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Views and Criticisms of German School Orientalists Regarding the Umayyad State

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Abstract:
The study examines the views and critiques of the German Orientalist school regarding the Umayyad state concerning the problematic interpretation of Islamic history through modern Western methodologies, which focused on analyzing social and political structures and attempting to explain the rise and fall of the state based on material and critical criteria. At the forefront of these scholars is the German Orientalist Julius Wellhausen, who presented a critical reading linking the manifestations of general public discontent and administrative mismanagement to the "Mawali" issue as a primary factor in explaining the nature and collapse of the Umayyad state.
However, this proposition was met with criticism by Arab thinkers who rejected generalized judgments. They asserted that some of what was presented by Orientalists relied on a selective reading of historical narratives, influenced by the conditions of their documentation during the Abbasid era. They highlighted that the Umayyad state was not a monolithic entity, and that there were prominent reformist models such as Omar bin Abdul Aziz, alongside the active participation of the Mawali in various political and scientific spheres of life.
Accordingly, the study concluded that the views and critiques of the German Orientalist school, while characterized by an analytical dimension, were marred by generalization and exaggeration, whereas Arab thinkers provided a more balanced reading based on the historical context and the multiplicity of factors influencing the trajectory of the Umayyad state.

-First: Perspectives and Critiques of the German Orientalist School Regarding the Umayyad Era:

Some scholars of the German School of Orientalism, most notably Julius Wellhausen, focused on interpreting the Umayyad state through a socio-political lens. This perspective explains the era's transformations through the lens of sovereign authority, the conduct of governors, and the structure of public finance. Within this context, Wellhausen formulates critiques centered on linking general public discontent with administrative injustice, wealth disparity, and the suspension of the borders (legal punishments). Consequently, the issue of the Mawali (non-Arab Muslims) becomes a pivotal axis in his critique, as he portrays the Umayyad state as an Arab sovereignty rather than an Islamic one. He concludes that the fall of the Umayyads was the inevitable result of the Mawali integrating into opposition movements and the subsequent shift of the center of action to Khorasan until the establishment of the Abbasid state.

The German Orientalist Julius Wellhausen noted that the escalating resentment toward the Umayyads was, in his view, linked to the persistence of grievances against the Sultan and his actions. These grievances were directed at the Banu Umayya in their capacity as the holders of authority at that time. He categorized these grievances into a framework that combines political, economic, and moral critique. He stated: (The resentment toward the Umayyads was fueled by grievances against the 'Sultan' and his actions, and these grievances remained directed at them specifically, as they were the masters of authority in that age.The primary subjects of these grievances were: that the officials were abusing their power and oppressing the people; that state funds were being monopolized by a few individuals while the pockets of others remained empty; and that adultery, debauchery, drinking, and gambling had become permissible for the elite without consequence, as borders were rendered inactive.)[1]

Furthermore, Wellhausen depicted the status of the Mawali in the Umayyad state as one lacking material political rights and privileges. He characterized their relationship with the state as one of subordination to the Arab tribes, rather than equal membership in the state. He noted: "They achieved personal freedom, but they did not attain the enjoyment of civil rights for citizens, nor free rights and their material advantages. They were considered Mawali to the Arab tribes, and the theocratic state only had room for them in the form of subordination to Arab tribes."[2]

Wellhausen acknowledged that the state was an Arab state, specifically characterized by the elevation of Arabs over conquered nations. He considered the continued assertion of Arab rights to sovereignty, despite the presence of non-Arab Muslims, a stark contradiction and a direct critique of the legitimacy of the Umayyad political model from the perspective of equality. He noted: "Islam alone was not sufficient to guarantee equality for them, because the Islamic theocratic state was, in reality, a purely Arab state; the state of the Arabs that placed them above conquered nations. This was inherently contradictory to the idea of theocratic government, for it should not have a king, nor should it possess the trappings of monarchy. The contradiction becomes most acute when the rights of sovereignty over non-Arab Muslims remain exclusive to the Arabs; faith in God and the acknowledgement of Him alone as King ought to call for the rejection of all distinctions between nations at their core[3]."

He also acknowledged that the principles of Islam served as a tool for the Mawali to reclaim their rights from the Arabs. He then linked this to the alignment of opposition parties against the Banu Umayya, describing their rule as the most intense form of government representing Arab national sovereignty rather than Islamic sovereignty.This is a direct critique of the state's legitimacy, as he stated: "It was easy to use the principles of Islam as a means to grant the Mawali their share in the theocratic state and to wrest their rights from the hands of the Arabs. Indeed, the people of piety and religious scrupulousness among the Arabs themselves stood by the Mawali in their demands for rights. Opposition parties of all kinds sought to find allies among the Banu Umayya, but the Banu Umayya were, in fact, representatives of the sovereignty of the Arab nation, not the sovereignty of Islam[4]."

He identified the key to the political transformation against the Umayyads as the integration of the Mawali into the principle of equality—not within the Umayyad state, but among its adversaries, the Kharijites. This explains the movement's shift to Khorasan as a transition to non-Arab lands, ending in an explicit result: the dismantling of Arab sovereignty and the replacement of the Umayyads by the Abbasids. That is, the issue of the Mawali was a decisive factor in the fall of the state(The Kharijites, in that regard, accepted the Mawali into their ranks and military, treating them on an equal footing with the Arabs. The Shia followed the path of the Kharijites in this matter, and indeed surpassed them. We have seen how a Shia party in Kufa, with its Mawali members, succeeded in rising and elevating the non-Arabs with it at the same time. However, this party—referring to the party of the Arabs themselves in Kufa—soon faded into the shadows. Nevertheless, it later moved from Kufa to the land of the true non-Arabs, to Khorasan, and spread there among those who had entered Islam from the inhabitants of those lands, under the banner of Islam—meaning under the banner of Shiism. Thus, the Khorasanians were able to expel the Arabs from their land first, then subsequently dismantle Arab sovereignty entirely and replace the Umayyads with the Abbasids.)[5]

Second: The Positions of Arab Thinkers regarding the Views and Critiques of the German School in the Umayyad Era:

[1] Julius Wellhausen, The Arab Kingdom and its Fall (Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz). Translated from German by: Muhammad Abd al-Hadi Abu Rida. Revision of the translation: Husayn Mu'nis. (Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjama, Cairo, 2nd Edition, 1387 AH - 1967 AD), p. 60
[2] Ibid., p. 67.
[3] Ibid., p. 67
[4] Ibid., p. 67
[5] Ibid., p. 68

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Fawzi acknowledged, in the context of his critique of the Orientalists' attacks—especially in their treatment of Umayyad history—that some of them fell into a fundamental methodological error: Generalization. They tended to generalize a specific phenomenon, a specific policy of a certain Caliph, a certain behavior, or a specific act, applying it to the entirety of the Umayyad era. Fawzi considers this methodological flaw clearly manifest in Wellhausen's generalization when he claimed that all Umayyads were unfit for the leadership of the Muhammadan Ummah. Fawzi asserts that such a comprehensive judgment remains faltering before the significance of historical texts, which prove that the borders were not neglected as a general policy for the state. Such neglect, had it occurred, would have caused widespread unrest in society and incited people to protest and object. Fawzi cites as an example what was narrated about Al-Walid bin Yazid; when rumors regarding his "profligacy" increased, people revolted and killed him, whether the accusation was proven or not. This indicates that society did not tolerate manifestations of deviance once their news spread and their causes were established[6].

Generalized negative judgments on the Umayyads do not hold when considering the early testimonies that distinguish some of their caliphs—foremost among them Omar bin Abdul Aziz, whose knowledge, jurisprudence, and recitation of the Qur'an were established long before he assumed power. It was narrated from Nafi' that he said in his description: "I have seen the people of Medina, and there is no young man among them more diligent, more jurisprudent, or more well-versed in the Book of Allah than this young man."[7]

Al-A'mash narrated from Abi al-Zinad that the jurists of Medina were four: Saeed bin al-Musayyib, Urwah, Qabisah bin Dhu'ayb, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz before he entered the Emirate (leadership). This points to his high scientific status in the environment of Medina before his transition to rule[8]. Al-Sha'bi confirms the vastness of his knowledge and intellect when he said: I never sat with anyone without finding myself superior to him, except for Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, for whenever I discussed a hadith with him, he increased my understanding of it, and whenever I recited poetry with him, he increased my understanding of it."[9]

When speaking about the Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz, historical sources confirm the nobility of his biography and the goodness of his character. Al-Imam Al-Dhahabi highlighted his scholarly and spiritual status with comprehensive descriptions, labeling him as: (The learned, diligent, ascetic, devout, and noble leader, truly the Commander of the Faithful… the ascetic, rightly guided Caliph, the most distinguished of the Umayyads.)

Al-Dhahabi further noted his dedication to knowledge and narration, mentioning that he transmitted hadith from a group of Companions and Successors (Tabi'un), including: Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, Al-Sa'ib ibn Yazid, and Sahl ibn Sa'd. It is also narrated that he obtained a drinking vessel used by the Prophet[10], which he cherished. His practical adherence and following of the Sunnah are evidenced by his conduct in prayer; Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) gave a striking testimony, stating: "I have not seen anyone whose prayer more closely resembles the prayer of the Messenger of Allah than this young man[11]." This early testimony highlights Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz's precocious commitment to a devotional form of worship close to the prophetic guidance, long before he assumed the Caliphate.

Ibn Kathir transmitted from Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who said: "I do not consider the word of any of the Successors to be an authoritative proof (Hujja), except for the word of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz."[12]

Accordingly, the interpretations provided by a group of Orientalists regarding Umayyad historical events and stances raise specific observations and inquiries for both specialized researchers and general readers alike. These interpretations are undoubtedly unconventional in Arabic writings on the subject, and some are surrounded by exaggerations in interpreting the historical text beyond its actual implications[13]. This critical approach, as Hamdi Shahin asserts, reminds us that established facts lead to the natural methodological entry point for understanding Umayyad history: examining the circumstances of the recording process (Tadwin) under which this history was written. It involves identifying the factors that governed or influenced the recording process. According to Shahin, Umayyad history was recorded during the Abbasid era within an atmosphere hostile to the Banu Umayya, by men whose schools of thought, intellectual orientations, and political loyalties varied. This necessarily left significant marks on their treatment of the news of that era—a period of immense importance and high sensitivity in the trajectory of Islamic history[14].

Regarding the issue of the Mawali , al-Sallabi points out that a reader of Islamic history will observe that the Mawali played prominent political and scientific roles in the Umayyad state. They carried out extensive conquests as military leaders and performed administrative tasks, such as managing and Arabizing the Diwans (administrative bureaus). Scholars take pride in this, as Al-Sallabi indicates that the Mawali were divided into three classes:

1. The First Class:

These were Mawali of the Arabs who either converted to Islam or formed an alliance with certain Arab tribes with political influence. That is, they belonged to the tribal base upon which the Umayyad state was founded. They were a significant support for the state in performing numerous tasks. For instance, Sarjun ibn Mansur al-Rumi [15]was a secretary for Mu'awiya over the Diwan al-Kharaj [16](Land Tax Bureau), and Zadan Farrukh oversaw the writing in the Diwan al-Kharaj[17], and wrote for Abd al-Malik on the Diwan al-Rasa'il (Bureau of Correspondence).Abu Al-Za'iza'a, his freedman [18], and Shu'ayb al-Sabi, his freedman[19], was in charge of the seal office for al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik. Yafi' ibn Dhu'ayb, his freedman [20],wrote for him on the estates in Damascus. ..Furthermore, among the prominent Muslim conquerors was Tariq ibn Ziyad, a mawla (client) of Berber origin; notably, the majority of the army that conquered Andalusia consisted of the Mawali [21].

[6] Fawzi, Orientalism and Islamic History, p. 94.
[7] Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, Vol. 37, p. 119; Al-Dhahabi, Al-Ibar fi Khabar man Ghabar, investigated by: Abu Hajar Muhammad al-Sa'id bin Basyuni Zaghloul, (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut), Vol. 1, p. 75; Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, Vol. 12, p. 380.
[8] Ahmad bin Hanbal, Al-Ilal wa Ma'rifat al-Rijal, investigated by: Wasiullah bin Muhammad Abbas, (Dar al-Khani, Riyadh, 1422 AH - 201 AD), Vol. 2, p. 410; Abu Hafs al-Fallas, Kitab al-Tarikh, investigated by: Muhammad al-Tabarani, p. 293; Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, Vol. 37, p. 120.
[9] Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, Vol. 37, p. 124; Al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam, Vol. 6, p. 139.
[10] Al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam, Vol. 5, p. 115.
[11] Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Vol. 14, p. 102; Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 1, p. 156.
[12] Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, Vol. 12, p. 677.
(Next Page Footnotes)
[13] Fawzi, Orientalism and Islamic History, p. 95.
[14] Shahin Hamdi, The Umayyad State: Allegations Against It and Refutations, (Dar al-Qahira, Egypt, 1422 AH - 2001 AD), p. 6.
[15] Sarjun ibn Mansur al-Rumi is mentioned in the book of Diwans during the early Umayyad period. Ibn Asakir lists him in his History of Damascus as a scribe for Mu'awiya, Yazid, and Abd al-Malik, quoting Abu al-Husayn al-Razi, who stated that he was a Christian who later converted to Islam. Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, vol. 2, p. 121
[16]) Al-Tabari, History of the Prophets and Kings,, Vol. 6, p. 180.
[17] Khalifa ibn Khayyat, Abu Amr Khalifa ibn Khayyat ibn Khalifa al-Shaybani al-Asfari al-Basri (d. 240 AH - 854 CE), History of Khalifa ibn Khayyat, edited by Karam Diya al-Umari, Dar al-Qalam, Al-Risalah Foundation - Damascus, 2nd ed., 1397 AH- 1977 AD), p. 212, Al-Qalqashandi, Subh al-A'sha fi Sina'at al-Insha, edited by: Muhammad Hussein Shams al-Din Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st edition, 1407 AH - 1987 AD), vol. 1, p. 48.
[18] Al-Tabari, History of the Prophets and Kings, vol. 6, p. 180
[19] Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, vol. 34, p. 262.
[20] Al-Tabari, History of the Prophets and Kings, vol. 6, p. 181.
[21]) Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan wa Anba' Abna' al-Zaman, vol. 5, p. 320; Al-Nuwayri, Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab, vol. 24, p. 40.

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The Mawali also included those who reached high administrative positions; Musa ibn Nusayr was from the captives of Ayn al-Tamr[22], and Abu al-Muhajir Dinar was a mawla of the Ansar. Yazid ibn Abi Muslim [23]served as a secretary for Al-Hajjaj and later governed the province of Ifriqiya.who was also Mawali[24].

Thus, the pages of history are seldom devoid of the presence of the Mawali in political, military, or administrative works. Consequently, these Mawali were a true part of the ruling class with no distinction between them and their patrons. Every ruling class tending toward tribalism needs to expand its base to perform the vast and extended tasks entrusted to the state. The Mawali were the class that the Umayyad state cultivated to face the tasks that the state had to perform, especially since they possessed great ability in administrative, political, and military works. However, those whom the state cultivated from the Mawali to expand the ruling elite base were but a small fraction of the flood of Mawali who entered Islam. Consequently, these few were not sufficient to offset the massive numbers of Mawali who entered Islam and represented a burden on the Umayyad state[25].

2. The Second Class:

These were the scholars who engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and were able to preserve for the Islamic Ummah its jurisprudential, literary, and hadith heritage across all branches of science. In Medina, for example, the leading scholars included: Sulayman ibn Yasar [26]mawla of Maymunah bint al-Harith, Nafi' mawla [27]of Umar, and Rabi'at al-Ra'y [28](who was among the teachers of Imam Malik). In Mecca, there were ujahid[29] ibn Jabr, Ikrimah [30](mawla of Ibn Abbas), and Ata ibn Abi Rabah[31]. In Basra, Al-Hasan al-Basri [32]and and his father, the freed slave of Zayd ibn Thabit, and in Syria Makhul [33], and in Egypt Yazid [34]ibn Habib and many others.

3. The Third Class:

These were the general masses of the Mawali who converted to Islam without entering into a clientage contract (Wala') with one of the Arab tribes. Consequently, their loyalty remained to the Ummah as a whole—meaning they belonged to the Ummah without there being a social institution to protect them or facilitate their rise in political institutions. These Mawali could become followers of certain social forces biased against the state, such as becoming Mawali of the Qaysi tribes while the state's tribal base relied on the Yemenis. While the scholars were treated with respect, the first class of Mawali was subject to political fluctuations, whereas this final class was subjected to discriminatory treatment that reached the level of hardship. This led the Arab tribalism against the Mawali to trigger a reaction in which they emphasized themselves in the face of Arab prejudice.

The Mawali in Khorasan followed the Abbasid call to escape the social and political discrimination practiced against them by the Umayyad state. In reality, there were no general Umayyad policies designed to systematically oppress or prejudice them, nor were any fields of employment closed to them; indeed, we find princes, military commanders, scholars, and judges among the Mawali.Truthfully, this perceived air of superiority toward the Mawali was not the sentiment of all Arabs, but rather the view of certain Bedouins who had not fully grasped the

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[22] Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, Mir'at al-Zaman fi Tawarikh al-A'yan, vol. 10, p. 161; Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Tarikh Dimashq, vol. 26, p. 13.

[23] Ibn al-Abbar, Al-Hulla al-Sira', vol. 2, p. 326; Al-Zarkali, Al-A'lam, vol. 3, p. 6

[24]Ibn Taghribirdi, Yusuf ibn Taghribirdi ibn Abdullah al-Zahiri al-Hanafi, Abu al-Mahasin, Jamal al-Din (d. 874 AH / 1443 CE), Al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Muluk Misr wa al-Qahira (Ministry of Culture and National Guidance, Dar al-Kutub Misr), vol. 1, p. 245; al-Zarkali, Al-A'lam, vol. 7, p. 143.

[25] Al-Sallabi, Mawali in the Umayyad state, from the book "The Umayyad State: Factors of Prosperity and Repercussions of Collapse," Dhu al-Hijjah 1442 AH/August 2021, Episode 275

[26] Sulayman ibn Yasar, the jurist, imam, scholar of Medina and its mufti, one of the senior followers and repositories of knowledge. His kunya was Abu Ayyub, and it was also said: Abu Abd al-Rahman, and it was also said: Abu Abdullah, a Medinan. He was a freed slave of the Mother of the Believers, Lady Maymuna al-Hilaliyya, may God be pleased with her. He was a scribe of the Mother of the Believers, Lady Umm Salama, may God be pleased with her (i.e., he was in a contract of manumission and then freed). He was born during the caliphate of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan, the possessor of the two lights, may God be pleased with him. He was a repository of knowledge (he died in 94 AH/317 CE), Al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam, vol. 4, p. 445

[27] Nafi', the freed slave of Abdullah ibn Umar (may God be pleased with them both): He is Nafi' ibn Jurjis, a distinguished Tabi'i (successor of the Companions), whose kunya (patronymic) was Abu Abdullah. He was originally from Daylam, though it is also said that he was from Abarshahr, and some say that his origins were from the Maghreb (North Africa). He was captured in one of the Muslim campaigns and became the property of Abdullah ibn Umar (may God be pleased with them both), then he was freed, hence his name, the freed slave of Ibn Umar. He is considered one of the great righteous Tabi'in and one of the most reliable narrators of hadith. He heard from his master, Abdullah ibn Umar, and also from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (may God be pleased with him). Many prominent imams narrated from him, including al-Zuhri, Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani, and Malik ibn Anas. Much of Ibn Umar's hadith is transmitted through his narration, to the point that Imam Malik said, "If I hear a hadith from Nafi' on the authority of Ibn Umar, I don't care if I don't hear it from anyone else." His truthfulness and precision are attested to by what he narrated concerning the etiquette of companionship and following (the Prophet). He narrated that he was walking with Ibn Umar when he heard a shepherd's flute. Ibn Umar put his fingers in his ears and turned away from the path until the sound stopped. Then he said: This is how I saw the Messenger of God do it. His death: (He died in the year 117 AH / 735 CE) and it was said (120 AH / 738 CE), Ibn Abd al-Barr, Al-Tamhid lima fi al-Muwatta' min al-Ma'ani wa al-Asanid, edited by: Mustafa bin Ahmad al-Alawi, Muhammad Abd al-Kabir al-Bakri, Ministry of General Endowments and Islamic Affairs - Morocco, 1387 AH /1967 CE), vol. 13, p. 236, Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan, vol. 5, p. 368

[28] Rabi'ah al-Ra'y: He is Abu Uthman Rabi'ah ibn Abi Abd al-Rahman Farrukh al-Taymi, a jurist and scholar, a client of the Banu al-Munkadir. He was the Mufti of the people of Medina, their sheikh, and the one who issued fatwas there. He narrated from a group of senior Tabi'in and the people of Medina, and great imams such as al-Awza'i, al-Thawri, and Malik learned from him. Imam Malik studied jurisprudence under him. He was considered trustworthy by scholars, and he was known for frequently using his own reasoning in issuing fatwas, which is why he was nicknamed Rabi'ah al-Ra'y. He died in the year 136 AH / 754 CE. Al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam, vol. 8, p. 417.

[29] The Imam, the Sheikh of Reciters and Commentators, his kunya was Abu al-Hajjaj al-Makki, the Black, a Qurayshi Makhzumi by affiliation; he was the freed slave of al-Sa'ib ibn Abi al-Sa'ib al-Makhzumi (and it was said: the freed slave of Abdullah ibn al-Sa'ib, and it was said: the freed slave of Qays ibn al-Sa'ib). He learned the Qur'an, its interpretation, and jurisprudence from Abdullah ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with him). He stated: "I recited the Qur'an to Ibn Abbas thirty times." He was one of the leading scholars of Qur'anic interpretation in Mecca, and he was considered trustworthy by scholars (trustworthy, a jurist, and a prolific narrator of hadith). A group of reciters studied with him, and al-Dhahabi mentioned that among his students in Qur'anic recitation were Ibn Kathir al-Dari, Abu Amr ibn al-Ala, and Ibn Muhaysin. He was a well-traveled scholar, and he settled in Kufa at the end of his life. He died in the year 102 AH (721 CE) while prostrating in prayer. It is also said that he died in 103 AH (722 CE), and some say 104 AH (723 CE). (Al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal, vol. 27, pp. 228-234; Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 4, pp. 449-456).

[30] He is Abu Abdullah Ikrimah ibn Abdullah al-Barbari, then al-Madani, the freed slave of Abdullah ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with him. He was a Tabi'i (successor of the Companions) known for his extensive narrations and frequent travels. He was one of the most knowledgeable people in exegesis (tafsir), and he also narrated on the Maghazi (military expeditions). He received knowledge from his master, Ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with him, and he also narrated from the Mother of the Believers, Lady Aisha, may God be pleased with her, Abu Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, and others. A group of imams narrated from him, including Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani, Khalid al-Hadhdha', and others. The authors of the six canonical hadith collections narrated from him. He said: "I have interpreted what is between the two covers (of the Quran), and everything I tell you about the Qur'an is from Ibn Abbas." He also said: "I sought knowledge for forty years." He traveled to various countries, and he mentioned that he went to Najd al-Haruri and stayed for six months, then he would narrate according to the opinion of Najd. He also went to the Maghreb (North Africa), and some people there learned from him He died in Medina, and there is disagreement about the year of his death. It was said 104 AH, 105 AH, 106 AH, and 107 AH. Al-Zarkali, Al-A'lam, vol. 4, p. 244. Hamoush Ma'moun, Al-Tafsir Al-Ma'moun 'ala Manhaj Al-Tanzil wa Al-Sahih Al-Musnun, 1st ed., 1428 AH - 2007 CE, vol. 1, p. 18

[31] Ata ibn Abi al-Rabbah: The Imam, the Sheikh of Islam, and the Mufti of the Haram. His kunya was Abu Muhammad. He was from Mecca and a Qurayshi by affiliation (it is said that his affiliation was with Banu Jumah or Banu Fihr). He was a vessel of knowledge and grew up in Mecca. He was born during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan, the possessor of two lights (may God be pleased with him). He narrated from a group of Companions, including: the Mother of the Believers, Lady Aisha (may God be pleased with her), the Mother of the Believers, Lady Umm Salamah (may God be pleased with her), Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him), Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them both), and others. Many imams narrated from him, such as al-Zuhri, Qatadah, Amr ibn Dinar, al-A'mash, Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani, and others. The authority to issue fatwas in Mecca rested with him, and he was held in high esteem by scholars. It was even reported that a crier would announce during the Hajj season that no one should issue fatwas except Ata. He was famous for his asceticism, piety, and profound knowledge, especially regarding the rituals of Hajj. It was even said that no one remained who was more knowledgeable about the rituals of Hajj than him. He died in the year 114 AH (732 CE), or it is said in the year (115 AH/733 CE), Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 5, pp. 423-429.

[32] Al-Hasan al-Basri: He is Al-Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan Yasar, Abu Sa'id, the imam of the people of Basra and one of the senior Tabi'in, He was related in loyalty to Zayd ibn Thabit al-Ansari, may God be pleased with him, and his mother was Khayra, a mawali of the Mother of the Believers, Lady Umm Salama, may God be pleased with her. He was born in Medina, then moved to Basra, where he excelled in knowledge and preaching. He learned from a group of the Companions, and great imams of knowledge and hadith narrated from him. He was a reference in jurisprudence, exegesis, and asceticism. He died in Basra at the beginning of Rajab in the year (110 AH / 728 CE). Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 4, p. 546.

[33] Makhul ibn Dabr, a scholar of the people of the Levant, known as Abu Abdullah (and it was said: Abu Ayyub, and it was said: Abu Muslim), the Damascene jurist, and his house was on the edge of the Sunday Market There is disagreement regarding his allegiance and origin. The most accurate account is that he was a freed slave of a woman from the Hudhayl tribe. It has also been said that he was a slave of Sa'id ibn al-'As, who gifted him to the woman from the Hudhayl tribe, and she then freed him. Another account states that he was a captive from Kabul, and other accounts exist as well. He is considered to be among the middle generation of the Tabi'in (Successors) and a contemporary of al-Zuhri. He transmitted many hadiths with missing links in the chain of narration. He transmitted on the authority of the Prophet and a group of Companions whom he did not meet. He heard and narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik, Wathila bin Al-Asqa', Abu Umama Al-Bahili, Saeed bin Al-Musayyab, Umm Al-Darda' and others. Al-Zuhri, Rabi'a Al-Ra'i, Al-Awza'i, Saeed bin Abdul Aziz, Sulayman bin Musa and a number of great scholars narrated on his authority, to the point that it was said: The scholars are four… and Makhul in the Levant. It was said: "There is no one in the Levant more knowledgeable than Makhul." He was described as the imam of the people of the Levant. It was mentioned that he used to issue fatwas based on his opinion and knowledge. His death: There is disagreement about it. It was said in the year 112 AH (731/730 CE), and it was said 113 AH (732/731 CE), and it was said 114 AH (733/732 CE), and it was said 116 AH (735/734 CE), and it was said 118 AH (737/736 CE).

[34] Abu Raja' Yazid ibn Abi Habib al-Azdi: A jurist from among the imams of his time, and he was a client of the Banu 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy from Quraysh He narrated from a group of sheikhs, including: Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Juz', Abu al-Tufayl, Ibrahim ibn Abdullah ibn Hunayn, Sa'id ibn Abi Hind, 'Arak ibn Malik, and Ali ibn Rabah. A number of prominent hadith scholars narrated from him, and he was a prolific narrator of hadith. It was mentioned regarding his practice of pledging allegiance: when a caliph was to be chosen, the first to pledge allegiance was Abdullah, then Yazid, and then the people. (d. 128 AH/746 CE). Al-Sadafi, Salah al-Din Khalil ibn Aybak ibn Abdullah al-Safadi (d. 764 AH/1362-1363 CE). Al-Wafi bi'l-Wafayat, edited by Ahmad al-Arna'ut and Turki Mustafa, Dar Ihya' al-Turath, Beirut, 1420 AH (2000 CE), vol. 28, p. 51.

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true essence of Islam. Perhaps it was the conduct of some governors, provoked by the Mawali's enmity toward the Umayyad state, that led to acts of injustice against both the Mawali and the Arab opponents of the state. It would be an injustice to characterize such behavior as the general policy of the Umayyad state.

Just as there were Mawali whose faith transcended tribalism (Asabiyyah), there were many Arabs who understood Islam profoundly, believing in the equality of all Muslims—Arab and non-Arab (Ajam) alike. They recognized that a man is honored by his religion, deeds, and character, not by race or lineage. "The most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous," and an Arab has no merit over a non-Arab except through piety. Al-Hasan al-Basri, a mawla, held a high status among the Arabs, and his word was respected even by the state; he openly criticized Umayyad caliphs and governors, yet upon his death, the entire population followed his funeral procession, leaving no one in the mosque for the afternoon prayer.Despite the many individuals—both Arab and Mawali—executed by Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi during the numerous revolutions and strifes of his governorship in Iraq, public outcry never reached the intensity it did over the execution of Sa'id ibn Jubayr, a mawla. This was due to Sa'id's immense standing among the people, despite his rebellion against the state alongside Ibn al-Ash'ath.

The widespread notion regarding the Banu Umayya—promulgated by Von Kremer, Van Vloten, and Browne, echoed by Jurji Zaydan and Philip Hitti, and adopted by modern historians such as Hasan Ibrahim Hasan and Ali Husni al-Kharbutli—claims that the Banu Umayya were prejudiced against the Mawali, exploiting and despising them, which supposedly led to the resentment that brought down the state. However, this is not entirely accurate. It has been shown that groups of Mawali supported the Umayyads; rather, large numbers of Mawali, like other Arab opponents of Umayyad rule, were mobilized by the Abbasid call because it convinced them of its principles and goals. Thus, they joined the Abbasid banner and contributed to the downfall of the Umayyad state. The Abbasid call exploited all circumstances and benefited from all elements disgruntled with the Umayyad state[35].

In addition to the aforementioned points, Fawzi establishes a methodology of refutation in his response to the suspicions raised by Orientalists regarding the Mawali issue. His approach is based on interpreting the stance of the state and society toward the Mawali within the context of historical transformations. He emphasizes that the era of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs was not identical to the Umayyad era that followed, just as the first Abbasid era differed from the preceding Umayyad stage. The logic of history necessitates that conditions change, policies shift, and social and state attitudes transform according to political, social, and economic variables.

Accordingly, Fawzi asserts that the Muslim Arabs were the founders of the new state, bearing the mission of spreading Islam and consolidating authority.However, state resources were not always sufficient for expenditures, and even some Arabs were deprived of stipends during certain periods. This raises the question of whether it was possible to meet the demands of all Mawali groups and grant them equal privileges as the Arabs—a question strictly linked to the financial and political reality of the state.He also points out that a segment of the Mawali participated in rebellion movements alongside Arab opposition leaders, such as the movements of Al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi, Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Kindi, and Abd Allah ibn Mu'awiya al-Talibi. This explains the state's caution toward certain groups during times of unrest, without implying a fixed state policy based on general prejudice.

Furthermore, Fawzi emphasizes that relying on individual accounts from a poet or a tribal chief to prove Arab contempt for the Mawali is insufficient to consider the phenomenon a formal state policy, especially since the primary competition was often among Arab factions themselves (Qaysi ,Yamani and Rabi'i), The consequences of this rivalry had a far more profound impact on the state's stability than simply attributing the problem to the mawali. Therefore, he criticizes the portrayal by some Orientalists and their followers of the matter as systematic Umayyad prejudice, because they failed to consider the structural changes brought about by the conquests, the increasing number of mawali, their natural interaction with Arabs in various regions, and the resulting scattered accounts preserved in literary works And poetry, such as Al-Iqd al-Farid, Al-Kamil, and songs, sometimes carried more than they could bear in constructing historical interpretation.

In contrast, this perspective shows that the state did not divide labor and positions in a rigid manner that prevented any specific group from participating. Instead, the criteria of competence and loyalty remained present in various sectors; therefore, the presence of the Mawali was prominent in administration, the Diwans (government bureaus), economics, and the sciences. Meanwhile, their proportion was lower in the military and politics, where the historical role of the Arabs remained stronger due to their experience and military traditions, notwithstanding certain exceptions. Fawzi relies here on evidence indicating the inclusion of the Mawali in the Diwan al-Ataa (Registry of Stipends) from an early period, as well as their participation in some armies. Furthermore, evidence related to the judiciary (Qada) and the issuing of legal opinions (Futya) shows that the door was not absolutely closed to the Mawali, and that their scientific brilliance crystallized gradually during the Umayyad era itself, rather than appearing suddenly with the establishment of the Abbasid state.[36]

Fawzi adds that the presence of the Mawali in the religious-political sphere during the Umayyad era sometimes took the form of movements supplementary to the state. However, it was not an inherent danger in itself, nor was it a purely Mawali revolution, as the various groups of Mawali were not uniform. Rather, specific groups emerged within particular frameworks, such as: the axis of Ghuluw (religious extremism), the axis of Shu'ubiyyah, and movements with religious-political dimensions. He emphasizes that this should not be generalized to all Mawali, nor should it be used as evidence of a state policy based on oppression. He underscores that Shu'ubiyyah was not merely a demand for equality, as some researchers portray; rather, in its origin and significance, it adopted a tendency antagonistic to the values of Arabism and the teachings of Islam. It sought to cast doubt on the historical role of the Arabs and their civilization-building privileges, attempting to replace Arab-Islamic values and systems with Persian-Sasanian ones. This makes citing it to prove formal Arab prejudice a flaw in understanding the context and the nature of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, Fawzi contends that the participation of the Mawali in anti-Umayyad movements is not understood as an independent Mawali movement. Instead, it was often part of a political mobilization by Arab opposition leaders who invested in the large numbers of Mawali (and their needs or the grievances of some) to increase their supporters and numbers. In return, groups of Mawali utilized these movements to join them and raise their demands. Nevertheless, the factual reality remains that their role was not always the decisive one, and their affiliation varied according to the movement, the environment, and the security circumstances. He points out that the image of Mawali participation is evident in movements that occurred in Iraq and Persia, such as: the movement of Al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi in 66 AH / 685 AD, the movement of Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Kindi in 81 AH / 700 AD, and the movement of Abd Allah ibn Mu'awiya al-Talibi in 127 AH / 744 AD. However, the exaggeration of this participation and its transformation into a case of "general oppression" resulted from a selective reading of partial accounts, which were then built upon to generate a clamor called the "Mawali Problem" and present it as the defining feature of the Umayyad era. In reality, it is closer to an interpretive exaggeration utilized to tarnish the image of that period.

He concludes by asserting that a more balanced view requires dealing with the phenomenon as changing social and political interactions within a society expanding and diversifying due to conquests—not as a fixed state policy or comprehensive Arab hatred.

[35] Al-Sallabi, a loyalist in the Umayyad state, from the book "The Umayyad State: Factors of Prosperity and Repercussions of Collapse," Dhu al-Hijjah 1442 AH - August 2021, Episode 275
[36] Fawzi, Orientalism and Islamic History, pp. 110-123

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Indeed, even some Western scholars were closer to moderation in approaching the Umayyad society and its structure, contrary to the sharp discourse of generalization.[37]

Conclusion

1. The views of Julius Wellhausen reveal an attempt to provide a socio-political interpretation of the Umayyad state; however, they were characterized by generalization and exaggeration in loading certain phenomena beyond their historical weight.
2. Arab thinkers have demonstrated that these theories ignored the nature of diversity within the Umayyad state and overlooked distinguished reformist models—such as Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz—which weakens a comprehensive judgment of the era.
3. Arab studies have shown that the Mawali issue cannot be reduced to a framework of systematic oppression; rather, it was a complex phenomenon subject to multiple political, social, and economic factors.
4. Consequently, a precise understanding of the Umayyad state requires adopting a balanced methodology that combines critique and analysis while considering the historical context and the plurality of accounts, moving away from reductive interpretations.

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