

The Biography of the Prophet ﷺ II

**Ibn Sa‘d’s
Kitab at-Tabaqat al-Kabir
Volume II**

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Contents

Preface	xv
Concerning the number of raids and expeditions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, their names and dates and a summary of what occurred in every raid and expedition	1
1. The expedition of Hamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib	2
2. The expedition of ‘Ubayda ibn al-Harith	2
3. The expedition of Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas	3
4. The expedition to al-Abwa’	3
5. The Buwat expedition	4
6. The expedition in pursuit of Kurz ibn Jabir al-Fihri	4
7. The expedition to Dhu al-‘Ushayra	5
8. The expedition of ‘Abdullah ibn Jahsh al-Asadi	6
9. The Battle of Badr	7
10. The expedition of ‘Umayr ibn ‘Adi	22
11. The expedition of Salim ibn ‘Umayr	22
12. The expedition against the Banu Qaynuqa’	23
13. The expedition (<i>ghazwa</i>) of as-Sawiq	24
14. The expedition to Qarqarat al-Kudr	25
15. The expedition to kill Ka‘b ibn al-Ashraf	26
16. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against Ghatafan	29
17. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against the Banu Sulaym	30
18. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha	30
19. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the Battle of Uhud	31

Those Muslims who were killed in the Battle of Uhud	36
20. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Hamra' al-Asad	42
21. The expedition of Abu Salama ibn 'Abd al-Asad al-Makhzumi	43
22. The expedition of 'Abdullah ibn Unays	43
23. The expedition of al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr	44
24. The expedition of Marthad ibn Abi Marthad	48
25. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against the Banu an-Nadir	50
26. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to the promised meeting at Badr	52
27. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Dhat ar-Riqā'	53
28. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Dumat al-Jandal	54
29. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to al-Muraysi'	55
30. The Battle of the Ditch which is the Raid of the Confederates in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ participated	58
31. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against the Banu Qurayza	66
32. The expedition of Muhammad ibn Maslama to al-Qurata'	69
33. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against the Banu Lihyan	70
34. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to al-Ghaba	71
35. The expedition of 'Ukkasha ibn Mihsan al-Asadi to al-Ghamr	76
36. The expedition of Muhammad ibn Maslama to Dhu al-Qassa	76
37. The expedition of Abu 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah to Dhu al-Qassa	77

38. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha to the Banu Sulaym at al-Jamum	77
39. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha to al-‘Is	78
40. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha to at-Taraf	78
41. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha to Hisma	79
42. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha to Wadi al-Qura	80
43. The expedition of ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn ‘Awf to Dumat al-Jandal	80
44. The expedition of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib to the Banu Sa’d ibn Bakr at Fadak	81
45. The expedition of Zayd ibn Haritha to Umm Qirfa in Wadi al-Qura	81
46. The expedition of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Atik against Abu Rafi‘	82
47. The expedition of ‘Abdullah ibn Rawaha against Usayr ibn Zarim	83
48. The expedition of Kurz ibn Jabir al-Fihri against the ‘Uranis	84
49. The expedition of ‘Amr ibn Umayya ad-Damri	85
50. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to al-Hudaybiya	86
51. The raid of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on Khaybar	96
52. The expedition of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab to Turaba	107
53. The expedition of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq to the Banu Kilab in Najd	107
54. The expedition of Bashir ibn Sa’d al-Ansari to Fadak	108
55. The expedition of Ghalib ibn ‘Abdullah al-Laythi to al-Mayfa‘a	108
56. The expedition of Bashir ibn Sa’d al-Ansari to Yaman and Jamar	109
57. The Fulfilled ‘Umra of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	109
58. The expedition of Ibn Abi al-‘Awja’ as-Sulami against the Banu Sulaym	112

59. The expedition of Ghalib ibn ‘Abdullah al-Laythi to the Banu al-Mulawwih at al-Kadid	112
60. The expedition of Ghalib ibn ‘Abdullah al-Laythi to the place where the companions of Bashir ibn Sa’d had suffered at Fadak	114
61. The expedition of Shuja‘ ibn Wahb al-Asadi to the Banu ‘Amir at as-Siyyi	115
62. The expedition of Ka‘b ibn ‘Umayr al-Ghifari to Dhat Atlah	116
63. Expedition of Mu’ta	116
64. The expedition of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As to Dhat al-Salasil	119
65. The expedition of al-Khabat whose commander was Abu ‘Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah	120
66. The expedition of Abu Qatada ibn Rib‘i al-Ansari to Khadira	120
67. The expedition of Abu Qatada ibn Rib‘i al-Ansari to Batn Idam	121
68. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the year of the Conquest of Makka	121
69. The expedition of Khalid ibn al-Walid against al-‘Uzza	132
70. The expedition of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As to Suwa‘	132
71. The expedition of Sa’d ibn Zayd al-Ashhali to Manat	133
72. The expedition of Khalid ibn al-Walid to the Banu Jadhima of Kinana	133
73. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Hunayn	135
74. The expedition of at-Tufayl ibn ‘Amr ad-Dawsi to Dhu al-Kaffayn	142
75. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against Ta’if	143
76. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent out the <i>zakat</i> -collectors	144
77. The expedition of ‘Uyayna ibn Hisn al-Fazari to the Banu Tamim	145

78. The expedition of Qutba ibn ‘Amr ibn Hadida to Kha‘tham	146
79. The expedition of ad-Dahhak ibn Sufyan al-Kilabi to the Banu Kilab	147
80. The expedition of ‘Alqama ibn Mujazziz al-Mudliji against some Abyssinians	147
81. The expedition of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib to al-Fuls, the idol of Tayy’, to destroy it	148
82. The expedition of ‘Ukkasha ibn Mishan al-Asadi to al-Jinab, the territory of ‘Udhra and Baliy	148
83. The expedition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Tabuk	149
84. The <i>hajj</i> led by Abu Bakr as-Siddiq	152
85. The expedition of Khalid ibn al-Walid to the Banu ‘Abd al-Madan at Najran	153
86. The expedition of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib to Yemen twice	153
87. Concerning the ‘ <i>umra</i> of the Prophet ﷺ	154
88. The Farewell Hajj	155
89. The expedition of Usama ibn Zayd ibn Haritha	169
The death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	172
What happened when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was close to death	172
The reading of the Qur’an to Jibril by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his <i>i’tikaf</i> in the year in which he died	174
Those who said that the Jews bewitched the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	175
The poison used on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	178
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ going out to al-Baqi‘ and asking for forgiveness for its people and for the martyrs	181
The beginning of the illness in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ died	183
The severity of the illness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	183

What the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited to seek protection and what Jibril recited to seek protection	186
The prayer of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with his Companions during his illness	190
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ commanding Abu Bakr to lead the people in the prayer during his illness	190
What the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Abu Bakr in his illness	198
The closing of the doors other than the door of Abu Bakr	200
The choice given to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	201
The division of time between his wives by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his illness	203
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asking his wives for permission to be nursed in the room of ‘A’isha	204
The <i>siwak</i> with which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ cleaned his teeth in the illness in which he died	205
The medicine which was given to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the side of his mouth when he was ill	206
The dinars which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ distributed in the illness in which he died	208
The church which the wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ mentioned in his illness and what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said about that	210
Concerning the document which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to write for his community in the illness in which he died	212
What al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib said to ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib during the illness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	214
What the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to his daughter Fatima in his final illness	216
What the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in his final illness to Usama ibn Zayd	217

What the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to the Ansar in his illness in which he died	219
The instructions given by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the illness in which he died	221
The coming of the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	224
The death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	225
Those who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not make a will and that he died while his head was in the lap of ‘A’isha	227
Those who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ died in the lap of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib	229
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ being shrouded in a striped cloth when he died	230
Abu Bakr kissing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ after his death	230
What the people said when they doubted the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	231
On how long the illness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lasted and the day on which he died	237
Condolences on the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	238
The shirt in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was washed	239
The washing of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the names of those who washed him	240
Those who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was shrouded in three cloths	244
Those who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was shrouded in three cloths, one of which was a striped Yemeni mantle	245
Those who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was shrouded in three mantles, and those who said that he was shrouded in a shirt and cloak	247

The hanut-scent of the Prophet ﷺ	248
The funeral prayer over the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	249
The location of the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	251
Digging the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and making a niche (<i>lahd</i>) in it	253
What was put in the grave of the Prophet ﷺ	257
Those who went into the grave of the Prophet ﷺ	258
What al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba said about him being the last one in contact with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	259
The burial of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	261
Sprinkling water on the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	262
Making the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ hump shaped	262
The age of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the day he died	264
How long the Messenger of Allah ﷺ resided in Madina after his Hijra until his death	265
Sorrow for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and those who mourned for him and wept over him	266
The inheritance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and what he left	268
Those who paid the debts of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and fulfilled his promises	271
Those who composed elegies for the Prophet ﷺ	273
Those of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who gave <i>fatwas</i> in Madina and were followed in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and after him, and those to whom their knowledge passed	287
‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ	288
‘Ali ibn Abi Talib ﷺ	290
‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn ‘Awf ﷺ	292
Ubayy ibn Ka‘b ﷺ	293
‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud ﷺ	294

Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari ﷺ	296
Various Shaykhs	297
Mu‘adh ibn Jabal ﷺ	297
Chapter: The people of knowledge and <i>fatwa</i> among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	300
‘Abdullah ibn Sallam ﷺ	302
Abu Dharr ﷺ	303
Those who collected the Qur’an in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	303
Zayd ibn Thabit ﷺ	306
Abu Hurayra ﷺ	309
Ibn ‘Abbas ﷺ	311
‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ﷺ	318
‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ﷺ	318
Chapter [Some others]	319
‘A’isha, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ	319
Other Companions	320
Those among the sons of the Muhajirun, sons of the Ansar and others who gave <i>fatwa</i> in Madina after the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	322
Sa‘id ibn al-Musayyab	322
Sulayman ibn Yasar	327
Abu Bakr ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman	327
‘Ikrima	327
‘Ata’ ibn Abi Rabah	328
‘Amra bint ‘Abd ar-Rahman and ‘Urwa ibn az-Zubayr	329
Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri	329
Glossary	333

Concerning the number of raids and expeditions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, their names and dates and a summary of what occurred in every raid and expedition

Muhammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Waqid al-Aslami reported to us from ‘Umar ibn ‘Uthman ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Sa‘id ibn Yarbu‘ al-Makhzumi and Musa ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Harith at-Taymi, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Muslim, the son of the brother of az-Zuhri, Musa ibn Ya‘qub ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Wahb ibn Rabi‘a ibn al-Aswad, ‘Abdullah ibn Ja‘far ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Miswar ibn Makhrama az-Zuhri, Yahya ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Qatada al-Ansari, Rabi‘a ibn ‘Uthman ibn ‘Abdullah ibn al-Hudayr at-Taymi, Ibrahim ibn Isma‘il ibn Abi Habiba al-Ashhali, ‘Abd al-Hamid ibn Ja‘far al-Hakami, ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi az-Zinad, and Muhammad ibn Salih at-Tammar. Muhammad ibn Sa‘d also said that Ruwaym ibn Yazis al-Muqri reported to us from Harun ibn Abi ‘Isa from Muhammad ibn Ishaq, Husayn ibn Muhammad reported to me from Abu Ma‘shar, and Isma‘il ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Uways al-Madani reported to us from Isma‘il ibn Ibrahim ibn ‘Uqba from his uncle, Musa ibn ‘Uqba, with their accounts intermeshed that the number of the raids of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in which he himself took part was twenty-seven, and the number of the expeditions which he sent was forty-seven. He took part in the fighting in nine raids: 1. Badr (where there was fighting), 2. Uhud, 3. al-Muraysi’, 4. The Ditch, 5. Qurayza, 6. Khaybar, 7. The Conquest of Makka, 8. Hunayn, and 9. Ta’if. This is what has been agreed upon for us.

In some transmissions it is said that he fought in the Banu an-Nadir, but Allah made it particularly supererogatory for him, and it is also said that he fought in the raid on Wadi al-Qura on the return from Khaybar and some of his Companions were killed. He also fought at al-Ghaba.

They said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to Madina when he emigrated from Makka on Monday 12th Rabi‘ al-Awwal. This is agreed upon, although some have related that he came on 2nd Rabi‘ al-Awwal.

1. The expedition of Hamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib

The first banner of war that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave was to Hamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim in Ramadan in the seventh month after the *Hijra* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It was a white flag and it was carried by Abu Marthad Kannaz ibn al-Husayn al-Ghanawi, the ally of Hamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent him with thirty men of the Muhajirun.

Others said that half of them were Muhajirun and half were Ansar. It is, in fact, agreed that they were all Muhajirun. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not send any of the Ansar on an expedition until he had fought along with them at the Battle of Badr. That is because they had stipulated that they would defend him in their abode. This is what is confirmed in our opinion.

Hamza set out to intercept the caravan of Quraysh which was coming from Syria and heading for Makka. The caravan included Abu Jahl ibn Hisham and three hundred men. They reached Sayf al-Bahr, i.e. the coast on the side of al-‘Is. They met and formed their rows for fighting. Majdi ibn ‘Amr al-Juhani, who was an ally of both sides, went to one group and then to the other group [to negotiate] and finally came between them and they did not fight. Abu Jahl headed with his companions and caravan on to Makka and Hamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib left with his companions for Madina.

2. The expedition of ‘Ubayda ibn al-Harith¹

Then there was the expedition of ‘Ubayda ibn al-Harith ibn al-Muttalib ibn ‘Abd Manaf to the valley of Rabigh in Shawwal at the beginning of the eighth month from the *Hijra* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

He gave him a white flag which was carried by Mistah ibn Uthatha ibn al-Muttalib ibn ‘Abd Manaf. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent him with sixty of the Muhajirun but none of the Ansar. Mistah met Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, who had two hundred men of his fellows, at a well-established water-hole at Ahya’, part of the valley of Rabigh, ten miles from al-Juhfa if you are making for Qudayd on the left side of the road. They had veered off the road in order to graze their mounts. Arrows were shot between them, but swords

¹ At-Tabari, 2:404, Sirat Ibn Hisham, 2:55, *al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi, 10.

were not drawn and battle lines were not drawn. The exchange of arrows occurred between them because Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas shot an arrow on that day. It was the first arrow shot in Islam. Then the two parties retired to their garrisons.

The variant of Ibn Ishaq states that the leader of the people (the idolators) was 'Ikrima ibn Abi Jahl.

3. The expedition of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas²

There was the expedition of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas to al-Kharrar in Dhu al-Qa'da at the beginning of the ninth month after the *Hijra* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He gave him a white flag which was carried by al-Miqdad ibn 'Amr al-Bahrani and sent him with twenty men of the Muhajirun to intercept the caravan of Quraysh which was due to pass. He instructed them not to go beyond al-Kharrar. Al-Kharrar were wells which were located to the left of al-Mahajja, which is near Khumm when you go from al-Juhfa to Makka.

Sa'd stated, 'We went out on foot and used to conceal ourselves in the day and travel by night until the morning of the fifth day when we found that the caravan had passed the day before and therefore we returned to Madina.'

4. The expedition to al-Abwa'³

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made an expedition (*ghazwa*) to al-Abwa' in the month of Safar at the beginning of the twelfth month after the *Hijra*.

Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib carried the flag. It was a white banner. He left Sa'd ibn 'Ubada in charge of Madina and set out with the Muhajirun with no Ansari among them until they reached al-Abwa' to intercept the caravan of Quraysh, but they did not encounter any fighting. It is also called the Waddan expedition. Both names are used for it. There are six miles between the two places. It is the first raid on which the Prophet himself participated.

2 At-Tabari 2:403, Sirat Ibn Hisham, 2:54, *al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi, 11.

3 At-Tabari 2:407, *al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi, 11, 12.

In this expedition, he made peace with Makhshi ibn ‘Amr ad-Damri, who was their chief in his time, on the basis that he would not attack the Banu Damra and they would not attack him nor increase numbers against him and they would not help his enemy. He wrote a document between him and them.

Damra are part of the Banu Kinana. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went to Madina. He had been absent from it for fifteen nights.

Isma‘il ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Uways reported to us from Kathir ibn ‘Abdullah al-Muzani from his father that his grandfather said, ‘We went on the first expedition in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ participated which was to al-Abwa’.

5. The Buwat expedition⁴

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went on an expedition (*ghazwa*) to Buwat in the month of Rabi‘ al-Awwal at the beginning of the thirteenth month after his *Hijra*.

Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas carried his flag, and it was a white flag. He put Sa‘d ibn Mu‘adh in charge of Madina. He set out with two hundred of his Companions to intercept a caravan of Quraysh containing Umayya ibn Khalaf al-Jumahi and a hundred men of Quraysh and two thousand five hundred camels. He reached Buwat, which consists of some mountains of Juhayna in the area of Radwa. It is close to Dhu Khusub which is by the road to Syria. There are four postal stages between Buwat and Madina. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not encounter any fighting and returned to Madina.

6. The expedition in pursuit of Kurz ibn Jabir al-Fihri⁵

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made an expedition (*ghazwa*) in pursuit of Kurz ibn Jabir al-Fihri in the month of Rabi‘ al-Awwal at the beginning of the thirteenth month after his *Hijra*.

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib carried the flag which was white. The Prophet ﷺ left Zayd ibn Haritha in charge of Madina. Kurz ibn Jabir had raided the grazing

4 *Al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi, 12, at-Tabari, 2:407.

5 *Al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi, 9, at-Tabari, 2:407.

animals of Madina and driven them off as animals had been left to graze at al-Jamma'. (The word '*sarh*' in the text denotes grazing livestock.) Jamma' is a mountain in the area of al-'Aqiq in the direction al-Jurf. It is three miles from Madina.

So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set out in search of Kurz until he reached a wadi called Safawan in the region of Badr which Kurz ibn Jabir had crossed. He did not catch him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then returned to Madina.

7. The expedition to Dhu al-'Ushayra⁶

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made the expedition (*ghazwa*) to Dhu al-'Ushayra in Jumada al-Akhira at the beginning of the sixteenth month after his *Hijra*.

Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib carried his flag, and the flag was white. The Prophet ﷺ left Abu Salama ibn 'Abd al-Asad al-Makhzumi in charge of Madina. He set out with one hundred and fifty, or two hundred Muhajirun who had volunteered. He did not force anyone to go. They set out with thirty camels which they rode in turns. He went out to intercept the caravan of Quraysh which had started to go to Syria. He had received news that it had left Makka and contained the wealth of Quraysh.

He reached Dhu al-'Ushayra which belonged to the Banu Mudlij and was located in the region of Yanbu'. There are nine postal stages between Yanbu' and Madina. He found that the caravan for which he had set out had passed that place some days ago. It was the same caravan which he would target when it returned from Syria. [On its return,] it travelled along the sea, and Quraysh received news of it and set out to defend it. They met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at Badr and there was fighting and some were killed.

It was at Dhu al-'Ushayra that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave 'Ali ibn Abi Talib his *kunya* (Abu Turab (Father of Dust)). That was because he saw him asleep rolling on the soft earth. He said, 'Sit up, Abu Turab!' He sat up.⁷ In this raid, the Prophet made a treaty with the tribe of Mudlij and their allies from the Banu Damra. Then he returned to Madina without encountering fighting.

6 At-Tabari 2:408, Sirat Ibn Hisham, 2:58, *al-Maghazi* of al-Waqidi, 12, 13.

7 An alternative, and authentic narration in Sahih Muslim, tells a different account of why 'Ali ibn Abi Talib was called Abu Turab. <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2409>.