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THE IMAGE OF CALIPH ‘ALI IN THE *CHRONOGRAPHY* OF THEOPHANES

Abstract. The article is an attempt to analyse the references used in Theophanes’ *Chronography* regarding the last rightly guided caliph, ‘Ali. Despite the importance that this ruler ultimately acquired in the historiography of Islam, the *Chronography* references do not confirm this at all. Theophanes did not even recognize him as a legitimate ruler. He presented ‘Ali as a usurper who had lost the war with Mu‘awiya. Moreover, he appears in these fragments as a man supported either by the “desert people” or by the Persians, elements alien to the core of the new Muslim state, which for Theophanes seems to be Syria and Egypt. The differences in the presentation of Mu‘awiya’s victor by the Byzantine historian and the Abbasid historiography, as well as the contradictions between Theophanes’ version and those presented by Syriac sources, suggest that Theophanes may have presented the Umayyad version of events in certain fragments of his work regarding intra-Islamic conflicts.

Keywords: Theophanes, *Chronography*, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, Byzantine historiography, history of early Islam

‘Ali was not much noticed by Theophanes the Confessor¹. In the *Chronography* we find only three mentions of ‘Ali. It is worth quoting them in their entirety in the introduction, in the most popular English translation. They appear in fragments assigned to the following years: AM 6147 (*Now discord prevailed among the Arabs: for those who dwelt in the desert wanted Ali, the nephew of Ali, Mouamed’s*

¹ The author is aware of the debate regarding Theophanes’ identity: C. ZUCKERMAN, *Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler, or A Story of Square Brackets*, [in:] *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. M. JANKOWIAK, F. MONTINARO, Paris 2015 (= TM 19), p. 31–52. However, I use the nickname Theophanes, which has become permanently etched in the historiographic tradition.



son-in-law, whereas those who were in Syria and Egypt wanted Mauias)², AM 6148 (In this year Mauias took up arms against Ali. The two of them met in the area of Barbalissos at Kaisarion near the Euphrates; and the men of Mauias, gaining the upper hand, captured the water [supply], while Ali's men were reduced to thirst and were deserting. Mauias did not wish to give battle and obtained victory without any toil)³, AM 6151 (While the Arabs were at Sapphin, Ali (the one from Persia) was assassinated and Mauias became sole ruler)⁴.

In practical terms, the chronographer mentions the fourth rightly-guided caliph only as an opponent of Mu'awiya. His account also suggests that both rulers basically ruled independently of each other, on equal terms, immediately after the death of 'Uthman. Interestingly, this is confirmed by Muslim traditions, where Mu'awiya, even in narratives hostile to him and the entire Umayyad dynasty, was presented as a full-fledged candidate for the caliphate, who claimed it immediately after the death of 'Uthman, no longer acting as a mere governor of Syria, but as a pretender to the highest dignity of the community. According to Syriac chronology, the years of his reign are measured from at least 656, from the time of the Battle of the Camel⁵. Theophanes' vision is also consistent with the chronology of the formation of the belief that 'Ali should be recognized as caliph, which we date only to the end of the 8th century, in distant regions (according to the Byzantine context) of southern Iraq, in the Kufa milieu, which were under the understandable influence of proto-Shiite groups⁶. In any case, this version seems to favour the Umayyads, not the Abbasids. The main aim of this short text, apart from discussing Theophanes' mentions of 'Ali, is also to indicate an interpretative proposition according to which such a way of presenting this figure may confirm that in Theophanes' *Chronography* one can find historiographic elements originating from Umayyad propaganda.

'Ali's origin according to Theophanes' *Chronography*

Theophanes introduced 'Ali in an account in which he described the murder of 'Uthman and tried to outline the situation in the caliphate after 'Uthman's death. Abu Talib's son was described by the Confessor as Muhammad's son-in-law (γαμβρὸν ὄντα τοῦ Μουάμεδ)⁷, which is of course true. 'Ali was the son of Abu

² *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History A.D. 284–813*, trans., and ed. C. MANGO, R. SCOTT with the assistance of G. GREATREX, Oxford 1997, p. 483.

³ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor...*, p. 483.

⁴ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor...*, p. 485.

⁵ Cf. Kh. KESHK, *When did Mu'awiya become Caliph?*, JNES 69.1, 2010, p. 31–42.

⁶ I-WEN SU, *The Early Shi'i Kufan Traditionists' Perspective on the Rightly Guided Caliphs*, JAOS 141.1, 2021, p. 27–47. Regarding the hard-to-understand mix of Kharijite and Shiite ideas that grew in Kufa, as well as the city's large number of different tribes see: M. HINDS, *Kūfan Political Alignments and their Background in the Mid-Seventh Century A.D.*, IJMES 2.4, 1971, p. 346–367.

⁷ *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C.G. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883 (cetera: THEOPHANES), AM 6147, p. 346.22–23 Abu Talib's son was described as a cousin (ἀνεψιὸν τοῦ Ἀλή) too. 'Ali is identified here

Talib, the Prophet's uncle and his adoptive father, the head of the Hashemites. It is likely that after the Battle of Badr (624) Muhammad gave his daughter, Fatima, to 'Ali in marriage. However, Theophanes' account does not mention Muhammad's adoption of 'Ali, which is emphasized in Shi'ite traditions, nor does it mention his appointment as successor in the Ghadir Khumm, following the final "farewell" pilgrimage to Mecca. However, in the account from AM 6151, in which the Confessor mentioned the death of Ali, he presented him again, in this passage without indicating any familial connections with the Prophet, as actually alien to the Arabs, emphasizing, contrary to historical truth, but perhaps referring to the origin of some of his followers, that he was connected with Persia (Ἀλή, ὁ τῆς Περσίδος)⁸. I am aware that 'Ali spent many years of his life in Iraq, and that his life also ended there; however, in my opinion, such a contrast between two pretenders to rule the caliphate – 'Ali as the representative of Persia and Mu'awiya as the representative of the Arabs – is fundamentally false and is intended by Theophanes to indicate the historical validity of his later theories about the opposition between the Persians and the Arabs in his contemporary times, referring, for example, to the rise of the Abbasids. In my opinion, Theophanes suggests here that 'Ali represented somewhat different interests than Mu'awiya, the Persian ones. This was not the case. According to the *Chronography*, 'Ali is just a candidate for the position of caliph, supported by the people of the desert⁹, while Mu'awiya was elected ruler by the people of Syria and Egypt, lands certainly more respected by Theophanes¹⁰.

Theophanes and the power struggle between 'Ali and Mu'awiya

In the fragment mentioned above, the Byzantine chronicler also stated that the Umayyad leader won the war and became caliph almost immediately after 'Uthman, which is supported by the chronology he provided, in which 'Ali's reign is absent. However, in the next account from AM 6148 regarding the battle of Siffin, Theophanes stated that Mu'awiya had taken up arms against 'Ali (τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἐπεστράτευσε Μαυΐας κατὰ Ἀλή). Theophanes mentioned two locations here, Barbalissos and Kaisarion. The first is connected with Balis, and the second with Neocaesarea or Dibsi Faraj. The description in this fragment strongly suggests a battle on the plain of Siffin. At the same time, this location is explicitly mentioned by Theophanes only in the account of AM 6151, not referring, however, to the battle itself, but only to the death of 'Ali. In any case, in AM 6148, the Confessor

as the cousin of another 'Ali, unspecified. It is hard to comment on this reference, but it seems to present an intriguing interpretive problem: if this is not just Theophanes' error, then we should ask who this 'Ali was, possibly contemporaneous with Theophanes, that the Byzantine chronographer chose to mention him. It is, of course, unlikely that Theophanes could have had in mind 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida.

⁸ THEOPHANES AM 6151, p. 347.26–27.

⁹ THEOPHANES AM 6147, p. 346.22: ὅσοι γὰρ κατὰ τὴν ἔρημον ὑπῆρχον, τὸν Ἀλή ἤθελον.

¹⁰ THEOPHANES AM 6147, p. 346.23–24: οἱ δὲ κατὰ Συρίαν καὶ Αἴγυπτον τὸν Μαυΐαν ἤθελον.

correctly identified the site of the battle, noting that it was near the Euphrates – in fact, Siffin was located several hundred metres from the river.

The description of the battle differs significantly from other texts (Michael the Syrian, or the Chronicle of 1234), whose authors were supposed to have used Theophilus of Edessa's work. Only in Theophanes' account can we notice an emphasis on the significance of the so-called battle for water¹¹. This seems quite interesting, considering the important role of this episode in Muslim historiographic traditions, written in the Abbasid era¹². Islamic historians present Mu'awiya's decision to deny 'Ali's troops access to the Euphrates as unworthy, contrasting it with the description of the fourth caliph's actions after his army had gained access to the river bank in battle – according to these accounts, Abu Talib's son allowed the Umayyads to use the water. This is certainly one of the fragments of the history of the clash and arbitration at Siffin that was particularly popular in creating propaganda against the dynasty founded by Mu'awiya¹³. The more interesting aspect is how the Chronographer presented this event – the Byzantine assumes that cutting off 'Ali's men from the water was a ploy that allowed the Umayyads to gain an advantage in the clash. The soldiers of the fourth caliph began to desert¹⁴. According to Theophanes, this is how Mu'awiya achieved victory without fighting a battle¹⁵. It is difficult to say unequivocally whether the Byzantine chronicler viewed the Umayyad leader's actions positively, appreciating the significance of the trick of cutting off access to water, or rather emphasized that the first Umayyad had won not in an armed clash, but thanks to trickery. Theophanes made no mention of the fact that this part of the clash on the plain was most likely lost by Mu'awiya's troops, and 'Ali's troops gained access to the river. What is more, he wrote about the escape from 'Ali's camp – this happened, but the reason for such behaviour

¹¹ Cf. R. HOYLAND, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, Liverpool 2011, p. 147.

¹² The various traditions regarding the water battle are discussed by Aaron M. HAGLER, *The Echoes of Fitna. Developing Historiographical Interpretations of the Battle of Siffin*, University of Pennsylvania 2011 (PhD Thesis), p. 24–25, 51–58, 123–129, 179–184, 250–255, 280–283. Muslim version of events: Ali Muhammad AS-SALLABI, *'Ali ibn Abi Tālib*, vol. II, trans. N. AL-KHATTAB, Riyadh 2011, p. 19–250, as well as a work published in one of the most important centres of Shiite theology in the world, in Qom, Iran: J. HUSSAIN, *Biography of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib*, trans. P.T. BILGRAMI, Qom 2007, p. 449–499.

¹³ As Aaron M. HAGLER rightly emphasized, there is something fascinating in how an essentially tactical decision became the foundation for the process of demonizing Mu'awiya in narratives written during the Abbasid period: *The decision to bar 'Ali and his companions from the waters of the Euphrates River, while certainly cynical and wicked, was ultimately nothing more than a military tactic and, from a literary standpoint, is presented a way to demonize Mu'awiya and the Syrians early in the Siffin narrative.* – A.M. HAGLER, *Repurposed Narratives: The Battle of Siffin and the Historical Memory of the Umayyad Dynasty*, IMEMS 3.1, 2013, p. 19.

¹⁴ THEOPHANES AM 6151, p. 347.2–3.

¹⁵ THEOPHANES AM 6151, p. 347.3–4: Μαυίας δὲ οὐκ ἤθελε πολεμῆσαι· ἀλλ' ἀπονητὶ τὴν νίκην ἤρατο.

of some troops was the terms of arbitration¹⁶, for which some of those who were particularly fanatically devoted to the letter of the Quran (Kharijites¹⁷) did not want to agree¹⁸. However, from Theophanes' account it appears that 'Ali's supporters left him out of thirst, presumably – they were not too attached to their leader, since desertion was decided by something so “trivial”. These facts – the differences between Theophanes' account and the Syriac traditions, as well as a slightly different take on the events surrounding Mu'awiya's actions at Siffin than what was shown in Abbasid propaganda – make it clear that Theophanes' story may be part of a very early or different trend in the history writing tradition that was made, say, for the needs of the Umayyads and made its way into Byzantium through a different route than Theophilus' traditions.

'Ali's death – Theophanes' version

Theophanes the Confessor also ignored the circumstances of 'Ali's death, only mentioning that he was murdered¹⁹, while the Arabs were on the plains of Siffin²⁰. This detail is not consistent with the chronology of events. However, combining the ultimately unsuccessful battle for the Alids with 'Ali's death allowed us to

¹⁶ Analysis of various accounts and variants of the agreement between 'Ali and Mu'awiya at Siffin, cf. M. HINDS, *The Siffin Arbitration Agreement*, JSS 17, 1972, p. 93–129.

¹⁷ On the Kharijite movement in the early Islamic period, especially in the context of the fundamental principles of the movement regarding the election of a caliph, regardless of origin, as the one who showed the greatest courage and dedication in spreading Islam: Ch. DÉCOBERT, *Le mendiant et le combattant. L'institution de l'islam*, Paris 1991, p. 107–121. However, according to Hannah-Lena HAGEMANN, who presented research on the image of the sect in sources of the 9th and 10th centuries, some available narratives reveal certain fixed structural patterns, full of established topos (such as the “belligerence” of the Kharijites). The Kharijites themselves, with their monotonously repeated, same arguments, serve as a so-called “an example of bad” – *History and Memory. Khārijism in Early Islamic Historiography*, The University of Edinburgh 2014 (PhD Thesis), p. 256–262. On the subject of divisions within the sect, cf. W. MONTGOMERY WATT, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Edinburgh 1973, p. 26–28; IDEM, *Kharijite Thought in the Umayyad Period*, I 36.3, 1961, p. 215–231.

¹⁸ On the importance of the Holy Book on the Muslim battlefield cf. G.H.A. JUYNBOLL, *The Qur'an Reciter of the Battlefield and Concomitant Issues*, ZDMG 125, 1975, p. 11–27. On the movement referring to the meaning of the Quran and its role in the history of the first decades of the Muslim state: IDEM, *The Qur'ān in Early Islamic History*, JESHO 16, 1973, p. 113–129. On the division between those who recognized primarily the authority of writing and those who supported oral traditions in early Islam cf. G.R. HAWTING, *The Significance of the Slogan La Hukm Illa Lillah and the References to the Ḥudūd in the Traditions about the Fitna and the Murder of 'Uthmān*, BSOAS 41, 1978, p. 453–463.

¹⁹ THEOPHANES AM 6151, p. 347.26–27: ἐδολοφονήθη Ἄλῆ, ὁ τῆς Περσίδος.

²⁰ THEOPHANES AM 6151, p. 347.26: τῶν δὲ Ἀράβων ὄντων εἰς τὸ Σαπφίν. Although Islamic sources do not agree on the exact date of Ali's death, and modern scholars note that the fact that it was to take place during Ramadan can be treated symbolically (cf. A. MARSHAM, *The Umayyad Empire*, Edinburgh 2024, p. 92), it would be challenging to accept Theophanes' version as a credible and to regard it as a serious alternative.

explain Mu'awiya's victory without referring to the issue of arbitration or the lack of conclusions in the clash on the plain, which is quite clearly mentioned in Syriac accounts, both by Michael the Syrian and by the Chronicle of 1234²¹. This constitutes a significant difference between the accounts in Syriac sources and the version of Theophanes. It is worth emphasizing that although Theophanes does not note the circumstances of 'Ali's death, he mentions in the next paragraph of his chronicle the rise of the Kharijite sect²². However, he does not connect them with the fourth rightly-guided caliph, indicating that they were a problem for Mu'awiya²³. Although a large group of early Kharijites were almost annihilated by 'Ali's supporters in 658 at Nahrawan²⁴, Theophanes's identification of Mu'awiya as the one who had a problem with this group is not entirely without sense²⁵. If the silences about death of 'Ali are deliberate and not the result of lack of knowledge, then they seem highly symptomatic. One connection between the new Umayyad problems and 'Ali would be the emphasis on the Persian origin of the Kharijites²⁶, and the subsequent passage in which the Confessor stated that the new Umayyad leader had exalted the Syrian Arabs over those living in Iraq²⁷, which can be interpreted as a result of winning the civil war. However, we will not find any direct reference to 'Ali in the above-mentioned fragments. It can only be noted that Theophanes' remarks here, which concern social rather than personal issues, are consistent with contemporary interpretations of the Kharijite movement, in which some scholars see a specific reaction of dissatisfaction with the policy of Abu Talib's son, who did not restore their privileges, obtained under 'Umar and lost during the reign of Ibn Affan²⁸.

²¹ Cf. R. HOYLAND, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle...*, p. 147.

²² THEOPHANES AM 6152, p. 347.30–31: τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἀνεφάνη αἵρεσις Ἀράβων, οἱ λεγόμενοι Χαρουργῖται.

²³ THEOPHANES AM 6152, p. 347.31–32: Μαυίας δὲ τούτους χειρωσάμενος τοὺς ἐν Περσίδι ἐταπείνωσεν, τοὺς δὲ ἐν Συρίᾳ ὕψωσεν.

²⁴ M. MORONY, *Al-Nahrawān*, [in:] *EI*, vol. VII, *Mif-Naz*, ed. C.E. BOSWORTH, E. VAN DONZEL, W.P. HEINRICH, Ch. PELLAT, ²Leiden 1993, p. 912–913.

²⁵ According to Martin HINDS, the Kharijites' opposition in the early Umayyad period was primarily due to the need to resist the unfavourable decisions of the local Iraqi tribal leaders on whom the new dynasty based its power in the region. In this sense, the Kharijites simply wanted to return to the policy of balance that had been previously implemented by 'Umar: *Kūfan Political Alignments and their Background...*, p. 346–367.

²⁶ In this sense, the term would not refer to a specific religious group, but to rebels in general, which would be interestingly consistent with the way in which rebellions are sometimes called Kharijite in traditional Islamic historiography, cf. H.L. HAGEMANN, P. VERKINDEREN, *Kharijism in the Umayyad Period*, [in:] *The Umayyad World*, ed. A. MARSHAM, London 2021, p. 489–517.

²⁷ THEOPHANES AM 6152, p. 347.32 – 348.1–2.

²⁸ Cf. M.A. SHABAN, *Islamic History. A New Interpretation*, vol. I, A.D. 600–750 (A.H. 132), Cambridge 1971, p. 71–72.

What Theophanes did not mention (for example)

The chronographer did not mention any of the Alid traditions that distinguished 'Ali from other caliphs, especially in comparison to Mu'awiya, but also to the Abbassids²⁹. Perhaps the Byzantine chronicler simply presented the Umayyad version of events in these fragments³⁰, emphasizing the use of the stratagem on the plain of Siffin, pointing out his quick victory and recognizing Abu Sufyan's son as the rightful ruler. Islamic historiography has presented the process of taking power from the Alids to the Banu Umayya as much more complex³¹. For example, the operation to retake Egypt by the forces of 'Amr ibn al-'As – according to Muslim sources, this undertaking took place only in 659/660³². At the same time, Abu Sufyan's son was also supposed to send an expedition of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-Hadram to retake the Iraqi lands³³. The following year saw Iraqi expeditions to 'Ayn al-Tamar, led by al-Nu'man ibn Bashur, and to al-Anbar and al-Mada'in, led by Sufyan ibn 'Awfa, and to the south, to Taymah, led by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'adah al-Fazari. All of these were aimed at collecting zakat, and those who refused to pay it when the new caliph called, Mu'awiya ordered to be killed. The same thing happened in Medina and Mecca³⁴. In some places, the Alids held sway longer. In Yemen, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ruled on behalf of 'Ali's family until 662³⁵.

Interestingly, despite the tendency to emphasize the significance of the above-mentioned events, noticeable in the High Middle Ages, such a dismissal of 'Ali is also characteristic of Sunni theologians and historians, certainly in the period

²⁹ It is worth mentioning here the narrative that seeks parallels between the information about the relationship between Muhammad and 'Ali and between Moses and Aaron: G. MISKINZODA, *The Significance of the ḥadīth of the Position of Aaron for the Formulation of the Shī'ī Doctrine of Authority*, BSOAS 78.1, 2015, p. 67–82.

³⁰ Pro-Umayyad traditions survived the Abbasid Revolution, cf. E.L. PETERSEN, *'Alī and Mu'awiya in Early Arabic Tradition: Studies on the Genesis and Growth of Islamic Historical Writing until the End of the Ninth Century*, Copenhagen 1964, p. 109–115.

³¹ However, there is no doubt that from Siffin begins the slow decline of the power of 'Ali and his allies, cf. A. MARSHAM, *The Umayyad Empire...*, p. 90–91.

³² Cf. IBN AL-JAWZI, *Al-Muntazam fī tārikh al-mulūk wa'l-umam*, vol. V, ed. M. ABD AL-QADIR ATA, M. ABD AL-QADIR ATA, Bayrūt 1995 (cetera: IBN AL-JAWZI), p. 151–152.

³³ According to Syrian traditions: MUHAMMAD IBN AHMAD ZAHABI, *Tārikh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām*, vol. III, ed. B. 'A. MA'RŪF; Sh. ARNA' ŪT; S. MAHDĪ 'ABBĀS, Bayrūt 1990 (cetera: MUHAMMAD IBN AHMAD ZAHABI), p. 552.

³⁴ IBN AL-JAWZI, p. 157–158; ISMĀ'ĪL IBN 'UMAR IBN KATHĪR, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-nihāyah*, vol. VII, Dawlah Qaṭar 2015 (cetera: ISMĀ'ĪL IBN 'UMAR IBN KATHĪR), p. 534–535.

³⁵ *Tārikh Khalīfah bin Khīyāt*, Ar-Riyāḍ 1985, p. 200; MUHAMMAD IBN AHMAD ZAHABI, p. 552; IBN AL-JAWZI, p. 162; ISMĀ'ĪL IBN 'UMAR IBN KATHĪR, p. 538.

from the 9th to the 10th century, who, trying to adapt the figure of the fourth caliph to the “official” version of the history of the development of early Islam, tried to reject pro-Alid tendencies³⁶, as well as those who are definitely against ‘Ali³⁷.

Conclusions

In conclusion, contrary to the importance that ‘Ali has acquired in the Islamic tradition³⁸ (even in folklore³⁹, not only as a religious or political leader⁴⁰), Theophanes did not even recognize him as a legitimate ruler. He presented ‘Ali as a usurper who had lost the war with Mu‘awiya. Moreover, he appears in these fragments as a man supported either by the “desert people” or by the Persians, alien elements to the core of the new Muslim state, which for Theophanes seems to be Syria and Egypt. The only exception to this narrative is the passage in AM 6151, in which the Confessor, referring to the murder of ‘Ali, wrote that Mu‘awiya became an independent, single ruler (μονοκρατορεῖ Μαυΐα)⁴¹. The differences in the presentation of Mu‘awiya’s victory by the Byzantine historian and the Abbasid historiography,

³⁶ In some traditional Shia narratives, there are suggestions that ‘Ali was recognized as caliph even during the reign of ‘Uthman: M. TAYEBI, *Shiism in the Caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan*, PazNT 6 (23), 2015, p. 1–29.

³⁷ *By the third/ninth century, an emerging Sunnī orthodoxy sought to minimize early partisan divisions within the community by actively criticizing pro-‘Alid and anti-‘Alid tendencies among scholars and rejecting their literary contributions. Furthermore, influential Sunnī scholars attempted to develop an image of ‘Ali that suited orthodoxy in their ḥadīth collections and commentaries* – N.A. HUSAYN, *The Memory of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib in Early Sunnī Thought*, Princeton University 2016 (PhD Thesis), p. III.

³⁸ Hassan ABBAS described it well, noting that Abu Talib’s son is still not a strictly historical figure, as discussions about him also concern contemporary issues related to the balance of power in the Middle East: *Ali’s life is inextricably linked with the history and politics of Islam. It is as relevant to Islam’s rise and growth as it is to the contemporary trials and tribulations faced by its adherents* – *The Prophet’s Heir. The Life of Ali Ibn Abi Talib*, New Haven 2021, p. 1. On the importance of ‘Ali in collecting materials for the fundamental book of Islam, the Quran: P. KARA, *The Suppression of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib’s Codex: Study of the Traditions on the Earliest Copy of the Qur’ān*, JNES 75.2, 2016, p. 267–289; IDEM, *In Search of Ali Ibn Abi Talib’s Codex History and Traditions of the Earliest Copy of the Qur’ān. History and Traditions of the Earliest Copy of the Qur’ān*, Berlin 2018, p. 133–152.

³⁹ Cf. J.L. LEE, *The New Year’s Festivals and the Shrine of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib at Mazar-i Sharif, Afghanistan*, The University of Leeds 1998 (PhD Thesis), p. 256–264.

⁴⁰ Cf. A.A. ROSTAMI-NASAB, O. TAJEDINI, A. SADATMOOSAVI, *Examination of the “Theory of Guidance” in the View of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a): An Exploration into the Nahj Al-Balaghah*, JRCE 25.2, 2016, p. 203–220. ‘Ali’s legacy is analysed even more in works of political science and social relations, and according to their authors, ‘Ali’s thought can be an inspiration for introducing reforms in these areas even today: P.Gh. FERIZHANDI, *La gouvernance dans la pensée du calife Ali ibn Abi Tālib (600–661 EC) dans sa Lettre 53 au gouverneur Mālik al-Ashtar al-Nakha’i (m. 658 EC) et sa réception jusqu’à nos jours*, Université de Montréal 2007 (MA Thesis), p. 102–136; R. SHAH-KAZEMI, *A Sacred Conception of Justice. Imam ‘Ali’s Letter to Malik al-Ashtar*, [in:] *The Sacred Foundations of Justice in Islam: The Teachings of ‘Ali Ibn Abi Tālib*, ed. M. ALI LAKHANI, Bloomington 2006, p. 61–106.

⁴¹ THEOPHANES AM 6151, p. 347.27.

as well as the contradictions between Theophanes' version and those presented by Syriac sources, suggest that Theophanes may have presented the Umayyad version of events in certain fragments of his work regarding intra-Islamic conflicts⁴².

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⁴² Similarly, in the context of the Abbasid revolution, although Theophanes is not a supporter of Marwan, he is negative about how the Abbasids seized power – considering their legitimacy questionable, presenting them as the people who led the robberies and murders by the lower class. In Theophanes' narrative, we also find positive remarks about the Umayyad rulers, which are difficult to find in his text in the context of the Abbasid rulers. Cf. B. CECOTA, *The Portrayal of Abbasid Rulers in Chronography of Theophanes the Confessor*, SCer 12, 2022, p. 339–350; IDEM, *Could a Caliph Be Virtuous? Selected Aspects of the Image of Muslim Rulers in the "Chronography" of Theophanes the Confessor*, VP 84, 2022, p. 79–92.

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