other machines. At their point of

⁵¹² Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 167.

⁵¹³ Joe Hughes, “Pity the Meat?: Deleuze and the Body,” in *Deleuze and the Body*, ed. Joe Hughes and Laura Guillaume (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 1-6.

⁵¹⁴ Consider the *Deleuze Connections* series of edited volumes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), which includes titles such as *Deleuze and the Body* (ed. Laura Guillaume and Joe Hughes), *Deleuze and Sex* (ed. Frida Beckman), and *Deleuze and Queer Theory* (ed. Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr).

⁵¹⁵ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 168.

connection, they facilitate flows between networks of machines, each machine itself defined by flows and relations. The “body” emerges here not as a self-contained whole endowed with structural coherence and internal unity, but as an unstable conglomeration of machines and machine networks. Even if Deleuze and Guattari do not provide a systemization of the body, their resistance to stable and coherent bodies could be useful in thinking about Muḥammad’s body—both as it appears within the texts that represent the prophetic body and the thousands of reporters whose connections produce this representation, as well as the master compilers who assemble thousands of narrations into the artificial unities of collected books (and even further to the artificial unities of a “Six Books” canon or “Sunnī ḥadīth corpus” at large).

Deleuze and Guattari’s prime desiring machine, the nursing interface of mouth-machine to breast-machine, appears in Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s ingestion of Umm Salama’s milk as a facilitator of flows between these machines and a third, the “baraka-machine” of Muḥammad’s body that flows through Umm Salama’s body into Ḥasan’s body and forges a connection of milk kinship. Even years after Muḥammad’s death, leakages from the Umm Salama breast-machine enable linkage the prophetic baraka-machine. For Abū Nu’aym’s representation of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in his *Ḥilya*, the linkage of Umm Salama’s breast-machine to Ḥasan’s mouth-machine further proliferates the baraka-machine’s flows through Ḥasan’s own legacy as a pious exemplar. Ḥasan’s mouth-machine, having sucked wisdom and eloquence from the breast-machine, changes its function and delivers speech “like the speech of prophets,” proliferating that wisdom and eloquence to a network of students and ultimately to their students.

In these sources, Muḥammad's body extends itself through countless combinations of desiring-machines. The multiplicity of desires and contexts reflected in these combinations finds reflection in a prophetic body that resists the systematization of master theories. Like Deleuze and Guattari in Grosz's assessment, the Sunnī sīra/ḥadīth corpus does not provide a systematic account of bodies, specifically Muḥammad's body, or a coherent theorization of baraka and the potential routes by which baraka enters and connects bodies. The untheorized prophetic body, characterized not by fixed boundaries, stable unity, or internal consistency but rather by fragments and processes forever in motion and making or severing connections, can reflect a Deleuzo-Guattarian body, marked by its fluidity and the multiple forces through which it emerges.

The capacity for Muḥammad's body to extend beyond its own limits, form connections with other bodies, transmit baraka into them, transform and authorize them, and even merge with those bodies to form a new assemblage without clearly conceivable borders proliferates wildly in these sources. While Muḥammad's body seemingly achieves representation as more transcendently powerful and fully de-abjected than in previous eras of sīra and ḥadīth literature, the coexistence of variegated ideas about prophetic corporeality within these collections points to the continued instability of Muḥammad's body and the vast multiplicity of its producers. The literary corpus constructs Muḥammad's body as an assemblage of numerous Companions whose names operate as hubs in networks that can overlap, collaborate, and even compete with one another, but do not come together as one transcendent hive-mind ordering the textual body with a singular intention.

In the sources considered here, Muḥammad's body intensifies in its power to spill into other bodies and transmit baraka to them in part through substances and processes that undermine the boundaries between their bodies. These phenomena, such as digestive waste, blood, and the decaying corpse, reflect discomfort at the breaking down of bodily integrity.⁵¹⁶ In the case of Muḥammad, however, these typically abjected substances and processes extend his body's limits in ways that do not render Muḥammad's body abject, but rather transmit his baraka in material flows to other bodies. Muḥammad's body is no longer simply Muḥammad's body, but an assemblage of energies and forces flowing between Muḥammad, his Companions, and extrahuman figures of the unseen, such as angelic and possibly divine bodies. Prophetic corporeality extends beyond the skin and bones of the historical Muḥammad, who acts as one hub in this baraka-transmitting power grid.

With substances such as Muḥammad's blood and urine demonstrating their powers as carriers of contagious prophetic baraka, it becomes seemingly impossible for the prophetic body to achieve an unwanted nearness to other bodies or provoke feelings of disgust or abjection. However, Muḥammad's body does not undergo the typical fragmentation of postmortem bodies that would enable his baraka-transmitting flesh to extend its range of power in relics: his body remains intact and alive, denying not only the possibility of corpse abjection, but also the potential for a prophetic corpse to be divided into pieces that, when spread out across the map, would expand the range of the body's baraka transmissions. While Muḥammad's corporeality does achieve extension through shrines devoted to his preserved hairs, contact relics, and footprints, his corpse retains

⁵¹⁶ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 109.

coherence. The prophetic corpse's inability to provoke abjection does not come from the special properties of its fragments, but rather its protection from becoming fragmented.

Muḥammad's body, while mediating between metaphysical and physical realms, relocates materials from one realm into the other. Muḥammad can ingest a portion of paradise and use his body to carry the portion from paradise to earth. He subjects the material of paradise to his internal digestive and reproductive systems, by which his body converts the material into semen. Finally, he deposits this trace of paradise into another body, from which it will reemerge as a new body that in turn produces bodies that extend Muḥammad's corporeality into future generations. This new body, itself a materialized act of mediation by Muḥammad between seen and unseen worlds, is sexed female but exempt from what Muḥammad has identified as the feminine defect and "deficiency in dīn" of menstruation. The de-abjection of Fāṭima's corporeality, like that of her father, intensifies over the course of the literature's development.

While representations of Muḥammad's body move toward de-abjection, demonstrated in constructions of his blood and urine as baraka-transmitting agents and the preservation of his bodily integrity postmortem, this movement is not absolute: it does not simply present a new narrative of the prophetic body and erase the previous narrative or censor every report that could complicate the new vision. This allowance of tension or even contradiction between reports arises from ḥadīth scholars' interests in expanding the bounds of the ḥadīth corpus, boasting of their own works' comprehensive coverage, and privileging reliable chains of transmission over subjecting the reports to textual analysis.⁵¹⁷ Ḥadīth collections of the 10th and 11th centuries, accomodating a wider field of reports

⁵¹⁷ Zaman, "*Maghāzī* and the *Muḥaddithūn*," 1-18.

without facing the burden of systematizing the body or theorizing baraka, construct a prophetic body that can prove itself in unpredictable and sometimes conflicting ways.

Between two ḥadīth scholars' collections, or even between the reports of two Companions such as Anas and 'Ā'isha (their names in turn representing assemblages of their student networks, geographic bases, and posthumous branding as much as historical personalities), dramatically divergent notions of the prophetic body can appear. The Companions by no means formed a cohesive and united category in their own lifetimes, and did not leave behind a consistent theory of the prophetic body. Taken apart to see how its pieces work, the prophetic body reveals itself as marked by multiplicity. Muḥammad's body as constructed in the Sunnī ḥadīth corpus represents the work of many bodies, not a singular mastermind or even an elite coterie of scholars speaking with a united voice, let alone a mass conspiracy in which ḥadīth transmitters act together to collectively rewrite the body according to the demands of a new project. The prophetic body does not appear as a self-contained, monolithic whole, but rather as an ongoing process of movement among the several thousand ḥadīth transmitters who have contributed to the corpus, and who vary widely across geographic, tribal, ethnic, and sectarian categories. Prophetic corporeality cannot reflect an integrated whole under the organization of an authorial sovereign, even when examined within the bounded limits of a single ḥadīth scholar's collection. As the compilers of these collections were more concerned with methodological integrity based on defensible chains of transmission (some more rigorous in this regard

than others) than producing a consistent narrative,⁵¹⁸ Muḥammad's body resists coherence and analytical mastery.

Instead of adhering to a systematic organization of its parts, Muḥammad's body becomes, to draw from Grosz's reading of Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of the body, "freely amenable to the flows and intensities of the desiring-machines that compose it."⁵¹⁹ This unorganized prophetic body, placed "in direct relations with the flows or particles of other bodies or things," reads as something akin to Deleuze and Guattari's Body without Organs (BwO).⁵²⁰ The assortment of parts and processes that can be collectivized and named "Muḥammad's body" does not undergo a reliable systemization, but remains "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles;"⁵²¹ the sources thus construct Muḥammad as a Nabī without Organs (NwO), an assemblage of parts through which baraka flows without a consistent organizing principle.

The Body without Organs does not literally lack organs, but rather lacks *organization*. Muḥammad's body operates as a baraka machine composed of smaller machines, but these machines resist organization; as an NwO, Muḥammad's textually produced body does not assign consistent functions to its parts. Sometimes Muḥammad's penis simply ejects urine and semen from the prophetic body, but on other occasions it produces baraka-loaded fluids that can save one from hellfire when ingested or even

⁵¹⁸ Hoyland, "History, Fiction, and Authorship in the First Centuries of Islam," 16-46.

⁵¹⁹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 168.

⁵²⁰ Ibid, 169.

⁵²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 40.

material traces of paradise that can produce a half-human, half-ḥūrī hybrid. Muḥammad's blood does not hold a consistent meaning or value—a Companion's pursuit of connection to Muḥammad through drinking this substance can either disturb Muḥammad or earn protection from hellfire—and the prophetic anus is neither clearly prophetic nor an anus. Muḥammad's heart, the locus of his intellect, was washed by angels and injected with wisdom and faith, but might have once contained a demonic portion that required surgical intervention. Depending on a particular intertextuality of reports, one could read Muḥammad's heart prior to the angelic surgery as more capable of abjection than his anus, open wounds, or postmortem remains. The Seal of Prophethood between Muḥammad's shoulders could mark the closure of an angelic surgeon's incision, or a divinely ordained birthmark that signals his special destiny to learned men who interpret his body through their scriptures. Finally, Muḥammad's porous skin, leaking sweat that makes perfume and transmits baraka, also receives and sends knowledge into his heart through the penetrating touch of a cold hand from a gorgeous and veiled youthful god with lush hair, a crown of pearls, and a bed of gold. Muḥammad's parts comprise the prophetic body in relation to the desires of his Companions and other bodies that act with and upon them: these desires make Muḥammad's body parts into baraka machines. Muḥammad's body in these sources is not his own in the sense of a clearly demarcated entity separate from other bodies, but (sometimes literally) bleeds, spits, sweats, and ejaculates into other bodies (or is opened, penetrated, and modified by them) and merges with them, forming a new body that itself lacks self-evident limits or a clear definition of its enhanced powers. "Muḥammad's body" as it appears in these sources represents a sum of unstable relations, an assemblage of human and extrahuman bodies, Companions, angels, and even the youthful god with a cold

hand flowing into and through one another, the terms of their exchanges in flux. The assemblage expands exponentially as bodies in this matrix report the prophetic body, and their own relations to it, to other bodies, thereby plugging more bodies into the grid. Those bodies in turn transmit their connections to new bodies that will also link to new bodies, and so on, producing chains of relations that culminate with the master compilers (and their student-transmitters) whose books reimagine this assemblage as a natural and bounded unity.

Conclusion: Secreting Baraka

In this study's introduction, I discussed an anecdote shared by Yasir Qadhi at an AlMaghrib weekend seminar, in which Qadhi referred to the drinking of Muḥammad's sweat as "baraka." The notion of baraka becoming attainable through intercorporeal exchange with Muḥammad resonated with the larger theme of the seminar, which was presented as an introduction to Bukhārī's ḥadīth scholarship. In his lectures, Qadhi emphasized the power of what he called the "living isnād," the chain of reporters that continues to grow through oral transmission, as producing an "embodied link" to Muḥammad. Qadhi argued that through these intergenerational teacher-student linkages, living isnāds create the possibility of encountering "somebody in your midst who has only twenty people between himself and the Prophet." That this *somebody* operates with and through a *body* is inseparable from the living isnād's power; prophetic knowledge survives as an exchange between bodies. In the context of the seminar, this corporeal link materialized via Qadhi's own body. Qadhi told the class, "I am connected," due to his having learned prophetic traditions directly from teachers who possessed chains of face-to-face encounters reaching back to Muḥammad. The presence of Qadhi's body in the lecture hall placed his seminar's participants into a closer relation to the prophetic body.

Ḥadīth transmission, Qadhi informed the class, constituted a "nodal system" in which the nodes were scholars, and linking with the right node could connect a student

into the entire grid. Qadhi's reception of ḥadīths as oral transmissions from his teachers entered him into their lineages, attaching him to major nodes such as Shawkānī (1759-1839), Shah Walī Allāh Dihlawī (1703-1762), and the master node, Bukhārī. As the embodied link to these nodes, Qadhi offered an opportunity for attendees of his seminar to enter the system and become nodes themselves: students who memorized a ḥadīth and recited it in front of him earned a teaching permission (*ijāza*) from Qadhi for that particular ḥadīth.⁵²²

Through its investigation of Muḥammad's body as represented in the nodal system's discourses, this study emphasizes the explicitly *embodied* dimension of Qadhi's "embodied link." This study of Muḥammad's body, examining his body for the DeleuzoGuattarian question of what the body can do, necessarily intersects with questions of other bodies and their own powers and limits. The ultimate nodes of the ḥadīth system, Muḥammad's Companions, represent a class authorized not only by their status as reporters of privileged information; the system also bestows a material authority upon them for their contact with prophetic corporeality. Coupled with their belief in Muḥammad's prophethood during Muḥammad's own lifetime and their dying as Muslims, to have entered into the physical presence of Muḥammad renders them shareholders in the Companions' universal probity as narrators of prophetic traditions. As shown in this study, numerous traditions intensify the embodied relation between Muḥammad and the Companions. When the ḥadīth corpus constructs Muḥammad's body as a powerful transmitter of baraka, it also transforms the bodies with which this body has formed connections; in turn, through its representation of these bodies as forming a new assemblage, a grid across which baraka circulates, the ḥadīth

⁵²² Qadhi, "Collector's Edition."

corpus contributes toward its self-authorization. In short, when providing narrations of baraka as a material transmission from Muḥammad's body into Companions' bodies, the ḥadīth scholars' nodal system also says something about its own power and the broader network of bodies that comprise it.

This study has tracked change in representations of Muḥammad's body in early sīra and ḥadīth literature, demonstrating that while Muḥammad's bodily powers intensify across the development of the corpus, the sources also resist a consistent systematization of the prophetic body. As the corpus itself reflects not a singular whole but rather a composition of multiple entities, each containing internal heterogeneity in terms of methodological, sectarian, and geographically centered networks, as well as old and new traditions reading in tension with one another, the assemblage of materials marked as "the corpus" resists a coherent formulation of prophetic bodies and their relationships to baraka. What Qadhi calls a "nodal system" consists of numerous nodal systems ("rhizomes" in DeleuzoGuattarian language) that have become sufficiently entangled in one another to give the appearance of a singular voice. While pointing to a general move within the literature to increasingly represent Muḥammad's body as a powerful conduit of baraka, this study also cautions against the assumption of a massive editorial shift in which one vision of the prophetic body successfully erases another. This study calls attention to the significance of Muḥammad's body in his own authorization and that of his Companions without requiring a united, consistent logic of the body operating throughout the sources.

Prophetic Food

A salient site of consideration for the instabilities and ambiguities of the prophetic body appears in the question of prophetic food. By “prophetic food” I mean both what Muḥammad eats and the power in traces of his body to feed others when consumed. Muḥammad’s body, like all bodies, has an inside and an outside, and open zones that enable passage between them. Things go into Muḥammad’s body; things also come out. Baraka likewise enters and exits Muḥammad’s body, often in relation to explicitly material flows and interventions. The preceding discussions have examined ways in which the materials and forces that go *in* contribute to the making of an extraordinary prophetic body, as well as the question of how this body defines the things that come *out*—that is, whether substances from such an extraordinary body retain special properties of that body. In both the entrances into Muḥammad’s body and exits from it, Muḥammad’s body achieves connections with other bodies, forging assemblages that expand their powers.

Muḥammad’s body appears to consume special substances that in turn transform his corporeal possibilities. In a tradition that falls out of the corpus over time, Muḥammad becomes endowed with tremendous sexual vigor after eating from a kettle that the angel Jibrīl delivers from the heavens. Muḥammad’s mouth might appear to be the most intuitive route through which these forces enter his body, but it is not the only one. His body can be opened and his insides affected in other ways, as in the event of angelic surgeons implanting faith and wisdom as material quantities into his chest. His skin, like that of non-prophetic bodies, also represents a porous and permeable border, through which Allāh’s hand can inject knowledge into Muḥammad’s chest by direct touch. In premodern logics of sensation, Muḥammad’s sensory experiences—*seeing* Allāh with his eyes, *smelling*

paradise, or *hearing* divine and angelic speech—can also be considered as penetrations of his body.⁵²³

This body, transformed by what goes in, can also extend the powers of agents that act upon it through the materials that come out. Throughout the development of the literary corpus, Muḥammad's bodily by-products achieve change in other bodies when consumed or otherwise contacted. The Qur'ān itself goes into Muḥammad's body, causing severe perspiration; sources represent this leakage from the Qur'ān's material site of revelation as smelling better than perfume, and women bottle Muḥammad's sweat to preserve traces of his baraka for their children. Muḥammad's saliva can heal wounds and cause dry wells to overflow. A fatigued camel ingests prophetic saliva and ablution water and can then run at break-neck speed to the next town. Companions drink Muḥammad's blood and urine and achieve measures of physical well-being and soteriological security through their consumption. Muḥammad eats fruit from a tree in paradise that his body then transforms into semen, producing the exceptional body of his daughter, which retains a paradisaical scent. His semen's role in the production of his wives' breast milk enables his baraka to travel through the body of Umm Salama into the mouth of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, whom she breastfeeds after Muḥammad's death. Hairs detached from Muḥammad's body, dipped into water, transform the water into medicine.

⁵²³ "In the atomistic tradition," writes Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "particles streamed continuously from objects into the atmosphere to strike the subject's eye or ear or nose." Sensory information was apprehended by physical encounter with the sensed phenomena. *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 101-102. In Aristotelian intromission, espoused by Avicenna and Averroes, air carries the form of an object into the eye's external layer, which then carries the form through a series of interior layers until reaching the site of common sense, at which point the viewer perceives the form. David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision: from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 44-56.

Not all fluids and body products hold equal capacity to open routes through which Muḥammad's baraka can flow to others, at least not within every Companion's body of narrations. Specific Companions and their networks of reporters privilege some flows above others. The tangling of these networks into a larger ḥadīth corpus preserves multiplicities that they offer in terms of imagining the prophetic body. This study has demonstrated that Muḥammad's powers for bodily connections and intercorporeal transactions of baraka, while intensifying through the development of the sīra/ḥadīth corpus, remain unstable even within the bounds of a singular scholar's collection.

A poignant example of the inconsistencies in Muḥammad's bodily powers appears in the intercorporeal connections achieved or rejected by Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, the "counter-caliph." Ibn al-Zubayr's genealogy connects his body to the prophetic body at multiple points. His father, Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, was not only Muḥammad's cousin (the son of Muḥammad's aunt Ṣafīyya bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib), but also the son of Khadīja's brother. Ibn al-Zubayr's mother, Asmā', was the daughter of Abū Bakr. Therefore, Ibn al-Zubayr was a first cousin once removed of Muḥammad, 'Alī, and Ibn 'Abbās, a first cousin once removed or second cousin (depending on whether their relation is read from the Khuwaylid or 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib line) of Fāṭima, a cousin of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, grand-nephew of Khadīja, nephew of 'Ā'isha, and grandson of Abū Bakr. Whether fighting for Zubayr and 'Ā'isha against 'Alī or joining 'Alī's son against the Umayyads, Ibn al-Zubayr aligns with interests informed by lineal connections.

Despite his varied connections, Ibn al-Zubayr remains disadvantaged. While his father Zubayr, Muḥammad, and 'Alī share a grandfather in 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Zubayr is excluded from the patrilineal privilege of Muḥammad and 'Alī as sons of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's

sons. Being the son of Muḥammad's aunt Ṣafīyya, Zubayr claims 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib as a *maternal* grandfather. Muḥammad had declared the sons of his own daughter to transcend matrilineal limitations, tracing their lineage through their prophetic maternal grandfather rather than their father, but Ibn al-Zubayr has no such waiver. However, the sources do construct a privileged descent for Ibn al-Zubayr through his father, one of the ten Companions who personally received Muḥammad's promise of paradise.⁵²⁴ In narrations attributed to 'Alī and Jābir, Muḥammad is said to have declared that every prophet has a disciple (*ḥawārī*), and that his disciple is Zubayr.⁵²⁵ In one version, 'Alī narrates Muḥammad's words in response to the arrival of Ibn Jurmūz, who had slain Zubayr, and additionally condemns "the killer of Ṣafīyya's son" to hellfire.⁵²⁶ In another version, Muḥammad specifically names his disciple as "Zubayr, son of my aunt," emphasizing their familial bond; this variant appears in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* with a Zubayrid chain of Hishām bin 'Urwa bin al-Zubayr < 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr < 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, authorizing the reporters through their patrilineal descent from Muḥammad's disciple.⁵²⁷

Ibn al-Zubayr enters into intensified relations with Muḥammad through the practice of *taḥnīk*, by which Muḥammad's body provides food for newborn males in his community. 'Ā'isha narrates that upon the birth of her nephew, he was brought to Muḥammad, who chewed a date and spit it into the baby's mouth. The food of interest is not the chewed

⁵²⁴ Syed Salman Nadvi, "'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and the Caliphate" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1972), 42.

⁵²⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, #680, 681, 14688, 14998.

⁵²⁶ Ibid, #813.

⁵²⁷ Ibid, #16212.

date, but the product of Muḥammad's body: "The first thing that entered his stomach," 'Ā'isha reports, "was the saliva of the Prophet, Allāh bless him and give him peace."⁵²⁸ Though Muḥammad was "not the father of any of your men," as the Qur'ān notes, and 'Ā'isha did not have children, Muḥammad's transmission of his saliva into the body of 'Ā'isha's nephew achieved a patriarchal intensification between them. This intensification bears political consequences, given Ibn al-Zubayr's allegiance to his aunt in her war against 'Alī.

For his controversial place in the power struggles of early Muslim history, Ibn al-Zubayr also appears in ḥadīth literature as having failed in an attempted connection to the prophetic body. After young Ibn al-Zubayr sneaks away with Muḥammad's blood and drinks it, Muḥammad foretells doom for both Ibn al-Zubayr and the community. When read as a pro-'Alid polemic, the tradition presents Ibn al-Zubayr—opponent of 'Alī, with a complex relation to 'Alī's son Ḥusayn—attempting an appropriation of what does not rightfully belong to him: a privileged blood connection to the Prophet.⁵²⁹ While some variations of this tradition soften its polemical blow, even allowing that Ibn al-Zubayr does achieve a successful transaction through his act of consumption, ambiguities persist concerning the consumption of prophetic blood. As Muḥammad's body remains unstable in its powers as prophetic food, the body of Ibn al-Zubayr in turn becomes a site of tensions and ambiguities concerning his relation to Muḥammad. Prophetic saliva entering the stomach of baby Ibn al-Zubayr successfully initiates him into the community; Muḥammad's

⁵²⁸ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, #3645.

⁵²⁹ Sandra Sue Campbell, "Telling Memories: The Zubayrids in Islamic Historical Memory" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2003), 77-78.

blood in the same stomach provokes a warning of future disaster, but might still retain sufficient Muḥammad-ness to benefit its consumer.

Material traces of Muḥammad's body consistently act as affective forces that enable his body to engage and impose change upon a variety of other bodies, whether "bodies" here refers to other living things (humans, animals, and plants), inanimate objects (such as a rock destroyed by his saliva), or a body of water that flows in abundance and becomes sweeter due to his saliva or urine. However, the precise terms by which his body can extend its powers change between reporters. The case of Ibn al-Zubayr's body demonstrates the difficulties in reducing these varied imaginaries of the prophetic body to a singular binary opposition, such as one that would contrast proto-Sunnī representations against pro-'Alid or proto-Shī'ī claims for the body.⁵³⁰ For both Ibn al-Zubayr's historical rehabilitation and his condemnation, the truth finds reflection in his body's capacity for linkage to the body of the Prophet.

Gendering Prophethood

Muḥammad's saliva forges powerful connections between his body and the bodies of his Companions. This linkage remains a gendered one: Muḥammad executes taḥnīk as a patriarchal initiation, performing the role of communal father exclusively for the community's newborn sons. Similarly, while examining Muḥammad's acts of spitting into men's ailing eyes, open wounds, or corpses for the purposes of healing or blessing, I could

⁵³⁰ Such a binary reductionism is tempting, given 'Ā'isha's general (but not absolute) lack of interest in Muḥammad's powers for intercorporeal baraka transmission in contrast to the prolific reports concerning Muḥammad's bodily powers from Companions regarded favorably in Shī'ī sources, such as Anas, Ibn 'Abbās, and Jābir.

not find these traditions paralleled by reports of his spitting into or on the bodies of women. ‘Ā’isha does appear to achieve self-authorization through her superior bodily intimacy to Muḥammad, but does not explicitly derive her power from special properties that could be communicable through his bodily products. This is not to say, however, that bodies do not matter in ‘Ā’isha’s narrations, but rather that her intercorporeal linkage to Muḥammad materializes by different modes than that of male Companions.

In its operation as a baraka machine that facilitates the flow of baraka between bodies, the powers of Muḥammad’s body become simultaneously enhanced and constrained by its status as a sexed body. Because Muḥammad’s socialization in his world is gendered, that is, subject to possibilities and limits defined by his gender, routes to his bodily baraka differ in relation to the gendering of bodies with which he interacts. This means that a Companion’s degree of contact with Muḥammad’s bodily baraka depends significantly on whether that Companion is a man, a woman with whom he is in a sexual relationship, a woman whose close familial relation to him deregulates their interactions, or unrelated women from the community, some of whom might still have privileged access (as in Umm Sulaym). Umm Sulaym does not put her hands or mouth to Muḥammad’s body to obtain his sweat, but obtains his sweat from a leather mat on which he had been sleeping. The bottle in which Umm Sulaym keeps Muḥammad’s sweat then becomes an instrument by which she can loosen the structure of a largely homosocial baraka economy.

Beyond his gendered interactions with other human beings, Muḥammad interacts with forces of the unseen world, which sources also represent as embodied and gendered. Muḥammad’s relationship with Jibrīl, for example, reads as a homosocial connection, and not only for the angels’ appearances with exclusively masculine bodies and Jibrīl’s

particular appearance in the form of *Diḥya al-Kalbī*. In a prominent but contested tradition, Muḥammad also experiences an intercorporeal encounter with Allāh, who appears as a beautiful young man and penetrates Muḥammad's body with knowledge through the power of skin-to-skin contact. Gender and sexuality, as they relate to the access of Muḥammad's Companions to his body, also relate in turn to the degrees to which his Companions can interact with the transcendent forces that act upon Muḥammad's body. The significance of gender to this access finds reflection in narratives of Companions' witness of Jibrīl, not only for his appearance as a man but for the question of who gets to see him. The question of whether women (and *which* women, specifically which of Muḥammad's wives) experience ocular witness of Jibrīl, like the possibility of Muḥammad having ocular witness of Allāh, meets a multiplicity of answers in the sources, further illustrating the instability of prophetic bodies and their relations to other bodies.

Muḥammad's body therefore appears as a site of mediation between homosocial forces of the transcendent unseen and a community of human believers whose interactions are significantly regulated on gendered lines. Gender specifically enables Muḥammad's mediation to be designated as the work of a prophet. Traditions representing prophethood as an inheritance between fathers and sons—such as the tradition naming Muḥammad's deceased son as having been a potential prophet, while excluding his living daughter—construct the prophetic body as necessarily a masculine one.

In short, to argue that Muḥammad's body matters—as a specimen of the perfect human, a proof of his prophetic status, or as a conduit through which beneficent energies flow between worlds—provokes consideration of what it means that his body has been marked as masculine. To ask what the prophetic body can do and how it achieves

connections with other bodies requires attention to the gendered openings and closings of access to that body. In this study, I have highlighted the importance of gendering of Muḥammad's body throughout the sources as a crucial element to his body's success in connecting to other bodies.

The Prophetic Assemblage: Muḥammad and the Companions

This study has highlighted the ways in which the ḥadīth corpus, along with the sectarian and epistemological claims that inform its production, relies not only on arguments for methodological mastery and reliably transmitted discourse, but also upon the affects of bodies. As illustrated in the episode of Abū Hurayra, the most prolific ḥadīth narrator among the Companions, finding his ability to remember Muḥammad's words enhanced after Muḥammad rubbed his cloak, the ḥadīth corpus represents more than an archive of rigorously vetted data. In resonance with Qadhi's self-presentation as a connected "node" at his Bukhārī seminar, the ḥadīth corpus reflects an assemblage of bodies.

This study has shown Muḥammad to radically extend his corporeality through contact with other bodies, whether by leaking his baraka into them, impregnating them and thereby producing new bodies, ejaculating baraka into a body that will then transmit his baraka via breast milk into a future scholar-saint, or remaining at least somewhat accessible to believers after death with a corpse that preserves its material integrity. The extension of Muḥammad's corporeality in turn extends the reach of those forces that act upon his body, that is, Allāh and his angels, but also extends the corporeality of bodies upon which Muḥammad has acted. In other words, as Muḥammad's body forges linkages with

the bodies of his Companions, the Companions in turn find their corporealities enhanced and extended. The development of the early ḥadīth corpus accompanied the ongoing construction of “Companion” as a category, for which one prerequisite of inclusion demanded that an individual had met Muḥammad. The label of “Companion” signified a particular relationship to the Prophet in physical space. This privileged class then extended its own corporeality with that of Muḥammad in its successor class, the Followers, and so on with the Followers of the Followers. Muḥammad’s body thus appears to merge with Companion bodies, which in turn enable linkages between Muḥammad’s body and future generations, forming a greater prophetic body with intensified powers. What ends up as “Muḥammad’s body” reflects an assemblage of bodies that have combined their forces, forming a power grid of baraka transactions.

The special prestige of the Companions is reflected in their possession of universal probity as trustworthy reporters of prophetic traditions. This particular privilege also developed over time and in relation to the crystallization of the ḥadīth partisans as a collective, their shared methodologies, and antagonism against other sectarian and epistemological claims, all of which find expression in their seminal ḥadīth collections. The ḥadīth corpus gives an appearance of what Deleuze and Guattari would term a “reterritorialization” of Muḥammad, a structuring and stratification of heterogeneous elements and the containment of heterogeneous elements under one governing system.⁵³¹ The apparent reterritorialization of Muḥammad within such a stratifying project as Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* betrays the persistent diversity and instability (or potential for deterritorializing lines of flight) remaining within his work. The topic-based organization

⁵³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 9-10.

of ḥadīth collections, presenting the Companions as a coherent whole, reterritorializes Muḥammad differently from the musnad format, which preserves individual Companions (and their networks of student reporters) as distinct bodies themselves (enabling an easier comparison of Anas's imaginary of Muḥammad to that furthered by 'Ā'isha, for example). With the establishment of the Companions' universal probity as a methodological lodestar for Sunnī ḥadīth scholarship and the organization of reports by topic rather than the Companions who reported them, the elite circles of ḥadīth scholarship in the 9th century CE constructed a prophetic assemblage that would include Muḥammad's body, the bodies of his Companions, the Followers, and Followers of the Followers, and also their own bodies for the connections forged by chains of transmission. Narrations of baraka flowing via material vehicles and pathways from Muḥammad's body into those of his Companions authorize the ḥadīth partisans' claims of epistemological supremacy and the truthmaking power of the isnād. The bodies make a method.

In pointing to the significance of corporeality in ḥadīth sources, my discussions here push back against a trend in contemporary Islamic studies to present embodiment and materiality as valorized almost exclusively within Ṣūfī traditions. Setting aside the problem of a simplistic Ṣūfī-Ḥadīthī binary, I argue that the Sunnī ḥadīth corpus authorizes itself through attention to bodies. The proto-Sunnī Ḥadīth Folk and their successors produced a literary corpus in which the Companions—and by extension the later producers of the literary corpus themselves—become distinguished as “the Companions” not only for their preservation of a prophetic oral archive, but also the transformation of their bodies by access to the prophetic body and its flows of baraka. Disassembled for consideration of its parts and their possibilities, the prophetic body reveals its most powerful parts to be the

bodies into which it enters relations, the machines that plug into Muhammad's baraka machine and thus multiply its power beyond his boundaries and even their own.

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