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“Calm Yourself”: Inviting Emotion Management in Early and Medieval *Sītra*

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Abstract

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This dissertation enters into a critical discussion among scholars who are preoccupied with the question of how emotional practices, which sustain prevailing ideologies and social norms, are mediated or taught. Early and medieval biographies of Muḥammad (*sīra*) offer a fruitful lens for approaching this inquiry as scholars of Islam have identified the genre’s uniquely pedagogical style which served to inspire the Muslim community. My dissertation centers on a cross-textual analysis of five Arabic biographies between the 8th and 12th centuries. Drawing upon resources from narrative and rhetorical theory, the history of emotions, and hagiology, I trace biographers’ efforts to articulate an ethics of emotional practice through a number of narrative strategies, namely, first- and second-person voice, narratives about conflict, poetry, and accounts that portray others’ emotional reactions when in Muḥammad’s presence. Broadly speaking, my research enters into a critical conversation among religionists who are interested in how master narratives and social norms are fortified by emotional rhetoric, and I argue for a shift in theoretical focus to the phenomenon of narrative progression and the interpretive role of implied readers. While there is a rich amount of scholarship on the ways in which sacred biographies function as sources of ethical reflection, specialists in this field have been conspicuously absent from conversations among both historians of emotion and narratologists regarding the crucial role of emotion in the formation of the ethical self.

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FOREWORD

The multifaceted ways in which dominant expressions of emotions are sustained within societies has emerged as a significant area of inquiry among scholars who argue that emotional practices can be provoked *externally* (e.g., through someone else's rhetoric) and *internally* (e.g., through an individual's efforts to *feel* or *not* feel a certain way based upon perceived societal expectations). Sociologists, anthropologists, and historians have used the phrases "emotion raising," "emotion work," and "feeling rules" to denote these processes. Narrative and rhetorical theorists have similarly analyzed the ways in which the content and form of narrative may invite readers to respond emotionally to a text by empathizing or identifying with characters. One of the questions that continues to occupy scholars, however, is precisely *how* are emotional practices mediated or taught?

While largely disengaged from the above conversation, Islamicists have emphasized that biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad (*sīra*) are characterized by both didacticism and emotive content. Mirroring discussions among specialists of sacred biography and hagiography in other traditions, Islamicists assert that a primary purpose of the *sīra* was to teach and inspire the Muslim community.¹ Chase Robinson places particular emphasis on the pedagogical aims of the genre between the 9th-12th centuries, when stories of the Prophet Muḥammad were made more accessible to readers through stylistic changes in the genre, such as abridgment and fictionalization. By the early 9th century, the *sīra* developed into a recognizable genre spanning the Islamic empire. Numerous biographies were produced during this time featuring iterations of

¹ See Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 63.

familiar narratives describing Muḥammad's birth and early childhood, entrance into prophethood, political and military endeavors, and death. These biographies communicated to readers an ethic based upon Muḥammad's idealized actions. Presumably, it is the emotionally-descriptive language found within the *sīra* that has led scholars of Islamic history to comment on the deeply emotive role that narrative representations of Muḥammad have fulfilled for readers of sacred biography. Despite scholarly allusions to the emotive content found within the *sīra*, the category of emotion remains largely uninterrogated as a lens through which to approach biographers' pedagogical concerns in the early and medieval periods. This has resulted in a "flattening" of the genre and its intended aims.²

My dissertation responds to this lacuna by analyzing early and medieval biographers' preoccupation with conveying an ethic of emotional practice through a number of narrative strategies, namely, first- and second-person voice, narratives about conflict, poetry, and accounts that depict others' emotional reactions when in Muḥammad's presence. I argue that these plotting strategies reflect biographers' simultaneous efforts to elicit emotional responses from audiences while also conveying parameters of emotional conduct, which may be deemed exceptional or inappropriate based upon the intensity of expression, duration of practice, or perceived consistency with religious norms. Due to both historiographical limitations and the relative nascence of Islamic studies as a field in comparison to other traditions such as Judaism and Christianity, much is still unknown regarding exactly how these texts were received and consumed. Consequently, I focus on biographers' plotting strategies rather than audience reception. Broadly speaking, this project engages with the above conversation among scholars

² This word is taken from Africanist Julie Livingston who writes about a "flattening" of her interviews when they were stripped of their emotional qualities (Nicole Eustace, et al., "AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions," *AHR* 117 (December 2012): 1488-1489).

interested in how emotional practices are mediated, and I argue for a shift in theoretical focus to biographers' plotting strategies, the phenomenon of narrative progression, and the interpretive role of implied readers.

Chapter One opens with a discussion of the lack of theoretical depth which has accompanied scholarly allusions to the “emotive” or “affective” dimensions of the *sīra* and related genres. I posit that this lack of critical interrogation partly stems from the currently disjointed nature of the study of emotions, as well as the failure to see emotion as an analytical category that extends beyond the topic of religious experience. Like the once marginalized study of gender, I argue that integrating emotion as an analytical category, rather than viewing it as a specialized field, may serve to enrich religious studies. For my inquiry, this requires a multi-faceted approach characterized by an integration of methods used by narratologists and rhetorical theorists, historians of emotion, and hagiologists. In Chapter One, I also discuss my selection of sources and provide a justification for this project's thematic structure, which functions to highlight the *sīra*'s densely intertextual nature.

After describing the contours of this study, Chapters Two through Five analyze biographers' narrative strategies. Chapter Two examines biographers' rare use of first- and second-person voice, which functions to guide readers towards proper emotional conduct and relationality toward Muḥammad. Chapter Three shows that narratives depicting conflict convey failures of emotional expression, articulate idealized emotional practices, and invite readers to manage their emotions. In Chapter Four, I draw attention to the aural and spoken components of the *sīra*, arguing that biographers relied on poetry to elicit emotional responses from the audience. My final chapter examines “awe narratives,” or accounts that portray others' emotional

reactions when in Muḥammad's presence. Here, I draw on the field of memory studies to analyze biographers' preoccupation with establishing an ethic of emotional practice when remembering the Prophet Muḥammad. I conclude my dissertation with a discussion of other avenues for intellectual exploration related to Islam and emotion as well the need for more sustained scholarship on emotion and affect in Islamic studies.

This project would not have been possible without the help and support of many friends and colleagues. I would like to thank Gordon Newby for his support and guidance during the time I worked on this project. Dr. Newby, who gifted me my first copy of Alfred Guillaume's translation of *The Life of Muḥammad*, has played the most crucial role in nurturing and inspiring my interest in sacred biography. In addition to the intellectual support he has long provided, Dr. Newby has been a dear mentor to me. I am likewise indebted to Angelika Bammer, who vastly enriched my thinking and propelled my work to new and exciting terrain by offering thorough comments, providing reading recommendations, and helping me sharpen the questions that guided this project. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Vincent Cornell for mentoring me through the completion of this project, offering sage advice throughout the course of my program, and drawing me to this topic by making our course on historiography delightfully exciting and memorable. Many other colleagues and friends deserve recognition. Namely, my interlocutors at AAR within the Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit and the Hagiology Workshop, the faculty within the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, and my companions (as well as the faculty) within Emory's GDR, ICIVS, and Tam Institute for Jewish Studies, particularly Rebecca Makas and Anandi Knuppel. Most importantly, I must thank my parents, who have been my biggest support every step of the way.

CHAPTER ONE:

HOW TO BUILD A MUSLIM: ETHICO-EMOTIONAL COMPORTMENT IN EARLY AND
MEDIÉVAL BIOGRAPHIES OF MUḤAMMAD

“Man is in his actions and practice, as well as his fictions, essentially a storytelling animal.”
— Alasdair MacIntyre

Storytelling and Emotion

This dissertation enters into a critical discussion among scholars who are preoccupied with the question of how emotional practices, which sustain prevailing ideologies and social norms, are mediated or taught. In the past two decades, scholars from a number of fields and disciplines have produced a wealth of literature on the role of narrative in mediating emotion, specifically the ways in which the content and form of narrative may be plotted to elicit readers’ emotional responses. As Patrick Colm Hogan shows, this is not a new topic. In Vedic texts, for instance, *rasa* was a central aesthetic feature that conveyed “the emotion felt by a reader or audience member, usually an empathic form of an emotion felt (as we imagine) by a character or narrator.”³ While the central relationship between storytelling and emotion is not a newly conceived idea, scholars have been approaching the topic with new fervor. This burgeoning strand of scholarship has significant implications for the field of religious studies, as storytelling (both oral and written) is the core of religious teaching and expression.

Early and medieval biographies of MuḤammad offer a fruitful lens for approaching this inquiry as scholars of Islam have identified the genre’s uniquely pedagogical style which served to inspire the Muslim community. In the most comprehensive analysis of the *sīra* genre to date, *Images of Muhammad*, Tarif Khalidi offers four principal aims of biographical literature, namely:

³ Patrick Colm Hogan, *Literature and Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1.

1. To provide inspiring examples to be imitated, 2. To celebrate famous men and women of a particular nation, 3. To exalt the self-image of a particular profession or group, and 4. To show how a particular life took on a meaningful shape (*bildungsroman*).⁴

One may find parallels between studies on Christian hagiography and the *sīra*, particularly in regard to methodological patterns and assumptions about the purpose of the two genres. For instance, Chase Robinson's emphasis that the *sīra* was intended to "edify [and] inspire"⁵ the Muslim community closely resembles Thomas J. Heffernan's description of the function of Christian hagiography. Heffernan introduces his study of *Saints' Lives* with an excerpt from Gregory of Tours' *Liber Vitae Patrum (The Life of the Fathers)* (ca. 591) in which he explains that the lives of Christian saints serve to "excit[e] the minds of listeners to emulate them [*verum etiam auditorum animos incitat ad profectum*]."⁶ Rosenwein takes this a step further, suggesting that "Saints' lives tell us how people were supposed to behave, emphasizing emotional ideals."⁷ Yet what does this mean practically, and how does a scholar of religion analytically approach such an assertion? What is it about sacred biography's narrative structure and content that has led scholars to unequivocally make statements about its affective valence?

In this dissertation, I argue that the first principle aim of biographical literature identified by Khalidi can and must be expanded to include an analysis of emotion. Most basically, and following Matthew Pierce's work on collective Shī'a biographies, I am interested in examining

⁴ Tarif Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad: Narratives of the Prophet in Islam Across the Centuries* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 7.

⁵ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 63.

⁶ Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4. Significantly, Heffernan's translation of this excerpt omits an English rendering of *ad profectum*, which may be translated as "toward [spiritual] perfection."

⁷ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 28.

“What feelings are evoked through this literature?” and “What was the anticipated response from the reader/audience?”⁸ Along with Pierce’s questions, I focus on the following inquiries:

1. How does an analysis of emotion in early and medieval *sīra* illuminate our understanding of the genre’s pedagogical function?
2. How do biographers use narrative devices (or, what others have called “rhetorical modes” or “rhetorical devices”) to elicit emotional responses from implied audiences, and what is the expected role of implied audiences in this process? In the same vein, how do the techniques of narrative impact audiences’ ethical responses, and what is the relationship between the ethical and the emotional in this context?
3. Given that genre conventions influence the “emotional tenor” of a text through standardized rules of expression, how can one effectively analyze the relationship between these conventions and emotional practices found within the *sīra*?⁹
4. What is the role of emotion in the cultivation of the believing religious-subject? And how can one analytically approach and appropriately theorize emotive dimensions of the religious?

An analysis of what may be called the “emotive” dimension of the *sīra* allows one to identify the methods by which premodern biographers established a model to be imitated (*imitatio Muhammadi*). By offering a theory of emotional regulation in the *sīra* I am not interested in hypothesizing how biographers or readers *actually* felt. Rather, I am concerned centrally with the ways in which rhetorical devices serve to signal to the reader particular modes of emotional expression which are bound up in historically-situated ethical frameworks.¹⁰ More broadly, this

⁸ Matthew Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men: The Imams and the Making of Shi’ism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 8.

⁹ See: Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 27.

¹⁰ In using the phrase “rhetorical devices,” I believe a caveat is required. I do not use “rhetoric” in relation to emotion to imply instrumentality. As Sara Ahmed has so eloquently commented,

Of course, emotions have often been linked to the power of language. But they are often constructed as an instrument: as something that we use simply to persuade or seduce other into false belief (emotion as rhetoric, rhetoric as style without content). Such a view constructs emotion as a possession, at the same time that it presumes that emotions are a lower form of speech... I have offered an alternative view of emotions as operating precisely where we don’t register their effects, in the determination of the relation between signs, a relation that is often concealed by the form of the relation: the metonymic proximity between signs (Sara Ahmed,

chapter functions as a bridge to the subsequent four chapters which together map a variety of narrative techniques used by early and medieval biographers to communicate ethico-emotional comportment to readers. By ethico-emotional comportment I wish to convey biographers' dynamic but enduring preoccupation with communicating a distinction between right and wrong that is deeply saturated by emotional practices and which derives fundamentally from representations of the Prophet Muḥammad's own emotional conduct. Authorial preoccupation with ethico-emotional comportment, I argue, is a hallmark of early and medieval *sīra* rather than an exceptional, stylistic particularity found in some biographies. While ethics has unequivocally been a central topic of discussion among specialists of Muḥammad's life, a rigorous and thoughtful conversation regarding the role of emotion in the cultivation of the ethical self remains starkly underdeveloped. The dearth of scholarship on emotional ethics in the *sīra* is particularly surprising given the centrality of the proper internalization of practices in Islamic orthopraxy, perhaps best conveyed by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj's (d. 988) words, "Knowledge is outward and inward; the Qur'ān is outward and inward; the *ḥadīth* of God's messenger, blessings be upon him, is outward and inward; and Islam is outward and inward."¹¹

In the following sections, I provide an account of the major trends in *sīra* scholarship which have led to tentative academic interest in emotion as well as "experientiality," a term in narrative theory that describes a reader's active process of engaging with the storyworld. I then outline the boundaries of the term "ethico-emotional comportment" for this project, arguing that Islamic notions of right and wrong are fundamentally tied to emotional practices. This

The Cultural Politics of Emotion. Second Edition. (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2004), 194).

Rather, I use rhetorical in the sense that it is used in narrative theory, which I will expand upon later.

¹¹ Abū Naṣr 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (Leiden: Brill, 1914), 24.

relationship between ethics and emotion has been deeply influenced by pre-Islamic and Greek thought in the formative period of Islam. After providing a framework for analyzing ethico-emotional comportment in the *sīra*, I introduce my methodology, data sources, and the historical context in which the selected texts were composed.

Sīra as History, Sīra as Literature, Sīra as Genre

While Islamicists have undoubtedly preoccupied themselves with the centrality of Muḥammad’s conduct in establishing an ethical framework for the Muslim community, one may identify three dominant strands of intellectual concerns among specialists of the genre that extend beyond ethics. The first approach is found among specialists of early *sīra-maghāzī*¹² works who place particular emphasis on orality, literacy, and the “Authenticity Question.” For instance, Gregor Schoeler writes,

In my book *Charakter und Authentie...* I tried to demonstrate that we could reconstruct, on the basis of the sources available, reports which go back to persons in very close contact with Muḥammad, sometimes even to eyewitnesses of the events. I argued, that these reports reflect at least the general outline of the events.¹³

While Schoeler qualifies the above by stating that such reconstruction of eyewitness accounts most accurately reflects an *approximation* of what actually occurred, he clearly emphasizes a

¹² *Maghāzī*, the plural of *ghazwa*, means “raids”; thus, *maghāzī* works are said to differ from biographies in that they deal centrally with the military campaigns of Muḥammad. Some scholars have overemphasized the differences between *sīra* and *maghāzī* works by claiming that the *maghāzī* genre lacks an intentional narrative structure. That is to say, some scholars separate *sīra* and *maghāzī* literature into two distinct genres with different literary aims. Specifically, the *maghāzī* genre has generally been analyzed for its historical accuracy rather than authorial intent. See, for instance: J. M. B. Jones, “The Chronology of the ‘Maghāzī’ — A Textual Survey,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19.2 (1957): 245-280; Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth* (Boston: Koninklijke Brill, 2010). Alternatively, some scholars have proposed the compound word “*sīra-maghāzī*” to denote a genre comprised of both kinds of texts. A secondary goal of this dissertation is to complicate the distinction often made between the two genres, and to emphasize that literary theory is a useful approach for analyzing *maghāzī* texts.

¹³ Gregor Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad: Nature and Authenticity*, trans. Uwe Vagelpohl (New York: Routledge, 2011), xii.

historical approach to the *sīra* which posits that “the truth is out there.”¹⁴ Because a number of extant or partially-extant early *sīra-maghāzī* works were constructed through the arrangement of oral tradition reports (*ḥadīth*) based on witness testimony, much analysis of this formative literature has focused on the act of witnessing. Thus, some scholars write about the ability of witnesses, particularly in *ghazwa* accounts, to accurately construct a retelling of a battle. Because a memory will be of an encounter, as an individual cannot see the entire battle, early Muslim historians (circa 8th-9th centuries CE) were faced with the challenge of compiling snapshot accounts.¹⁵ These disjointed image sequences required the historian to piece together an account which privileged the witness’ memory over the plausibility of an event. Perhaps partly in reaction to this privileging of the witness, a new strain of skepticism has emerged among scholars of early Islamic history in the past few decades.¹⁶ These scholars, whom Schoeler identifies as revisionists, assert that descriptions of early Islam represent the concerns of later generations and should be seen as almost entirely fictitious, and not fictitious in the sense that Hayden White identifies.¹⁷ This skepticism has led such revisionists to place orality and literacy in opposition, with written accounts achieving primacy in matters of authenticity.

Some scholars have been less concerned with issues of reliability and forgery in early

¹⁴ Vincent Cornell, “Islamic Historiography” seminar, Fall 2013.

¹⁵ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 93.

¹⁶ Schoeler more precisely identifies this new skepticism as a *paradigm*: “In terms of the philosophy of science, we could call the new scepticism a ‘paradigm’ (as understood by Thomas S. Kuhn). In general, the life-span of paradigms is short: they are soon ‘exhausted’ and can finally only ‘explain problems for which the solution is assured’. The end of a paradigm’s life span is mostly heralded by a crisis” (Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad*, 13).

¹⁷ Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad*, 9. See: Hayden White, “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 121-134. This new strain of skepticism echoes, in some ways, early Orientalist scholarship, such as that by Henri Lammens, who held that the *ḥadīth* and *sīra* were wholly fictitious (Imām Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl Ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad: A Translation of al-Sīra al-Nabawīyya*, trans. Trevor Le Gassick (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 1998), xx).

accounts of Muḥammad’s life. Thus the second dominant approach, which draws upon literary theory, is characterized by analyses of tropes and parabolic cycles in depictions of Muḥammad. Simply put, this strand of scholarship identifies *sīra* as *literary narrative*. Scholars who adhere to this approach do not necessarily view the content within the *sīra* as ahistorical; rather, they are typically concerned with examining the ways in which narrative features reveal aspects of authorial agency. One of the most groundbreaking works that illustrates this approach is Gordon Newby’s *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad*. This reconstruction of the missing first portion of Ibn Ishāq’s *sīra* is prefaced by a thorough description of a “hagiographic and hermeneutic process” whereby Ibn Ishāq incorporated Jewish Haggadah and Christian martyrology to form an image of Muḥammad as the last prophet.¹⁸ Newby directs careful attention to the “dual role” of a biographer (as both a “historian and devotee”) in relating an accurate account of the past and selecting which stories are ultimately included in the final text.¹⁹ He even suggests that one may determine from Ibn Ishāq’s writing that he sometimes “gives an indication of the process of selecting the materials to be included.”²⁰

Other scholars interested in this dual role have attempted to situate it more broadly in a web of intertextual relations and communal agency. In Khalidi’s vast study of the *sīra* genre he identifies narrative patterns among biographies composed with the same temporal and geographic limits, arguing that the religious community in which a biographer lives plays a central role in the construction of images of Muḥammad. He refers to this phenomenon as “social

¹⁸ Gordon Darnell Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), ix.

¹⁹ Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, 16.

²⁰ Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, 17.

ideality.”²¹ Similarly, Rebecca R. Williams asserts that narrative idiosyncrasies in both the *sīra* and *tafsīr* (Qur’ānic exegesis) reveal themes that were significant for medieval Muslim communities. Williams identifies the four central themes of sex, politics, betrayal, and wrath, arguing convincingly that motivations of biographers and historians such as Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī may be interpreted by analyzing the structure of narratives within the *sīra*.²²

Williams’ contention that literary themes reveal medieval controversies may best be understood as an attempt to deconstruct some of the issues central to the third common approach to the *sīra*. This third approach focuses on the *sīra* as a *genre*, whereby scholars analyze the development of the *sīra* to enhance understanding of socio-political contexts. Given the often vast temporal and geographic scope, scholarship characteristic of this approach rarely consists of close analyses of passages in the *sīra* as a way to trace discrete changes. For example, Robinson largely relies on manuscript evidence and broader narrative patterns to draw convincing conclusions about the function of the *sīra* for premodern Muslims. Robinson argues that by the 9th century the *sīra* developed into a recognizable genre that was intended “not merely to edify or inspire, but to produce social and institutional consequences” as visible in biographers’ prescriptive writing and abridgment and fictionalization of well-known narratives.²³ This development was contemporaneous with historical narrative more generally, which was packaged for wide readership, especially in al-Andalus. Again, the scope of Robinson’s work prevents him from elaborating on some of these patterns through textual analysis (to get a sense, his primary source biography lists nearly 150 works). Yet Robinson’s methodology reveals that

²¹ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, xiii. Another example of this approach may be found in Michelina Di Cesare, *The Pseudo-Historical Image of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2011).

²² Rebecca R. Williams, *Muḥammad and the Supernatural: Medieval Arab Views* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

²³ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 63.

the *sīra* was widely read and predominantly written for the general public. For instance, Robinson observes that there are close to 100 copies of Qādī ‘Iyād’s twelfth-century *sīra* in two Cairo collections alone; he compares this with the popular historical work *Kitāb al-Khiṭaṭ* by al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442), of which there are 170 extant copies in total.²⁴

Biographer- and Reader-Experientiality

These three primary trends have substantially expanded the scholarly discussion regarding the enduring role of the *sunna* (customary practice of Muḥammad), as articulated in *sīra*, for Muslim communities both past and present.²⁵ Due to both historiographical limitations and the relative nascence of Islamic studies as a field in comparison to other traditions such as Christianity, much is still unknown regarding exactly *how* these texts were received and consumed in the formative and classical periods of Islamicate societies. Questions such as: *Who had access to these texts? Is there evidence of interactive or haptic practices that accompanied reading or aurally receiving such texts?*²⁶ *And how might we better understand the enduring role these texts played in the cultivation of the believing religious subject?* remain a focus of interest for contemporary historians.

In the past few decades, scholars have drawn explicit attention to both biographer-intentionality and audience-experientiality in an attempt to more precisely interpret

²⁴ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 109-110.

²⁵ It is important to note that the terms *sīra* and *sunna* were synonymous at the time of Ibn Ishāq, the author of the earliest extant biographical work on Muḥammad. In Islamic discourse, the word *sunna* became associated with the customary practice of Muḥammad, eventually having a binding legal precedent in Islamic law.

²⁶ Notably, Alfred Guillaume has remarked that “there is no real distinction between reading and reciting. Right down to the Middle Ages it was a matter of surprise if a man was able to read a text without forming the words with his lips and so reciting it” (‘Abd al-Mālik Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq’s Sirat Rasul Allah*, trans. Alfred Guillaume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 733n310). This topic will be explored in Chapter Four.

the complex relationship between biographer, reader, and text. One productive way in which specialists have highlighted the relationship between biographer and audience is through an emphasis on the pedagogical or didactic nature of the *sīra*. Thus, as noted previously, Khalidi asserts that sacred biography functions to provide inspiring examples to be imitated.²⁷ And Robinson emphasizes the pedagogical nature of biographies produced between the 9th and 12th centuries. Moreover, in many cases, scholars have tentatively approached the relationship between biographer and audience by introducing descriptive, rather than analytical, concepts such as “emotive” in order to articulate the effect reading the *sīra* likely had (or, for the contemporary generation, has) for the audience. Asma Afsaruddin, for instance, has written that,

These personalities [i.e., Muḥammad and his Companions] are historical figures to be sure, but in the way that their memory and legacy have been partially and creatively reconfigured by posterity, they are also to an extent, mythical and ‘iconic’ characters who have fulfilled and continue to fulfil a deeply emotive and symbolic role through the generations.²⁸

Here Afsaruddin alludes to what others have called the sense of a “living” connection between Muḥammad and his Companions and the later Muslim community, yet she does not expand on how Muḥammad and other “characters” fulfill an emotive role.²⁹ Similarly, in the preface to Ismā‘īl Ibn Kathīr’s (d. 1373) *Prophetic Biography*, Trevor Le Gassick acknowledges that translating a biographical work may result in stripping the text of its original, “emotive content.”

²⁷ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 7.

²⁸ Asma Afsaruddin, *The First Muslims: History and Memory* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), xiii.

²⁹ Both Recep Şentürk and Jonathan Brown have used the term “living” to refer to the Muslim community’s connection with Muḥammad after his death. See: Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Recep Şentürk, *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Hadīth Transmission Network, 610–1505* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). Notably, “living connection” is also a phrase used by Marianne Hirsch (taken from Eva Hoffman) to describe the embodied practice of “postmemory,” carried out by the “generation after” a collective trauma. See: Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 33. This idea will be explored further in Chapter Five.

³⁰ Along the same lines, translator Sean W. Anthony has referred to *maghāzī* as “sites of sacred memory” which are “not merely rote recitations of events from Muḥammad’s life. They are more potent than that.”³¹ When reading scholarship on the *sīra-maghāzī* one may get the sense that scholars are holding its “emotive” dimension at arm’s length. This genuine, albeit cursory, interest in the emotionality of the *sīra* has not yet led scholars to consider using emotion as an analytical rather than descriptive category.

Recent use of the term “emotive” in *sīra* scholarship illustrates a growing desire to understand the ways in which early and medieval Muslims attempted to cultivate or preserve a relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad despite the ever-widening generational distance. The canonization of *ḥadīth* provided Muslims with a normative and legally-binding legacy. Ritual recitation of *adhkār* (litanies of remembrance), as the Arabic root indicates, allowed Muslims to *recollect* Muḥammad and thus “know” him outside of the corporeal realm. Dreams were another opportunity to “know” and “see” Muḥammad. And the hagiographic nature of the *sīra* supplied Muslims with a medium for edification through emulation of his actions. In another sense, then, recent use of the term “emotive” indicates a desire to bring to the forefront the role of the reader in interpreting stories about Muḥammad. Derived from the verb *sāra*, meaning “to travel *with someone*,” the practice of reading the *sīra* may therefore be best conceived of as an exercise in “meditative imagining,” in that these texts were “lived with” in an active sense.³² To read the *sīra* meant to travel with the embodied Qur’ān, Muḥammad.³³

³⁰ Ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad*, xxiv.

³¹ Ma‘mar Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions: An Early Biography of Muḥammad*, trans. Sean W. Anthony (New York: New York University Press, 2015), xviii-xix.

³² Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 25n95. As a specialist in medieval Christianity, Rosenwein uses this concept in the context of Christian hagiography. See also: Giselle de Nie, “Images of Invisible Dynamics: Self and Non-Self in Sixth-Century Saints’ Lives,” *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 52-64.

³³ An allusion to the famous *ḥadīth* attributed to ‘Ā’isha.

Precisely how these texts were “lived with” is met by historiographical challenges for the early and medieval period, but, as one article demonstrates, it is also met by analytical challenges for the modern period. Muzaffar Iqbal’s article published in the journal of *Islamic Studies* is one of the most explicit attempts to simultaneously examine biographer-audience relationships and what Barbara Rosenwein has referred to as “meditative imagining.”³⁴ Through a reading of a number of nineteenth-century biographies, Iqbal argues that “Writing a Sīrah work is, in itself, a transforming process. It involves formation of relationship with the Prophet . . . as well as with numerous persons who appear in the source material in relation to the Prophet.”³⁵ Iqbal refers to this as “internalization” and specifically identifies a phenomenon in which the biographer and reader are transposed “back in time.”³⁶ Iqbal refers to style, extent of detail, target audience, and intent and purpose as key elements which distinguish works of internalization from other biographies, but he does not indicate how these elements reflect a process of internalization through sustained textual analysis. For instance, he refers to “the emotional content of the exchange” within a dialogue scene between Muḥammad and his companion, Sawād, to illustrate how this brings “intimacy” to the reader, but does not expand on whether or not this dialogue differs from premodern biographies, what is meant by “intimacy” or “emotional content,” or offer an analysis of what scholars of rhetorical theory have called “reader response.”³⁷ Iqbal’s assertion is of course a precarious one given the assumptions one would have to make about authorial intent and reader reception based solely on interpretation of narrative content and structure (rather than, say, a biographer’s or reader’s own comments about internalization).

³⁴ Use of Rosenwein’s term is my own.

³⁵ Muzaffar Iqbal, “Living in the Time of Prophecy: Internalized Sīrah Texts,” *Islamic Studies* 50.2 (Summer 2011): 207.

³⁶ Iqbal, “Living in the Time of Prophecy,” 197.

³⁷ Iqbal, “Living in the Time of Prophecy,” 200.

Despite the severe limitations of Iqbal's article, he wavers around a concept used in cognitive narrative theory called "experientiality," which carries with it the meaning of a reader's *active* process of making sense of the narrative.³⁸ Iqbal uses the adverb "experientially" when describing biographers' internalization (which he argues is then transferred to a reader upon interacting with the text). Thus, Iqbal asserts that internalization is a "process whereby the author actually *experientially* conceives the events, and then recasts them as if he or she was [*sic*] there. This is in contrast to presenting information."³⁹ Moreover, Iqbal's description of the "emotional content of the exchange" in the dialogue between Muḥammad and Sawād and Le Gassick's emphasis on the "emotive content" in Ibn Kathīr's biography of Muḥammad both evoke but omit Sara Ahmed's careful dissection of the "emotionality of texts."⁴⁰ The historiographical and analytical challenges visible in the above scholarship should not lead one to abandon topics centered on textual "emotivity," biographers' "internalization," and readers' edification, but rather reveal a web of interrelated issues that may be more precisely expounded through a range of methodological resources. Specifically, this recent scholarship demonstrates a concern for understanding the *sīra* as an interactive process that connects the cognitive ("what do we understand and how do we understand it?") to the emotive ("what do we feel and how do those feelings come about?") to the ethical ("what are we asked to value in these stories, how do these

³⁸ See, for instance: Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London: Routledge, 1996); Marco Caracciolo, *The Experientiality of Narrative: An Enactivist Approach* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014). To be clear, Iqbal does not rely upon or refer to narrative theory. Moreover, I have not yet seen a *sīra* specialist use the term "experientiality" in the particular sense that it is used in cognitive narrative theory. For a psychological approach to the concept of "narrative experience," see: Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality" *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 1-21; See also: Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986) and Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

³⁹ Iqbal, "Living in the Time of Prophecy," 197. Emphasis added. Significantly, Iqbal's remarks evoke the obligation in the Passover Haggadah in which a man is to regard himself as if he were personally liberated from Egypt. Special thanks to Gordon Newby for pointing out this parallel to me.

⁴⁰ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 12.

judgments comes about, and how do we respond to being invited to take on these values and make these judgments?”).⁴¹ Although *sīra* specialists have acknowledged or examined these three modes to varying degrees, the manner in which they intersect and influence one another remains undertheorized at best. I am therefore entering into this critical conversation by treating narrative, emotion, and ethics as intertwined analytical categories. The following section illustrates the centrality (and interrelationality) of these three modes in the *sīra* and proposes a theory of ethico-emotional comportment as a means for interpreting the dynamic interplay between text, biographer, and reader.

Ethico-Emotional Comportment in the Sīra

The relationship between narrative (or, more specifically, the act of storytelling) and ethics is not altogether uncharted terrain within Islamic studies. In the context of philosophical writing, for example, Cyrus Ali Zargar has argued that classical Arabic and Persian storytelling “allowed abstract ethical theory to materialize,” labeling storytelling as “virtue ethics exemplified.”⁴² Scholarship on Muḥammad’s life has similarly centered on ethics, primarily because Muslims view Muḥammad as the exemplar of ethical conduct.⁴³ Thus, Ignaz Goldziher’s two-volume work, *Muhammedanische Studien (Muslim Studies)*, delineates a full-scale transformation of the ethical concept of *muruwwa* (“the virtue of the Arabs”) during Muḥammad’s life.⁴⁴ Goldziher goes so far as to claim that the contrast between notions of honor

⁴¹ James Phelan, *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), ix.

⁴² Cyrus Ali Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2017), 21.

⁴³ Even in scholarship outside of *sīra* studies, such as that focused on Islamic law, gender and sexuality, or environmentalism, Muḥammad’s life is discussed in the context of ethics.

⁴⁴ Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. C.R. Barber and S. M. Stern (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1966), 21-22.

associated with *murūwwa* in the pre-Islamic and Islamic period was so vast that it was “unbridgeable.”⁴⁵ In some cases, scholars have argued that the narrative structuring of the *sīra* may be interpreted as biographers’ attempts to produce a *vade mecum* for ethical conduct. For instance, Khalidi identifies an Andalusian group of biographers between the 11th and 14th centuries who produced a style of writing particularly amenable for use as a guide to ethical conduct.⁴⁶ Khalidi’s analysis, however, does not expand on how “critical rigor” and conciseness may indicate either biographers’ preoccupation with ethics, or precisely why these features would appeal to the audience and promote ethical conduct.⁴⁷ One may see a parallel here with the aforementioned scholarship that has tentatively approached the “emotive” content of the *sīra*. These two academic conversations, however, remain disjointed. This is particularly surprising when one considers how the questions “what are we asked to value?” and “what do we feel?” have been inextricably linked in the Islamic tradition.⁴⁸

The manner in which these above two questions have been bound together in the Islamic tradition has been deeply influenced by pre-Islamic Bedouin virtues as well as an enormous body of Greek literature translated primarily into Arabic⁴⁹ from the last decades of the eighth century until a decline in the tenth century.⁵⁰ It is impossible to approach an understanding of how

⁴⁵ Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 21.

⁴⁶ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 220.

⁴⁷ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 214.

⁴⁸ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, ix.

⁴⁹ Arabic became the administrative language of the Umayyad dynasty over half a century after Muḥammad’s death. See: Franz Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, trans. Emile and Jenny Marmorstein (New York: Routledge, 1992), 2.

⁵⁰ This dating comes from Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 5-9. Of course, pre-Islamic culture and Hellenism were not the only sources of influence on ethics and emotional practices, but for this study they emerge as the most prominent. Kristian Petersen, for instance, has argued lucidly that there was a reinterpretation of Islamic ethics through Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist systems of thought in Sino-Islamic texts. Sasanian, Jewish, and Indian influence on Islamic ethics are among other examples. See: Kristian Petersen, *Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, Scripture, and Language in the Han Kitab* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); See also: Mana Kia, “*Adab* as Ethics of Literary Form and Social Conduct: Reading the *Gulistān* in Late Mughal India,” in *No*

premodern Muslims conceived of the relationship between these two modes without grasping this legacy. The Arabic term *akhlāq*, meaning “character traits,” illuminates this relationship. As Zargar points out, this term became associated with the refinement of virtues, yet this refinement encompassed a wide range of behaviors, including God consciousness, modesty, proper etiquette, and proper emotional conduct.⁵¹ Proper emotional conduct was articulated through a variety of Arabic terms, such as *hilm* (forbearance) and *ḥuzn* (sadness)—terms which are interwoven in the *sīra*. When contemporary scholars use the term “ethics” in relation to the premodern period, they are usually referring to *‘ilm al-akhlāq* (the science of character traits). Typically conceived, *‘ilm al-akhlāq* focuses on *individual* ethics which, consequently, has impacts on the harmony of other social structures, such as the family or political structure.⁵² As the name indicates, it is also undeniably linked to the pursuit of knowledge. In his commentary on the introduction to al-Zamakhsharī’s Qur’ān *tafsīr*, al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) demonstrates this by writing,

‘ilm, which is not connected with an activity, is cultivated for its own sake and called *‘ilm*. If, on the other hand, it is connected with an activity, it is pursued for the sake of that activity and called *ṣinā‘ah* in the linguistic usage of the élite. The latter is divided into two parts, (1) what can be attained exclusively by means of speculation and the result of inductive reasoning, as, for example, medicine, and (2) what can be attained only through persistent activity, for example, tailoring.⁵³

Al-Jurjānī’s second point will be especially pertinent when we later return to the notion of conceiving of the *sīra* as inviting interpretive (and ethical) work. As will be shown, the tremendous influence of pre-Islamic and Greek frameworks on how Muslims dynamically constructed a sense of right and wrong illustrate that “ethics” in the *sīra* must be treated

Tapping around Philology: A Festschrift in Celebration and Honor of Wheeler McIntosh Thackston Jr.’s 70th Birthday, ed. Alireza Korangy and Daniel J. Sheffield (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 281-308.

⁵¹ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 1-2.

⁵² Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 83.

⁵³ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 272n3.

discursively, but it also reveals the centrality of emotional practices in the maintenance of the ethical self.

The antagonism between the pre-Islamic concepts of *jahl* and *hilm* provides one of the clearest examples of this centrality. Similar to Goldziher, Toshihiko Izutsu argues that notions of honor as well as man-to-man interactions were contested with the rise of Islam in Mecca.⁵⁴ In *God and Man in the Koran*, Izutsu uses semantic analysis to conceptualize a Qur'ānic *Weltanschauung*. In particular, Izutsu analyzes how the oppositional terms *hilm* (forbearance) and *jahl* (ignorance, impetuosity) gained new meaning after the rise of Islam. Izutsu spends considerable time describing how the behavioral trait, *jahl*, is depicted in pre-Islamic poetry, writing,

Jahl is the typical behavioral pattern of a hot-blooded impetuous man, who tends to lose his self-control on the slightest provocation, and consequently to act recklessly, driven by an uncontrollable [sic] blind passion, without reflecting on the disastrous consequence this behavior might lead to. It is the behavior pattern peculiar to a man of an extremely touchy and passionate nature, who has no control of his feelings and emotions, and who, therefore, easily surrenders himself to the dictates of violent passions, losing the sense of what is right and what is wrong.⁵⁵

Importantly, Izutsu describes how “losing the sense of what is right and what is wrong” (i.e., ethical conduct) is influenced by a lack of emotional control. Not to be misconstrued with a static personality, Izutsu clarifies that *jahl* is “not primarily a permanent nature of man”; rather, “it denotes occasional outbursts of passion, and as regards its effect on human intellect and reason, it implies momentary, and not necessarily permanent and constant, absence of the balance of the mind.”⁵⁶ In this sense, *jahl* was a performative and dynamic action which occurred in relation to

⁵⁴ Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (New York: Books for Libraries, A Division of Arno Press, 1980), 217.

⁵⁵ Izutsu, *God and Man*, 205.

⁵⁶ Izutsu, *God and Man*, 212.

other men. For instance, Izutsu relates a poem from the 9th-century work *al-Ḥamāsah* (*Valor*) which reads,

When the opponent shows an arrogant attitude,
swaggering about with his chest puffed out elatedly,
inclining his head on one side,
perking up his shoulder.⁵⁷

Izutsu goes on to explain, “This is a typical description of a ‘haughty’ man. The inclining of his head on one side was so typical of this kind of man that the phrase *istaqāma al-akhda ‘u*, lit. ‘the neck has straightened up’ meant that the man lost his self-confidence and became humiliated.”⁵⁸

The association of *jahl* with arrogance and lack of emotional control rendered it a flawed behavioral trait, such that to be called *jahl* was categorically an insult. This meaning was preserved in early and medieval Islamic writing.

While the *jāhil* in pre-Islamic literature is depicted as volatile, the *ḥalīm* is the man who “knows how to smother his feelings, to overcome his own blind passions and to remain tranquil and undisturbed whatever happens to him, however much he may be provoked.”⁵⁹ As such, *ḥilm* was the ethical and emotional ideal and remained such in the Islamic tradition. In Ibn Ishāq’s *Prophetic Biography*, for instance, Muḥammad is described as the greatest of his people in forbearance (*a‘azamhum ḥilm*).⁶⁰ Yet, *ḥilm* took on new meaning in some crucial ways as it became integrated into the Islamic framework. In the Qur’ānic framework, *ḥilm* is used to denote God, who is depicted as *al-Ḥalīm*.⁶¹ Modeling restraint thus became associated with God centeredness. In the *sīra*, *ḥilm* still appears in reference to men’s personalities and behaviors, yet

⁵⁷ Izutsu, *God and Man*, 209.

⁵⁸ Izutsu, *God and Man*, 209.

⁵⁹ Izutsu, *God and Man*, 205.

⁶⁰ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 81; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 174.

⁶¹ Izutsu, *God and Man*, 216.

it likewise acquired this deeper aspirational sense.⁶²

The influence of pre-Islamic concepts such as *muruwwa*, *jahl*, and *hilm* on the Islamic canon cannot be overstated. Equally influential, however, was the Graeco-Arabic translation activity during the ‘Abbāsīd period beginning in the eighth century. Franz Rosenthal argues that a decline in hostility toward Hellenistic culture and the central role of seeking knowledge (*‘ilm*) in the Islamic tradition paved the way for this translation period.⁶³ Consequently, translations from Greek medicine, philosophy, and literature contributed to various branches of knowledge, including *‘ilm al-akhlāq*. The nature of the translation activity complicates theories of “influence,” as collections of Greek writings “were continually copied, and individual sayings were widely quoted, either literally or with a certain freedom.”⁶⁴ What may therefore be called “ethics” writ broadly in the premodern Islamic tradition integrated frameworks of Galenism (also referred to as humoralism) and Aristotelianism, among other modes of thinking. Unsurprisingly, this integration did not produce a homogenous ethical framework. Rather, competing medical and philosophical notions resulted in a multivalent approach to ethics that is further complicated by the presence of what Rosenwein has referred to as “textual communities.” Textual communities may be thought of as constellations of overlapping concentric circles of textual exchange which may either coexist with, or remain separate from, other dominant or marginal communities.⁶⁵

Galen of Pergamon’s (d. 210 CE) medical text, *Kitāb al-Akhlāq li-Jālīnūs* (*The Book of*

⁶² Though its features are distinct, a concept that is sometimes compared with *hilm* is *ṣabr*, which is also translated as forbearance. In Islamic thought, *ṣabr* is conceived of as a virtue that may be realized through the transmutation of suffering (Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 290).

⁶³ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 2-5.

⁶⁴ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 83.

⁶⁵ Jan Plamper, “The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns,” *History and Theory* 49 (May 2010): 257. See also: Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 24-25.

Character Traits), is one of the most influential works that was translated in Arabic. Perhaps most significantly, Galen's writing helped propagate the notion that four natures (heat, cold, wetness, and dryness) are manifested in the body as four humors (yellow bile, blood, phlegm, and black bile). This theory of humoralism, as it is often called, was developed by Hippocrates (d. circa 370 BCE) and later expounded upon by Galen, thus it is sometimes referred to as Galenism. Because the four natures are in constant flux within the body, Galen and others emphasize the importance of the moderation of things such as pleasure and movement. Galen explains, "Hence youth and wine stimulate movement and aggressiveness, while old age and cold medicines produce laziness and weakness and, in the course of time, finally cause all activity and movement to stop."⁶⁶ Humoralism, which was developed in Islamic writing in countless ways, articulated an ethic that was situated in a larger framework of moderation and balance within the cosmos, but also fundamentally linked to the body and physical health. Writing about the Brethren of Purity and Friends of Loyalty's⁶⁷ description of the four humors (Ar., *al-akhlāṭ*) Zargar points out that, "For the sake of health and even life itself, the natures must achieve a balance appropriate to that individual's age, sex, place of birth, occupation, and surroundings, although each of these factors might also adversely affect the balance."⁶⁸ When the humors were out of balance, this could manifest in excessive anger or timidity, among other "ailments." This, however, allowed for concrete remedies to restore harmony to the body. In Persian scientist Miskawayh's (d. 1030) *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taḥhīr al-A'rāq* (*The Refinement of Character Traits and Purification of Hereditary Dispositions*), he argues that anger stimulates

⁶⁶ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 87.

⁶⁷ A secret society of Muslim philosophers.

⁶⁸ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 36. Zargar omits diet as another major factor. See: 'Alī b. Rabbān al-Ṭabarī, *Firdaws al-Ḥikmah*, ed. M. Z. Siddiqi (Berlin, 1928), 40.

the body's heat which "rises to the surface, clouding the brain with a turbid smoke that corrupts the thinking process."⁶⁹ Miskawayh's antidote is to avoid boasting (note the parallel with *jahl*) and to subject the soul's vanity to "humiliation before an impudent person," but others offered antidotes such as the excretion of phlegm in the case of its excess, which indicates melancholia.⁷⁰ The framework of humoralism was therefore adopted and rearticulated as Greek medical and philosophical texts were transmitted into the corpus of Islamic writings.

Competing philosophical frameworks diversified the already complex study of *akhlāq*. In *The Book of Character Traits*, Galen begins by arguing that character belongs exclusively to the irrational soul.⁷¹ Galen describes, for instance, people who are "greatly terrified if they unexpectedly hear a terrible noise" and those who "laugh involuntarily when they see or hear something amusing," arguing that the spontaneity of these emotional practices reveal their inherent irrational nature.⁷² By irrational Galen means that these actions occur "without reflection," noting that one may experience involuntary fear or laughter even if he wishes "to avoid doing so but cannot."⁷³ Galen explicitly addresses his divergence from Aristotle's views on character qualities and other philosophers who held that even emotions (which were also

⁶⁹ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 40. The quotation is Zargar's summary of Miskawayh. Interestingly, one may note that the relationship between heat and anger was already documented as a part of Prophetic medicine, such as in the following *ḥadīth* from *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* in which Abū Wā'il al-Qāṣṣ is reported to have said,

We entered upon Urwah ibn Muhammad ibn as-Sa'di. A man spoke to him and made him angry. So he stood and performed ablution; he then returned and performed ablution, and said: My father told me on the authority of my grandfather Atiyah who reported the Messenger of Allah as saying: Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution.

("General Behavior (Kitab al-Adab)," Sunnah, accessed June 15, 2018, <https://sunnah.com/abudawud/43/12>).

⁷⁰ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 40. The quotation is Zargar's summary of Miskawayh. See also: Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 197-201.

⁷¹ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 85.

⁷² Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 85.

⁷³ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 85.

classified as character qualities) belong to the rational soul.⁷⁴ While Galen critiques Aristotle's framework, others such as Miskawayh quoted and integrated his writing in a discussion of what Zargar identifies as virtue ethics. In *The Refinement of Character Traits*, Miskawayh asserts that the soul is comprised of three parts, that which produces thinking, that which produces anger, and that which produces desire.⁷⁵ Miskawayh quotes from Aristotle's *The Virtues of the Soul* in his structuring and elaboration of virtues (*al-faḍā'il*, Gk., *aretai*), which notably includes *ḥilm*, while still heavily integrating Galen's theory of the four humors.⁷⁶ Miskawayh's expansion of Aristotle, Zargar observes, later became the framework for Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) massively-influential scholarship on ethics. This pattern of influence is essential to understanding the ways in which ethics was dynamically contested and envisioned:

It was part of a larger socio-historic process, in which authors took Greek sources and harmonized them with Arabic scripture, leading to offshoot after offshoot, reconfiguration after reconfiguration, as interrelated sciences pertaining to virtue then began to appear in literary, mystical, legal, folkloric, and other contexts.⁷⁷

The intertextual corpus of *sīra* is one such context in which articulations about how one may distinguish between right and wrong was reconfigured through Greek sources. Even when medieval biographers do not explicitly quote from Arabic translations of Greek texts, the pervasiveness of Hellenistic conceptions of the good life cannot be discounted when discussing the *sīra* as a source for edification.

As demonstrated, pre-Islamic and Graeco-Arabic material had an enormous influence on the evolution of *'ilm al-akhlāq*. In this sense it must be emphasized that *'ilm al-akhlāq* is subject

⁷⁴ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 86.

⁷⁵ Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 95-96.

⁷⁶ See: Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 82-91.

⁷⁷ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 81.

to ruptures, transformations, and “troping,” as is any discursive practice.⁷⁸ As such, *‘ilm al-akhlāq* is not a stable or linear concept that may be easily traced throughout Islamic history and this dynamism is visible in how ethical concepts are described within the biographies selected for this study. The terms *muruwwa*, *jahl*, *ḥilm*, and *akhlāq* are found within the *sīra* in accounts of Muḥammad and other central figures. As one might imagine from the above descriptions, however, they are multivalent concepts that shift in meaning from biography to biography. Although the term *akhlāq* is found within the chosen biographies, *ilm al-akhlāq* is not. Partly for this reason, I prefer the phrase ethico-emotional comportment to terms like “ethics” or *‘ilm al-akhlāq* to indicate a dynamic concept unique to the *sīra*, yet still influenced by iterations of *‘ilm al-akhlāq*. As described previously, by ethico-emotional comportment I wish to convey biographers’ dynamic but enduring preoccupation with communicating a distinction between right and wrong that is deeply saturated by emotional practices. In some cases, this is quite obvious. As will be shown in Chapter Five, for example, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ attaches juridical terms such as *wājib* (obligatory) and *ḥarām* (forbidden) to emotional practices. In other cases, it is implied within a narrative or dialogue segment and must be interpreted or “worked through” by the reader. Thus, contrary to what Khalidi has argued regarding the centrality of ethics within a discrete cluster of Andalusian biographies, premodern biographers were categorically concerned with communicating ethico-emotional comportment. In this context, “working through” does not merely imply making sense of what the biographer is attempting to convey in terms of ideal conduct; rather, it also suggests reflection, integration, and even emotion management.

⁷⁸ Hayden White, “Introduction: Tropology, Discourse, and the Modes of Human Consciousness,” in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 2.

Methods

The nature of my inquiry requires a multi-faceted approach characterized by an integration of methods used by narratologists and rhetorical theorists, historians of emotion (and emotion theorists more broadly), and hagiologists. Previously, I discussed the relevance of hagiology for this project, but the yield of narratology, rhetorical theory, and the history of emotions for this project deserves additional attention. Rhetorical theory may be most helpfully conceived of as a response to perceived inadequacies within the field of narratology, specifically the undertheorization of character-character dialogue as a form of authorial communication and the phenomenon of readerly experience more broadly.⁷⁹ This undertheorization has led James Phelan to propose the utility of a “rhetorical paradigm” which may provide nuance to the ways in which narratologists have previously understood narrative phenomena.⁸⁰ Perhaps one of the most crucial features of a rhetorical approach for this project is that it identifies a “feedback loop” among authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response.⁸¹ For Phelan this assumes that “texts are designed by authors to affect readers in particular ways” and this is “conveyed through the words, images, techniques, elements, structures, forms, and dialogic relations of texts as well as the genres and conventions readers use to understand them.”⁸² As visible in the words “texts are designed by authors to *affect* readers,” rhetorical (and narrative) theorists have been centrally preoccupied with the relationship between the emotive (“what do we feel and how do those feelings come about?”) and the ethical (“what are we asked to value in these stories, how do

⁷⁹ See: James Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else: A Rhetorical Poetics of Narrative* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017), 3-12.

⁸⁰ Narrative phenomena may refer to a host of different things such as narrative voice, textual ambiguities, and intertextuality.

⁸¹ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 6.

⁸² Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 6.

these judgments comes about, and how do we respond to being invited to take on these values and make these judgments?”).⁸³ In the analyses that follow in my future chapters, we will see how narratology and Phelan’s rhetorical approach address issues brought forth by *sīra* specialists (shown above) while also drawing attention to topics that have been neglected in *sīra* studies.

This dissertation serves to contribute to the substantial body of scholarship on the *sīra* already produced, while asking my interlocutors to consider a different set of questions than those which currently circulate. In addition to narrative and rhetorical theory, I find that the *Annales* school of historiography may offer tools for approaching the *sīra* which takes into account both narrative and metanarrative (i.e., narrative that is self reflexive) in a more nuanced manner. A product of Lucien Febvre (d. 1956) and Marc Bloch (d. 1944), the *Annales* school first emerged with the creation of the journal *Annales d’histoire économique et sociale*. This school of historiography shifted the study of history to the domain of lay people, rather than that of high politics, and with this shift came a newfound emphasis on representations of feeling in writing and image over time—what may now be called a conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*) of emotion.⁸⁴ More broadly, the history of emotions, as a particular expression of *Annales* thinking, may enhance studies on Islam in both the modern and premodern period. This is particularly important as Islam remains noticeably underrepresented in the history of emotions as well as emotion studies more generally.⁸⁵

⁸³ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, ix.

⁸⁴ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 41.

⁸⁵ For instance, in two prominent scholarly journals that feature some of the most widely-circulated publications from historians of emotions, namely, the *American Historical Review* (AHR) and *History and Theory*, the field of Islamic studies is almost entirely unrepresented, apart from passing reference to a few minor works. In two recent academic “conversations” featured in these journals, the following interlocutors discussed a number of critical issues within the history of emotions, all of whom are outside of Islamic studies: Nicole Eustace, Eugenia Lean, Julie Livingston, Jan Plamper, William M. Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns. See: Plamper, “The History of Emotions” and Eustace, et al., “AHR Conversation.” Moreover, Rosenwein has commented that “Elias, Stearns, and Reddy are the most important theorists of the history of emotions to date. It is striking that all three situate emotions

Though having antecedents in the established Annales school of historiography, the history of emotions is a burgeoning niche, with all of the methodological burdens (and freedoms) associated with academic nascence.⁸⁶ As such, this dissertation enters into a currently disjointed (and often insular) framework for theorizing the study of emotion. This is further complicated by the fact that many non-historians are producing groundbreaking work on emotion, such as Martha Nussbaum, Sara Ahmed, and Patrick Colm Hogan who approach emotion through the perspectives of philosophy, cultural studies, and comparative literature. A number of challenges emerge in any study which purports to examine “emotions,” the first of which is the process of defining what constitutes an emotion (as if emotions were isolable), as well as issues of anachronism in both the very use of the term and its perceived characteristics.⁸⁷ Jan Plamper rightly reminds us that,

Emotion is not simply whatever doesn't fit into the anachronistic commonsense model of historical explanation. In other words, one should avoid invoking 'emotion' to label all human action that cannot be explained through 'interests' and 'rationality'—the classical rational-choice assumption of optimizing gain.⁸⁸

Eugenia Lean has also helpfully challenged those working on emotions to be wary of tracing perceptible changes in “disembodied ideas about affect or discrete emotions (e.g., rage, love), especially via ‘great thinkers’ (usually men).”⁸⁹ She asserts,

By not contextualizing the production of ideas by considering how they were produced, legitimated, and institutionalized in their local, social, political, and

and their transformations—whether imposed at court, liberated in refuges, or discussed in advice books—in the secular sphere. None concerns himself with religion in the slightest degree” (Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 200-201).

⁸⁶ On academic freedoms and entanglements as they related to another “field,” see: William Cutter, “Jewish Studies as Self-Definition: A Review Essay,” *Jewish Social Studies* 3.1 (1996): 158-176.

⁸⁷ See the recent debate on defining emotion in the journal *Emotion Review*, especially its October 2010 issue.

⁸⁸ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 277.

⁸⁹ Eustace, et al., “AHR Conversation,” 1519.

spatial contexts, we fail to understand how these ideas of affect gain prominence to shape practice and subjectivity.⁹⁰

To mitigate unnecessary confusion, I have chosen to avoid using the words “emotion” and “affect” synonymously. My preference for using the term emotion rather than affect also mirrors the scholarship that I have found most theoretically useful for this project. Rather than attempting to isolate discrete emotions, this dissertation heeds Lean’s warning through its organizational structure by approaching the category of emotion through a number of lenses, including narrative voice, male-to-male conflict, poetry, and narratives about others’ emotional reactions in the presence and remembrance of Muḥammad.

Emotion in this dissertation will therefore be used as a “meta-concept,”⁹¹ with the understanding that it is “a constructed term that refers to affective reactions of all sorts, intensities, and durations.”⁹² My decision to use emotion as a meta-concept also reflects the ways in which emotional practices are described in the five biographies I include in this study. The Arabic term for emotion, *‘ātifa*, is not used by biographers. Rather, emotional concepts, metaphors, insults, and practices are woven into the texts for pedagogical purposes. For instance, in *The Book of Military Campaigns* ‘Ā’isha relates that Abū Bakr’s weeping during Qur’ānic recitation frightened the notables of the Quraysh because he was “beguiling [their] women and children.”⁹³ In this brief narrative alone, Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid reveals the complexity of the male practice of weeping to his audience. As a religious practice, Abū Bakr’s weeping is simultaneously depicted as a weakness (due to his lack of restraint) and a practice that, in excess, had the power to galvanize a segment of society, thereby disrupting the existing power structure.

⁹⁰ Eustace, et al., “AHR Conversation,” 1519.

⁹¹ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 12.

⁹² Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 4.

⁹³ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 72-73.

Using emotion as a meta-concept provides a means for deconstructing biographers' descriptions of emotional practices through various rhetorical techniques.

More concretely, I find Monique Scheer's work on emotional practices useful for articulating a holistic approach to studying emotion, which attempts to escape some of the dichotomizing paradigms previously used in scholarly discourse, such as expression and experience.⁹⁴ A follower of Bourdieu, Scheer expands the concept of habitus⁹⁵ to integrate mind and body in the performance of emotion. She argues that theorists of emotion have traditionally separated the mind from the body, thereby de-historicizing the latter in the process. Practice theory offers a way out of this paradigm: "In practice theory, subjects (or agents) are not viewed as prior to practices, but rather as the product of them."⁹⁶ Scheer emphasizes the active nature of emotions; she therefore concludes that emotions are a kind of practice which "can encompass intentional, deliberate action, [while also including], and indeed stress[ing], habituated behavior..."⁹⁷ Approaching emotions through the use of practice theory leads Scheer to identify what she calls the *doing of emotion*. In this sense, one is not an emotional subject, possessing an emotional self; rather, one practices emotion "along a continuum from wholly conscious and deliberate to completely inadvertent, shifting in the course of their [emotions] execution along this continuum."⁹⁸ I find the implications of practice theory particularly illuminating in consideration of the pedagogical aims of the *sīra*.

⁹⁴ Monique Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion," *History and Theory* 51, no.2 (May 2012): 193.

⁹⁵ Recall that Rosenwein has also found the Bourdieuan concept of habitus useful in her analysis of emotional communities in the early Middle Ages.

⁹⁶ Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice," 200.

⁹⁷ Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice," 200.

⁹⁸ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 269.

In addition to Scheer's contributions, Rosenwein's concept of "emotional communities," which may manifest in "textual communities," offers a way of thinking about representations of emotional practices in the *sīra* which emphasizes both the genre's intersubjective and intertextual nature. In an interview with Plamper, Rosenwein contends that,

Emotional communities 'are precisely the same as social communities—families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships—but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.' [They are] 'social groups that adhere to the same valuations of emotions and how they should be expressed.'⁹⁹

Ultimately, Rosenwein visualizes emotional and textual communities as constellations of overlapping concentric circles which may either coexist with, or remain separate from, other dominant or marginal communities.¹⁰⁰ The Islamic tradition is particularly suited to integrate Rosenwein's theory of textual communities. The web of interrelated networks characteristic of Islamicate society during the emergence and proliferation of the *sīra* genre may be helpfully conceived as both intersecting nodes of power as well as living communities imbued with shifting emotional norms.

Data Sources

This dissertation contributes to the growing body of scholarship on the *sīra* by examining five biographies¹⁰¹ from the formative and classical periods of Islam, namely, (1) *Al-Sīrah*

⁹⁹ Plamper, "The History of Emotions," 252-253.

¹⁰⁰ Plamper, "The History of Emotions," 257. Rosenwein is quoting from her work, *Emotional Communities*, for the interview.

¹⁰¹ As Arabic was the primary language for Islamic historiography, the majority of *sīra*, particularly during the period under study, was composed in Arabic. Thus, all of the texts I have selected are in Arabic. Translations of

al-Nabawīyah (Prophetic Biography) by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 761), (2) *Kitāb al-Maghāzī (The Book of Military Campaigns)* by Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid (d. 770), (3) *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa (Proofs of Prophethood)* by Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1038), (4) *Kitāb al-Shifā’ bi-Ta’rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā (The Book of Healing by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One)* by Qāḍī ‘Iyād Ibn Mūsā (d. 1149), and (5) *I’lām al-Warā bi-A’lām al-Hudā (Informing Humanity with the Figures of Right Guidance)* by al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī (d. 1154). Spanning approximately 400 hundred years, this project is bookended by the earliest extant biographical work, the content and form of which had an enormous influence on the contours of the genre, and one of the most well-known Shī‘a biographies of Muḥammad. Scholars of Islam identify pivotal shifts in the genre around the twelfth century, making al-Ṭabrisī’s biography an appropriate temporal conclusion to this study. Rather than organizing chapters by separate biographies in chronological succession, I consider Rosenwein’s theory of “textual communities,” focusing on biographers’ use of narrative strategies to convey ethico-emotional comportment to implied audiences.

The rapidly shifting *milieux* characteristic of the formative and classical periods of Islam offer a particularly interesting backdrop to this study on genre. After Muḥammad’s death in 632 CE, the emerging religion maintained aspects of pre-Islamic oral culture through recitation and memorization of the Qur’ān, but more significantly for this study, through the creation of the *ḥadīth* transmission network. Fearful of losing the Prophetic example, the Companions of Muḥammad established a rigorous system of recollecting the Prophet’s deeds and sayings.

Proofs of Prophethood and *Informing Humanity* in this study are my own. For *Prophetic Biography*, *The Book of Military Campaigns*, and *The Book of Healing* I use others’ translations while also referring to the original Arabic texts. My footnotes will include references to both English translations and the Arabic texts to aid in cross-referencing.

Because the *ḥadīth* network was comprised of a system of fact-checking to ensure the accuracy of each disjointed narrative, a separate genre, *sīra*, emerged which gradually allowed for greater plasticity in depicting the Prophet's words and actions.¹⁰² Put differently, with the composition of Ibn Ishāq's *sīra* came the first narrative use of *ḥadīth*; this occurred against the resistance of his contemporaries, who were using *ḥadīth* for legal rulings. The gap between the *ḥadīth* and *sīra* genres widened as *ḥadīth* were increasingly identified as a legitimate source of *sharī'ah* (Islamic law) and *sīra*, with its literary conventions and hagiographic style, became primarily devotional. This study is thus delineated by both time and genre. Limiting this study to the *sīra* rather than the *ḥadīth* reflects my interest in examining the narrative and discursive modes that have dominated the genre since its "creation" by Ibn Ishāq, as well as the way in which these modes were "designed by authors to affect readers in particular ways."¹⁰³ With that said, this study may have significant implications for other genres and may open up avenues for exploring the relationship between narrative and emotion in other temporal and geographic contexts.

By 830 CE, the basic genre conventions of biography, prosopography, and chronography were established in forms that would remain recognizable throughout the classical period of Islam (i.e., until around 1500 CE).¹⁰⁴ Beginning in this same century, Khalidi identifies "a Kulturkampf of intense proportions that erupted in Muslim cultural circles" as increased and sustained contact with other cultures provoked Muslim historians, natural scientists, and philosophers to produce a defense of Muḥammad, and, by implication, of prophecy itself.¹⁰⁵ One consequence of this was the emergence of *dalā'il* and *shamā'il* works, which highlighted

¹⁰² That being said, it is worth pointing out that a number of extant or partially extant early works from the *sīra-maghāzī* genre were constructed through the arrangement of oral tradition reports based on witness testimony.

¹⁰³ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 6.

¹⁰⁴ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 24.

¹⁰⁵ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 194.

miraculous signs demonstrating Muḥammad’s prophethood and unique station and conveyed his “lofty qualities and outward beauty.”¹⁰⁶ Jonathan Brown describes the tenth through eleventh centuries as both a time of “fleeting genres” and a “period of intense canonical process.”¹⁰⁷ A defining feature of this canonization was the “crucial interaction between text and audience.”¹⁰⁸ Brown explains, “It is in these periods that audiences ‘shaped what they received in ways that rendered [the texts] most meaningful and valuable for them.’”¹⁰⁹ While the *sīra* did not undergo a process of canonization in any conventional sense, it may be suggested that a complex interaction between text, biographer, and audience was similarly a mark of the *sīra*.

It is impossible to consider these discrete biographies outside of the context of developing and fleeting adjacent genres, and their alternative form and function. As proponents of network theory will emphasize, studying the *sīra* in relation to other genres allows one to acknowledge the dynamism involved in the negotiation of space (both textual and geographic). Biographers were engaged in the process of constructing topoi and conventions particular to the *sīra*, but this did not occur in a vacuum, and it was not uncommon for a biographer to also have expertise in another area such as *tafsīr* (e.g., al-Ṭabrisī), *ḥadīth* (e.g., Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Kathīr), or jurisprudence (e.g., Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ). Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence have noted that one goal of orienting a study of Islam by focusing on Muslim networks is “to locate Islam in multiple pasts across several geo-linguistic, sociocultural frontiers.”¹¹⁰ Although writing specifically about

¹⁰⁶ Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 33.

¹⁰⁷ Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 102.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 100.

¹⁰⁹ Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 100.

¹¹⁰ Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), xii.

Islamic hagiography, I find the following questions from Vincent Cornell essential for properly situating each biography within a complex web of institutions and apparatuses:

Who (or what) bestows authority on the hagiographer? What is the institutional locus from which the hagiographer speaks? How does this site give the discourse its legitimacy? What is the ‘library’ or documentary field of the discourse? Where is the hagiographer located in the information networks of the day?¹¹¹

My selection of the above-named biographies reflects my attempt to offer a diverse (yet still representative) range of institutional loci from which each biographer speaks.

As noted, the first extant biography to emerge out of the *sīra* genre was Ibn Ishāq’s *Prophetic Biography*, usually dated at 727 CE.¹¹² Born in Medina, Ibn Ishāq became one of the leading traditionists of his time. He traveled to Egypt, Kūfa, al-Jazīra, and Ray, settling in Baghdad and facing conflict with competing traditionists, including Mālik b. Anas. Ibn Ishāq’s *sīra*, commissioned by the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Manṣūr, was written to show the linear march of creation, from its beginning, to Islam, and to its rightful successor, the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate. What survives of this *sīra* is actually a recension by Ibn Hishām (d. 835 CE). As will be shown in later chapters, one of the largest influences Ibn Hishām had on the text was amplifying its hagiographic features. Because Ibn Ishāq’s *sīra* became the premier account of Muḥammad’s life (consistently being referred to as such in premodern Islamic writing), it is an essential work for this study.

¹¹¹ Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 64.

¹¹² Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xiii-xiv. Guillaume identifies a number of important *magāzī* works written before *Prophetic Biography*, namely, those by: Abān b. ‘Uthmān al-Bajalī (20-100 AH); ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr b. ‘Awwām (23-94 AH); Surahbīl b. Sa‘d (d. 123 AH); Wahb b. Munabbih (34-110 AH); ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatāda al-Anṣārī (d. 120 AH); Muḥammad b. Muslim ... b. Shihāb al-Zuhrī (51-124 AH); ‘Abdullah b. Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Ḥazm (d. 130 or 135 AH); ‘Abū’l-Aswad Muḥammad b. ‘Abdu’l-Raḥmān b. Naufal (d. 131 or 137 AH); and, lastly, Ibn Ishāq’s contemporary, Mūsā b. ‘Uqba (55-141 AH) (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xiv-xvi).

I include another early text, *The Book of Military Campaigns* by Ibn Rāshid, for a variety of reasons. First, the joint authorship of *The Book of Military Campaigns*, characteristic of early biographical works, highlights the intersubjective production of emotional norms. For the sake of convenience, I refer to the author of this text as Ibn Rāshid, but this work is technically the product of transmissions between three scholars: Ibn Rāshid of Baṣra, al-Zuhrī (d. 742) of Medina, and ‘Abd al-Razzāq (d. 827) of Ṣana‘ā’. This brief text primarily focuses on disjointed narratives about Muḥammad’s military expeditions and political endeavors, and it is the second earliest biography to emerge out of the *sīra* genre. As such, many medieval biographers cite this text in their own rendering of Muḥammad’s life. I include *The Book of Military Campaigns* because little scholarly work has been produced that analyzes this text beyond issues of orality and authenticity despite its influence on the genre. Including Ibn Rāshid’s work also serves to complicate the distinction between the *sīra* and *maghāzī*, a gap which some scholars have overemphasized by claiming that the *maghāzī* genre lacks an intentional narrative structure. That is to say, *sīra* and *maghāzī* literature has traditionally been separated into two distinct genres with different literary aims. I challenge this claim, arguing that, similar to other *sīra* works, *The Book of Military Campaigns* is written in a hagiographic, vignette-style, which may be pieced together to construct an ideal for Muslims.

Composed over two and a half centuries later, *Proofs of Prophethood* by al-Iṣfahānī similarly contributes to the conversation surrounding genre boundaries, as many historians have distinguished *dalā’il* works from the *sīra*. Along with al-Bayhaqī (d. 1066), al-Iṣfahānī’s text is one of the two earliest *dalā’il* works.¹¹³ Nonetheless, scholars note the important relationship

¹¹³ Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, 33.

between *dalā'il* and *sīra* literature. As Khalidi remarks, “But the *Dala'il* works did not simply defend him; they also celebrated his achievements. In other words, they canonized his *Sira*, helping to enshrine the love of Muhammad among the members of his community.”¹¹⁴ Although canonization may be too strong of a term, the *dalā'il* were essential to forming the *sīra*'s literary topoi. As a well-known mystic and historian from Iran, al-Iṣfahānī's text is colored by his knowledge of mysticism as well as the geographic context from which writes.

The Book of Healing by Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ will provide a unique lens for analyzing ethico-emotional comportment given Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's profession as judge of Ceuta and Granada.¹¹⁵ As a legal scholar, Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's biography of Muḥammad provides a framework for regulating emotions that is deeply rooted in the *sharī'ah*. Ed McAllister explains that,

The aim of this work was to protect the privileges of the Prophet and settle the issue of his rank in relation to competing authority figures, especially Sufis. The mistrust of (some) *fuqahā'* [jurists] toward Sufis was not only due to the fact that they claimed to have qualities that the *fuqahā'* wished, in general, to see restricted to the prophets. It was also because Sufis were in favour of religious practices most *fuqahā'* considered too close to popular religiosity and as deviations from accepted norms. What was at stake between Sufis and *fuqahā'* was, ultimately, the control over religious authority.¹¹⁶

Yet the uniqueness of *The Book of Healing* extends beyond Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's professional precommitments. Robinson describes Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's work as a text “eclipsed by a fully mythologised and altogether more static Perfect Man. Because he is timeless, chronology as much as disappears as a narrative feature, replaced by a catalogue of encomia.”¹¹⁷ *The Book of Healing*'s concise anecdotes, often centering on the Prophet Muḥammad's unique or miraculous

¹¹⁴ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 193.

¹¹⁵ See: Camilo Gómez-Rivas, “Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149),” in *Islamic Legal Thought: A Compendium of Muslim Jurists*, eds. Oussama Arabi, David S. Powers, and Susan A. Spector (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 323-338.

¹¹⁶ Ed McAllister, trans., “Between the Maghreb and al-Andalus: Political and Religious Authority under the Almoravids,” in Maribel Fierro, *The Almohad Revolution: Politics and Religion in the Islamic West in the Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 13.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 65.

traits, quickly became known for its healing powers in the premodern era.¹¹⁸ Thus, it is an essential text given its sheer popularity.¹¹⁹ I have also chosen this *sīra* as a way to enter into the conversation that Lean has prompted through her expressed reservation about any study on emotions which purports to investigate change over time while not simultaneously considering space. As she helpfully points out,

Throughout history, emotions do not solely ‘develop over time,’ but move and traverse over space, small-scale and large, and in messy, unexpected ways that do not conform to civilizational, regional, national, or local boundaries. The methodological challenge, then, is to conceptualize how to grapple with the issue of space.¹²⁰

Khalidi groups *The Book of Healing* into what he identifies as “an Andalusian group of authors who gave new shape and content to the *Sira*.”¹²¹ A feature of this particular geographic node,¹²² according to Khalidi, is its strong emphasis on ethical comportment: “Where *Sira* is concerned, these authors are distinguished by a certain critical rigor that seeks to cut through the sloppiness of biographical reports, and so to turn the *Sira* into a more concise guide to conduct, ethics, and law.”¹²³ Khalidi goes on to write that these authors “not only reengage with its earliest strata, a great boon to modern researchers, but also manage to reconstruct a biographical corpus that is more amenable for use as a guide to conduct.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, 33.

¹¹⁹ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 109-110. As noted earlier, there are close to one hundred copies of this *sīra* in two Cairo collections alone. Robinson writes that “Manuscript evidence is the closest we can get to the modern bestseller list, which tells us what people actually read, or short of that, *what they intended to read or wanted people to think they read*” (Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 110-111). Emphasis added.

¹²⁰ Eustace, et al., “AHR Conversation,” 1517-1518.

¹²¹ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 213. Khalidi also identifies Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) and Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 1334) as belonging to this group of authors.

See also: Maher Jarrar, *Die Prophetenbiographie im Islamischen Spanien* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989).

¹²² Khalidi mentions that Marshall Hodgson also identified a general trend in Andalusian literature, calling it ““a special provincial flavor, attractive for its relative freedom from established restraints”” (Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 214).

¹²³ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 214.

¹²⁴ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 220.

As the only Shī‘a biography in this study, al-Ṭabrisī’s *Informing Humanity*, composed in Iran, illuminates the ways in which biographers’ sectarian precommitments influenced their writing.¹²⁵ By the 10th century, Shī‘a biographies of Muḥammad had their own conventions and parameters of historical consciousness.¹²⁶ In general, Shī‘a biographies were devoted mainly to accounts of the twelve imams. Given instances of intra-religious conflict between members of different factions within the Muslim community, it was common for Shī‘a biographies to deal centrally with ‘Alī’s (Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law) martyrdom, his unique qualities, his military exploits, and his perceived superiority over Muḥammad’s other Companions. Pierce adds that unlike other Shī‘a biographies, *Informing Humanity* appears to have been composed with “more academic and text-oriented interests at play.”¹²⁷ This is partly a reflection of al-Ṭabrisī’s status as a prominent scholar on Qur’ānic commentary, which provides a richer picture of the genre’s varied conventions.

This dissertation’s wide temporal and geographic scope does not come without challenges and issues. For instance, Rosenwein has critiqued focused studies of emotions in medieval Europe which have tended to treat Europe as one emotional period.¹²⁸ Rosenwein reminds us that, “Even very short time spans, such as the sixth to late seventh centuries, ... saw vast changes in the uses of emotional vocabulary and expressive repertoires.”¹²⁹ Rosenwein’s

¹²⁵ As an interesting aside, our first biographer, Ibn Ishāq, was accused of having an ‘Alīd bias by his contemporary, Mālik b. Anas, so even the process of identifying a text as Shī‘a (or proto-Shī‘a) can be complex.

¹²⁶ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 126-127.

¹²⁷ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 39. That said, Pierce adds that, “there is also good reason to resist the urge to cast these works as either ‘scholarly’ (thus elite, and read by few) or ‘popular’ (and therefore widespread among the masses). Jonathan Berkey argues that during this general period in the Arabic-speaking world, the boundaries between scholarly and lay discourses were often blurred. The role of preaching and storytelling was particularly important in this regard” (Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 39).

¹²⁸ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 2. One work within Ottoman studies that demonstrates an awareness of this tendency is Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹²⁹ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 2.

emphasis on the existence of “textual communities” of emotion, in which communities over wide temporal and geographic space create and reinforce ideologies, teachings, and common presuppositions, has helped jettison the “emotional period” paradigm while still pointing to patterns of congruence.¹³⁰ Although attempting to generalize, describe, and segment historical eras comes with a range of practical and theoretical drawbacks, Khalidi’s description of the changing nature of later medieval *sīra* written under the Mamluk Empire and during the early Ottoman periods (ca. 13th-18th centuries) justifies containing this study temporally by ending in the twelfth century.¹³¹ Rather than hypothesizing the existence of a particular emotional period during the 8th through 12th centuries, this dissertation considers the ways in which biographers utilized a number of narrative strategies to communicate emotional ideals.

The diversity of the above biographical works also provokes one to consider the relationship between so-called “established” genre conventions and explicit or implicit expressions of emotions found within the *sīra*. As Rosenwein rightly points out, “do not genres dictate the ‘emotional tenor’ that a text will have, quite independently from any supposed community?”¹³² She goes on to write that,

The constraints of genre admittedly pose a problem. Might not the well-meaning historian mistake a particular genre, with its rules of expression, for an ‘emotional community’? ... But *if* one genre were in fact privileged over others by a community, this would strengthen my case, since it would suggest that emotional communities choose the genres most compatible with their styles.¹³³

Ultimately, Rosenwein concludes that genre rules were not ironclad in medieval Europe. I argue that the same conclusions may be drawn about the *sīra* in the formative and classical periods of

¹³⁰ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 24.

¹³¹ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 208.

¹³² Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 27.

¹³³ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 27.

Islamic history. As will be shown, the *sīra* genre was fluid enough that biographers, “under certain conditions and with certain goals in mind,” were able to manipulate standardized conventions.¹³⁴ The following chapter examines this point by looking at one of the most compelling ruptures in the *sīra*’s genre conventions, namely, biographers’ rare use of first- and second-person voice.

¹³⁴ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 27.

CHAPTER TWO:

BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL

“The self never feels averse to repeating these stories, nor is it hostile to hearing them again and again.” — Qādī ‘Iyād

Direct Addresses to the Audience

Ibn Ishāq’s role in establishing the parameters of the genre cannot be overstated, but this occurred in a larger tradition of epitomising and recasting. Beginning around the 9th century, when paper was widely available, a historian who was interested in making his work accessible might choose a classic upon which to base his writing.¹³⁵ This pattern carried over into other genres, such as the *sīra*, as subsequent biographers relied on Ibn Hishām’s recension of Ibn Ishāq’s work to compose their own. Though shaped by their own precommitments, religious training, cultural peculiarities, and political milieux, biographers’ recasting lent to familiar modes of telling. Among the features that Ibn Ishāq helped standardize in the *sīra* was the use of third-person narration based upon the collection and plotting of *hadīth*. Because Ibn Ishāq was not a witness to the events of Muḥammad’s life, his writing was from the dual perspective of a historian and devotee.¹³⁶ This temporal gap inhibited Ibn Ishāq from using “homodiegetic” or first-person writing, in which “the voice that speaks is a participant” in the storyworld. Ibn Ishāq also refrains from using first-person writing in the form of commentary, a trend that many subsequent biographers mirrored, with rare exceptions.

¹³⁵ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 178.

¹³⁶ Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, 16. Ibn Ishāq died approximately 135 years after the Prophet Muḥammad.

For a genre in which authors rarely utilize the first-person voice, *sīra* specialists often rely upon supplementary primary source material, such as the *tabaqāt* genre (biographical literature of notable individuals organized by generation) or, more rarely, *tarjama nafsahu* (autobiography), to theorize the ways in which a biographer's scholarly training, patronage, and religious or sectarian foci affected his preoccupations and methodology.¹³⁷ So, for instance, Anthony includes a thorough account of Ibn Rāshid's life and scholarly training in his introduction to *The Book of Military Campaigns*, which he reconstructed from additional primary sources.¹³⁸ The few occasions in which biographers use the first person emerge as exceptional and revealing windows into authorial preoccupations. Because of its significant divergence from genre conventions, the use of the first person in the *sīra* functions like a break in the fourth wall, drawing significant attention to the role of biographer as *teacher*, and, in turn, reader as pupil. This effect is amplified on the even rarer occasion in which a biographer uses second-person writing to directly address the implied reader. In stage performance and fictional cinema, a break in the fourth wall occurs when a character makes a direct address to the audience, thereby acknowledging their presence as spectators and, in effect, creating a narrative pause that invites meditative engagement.¹³⁹ This stark shift in narrative voice that may be found in some early and medieval biographies begs the question: what is the special content (the lesson plan, so to speak) that is being transmitted?

A superficial reading may lead one to conclude that biographers use the first person

¹³⁷ I will use the pronouns "he" and "his" throughout as a conscious choice that indicates the gendered nature of the *sīra*, both in terms of the male biographers and the presumed male audience. This issue will be explored in Chapter Three.

¹³⁸ See: Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, xix-xxix.

¹³⁹ Tom Brown, *Breaking the Fourth Wall: Direct Address in the Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), x, 17.

solely to present an *apologia* of their methodology and sources. I find the term *apologia* useful for describing the rare and usually concise first-person writing in which a biographer communicates to the intended audience (a) his reasons for writing the biography, (b) his scholarly training, (c) his sources, or (d) his methodology. In studies of the *sīra*, specialists who direct attention to this part of the text devote only cursory interest and most often take biographers' comments on their sources and methodology at face value, thereby applying what Paul Ricœur has called a "hermeneutics of faith."¹⁴⁰ More rarely, some scholars have employed a "hermeneutics of suspicion," indicating that a biographer's description of his methodology may reveal an aspect of his ideology.¹⁴¹ The *apologia* and a biographer's strategic use of first-, second-, and third-person voice has been an understudied feature in studies of the *sīra*, in many cases remaining completely unaddressed. Yet narrative voice offers one of many entry points into unpacking what Phelan has referred to as a "feedback loop" between authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response.¹⁴² In this sense I am concerned with amplifying the growing interest in identifying the *sīra* as literary narrative, not as a means of undermining conversations about historicity, but rather to demonstrate the compatibility between literary and historical approaches.

Breaking the fourth wall is an appropriate metaphor as it brings to mind an image of one

¹⁴⁰ Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 26-32. Chase Robinson is one scholar who appears to fall into this camp. See, for example, his analyses on authorial disclosures in a number of prophetic biographies and prosopographies in Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 179-186.

¹⁴¹ One example of this is found in an edited volume on premodern autobiography, which of course has its own distinct genre conventions. See, in particular, the following excerpts: Dwight F. Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 66-68, 87-93. It should be noted that specialists have not used the above Ricœurian terms to describe their approaches.

¹⁴² Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 6.

disclosing his or her innermost thoughts and feelings.¹⁴³ I would therefore like to offer an unconsidered function of the first-/second-person voice in the *sīra*. Namely, that first- and/or second-person voice may also function as a multifaceted rhetorical technique in which a biographer implicitly (or, in rare cases, explicitly) instructs readers in the art of “deep acting,” a form of emotional regulation that refers to a person’s attempt to guide his feelings in order to elicit an emotional reaction deemed appropriate to the situation.¹⁴⁴ Thus, while “breaking the fourth wall” demonstrates a unique rupture in genre conventions, analyzing this rupture may allow scholars to more precisely interpret the ways in which biographers intentionally emplotted narratives to communicate ethico-emotional comportment to readers. As mentioned in Chapter One, by offering a theory of emotional regulation in the *sīra*, I am not interested in hypothesizing how biographers or readers *actually* felt. Instead, I will argue that first- and second-person writing signals to implied readers an “ethics of reception” for the *sīra*, which may involve the suppression or evocation of emotional practices.

Biographers who use first- and/or second-person writing relied on a number of rhetorical devices to signal to the reader particular modes of emotional expression, the most obvious of which is the use of what historian Barbara Rosenwein has referred to as “emotion words,” such as “distress,” “fear,” and “love,” to convey their own feelings.¹⁴⁵ In addition to the preponderance of emotion words found alongside first- and second-person passages, one must also take into account the function of emphatic particles such as *qad* and *la-qad*, hyperbole and hyperbolic negation, metaphors, salutations or blessings on the reader and the Prophet Muḥammad, and

¹⁴³ In cinema, breaking the fourth wall is said to convey both a gesture of intimacy with the audience and a gesture of “open and ‘honest’ expression” (Brown, *Breaking the Fourth Wall*, 13, 15).

¹⁴⁴ Arlie Russell Hochschild, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure,” *American Journal of Sociology* 85.3 (1979): 558.

¹⁴⁵ See: Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 51-55.

allusions to Qur'ānic passages, which together create an emotional habitus for the audience and the biographer himself.¹⁴⁶ Although this writing was not intended as private correspondence, biographers' use of first- and second-person (most often *singular*) voice is often written with a tone of urgency and intimacy such as that given by a friend communicating information of great importance. This tone of urgency is undoubtedly linked to the content of the narrative, that is, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad.

To explore the above phenomena I analyze first- and second-person writing in Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's *The Book of Healing* and Ibn Hishām's redaction of Ibn Ishāq's *Prophetic Biography*, arguing that both Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ and Ibn Hishām were centrally preoccupied with the ways in which their plotting could arouse implied readers' trepidation, love, or distress. Although *Prophetic Biography* was composed approximately four centuries before *The Book of Healing*, Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's extensive use of first- and second-person narration provides a framework for approaching Ibn Hishām's comparatively modest use of the first person found in the notes to his *sīra*.

“Voice” as a Mode of Telling

The issue of voice (i.e., “who speaks”) has been a key locus of study among narratologists, hagiologists, and historians of emotion, all of whom have drawn attention to the ways in which first-person writing may function as a means of persuasion, to convey a degree of authority absent in third-person writing, or to reveal one's inner preoccupations (i.e., one's “true” feelings). This line of thinking has not been met without criticism or qualification. As Scheer explains,

¹⁴⁶ Barbara Rosenwein is one historian of emotions who finds utility in drawing from Pierre Bourdieu. She explains, “Emotional communities are similar as well to Bourdieu's notion of ‘habitus’: internalized norms that determine how we think and act and that may be different in different groups” (Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 25).

The history of emotions has traditionally viewed first-person accounts as the royal road to individual feeling, and as documents of emotives¹⁴⁷ and the practice of introspection they remain important. But this method should not reproduce the assumption that ‘real’ emotions—the ones worth writing about—are necessarily internal and private. Attending to practices means attending to observable behavior, suggesting that third-person accounts read with the requisite source criticism would also be valid documents of emotional practices.¹⁴⁸

Scheer’s remarks complicate the assumption that first-person writing (which may include disclosures about one’s feelings) is the most effective mode through which one can trace and analyze emotional practices, indicating that first-, second-, and third-person voice are all “valid documents” to study emotions in history. To this conversation, narratologists and rhetorical theorists have added the concept of personification as well as reliability or “trust,” which further complicates the traditional demarcation between first- and third-person narration:

... emotion is central to our response to narrators and focalizers. However, to a great extent, our emotional response to narrators is a function of the degree to which they are personified or personalized, and thus the degree to which we respond to them as characters ... Personification is not reducible to the traditional distinction between first- and third-person narration. Of course, first-person narrators are usually far more personified than third-person narrators. But there is not an absolute gulf here.¹⁴⁹

Hogan goes on to explain the centrality of a narrator’s perceived reliability in influencing readers’ emotional responses to the storyworld, even drawing attention to work in the cognitive sciences regarding the relationship between emotion systems and oxytocin levels:

For example, research indicates that increasing oxytocin levels increases proneness to trust (see Kringelbach and Philips 116). Since oxytocin is linked with attachment feelings, we might conjecture that the cultivation of attachment feelings in a literary work will foster trust of the narrator. This seems plausible, not only for exaggerated accounts of the excellences of lovers in a romantic story, but for the excellences of the homeland in a heroic one.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ The concept of emotives, developed by historian William Reddy, will be explored in Chapter Four.

¹⁴⁸ Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice,” 218.

¹⁴⁹ Hogan, *Literature and Emotion*, 159.

¹⁵⁰ Hogan, *Literature and Emotion*, 161.

Scheer and Hogan's remarks elucidate some of the most recent work on the relationship between narrative voice and emotion among historians and narratologists. Their work draws attention to the unique place of first-person writing in either conveying a writer's feelings or fostering readers' emotional responses, while also complicating the notion that first-person voice is the "royal road" to feeling. Later we will see how the field of hagiography contributes to this conversation by thinking through the relationship between "voice" as a mode of telling, emotion, and ethics. First, however, it is necessary to examine the issue of narrative voice in the genre of autobiography in order to understand the occurrence of first- and second-person writing in the *sīra*.

Perhaps the most obvious form of first-person literature in the Islamic tradition is "self-narrative," or autobiography.¹⁵¹ Dwight F. Reynolds describes that much of the scholarly conversation surrounding premodern Arabic autobiography has been rooted in Western and modernist biases that has resulted in the assumption that (a) autobiography constitutes a minor genre because of its rarity, and (b) premodern Arabic autobiographies do not constitute "true" biographies due to the "absence of any depiction of the author's personality or personal life."¹⁵² In regard to the first point, Reynolds explains that autobiography has been an understudied genre in Islamic studies primarily because these texts have not been widely available to scholars, and also because they have been treated as isolated anomalies.¹⁵³ And clarifying the second assumption, Reynolds writes that, "This line of thought derives in part from modern expectations

¹⁵¹ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 9.

¹⁵² Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 28.

¹⁵³ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 27. To get an impression, Franz Rosenthal lists only 23 autobiographies in his 1937 article. See: Franz Rosenthal, "Die arabische Autobiographie," *Studia Arabica* 1 (1937): 1-40. The lack of availability also reflects that the field of Islamic studies is behind in terms of processing primary source material, as noted in Chapter One.

than an autobiography should reveal an interior self different from, and even at odds with, the exterior public self.”¹⁵⁴ Though occasionally written in the third person, premodern Arabic autobiographies are most frequently written in the first person and often contain disclosures of the author’s feelings. For instance, Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873/877), a Nestorian Christian, vividly describes his suffering when faced with insults from other scholars: “Every time I heard things like this I would feel a tightness in my chest, and I would contemplate killing myself out of anger and frustration. There was nothing I, a lone man standing against a horde of enemies, could do to stop them.”¹⁵⁵ And ‘Imād al-Dīn (d. 1201) conveys the loss he felt when journeying from Damascus to Cairo, writing, “I missed my family dreadfully and expressed my feelings in verse at every stop on the road.”¹⁵⁶ Despite passages such as these, many early scholars such as Georg Misch and Franz Rosenthal suggested that the author’s personality remained shrouded behind a typology.¹⁵⁷ Pushing back against these widely-held assumptions, Reynolds contends that

premodern Arabic biographers reveal considerably more about their personal and ‘inner’ lives in their texts than has been previously documented, but much of this information is made manifest only through careful, close reading of the texts and a thorough awareness of their social milieus and literary strategies.¹⁵⁸

Moreover, he shows that autobiography is far more ubiquitous than many scholars have assumed.

Among the motifs and literary conventions that Reynolds identifies in his analyses of roughly 140 premodern autobiographies is the value placed on modesty when composing one’s work. This literary convention appears in different forms, but Reynolds illustrates one such example by drawing an analogy between Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s (d. 1449) admission of failure

¹⁵⁴ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 29.

¹⁵⁵ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 110.

¹⁵⁶ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 150.

¹⁵⁷ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 28-29.

¹⁵⁸ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 30.

in mastering the basic religious sciences and Albert Einstein’s disclosure that he failed mathematics on several occasions.¹⁵⁹ Thus, rather than merely taking a biographer’s disclosures at face value, this mode of analysis reveals the manner in which genre conventions and ethics intersect. The preoccupation with avoiding self-aggrandizement or vanity that developed as an ethical feature of the genre may help us understand why first-person writing occurs so infrequently in the *sīra*.¹⁶⁰

To draw out this point, it is crucial to conceive of “voice” as a mode of telling. Why, for instance, do some authors composing their own biography choose to write in the third person, while others use the first? And why do some switch from third-person writing to first within their work? How do these shifts in narrative voice serve a communicative function for implied readers? To clarify these issues, it is useful to look at Ibn Ḥajar’s autobiography, which is primarily written in the third person, but contains a sudden shift to first-person voice. Writing in the third person, Ibn Ḥajar positions himself modestly when describing his entrance into school at five years old, his memorization of the Qur’ān, and the first time he leads supererogatory prayers during the month of Ramadan. When recounting his reception of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (considered one of the most authoritative *ḥadīth* collections), however, he switches to the first person: ““So my source for [the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī] is Shaykh Najm al-Dīn al-Murjānī, who taught me properly much later; I have relied upon him because of my trust in him.””¹⁶¹ Reynolds argues that this shift to the first person when describing his audition of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is a reflection of the terminology used in medieval teaching methods, which are rendered variously as “I heard

¹⁵⁹ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 83.

¹⁶⁰ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 28.

¹⁶¹ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 82.

this work from,” “I was granted a certificate to transmit such and such a work,” and so forth.¹⁶²

In this sense, Ibn Ḥajar’s use of the first person in this context may be read as an expression of authority that is couched in other passages of modesty through his third person writing. That is, both third- and first-person voice serve particular functions for communicating information to the implied audience.

For some scholars of rhetorical and narrative theory, such as James Phelan and Adam Zachary Newton, the positioning of voice as a mode of telling cannot be divorced from its ethical dimension.¹⁶³ Following the recent ethical turn in literary studies, Phelan argues that an author’s choices in relation to forms of telling “will affect the audience’s ethical response to the characters; each choice will also convey the author’s attitudes toward the audience.”¹⁶⁴ Put differently, Phelan is centrally concerned with the tie between ethical responses and the techniques of narrative (i.e., “the signals offered by the text”).¹⁶⁵ Newton similarly explores the relationship between narrational ethics, which is associated with forms of telling, and hermeneutic ethics, which is associated with interpreting the text.¹⁶⁶ For Newton, the clandestinity of first-person writing that occurs in autobiography and other forms of narrative “solicits, indeed, summons interpretation, a dynamic that Levinas calls ‘rubbing the text.’”¹⁶⁷ Phelan and Newton’s contributions reveal that sustained focus on a biographer’s use of first-person (and, in some cases, the corollary second-person) voice may allow scholars to

¹⁶² Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 82.

¹⁶³ Newton draws heavily on Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly his work from *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, *The Dialogic Imagination*, and *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*.

¹⁶⁴ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 23.

¹⁶⁵ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 22.

¹⁶⁶ Adam Zachary Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 18-25.

¹⁶⁷ Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, 246. Newton explores Emmanuel Levinas’ notion of “rubbing the text” further in Adam Zachary Newton, *To Make the Hands Impure: Art, Ethical Adventure, the Difficult and the Holy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 70-94.

interpret author-audience relationships that takes into account “the ethics of the telling” and “the ethics of the told.”¹⁶⁸ Both the telling (e.g., plotting) and the told (e.g., accounts of interactions between Muḥammad and others) have been a focus of study for *sīra* specialists, but the way in which they reinforce one another to communicate an ethical framework that invites interpretive work from the reader has been largely neglected. Moreover, biographers’ use of the first-/second-person has not yet been conceived of as an aspect of *ethical telling*.

I am also interested in drawing out Newton’s image of “the summoning ‘I’”¹⁶⁹ by considering how this idea relates to Brian Siebeking’s recent comments regarding hagiographical texts. Following the work of Massimo Rondolino, Siebeking has contended that hagiography may be more fruitfully conceived of as “a category of analysis” rather than a set of genres.¹⁷⁰ This suggestion partly reflects a turn among hagiologists to more fully address the ways in which the Christian tradition has dominated the field. For Siebeking, “a text is not a hagiographical text until it has been received ‘hagiographically.’”¹⁷¹ He goes on to clarify this point by suggesting that hagiographical works invite a particular way of engaging with the text, which he calls an “ethics of reception.”¹⁷² A similar point has been made by Thomas Heffernan, who writes that, “Texts have their beginnings not in the act of composition but in a complex series of anticipations. The primary anticipation in the composition of sacred biography is that which contains the interaction between the author and his audience.”¹⁷³ In the analyses that follow, I will expand upon the idea that first- and second-person voice, as one of several “techniques of

¹⁶⁸ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 9, 16-17, 22-25.

¹⁶⁹ Use of this phrase is my own.

¹⁷⁰ Brian Siebeking, “The Ethics of the Saints: Re-Reading and Re-Writing Hagiographical Texts,” Response, American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO, November 18, 2018.

¹⁷¹ Siebeking, “The Ethics of the Saints.”

¹⁷² Siebeking, “The Ethics of the Saints.”

¹⁷³ Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, 18.

narrative,” signals an ethic of reception for the *sīra*’s implied readership. As will be shown, this summoning is not merely hermeneutic; rather, it invites emotion management. While later chapters will examine these issues through biographers’ use of third-person narration and emplotment of dialogue, the following sections illustrate the intersection of the questions “what are we asked to value?” and “what do we feel?” in first- and second-person narration.

“Know, O Lover of Muḥammad!”: Authorial Disclosures in The Book of Healing

The Book of Healing by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is one of the most atypical works that has been attributed to the *sīra* genre. Eschewing a standard chronological structure, the book is divided into four parts. The first part centers on the Prophet Muḥammad’s virtuous qualities, the second part on the rights owed to Muḥammad, the third on the things that are impossible, permitted, and forbidden for him, and the fourth on the judgments for those who disparage him. Despite numerous divergences from genre conventions such as non-linear chronology and legislative discourse delineating judgments for cursing Muḥammad, Islamicists have consistently categorized *The Book of Healing* as a biography of Muḥammad. Robinson is one scholar who has qualified this by labeling it a “devotional biography.”¹⁷⁴ Arguably the most distinguishing feature of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s *sīra* is his extensive communication with the implied audience through his use of first- and second-person writing. Significantly, this occurs not only in his preface but throughout the entire text. Although scholars have identified and analyzed a number of narrative and structural peculiarities in *The Book of Healing*, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s use of the first- and second-person voice remains uninterrogated. The unparalleled use of first- and second-person narration in *The Book of Healing* warrants sustained attention precisely *because* it demonstrates a

¹⁷⁴ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 65.

rupture in genre conventions. As historians of emotions have observed, ruptures in convention often provide the most revealing windows into decoding norms about emotional expression. Along with resources from emotion theorists, rhetorical theory will provide a mode through which to consider authorial disclosures¹⁷⁵ and direct addresses to the audience as devices that guide readers towards proper emotional conduct and relationality toward Muḥammad. Later chapters will expand upon this central idea by unpacking the ways in which Muḥammad and his Companions aid in communicating ethico-emotional frameworks for implied readers in both narrative and dialogue segments. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s authorial disclosures may therefore allow one to reflect not only on the function of atypical narrative voice, but also on the reasons why third-person voice became standardized in the premodern period.

Although Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ sometimes uses the first-person plural *-nā* (“we”), indicating his address to the community of believers, he more often relies upon the first-person singular when speaking to his audience. One of the first instances of this occurs in the preface where Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ addresses an unknown reader using the second-person singular pronoun:

You (*fa-innaka*) have repeatedly asked me to write something which gathers together all that is necessary to acquaint the reader with the true stature of the Prophet (*al-Muṣṭafā*)¹⁷⁶, peace and blessings be upon him, with the esteem and respect which is due to him, and with the verdict (*ḥukm*) regarding anyone (*man*) who does not fulfill (*wājiba*) what his stature demands or who attempts to denigrate his supreme status – even by as much as a nail-paring.¹⁷⁷

There are a number of narrative devices to unpack here, some of which will be examined in future chapters. Most pressingly, however, is Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s declaration that he is fulfilling a

¹⁷⁵ I borrow this term from James Phelan.

¹⁷⁶ Bewley translates *al-Muṣṭafā* as Prophet, but it is important to note that Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ uses the honorific, “The Chosen One.”

¹⁷⁷ Qadi ‘Iyad Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah: Ash-Shifa of Qadi ‘Iyad*, trans. Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley (Granada: Madinah Press, 2011), viii; Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’ bi-Ta’rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā* (Bayrūt: Mu’assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyah, 1995), 47. Inclusions of the Arabic in Bewley’s translation are my own.

request for, and thus speaking to, this unnamed person. Writing about this formula in other contexts, Reynolds remarks that writing in response to a request from someone else is a common device found in other medieval genres, such as autobiography and biographical compendiums, and may be interpreted as either genuine or merely rhetorical.¹⁷⁸ Pierce provides an example of this phenomenon by noting that al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 1022 CE) claimed to have written *The Book of Guidance* (a collective biography of the Twelve Imams) in direct response to a request for instruction, though he does not identify the person who made the request.¹⁷⁹ Outside of Islamic studies, scholars of literary theory have analyzed the significance of similar modes of address. Susan Sniader Lanser, for instance, describes addresses to “private narratees” which “locate the (unacknowledged) public reader as eavesdropper or voyeur” in a number of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts.¹⁸⁰ What is noteworthy about Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s address is that it reveals, at its outset, another means of authorial disclosure that extends beyond what emerges from standard, third-person narration. In third-person narration, stories about Muḥammad’s life are emplotted and unfold to communicate what the biographer has decided are the most compelling events that should be transmitted. Thus, as Williams has noted, the story about Muḥammad’s staunch opponent (and uncle), Abū Lahab, in Ibn Kathīr’s *sīra* may be read as Ibn Kathīr’s concern with communicating the theme of divine protection.¹⁸¹ It is particularly important to think about narrative voice in the *sīra* as a means of communication, and about Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s innovative use of the first and second person as an expansion of this, because it provides a richer account of conceiving of the *sīra* as didactic, which has developed into a truism without

¹⁷⁸ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 61.

¹⁷⁹ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 32.

¹⁸⁰ Susan Sniader Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 141.

¹⁸¹ Williams, *Muḥammad and the Supernatural*, 98.

much theoretical depth.

By conceiving of first- and second-person narration as one of several channels of communication, one may see Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s use of the above “request-and-fulfillment frame” as more than a stylistic feature. The communicative element becomes more clear in the remainder of his preface and in other instances in which Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes first- or second-person writing. Thus within the frame about fulfilling a request, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ divulges more to his anonymous commissioner:

Know, may God enoble you! that you have burdened me with a very difficult talk (*‘usrān*). You have confronted me with a momentous undertaking with fills my heart (*qalbī*) with trepidation (*ru‘bān*).¹⁸²

In this continuation of the request frame, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ employs second- and first-person voice along with Qur’ānic allusions to communicate the gravity of writing about the Prophet Muḥammad’s life. Again, it is important to emphasize that I am not concerned with theorizing the authenticity of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s disclosure of his feelings. Rather, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s admission that this task “fills [his] heart with trepidation” implicitly signals the apprehension one *should feel* when thinking about the Prophet.¹⁸³ In *The Book of Healing*, God is depicted as the Ultimate Controller of emotions, placing tranquility (*al-sakīna*) into the hearts of His community of believers and throwing terror (*al-jaza‘*) into the hearts of Muḥammad’s enemies.¹⁸⁴ At the same time, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ emphasizes a believer’s role and responsibility in cultivating certain emotions in later sections such as “Concerning the Necessity of Loving [Muḥammad]” and “On the Reward for Loving the Prophet.” The effort to feel a particular way deemed “appropriate to the situation” has been variously labeled “emotion work,” “feeling rules,” “emotion management,” and “deep

¹⁸² Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, viii; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 47.

¹⁸³ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, viii; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 47.

¹⁸⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 26, 28; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 91, 93.

acting.”¹⁸⁵ All of these concepts have been used synonymously and were first coined by Arlie Russell Hochschild in 1979. Hochschild explains that “emotion work” refers to “the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling. To ‘work on’ an emotion or feeling is, for our purposes, the same as ‘to manage’ an emotion or to do ‘deep acting.’”¹⁸⁶ This may manifest in the evocation or suppression of emotional practices (or the degree to which they are expressed), but what is most significant for Hochschild is the effort, not the outcome. “Feeling rules” may be understood as norms that influence people’s efforts to feel or not feel certain emotions.¹⁸⁷ Scholars from numerous fields and disciplines have drawn from Hochschild’s theory to develop, expand, and historically situate instances of “feeling rules” and “emotion work,” more frequently preferring the latter phrase. Kimberley Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley, for example, have elaborated on the interplay between spontaneous and ritual weeping in the context of religious expression. In the case of ritual weeping they explain that it is a “religious act, with ‘work’ to perform that goes far beyond the personal, far beyond what private subjective emotion can fuel.”¹⁸⁸ The tension between spontaneous emotional expression and emotion work is a central theme in Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s *sīra*. In the above passage, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ appears to describe to the anonymous commissioner a spontaneous feeling of trepidation or dread. By depicting himself in this way, he indicates to his reader what should be felt, and if one does not experience this trepidation spontaneously, what one ought to *try* to feel. It may also be argued that Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is signaling to himself what he ought to try to feel when writing about Muḥammad. To gain a full sense of the function of this frame, however, it is important to

¹⁸⁵ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 552.

¹⁸⁶ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 551n2.

¹⁸⁷ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 561.

¹⁸⁸ Kimberley Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley, eds., *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 9.

consider how Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ situates the word trepidation in relation to other rhetorical devices.

Within this frame, Qaḍī ‘Iyāḍ communicates a tone of both urgency and gravity in the act of writing a biography of Muḥammad. In the first quotation, Qaḍī ‘Iyāḍ uses hyperbole (“you have repeatedly asked me”), legislative discourse (“with the verdict regarding anyone who does not fulfill”), and metaphor (“even by as much as a nail-paring”) to transmit this tone. In the second quotation, it appears that Qaḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s request frame is couched in Qur’ānic allusions, which function to draw associations between the use of the word trepidation in his *sīra* and the Qur’ān. The word *al-ru‘ba*, which may be translated as “terror,” “dismay,” or “trepidation,” appears five times in the Qur’ān (3:151; 8:12; 18:18; 33:26; 59:2). In each instance it occurs alongside the word *qalb* (heart) as it does in Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s description. In three of these Qur’ānic passages, God says that He “will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve (or disbelieved)” (3:151; 8:12; 59:2). In using the same language found within these Qur’ānic passages, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ evokes the sense that proper emotional conduct (i.e., what one ought to feel) is tied to right belief. The juxtaposition of one feeling trepidation out of sincere belief with feeling trepidation out of disbelief becomes an effective mode for communicating the gravity of one’s actions in this life.¹⁸⁹ Emotion theorists like Ahmed have argued that it is through such textual associations that narratives are constructed, meaning that emotions are not “in” texts, but may be conceived of “as effects of the very naming of emotions, which often works through attributions of causality.”¹⁹⁰ Put another way, emotion is not “in” the subject or the object; rather, “emotions are *shaped by contact* with objects, rather than being caused by objects.”¹⁹¹ In this

¹⁸⁹ In addition to the passages in 3:151, 8:12, 18:18, 33:26, and 59:2, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s use of the word *‘usrān* (“hardship” or “difficulty”) may be an allusion to 94:4-5 which reads, “So, indeed, with hardship is ease. Indeed, with hardship is ease.”

¹⁹⁰ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 13.

¹⁹¹ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 6. Emphasis added.

sense, it is through the very concealment of associations, such as the concealment of a Qur’ānic allusion, that requires the reader to mobilize or give meaning to the narrative. The sense of “oughtness” that is conveyed in Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s request frame may therefore be extended to imply a broader concern for communicating proper emotional conduct which may indicate right belief in God and His Messenger.

Whether or not the request to Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is rhetorical, his disclosure about fulfilling it also indicates the presence of multiple implied audiences. In addition to the anonymous commissioner, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ implies that his work has been compiled for a general reader for the purpose of teaching the proper etiquette required for esteeming Muḥammad as well as legal punishments for denigrating him. This is evident from his use of the word *man* (“one,” “anyone”) within the frame. This frame is woven into the remainder of the text, and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ occasionally breaks from third-person narration or dialogue sequences to address the reader. What is significant about the presence of multiple audiences is that it becomes difficult to distinguish between the “commissioner” and the “general reader.” In chapter two, “God’s perfecting his good qualities of constitution and character (*khalq wa-khuluq*), and giving him all the virtues of the religion and this world,” Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ begins by using the vocative particle, *ayyuhā* (O...!), to address the reader as *al-muḥibb*, lover or friend [of Muḥammad].¹⁹² In section two of the same chapter, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ again uses the first and second person:

I am setting out to detail his qualities of perfection in the best way I can, which has filled me with longing to call attention to his attributes, may God bless him and grant him peace. Know, may God illuminate my heart and yours and increase my love and your love for this noble Prophet! – that if you were to look into all those qualities of perfection which cannot be acquired and which are part of one’s constitution, you will find the Prophet has every one of them – all of the

¹⁹² Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 31; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 97. It is important to note that *khuluq* is the singular of *akhlāq*, a term which was discussed in Chapter One.

various good qualities without there being any dispute about it among the transmitters of tradition.¹⁹³

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ continues by providing rich descriptions of Muḥammad’s physical features, including descriptions of his complexion, his eyelashes, his front teeth, and the proportionality of his body.

¹⁹⁴ Here Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ draws a connection between the ethics of the telling (i.e., the act of detailing) and the ethics of the told (i.e., descriptions of Muḥammad’s features). While Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes passages of self reflexivity or metafiction at other times, this excerpt is unique because of the supplication to God to increase his and the reader’s love for Muḥammad. Through an inclusion of this supplication, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ reveals that his emplotment of the *sīra* is not only deliberate, but is deeply informed by a desire to engender relationality toward Muḥammad. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s emplotment may be seen as an aspect of “work” or “effort” to attain this relationality; ultimately, however, God is depicted as the Ultimate Source of attaining this goal. This context in which Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ refers to his methodology allows one to view his other methodological disclosures through the same lens, such as when he writes, “We omitted many others and we condensed some long *hadiths* to achieve our purpose... We shortened *isnads* (chains of narration) in order to be concise.”¹⁹⁵ With this reading, Khalidi’s statement about the conciseness characteristic of *The Book of Healing* and a number of other Andalusian biographies (discussed in Chapter One) garners new meaning. While scholarship on the *sīra* has mostly consisted of applying a hermeneutics of faith to instances of metafiction, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s unparalleled use of first-person and second-person narration reveals multileveled and purposive communication that extends beyond establishing authorial legitimacy. By breaking the fourth wall, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s *sīra* functions

¹⁹³ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 33; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 100.

¹⁹⁴ Descriptions of bodily proportionality abound in Greek biographical literature as perfect proportionality was believed to reveal one’s ethical perfection.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 206; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 464.

like a diatyposis, or testament, that directs his audience to worldly and spiritual success, where success in both realms is in part dependent upon one's effort to engender emotions. Although Ibn Hishām's use of the first person is not nearly as extensive as Qāḍī 'Iyād's, it similarly reveals a preoccupation with conveying a framework for engaging with the *sīra* that hinges on proper emotional comportment.

First-Person Voice in Ibn Hishām's "Apologia"

When Fra Arnaldo recorded Angela of Foligno's (d. 1309) mystical revelations, his bewilderment manifested in the transposition of Angela's speech when translating her words into Latin, which Arnaldo describes at length in his *apologia*:

'I, brother scribe, wrote as much as I could grasp, with great fear and reverence, and with much haste, just as I have heard it from the mouth of the said Faithful of Christ, while she talked in my presence. I did not add anything of my own from beginning to end, but I have omitted much of the good things which she said, because I could neither understand them nor write them down. And she spoke about herself in the first person, but it happened sometimes that I wrote in the third person, because of my haste, which I did not correct. And from beginning to end I have hardly written anything except in her presence. And then I wrote with great haste, as she spoke, because I was forced to hurry by the many obstacles put before me by the Brothers and their prohibitions. I tried to write as much of her words as I could get, not wishing to write after I had withdrawn from her presence, and not knowing what to write later for fear that I should include, be it even one word, which she did not say herself.¹⁹⁶

Quoting the *apologia* in full, Aviad M. Kleinberg draws attention to Arnaldo's "repeated and confused exclamations," noting that Arnaldo repeats his claim of passive narration three times in this passage alone, as well as throughout the entire biography.¹⁹⁷ Kleinberg's analysis of Arnaldo's repeated first-person claims focuses primarily on Arnaldo's role as an editor, despite

¹⁹⁶ Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 47.

¹⁹⁷ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 48.

Arnaldo's claims to the contrary. Kleinberg explains that while Arnaldo insists in his *apologia* that he is merely a "sieve" for Angela, in actuality, Arnaldo had an influence on Angela's words by asking her for clarifications on several occasions: "Arnaldo might not have been aware that by these questions, and even by his requests for clarification when he could not understand Angela's words, he was guiding her in certain directions."¹⁹⁸ These analyses illuminate the dynamic interplay between witness (or biographer) and saint in the composition of Angela's biography. What Kleinberg does not touch upon, however, is the manner in which Arnaldo's *apologia* also "guides" implied readers in "certain directions," by establishing an emotional tone for the remainder of the biography (that is, by signaling an ethic of reception). This is apparent not only in Arnaldo's first-person claims about his own fear and reverence, but also in the repetitive descriptions of his haste which helps to convey a "dread of forgetting" that permeates the genre of medieval Christian hagiography.¹⁹⁹

Unlike *The Book of Healing*, Ibn Hishām's redaction of *Prophetic Biography* features minimal use of the first-person voice. Use of the second person is completely absent in this text. The first person appears in Ibn Hishām's notes in the form of an *apologia*, a textual feature that, while fairly common in other genres of Islamic writing, rarely appears in the *sīra*.²⁰⁰ *Prophetic Biography* proves a particularly complex work for analysis given the redactive work by Ibn Hishām. In this sense, it is perhaps most similar to *The Book of Military Campaigns*, which is characterized by the co-authorship of Ibn Rāshid, al-Zuhrī, and 'Abd al-Razzāq. Ibn Hishām's infrequent use of the first person still warrants attention because it further illuminates

¹⁹⁸ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 49.

¹⁹⁹ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 42.

²⁰⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's (d. 1071) *sīra* also contains an *apologia*. See: Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 179. More broadly, there are not many examples of "notes" that may be found in the genre of Islamic hagiography.

biographers' investment in conveying an ethic of reception to implied audiences while also expanding analyses of the *apologia* beyond discussions of methodology and source selection.

As with Arnaldo's first-person disclosures, Ibn Hishām's *apologia*'s provides a window into his methodology and source selection, but it also illustrates a preoccupation with how the techniques of narrative will affect implied readers. Here I quote Ibn Hishām's *apologia* in full:

God willing I shall begin this book with Ismā'īl son of Ibrāhīm and mention those of his offspring who were the ancestors of God's apostle one by one with what is known about them, taking no account of Ismā'īl's other children, for the sake of brevity, confining myself to the prophet's biography and omitting some of the things which [Ibn Ishāq] has recorded in this book in which there is no mention of the apostle and about which the Quran says nothing and which are not relevant to anything in this book or an explanation of it or evidence for it; poems which he quotes that no authority on poetry whom I have met knows of; things which it is disgraceful to discuss; matters which would distress certain people; and such reports as al-Bakkā'ī told me he could not accept as trustworthy—all these things I have omitted. But God willing I shall give a full account of everything else so far as it is known and trustworthy tradition is available.²⁰¹

There is much that Ibn Hishām discloses in the above. As Heffernan has noted, a biographer's selection of sources reveals the historiography that governs the remainder of the work and “allows the reader to judge the interpretive skill with which the biographer has completed his task.”²⁰² Most basically, this *apologia* demonstrates that the *sīra* was read critically by Ibn Hishām, who indicates that he makes a number of excisions for the sake of brevity, relevance, and authoritative weight. Significantly, Ibn Hishām also discloses that he omits content that “is disgraceful to discuss” or “would distress certain people.”²⁰³ Ibn Hishām repeats this concern throughout his notes, writing in other places that he omits narratives or poetic verses due to obscenity, or in which someone spoke disparagingly of Muḥammad or his Companions. In some

²⁰¹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 691n10; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 25.

²⁰² Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, 124.

²⁰³ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 691n10; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 25.

cases, Ibn Hishām concern for disgraceful matters extends beyond narratives or poetry that directly addresses the Prophet Muḥammad or other righteous figures. For example, Ibn Hishām excises parts of Abū Ṭālib’s invective against a member of the Quraysh, as he writes, “I have left out two verses in which he violently insulted him.”²⁰⁴ And regarding another poem from al-Jawn, he remarks, “I have omitted a verse which is obscene.”²⁰⁵

These disclosures, while brief, convey a similar ethics of reception to that seen in *The Book of Healing*. Unlike Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (and Arnaldo), however, Ibn Hishām’s use of the first person does not include disclosures of his own feelings. Rather, he directs attention to avoiding eliciting the “distress” of implied readers through disgraceful content. Interestingly, Reynolds notes a similar stylistic technique used by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) in his autobiography, which he calls a “rhetoric of action rather than emotion.”²⁰⁶ He writes, “al-Suyūṭī tells us what he did, rather than how he felt ... Another device used several times in the same text is the author’s description of the emotions of those around him rather than his own.”²⁰⁷ Reynolds provides an account of al-Suyūṭī’s preparation for delivering his first lecture as an example of how this stylistic technique appears. Al-Suyūṭī mentions the teachers who will be present, the process of setting the date and getting his mentor’s approval, and the content contained in his preparatory notes. Through detailing his preparations, Reynolds observes, “This account of his actions, though devoid of explicit references to emotions, would have conveyed much to his contemporary readers about his state of mind before this dramatic moment in his life.”²⁰⁸ I argue

²⁰⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 716n167; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 243.

²⁰⁵ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 726n223; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 359. The issue of conflict apparent in these passages will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter.

²⁰⁶ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 87.

²⁰⁷ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 87.

²⁰⁸ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 87.

that the same may be said regarding Ibn Hishām’s disclosures in his *apologia*. Yet, whereas Reynolds appears to be more concerned with uncovering al-Suyūfī’s “inner emotions,” I am interested in identifying Ibn Hishām’s first-person writing as a method by which he orients implied readers to proper emotion comportment when engaging with the *sīra*, as is implied through his own handling of the source material.²⁰⁹ By describing how disgraceful matters and obscene material may distress certain readers and excising those passages, Ibn Hishām implicitly conveys that the distress felt when encountering such material is something one *ought* to feel. That is to say, like Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, Ibn Hishām’s ethics of reception reveals an emotive dimension.

The above passages in *The Book of Healing* and *Prophetic Biography* illustrate two distinct modes of telling through use of the first- (and sometimes second-person) voice. As mentioned previously, a break in the fourth wall occurs in fictional narrative and cinema when a character makes a direct address to the audience, thereby acknowledging their presence as spectators and, in effect, creating a narrative pause that invites meditative engagement.²¹⁰ In the context of the *sīra*, breaking the fourth wall summons or “beckons” implied readers to engage with the text, but this engagement extends beyond the hermeneutic.²¹¹ By employing first- and second-person voice, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ articulates that engagement with the *sīra* requires emotional exertion through the evocation of both trepidation and love for God and the Prophet Muḥammad. Throughout his work, however, one may locate a tension between the idealization of spontaneous emotional expression and emotion work. While both are privileged, spontaneous trepidation and love is tightly linked to firm belief in God. Alternatively, Ibn Hishām’s direct addresses within

²⁰⁹ Reynolds writes, “a close examination of those moments reveals how one autobiographer succeeds in communicating his emotional state” (Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 88).

²¹⁰ Brown, *Breaking the Fourth Wall*, x, 17.

²¹¹ Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, 246.

his *apologia* indicate a preoccupation with implied readers' distress. Though this portion of the text does not contain descriptions of Ibn Hishām's emotional state, he implicitly signals an ethic of reception for the *sīra* by describing his reasons for omitting certain material. Phelan and Newton have drawn attention to the ways in which voice and other modes of telling "will affect the audience's ethical response to the characters."²¹² This chapter pulls together the thread between voice, ethics, and emotion work by showing that biographers relied on modes of telling to communicate ethico-emotional comportment and convey an ethic of reception to implied readers.

Conclusion: A Hermeneutics of Silence

In a brief description about the ubiquitousness of honorifics and blessings in sacred writing, Kecia Ali remarks that "One becomes inured to these formulae when reading Arabic or devotional texts, but they distract those unaccustomed. Yet since their presence, especially in texts in European languages, tells about the intended audience for a work, I include them when it seems relevant."²¹³ This chapter has demonstrated that it is through such formulae and through the associations between "emotion words," allusions, and metaphors, that narrative is constructed. Interpreting authorial disclosures may occur by examining patterns in the genre, but in some cases it may be read within breaks in genre convention. Plamper, for instance, offers a series of provocative questions about "decod[ing] noise and rupture at the microlevel of language" which he ultimately calls a "hermeneutics of silence":

²¹² Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 23.

²¹³ Kecia Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 4. One of the most common honorifics is the *taṣliyah*, which offers blessings upon Muḥammad and his progeny. For more on the significance of the *taṣliyah* in Islamic writing, see: Cristina de la Puente, "The Prayer upon the Prophet Muḥammad (Taṣliya): A Manifestation of Islamic Religiosity," *Medieval Encounters* 5, no. 1 (1999): 121-29.

Is there ersatz language—comments on the weather, or long descriptions of a soldier who repeatedly cleaned his weapon? Does this disturb the inner logic of the text; is there, for instance, a sudden and unexpected shift in tempo; does a preposition appear that is not used in the remainder of the text; does the author undermine the logic of his narrative?²¹⁴

By considering Plamper's hermeneutics of silence, one may see how ruptures potentially reveal more about a genre than what has been rendered "canonical." In the following chapters, Plamper's theory may offer insight when examining the repetition of well-known narratives in the five biographies selected for this study.

²¹⁴ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 296.

CHAPTER THREE:

READING CONFLICT IN THE *SĪRA*: AN ETHIC OF MAN-TO-MAN RELATIONS

“When he saw me, he smiled the smile of an angry man.” — Ka‘b ibn Mālik on the Prophet Muḥammad

“Texts have their beginnings not in the act of composition but in a complex series of anticipations. The primary anticipation in the composition of sacred biography is that which contains the interaction between the author and his audience.” — Thomas Heffernan

No Surprises Here: Conflict, Ethical Invitation, and Readerly Experience

Sacred biography is distinct from other forms of narrative in several crucial ways. One of the most basic ways that may initially seem unworthy of comment is that these stories are already known to most readers. Thus, almost in passing, Matthew Pierce remarks that collective biographies of Shī‘a imams do not contain many plot twists.²¹⁵ Like collective biographies, the *sīra* is mostly devoid of surprises for the reader. Scholars of narrative and rhetorical theory have spent considerable time analyzing textual phenomena such as inferences, implausibility, and plot twists or “unnatural narratology” as a way of understanding an author’s reliance on narrative progression which, for some scholars, leads to readers’ creation of “new text,” or, for others, implicates readers in the text’s ethical framework.²¹⁶ While issues of historicity (i.e., biographers’

²¹⁵ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 42, 66.

²¹⁶ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 33. See also: Sheldon Shacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964); Katra A. Bayram, *Ethics and the Dynamic Observer Narrator: Reckoning with the Past and Present in German Literature* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2015); Katherine Saunders Nash, *Feminist Narrative Ethics: Tacit Persuasion in Modernist Form* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014); Deborah A. Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky’s Liars and Narrative Exposure* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2003); Marie-Laure Ryan, “Cheap Plot Tricks, Plot Holes, and Narrative Design,” *Narrative* 17.1 (2009): 56-75; Nussbaum touches upon this issue as it relates to readers’ emotional investment in characters (Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 240-243). In this sense, one of the crucial ways that makes *sīra* distinct from other modes of telling about the Prophet’s life (such as the *ḥadīth*) is the process of narrative unfolding and, consequently, readers’ responses, which influence their responses on later parts of the story (See: Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 41-42).

investment in telling “the truth”), intertextuality, and repetition of familiar narratives would preclude analysis of many of the above textual phenomena for the *sīra*, this chapter examines how stories about conflict similarly function to implicate or invite readers into the text’s ethical framework. More precisely, I argue that conflict in the *sīra* functions as a rhetorical technique by which biographers communicate *boundaries* of ethico-emotional comportment to the implied audience. In this chapter I examine what I call “conflict narratives,” or narratives depicting a serious argument, dispute, or violent physical exchange, theorizing that these often volatile conflicts convey failures of emotional expression, articulate idealized emotional practices, or invite emotion work from the reader. That is to say, conflict narratives are a pedagogical tool. As with first-/second-person writing in Chapter Two, conflict narratives may be interpreted by examining the range of rhetorical devices found woven into the stories such as insults, descriptions of gestures and facial expressions, emotion words, the absence or presence of salutations, and Qur’ānic discourse. By applying a hermeneutics of silence, the noticeable omission of conflict narratives may additionally reveal authorial interest in ethico-emotional comportment, such as will be shown with *The Book of Healing*.

The few scholars who have drawn attention to conflict in the *sīra* have identified it as a literary theme or have hypothesized that prevalent depictions of conflict may reflect historical realities in which a text was written such as sectarian violence or economic crises.²¹⁷ I am

²¹⁷ See, for example: Sean Anthony’s footnote on *fitna* (civil strife) as a literary theme in *The Book of Military Campaigns* (Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 308n247). Rebecca Williams discusses betrayal and forgiveness as central themes in the *sīra* (Williams, *Muhammad and the Supernatural*, 109-162). While not a *sīra* text, Pierce describes a heated narrative within a Shi’a collective biography as “reflect[ing] the deep anger and vindictiveness that seems to have resonated in the Shi’a community toward its opponents” (Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 111). And, also outside of *sīra* scholarship, Joel L. Kraemer has described the “social aggressiveness” (such as stealing, pillaging, and fighting among Turks and Daylamīs) that was characteristic of the Buyid dynasty in Baghdad, which manifested in a proliferation of polemical works (Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival During the Buyid Age*, 2nd. ed. (E.J. Brill: New York, 1992), 37).

interested in extending a theory of conflict within the *sīra* beyond the thematic or the historical to the ethical and, more specifically, the ethico-emotional. Conflict as a site of intense emotion expression has been a locus of study for theorists of emotion who, following a cognitivist view, argue that emotional practices must be understood in the context of ethical reasoning. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Ahmed explains that

Such theorists suggest that emotions involve appraisals, judgements, attitudes or a ‘specific manner of apprehending the world’ (Sartre 1962: 9), which are irreducible to bodily sensations. Some theorists have described emotions as being judgements (Solomon 1995), whilst others might point to how they involve judgements: the emotion of anger, for example, implies a judgement that something is bad ... (Spelman 1989: 266).²¹⁸

Representations of conflict, some historians have argued, reveal visceral displays of appraisals while often conveying failures of emotional norms. Plamper, summarizing ethnohistorian Monique Scheer, has referred to the latter phenomenon as a “failure of ‘doing’” emotion:

[Conflicts] say something about the failure of ‘doing’, and so reveal the unspoken, implicit rules of ‘doing’. In conflicts, different regulating emotional practices collide, thus making it possible to draw conclusions about more extensive cultures of emotion.²¹⁹

In the context of the *sīra*, I argue that biographers’ emplotment of conflict narratives not only indicate appraisals and, in some cases, “failures” of emotional expression, they also reveal invitations for emotion work. Robinson, Khalidi, and others have argued that the *sīra* contains inspiring examples to be imitated, yet this has become a truism in the field rather than a point of intellectual exploration. The first part of the chapter’s title, “*Reading Conflict*,” therefore signals a shift in theoretical focus to the phenomenon of narrative progression and the interpretive role

²¹⁸ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 5. A judgement that something is bad is of course rooted in the evaluation that it is harmful to oneself or one’s community. Nussbaum has traced this reasoning back to Greek Stoicism, thereby identifying her approach as “neo-Stoic” and “cognitive-evaluative” (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 23).

²¹⁹ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 269-270. See: Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice,” 218.

of implied readers. Distinguishing between implied (i.e., the audience for whom the biographer writes) and real (i.e., “flesh-and-blood”²²⁰) readership may allow scholars to engage more fully with the topic of readerly experience while also providing a new avenue for addressing the historiographical challenges mentioned in Chapter One.²²¹

Gendering Conflict Narratives

Theorizing implied and real readership for the *sīra* is exceedingly complex for the reasons noted in Chapter One. Some biographies are known to have been commissioned (e.g., *Prophetic Biography*), dedicated (e.g., *Informing Humanity*), or address an anonymous and possibly fictitious “commissioner” (e.g., *The Book of Healing*). Other texts such as *The Book of Military Campaigns* were co-authored and compiled before the widespread emergence of book production.²²² In spite of these various distinctions, one aspect that is shared in premodern biographies is the gender of the implied audience. By the early 9th century, the *sīra* developed into a recognizable genre spanning the Islamic empire, and, despite its increased accessibility, was tailored primarily to a male audience as men were more likely to have attained the education required to read and compose historical narrative. This tailoring is evident in the ubiquity of gendered practices and concepts in *Prophetic Biography* and *The Book of Military Campaigns* such as *ḥilm*, *muruwwa*, *mufākhara* (poetic boasting), and *‘ird* (honor). It is further evident in

²²⁰ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 7. See also: Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 251-252.

²²¹ Recently, there has been some innovative scholarship on readerly experience of medieval allegorical writing in the Islamic tradition. See: Rešid Hafizović, “The Symbolic Language of *Ḥikāya* as the ‘Interpretative Mi‘rāj’ of the Soul with its Existential Drama,” *Sophia Perennis* 7.3 (2010): 11-27; Mohammed Rustom, “Story-Telling as Philosophical Pedagogy: The Case of Suhrawardī,” in *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam*, ed. Sebastian Günther (Leiden: Brill, in press).

²²² See: Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, xxvi. See also: Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, trans. Shawkat M. Toorawa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

passages that describe “sound masculinity” (*ṣiḥḥa al-dhukūriyya*) and the physical prowess or bodily perfection of Muḥammad, ‘Alī,²²³ and the Imams in *The Book of Healing, Proofs of Prophethood, and Informing Humanity*.²²⁴ While there has been some scattered interest in Muḥammad’s “masculinity,”²²⁵ many intersecting gendered phenomena remain understudied in the *sīra*, namely, gendered audiences, “gendered voices”²²⁶ (i.e., the biographers and those whom they quote), gendered acts of witnessing (i.e., those who saw and recorded discrete events), and gendered practices and concepts (e.g., poetic boasting, honor, forbearance, and “man-ness”).²²⁷

The convergence of these gendered phenomena is particularly pronounced in conflict narratives. In addition to containing rich depictions of emotional practices linked to the male body and masculine practices and concepts such as poetic boasting, honor, and forbearance, conflict narratives most frequently feature interactions between men who are identified as witnesses to and participants in historical events.²²⁸ Indeed, women’s participation in conflict

²²³ Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law who is regarded by Shī‘as as the rightful successor to Muḥammad.

²²⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 46; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 131; Al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *I’lām al-Warā bi-A’lām al-Hudā* (Bayrūt: Mu’assasat al-A‘lamī lil-Maṭbū‘āt, 2004), 98.

See Pierce’s analysis of physical prowess and bodily perfection as it relates to *Informing Humanity* (Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 94-126).

²²⁵ See: Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad*, 87-90, 144-146, 166; Amanullah De Soudy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 110-115. To avoid anachronism, I refrain from using the term masculinity in this study, instead preferring to rely on gendered-Arabic concepts such as *murūwwa* and *dhukūriyya*. David Halperin has written an excellent monograph in which he problematizes applying modernist notions of same-sex acts, desire, and expressions of affection to premodern societies. Although this section focuses on gender rather than sexuality, I follow Halperin’s line of thinking (David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For a great analysis of the “invention” of masculinity as well as its relationship to manliness, see: Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 16-23.

²²⁶ I borrow this phrase from Catherine M. Mooney, ed., *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

²²⁷ For critical scholarship on witnessing, remembering, and retelling as gendered practices outside of the *sīra*, see: Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*.

²²⁸ Although both men and women are expected to imitate Muḥammad, the sexes are often depicted in primary sources as having separate roles, rights, and responsibilities. For secondary source material which speaks to women have a separate role than men, see: Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Amina Wadud, *Qur’an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006); Leslie P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the*

narratives is infrequent and women are sometimes nameless, such as when Ibn Ishāq describes women stirring up anger during the Battle of Uḥud in *Prophetic Biography*.²²⁹ Often times man-to-man conflict is depicted in dialogue, though this dialogue is frequently couched in third-person narration whereby a biographer, acting as narrator, provides additional information for the implied reader. This point is critical to understanding the communicative aspects of conflict narratives, a phenomenon that we saw in the previous chapter, and which is alluded to in this chapter's second epigraph.²³⁰ Although biographers are undoubtedly concerned with the historical accuracy of their reports, they also utilize dialogue exchanges to communicate ethico-emotional values. Moreover, biographers rely on narrative progression, or the links between scenes of dialogue and third-person narration, to convey an ethic of man-to-man relations for implied readers. The central role of men as "somebodies who tell" and the convergence of gendered phenomena in conflict narratives will be essential to understanding how biographers conceived of ethico-emotional comportment in each of their works.²³¹ The following sections examine patterns in conflict narratives among the five biographies and the ways in which they serve as a point of ethical exchange between biographer, reader, and text.

Witnessing and Appraising Anger

Conflict emerges in myriad contexts in the *sīra*. It appears in narratives about early converts to Islam, in instances in which one's honor is impugned, on the battlefield, in regard to

Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

²²⁹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 371; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 651.

²³⁰ A crucial dimension to consider in Heffernan's statement that "The primary anticipation in the composition of sacred biography is that which contains the interaction between the author and his audience" is the gender of the author and reader (Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, 18).

²³¹ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 168.

political succession, and in theological debates between Muḥammad and his antagonists.

Although conflict narratives appear in some form in each of the biographies in this study, there are significant differences in how frequently they appear and the manner in which they are told.

As noted, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ and al-Iṣfahānī almost completely omit conflict narratives from their biographies. This omission will be analyzed further in a later section, but, for now, it is useful to look at a central feature of conflict narratives that is shared among the biographies, namely, descriptions of anger (*ghaḍāb*), fury (*ightiyāz*; *ḥamīya*), and other related emotion words. In conflict narratives, anger and its synonyms are indicated through outbursts, changes in facial expression and other somatic indicators, or through others identifying someone else’s anger in third-person narration, dialogue, or a *ḥadīth*’s *matn* (text).²³² It rare for someone within a biography to state, “I am angry.” Rather, biographers or characters identify anger, or readers are required to interpret emotional gestures and utterances as outward displays of anger. Put another way, in their depictions of anger, biographers place significant emphasis on the acts of witnessing and appraisal. Representations of anger within conflict narratives therefore emerge through multileveled communication between biographers, characters, and readers, each of whom make inferences and judgments about expressions of anger that may overlap or diverge with one another. A biographer’s judgments about expressions of anger may be gleaned from repetition of similar narratives or phrases, distancing from a character’s judgments, and even commentary. A character’s judgments about anger appear in exclamations or commentary about another’s anger, questioning, and through attempts to redirect another’s emotional expression through statements

²³² A *ḥadīth* is made up of two parts, the *matn* and the *isnād*. The *matn* is a statement from the Prophet Muḥammad or a description of his actions, and the *isnād* is the chain of narration, which functions as the *matn*’s “credentials” (Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 91, 113-115).

like *‘alā rislik* (“be at ease”). Through these techniques, implied readers are implicated in a network of witnessing, appraisal, and judgment.

The following passages from *The Book of Military Campaigns* and *Prophetic Biography* may illuminate these points and provide an initial overview of how modes of telling impact biographer-character-audience dynamics in conflict narratives. In *The Book of Military Campaigns*, Ibn Rāshid and his co-authors heavily rely on dialogue rather than third-person narration. This is partly a consequence of the enduring role of aurality in Islamic society at the time of the work’s composition and the manner in which the text was compiled, but it also functions as an effective mode of storytelling for Ibn Rāshid. In a passage from a longer conflict narrative about the campaign of Dhāt al-Salāsil, Ibn Rāshid relates,

Al-Mughīrah went to see ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and took the matter up with him. He began by saying, ‘Abū ‘Abd Allāh, answer my questions: How do you regard those of us who have remained neutral? Indeed, we have had our doubts about this whole affair, even though it has seemed crystal clear to the rest of you throughout the fighting. Our view is that we should wait and remain resolute until the community agrees on a single man, and then join in solidarity with the community.’

‘I regard your pack of neutrals as being beneath the pious,’ ‘Amr answered, ‘and even beneath that insolent throng of ‘Alī’s!’²³³

Ibn Rāshid reports that al-Mughīrah then departs ‘Amr and approaches Abū Mūsā to ask him the same question. In this dialogue exchange between ‘Amr and al-Mughīrah, ‘Amr’s insult reveals his anger and appraisal against neutrality during a period of stalemate at the Battle of Ṣiffīn. The reader (or listener) is required to infer ‘Amr’s anger and make judgments about his outburst based upon how it fits into the broader framework of ethico-emotional comportment that has already been presented through previous dialogue exchanges, such as an earlier conversation in

²³³ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 232-233.

which ‘Umar indicates to al-Mughīrah that *ghaḍāb* has precarious qualities that may be linked to disbelief (*kufīr*).²³⁴

In *Prophetic Biography*, Ibn Ishāq similarly includes outbursts and insults, but his *sīra* also crucially relies on others explicitly identifying someone else’s anger. For instance, in a longer conflict narrative about hypocrisy, Ibn Ishāq relates a *ḥadīth* that depicts Sa‘d observing Muḥammad’s anger:

‘Al-Zuhrī from ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr from Usāma told me that the apostle got up and went into the house of Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda, his face showing the emotions raised (*fī wajhika mā qāla*) by Ibn Ubayy, the enemy of God. Sa‘d asked the apostle why he looked so angry (*innī lā’rā fī wajhika shay’an*) as though he had heard something that displeased him, and then he told him what Ibn Ubayy had said. Sa‘d said: ‘Don’t be hard on him (*irfuq bihi*); for God sent you to us as we were making a diadem to crown him, and by God he thinks that you have robbed him of a kingdom.’²³⁵

In this passage Sa‘d functions as a witness, identifier, and evaluator of Muḥammad’s anger. The implied reader thus relies on Sa‘d’s appraisal in a manner that is distinct from the dialogue between ‘Amr and al-Mughīrah in *The Book of Military Campaigns*. In *Prophetic Biography*, the description of Muḥammad’s anger indicates that anger affects one somatically, even in moments when one attempts to suppress it. A further compelling example of this that we will return to later is found in this chapter’s first epigraph from *The Book of Military Campaigns* in which Ka‘b ibn Mālik says about Muḥammad, “When he saw me, he smiled the smile of an angry man (*tabassuma al-mughḍab*)”²³⁶ The tension between one’s body revealing an inward state to others

²³⁴ Notably, the exchange between ‘Umar and al-Mughīrah chronologically follows the dialogue between ‘Amr and al-Mughīrah. See: Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, xxviii-xxix for Anthony’s remarks on issues of chronology in *The Book of Military Campaigns*.

²³⁵ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 279; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 496-497.

²³⁶ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 132-133. Ibn Ishāq includes this account in his work as well: “Last of all I came and saluted him and he smiled as one who is angry” (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 611; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1036).

(who function as witnesses and appraisers) and one's attempts to suppress anger through the practice of *ḥilm* is arguably the most important facet of conflict narratives and it calls to mind Goldziher and Izutsu's discussions of the transformation of Arab virtues during the rise of Islam. Although biographers include the word *ḥilm* in some conflict narratives, more often it is implied through descriptions of one's attempts to suppress anger through being silent, walking away, pardoning, or, as in the case of Muḥammad and Ka'b, smiling.

The above passages illustrate the most common ways that biographers represent anger within conflict narratives. In rare instances, however, a biographer includes a first-person disclosure from someone who identifies his own anger. The occasions in which someone directly discloses his anger are often particularly jarring, both because they disrupt the standard mode of storytelling and because they place readers in the primary role of witness and evaluator. A concise disclosure from Muḥammad in Ibn Hishām's notes provides a particularly compelling illustration. After Muḥammad's uncle, Ḥamza, is martyred and his body badly mutilated during the Battle of Badr, Muḥammad stands over him and utters, "I have never been so hurt before. Never have I been more angry."²³⁷ Muḥammad then reports that the angel Jibrīl came to him and told him that Ḥamza was "written among the people of the seven heavens."²³⁸ Ibn Hishām's inclusion of Muḥammad's hyperbolic first-person disclosure produces an effect distinct from the previous descriptions of anger because of the heightened role of witnessing for the reader. At the same time, however, readers do not rely on a description of somatic indicators such as a reddened face, a grimace, or shaking limbs in this passage, but on Muḥammad's words alone.²³⁹ In his

²³⁷ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 756n613; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 678.

²³⁸ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 756n613; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 678.

²³⁹ Ibn Hishām's inclusion of this *ḥadīth* in his notes but not in the redacted body of text appears to be the beginning of a trajectory toward establishing an "immaculate" view of Muḥammad.

redaction, Muḥammad's first-person disclosure is absent, and it is his Companions who witness and interpret Muḥammad's facial expression:

When the Muslims saw the apostle's grief and anger against those who had thus treated his uncle, they said, 'By God, if God gives us victory over them in the future we will mutilate them as no Arab has ever mutilated anyone.'²⁴⁰

Similar to the previous passage that describes Sa'd witnessing Muḥammad's change in facial expression, focus is placed on others reading Muḥammad's grief and anger, and, in this case, exhibiting "fellow feeling" to the point of desiring revenge. The effect generated from these two passages of Muḥammad's grief and anger for implied readers warrants careful reflection. Dori Laub has written about the tremendous weight of bearing witness to a victim's narrative that may illuminate this point:

The emergence of the narrative [of trauma] which is being listened to—and heard—is, therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the 'knowing' of the event is given birth to ... The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time. By extension, the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself.²⁴¹

Though she does not use the phrase "fellow feeling," Laub goes on to argue that this co-ownership binds the listener to a participatory act of feeling what the victim feels (or, at least *attempting* to carry out this task despite the gulf of experience).²⁴² In these passages, Muḥammad's Companions are rendered as witnesses to his pain; yet, implied readers are also implicated in an act of secondary witnessing that suggests co-ownership through the participatory act of fellow feeling. Significantly, Ibn Ishāq concludes this conflict narrative by

²⁴⁰ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 387; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 678.

²⁴¹ Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, M.D. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 57.

²⁴² Laub, "Bearing Witness," 58. Elaine Scarry vividly describes this gulf and its ethical implications in Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

relating that the Qur’ānic verses 16:126-127 were then revealed which forbade mutilation:

If you punish, then punish as you have been punished. If you endure patiently (*ṣabartum*) that is better for the patient. Endure patiently. Your endurance is only in God. Grieve not for them, and be not in distress at what they plot.²⁴³

Ibn Ishāq reports that Muḥammad therefore “pardoned them and was patient and forbade mutilation,” revealing the didactic function of the description of Muḥammad’s anger and placing ethico-emotional comportment within a Qur’ānic framework.²⁴⁴ Despite the manner in which these passages bind implied readers to the act of bearing witness (and perhaps in anticipation of its consequences), Ibn Ishāq carefully orients readers to the cultivation of *ḥilm* and *ṣabr*.

Narratologists Gérard Genette, Seymour Chatman, and James Phelan, among others, have drawn attention to important distinctions between vision (“who sees?, later amended to who perceives?”) and voice (“who speaks?”) in narrative which are applicable to unpacking how multileveled communication becomes an effective didactic element within the *sīra*.²⁴⁵ In conflict narratives, implied readers, characters, and biographers are implicated as witnesses to others’ anger through shifts in focalization, or “the way narrative discourse signals the perceiver of events.”²⁴⁶ While these scholars hold varying opinions about the ways in which characters and narrators may “slant” or “focalize” a perspective within a story, they agree that these techniques “function as a set of lenses through which the audience perceives the storyworld.”²⁴⁷ Each of the above passages focalize perspectives in different ways, in some cases placing characters in the primary role of witness and in other cases placing readers in that role. Some scholars have emphasized that the positioning of readers in the role of witness may reveal both an ethical and

²⁴³ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 387; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 678-679.

²⁴⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 387-388; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 679.

²⁴⁵ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 110-119.

²⁴⁶ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 110.

²⁴⁷ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 110.

didactic dimension of the text. For instance, Deborah A. Martinsen has argued that by having readers witness scenes of shame, Dostoevsky “involves readers in the ethical drama of shame by collapsing the intersubjective boundaries between characters and readers.”²⁴⁸ In so doing, Dostoevsky “attempts to stir readers’ desire to follow the authorially approved path by appealing to readers’ internal divisions, particularly to readers’ sense of shame experienced as conscious (knowledge of right action).”²⁴⁹ Martinsen pays careful attention to what she calls “autonomic responses that betray shame,” such as the averting of eyes, sweating, or blushing, because such descriptions disrupt readers’ expectations and their sense of personal inviolability.²⁵⁰

In conflict narratives, somatic indicators of anger function differently. They require readers to make inferences about what these bodily expressions convey, and they also require witnesses to make appraisals about whether or not an expression of anger is appropriate based, in part, upon who or what is the object of its focus. Descriptions of outbursts and insults function similarly as they also involve witnessing, inferring, and judging. As will be shown, judgments about anger in the *sīra* are wholly contingent upon context (in regard to both the “storyworld” and a biographer’s milieu) and the intensity and duration of its expression. Moreover, appraisals fit into a broader ethico-emotional framework that include concepts such as *ḥilm*, *ṣabr*, and *murūwwa*, and are contingent upon narrative progression, or the way this framework has been plotted for readers through previous dialogue exchanges and third-person disclosures from the biographer. The crucial role of narrative progression in conflict narratives will be a central point of the analyses that follow, and the following sections build upon the phenomena of witnessing,

²⁴⁸ Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame*, 15. See also: Leslie A. Johnson, “The Face of the Other in *Idiot*,” *Slavic Review* 50, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 867-878.

²⁴⁹ Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame*, 16.

²⁵⁰ Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame*, 15-16.

appraising, and judging by examining the ways in which emotion work is implicated in this network. Through this emphasis on emotion work, biographers were concerned specifically with articulating an ethic of man-to-man relations.

Muhammad's Emotional Redirection: A Reading of the Conflict between the Aws and Khazraj

First and foremost, biographers articulated an ethic of man-to-man relations through descriptions of Muḥammad's conduct, which, like Christ's behavior in medieval Christian sacred biography, "was the single authenticating norm for all action."²⁵¹ While Chapter Five will examine representations of Muḥammad's ethico-emotional comportment more broadly, this section centers on his role in conflict narratives as a witness, appraiser, and mediator. More specifically, upon witnessing anger, Muḥammad's appraisals frequently take the form of what I am calling "emotional redirection." In the *sīra*, emotional redirection occurs when someone recognizes another's anger, sadness (*ḥuzn*), or distress (*ḍīq*) and encourages him to suppress an emotional practice that is often depicted as occurring in excess and replace it with another idealized emotional practice, often by using the imperative mode (*fi'l 'amr*).²⁵² In some cases, the idealized emotional practice is identified within the text. In most cases, however, the one redirecting emotions mentions God, a well-known story of another prophet, or Paradise, which functions to elicit particular feelings for the person being redirected. Emotional redirection therefore functions as a pedagogical tool which conveys boundaries of emotional expression that are inextricably tied to correct belief. This is vividly demonstrated through biographers' plotting

²⁵¹ Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, 5.

²⁵² We saw this earlier in the conflict narrative involving Sa'd and Muḥammad, when Sa'd, using the imperative, tells Muḥammad "Don't be hard (*irfuq*) on [Ibn Ubayy]." Literally, *irfuq* means to be kind, friendly, or to treat someone gently.

techniques and the repetition of story arcs or phrases. Although conflict narratives contain many instances in which Companions of Muḥammad and even his antagonists redirect emotional practices, such passages illustrate a mimetic function that reinforces the central image of Muḥammad as the paragon of ethical conduct.²⁵³

In *Prophetic Biography* and *The Book of Military Campaigns*, Muḥammad is frequently depicted as an appraiser and mediator of tribal conflict. In particular, the antagonism between the Aws and Khazrāj Medinan tribes is a recurring plot in both biographies. Prior to the *hijra* (migration) from Mecca to Medina, the Aws and Khazrāj were frequently in conflict. When Muḥammad migrated to Medina, he united the tribes with a binding covenant that ensured sanctuary within the city and equality among the tribes.²⁵⁴ Specifically, Muḥammad sought to replace tribalism with an Islamic ethos. Both Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid depict the transition from tribalism to Islam as precarious. Most frequently, this precariousness is established through the repetition of story arcs in which tribal members exhibit recalcitrance and lack of emotional control in the form of excessive or misdirected *ghaḍab*. Depictions of excessive *ghaḍab*, frequently juxtaposed with Muḥammad’s calm state, serve a didactic function by establishing boundaries for the expression of anger and affording implied readers with a model for mimesis.

²⁵³ My use of the term mimetic here and throughout this chapter should be distinguished from how it is typically used by narratologists. Gerald Prince explains that mimesis (“showing”) generally refers to forms of narration with “no (or minimal) narratorial mediation” and it is distinct from diegesis (“telling”) (Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology*, revised edition (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 52-53). Alternatively, Heffernan uses the term to describe the function and consequence of “repetitive mimetic patterns,” writing, “This ethical imperative illustrated for prescribing behavior by the deeds narrated in the life of a saint can itself become constitutive” (Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, 20). That is to say, they become a model for public *imitatio*. In Chapter Four, however, I draw upon Phelan’s understanding of what he calls the “mimetic component of narrative,” suggesting they ways in which this concept can be developed.

²⁵⁴ The covenant is known as the Constitution of Medina. See: Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 231-233; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 430-433.

In *Prophetic Biography*, for instance, Ibn Ishāq relates a story in which an antagonist upends a moment of tranquility between the Aws and Khazraj:

Shās b. Qays, who was an old man hardened in unbelief and most bitter against the Muslims and exceedingly envious of them, passed by a number of the apostle's companions from Aus and Khazraj in a meeting while they were talking together. When he saw their amity and unity and their happy relations in Islam after their enmity in pagan times (*al-jāhiliyyah*) he was filled with rage and said: 'The chiefs of B. Qayla in this country having united there will be no firm place for us with them.' So he gave orders to a Jewish youth who was with them to go to them and sit with them and mention the battle of Bu'āth and the preceding events, and recite to them some of the poetry composed by each side ... The youth did so. Thereupon the people began to talk and to quarrel and to boast until two men of the two clans leapt up ... when the news reached the apostle he went out with such of the emigrants as were with him and said to them: 'O Muslims, remember God. Remember God (*Allāh Allāh*). Will you act as pagans while I am with you after God has guided you to Islam ... ?' Then the people realized that the dissension was due to Satan and the guile of their enemy. They wept and the men of Aus and Khazraj embraced one another. Then they went off with the apostle, attentive and obedient, God having quenched the guile of the enemy of God Shās b. Qays.²⁵⁵

While specifically implicating Shās b. Qays as an enemy of God due to his role in instigating conflict among the Aws and Khazraj, the general outlines of this story arc appear numerous times throughout *Prophetic Biography*. A conflict narrative involving Sa'd b. Mu'ādh (the chief of the Aws tribe) and Sa'd b. 'Ubāda (the chief of the Khazraj tribe) provides an example of this repetition. According to Ibn Ishāq, Ḥuyayy b. Akḥṭab al-Naḍrī, identified as "the enemy of God," goes to Ka'b b. Asad al-Qurāzi's fort to confront him about his treaty with Muḥammad and persuade him to break his bond. The two engage in a verbal altercation, and, due to Ḥuyayy's persistence, Ka'b breaks his oath with Muḥammad. When Muḥammad learns of this, he sends Sa'd b. Mu'ādh and Sa'd b. 'Ubāda to determine the accuracy of the report. Ibn Ishāq relates,

²⁵⁵ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 261-262; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 472-473.

[Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh and Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda] went forth and found the situation even more deplorable than they had heard; they spoke disparagingly of the apostle, saying, ‘Who is the apostle of God? We have no agreement or undertaking with Muḥammad.’ Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh reviled them (*shātamhum*) and they reviled him. He was a man of hasty temper (*kāna rajulān fīhi ḥidda*) and Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda said to him, ‘Stop insulting them, for the dispute between us is too serious for recriminations.’ Then the two Sa‘ds returned to the apostle and after saluting him said: “Aḍal and al-Qāra’ i.e. (It is) like the treachery of ‘Aḍal and al-Qāra’ toward the men of al-Rajī’, Khubayb and his friends. The apostle said ‘God is greater [than all things]! Be of good cheer (*absharū*), you Muslims.’²⁵⁶

Both conflict narratives feature three crucial elements. In each narrative, Ibn Ishāq functions as a narrator by providing additional information about the characters. Ibn Ishāq informs readers that Shās b. Qays is “an old man hardened in unbelief,” “bitter,” and “envious,” Ḥuyayy is “the enemy of God,” and Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh is “a man of hasty temper.” Moreover, at the conclusion of the first conflict narrative, Ibn Ishāq links Shās’ behavior to the period of Ignorance, writing “when Shās brought back for a moment the atmosphere of the pagan days.”²⁵⁷ By providing this information alongside descriptions of emotional conduct, Ibn Ishāq places implied readers in the role of witness and appraiser while reducing any ethical ambiguity regarding the men’s emotional behavior. Through association and narrative progression, rage, bitterness, and irascibility are rendered as qualities of disbelief that derive from Satanic provocation.

The second narrative component is Muḥammad’s pronounced role in mitigating conflict, which occurs through him addressing the Muslim community with the words “O Muslims, Remember God. Remember God” and “God is greater [than all things]! Be of good cheer, you Muslims.” Muḥammad’s words not only indicate a call toward God consciousness (i.e., toward an Islamic ethos and away from tribalism), but also communicate boundaries of emotional conduct between men. This point is not entirely novel, but it warrants elaboration. When

²⁵⁶ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 453; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 782.

²⁵⁷ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 262; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 473.

describing the transformation of *muruwwa* and Muḥammad's castigation of *mukāfa'a* (retaliation of evil for evil), for instance, Goldziher has drawn attention to representations of Muḥammad in which he conveys boundaries of emotional conduct:

[Muḥammad] is represented as saying: 'Shall I tell you whom I consider the worst of you? He who goes by himself to meals and withholds his presents and beats his slaves. But who is worse even than these? He who does not forgive faults and does not accept apologies, he who does not forgive offences. But who is worse even than that? He who is angry with others and with whom others are angry in return.'²⁵⁸

In citing the above *ḥadīth*, Goldziher emphasizes that Muḥammad is depicted as centrally concerned with articulating a framework of emotional conduct in early Islamic literature.²⁵⁹ By drawing attention to this *ḥadīth*, Goldziher also illuminates the crucial relationship between *muruwwa* and idealized emotional conduct. What I am interested in expanding upon is the didactic and emotive function of Muḥammad's words "O Muslims, Remember God. Remember God" and "God is greater [than all things]! Be of good cheer, you Muslims." In both conflict narratives, Muḥammad's words create a rupture that simultaneously convey his efforts to both suppress others' "failures" of emotional expression (manifested through excessive displays of anger) and elicit alternative emotional practices. By mentioning God in both passages, Muḥammad's words function to elicit emotional responses from the Muslim community and further establish associations between feeling states (specifically "good cheer") and correct belief. Due to the frequency with which emotional redirection occurs in *Prophetic Biography*, as well as the manner in which Muḥammad's words are appropriated by his Companions and antagonists in other conflict narratives, Ibn Ishāq implicates implied readers in the practice of

²⁵⁸ Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 26.

²⁵⁹ Here, it bears noting that Muḥammad's words evoke the sense that an ethic of individual emotional comportment is a foundation for *social* morality, as anger and irascibility can result in communal strife. This idea was examined in Chapter One.

emotional redirection. Put differently, the repetition of narratives featuring emotional redirection within *Prophetic Biography* indicate that Muḥammad's words not only served an emotionally-elicitive function for characters in the storyworld, but for implied readers as well.

The third and final component of these conflict narratives is that they also communicate idealized emotional practices and provide a sense of resolution that reinforces the image of Muḥammad as instructor. In the conclusion of the conflict narrative about Shās b. Qays, Ibn Ishāq relates,

Then the people realized that the dissension was due to Satan and the guile of their enemy. They wept and the men of Aus and Khazraj embraced one another. Then they went off with the apostle, attentive and obedient, God having quenched the guile of the enemy of God Shās b. Qays.²⁶⁰

In this passage, male weeping is not only idealized, but is associated with belief in God and obedience to the Prophet Muḥammad. As with Qāḍī Iyāḍ's privileging of spontaneous trepidation, spontaneous rather than ritualized weeping is associated with correct belief (as well as sincerity) in the above passage.²⁶¹ In each of these conflict narratives, the precariousness of the transition from tribalism to Islam is identified but mitigated by providing readers with an unambiguous framework of right belief that is characterized by distinct emotional practices, namely, the suppression of anger, spontaneous weeping, and good cheer, the latter of which appears to take form through emotion work. Here it is important to remember that, for Hochschild, emotion work "differs from emotion 'control' or 'suppression.'" The latter two terms suggest an effort merely to stifle or prevent feeling. 'Emotion work' refers more broadly to the act of evoking or shaping, as well as suppressing feeling in oneself."²⁶² She identifies three

²⁶⁰ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 262; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 473.

²⁶¹ The distinction between spontaneous and ritualized weeping (or lamentation) will be analyzed in greater depth in Chapter Four.

²⁶² Hochschild, "Emotion Work," 561.

techniques or dimensions that illuminate this point, namely, cognitive, bodily, and expressive emotion work. Cognitive refers to “the attempt to change images, ideas, or thoughts in the service of changing the feelings associated with them,” bodily reflects “the attempt to change somatic or other physical symptoms of emotion” (e.g., trying not to shake), and expressive emotion work is “trying to change facial gesture in the service of changing inner feeling” (e.g., trying to smile, or to cry).²⁶³ All of these thus differ from mere outward display in that they are directed toward a change in feeling.²⁶⁴ Like *Prophetic Biography*, *The Book of Military Campaigns* features many conflict narratives that emphasize Muḥammad’s role in communicating ethico-emotional comportment to his Companions and antagonists, yet Ibn Rāshid’s unique plotting techniques result in a more amplified image of Muḥammad as witness.

In *The Book of Military Campaigns*, Ibn Rāshid and his co-authors establish Muḥammad’s role as a mediator early on, when Muḥammad attains puberty. In one of the first scenes of conflict (the first occurring before Muḥammad’s birth and involving his grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib), Ibn Rāshid relates a story about Muḥammad’s role in repairing the Ka‘ba,²⁶⁵ the cube-shaped shrine that, according to tradition, was originally constructed by the Prophet Ibrāhīm and his son, Ismā‘īl. When Muḥammad is an adolescent, the Ka‘ba accidentally catches fire after sparks from a woman’s kindling fly onto its covering. After careful deliberation, the Quraysh²⁶⁶ decide to tear down the Ka‘ba to facilitate its repair. When the repair is complete, Ibn Rāshid relates that the Quraysh begin to quarrel over which tribe should have the honor of

²⁶³ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 562.

²⁶⁴ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 562. The image of Muḥammad smiling as one who is angry found in *Prophetic Biography* and *The Book of Military Campaigns* is a perfect example of both an effort and failure to engage in expressive emotion work.

²⁶⁵ The most sacred site in Islam toward which the Muslim community directs ritual prayer.

²⁶⁶ The dominant tribe in Mecca.

putting the cornerstone back in its place, nearly causing a physical altercation to take place. To mitigate the conflict, an unnamed man suggests that they choose the next person who appears walking down the road to return the stone to its place. Providentially, the young Muḥammad, whom Ibn Rāshid identifies as “the Messenger of God,” approaches them. The tribal members order that the cornerstone be placed inside a cloth, and Muḥammad calls the head of each tribe to hold an edge of the cloth so that, collectively, the tribes raise the stone. Ibn Rāshid concludes the narrative by relating that Muḥammad puts the cornerstone in place. In the beginning of the following section, Ibn Rāshid reports that, as the years passed, their admiration for Muḥammad continued to grow, earning him the honorific “The Trustworthy” (*al-amīn*).²⁶⁷ What stands out in this conflict narrative is the element of foreshadowing which establishes Muḥammad’s future role as a mediator among tribal members. Attention is directed toward Muḥammad and away from the unnamed person who is the catalyst for the narrative shift that leads to the resolution of tribal conflict. Ibn Rāshid’s plotting of the origin of the honorific “The Trustworthy,” as well as his inclusion of the title “the Messenger of God,” amplifies this focus on Muḥammad.²⁶⁸ After Muḥammad enters into prophethood at the age of forty, his role within conflict narratives becomes more complex as these narratives integrate elements of witnessing, judging, and emotional redirection.

In *The Book of Military Campaigns*, this shift in complexity is reflected in a conflict narrative about ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ubayy b. Salūl’s slander against the Prophet Muḥammad’s wife, ‘Ā’isha. The story of the slander, or the incident of the lie (*ḥadīth al-ifk*) as it is often called, is

²⁶⁷ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 10-11.

²⁶⁸ Ibn Ishāq also includes this narrative in his *sīra*, but Ibn Rāshid’s focalization on Muḥammad is more pronounced. For instance, Ibn Ishāq provides the name and brief description of the man who suggests that they choose the next person who appears walking down the road to settle the dispute. Cf. Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 84-87; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 182-187.

one of the most famous narratives from early Islamic history, and it became a source of medieval interpretation on issues of honor and shame, as well as Sunnī-Shī‘a polemics.²⁶⁹ According to Ibn Rāshid’s account,²⁷⁰ ‘Ā’isha accompanies the Prophet Muḥammad on one of his expeditions. Upon their return home, ‘Ā’isha is accidentally left behind because she goes looking for her lost necklace. Reasoning that the men will realize she is missing and return for her, she remains at the campsite and falls asleep. The following morning, Ṣafwān b. al-Mu‘aṭṭal, who was passing behind the army, sees her and saying only, “We are God’s, and to Him we shall return!” has her mount his camel as he leads it to camp. Ibn Rāshid reports that ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ubayy b. Salūl then began to circulate false rumors about what transpired between ‘Ā’isha and Ṣafwān, while ‘Ā’isha, who had taken ill, remained bedridden and thus unaware of the gossip. The story evolves into a conflict narrative in which Muḥammad, first seeking to justify action against ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ubayy b. Salūl, ultimately mitigates a conflict between the Aws and Khazrāj tribes and refrains from taking action. ‘Ā’isha is vindicated when verses from the Qur’ān reveal her innocence and chastise her slanderers.²⁷¹ D. A. Spellberg has argued lucidly that the story of the slander is

implicitly a story about female chastity before it becomes a tale of divine vindication. It is a dilemma in which male honor is threatened by the sexual aspersions cast upon a woman ... The defense of ‘Ā’isha’s reputation was not about her alone, but about the effect of this charge on the larger kin group and religious community of which she was a member. It is in this sense that the defense of her reputation became at once a matter in which the gendered social values inherent in the concepts of honor and shame merged with the new faith of Islam.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ D. A. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of ‘A’isha bint Abi Bakr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 61.

²⁷⁰ Shī‘a accounts of this story often differ in several ways. See: Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 80-95.

²⁷¹ Q. 24:11-21.

²⁷² Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 63.

Spellberg's analysis reveals critical issues of female chastity and male honor, yet I am interested in shifting focus to another element of the story that has been neglected, namely, the ways in which descriptions of emotional practices serve a didactic function that informs other passages involving man-to-man conflict within *The Book of Military Campaigns*. Put another way, embedded in 'Ā'isha's story of vindication is a multilayered story about emotional redirection with Muḥammad as the centerpiece.

Part of what makes this conflict narrative multilayered is the complex way in which it is related. In contrast to the majority of conflict narratives, which are related by men, the story of the slander is unique in that 'Ā'isha, speaking in the first person, narrates.²⁷³ Spellberg comments that

'Ā'isha thus appears to testify to her innocence on her own behalf in the historical record. Yet the nature of her narrative is clearly a carefully structured retrospective version of past events ... The account of the lie may have been cast through 'Ā'isha's collected observations, but the selective scripting and final detailed shaping of her role and reactions would be done after her death.²⁷⁴

In Ibn Rāshid's account, this scripting is quite apparent, as he begins relating the story by saying, "Each of my sources related to me a portion of her story, some of them being more knowledgeable of her story than others or more reliable narrators. I committed what I heard of her story from them to memory, and each version confirmed the veracity of others."²⁷⁵ He then goes on to tell the story in 'Ā'isha's voice, writing, "'Ā'isha said: ..." before beginning each major section of the narrative. This narrative pattern is consistent with other passages in *The*

²⁷³ While it is unique that 'Ā'isha narrates this conflict narrative, it must be emphasized that 'Ā'isha had an enormous role in transmitting and preserving the historical record. 'Ā'isha was the fourth most prolific *ḥadīth* transmitter, relating 2210 *ḥadīth*; the second most prominent, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, having transmitted 2630 (Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, 18).

²⁷⁴ Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 66.

²⁷⁵ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 148-149.

Book of Military Campaigns whereby one of the co-authors relates an account from the perspective of the *ḥadīth* transmitter. Notably, however, ‘Ā’isha functions as the narrator even in passages that she herself did not witness, most significantly, the passages involving the Prophet Muḥammad’s efforts to subdue man-to-man conflict. The result is a complex web of female “witnessing” and retelling of male emotional practices ultimately related through a male lens to male implied readers.²⁷⁶

According to ‘Ā’isha’s account, she and Muḥammad are emotionally affected by the slander, though there is a strong juxtaposition in their emotional practices. ‘Ā’isha remains isolated at home due to her illness, she turns to her parents for comfort and answers, and she is overcome with long fits of weeping. Muḥammad seeks redress among the community, first through counsel with ‘Alī and Usāmah ibn Zayd, and later by speaking to the Muslim community. In his address to the people from the pulpit, Muḥammad asks,

‘O assembly of Muslims! Who will give me cause to act against this man who has brought such pain (*adhāh*) to my household? By God, I know of nothing by good from my household. They have mentioned a man of whom I also know of nothing but good. Never has he sought to enter the company of my household save by my side.’²⁷⁷

Muḥammad’s words set off a heated exchange between members of the Aws and Khazrāj. The chief of the Aws tribe, Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh, stands up and responds, “I will take action against him on your behalf, O Messenger of God! If the man be of the Aws clan, then we will strike off his head! And if he be from our brethren of the Khazraj clan, if you so command us, it will be done.”²⁷⁸

The scene quickly devolves, as Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda, the chief of the Khazrāj tribe, insults Sa’d b.

²⁷⁶ For a discussion of the relationship between narrative voice, gender, and authority in other contexts, see: Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*.

²⁷⁷ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

²⁷⁸ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

Mu‘ādh by telling him that he could never slay Ṣafwān if he tried. Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh’s cousin comes to his aid with a retort, and the two clans rise up in fury (*thāra*) while “The Messenger of God remained at the pulpit working to settle them down until they became calm. The Prophet himself remained calm (*sakata*).”²⁷⁹

The didactic elements of this story lay in a number of plotting techniques that are unique to *The Book of Military Campaigns*. The first technique is the juxtaposition of Muḥammad’s emotional state with that of the two clans. The verb *sakata* means “to be silent,” but it may also be used in conjunction with the word *ghaḍab* to describe the abatement of one’s anger. In this case, both meanings are conveyed, as Muḥammad’s efforts to calm down the tribal members is juxtaposed with their fury. Put another way, Muḥammad’s silence is juxtaposed with their outbursts, which, like Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh’s reviling in *Prophetic Biography*, are rendered “failures” of emotional expression. Significantly, the passage that immediately follows the above description of Muḥammad’s calmness follows this pattern of juxtaposition while also incorporating an account of emotional redirection. Speaking in the first person, ‘Ā’isha relates,

That day I stayed home. My tears flowed until they ran dry, and sleep’s antimony did not once touch my eyes. My parents feared that the weeping would rip my insides apart. While they sat with me as I was crying, a woman sought permission to visit me. I bad her enter, and she sat down next to me crying. While we were in this state, the Messenger of God came to us and sat with us.²⁸⁰

‘Ā’isha’s first-person account of her extreme distress, which causes a woman witnessing it to also cry, is contrasted with a familiar description of Muḥammad’s calm state. In both narrative segments, Ibn Rāshid emplots descriptions of men expressing fury and women weeping that, through juxtaposition, are revealed as excessive in the level of intensity and, presumably in the

²⁷⁹ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

case of ‘Ā’isha, duration of expression. Muḥammad is depicted as a witness of two seemingly unrelated accounts of emotional practices, and the repetitive description of Muḥammad’s calmness serves to convey to readers an ideal of emotional expression.

Yet it is not merely the description of Muḥammad’s emotional state that functions didactically. The manner in which Muḥammad works to calm the two tribes and redirect ‘Ā’isha provides a model of behavior for mimesis. In the incident of the lie, Muḥammad works as a mediator to settle down the tribes in the narrative segment involving man-to-man conflict while simultaneously engaging in emotion work by remaining calm himself. In the segment in which ‘Ā’isha describes her distress, Muḥammad encourages emotion work in the form of emotional redirection. As Ibn Rāshid relates,

While we were in this state, the Messenger of God came to us and sat with us. Now he had not sat with me since the affair began, for a month had passed without a revelation coming. The Messenger of God confessed the oneness of God when he sat ...²⁸¹

After confessing the Oneness of God, Muḥammad then tells ‘Ā’isha that God will prove her blameless if she is blameless, and if she is guilty, God will accept her repentance.²⁸² Upon hearing this, ‘Ā’isha narrates that, “When the Messenger of God finished speaking, my tears subsided, and eventually I couldn’t even tell I had been crying.”²⁸³ By mentioning God, Muḥammad attempts to calm ‘Ā’isha and redirect her emotional state. He implicitly encourages ‘Ā’isha to suppress her weeping while attempting to elicit an alternative emotional response, thus conveying boundaries of emotional expression that are inextricably tied to correct belief. This passage features strong parallels with instances of emotional redirection in *Prophetic Biography*

²⁸¹ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

²⁸² Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

²⁸³ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

discussed above, yet it is weeping rather than anger that Muḥammad attempts to redirect. Whereas spontaneous male weeping in *Prophetic Biography* is depicted as an idealized emotional practice, ‘Ā’isha’s spontaneous weeping in *The Book of Military Campaigns* is depicted as warranting redirection. As an isolated *ḥadīth*, the account of Muḥammad mentioning the Oneness of God to ‘Ā’isha while she is in a state of weeping retains its didactic dimension, but, when emplotted among other narratives in *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, the story implicates characters and readers into a more complex network of witnessing, appraisal, and judgment that is dependent upon narrative progression or, more broadly, the links between and among dialogue and third-person narration.

Along with juxtaposition, the heated dialogue between the men reveals important associations between Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda’s outburst and *jahl* which functions to imbue emotional practices with qualities of belief or disbelief. Similar to Ibn Ishāq’s plotting techniques in *Prophetic Biography*, Ibn Rāshid identifies Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh as “the Ally” immediately before relating his response, ““I will take action against him on your behalf, O Messenger of God!””²⁸⁴ Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh’s eagerness to act on behalf of Muḥammad is juxtaposed with Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda’s brash words, as he is described by Ibn Rāshid as “otherwise an upright man, but the Era of Ignorance still had a hold on him.”²⁸⁵ By identifying Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh as “the Ally” and Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda as influenced by the *jāhilīyah*, Ibn Rāshid affords implied readers an unambiguous lens through which to appraise the dialogue exchange. In so doing, he communicates parameters for expressions of anger and man-to-man conflict that are dependent upon *niyyah* (right intention)

²⁸⁴ Notably, the emotional comportment of Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh and Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda is reversed in the conflict narrative about Ḥuyayy and Ka’b b. Asad al-Quraẓī in *Prophetic Biography*. One may recall that Ibn Ishāq identifies Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh as “a man of hasty temper” and relates that it is Sa’d b. ‘Ubāda who redirects Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh with the words, “Stop insulting them” (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 453; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 782).

²⁸⁵ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 154-155.

and emotional control. With this reading, Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh’s declaration that he would strike off the head of someone coming from his own clan demonstrates intense loyalty to the Prophet Muḥammad rather than violence motivated by unrestrained anger. Moreover, the distinct manner in which Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh euphemistically describes doing the same to someone of the Khazrāj tribe if Muḥammad commands it further conveys Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh’s emotional control, lack of bloodlust, and correct intention. Importantly, anger itself is not identified as a feature of disbelief in either *Prophetic Biography* or *The Book of Military Campaigns*. Rather, attempts to redirect anger occur when a witness determines that someone has surpassed the appropriate bounds of its expression through a perceived violation of someone’s rights, through an excess in intensity or duration, or as a result of improper intention. The same may also be said for spontaneous weeping which is either valorized or redirected based upon perceived sincerity, intentionality, the “object” of one’s sadness, duration, and intensity of expression.²⁸⁶ The above passages have illustrated Muḥammad’s central role in communicating these parameters in conflict narratives, yet within *The Book of Military Campaigns* and *Prophetic Biography* Muḥammad is sometimes depicted in a manner that appears to violate these boundaries. When read alongside Ibn Rāshid and Ibn Ishāq’s plotting techniques, such narrative disruptions reveal a didactic function that places characters and implied readers in the role of witness and appraiser of emotional expression.

“‘Calm Yourself, O Muhammad’”: Others Redirecting Muḥammad

²⁸⁶ By including the relationship between emotional practices and “objects,” I am drawing from Sara Ahmed who describes emotions as relational: “they involve (re)actions or relations of ‘towardness’ or ‘awayness’ in relation to such objects” (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8). See also her discussion on pp. 10-11. Within the *sīra*, characters’ and biographers’ appraisals of emotional practices are often dependent upon such elements of relationality toward objects. So, for instance, weeping on behalf of a lost child and weeping in remembrance of the Prophet Muḥammad are evaluated differently.

As narratologists have argued, characters play a critical role in interpreting and evaluating unfolding events, and authors may employ a range of rhetorical devices to indicate their distance (or lack thereof) from a character's evaluation of events. Phelan explains that

This relationship can vary widely, from minimal distance (in cases where the implied author uses a character as a reliable spokesperson for his views) to maximal distance (in cases where the implied author communicates messages that run counter to the facts, interpretations, and ethical evaluations the characters deliver in the dialogue).²⁸⁷

A basic example of this within the *sīra* is Ibn Ishāq's use of the word "*za'ama*" (he alleged) to indicate his skepticism about the historical accuracy of a report, but Phelan's observations can be applied more extensively when one considers other modes of telling.²⁸⁸ In *Prophetic Biography* and *The Book of Military Campaigns*, characters function as witnesses and appraisers of others' anger. In some cases, Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid include dialogue segments in which both protagonists and antagonists evaluate and redirect Muḥammad's anger. In this section I argue that such inclusions of Muḥammad's manifestations of anger that warrant redirection in the eyes of witnesses indicate more than biographers' concern for historical accuracy. Indeed, Ibn Hishām's disclosure that his reasons for redacting parts of *Prophetic Biography* include a concern for brevity and a desire to omit "things which it is disgraceful to discuss" or "matters which would distress certain people" indicates that biographers did not always privilege historicity out of consideration of implied readers' responses.²⁸⁹ Some scholars of sacred biography such as Kleinberg have argued that the earliest biographies of Christian saints tended to be full of

²⁸⁷ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 173.

²⁸⁸ Guillaume discusses Ibn Ishāq's use of *za'ama* and other expressions of skepticism in his introduction. See: Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xix-xx.

²⁸⁹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 691n10; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 25. Ibn Hishām repeats this concern throughout his notes, writing in other places that he omits verses due to obscenity or in which someone spoke disparagingly of Muḥammad's Companions (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 726n223, 749n541, 750n551; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 359, 616, 627).

“ambiguous and contradictory messages” and “richer and less conventional” than later accounts which were more coherent and typological.²⁹⁰ Kleinberg attributes such ambiguity to hagiographers’ knowledge of saints’ lives through firsthand eyewitnessing, further commenting that “Their narratives are hesitant, indecisive, full of details that distract and trouble the reader instead of reassuring him or her.”²⁹¹ While this description appears to mirror the ways in which Muḥammad is depicted in the *sīra*, I argue that early biographers’ inclusion of seemingly ambiguous descriptions of Muḥammad’s ethico-emotional comportment are intentional and demonstrate the *sīra*’s mimetic function for implied audiences.²⁹²

Even in biographies that heavily feature conflict narratives, Muḥammad is typically depicted in a state of tranquility or forbearance when attempting to mitigate conflict or when faced with verbal or physical abuse. Ibn Ishāq includes a brief narration in which Muḥammad is insulted in *Prophetic Biography* that illustrates this normative model:

A man of Aslum, who had a good memory, told me that Abū Jahl²⁹³ passed by the apostle at al-Ṣafā, insulted him and behaved most offensively, speaking spitefully of his religion and trying to bring him into disrepute. The apostle did not speak to him.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 1-2.

²⁹¹ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 46.

²⁹² Although a number of extant or partially-extant early *sīra-maghāzī* works were constructed through the arrangement of oral tradition reports based on witness testimony, early biographers themselves were not witnesses in the way that Kleinberg describes for early Christian hagiographers. Tarif Khalidi explains that the “founding fathers” of the *sīra*, namely, Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) / Ibn Hisham (d. 833), al-Wāqidī (d. 822), Ibn Sa‘d (d. 845), al-Balādhurī (d. 892), and al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) lived “between 100 and 250 years after the events they described. In any discussion of authenticity, one ought to remember that this span of time lies well within the capacity of a historian to record what he could have heard orally from his grandfather and, by extension, from his great-grandfather, to say nothing about the survival of written materials” (Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 61-62).

²⁹³ It is significant that the name of Muḥammad’s abuser is Abū Jahl (as one may recall the discussion of *jahl* as the behavior of a man who “easily surrenders himself to violent passions”), which may be a reflection of careful editing by the author (Izutsu, *God and Man*, 205).

²⁹⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 131; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 262. According to Ibn Hishām, the worst treatment Muḥammad received from the Quraysh occurred when he went out and everyone that met him, free or slave, called him a liar and insulted him. According to the account, Muḥammad went home and wrapped himself up “because of the violence and the shock,” and God then revealed the Qur’ānic verses “O you, enshrouded one! Rise up and warn” (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 718n177; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 261-262).

In the *sīra*, depictions such as the one above abound to display idealized qualities such as *ḥilm*, *ṣabr*, and *muruwwa*, embodied most perfectly through Muḥammad's conduct. As with conflict narratives that feature others' anger or fury, ruptures in standardized representations of Muḥammad tend to shift focalization to those who witness anger, amplifying their evaluative and edifying role. In most cases, it is protagonists, or those possessing the same ethical framework as Muḥammad, who witness and evaluate his anger. Thus, one may recall the aforementioned story of Sa'd b. 'Ubāda witnessing Muḥammad's anger toward Ibn Ubayy by observing his change in facial expression and telling Muḥammad to be gentle.²⁹⁵ Prior to Sa'd b. 'Ubāda's exhortation, the angel Jibrīl performs this evaluative role when witnessing Muḥammad's anger:

I was told that Sa'īd b. Jubayr said: A number of Jews came to the apostle and said: 'Now, Muhammad, Allah created creation, but who created Allah?' The apostle was so angry that his colour changed and he rushed at them being indignant for his Lord. Gabriel came and quietened him saying, 'Calm yourself, O Muhammad.' And an answer to what they asked came to him from God: 'Say, He God is One. God the Eternal. He begetteth not neither is He begotten and there is none equal to Him.' When he recited that to them they said, 'Describe His shape to us, Muhammad; his forearm and his upper arm, what are they like?' The apostle was more angry than before and rushed at them. Gabriel came to him and spoke as before. And an answer to what they asked came to him from God: 'They think not of God as He ought to be thought of; the whole earth will be in His grasp at the day of resurrection and the heavens folded up in His right hand. Glorified and Exalted is He above what they associate with Him.'²⁹⁶

In this passage, the standard model in which Muḥammad acts in the role of witness and appraiser is upended to depict him as requiring emotion work at the behest of Jibrīl. Though Jibrīl does not have a major narrative role in *Prophetic Biography* in terms of the frequency with which he appears, elsewhere he is represented as teaching Muḥammad how to make ablution and perform

²⁹⁵ Recall also that Sa'd b. 'Ubāda similarly redirects Sa'd b. Mu'ādh in another conflict narrative in *Prophetic Biography*.

²⁹⁶ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 270; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 484.

ritual prayer, which Muḥammad then teaches his wife and, later, the Muslim community.²⁹⁷ The story of the prescription of prayer illuminates the conflict narrative between the group of antagonistic Jews, Muḥammad, and Jibrīl because it highlights a narrative pattern of observation and mimesis that permeates *Prophetic Biography* and the *sīra* more broadly. Ibn Ishāq writes that Muḥammad “watched” Jibrīl perform ritual prayer and then performed the prayer alongside him, and when Muḥammad performs the ritual prayer for Khadīja, she “copies him.”²⁹⁸ Jibrīl’s call to emotion work follows this pattern of the transmission of religious knowledge that begins with God and is transmitted through the angel Jibrīl to Muḥammad and, ultimately, the community of believers, thus placing ethico-emotional comportment firmly within a framework of belief and orthopraxy.

Read alongside other passages in *Prophetic Biography* that feature emotional redirection, the above conflict narrative reveals the central role of emotion work, as expressed in the exhortation “Calm yourself,” in the maintenance of one’s spiritual state. This requires constant exertion, as even immediately following Jibrīl’s command Muḥammad “was more angry than before and rushed at them.” Whereas most conflict narratives that feature Muḥammad depict him in a state of silence and tranquility, thus providing a model for characters and implied readers to imitate, the above narrative shifts focus to Muḥammad’s significant exertion and the physical manifestation of his anger as rendered through a change of color on his skin. Zouhair Ghazzal has argued that representations of Muḥammad’s anger in early Islamic literature may have been intended to “show his commonality with others,” yet this interpretation discounts the heightened focalization on others’ witnessing bodily expressions of Muḥammad’s anger within such

²⁹⁷ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 112; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 223-224.

²⁹⁸ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 112; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 224.

passages.²⁹⁹ In the premodern period, Islamic philosophers and Sufis developed this idea more broadly by composing stories of moral learning that conveyed the connection between the heart and the body, which required a learned person to interpret the state of another's spiritual heart by observing the realm of the external (i.e., behaviors, or bodily expressions). Zagar explains that for the Brethren of Purity and others "The body's movements, moments of stillness, and consumption, as well as its function as a vehicle of speech, violence, and indeed all action, put it at the center of ethical and spiritual perfection, both for monitoring and for diagnosing the heart."

³⁰⁰ In some stories, which Zagar calls "pulse narratives," an ailing person seeks out a physician who relies on the medical practice of pulse-taking to evaluate the state of the patient's heart.³⁰¹ In pulse narratives and other modes of storytelling, authors frequently emphasized characters' evaluative roles; these characters appeared in myriad forms, such as judges and even animals. Much like the physician monitoring his patient through the body's signs, Jibrīl observes Muḥammad's indignation through his facial coloring. Thus, a seeming rupture in Muḥammad's ethico-emotional comportment is plotted to convey Jibrīl's call to emotional exertion, the struggle against the self (*jihād al-nafs*), as well as the idealization of silence in the face of provocation, for both Muḥammad and implied readers.

In previous passages I have argued that biographers utilize titles such as "the enemy of God" to indicate their distance from a character's behavior, yet sometimes biographers include passages in which antagonists appear to operate within the same ethical framework. One of the most vivid examples of this occurs in a conflict narrative immediately preceding the story of Abū

²⁹⁹ Zouhair Ghazzal, "From Anger on Behalf of God to 'Forbearance' in Islamic Medieval Literature," in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 212.

³⁰⁰ Zagar, *The Polished Mirror*, 269.

³⁰¹ Zagar, *The Polished Mirror*, 270.

Jahl in *Prophetic Biography*. Ibn Ishāq relates that Muḥammad had lost legitimacy with his tribe, and members from the Quraysh incite other “foolish men” to undermine Muḥammad’s social status and his new message.³⁰² The men insult him in various ways and accuse him of being a poet, sorcerer, diviner, and liar, yet Muḥammad continues to proclaim what God orders.³⁰³ Told from the perspective of ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ,³⁰⁴ Ibn Ishāq writes that on one occasion a group of men from the Quraysh were gathered in the Ḥijr³⁰⁵ discussing the trouble Muḥammad was causing them by reviling their religion:

While they were thus discussing him the apostle came towards them and kissed the black stone, then he passed them as he walked round the temple. As he passed they said some injurious things about him. This I could see from his expression. He went on and as he passed them the second time they attacked similarly. This I could see from his expression. Then he passed a third time, and they did the same. He stopped and said, ‘Will you listen to me O Quraysh? By him who holds my life in His hand I bring you slaughter (*dhabḥ*).’ This word so struck the people that not one of them but stood silent and still; even one who had hitherto been most violent spoke to him in the kindest way possible, saying, ‘Depart, O Abū’l-Qāsim, for by God you are not violent (*jahūl*).’ So the apostle went away, and on the morrow they assembled in the Ḥijr, I being there too, and they asked one another if they remembered what had taken place between them and the apostle so that when he openly said something unpleasant they let him alone.³⁰⁶

Given that Ibn Hishām carefully excises many passages in *Prophetic Biography* that he believed might disrupt the narrative structure or distress the reader, his inclusion of the above description of Muḥammad warrants careful attention. Certainly, Ibn Hishām does not shy away from

³⁰² Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 130; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 260.

³⁰³ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 130; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 260.

³⁰⁴ ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was one of the leaders of the Quraysh who opposed Muḥammad before his conversion to Islam.

³⁰⁵ The semicircular spot between the wall and the Ka‘ba which, according to tradition, contains the graves of Hagar and Ishmael.

³⁰⁶ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 131; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 261. While Ibn Rāshid does not include this account in *The Book of Military Campaigns*, he does relate a similar incident in which Muḥammad is redirected by men of the Qurayzah who say, “‘You didn’t used to be so so obscene, Abū l-Qāsim!’” in response to Muḥammad’s words, “‘You brethren of monkeys and pigs!’” (Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 86-87). In both passages, Muḥammad’s opposers use the *kunya* Abū’l-Qāsim to redirect him.

including passages of Muḥammad expressing anger that is evaluated by witnesses as transgressive. Yet, even with this in mind, the above conflict narrative in which Muḥammad’s abusers emotionally redirect him is an exceptional account of Muḥammad’s anger due to a reversal of the standard narrative formula: Muḥammad’s use of the word *dhabḥ* is depicted as an excessive expression of anger, while Muḥammad’s abusers stand “silent and still,” the same idealized practice attributed to Muḥammad in other passages. It appears that Ibn Ishāq’s inclusion of Muḥammad’s outburst (and Ibn Hishām’s preservation of the account) reveals their concern for articulating an ethic of emotional practice more than merely a desire for historical authenticity. As with the accounts of Sa‘d, Ka‘b, and Jibrīl witnessing Muḥammad’s anger, this passage places significant focus on the men of the Quraysh reading Muḥammad’s facial expression. The men’s roles as witnesses even extends into the next day, as ‘Abdullah describes them recalling the previous day’s events. Through the act of witnessing, Muḥammad’s abusers are transformed into moral actors, if only briefly, articulating the same ethico-emotional framework as the Prophet Muḥammad. Zargar has alluded to the fact that the transformation of atypical characters into moral actors is a feature of Islamic storytelling more broadly. Speaking about Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s (d. 1273 CE) *Mathnawī-i Ma‘nawī* (*The Rhymed Couplets of Spiritual Significance*), Zargar comments that “The characters that appear in Rūmī’s narrative poems might stand on opposite sides of an ethical or theological issue, but the learning seems to be in their failures to agree *as well as* in the concluding didactic lesson that Rūmī will offer.”³⁰⁷ In this way, Zargar’s observations about Rūmī’s narrative poetry helpfully demonstrate the ways in which antagonists and ruptures in standard representations in the *sīra* may actually reinforce a

³⁰⁷ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 267.

biographer's didactic aims.

“‘Easy Now’”: *Others Redirecting Others*

In the context of medieval Islamic philosophy, Rešid Hafizović has argued that some forms of allegorical storytelling function to heighten readerly experience by facilitating implied readers' "interiorization" of symbols within the text.³⁰⁸ Similarly, summarizing Mohammed Rustom, Zargar explains that "Suhrawardī's style of narration, in which readers find themselves in the place of the narrator, allows readers to 'unveil' the text and 'unveil and therefore 'become' their true selves."³⁰⁹ Although Hafizović and Rustom's insights are heavily contingent upon the degree of intellectual exertion required by the process of "unraveling even a few sentences" due to philosophers' reliance on allusions to literary narratives, Islamic scripture, and philosophical concepts, Zargar has explored how these ideas may be extended to consider the ways in which protagonists function to implicate readers more fully into the text's ethical framework.³¹⁰ Thus, Zargar writes that "Many novels present protagonists who either figure out their place in the world or help us reconsider ours; we might call this an exploration of selfhood. Perhaps our view of the novel changes when we observe that this modern mode of exploration has at least one ancestor in a philosophical thought experiment, one entrenched in the ethical perfection of the human self, with or without religion."³¹¹ One of the most revealing ways that biographers rely on protagonists to implicate readers into the text's ethical framework is through their employment of dialogue exchanges in which characters imitate and appropriate Muḥammad's ethico-emotional

³⁰⁸ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 135. See: Rešid Hafizović, "The Symbolic Language of *Ḥikāya* as the 'Interpretative Mi'rāj' of the Soul within its Existential Drama" *Sophia Perennis* 7.3 (2010): 11-27.

³⁰⁹ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 136.

³¹⁰ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 135.

³¹¹ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 118.

conduct in conflict narratives. Rather than merely conveying to readers an orderly account of Muḥammad's life, characters' appropriation of Muḥammad's words and conduct serve to implicate readers into the text's framework by reinforcing a mimetic structure that invites readers to similarly engage in the practices of emotion work and emotional redirection.

This point is perhaps best illustrated in an extended conflict narrative related by Ibn Rāshid that features a "question-and-response" dialogue between 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and Ḥabīb b. Maslamah. Ibn Rāshid relates the events leading up to the First Civil War in a frame story that includes numerous conflict narratives which serve to contextualize widespread civil unrest. The last conflict narrative within this frame story describes Mu'āwiyah b. Abū Sufyān's address to the people in which he provokes (*ta'arraḍa bi-*) 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar by saying that no one has a more rightful claim to rule the community than himself. Speaking in the first person, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar reports,

'I threw off my outer cloak, ready to stand against him and say, 'You speak of men who vanquished you and your father for the sake of Islam!' But then I was afraid to say anything, lest I risk threatening the unity of the community and cause blood to be shed because I acted against my better judgement. Almighty God's promise of Paradise was far dearer to me than all else. After I had returned to my encampment, Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah came to me and said, 'What prevented you from speaking up when you heard that man speak thus?' 'Indeed I wanted to,' I told him, 'But I feared I would say something that would risk threatening the unity of the community and cause bloodshed and lead me to act against my better judgement. Almighty God's promise of Paradise was far dearer to me than all else.' Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah then said to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar, 'My father and mother's life for yours! God has protected you from sin and preserved you from the ruin you feared.'³¹²

As with Rustom's observations about Suhrawardī's style of narration and Martinsen's analysis of Dostoevsky's inclusion of scenes of shame, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar's first-person description of emotion work collapses the distance between implied readers and characters. Readers are first

³¹² Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 235-237.

placed in the role of witness to ‘Abd Allāh’s anger as he relates that he “threw off his outer cloak, ready to stand against him.” Yet ‘Abd Allāh redirects himself, as the Prophet Muḥammad is depicted redirecting his Companions in other passages, by shifting his emotional focus to the promise of Paradise.

Significantly, ‘Abd Allāh’s first-person disclosure is then rearticulated through a question-and-response dialogue exchange that serves to enhance its didactic nature for implied readers. In using the term didactic here, I wish to draw upon Brian Siebeking’s nuanced description of “didactic comments” in Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Tha‘labī’s (d. 1035) *Brides of the Sessions in Tales of the Prophets*, a work considered by many to be the most representative of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* genre.³¹³ Analyzing Tha‘labī’s “agency as a homiletic storyteller,” Siebeking explains,³¹⁴

... I use the phrase ‘didactic comments’ to designate those third-person reports that are not so much moving the storyline along (or even explicating some facet of its telling) as they are redirecting its import along more edifying lines. In strictly narrative sense, they are largely irrelevant. In a homiletic sense, however, they could not be more consequential.³¹⁵

Siebeking goes on to describe Tha‘labī’s inclusion of *ḥaḍīth*, poetry, and instructive asides that fall under the rubric of didactic comments.³¹⁶ Ibn Rāshid’s inclusion of the above report which retells ‘Abd Allāh’s disclosure is thus didactic in the sense that it does not convey any new information to readers, but, rather, facilitates a sort of narrative performance in which readers are primed to respond to Ḥabīb’s question alongside ‘Abd Allāh.³¹⁷ Although we do not have a

³¹³ Brian Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre: Popular Religious Education in Tha‘labī’s (d. 427/1035) *Tales of the Prophets*,” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2017), 4.

³¹⁴ Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 184.

³¹⁵ Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 190.

³¹⁶ Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 190.

³¹⁷ Speaking of David Small’s use of this rhetorical technique in his graphic memoir, *Stitches*, Phelan has argued that question-and-response dialogue exchanges implicate readers by priming them to respond alongside the character. In the case of *Stitches*, which describes Small’s experiences as a cancer patient rendered voiceless due to a removed

record³¹⁸ of Ibn Rāshid's audience as performative agents, it is worth considering the ways in which questions (real or rhetorical) and anticipatory audience responses are interwoven within the Islamic tradition. Within the Qur'ān, for instance, many scholars have drawn attention to the rhetorical significance of patterned questions directed at the implied audience, such as those found in *Sūrat al-Qāri'ah* (*The Calamity*) and *Sūrat al-Mā'ūn* (*The Small Kindness*):

The Striking Calamity
What is the Striking Calamity?
And what can make you know what is the Striking Calamity?
It is the Day when people will be like moths, dispersed
 (101:1-3)

Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense?
For that is the one who drives away the orphan
And does not encourage the feeding of the poor
 (107: 1-3)³¹⁹

While the Qur'ān is not dominated by a “storytelling impulse” in the sense of conveying a linear narrative to the audience, Siebeking, drawing on Sydney Griffith, explains that “More often, the text introduces a figure or event by asking its audience to ‘recall’ an episode, which it then remembers by way of ‘paraphrases, allusions, or echoes.’”³²⁰ Perhaps reflecting an attempt to

vocal cord, Phelan explains a pivotal scene between Small and his therapist (depicted in the memoir as a white rabbit): “In giving his litany, the Rabbit has just summarized the key events that Small’s audience has experienced and responded to. In having the Rabbit ask his question to David, Small is simultaneously asking it to his audience, who of course are primed to answer ‘no’” (Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 55-56). What Phelan crucially points out is Small’s reliance on narrative progression.

³¹⁸ This historiographical limitation extends to many other genres. Thus, Siebeking comments about Tha‘labī’s *Brides* that it is unclear “what happened after (or perhaps even during) the text was read/preached” (Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 68).

³¹⁹ Translation taken from <https://quran.com/>. For a discussion of rhetorical questioning in the Qur'ān, see: Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations* (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1999), 16-17, 53, 113.

³²⁰ Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 2. Siebeking also relates Roberto Tottoli’s observations about the Qur’ānic injunction to remember, often articulated in the form of a question: “Many Qur’ānic narrations are thus introduced with explicit requests, not to say orders, to ‘remember.’ More or less lengthy passages begin with the imperative ‘and remember...’ followed by the names and experiences of various prophets. ... Similar formulae are repeated for other brief expressions that introduce the narrative sections in some suras. God addresses Muḥammad asking: ‘Have you heard the story about...?’ or ‘Have you not regarded...?’ before passages dealing with the prophets” (Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, trans. Michael Robertson (London: Routledge, 2009), 4).

refract this rich Qur’ānic tradition, question-and-answer exercises became ““an integral part of the *qaṣaṣ* ceremonies,”” known as *majlis al-qaṣāṣ* (narrating and answering queries), whereby audience interaction was a central component of these learning sessions.³²¹ In light of these textual and oral legacies, Ḥabīb’s question to ‘Abd Allāh may allow us to consider how conflict narratives may have functioned to implicate readers through an anticipatory “interiorization” of emotional norms. In this sense, the above question-and-answer feature in *The Book of Military Campaigns* is not only didactic, it is “emotive,” or invites emotion work by allowing readers to respond alongside Abd Allāh with the words ““Indeed I wanted to ... [but] Almighty God’s promise of Paradise was far dearer to me than all else.””

The question-and-response feature may be conceived of as one of many rhetorical devices found within *The Book of Military Campaigns*’ conflict narratives that serve to invite emotion work from implied readers. Writing about Tha‘labī’s didactic comments in *Brides*, Siebeking observes that Muḥammad is “the mouthpiece of much (if not most) of such edifications.”³²² While this might seem an obvious point for the *sīra*, a significant way in which this occurs in conflict narratives is through characters’ appropriation of Muḥammad’s words and conduct. In the previous section I examined how both protagonists and antagonists are depicted redirecting Muḥammad in much the same way that he is depicted directing others. Similarly, *The Book of Military Campaigns* features many conflict narratives that depict others redirecting others in Muḥammad’s absence. These passages often contain the same phrases used by Muḥammad to calm others, the most frequent being “Easy now” (*alā rislika*). Thus, within the

³²¹ Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 68. Siebeking is quoting Khalil ‘Athamina, “Al-Qasas: Its Emergence, Religious Origin and its Socio-Political Impact on Early Muslim Society,” *Studia Islamica* 76 (1992): 63. The ritualization of questioning is certainly not unique to the Islamic tradition. There is a compelling parallel in Judaism in which Four Questions are traditionally posed to the youngest child during the Passover seder.

³²² Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 191.

First Civil War frame story Ibn Rāshid relates a conflict narrative between ‘Amr and Mu‘āwiyah in which ‘Amr incites the latter to fight Qays b. Sa‘d, but Mu‘āwiyah, whom Ibn Rāshid reports to be “the better of the two men,” replies with the same words used by Muḥammad in other passages, notably using his *kunyā*.³²³ Other conflict narratives depict Companions redirecting one another by using the same descriptions of Muḥammad’s conduct in other passages, such as ordering someone to sit down, growing silent, or confessing the Oneness of God.³²⁴ The frequency with which Ibn Rāshid emplots these repetitive images reveals their didactic function for implied readers. While repetition is one of the most common narrative techniques used among biographers, the following section directs attention to an oft-neglected editing tool in sacred biography, namely abridgment or omissions.

Omissions of Conflict

Omissions or abridgment within sacred biography provide insight into authorial concerns while also reflecting the socio-historical context in which a biography was composed. What conclusions can be drawn from the fact that conflict narratives feature so prominently in *The Book of Military Campaigns* and *Prophetic Biography* but remain almost entirely absent in *The Book of Healing*? As noted earlier, Kleinberg has argued that early Christian hagiographers were “likely to produce a surplus of information that blurred the fine contours of the ideal,” whereas later writers tended to fictionalize accounts.³²⁵ Similarly, scholars such as Robinson and Khalidi have remarked on the hagiographic trajectory of the *sīra* following the epistomising trend beginning in the 9th century. Although the presence of conflict in the *sīra* appears to parallel

³²³ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 230-231.

³²⁴ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 186-187, 250-251.

³²⁵ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 2.

Kleinberg's linear model (wherein the earliest extant biographies such as *Prophetic Biography* and *The Book of Military Campaigns* feature numerous conflict narratives and medieval biographies such as *The Book of Healing* have few), it is worth considering the relationship between biographers' exposure to violence and his depictions of conflict or violence within his writing because this has been a mode of analysis for similar genres of Islamic writing.

One may wonder, for instance, if a heightened period of social aggressiveness³²⁶ during the early biographies' compositions may contextualize Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid's inclusion of conflict narratives as compared with a decline during the composition of *The Book of Healing*. Joel L. Kraemer and Martin J. McDermott have thus described how the characteristic hostility and social aggressiveness of Baghdad during the Buyid dynasty manifested not only in actual instances of violence between different groups (e.g., sectarian violence between Sunnīs and Shī'as), but also in the intra-religious polemic works of theologians writing at that time.³²⁷ For instance, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd's (d. 1022) *Kitāb al-Irshād (The Book of Guidance)*, identified as an "inter-Islamic polemic," is full of graphic imagery and poetry, which appears to reflect his own involvement in sectarian violence.³²⁸ Similarly, Anthony has described Syria in the period leading up to the composition of *The Book of Military Campaigns* as a "vortex of violence," leading Anthony to speculate that this precariousness led Ibn Rāshid to journey to Sanaa.³²⁹

³²⁶ I take this phrase from Joel L. Kraemer who borrows it from Annales School historian Robert Mandrou. See: Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival During the Buyid Age*, 2nd. ed. (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992). See also: John J. Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 to 403H./1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future* (Boston: Brill, 2003).

³²⁷ Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, 4-22; Martin J. McDermott, *The Theology of Al-Shaikh Al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022)* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1978).

³²⁸ I.K.A. Howard identifies the first part of this text as a polemic. Shaykh Al-Mufīd, *The Book of Guidance: Into the Lives of the Twelve Imams (Kitāb al-Irshād)*, trans. I.K.A. Howard (Qum, Iran: Ansariyan Publication, 1981), xxvii.

³²⁹ Anthony reminds us that the denouement of this conflict was the 'Abbasid Revolution (747-750 CE). Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, xxv. See also: Chase F. Robinson, "The Violence of the Abbasid Revolution," in *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 226-251.

Although it is unclear the extent to which this atmosphere would have affected Ibn Rāshid (or if this period of violence had any impact on his co-authors), it is conceivable that the conflicts associated with the Third Civil War informed the composition of *The Book of Military Campaigns*. What is interesting, however, is that, despite the glaring omissions of conflict narratives with *The Book of Healing*, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ was similarly exposed to significant violence at the hands of the Almohads. Maribel Fierro explains that

The Almohads did what revolutionaries do: they openly and explicitly marked the break between the old and the new times, resorting to the use of violence, but also developing an ambitious propagandistic and pedagogical programme to habituate their subjects to the new Almohad beliefs and ways of doing things.³³⁰

According to H. Kassis, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s minting of a dinar in 542 AH indicates his attempt to navigate this precarious political environment, or more specifically “it represents an attempt ‘to accommodate the new rulers, the Almohads, while at the same time maintaining his own political and religious orthodoxy.’”³³¹ While Jeremy Rogers doubts some of the details of Kassis’ description of the dinar, he adds that shortly after the minting, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ was directly involved in a rebellion against Almohad rule in Ceuta which resulted in the return to Almoravid control in 543 AH.³³² The somewhat comparable experiences of Ibn Rāshid and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ inform and also complicate the above analyses of conflict narratives as well as the significant omissions within *The Book of Healing* while revealing the difficulty in theorizing how exposure to (or participation in) violence impacts narrative representations of conflict. That said, given the

³³⁰ Maribel Fierro, *The Almohad Revolution: Politics and Religion in the Islamic West in the Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), ix.

³³¹ Jeremy Rogers, trans., “Coins of the Almohad Era: I. The Dinar of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ that Never Was II. When the First Almohad Coins were Minted, and the Question of the Lawfulness of Minting Coins,” in Maribel Fierro, *The Almohad Revolution: Politics and Religion in the Islamic West in the Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 2. See also: H. Kassis, “Qadi ‘Iyāḍ’s Rebellion against the Almohads in Sabta (A.H. 542-43/A.D. 1147-48): New Numismatic Evidence,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103/3 (1983), 505-514.

³³² Rogers, trans., “Coins of the Almohad Era,” 2-3.

violent context of the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution and Almohad rule, it is reasonable to surmise that Ibn Rāshīd and Qāḍī Iyāḍ’s exposure to violence informed the manner in which they each represented conflict within the *sīra*, leading Qāḍī Iyāḍ to largely omit such narratives and Ibn Rāshīd to use them for pedagogical aims. At the very least, it is clear that the presence or omission of conflict narratives within these texts reflects biographers’ preoccupation with articulating an ethic of emotional practice to implied readers.

Whereas Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshīd rely on dialogue, frame stories, and even kerygmatic storytelling³³³ to convey boundaries of ethico-emotional comportment, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ more frequently uses first-person voice (explored in Chapter Two), descriptions of Muḥammad’s conduct (see Chapter Five) as well as the conduct of other prophets, and legislative discourse (see Chapter Five). The instances in which Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes conflict narratives are rare but revealing in regard to the question of his broader omissions. In a few instances, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates conflict narratives in which Muḥammad’s enemies plot to kill him, or in which he is assaulted by members of the Quraysh. Yet Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ rarely relies on acts of witnessing in these passages to implicate readers. That is to say, he rarely relates descriptions of Muḥammad’s (or others’) anger, and he rarely depicts man-to-man violence. Rather, in the few conflict narratives that Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ does include, he acts as a narrator by describing to readers the nature and purpose of Muḥammad’s anger:

It was not that the Prophet was moved by anger and provoked by displeasure causing him to do something like this to a Muslim who did not deserve it ... It is not understood from his words, ‘I am angry as men are angry’ that anger moved him to do something that should not be done. It is possible that what is meant is that anger for Allah moved him to punish someone by his curse or vilification when what they had done was something that could be tolerated and could be pardoned or something about which he was given the choice between punishment

³³³ Ibn Rāshīd, *The Expeditions*, 42-49. On kerygmatic storytelling, see: Ibn Rāshīd, *The Expeditions*, 291n72.

and pardon. It is possible that it came as compassion and *to teach his community fear* and as a caution for those who exceed the limits of Allah.³³⁴

While Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ omits countless conflict narratives, he establishes that narratives about Muḥammad’s anger serve to teach the community fear and to establish *boundaries* set by God. In a section titled “God’s protecting the Prophet from his people and his being enough for him against those who injured him,” Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ further establishes this connection between conflict narratives and fear by relating several instances in which a man or group of men plot to kill Muḥammad, only to be protected by God instilling fear through various means. For instance, one plotter reports, “I saw a terrifying sight and the fluttering of wings filled the earth.”³³⁵ And in another report Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates, “The hand of the bedouin trembled and the sword fell from it.”³³⁶ Similarly, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ describes a failed attempt by Muḥammad’s plotters to disturb him during prayer, relating from their perspective, ““We suddenly heard a terrible sound behind us that we thought would not leave anyone in Tihama alive. We fainted and did not recover until after he had finished his prayer and returned to his family.”³³⁷ Rather than implicating readers through descriptions of Muḥammad redirecting others, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ uses conflict narratives to engender fear as a way of establishing right conduct and belief. One may notice a correlation between Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s focalization on fear and terror in these brief conflict narratives and his first-person disclosure about spontaneous trepidation discussed in Chapter Two. As discussed previously, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s disclosure implicitly signals the apprehension one *should feel* when thinking about the Prophet, and the above conflict narratives, like the Qur’ānic allusions he uses, amplify Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s aim to evoke fear in the hearts of readers and, in turn, facilitate sincere

³³⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 357; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 738-739. My emphasis.

³³⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 196-197; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 441.

³³⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 193; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 434.

³³⁷ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 194; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 436.

belief.

The manner in which Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ frames the conflict narratives he includes allows us to understand his broader omissions. Like Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s plotting of Muḥammad’s life reveals a concern for communicating an ethic of emotional practice for implied readers. While Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid rely heavily on conflict narratives between men to establish boundaries of the expression of anger, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ omits conflict narratives as a way to allow for significant focus on other idealized practices, such as fear, joy, and weeping. While Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s focus on other emotional practices will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five, the following two excerpts which idealize joy may serve as an introduction to this point. Often relying on concise description of Muḥammad to establish idealized practices for readers, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates that “The Prophet was cheerful to unbelievers and his enemies hoping to win them over . . .”³³⁸ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ similarly describes Muḥammad interacting with his Companions, writing

[Muḥammad] conversed with his Companions about the topics they brought up themselves and admired what they admired and laughed at what they laughed at. His joy and justice encompassed everyone. Anger did not provoke him nor did he curtail what someone was due nor conceal things from his Companions.³³⁹

Rather than viewing Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s omissions as merely a tendency to fictionalize, the instances in which he includes conflict narratives as well as his focalization on other emotional practices reveal the expansive connections Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ draws between the cultivation of emotions and sincere belief in God and the Prophet Muḥammad. One may also see how the words “[Muḥammad] admired what they admired and laughed at what they laughed at” reveal that shared emotional practices are a way of constituting community.

³³⁸ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 360; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 745.

³³⁹ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 361; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 745.

Conclusion: Theorizing Boundaries of Anger and Conflict

Conflict, or more specifically, violence, has been a topic of interest in medieval and modern polemics against Islam, predominantly among Christians and secularists who have argued that Islam is a religion which encourages violence. In particular, the Prophet Muḥammad's conduct, as reflected in the *ḥadīth* and *sīra*, is cited as the source fueling enduring Sunnī-Shī'a conflict, violence against non-Muslims, and violence against women. Carl Ernst reflects that "The two biggest Christian criticisms of the Prophet Muhammad were undoubtedly in relation to his military activities and his marriages."³⁴⁰ And, showing the extent to which such rhetoric extended into the medieval period, Ali writes that, "Renewed fears of Ottoman military advances led to villainous portraits of Turkish emperors. They were likened in their bad qualities to 'the Arab pseudo-prophet Mohammed,' to whom Philippus Meyerus's 1594 poetic Latin life assigns ruthlessness, cruelty, and a 'diabolical combination of political astuteness and military strength.'"³⁴¹ Of course, this image of Muḥammad remains exceedingly common in contemporary religious polemics and politicized speech. Inevitably, such discourse diminishes the complexity of representation of conflict in the *sīra*: it diminishes biographers' agency (in the form of plotting, omissions, and inclusions of moralizing phrases such as "the enemy of God"), and, most importantly, it diminishes the primacy of readerly experience and the manner in which conflict, much like modern novels, implicates readers into the text's ethical framework. The above analyses have shown that conflict in the *sīra* was a primary avenue through which biographers' communicated the dangers of excessive displays of anger, which had the potential

³⁴⁰ Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 14.

³⁴¹ Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad*, 32.

to lead to man-to-man violence, disrupt a stable religious community, and incur distance from God.

CHAPTER FOUR:
ELICITING EMOTIONS THROUGH POETIC VERSE

“If you recite praise be grand, lament be grief-stricken, elegiac love be humble, lampoon be harsh and extreme.”³⁴² — *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā’* (*Salons of Litterateurs*)

Internalization through Recitation

A well-known (and morbidly humorous) account of the bibliophile al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868/9 CE) holds that he died in his personal library when a pile of books fell on him.³⁴³ While the historicity of al-Jāḥiẓ’s death is uncertain, the account reinforces a modernist image of the preeminence of private readership that discounts the rich oral and social components of the Islamic literary heritage in the early and medieval periods.³⁴⁴ To be clear, the existence of bibliophiles like al-Jāḥiẓ who could afford to collect troves of works is well documented,³⁴⁵ but the more common readerly experience occurred in assembly through interactive exchanges between reciter and audience. Moreover, as Guillaume rightly points out in his translation of *Prophetic Biography*, “there [was] no real distinction between reading and reciting. Right down to the Middle Ages it was a matter of surprise if a man was able to read a text without forming the words with his lips and so reciting it.”³⁴⁶ While the enduring role of orality in the Islamic tradition has been well established, I know of no published monograph which deals centrally with the *sīra* as recited and

³⁴² Ms. Pet. 105, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā’* [Salons of Litterateurs] (Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany), f. 221b. Translation taken from Samer M. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance, and the Presentation of the Past* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 53.

³⁴³ Devin Stewart, “Introduction to Islamic Studies” seminar, Spring 2013.

³⁴⁴ On private readership and modernist bias, see: Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 33.

³⁴⁵ For instance, Robinson describes a Mamlūk biographer who was reported to have imparted no less than 18 cases of books upon his death (Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 173).

³⁴⁶ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 733n310.

performed text.³⁴⁷ This lacuna has prevented scholars from theorizing the ways in which the *sīra* was mobilized by readers³⁴⁸ through social exchange, as well as how ethical values were internalized through recitation and aural reception. Put differently, this gap has contributed to a one-dimensional view of the *sīra*'s devotional aspects.

In the previous chapter, I drew attention to implied readers' visual engagement with the *sīra* by focusing on issues of witnessing and appraisal, thereby treating the *sīra* as read text.³⁴⁹ This chapter considers how the aural and the spoken complemented readerly experience and facilitated implied audiences' internalization of ethico-emotional comportment. Biographers' use of poetic verse in the *sīra* serves as a rich entry point into this inquiry. Given its mnemonic nature, poetry (*shi'r*) was meant to be memorized and performed in the premodern period.³⁵⁰ Classical sources further reveal that premodern Muslims were intimately conscious of a composer's use of poetic features such as lyricism, alliteration, improvisation, and repetition to elicit or maintain emotional responses from audiences.³⁵¹ I argue that biographers' use of poetry reflect these patterns and assumptions in the Arabo-Islamic tradition. Biographers were deeply influenced by the perception that poetry had the unique capacity to elicit love, sadness, anger, shame, and distress, which is evident in their inclusion, omission, and commentary about poetic

³⁴⁷ Scholars who have drawn attention to the oral dimension of the *sīra* have focused almost exclusively on the relationship between orality and authenticity in early biographies of Muḥammad. See: Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad*.

³⁴⁸ On the mobilization of sacred texts in the field of biblical studies, see: Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

³⁴⁹ On the relationship between emotional space and visual culture in the Islamic tradition, see: Jamal J. Elias, *Alef is for Allah: Childhood, Emotion, and Visual Culture in Islamic Societies* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

³⁵⁰ As Marshall G. S. Hodgson explains, "Poetry was chanted or sung—to conventional tunes—in public; not (in principle) read in the study. We must keep this in mind when evaluating its impact" (Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. Volume One (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 457).

³⁵¹ See: Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 57.

verse. Like other textual phenomena such as first-/second-person voice and conflict narratives, biographers used poetry to communicate ethico-emotional comportment to implied audiences, producing what Suzanne Stetkevych has referred to as “intratextual exegesis,” “whereby, through the repetition of the same message by means of a variety of metaphors and images, the preservation of meaning is guaranteed.”³⁵² By drawing on scholarship that describes the primacy of orality and face-to-face learning in the Islamic tradition, I offer a theory of readers’ performance of the *sīra*, which may help us understand how biographers anticipated implied audiences’ internalization (or, perhaps more appropriately, *embodiment*) of ethico-emotional comportment.

The Function of Poetry in Early and Medieval Arabo-Islamic Society

Premodern Muslims associated distinct poetic genres with corresponding emotional states. This association is perhaps best conveyed in an exchange between an Umayyad Caliph and a poet that is transmitted in Ibn Rashīq’s (d. 1064) *Kitāb al-‘Umda (Book of the Pillar)*:

(Caliph) ‘Abdalmalik b. Marwān asked Arṭāt b. Suhayya (d. c. 705): ‘Will you be composing any poetry today?’ He answered: ‘By God! (How can I?) I’m not excited,³⁵³ I’m not angry, I don’t drink (wine), and I don’t desire (anything). Poetry proceeds only from one of these (four states).’³⁵⁴

Gregor Schoeler observes that, while Arṭāt omits the well-known genre of elegiac verse (*rithā’*) from his list (which corresponded with a state of mourning), this exchange is representative of

³⁵² Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), xiii.

³⁵³ Here, Schoeler translates *aṭrabu* as “excited,” but he notes that it also means “moved with joy” (Gregor Schoeler, “The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry: Classifications of Poetic Themes and Poems by Pre-Modern Critics and Redactors of *Dīwāns*,” *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5, no. 6 (2010-2011): 5n19).

³⁵⁴ Schoeler, “The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry,” 4-5.

premodern categorization of pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry.³⁵⁵ To the significance of this categorization, Julie Meisami adds that, “This division stresses the expressive-affective aspect, the emotions which generate certain genres *and which they, in turn, generate in the audience.*”³⁵⁶ Countless scholars have analyzed the relationship between poetry and corresponding emotional states and practices, yet, despite the ubiquity of poetic verse in early and medieval *sīra*, specialists have significantly undertheorized its function for biographers by primarily focusing on issues of historicity.³⁵⁷ This section will provide an overview of premodern assumptions regarding the function of poetry, as well as the prominent theories offered by contemporary scholars who have drawn attention to the relationship between recitation practices and emotional norms.

Marshall Hodgson expresses the centrality of poetry in the Arabo-Islamic literary heritage by remarking that “If literature was the crowning art for the Arabs, within literature it was poetry.”³⁵⁸ The origins of this literary heritage lie in the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* (ode), which, by the Umayyad (661-750 CE) and early ‘Abbāsīd (750-1258 CE) period, was recognized as “the political and courtly genre *par excellence.*”³⁵⁹ While the *qaṣīda* was recognized as the most respected genre in the pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and ‘Abbāsīd periods, other poetic genres central

³⁵⁵ Schoeler, “The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry,” 8. Ibn Rashīq’s teacher further clarifies the above by writing that “The types [*aṣnāf*] of poetry are comprised under four headings: *madāḥ*, *hijā’*, *ḥikma* [wisdom] and *lahw* [pleasure] each type [*ṣinf*] is divided into *funūn*. *Madāḥ* includes elegies, boasting, and thanks; *hijā’* includes blame, reproach, and seeking delay; *ḥikma* includes proverbs, exhorting to asceticism, and admonition; and *lahw* includes love poetry, incitement to pleasure, and descriptions of wine and the drunken” (Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 27).

³⁵⁶ Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 27. Emphasis added.

³⁵⁷ See: W. Arafat, “The Elegies on the Prophet in Their Historical Perspective,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1, no. 2 (April 1967): 15-21; Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 122-123; Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xxv-xxx.

³⁵⁸ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (vol. 1), 457.

³⁵⁹ Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, ed., *Early Islamic Poetry and Poetics* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), xiii.

to pre-Islamic culture were preserved in early Islamic writing, namely, *fakhr* (praise or boasting of oneself or tribe), *hijā'* (satire or invective against an opposing tribe), and *rithā'* (lament for the dead). During the Umayyad and early 'Abbāsīd period, additional poetic genres emerged, each developing their own standards of rhyme, meter, and appropriate subject matter.³⁶⁰ Although conventions relating to the composition and performance of poetry underwent significant changes between the pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and 'Abbāsīd periods, the primary function of poetry as public recitation was preserved. In the pre-Islamic period, the performance of poetic verse occurred among men on the battlefield through mutual satire (*hijā'*) and poetic boasting (*mufākhara*).³⁶¹ Women's recitation of *niyāḥa* (lament for their adult menfolk) and *tahrīd* (poetry intended to instigate male relatives to avenge a fallen kinsman) reflected a prescribed ritual and *public* obligation.³⁶²

The preservation of public recitation is particularly noteworthy when one considers the expansion of paper-making technologies and consequent proliferation of manuscripts in urban centers by the 8th century, which would have allowed for solitary reading practices to flourish.³⁶³ Rather than supplanting orality, however, access to books “invigorated and multiplied the social bonds and rituals deemed necessary to transmit knowledge, as well as the face-to-face performance that authenticated it.”³⁶⁴ In other words, as Samer M. Ali has eloquently stated, “a piece of technology such as a book could not adequately substitute for the authority of learned gifted personalities, largely because of the premium on lyricism and elegizing.”³⁶⁵ Ali's point

³⁶⁰ Stetkevych, *Early Islamic Poetry and Poetics*, xiii; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (vol. 1), 457.

³⁶¹ See: Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 45-58.

³⁶² Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, 162, 166.

³⁶³ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 39.

³⁶⁴ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 38. Cf. Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature*, 111-120.

³⁶⁵ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 39.

impresses upon the centrality of embodied knowledge in the Islamic tradition, and enriches our understanding of how ethico-emotional comportment was transmitted in social settings. Significantly, classical sources reveal a wealth of information regarding how poetry was performed and received in the public sphere, particularly in relation to reciters' emotional comportment and audiences' subsequent emotional responses. Thus, while limited material on readerly experience of the *sīra* and other devotional literature has hindered scholars from theorizing “what happened after (or perhaps even during) the text was read/preached,” anecdotes about poetry gatherings as well as marginal notes in manuscripts of poetry collections provide rich insights into the ways in which textual, oral, and emotional communities overlapped during the premodern period.³⁶⁶

With the transition of leadership to ‘Abbāsīd control came the rise and flourishing of literary gatherings known as *mujālasāt* in the mid 9th century. These salons, which emerged in Iraq and spread west to al-Andalus and North Africa, were intimate public spaces in which individuals from a diverse range of classes, ages, and even religious affiliations gathered to recite and hear proverbs, historical narratives, and poetry.³⁶⁷ Ali describes that *mujālasāt* originated in the form of home gatherings held by physicians after clinical hours.³⁶⁸ This origin is significant because it illuminates the assumption that the physical body required nourishment through intimate social interaction. Moreover, some forms of interaction were viewed as uniquely suited to facilitate this nourishment. Thus, Ali relates that the physician Ibn Māsawayh would recite stories and poetry to his patients while examining their eyes, ears, and heart as a mode of healing

³⁶⁶ Siebeking, “The Creation of an Islamic Literary Genre,” 68. Here Siebeking is referring to the readership of Tha‘labī’s *Brides*.

³⁶⁷ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 3, 16.

³⁶⁸ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 27.

through stimulation of the soul.³⁶⁹ These clinical sessions ultimately developed into literary gatherings held by nonphysicians, but the assumption that poetry and other forms of narrative could evoke positive somatic and emotional responses from listeners remained central to *mujālasāt* participants.³⁷⁰ More precisely, anecdotes about performers' preoccupation with eliciting emotional responses from audiences as well as accounts of audiences' reactions indicate an assumption that emotional incitement was attributed to both the content that was conveyed and oratory skill. In one account, for instance, a vizier listening to the poet al-Buḥturī (d. 897) "began to tremble in a fit of rapture in response to a favorite line."³⁷¹ And in another anecdote, the 'Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 809) "[lept] to his feet and kissed the performer's head."³⁷² Regardless of the historical accuracy of these accounts, they reveal an understanding that recitation styles had the potential to add texture to, or reinforce the emotional valence of, recited material.³⁷³ As Ali demonstrates, "Competent performers remained attuned to forms of audience reaction such as smiles, pensive looks, cheers, ... and clapping," and this is evident not only in anecdotes, but also in cues preserved in marginal notes.³⁷⁴

Manuscripts in the Moroccan National Archive record pause markings (*qiff*) in the margins of the poetry collections of the pre-Islamic Imru' al-Qays, as well as in that of the Abbasid al-Mutanabbī, after especially intense lines. Similar markings are placed in the Berlin manuscript margins of *The Book of Monasteries*, in the course of jokes and at strategic moments in narrative and poetry. In poetry one finds that pauses often fall for effect after the first line.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 27.

³⁷⁰ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 27.

³⁷¹ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 29.

³⁷² Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 29.

³⁷³ For a discussion of oral recitation and emotional texture in the context of anthropological research in Africa, see: Nicole Eustace et al., "AHR Conversation," 1488-1489.

³⁷⁴ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 29.

³⁷⁵ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 53.

Ali also describes performers' textual adjustments, including "supplements and 'updates' in the margins," as well as accounts of delivery styles such as walking the stage, approaching the audience, pausing, and repeating lines.³⁷⁶ These marginal notations and accounts indicate a vast range of accepted strategies that performers used to sustain the "emotional involvement" of their immediate audience.³⁷⁷ And while performers used these strategies in their recitation of both narrative and poetry, classical sources suggest that the latter was believed to be uniquely suited to invoke emotional responses from the audience, a point which will be expanded upon in later sections.³⁷⁸

Despite a wealth of noteworthy scholarship that has sought to theorize premodern Muslims' assumptions regarding the relationship between poetry and emotion, *sīra* specialists have limited their analyses on poetic verse to three primary topics: historicity, Muḥammad's antipoetic attitudes, and the way in which poetry provides literary enrichment to the *sīra*. The neglected focus on the relationship between poetry and emotion among *sīra* specialists is particularly significant because it discounts the prevailing attitudes among premodern Muslims illustrated in the above anecdotes and marginal notations. And although it is unclear whether or not devotional literature such as the *sīra* was recited in *mujālasāt*, biographers' emplotment of verses as well as their commentary about poetry is indicative of the ubiquity of the above assumptions.³⁷⁹ Additionally, I would like to suggest that biographers' inclusions or omissions of

³⁷⁶ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 53.

³⁷⁷ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 132.

³⁷⁸ It is significant to emphasize that performers made textual adjustments to both narrative and poetry because poetry was traditionally viewed as "more impervious to change" due to its formal structure in meter in rhyme (Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 94).

³⁷⁹ The sources are somewhat ambiguous regarding whether or not devotional literature such as the *sīra* was recited in *mujālasāt*. Ali argues that because literary salons were independent of religious institutions, they became a space where individuals gathered for social enjoyment apart from religious concerns (Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 16-19). Ali points to anecdotes that describe or defend comic-bacchic performances, which were believed to counterbalance

poetry were influenced by an awareness of contemporaneous public recitation practices associated with poetry; in future sections, I will draw out the connection between assumptions about poetry's uniquely emotive features and public recitation practices. And while it is beyond the scope of this project to examine evidence of textual adjustments or delivery instructions in the margin notes of *sīra* manuscripts (which may indicate strategies for eliciting emotional responses), it seems reasonable to assume that such notations exist given their presence in other genres that recount stories of Muḥammad and his Companions.³⁸⁰

Contemporary Theories of Poetry in Autobiography, Collective Biography, and the Sīra

In the first extant *sīra*, poetry was woven into the text alongside narrative. Many subsequent biographers maintained this feature, while others omitted poetry to a large extent. Within other genres as well, such as autobiography and collective biographies of Shī'a imams, poetry was a common literary feature. Given the frequency with which poetry appears in these

other serious (i.e., religious) pursuits outside of literary gatherings. For instance, he includes an anecdote in which Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023 CE) is reported to have said,

Perhaps, this sort of talk might elicit disapproval roundly. That, however would not be fair, for the soul needs levity (*bishr*). I have been told that Ibn 'Abbās [a renowned early teacher] used to say in his gathering—after delving into the Book, the Sunna, the Law, and various issues—'Now, let's have some fun!' I think all he intended by this was to give balance to the soul, so that the tedium of serious things does not overtake it, so that it can borrow the fire of new energy, so that it can prepare to receive what greets it. It will then listen (Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 51).

At the same time, however, Ali describes "jarring frenzied textual adjustments in the margins" of a number of manuscripts that recount the Prophet Muḥammad's life, indicating that stories of Muḥammad may have been related in literary gatherings, or, at the very least, that performers utilized similar delivery strategies for religious content as well (Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 55-56). Based upon Ali's research, I would venture to argue that stories and poetry from the *sīra* were occasionally recited in these venues, but perhaps were recited more frequently in other religiously-oriented spaces.

³⁸⁰ See: Ms. Pm. 4. *Al-Inbā' bi-Anbā' al-Anbiyā' wa Tawārīkh al-Khulafā'* [*The Announcing of News of Prophets and the History of the Caliphs*]. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany; Ms. Spr. 48. *Murūj al-Dhahab* [Meadows of Gold]. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany; Ms. Pm. 127. *Tārīkh Shāh-nah (sic)*. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Germany (Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 55-56).

genres, scholars have suggested a range of intended functions. For instance, Reynolds has noted that the inclusion of poetry within premodern Arabic biography and autobiography often functioned to indicate “the subject’s literary achievement and cultivation.”³⁸¹ Other scholars have theorized writers’ inclusions of poetry by considering how it aids in storytelling. For example, Pierce has argued that poetry helps draw attention to important narrative events within collective biographies of Shī‘a imams.³⁸² Guillaume similarly remarks that it was a common practice for premodern writers to include poetic verse alongside narrative “at the crucial moment.”³⁸³ Guillaume expands upon this idea by explaining that much of the poetry Ibn Ishāq includes in *Prophetic Biography* was meant to be read “against the backdrop” of the tragedies of Karbalā’ (680 CE) and al-Ḥarrah (683 CE), when members of Muḥammad’s family and his Companions were slain.³⁸⁴ Guillaume’s remarks are significant because they allude to a number of interrelated textual phenomena that are later brought into focus by scholars of literary theory and history. Although not explicitly stated, Guillaume describes what White would later identify as “plot-types,” whereby a historian’s emplotment of events renders an account “epic” or “tragic”:

But I would suggest that there is no such thing as narration-in-general, that there are only different kinds of stories or story-types, and that the explanation effect of historical storytelling derives from the kind of coherence with which it endows events by its imposition upon them of a specific plot structure. This is to say that narrative accounts can be said to explain real events by representing them as possessing the coherence of generic plot-types—epic, comic, tragic, farcical, and so on.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 93.

³⁸² Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 26. Similarly, Khalidi has argued that Shī‘a poetry in biographies of Muḥammad “adds to the tapestry of Muhammad’s images,” indicating that poetry is emplotted by biographers in order to draw attention to noteworthy events or descriptions of Muḥammad (Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 150).

³⁸³ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xxvi.

³⁸⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xxvii.

³⁸⁵ Hayden White, “Storytelling: Historical and Ideological (1996),” in *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory 1957-2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 280.

That is to say, Guillaume implies that Ibn Ishāq's inclusion of poetry served to render certain passages as tragic, a mood that was amplified by the historical context in which the biography was composed and read. With Guillaume's insight about the tragedies of Karbalā' and al-Ḥarrah, one may see the general contours of a theory in which poetry functioned to elicit an emotional reaction from implied readers.

In the context of Arabic autobiography, Reynolds echoes other scholars' sentiments that poetry served to draw attention to important narrative events by adding the crucial qualifier that "in many cases this poetry marks a significant and highly emotional event in the author's life."³⁸⁶ As the poetry autobiographers included was their own (or, was frequently represented as such), Reynolds further suggests that poetry "could be used to express deeply felt emotions: love, grief, loneliness, anger, yearning... Because of its durability, its perceived beauty, and the amount of control it demonstrated on the part of the author," poetry functioned to communicate "an acceptable code for expressing things that, if expressed in plain language or in actions, might be culturally unacceptable."³⁸⁷ Whereas Reynolds theorizes that poetry may indicate a writer's desire to convey his or her own feelings in Arabic autobiography, I argue that biographers' emplotment (and, in some cases, omission) of poetic verse in the *sīra* functioned to communicate "feeling rules" for implied readers. More specifically, biographers used a number of techniques such as focalization, repetition, and commentary to provide a "roadmap" for how implied readers

³⁸⁶ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 93-94.

³⁸⁷ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 94. See also: Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, 30th anniversary ed. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016). Abu-Lughod's scholarship is particularly helpful for understanding the expression of emotion in poetry in relation to public and private space as well as established genre conventions.

should feel when reciting poetry.³⁸⁸ In this sense, I am interested in extending Pierce and Khalidi's idea that poetry was intended to aid in storytelling by considering storytelling's emotive dimension. Rather than merely drawing attention to important narrative events, poetry was used alongside other textual phenomena to communicate ethico-emotional comportment and invite readers into the text's storyworld. In conceiving of the emotive dimension of storytelling, it may be more accurate to speak not only of implied readers, but implied reciters and listeners as well, particularly as the public and ritualized performance of poetry in the premodern period warrants consideration of the ways in which the aural and the spoken complemented readerly experience. By approaching poetry in the *sīra* through multiple lenses, one may see that it held an indispensable role in eliciting emotional responses and inviting implied audiences into the text's ethical framework.

Emotion Claims and the Mimetic Component of Narrative in Elegiac Verse

Ibn Hishām's redaction of *Prophetic Biography* quickly became recognized as the most authoritative account of the Prophet Muḥammad's life, as demonstrated in the number of later biographers who used the text as a template to construct their own work. As Robinson notes, "[*Prophetic Biography*] generated a tradition of redacting, commenting and epitomising."³⁸⁹ Much scholarly focus has been placed on subsequent biographers' recasting of narrative material found in *Prophetic Biography*, but significant adjustments were also made to poetry. To get a

³⁸⁸ Here I draw on Hayden White's discussion of historical narrative as an extended metaphor (Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 91).

³⁸⁹ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 65. As noted in Chapter Two, the epitomization of *Prophetic Biography* must be understood in the context of a widespread tradition of "recasting" (Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 179).

sense of both the centrality of poetry in the *sīra*, as well as the frequency with which poetry was redacted, the following breakdown may be useful:

- Out of 1147 pages, Ibn Ishāq includes 596 poems. In his notes, Ibn Hishām includes 254 additional poems.³⁹⁰ Significantly, Ibn Hishām’s redacted work concludes in poetic verse.
- Ibn Rāshid (Ibn Ishāq’s contemporary) includes 6 poems out of 140 pages in *The Book of Military Campaigns*, the least number out of the five biographies.³⁹¹
- Al-Isfahānī includes 53 poems out of 566 pages in *Proofs of Prophethood*.
- Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes only 21 poems out of 884 pages in *The Book of Healing*.
- Al-Ṭabrisī’s *Acquainting Humankind* contains 92 poems out of 460 pages.

Thus, out of the five biographies included in this study, *Prophetic Biography* contains the greatest number of poems. The range with which biographers incorporated poetic verse indicates that they did not hold a homogenous view of poetry. Despite the significant variability, however, biographers shared the assumption that poetry possessed the potential to have an emotional effect on readers. This effect was not always perceived positively—as noted in Chapter Two, Ibn Hishām excises numerous “obscene” and violent verses from Ibn Ishāq’s biography out of concern for readers’ “distress.”³⁹² Biographers’ shared assumption about poetry is not only reflected in the rare metafictional disclosure, but also in the frequency with which “characters” in the *sīra* are depicted as affected by the recitation of poetry. Each biography contains accounts of men and women who are incited to anger, violence, or weeping in reaction to another’s performance of poetry. Similarly, biographers include accounts that describe one’s *attempt* to

³⁹⁰ I use the phrase “additional poems” somewhat liberally here, as it meant to refer to Ibn Hishām’s inclusion of poems as well as single verses.

³⁹¹ Because this text features the original Arabic text alongside an English translation, I divided the book’s 281 pages in half to denote the number of Arabic pages.

³⁹² See: Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 716n167, 726n223, 749n540, 750n551.

elicit an emotional reaction from another or a group of people. One basic example of this is found in *Prophetic Biography* when Ibn Ishāq relates that “Ḥassān b. Thābit composed the following lines to excite feeling for the murder of Abū Uzayhir and to bring shame on Abū Sufyān for his cowardice and betrayal of trust.”³⁹³ As with the *mujālasāt* accounts that describe al-Buḥturī and Hārūn al-Rashīd’s emotional reactions, what may be called the “elicitive potential” of poetry was represented as stemming from both the content conveyed within poetic verse and the reciter’s oratory skill.³⁹⁴ In the previous chapter, I showed that biographers’ repetition of conflict narratives functioned didactically to convey appropriate boundaries of emotional expression to implied readers. This section examines the ways in which biographers used poetry to express the idealization of spontaneous and, in some cases, ritual weeping, through repetition and focalization. Drawing on William Reddy’s theory of emotives and Amy Bard’s work on South Asian *majlis* (“mourning assembly”) poetry, I argue that narratives depicting spontaneous weeping in reaction to the recitation of poetry as well as poems depicting ritual weeping function as “tools or training mechanisms” for implied reader’s interiorization of

³⁹³ The poem is as follows,

The people on both sides of Dhū’l-Majāz rose one morning,
 But Ibn Ḥarb’s protégé in Mughammas did not!
 The farting donkey did not protect him he was bound to defend.
 Hind did not avert her father’s shame.
 Hishām b. al-Walīd covered you with his garments,
 Wear them out and mend new ones like them later.
 He got what he wanted from him and became famous,
 But you were utterly useless.
 If the shaykhs at Badr had been present
 The people’s sandals would have been red with blood newly shed.

(Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 190; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 360).

³⁹⁴ Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, 29.

idealized ethico-emotional comportment.³⁹⁵ As will be demonstrated in a later section, however, biographers also held ambivalent feelings about poetry, which is most vividly illustrated in their inclusion and omission of *tahrīd* poetry and narratives that depict others inciting people to anger or violence through recitation.

One of the most common forms of poetry that appears in the *sīra* is *rithā'*, or elegy. Both men and women compose and recite elegiac verse in the *sīra* to express mourning for family members and loved ones who have passed away. Most frequently, men are eulogized, particularly if their death occurred on the battlefield, but biographers also include numerous elegies that were composed for men who died of natural causes, such as the Prophet Muḥammad and his grandfather, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. This tradition of eulogization was a remnant of the pre-Islamic era, though, as Stetkevych explains, the composition and recitation of *rithā'* before the rise of Islam was most frequently associated with women.³⁹⁶ Focusing primarily on women's recitation of *rithā'*, Stetkevych describes the mnemonic imperative of oral poetry whereby "whatever is not remembered/memorized is lost."³⁹⁷ Stetkevych lucidly argues that by reciting *rithā'*, women are put "on record" as "being in perpetual mourning," in effect relieving women of the continuous practice of actual mourning.³⁹⁸ In this way, *rithā'* expresses a ritual and public intent.³⁹⁹ While considering Stetkevych's theory of the mnemonic imperative, I am interested in shifting focus to the ways in which elegies in the *sīra* (as recited by both men and women) provide signposts for how implied readers should feel when reading and reciting. This point is

³⁹⁵ Amy Bard, "'No Power of Speech Remains': Tears and Transformation in South Asian *Majlis* Poetry," in *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination*, ed. Kimberley Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 156.

³⁹⁶ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, 162-163.

³⁹⁷ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, xiii.

³⁹⁸ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, 166.

³⁹⁹ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, 166.

vividly illustrated in a brief poem included by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ in *The Book of Healing*. When the Prophet Muḥammad died after enduring a brief illness, Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid both include an evocative narrative in which ‘Umar, Muḥammad’s close friend and the second Caliph, expresses an inability to comprehend Muḥammad’s death. Moments after Muḥammad’s passing, Ibn Ishāq writes that ‘Umar addressed the community with the words “‘Some of the disaffected will allege that the apostle is dead, but by God he is not dead.’”⁴⁰⁰ Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid relate that ‘Umar continued speaking to the community in this way until Abū Bakr redirects him through Qur’ānic recitation.⁴⁰¹ Unlike Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ departs from a chronological structure and omits the above narrative about Muḥammad’s passing.⁴⁰² In a chapter entitled “On the Necessity of Loving the Prophet,” however, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ conveys the depth of ‘Umar’s loss. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates that ‘Umar went out one night to observe the people during his reign as Caliph and saw an old woman in her home teasing some wool, reciting,

The prayer of the good be upon Muhammad,
 May the blessed bless him!
 I was standing in tears before dawn. If only I knew,
 When death gives us different forms,
 Whether the Abode will join me to my beloved!⁴⁰³

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates that when ‘Umar heard this, he sat down in tears.⁴⁰⁴ At the most basic level, this brief narrative conveys ‘Umar’s deep love for Muḥammad, and that sincere love for Muḥammad may lead to spontaneous tears. Yet a consideration of William Reddy’s theory of emotives may allow us to reframe the above poem in the context of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s broader

⁴⁰⁰ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 682; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1134.

⁴⁰¹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 682; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1134; Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 188-189.

⁴⁰² The accounts are also different in *Proofs of Prophethood* and *Acquainting Humankind*.

⁴⁰³ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 225-226; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 497.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 226; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 498.

narrative strategies.

Drawing on J. L. Austin's work on speech act theory, Reddy expands upon Austin's central argument that "not all statements are descriptive."⁴⁰⁵ The classic example Austin provides is when one says "I do" at a wedding.⁴⁰⁶ Austin calls such utterances "performatives," which are "used in such a way as to make the utterance into an order."⁴⁰⁷ Reddy argues for consideration of an additional type of utterance called "emotives," which derive from what he calls "emotion claims."⁴⁰⁸ As Reddy explains, "statements about the speaker's emotions are prominent examples of a type of utterance that is neither constative (description) nor performative, neither 'doing things with words' nor offering an account or representation of something."⁴⁰⁹ Emotion claims in the first person present tense, such as "I am angry," are descriptive in appearance and thus mimic statements such as "I have red hair," but also have a "self-exploring or self-altering effect."⁴¹⁰ To demonstrate that emotion claims are not merely descriptive (though they may appear as such), Reddy provides an example of someone saying "I love you," which, in some circumstances, may be spoken in order to find out if it is "truly felt."⁴¹¹ The effects following an emotion claim may thus lead to a range of outcomes, such as "confirming, disconfirming, indifferent to, intensifying, or attenuating the emotion claimed."⁴¹² One may therefore see Reddy's concept of emotives as an expansion of Hochschild's theory of emotion work (and indeed Reddy refers to Hochschild's

⁴⁰⁵ William M. Reddy, "Emotional Liberty: Politics and History in the Anthropology of Emotions," *Cultural Anthropology* 14, no. 2 (May 1999): 267.

⁴⁰⁶ Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 267.

⁴⁰⁷ Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 267-268.

⁴⁰⁸ Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 268.

⁴⁰⁹ Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 268.

⁴¹⁰ Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 268.

⁴¹¹ Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 269. Reddy explains that, "the 'truth' or 'falsehood' of the statement depends on its effects on the speaker" (Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 269).

⁴¹² Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 269. Importantly, Reddy identifies a number of researchers who have studied "the powerful effects that emotional utterances can have on emotions," such as Phoebe Ellsworth (1994), Ronald De Sousa (1987), and Bruce Kapferer (1979) (Reddy, "Emotional Liberty," 269).

1983 study), which describes one's efforts to change an emotion in degree or quality.

Significantly, Reddy does not limit his study of emotives to first-person emotion claims.

Utterances such as “You appear angry” or “He is afraid,” while not emotives for the speaker, can “force rehearsal of the claim in the first person on the person spoken about, and such a rehearsal is an emotive.”⁴¹³ In this way, “Emotives are themselves instruments for directly changing, building, hiding, and intensifying emotions.”⁴¹⁴

Reddy's theory of emotives adds significant texture to Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's inclusion of the above poem and accompanying narrative by allowing us to consider how emotion claims may force rehearsals for those in the “storyworld” and, perhaps more importantly, for implied readers. Put differently, Reddy's work provides a richer framework for conceiving of the *sīra* as a devotional genre. In the above poem, one may reframe the old woman's words “I was standing in tears before dawn” as an emotive rather than a descriptive utterance. Indeed, as Stetkevych has shown in pre-Islamic *rithā'*, statements about the outpouring of tears are not meant to be read as descriptive, but express a ritual function.⁴¹⁵ Although it is unclear what outcome this utterance produces for her within the narrative structure, the woman's words force a rehearsal for both 'Umar and implied readers. For 'Umar, the forced rehearsal leads to a powerful self-altering effect that causes him to sit down in tears. It is not insignificant that Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ does not provide an account of the woman's words having an effect on her. As with the majority of conflict narratives in other biographies, this woman remains nameless, and focus is placed on the male body rather than on her emotional reaction. The additional texture that emerges from this description of 'Umar's spontaneous tears stems from Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's inclusion of numerous

⁴¹³ Reddy, “Emotional Liberty,” 270.

⁴¹⁴ Reddy, “Emotional Liberty,” 270.

⁴¹⁵ Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, 166.

accounts of other righteous men weeping, either in remembrance of God or the Prophet Muḥammad. In the same chapter, for instance, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes a tradition from Ishāq al-Tujibi (d. 1087 CE) who is reported to have said, “Whenever the Companions of the Prophet heard his name after he died, they were humble, their skins trembled and they wept. It was the same with many of the Followers. Some of them act like that out of love and yearning for him, others out of respect.”⁴¹⁶ In other passages as well, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes hyperbolic descriptions of other prophets weeping in remembrance of God, such as Dā’ūd (David):

He mixed his drink with tears. He was never seen to laugh after his error nor to look directly at the sky because of his shyness (*ḥayā’*) before his Lord and he continued to weep for the rest of his life. It is said that he wept (*bakā*) until the plants sprang up from his tears until the tears formed ridges in his cheeks.⁴¹⁷

Similar to the description of Dā’ūd, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates a narration from Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 722) about the Prophet Yaḥyā’s (John the Baptist) tendency to weep: “‘Yahya’s food was herbs. He used to weep (*kāna yabkī*) out of fear (*khashya*) of Allah until the tears made ridges in his cheeks.”⁴¹⁸ Through “repetition texture,” Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ conveys the idealization of spontaneous weeping out of love, fear, or humility, thereby rendering the description of ‘Umar’s emotional reaction consistent with the prophetic model that implied readers should strive to emulate.⁴¹⁹

Reddy’s theory of emotives allows us to see emotion claims in *The Book of Healing* beyond their

⁴¹⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 227; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 501.

⁴¹⁷ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 79; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 197-198. Significantly, this description of Dawūd weeping is extremely similar to a description of Plato found in Al-Mubashshir’s *Kitāb Mukhtār al-Ḥikam wa-Maḥāsin al-Kalim* (*Book of Selected Maxims and Aphorisms*) (circa 1048 CE), which was part of the Graeco-Arabic translation activity described in Chapter One. Al-Mubashshir writes, “One could usually detect his presence through hearing him weep. When he wept, he could be heard two miles away in deserted rural districts. He wept uninterruptedly” (Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage*, 29).

⁴¹⁸ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 79; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 199.

⁴¹⁹ First labeled “repetitive texture” by Vernon K. Robbins, “repetition texture” describes words and phrases that occur repetitively in a larger span of literature or discourse (Vernon Robbins, email to author, April 22, 2019). See: Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996) and Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996). This phenomenon will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Five.

descriptive appearance and enriches what Phelan and others have described as the mimetic component of narrative, or “rhetorical readers’ interest in the characters as possible people and in the narrative world as like our own, that is, hypothetically or conceptually possible.”⁴²⁰ That is to say, emotives function to collapse the distance between the implied audience and “characters.”

Bard’s application of Reddy’s work in her study of South Asian *majlis* poetry allows us to theorize how implied readers’ investment in the narrative world cannot be divorced from the aural and spoken dimensions of readerly experience.⁴²¹ When one considers, as Guillaume has remarked, that reading the *sīra* necessarily involved the forming of words with one’s lips, Reddy’s theory of emotives can be broadened and enriched by considering the interrelated roles of implied reader, implied listener, and implied reciter. Bard takes up this idea in her study of *majlis* poetry by placing focus on the role of listeners and reciters.⁴²² In contemporary Shī‘a mourning assemblies, Muslims gather to recount the martyrdom and torture of Ḥusayn (the Prophet Muḥammad’s grandson) and his family at Karbalā through the recitation of poetry. Listeners are encouraged to imagine themselves physically present at Karbalā, and, through such imagining, “should be moved to tears.”⁴²³ Bard goes on to describe that *majlis* poetry frequently contains formulaic descriptions of tears and weeping which, following Reddy’s work, she identifies as emotives:

Emotives such as ‘now is the time for tears!’ (as seen in the last stanza of Mūnis’s marsiyah) can articulate a communally idealized sentiment, activate or intensify a feeling on the part of the individual making the emotional claim, and spur others

⁴²⁰ Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*, 11.

⁴²¹ This idea is analyzed in great depth by historian of medieval Christianity Sara Richey in Sara Richey, “The Wound’s Presence and Bodily Absence: Activating the Senses in a Fourteenth-Century Manuscript” in *Sensory Reflections: Traces of Experience in Medieval Artifacts*, ed. Fiona Griffiths and Kathryn Starkey (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 163-180.

⁴²² See also: Richard K. Wolf, “Embodiment and Ambivalence: Emotion in South Asian Muharram Drumming,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, no. 32 (2000): 81-116.

⁴²³ Bard, “‘No Power of Speech Remains,’” 146.

to participate in or share in the experience of the person making the claim. In a sense, emotives are tools or training mechanisms for achieving what is the desired state in the Shī‘ī mourning assembly.⁴²⁴

Bard reads other formulaic expressions such as “We are mourners!” as emotives, which may invite interiorization of the suffering experienced at Karbalā through the ritualized actions of listening and reciting.⁴²⁵ The connection that Bard draws between listening to/reciting emotives and *imagining* adds complexity to the account of ‘Umar’s spontaneous tears and its mimetic component in *The Book of Healing* while reflecting a need for more rigorous work on the aural and spoken dimensions of early and medieval *sīra* which has heretofore been neglected. Indeed, the significance of the aural and spoken dimensions are reflected in the account itself, as it through hearing the women’s recitation that ‘Umar remembers his loss, imagines Muḥammad and the Abode, and begins to weep. In her seminal work on emotional ethics, Nussbaum similarly explores the connection between listening and imaging in her analysis of the emotional properties of music, writing, “On the side of the listener, we have the point of view that the music invites the listener to occupy — what Jerrold Levinson has aptly called ‘the point of view of the music.’ We also have various more local positions within the music that the listener might choose to occupy, in identifying with one of its ‘characters.’”⁴²⁶ Nussbaum and Levinson’s insights are highly evocative of Phelan’s observations regarding the mimetic component of narrative, yet the unique properties of music (and, transferrably, recited poetry) such as intonation, rhythm, and paronomasia, invite readers to occupy a “point of view” within the storyworld that is absent in written narrative.⁴²⁷ While it is unclear precisely how *The Book of*

⁴²⁴ Bard, “‘No Power of Speech Remains,’” 156.

⁴²⁵ Bard, “‘No Power of Speech Remains,’” 156.

⁴²⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 253.

⁴²⁷ Much has been written on the connection between music and emotion. In addition to Nussbaum’s work, see:

Healing was recited (and, more specifically, how reading practices of poetry within the text may have differed from those of narrative), when read as an emotive utterance, the words “I was standing in tears before dawn” have a “self-exploring or self-altering effect” as implied readers-listeners-reciters are invited to imagine ‘Umar’ s loss and perhaps share in his grief.⁴²⁸ In the previous two chapters, I discussed readerly experience almost exclusively in terms of implied readership, which revealed one facet of audiences’ engagement with the “storyworld.” Reddy and Bard’s work on emotives allows us to see that implied audiences’ investment in the narrative world cannot be divorced from the aural and spoken dimensions of readerly experience. This is particularly important for a study of Islamic texts given the currency placed on face-to-face learning in the early and medieval periods. In *Prophetic Biography*, the remnants of a ritually-prescribed oral poetic form of *rithā*’ demonstrates the interconnected role of implied reader-listener-reciter, and further illustrates how poetry functioned to invite interiorization of ethico-emotional comportment.

A majority of the elegies composed by men and women in *Prophetic Biography* feature formulaic phrases such as “My eye is weary of remembering” and “O eye, be generous,” which would have been familiar to implied readers both because they were a remnant of pre-Islamic poetic form and because they served a ritual function. Stetkevych shows that, rather than being unimaginative, formulaic phrases in pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry such as “do not be

Jenefer Robinson, “The Expression and Arousal of Emotion in Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 13-22, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/431581>; Jenefer Robinson and Robert S. Hatten, “Emotions in Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 71-106, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/mts.2012.34.2.71>; Hauke Egermann and Stephen McAdams, “Empathy and Emotional Contagion as a Link Between Recognized and Felt Emotions in Music Listening,” *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 31, no. 2 (December 2013): 139-156, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/mp.2013.31.2.139>.

⁴²⁸ Reddy, “Emotional Liberty,” 268.

- Down my cheeks like falling **pearls**
- Barra: **Be generous, O eyes**, with your **pearly tears**
For the **generous** nature who never repelled a beggar.
- ‘Ātika: **Be generous O eyes**, and not niggardly
With your **tears** when others sleep
- Umm Ḥakīm al-Bayḍā’: **Weep, O eye, generously**, hide not thy **tears** ...
Weep for him, refrain not from grief,
Make women **weep** for him **as long as you live**.
- Umayma: I shall **weep** for him **as long as I live**.
His memory deserves that I suffer.
- Arwā: My **eye wept** and well it did.⁴³⁴

In other passages as well, elegies attributed to men contain the same formulaic phrases and imagery. Maṭrūd b. Ka‘b al-Khuzā‘ī’s elegy of Nawfal,⁴³⁵ for example, shares the same patterns found in ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s daughters’ elegies:

O eye, weep copiously, pour down thy tears,
Weep over Mughīra’s sons, that noble breed of Ka‘b,
O eye, cease not to weep thy gathering tears,
Bewail my heartfelt sorrow in life’s misfortunes...

Woe to you, weep if you can weep...

Weep for the father of the women with disheveled hair
Who weep for him with faces unveiled as camels doomed to die.

I passed that night in pain watching the stars
I wept and my little daughters wept to share my grief...

I say while my eye ceases not to weep,
May God spare the unfortunate (family)!⁴³⁶

The same formulaic patterns are likewise found in elegies composed for the Prophet Muḥammad upon his death, such as that attributed to Ḥassān b. Thābit in Ibn Hishām’s notes:

⁴³⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 74-76; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 162-166.

⁴³⁵ The last of the sons of ‘Abd Manāf, Muḥammad’s great-great-great grandfather.

⁴³⁶ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 60-61; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 137-140.

There I stood weeping the apostle,
 My very eyelids ran with tears,
 Reminding me of his favours. Methinks my soul
 Cannot recount them and halts bewildered.
 Aḥmad's⁴³⁷ loss exhausted my soul with pain
 While it recounted the apostle's favours.
 Yet it has failed to capture a tithe of what he did
 But my soul can only report what it feels...⁴³⁸

In these and other elegies, one may find an economy of imagery through the repetition of words such as “tears,” “pearls,” “generous,” “eye(s),” “weep/wept,” and “as long as you/I live.” It is limiting to suggest that by including elegies that contain these patterns Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām were solely concerned with preserving authentic accounts of recited poetry. Indeed, W. Arafat has convincingly argued that the four elegies composed for the Prophet Muḥammad in *Prophetic Biography* (all of which are ascribed to Ḥassān b. Thābit) are the work of later Anṣāris and were thus composed long after Muḥammad's death.⁴³⁹ More than merely reflecting a closed oral-formulaic system, Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām's inclusion of elegies that feature recurring imagery and formulaic patterns function to elicit emotional responses from implied audiences. This is consonant with the work of Arafat, who argues that the elegies spuriously attributed⁴⁴⁰ to Ḥassān b. Thābit reflect, among other concerns, “an intense sentimentality in concentrating their thoughts on the Prophet himself, with whom their glorious past was closely connected.”⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁷ Aḥmad is from the same root as Muḥammad, and it is one of the names used for the Prophet Muḥammad.

⁴³⁸ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 795n921; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1147.

⁴³⁹ Arafat, “The Elegies on the Prophet,” 19. Arafat provides many reasons for this claim, such as the use of the name Aḥmad for the Prophet Muḥammad and the description of Muḥammad's wives as nuns, both of which would have been unlikely for a contemporary poet (Arafat, “The Elegies on the Prophet,” 17, 19).

⁴⁴⁰ On the phenomenon of spurious attribution in other genres, see: Suleiman Ali Mourad, *Early Islam between Myth and History: Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of his Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship* (Boston: Brill, 2006).

⁴⁴¹ Arafat, “The Elegies on the Prophet,” 15.

Whereas Arafat focuses on the composer(s)' desire to convey what Meisami has elsewhere referred to as the "expressive-affective aspect" within his elegies, I am interested in Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām's use of such elegies as a feature of emotive storytelling.

Stetkevych alludes to this phenomenon in a rich analysis of *tarṣī'* (internal rhyme) in al-Fāri'ah bint Shaddād al-Murriyyah's elegy for her brother by describing the way in which "the building tension of the repeated epithetic pattern creates a heightened emotive state" for implied audiences.⁴⁴² Stetkevych's analysis can be expanded to consider Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām's plotting of elegies, which, through repetition of formulaic phrases, provide signposts for how implied readers should feel when reading and reciting. For Bard, audiences' familiarity with poetic content and form is crucial to conceiving of emotion claims in elegies as "tools or training mechanisms" because such familiarity may transform listeners into reciters, spectators into participants, as "Astute audience members can predict the final lines of verses based on meter, rhyme, and subject matter, and chime in to successfully complete a stanza."⁴⁴³ As with the story of 'Umar in the *The Book of Healing*, the repetition of formulaic phrases such as "O eye, weep copiously" generates a "self-exploring or self-altering effect" for implied audiences by inviting audiences to imagine the losses conveyed through multi-sensory engagement with the text.⁴⁴⁴ As will be demonstrated in the following section, however, biographers were wary of the effect recited poetry could have for implied audiences, which is most vividly illustrated in their inclusion and omission of "incitement poetry" and narratives that depict others inciting people to anger or violence through recitation.

⁴⁴² Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals*, 183.

⁴⁴³ Bard, "No Power of Speech Remains," 157.

⁴⁴⁴ Again, see: Ritchey, "The Wound's Presence," 163-180 for a rich comparison of multi-sensory engagement with devotional texts in the Christian tradition.

Ambivalent Feelings: “Emotion Raising” and the Incitement of Anger and Shame

In the context of the Chinese revolution of 1949, Elizabeth J. Perry refers to a form of emotion work called “emotion-raising” (*tigao qingxu*) which provides analytical yield for understanding the emotional force that poetry (and, more specifically, its public recitation) was thought to possess for biographers. Drawing on Hochschild’s theory of emotion work, Perry describes a number of calculated and elaborate strategies that Chinese Communist leaders used to elicit and maintain the “emotional commitment” among cadres and ordinary recruits.⁴⁴⁵ Perry’s study is insightful because it demonstrates Communist leaders’ utilization of performance, images, sound, and memory to elicit public expressions of anger, fear, and shame for revolutionary purposes.⁴⁴⁶ Specifically, union cadres were instructed to raise peasant recruits’ emotions by putting on exhibits which displayed bloody clothing belonging to victims of the accused and weapons used by perpetrators to create an atmosphere that was “solemn yet lively.”⁴⁴⁷ Sound was also viewed as an effective tool to aid in emotion raising as songs were taught to workers to “enliven the proceedings” in meetings, and cadres were instructed to use slogans that were “brief” and “easily grasped” with “clear and forceful voices.”⁴⁴⁸ Yet Perry describes how Mao Zedong and his lieutenants were strategic in their use of this multi-pronged approach as they observed that emotionally-charged convocations could easily get out of hand

⁴⁴⁵ Elizabeth J. Perry, “Moving the Masses: Emotion Work in the Chinese Revolution,” *Mobilization: An International Journal* 7, no. 2 (2002): 112.

⁴⁴⁶ Perry, “Moving the Masses,” 112.

⁴⁴⁷ Perry, “Moving the Masses,” 116. Perry explains that peasant recruits were also “encouraged to articulate their own accusations against their former oppressors” and thus internalize feelings of anger (Perry, “Moving the Masses,” 113)

⁴⁴⁸ Perry, “Moving the Masses,” 117.

and devolve into chaos.⁴⁴⁹ Perry’s work on “emotion-raising” helps us understand biographers’ ambivalence about poetry as the very features that aided in expressing reverence for the Prophet Muḥammad or the idealization of spontaneous weeping was also represented in the *sīra* as having the potential to spur others to boundless rage.⁴⁵⁰

This section examines narratives that describe instances in which recited poetry excites feelings of rage or shame for the listener. What I will broadly refer to as “incitement poetry” in biographies of Muḥammad may actually be classified into a number of different genres with distinct characteristics, namely, *tahrīd*, *hijā’* (mutual satire), and *mufākhara* (poetic boasting). Frequently associated with women, *tahrīd* poetry functioned to instigate male relatives to avenge a fallen kinsman. Like women’s *rithā’*, *tahrīd* was publicly performed by women on the battlefield in the pre-Islamic period, and some biographers include *tahrīd* poetry or descriptions of this custom. Biographers also include *hijā’* and *mufākhara*, which were typically recited by men on the battlefield to incite feelings of either rage or shame. More broadly, one may speak of poems that feature the theme of blood vengeance (*tha’r*) which is found in some *sīra* works and is noticeably absent in others. For instance, though contemporaries, Ibn Ishāq includes *tahrīd* poetry, *hijā’*, *mufākhara*, and poems that feature *tha’r*, whereas Ibn Rāshid completely omits all forms of such poetry. Indeed, out of the six poems Ibn Rāshid includes, five mention either the Prophet Muḥammad, God, or the Hereafter and one is recited by Muḥammad himself. Similar to Mao and his lieutenants’ complex views about *tigao qingxu*, biographers treated incitement

⁴⁴⁹ Perry, “Moving the Masses,” 114.

⁴⁵⁰ While most of the descriptions in the *sīra* depict someone’s attempt to evoke emotional reactions from another through the recitation of poetry, on at least one occasion, poetry is also utilized to *suppress* rage. Ibn Hishām includes a brief account in which Ḥassān b. Thābit recites verses to placate Sa’d b. Zayd (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 767n735; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 837).

poetry with ambivalence as they were wary of the effect that recited poetry could have for implied audiences.

Biographers' wariness about incitement poetry is visible in their plotting of accounts which depict men and women inciting others to anger or violence through recitation, or, like Ibn Rāshid and Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, in their omission of these accounts. In Chapter Three, one may recall the conflict narrative in which an antagonist upends a moment of tranquility between the Aws and Khazrāj in *Prophetic Biography*. The analysis in Chapter Three focused primarily on the way in which Shās b. Qays is identified as an enemy of God due to his role in instigating conflict among the Aws and Khazrāj. Shās grows jealous when witnessing the amity between the Aws and Khazrāj, and, filled with rage, he orders a Jewish youth to recite some of the poetry composed by each side during the battle of Bu'āth. When the youth does so, an altercation develops between the tribes.⁴⁵¹ In this conflict narrative, Shās is depicted as the instigator of tribal conflict, but it is the youth's recitation of poetry (who, notably, is not a member of the Muslim community) that leads the Aws and Khazrāj to become enraged and fight. In this passage, incitement poetry is associated with a Jewish youth, the guile of Satan, and paganism, all of which may threaten the stability of the new Muslim community by causing *fitna* (communal strife).⁴⁵² We see this narrative pattern again in *Prophetic Biography* when Ibn Ishāq relates that Ḥassān b. Thābit

⁴⁵¹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 261-262; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 472-473. Significantly, Ibn Hishām includes the poem the youth recites while Ibn Ishāq omits it:

I was pained at the loss of a doughty defender.
A permanent grief afflicted me.
Though you killed him, a
Sharp sword has bitten into 'Amr's head.

(Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 735n317; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 472).

⁴⁵² This tension may also be a reflection of the socio-political context in which *Prophetic Biography* was composed as Ibn Ishāq lived and wrote in a world where Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians vastly outnumbered Muslims.

composed a number of verses to “excite feeling for the murder of Abū Uzayhir and to bring shame on Abū Sufyān for his cowardice and betrayal of trust.”⁴⁵³ Although Ḥassān b. Thābit’s verses are not associated with pagan or Satanic influence, Ibn Ishāq includes an appraisal from Abū Sufyān immediately following the verses: “When he heard of this satire Abū Sufyān said: ‘Ḥassān wants us to fight one another for the sake of a man from Daus. By God, what a poor idea!’”⁴⁵⁴ The thematic tension between *fitna* and *jamā‘ah* (communal solidarity) seen above is at the center of Ibn Rāshid’s *sīra* as well; interestingly, however, Ibn Rāshid includes an account in which recited poetry strengthens the community rather than harming it.⁴⁵⁵ This is because the poetry is recited by the Prophet Muḥammad himself:

The Prophet then built the mosque—straightaway he began to carry the sunbaked bricks with the coat of his garment alongside the other Muslims, reciting:

This very load, not the load of Khaybar,
our Lord, is most righteous and pure.

He also recited:

O Lord, the reward is the Hereafter,
so show Your mercy to the Allies and Emigrants.

The Messenger of God thus repeated the poetry of a Muslim man whose name I do not know, nor have I heard in the reports about the Prophet that the Messenger of God ever repeated a single complete verse of poetry except for these verses. His intent in doing so was to encourage them to build the mosque.⁴⁵⁶

The disclaimer Ibn Rāshid provides about the Prophet Muḥammad’s recitation of poetry is telling, and reflects biographers’ reservations and ambivalence about poetry due to the

⁴⁵³ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 190; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 360.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 190; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 360. This pattern is found elsewhere in *Prophetic Biography* with women using poetry to taunt and incite violence. The most infamous account being that of Hind d. ‘Utba, who mutilated a number of Muḥammad’s Companions’ bodies by making their ears and noses into anklets, collars, and pendants, chewing on Ḥamza’s liver, and then reciting a number of verses to boast and taunt the Muslim community (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 385-386; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 674-675).

⁴⁵⁵ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 308n247.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 126-127.

perception that it could lead to feelings of rage or shame, particularly if it contained the theme of vengeance. Yet biographers' reservations were also informed by a number of Qur'ānic verses about poetry as well as traditions depicting Muḥammad's antipoetic remarks. As Khalidi eloquently explains,

Beginning in the Qur'an and continuing with Muhammadan Hadith, there is much faultfinding, at least outwardly, in poetry and poets. The Qur'an speaks of poets as empty boasters who are accompanied by 'demons' or 'tempters' (*al-ghawun*), wandering aimlessly in every valley. Where Muhammad is concerned, God proclaims at Q. 36:69: {We did not teach him poetry, nor does poetry benefit him.} Additionally, we have seen already how the charge of being a poet was one that was vigorously denied by God on Muhammad's behalf, and how important it was for Muhammad's message and self-identity to distinguish divine revelation from poetry.⁴⁵⁷

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ and al-Iṣfahānī are the most explicit in regard to establishing Muḥammad's attitude toward poetry, reporting that the Prophet Muḥammad said, "As I was growing up, idols were made loathsome to me and poetry was made loathsome to me. I was not tempted by anything done in the *Jahiliyya* except on two occasions. God protected me from them and I did not repeat that."⁴⁵⁸ Despite this, we know that biographers did not excise poetry completely, but instead found innovative ways to incorporate poetic verse into the Islamic framework.

As with elegiac verse, poetry that functioned to incite others was a remnant of the pre-Islamic era, and in biographies of Muḥammad one may see biographers' attempts to reformulate such poetic content through an Islamic *Weltanschauung*. This is apparent in each of the biographies and is vividly seen in a conflict narrative involving 'Amr b. 'Abdu Wudd b. Abū Qays (a horseman of the Quraysh tribe) and 'Alī that occurs during the Battle of the Ditch in

⁴⁵⁷ Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 116.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 52; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, 144. Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* (Ḥaydarābād: Maṭba'at Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Niẓāmīyah, 1950), 55. Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's inclusion of this report is an excellent example of the *sīra*'s dense intertextuality, as Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ notes that this transmission derives from al-Iṣfahānī's *Proofs of Prophethood*.

Prophetic Biography. Ibn Ishāq relates that when ‘Amr reached the place where a number of Muslims were holding ground, he challenged someone from the Muslim community to fight him.⁴⁵⁹ ‘Alī accepts ‘Amr’s challenge, but first invites him to Islam, which ‘Amr rejects. The two men exchange words and ‘Amr becomes enraged, advancing on ‘Alī. According to Ibn Ishāq’s account, ‘Alī overpowers and kills ‘Amr in a relatively anticlimactic scene when compared with Ibn Hishām’s account.⁴⁶⁰ Ibn Hishām’s recasting of the conflict between ‘Amr and ‘Alī differs from Ibn Ishāq’s account in that it contains dialogue exchanges between the two men in which they taunt one another, incitement poetry composed by both men, descriptions of ‘Amr’s anger and ‘Alī’s joy, and graphic imagery of the battle.⁴⁶¹ While Ibn Ishāq omits the two incitement poems from ‘Amr and ‘Alī, he concludes the conflict narrative with a poem from ‘Alī (that is spuriously attributed, according to Ibn Hishām) about his victory over his opponent:

In his folly he fought for the stone pillars
While I fought for the Lord of Muhammad rightly.
I rejoiced when I left him prone
Like a stump between sand and rocks.
I forbore to take his garments
Though had I been vanquished he would have taken mine.
Do not imagine, you confederates, that God
Will desert His religion and His prophet.⁴⁶²

In the above poem, ‘Alī’s invective against ‘Amr and boasting is clearly reformulated through an Islamic *Weltanschauung*. ‘Alī boasts not only of himself, but of his religion, and of God’s victory over paganism, while articulating his refusal to take the spoils of war (as contrasted with others’ shameful behavior during warfare, such as Hind’s mutilation of Ḥamza and other Companions’ bodies). The discrepancies between Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām’s accounts are intriguing

⁴⁵⁹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 455; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 785.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 455-456; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 785.

⁴⁶¹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 455-456; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 785.

⁴⁶² Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 456; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 785.

(particularly as others have commented on Ibn Ishāq's inclusiveness with poetry), and warrant reflection on the relationship between incitement poetry and the mimetic component of narrative.

⁴⁶³ In his study of collective biographies of Shī'a Imams, Pierce remarks that "The mourning performances in the biographies, like the performative aspects of marthiya, were intended not only to invite the audience to share in the grief of loss. They were also designed to evoke emotions of protest and desire for injustice to be rectified."⁴⁶⁴ Pierce is referring to what Moojan Momen has called the "ethos of sanctification through martyrdom."⁴⁶⁵ Momen explains, "Above all, the martyrdom of Husayn has given Shi'i Islam a whole ethos of sanctification through martyrdom. Although the Shi'is were persecuted all through their early history and, according to their traditions, every single one of the Imams suffered martyrdom, it is above all the martyrdom of Husayn that has given this characteristic to Shi'i Islam."⁴⁶⁶ Pierce's comments may point to biographers' broader reservations about including incitement poetry because of the way in which it invites implied audiences to share in the anger of those within the storyworld; such investment (or, as Perry has called it "emotional commitment") may lead to man-to-man violence, or worse, the dissolution of the Muslim community. Alternatively, for the Shī'a community, the shared rituals of mourning and protest may function to constitute community. This idea will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter by examining the ways in which al-Ṭabrisī's *Informing Humanity* differs from the other biographies in this study.

⁴⁶³ For a discussion of others' views about Ibn Ishāq's inclusion of poetry, see: Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, xxv-xxvi.

⁴⁶⁴ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 61.

⁴⁶⁵ Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 33.

⁴⁶⁶ Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, 33.

Conclusion: Nonvisual Dimensions of the Sīra

Reflecting on the role of the nonvisual senses in Christian devotees' engagement with religious texts, Historian Alexa Sand writes, "The connection between books and bodies lies at the root of Christian devotion in the Middle Ages ... To make or to handle a book was to engage in an intensely somatic experience, rich in both sensory and metaphorical significance."⁴⁶⁷ Sand's words evoke many parallels in the Islamic tradition, perhaps the most obvious being Muslims' interiorization of the "inner rhythms, sound patterns, and textual dynamics" of the Qur'ān, which has been a locus of scholarly interest for decades.⁴⁶⁸ Interestingly, however, scholars have largely neglected the role the nonvisual senses play in implied audiences' engagement with early and medieval *sīra*, indicating the exciting work that remains to be completed. Drawing attention to the nonvisual senses generates a number of compelling questions that may illuminate the *sīra*'s devotional aspects, such as: How can we conceive of the process of writing and bookbinding as an emotive act? What may preserved manuscripts reveal about the relationship between emotional comportment and recitation practices? In turn, what might this reveal about the presence of textual and emotional communities in different temporal and geographic contexts? The above analyses demonstrated that implied audiences' investment in the narrative world cannot be divorced from the aural and spoken dimensions of readerly experience. Biographies of Muḥammad were material objects—they were touched, written in, recited, and heard. This multisensory engagement is essential to understanding implied audiences' interiorization of ethico-emotional comportment and biographers' investment in emotive storytelling.

⁴⁶⁷ Alexa Sand, "Birds in Hand: Micro-books and the Devotional Experience" in *Sensory Reflections: Traces of Experience in Medieval Artifacts*, ed. Fiona Griffiths and Kathryn Starkey (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 181-202.

⁴⁶⁸ Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*, 11.

CHAPTER FIVE:

“FEELING RULES” IN THE PRESENCE AND REMEMBRANCE OF MUḤAMMAD

“This trunk is weeping at the remembrance of what it has lost.” — the Prophet MuḤammad

Introduction

The movement and stillness of bodies when in MuḤammad’s presence is a recurring image in the *sīra*. Biographers include numerous stories in which humans and other sentient life, upon encountering MuḤammad, have a spontaneous physiological or emotional reaction. At the same time, biographers also privilege narratives that depict stillness in the presence of MuḤammad, which may indicate a sincere and uncontrollable manifestation of awe. In other passages, stillness conveys the effort of “deep acting,” a form of emotional regulation that refers to a person’s attempt to guide his feelings in order to elicit an emotional reaction deemed appropriate to the situation.⁴⁶⁹ This narrative tension, which privileges both movement and stillness, reflects biographers’ simultaneous efforts to elicit emotional responses from implied audiences while also conveying “feeling rules” appropriate for the remembrance of MuḤammad. In this chapter, I examine biographers’ preoccupation with establishing an ethic of emotional practice when remembering the Prophet MuḤammad through an examination of “awe narratives,” or, narratives that depict others’ emotional comportment when in MuḤammad’s presence. Awe narratives also appear in accounts of righteous followers’ emotional reactions when hearing MuḤammad’s name or when engaging in *dhikr*, a word that conveys both “remembrance” (of God or the Prophet MuḤammad) and oral “mentioning.” As will be shown,

⁴⁶⁹ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 558.

dhikr disrupts the classical terminology of storage and retrieval used for individual memory through the assumption that one can “recollect” the Prophet Muḥammad without retrieving an individual episodic experience—that is to say, it leaves room for generational distance and alternative forms of mediation. Drawing on scholarship in memory studies which points to the deeply emotive and experiential characteristics of memory, I analyze the relationship between emotion work and memory work, arguing that biographers use awe narratives to convey the idealization of spontaneous somatic reactions for those generations coming after him, which may be realized through *dhikr* and other forms of emotion work. Similar to Chapter Three’s conflict narratives (as well as the “pulse narratives” described by Zargar), awe narratives are didactic, and biographers rely on a number of rhetorical strategies to convey an ethic of remembrance, such as repetition, legalistic language dictating how a Muslim should feel when thinking about or remembering Muḥammad, and Qur’ānic discourse about Paradise.

Encounters with Muḥammad and “Physiological Outcomes”

Scenes of awe in the presence of saints or upon encountering an apparition of an angel occur frequently in Christian hagiographies and apocalyptic literature. Accounts such as these are similarly found the Gospels, as in John 18:4-6, when a group of soldiers, chief priests, and Pharisees seeking to detain Jesus draw back and fall to the ground when Jesus says, “I am he.” In Christian hagiographies, saints’ lives were recorded by contemporaneous eyewitnesses, and this led to complex, and sometimes muddy, forms of telling. We saw this in Chapter Two in Arnaldo’s transposition of Angela’s speech which he defends in his *apologia*. Kleinberg remarks that “The personal encounter with a holy individual was often too powerful and too bewildering

to allow a truly iconic portrayal of the saint.”⁴⁷⁰ What Kleinberg vividly describes in his analyses of saints’ biographers, and what is reflected in Arnaldo’s *apologia*, is witnesses’ tremendous fear and awe during a sacred encounter. This phenomenon has been an enduring topic of interest for scholars of religion since William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) and Rudolph Otto’s *The Idea of the Holy* (1923). A feeling of awe or dread (for Otto, *mysterium tremendum*) has been conceived of as a defining feature of proximity to the sacred, or a central topos in sacred literature.⁴⁷¹ In the analyses that follow, I offer additional ways of thinking about the function of awe narratives in the *sīra* that may help us avoid identifying them as mere typologies. Along with first- and second-person voice, conflict narratives, and poetry, awe narratives are a rhetorical technique by which biographers communicate ethico-emotional comportment.

Encounters with Muḥammad, particularly one’s first encounter, result in “physiological outcomes,” such as a stilled heart, trembling skin, sweating, and immobility.⁴⁷² Many awe narratives therefore indicate a reaction to being in Muḥammad’s presence that is sincere and uncontrollable. This is powerfully illustrated in the accounts of Shayba ibn ‘Uthmān al-Juhānī and Faḍāla ibn ‘Amr, whose hatred for the Prophet Muḥammad motivated each of them to plot his murder. Al-Iṣfahānī and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relate that during the Battle of Ḥunayn (630 CE), Shayba sought to kill Muḥammad as an act of vengeance for the death of his father and uncle, who died at the hands of Ḥamza. According to their accounts, Shayba approached Muḥammad from behind, raising his sword to kill him. Yet, Shayba recalls of the thwarted incident, “The Prophet

⁴⁷⁰ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 46.

⁴⁷¹ See: Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 12-30.

⁴⁷² This term comes from Hogan, *Literature and Emotion*, 45.

was aware of me and summoned me. He placed his hand on my breast. He had been the most hated people to me and when he lifted his hand, he was the most beloved of people to me.”⁴⁷³ In a similar account about Faḍāla, Ibn Ishāq, al-Iṣfahānī, and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relate that Faḍāla desired to kill Muḥammad in the year of the Conquest when Muḥammad was circumambulating the Ka‘ba. When Faḍāla approached Muḥammad, the later asked him, ““What were you telling yourself?”” “Nothing,”” Faḍāla responded. Faḍāla relates that Muḥammad “laughed and asked for forgiveness for me, placed his hand on my breast and stilled my heart. By God, as soon as he lifted it, God had not created anyone more beloved to me than him.”⁴⁷⁴

The accounts of Shayba and Faḍāla illustrate a common narrative pattern in the *sīra* which depicts the spontaneous and uncontrollable effect of Muḥammad’s presence on even his most ruthless enemies. In these passages, contact with Muḥammad through touch results in transformative physiological and emotional reactions. Yet, other awe narratives depict similar reactions caused by merely seeing Muḥammad. In *The Book of Healing*, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes a brief narration in which a man approaches Muhammad and “beg[ins] to tremble out of awe of him.”⁴⁷⁵ And in another section, he writes that

Anyone who had not seen the Prophet before would become perplexed (*yabhatu*) and terrified (*yaḥḥaqu*) when he saw him. This was related about Qayla. When she saw the Prophet she trembled with terror. He said, ‘Poor girl, you must be calm.’ In the *hadith* of Abu Mas‘ud, it tells of a man who stood before the Prophet and trembled. He said to him, ‘Relax, I am not a king.’⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, 130; Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 197; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 441.

⁴⁷⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, 86; Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 197; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 441-442. Ibn Rāshid relates a similar passage that alludes to Muḥammad’s ability to influence the hearts of others, writing, “The Prophet had already begun to cause their hearts to turn” (Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 102-103).

⁴⁷⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 68; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 176.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 48; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 136-137.

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ frequently uses the word spontaneous (*badīha*) alongside the word *hayba*, which may be translated as fear, dread, or awe, in passages that depict others encountering Muḥammad. Describing Muḥammad in *The Book of Healing*, ‘Alī is reported as saying, “Anyone who saw him suddenly was filled with awe of him (*hābahu*). Those who kept his company loved him.”⁴⁷⁷ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ repeats ‘Alī’s words verbatim later in the text, adding, “We mentioned that one of the Companions could not turn his eyes away because of his love for him.”⁴⁷⁸ What is remarkable about Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s privileging of these stories, which is visible through repetition and divergence from a chronological structure, is the way in which they deeply inform his first- and second-person writing. Like his first- and second-person writing, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s repetition of *ḥadīth* that involve spontaneous emotional responses serves a didactic function and may be read as efforts to elicit emotional responses from his audience. This point has been explored to some degree by Pierce, who describes accounts of weeping in collective Shi‘ī biographies as guiding implied readers to “empathize and to emote similarly”⁴⁷⁹:

The many stories of people close to the imams crying suggest that the imams’ weeping was invitational. On occasion, the exhortation and recommendation to weep is explicit ... More often, however, the invitation was merely implied by the examples of characters within the stories: the people around the prophet’s deathbed are said to have lamented and wept loudly...⁴⁸⁰

In this way, the sense of “oughtness” that is conveyed in Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s request frame in which he describes his own trepidation is reinforced by recurring awe narratives, which also serve to communicate that spontaneous awe is a crucial feature of authentic belief. Put differently, by depicting himself and others as experiencing spontaneous trepidation and fear, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ

⁴⁷⁷ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 34; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 104-105.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 231; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 508.

⁴⁷⁹ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 57.

⁴⁸⁰ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 56-57.

conveys parameters for how one should feel when encountering the Prophet Muḥammad, and, by extension, how implied readers should feel when remembering Muḥammad. What Pierce does not expand upon in the above quotation is the process by which implied readers are meant to “empathize and emote similarly.” We will return to this issue in future sections by examining the relationship between spontaneous emotional responses and the practice of emotion work in the remembrance of Muḥammad.

In the above accounts and others, biographers place significant focus on the body, which externally manifests one’s feeling state. The body is represented as the medium through which the state of one’s heart is manifested. A trembling body or a face that grimaces or reddens in anger therefore indicates the sincere state of one’s heart. The frequency with which biographers plot and repeat awe narratives reflects biographers’ privileging of spontaneous emotion. Of course, as we saw in Chapter Three, spontaneous emotional reactions are not always depicted positively in the *sīra*. Spontaneous outbursts may reveal irascibility, which is associated with disbelief, Satanic influence, and the Period of Ignorance that marked pre-Islamic Arabia. And trembling from fear of one’s enemy may reflect a weakness of faith. Interestingly, awe narratives are not limited to the portrayal of human bodies. Narratives depicting the spontaneous reactions of animals, other sentient life, and inanimate things function didactically and mimic passages portraying humans’ physiological responses. Although animals do not appear as frequently in the *sīra* as they do in other genres, such as mystical didactic-narrative poetry or Sufī writing more broadly, their role in biographies of Muḥammad is often purposive. Zargar explains the purposive role of animals in other genres by writing,

It is commonly said in Islamic theology that angels obey God because of their luminous nature, such that they cannot do otherwise, and animals obey God because he has commanded them only to fulfill their animal ends, but humans and

jinn must choose obedience, an arrangement supported by the Qur'ān ... (Q. 22:18 and 55:33-4).⁴⁸¹

Zargar goes on to say that animals occasionally possess moral agency in Islamic writing that is much like humans, a pattern that Lenn E. Goodman refers to as “virtual subjecthood.”⁴⁸² Sarra Tlili has further contended that the Qur'ān presents animals as “persons” who are cognizant of their relationship with God.⁴⁸³ For some genres of Islamic writing, then, narratives involving animals may help readers “reassess what it means to be human,” thereby presenting a spectrum of ethical choice.⁴⁸⁴

While animals appear in each of the five biographies, their didactic role occurs most frequently in *The Book of Healing*. Indeed, the first awe narrative Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ includes portrays Muhammad's mount, Burāq, breaking into a sweat when the angel Jibrīl reminds him that “No one more honored by God than [Muhammad] has ever ridden you.”⁴⁸⁵ This account appears in Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's introduction alongside his request frame and first-person disclosures. Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ repeats this story in a later section that deals with Muḥammad's nobility and exalted position.⁴⁸⁶ Interestingly, the Burāq awe narrative is distinct from the awe narratives described above because his physiological reaction is caused by *remembering* Muḥammad at the behest of Jibrīl. (Here we may recall our discussion of Jibrīl's call to emotion work in *Prophetic Biography* in Chapter Three). Alternatively, in the passages examined thus far, emotional responses are depicted occurring as a result of either physical or visual contact with Muḥammad. Later, we will see how Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ includes other awe narratives that portray the powerful effect of

⁴⁸¹ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 41.

⁴⁸² Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 41.

⁴⁸³ Sarra Tlili, *Animals in the Qur'an* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 166-209. See also: Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 42; Q. 27:18, 27:22, and 33:72.

⁴⁸⁴ Zargar, *The Polished Mirror*, 47-48.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 3; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, 54.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 85; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, 210.

remembering Muḥammad, both for those able recall individual episodic memories, as well as for those in later generations who did not experience the same temporal proximity.

Animals appear in other passages in *The Book of Healing* through the use of metaphors and similes, such as when Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ reports that,

[Muḥammad’s] companions smiled rather than laughed in his presence out of respect for him and to imitate him. His assembly was one of forbearance (*ḥilm*), modesty (*ḥayā’*), good-feeling and trust. Voices were not raised in it and disrespect to sacred things did not arise in it. When he spoke, his companions bowed their heads in silence as if there were birds sitting on them.⁴⁸⁷

As with the Burāq account and ‘Alī’s description of others’ encounters with Muḥammad, this description is repeated almost verbatim in another section.⁴⁸⁸ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s use of birds as a simile in this passage points to a larger pattern in *The Book of Healing* in which animals function to remind humans of idealized emotional comportment when in Muḥammad’s presence. One of the most significant awe narratives depicting an animal’s reaction in *The Book of Healing* similarly portrays stillness rather than the involuntary trembling that is depicted in other accounts. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes a narration from ‘Ā’isha, who recalls, ““We used to have a pet animal. When the Messenger of God was with us, it stayed in its place without moving. When the Messenger of God went out, it would move about.””⁴⁸⁹ The above passage is somewhat ambiguous in regard to the nature of the animal’s conduct. By this I mean, it is unclear whether or not the animal’s stillness is meant to be read as an uncontrollable physiological reaction to being in Muḥammad’s presence, or illustrative of an awareness of Muḥammad’s nobility, the latter of which would point to intention and effort akin to what is portrayed in the passage of Muḥammad’s Companions bowing their heads in silence. Read alongside the account of Muḥammad’s Companions, it

⁴⁸⁷ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 71; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 182.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 236; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 516-517.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 171; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 377.

appears that Muḥammad and ‘Ā’isha’s pet functions as a moral agent who directs implied readers to the proper conduct one should engage in when remembering Muḥammad. This point will become more apparent when examining additional awe narratives included by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ that depict righteous followers’ bodily (and emotional) conduct when engaging in *dhikr*.

Al-Iṣfahānī and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s preoccupation with recounting the miracles and supernatural wonders (*karāmāt*) of Muḥammad lead them to include awe narratives involving other forms of sentient life as well as inanimate things. Al-Iṣfahānī and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ include a report from Anas ibn Mālik who relates that Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān were climbing Uhud, a mountain in Medina, when it began to shake under them. Muḥammad then said, “Be firm, Uhud. A prophet, a true man and two martyrs are on you.”⁴⁹⁰ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes another awe narrative in the same section that portrays a *minbar* (the platform on which someone delivers a sermon) shaking when Muḥammad recites verse 6:91 from the Qur’ān, which reads, “They do not value Him with His true value.” According to the account, Muḥammad then said, “The Compeller⁴⁹¹ glorifies Himself, saying, ‘I am the Compeller, I am the Compeller, I am the Great, the Self-Exalted.’”⁴⁹² The *minbar* reportedly shook until the congregation said, “He will fall off it.”⁴⁹³ This type of “call-and-response” is somewhat unusual in Islamic writing as normative accounts of prayer gatherings traditionally depict an etiquette of silence during assembly. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s inclusion of the *minbar* account helps to illustrate the frequency with which he relies on repetition texture to convey the idealization of spontaneous fear, which manifests in trembling.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, 267; Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 170; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 374.

⁴⁹¹ The Compeller (*al-Jabbār*) is one of the 99 names of God.

⁴⁹² Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 170; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 375.

⁴⁹³ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 170; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 375.

Like Qaylā and the reported men who tremble when in Muḥammad’s presence, the *minbar* is portrayed anthropomorphically by mimicking the same conduct.

The above passages demonstrate the recurring theme of (bodily) movement and stillness in the presence of Muḥammad as well as the manner in which animals serve a didactic role by functioning as moral agents or reminding implied readers of their innate disposition (*fiṭra*). Occasionally, other sentient life appears in awe narratives that is portrayed as possessing an emotional framework comparable to humans and animals. As with the above accounts that portray animals and inanimate things’ emotional or physiological reactions in Muḥammad’s presence, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates an account of a palm trunk that is signaled in this chapter’s epigraph. According to the tradition, the mosque in which Muḥammad used to speak was constructed from the trunks of palm trees with a roof laid over the top. When the Prophet Muḥammad addressed the Muslim community during communal prayer, he used to lean on one of the trunks. After some time, a *minbar* was built for him, thus eliminating his need to lean back. When this occurred, however, the people would hear the trunk making a sound like a camel.⁴⁹⁴ Anas added that this sound continued “until the mosque was shaken by its moaning” and Sahl recalled that the people would weep when they saw this.⁴⁹⁵ In reaction to witnessing this, Muḥammad explains, “This trunk is weeping at the remembrance (*dhikr*) of what it has lost.”⁴⁹⁶ In the Islamic tradition, memory, emotion, and ethics intertwine in the concept of *dhikr*. Within Islamic theological and philosophical writing, remembering becomes a religious obligation and is placed

⁴⁹⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 168; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 370.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 168; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 370.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 168; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 370. Interesting, Ibn Ishāq includes an additional account of Muḥammad interacting with a tree. Ibn Ishāq relates that Muḥammad wished to show Rukāna al-Muṭṭalibī something extraordinary, and so he called out to a tree to come to him and it obeyed by standing before Muḥammad. Muḥammad then told it to go back to its place and it did so (Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 178-179; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 342).

in opposition to forgetting, *ghaflā*, which is perceived as an inevitable human failure that one must struggle against. The practice of *dhikr* also evokes the sense that one is seeking to recall his or her primordial past and, thus, one's original nature. The account of the palm trunk weeping in remembrance of its contact with Muḥammad is strikingly similar to other passages found in *The Book of Healing* that depict righteous followers engaging in *dhikr* and having a spontaneous emotional reaction (frequently, weeping) as a result of that effort, a point that will be expanded upon in future sections. As demonstrated in the accounts from Ibn Ishāq, al-Iṣfahānī, and Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, awe narratives depict emotional or physiological reactions as a result of proximity with Muḥammad, his righteous Companions, and Qur'ānic recitation. They also reveal a narrative tension in which both spontaneous movement (i.e., physiological outcomes) and effort-induced stillness in the presence of Muḥammad are idealized. We have already seen how repetition emerges as one of the most common rhetorical strategies biographers use in their plotting of awe narratives. Similarly, we have explored the significance of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's reliance on non-human characters to reinforce patterns of idealized emotional conduct. These strategies are two of the most common modes of telling that appear in the *sīra* and thus warrant additional reflection.

Regarding the phenomenon of recurring plots in the vitae of medieval saints, Kleinberg comments that,

Historians have charted the typology of different possible 'plots' available to the saints and dismissed the peculiarities of each reenactment as trivial ... The eyewitness/biographer usually repeated many of the clichés of the hagiographical genre, but by proclaiming his loyalty to standard representations, he could interpret their meaning in such a way as to give them an entirely new content.⁴⁹⁷

Kleinberg's remarks are relevant to biographers' plotting of awe narratives as biographers of Muḥammad repeated common awe narratives while also varying their plotting techniques. Most

⁴⁹⁷ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 2-3.

commonly, biographers relied on repetition texture (first discussed in Chapter Four), redundant telling, and mask narration. As noted, repetition texture refers to a phenomenon in which words and phrases occur repetitively in a text. Redundant telling is distinct from repetition texture in that the material repeated does not convey any new information to implied audiences, such as with Qādī ‘Iyād repeating *ḥadīth* verbatim. For Phelan, redundant telling also allows us to interpret authorial motivation with greater nuance: “The motivation for redundant telling resides in the *author’s need* to communicate information to the audience, and so we might use the longer phrase *redundant telling, necessary disclosure* to describe it.”⁴⁹⁸ We saw an example of this in Chapter Two in Arnaldo’s “repeated and confused exclamations” of passive narration.⁴⁹⁹ Mask narration, whereby characters “mask” the viewpoints authors wish to convey, helps us understand the plotting of awe narratives that portray antagonists, animals, and inanimate things having spontaneous reactions in Muḥammad’s presence.⁵⁰⁰

Ibn Rāshid frequently relies on redundant telling and mask narration to convey appropriate feeling rules in the presence of Muḥammad. As described in Chapter Two, feeling rules may be understood as norms that influence people’s efforts to feel or not feel certain emotions and is thus related to the concept of emotion work because it signals the “act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling.”⁵⁰¹ Redundant telling and mask narration appear in an awe narrative featuring ‘Urwah ibn Mas‘ūd al-Thaqafī (d. 630), a chieftain who negotiates with Muḥammad on behalf of the Quraysh in regard to the peace treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. ‘Urwah is a compelling narrator because, while he first appears in *The Book of*

⁴⁹⁸ Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 12. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁹⁹ The conflict narrative involving Ḥabīb and ‘Abd Allāh that was analyzed in Chapter Three similarly demonstrates this phenomenon.

⁵⁰⁰ See: Phelan, *Living to Tell About It*, 197-204.

⁵⁰¹ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 551n2.

Military Campaigns as woefully boorish, he becomes a mouthpiece for Ibn Rāshid within the same account.

‘Urwah’s transformation is attributed to a brief encounter with Muḥammad. When negotiating the terms of the treaty with Muḥammad, ‘Urwah is described as antagonistic toward the Muslim community, suggesting that it may come to ruin and saying to Muḥammad, “‘I see no men of renown here—I see only a motley group of people apt to forsake you.’”⁵⁰² Ibn Rāshid relates that ‘Urwah even grabs Muḥammad’s beard while speaking to him, which causes one of Muḥammad’s Companions to forcefully correct ‘Urwah by hitting his hand with the hilt of his sword.⁵⁰³ At this moment, ‘Urwah begins to look around at Muḥammad’s Companions wide-eyed and exclaims,

‘By God ... when the Messenger of God hawks up his phlegm, one of these men catches it in his hand and smears it on his face and skin. And when he commands them to do something, they hasten to accomplish his orders. And when he performs his ablutions, they nearly kill themselves over the ablution water. Whenever they speak, they lower their voices before him, and out of deference to him, they never look him in the eye.’⁵⁰⁴

In the same account, ‘Urwah then returns to his own companions and repeats the above words verbatim, which functions as a form of redundant telling by signaling to implied readers the importance of the material that is being conveyed. ‘Urwah concludes his report to his companions by advising them to accept the “upright course of action” offered by Muḥammad, and he asks that he be allowed to go see him.⁵⁰⁵ Previously I have argued that biographers utilize “characters” in the *sīra* as reliable narrators who help convey biographers’ viewpoints. Phelan

⁵⁰² Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 30-31.

⁵⁰³ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 30-33.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 32-33. One may also notice the significant similarity between Ibn Rāshid’s account of the Companions’ conduct and that which is found in *The Book of Healing*.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 30-31.

refers to this form of telling as mask narration. In most cases, biographers use protagonists (i.e., those possessing the same ethical framework) for mask narration. Animals appear in awe narratives as protagonists in part because, as Zargar has explained, they are following their intended nature. Occasionally, however, biographers include passages in which antagonists appear to operate within the same ethical framework. In the above account, ‘Urwah functions as a mouthpiece for Ibn Rāshid by conveying the behavior deemed appropriate when in Muḥammad’s presence. While this account does not depict Muḥammad’s Companions’ emotional practices, it depicts a sudden transformation within ‘Urwah through his encounter with Muḥammad. ‘Urwah transforms into a protagonist by becoming “wide-eyed” when seeing the manner in which Muḥammad’s Companions exhibit deference in his presence. Similar to the accounts of others’ reactions found in *Prophetic Biography*, *Proofs of Prophethood*, and *The Book of Healing*, ‘Urwah’s conduct indicates a spontaneous physiological and uncontrollable reaction.

Regarding the frequency with which imams weep in collective Shī‘a biographies, Pierce remarks that

The suffering of the imams undoubtedly evoked sorrow, but their sadness on each other’s behalf also served as an emotional prompt. Their tears were exemplary in that they embodied the appropriate emotional response to the stories. The imams modeled the way their life stories ought to be received.⁵⁰⁶

The above awe narratives provide a cursory glance at the range of emotional and physiological reactions that are idealized among the biographies included in this study. Through repetition texture, redundant telling, and mask narration, biographers demarcated the boundaries of feeling rules and demeanor deemed appropriate for those who enjoyed temporal proximity with

⁵⁰⁶ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 63.

Muḥammad. Yet, given that *spontaneous* emotional responses are so heavily privileged in these accounts, how were implied readers expected to emulate what is portrayed? Pierce's suggestion that the imams modeled the way their stories "ought to be received" provides a starting point for thinking through the way in which awe narratives provide a blueprint for deep acting. In this sense, emotion work may lead to the spontaneous emotional reactions that are idealized in biographers' awe narratives. In the second major portion of this chapter, I will analyze the above awe narratives in relation to the concept of remembrance, which I will frame as a form of both emotion work and memory work. Some biographers are more explicit in identifying the connection between these two concepts, as visible in Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's plotting of awe narratives that depict others' emotional reactions in remembrance of Muḥammad.

The Death of the Prophet Muḥammad

According to biographers' accounts, the Prophet Muḥammad's illness began the morning after a trip to Baqī' al-Gharqad where he journeyed to pray for the dead in the summer of 632. It is related that Muḥammad stood among the graves and said, "Peace upon you, O people of the graves! Happy are you that you are so much better off than men here. Dissensions have come like waves of darkness one after the other, the last being worse than the first."⁵⁰⁷ Ibn Ishāq writes that Muḥammad then turned to Abū Muwayhiba, who was with Muḥammad upon his request, and alludes to his approaching death. Biographers describe the days preceding Muḥammad's death with a tone of urgency and in great detail. Much of the passages detailing the days before Muḥammad's death record his Companions' fear, love, and joy when seeing Muḥammad or

⁵⁰⁷ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 678; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1124.

when thinking about the possibility of his death. Ibn Ishāq reports the Companions' desire to be near him vividly in a *ḥadīth* from Anas:

The Muslims were almost seduced from their prayers for joy at seeing him, and he motioned to them (﷖⁵⁰⁸ with his hand) that they should continue their prayers. The apostle smiled with joy when he marked their mien in prayer, and I never saw a nobler expression than he had that day.⁵⁰⁹

Ibn Rāshid relates the same passage from Anas, adding that Anas said, “I gazed at his face as though it were the page of a book, and he smiled ... We were almost tempted to abandon our prayer because of the joy we felt upon seeing the Messenger of God.”⁵¹⁰ This occurred on the day of Muḥammad’s passing. In another passage in *Prophetic Biography* and *The Book of Military Campaigns*, Abū Bakr is depicted weeping when he hears Muḥammad say something that he perceives as alluding to Muḥammad’s coming passing.⁵¹¹ According to Ibn Ishāq’s account, the Prophet Muḥammad passed away in ‘Ā’isha’s arms that very day.⁵¹² Ibn Ishāq takes care to elaborate on what occurred in the preceding minutes, hours, and days, including the preparations for Muḥammad’s burial. He relates that a number of Muḥammad’s male Companions take charge of washing Muḥammad’s body, including ‘Alī who is reported to have said, “‘Dearer than my father and my mother, how sweet you are alive and dead!’”⁵¹³ During this process, Ibn Ishāq reports that an unidentified voice came from the direction of the house instructing the men to “Wash the apostle with his clothes on,” which they obeyed.⁵¹⁴ Reflecting on the account of

⁵⁰⁸ The ﷖ indicates that the additional material within the parentheses comes from al-Ṭabarī.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 681; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1132.

⁵¹⁰ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 180-181.

⁵¹¹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 679; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1129; Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 178-179.

⁵¹² Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 682; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1133.

⁵¹³ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 688; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1139.

⁵¹⁴ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 688; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 1139.

Muḥammad's passing and the subsequent burial preparations in *Prophetic Biography*, Leor Halevi writes,

This was God's first intervention in history following the death of the last Prophet. Why did it occur? Why did Ibn Iṣḥāq and his informants find it necessary to reveal in precise detail how Muḥammad's corpse had been handled? What was at stake for them in remembering or imagining these events several generations after their occurrence?

The ritual had become a key event in the early Islamic historical imagination. It took place while the Prophet lay helpless and in silence; this forced Muḥammad's biographer to consider how his subject had been handled in the absence of prophetic guidance.⁵¹⁵

To this he adds that Ibn Iṣḥāq and his informants "wished to remember that the Prophet's body had been buried in a state of purity, absolved from the dirt of this world. Yet they were reluctant to imagine him scrubbed in the traditional way and stripped naked, 'just as we strip our dead,' with his zone of shame uncovered."⁵¹⁶ Halevi's analysis centers on the implications of washing Muḥammad's corpse in terms of the politics of succession and the development of ritual practices for the Muslim community.⁵¹⁷ He shows how Islamic funerary practices such as shrouding and washing corpses, ritual lamentation, funeral processions, and tomb constructions developed as a cornerstone of Muslim religious identity. I am interested in directing attention to the third question that Halevi poses in the above quotation by considering the importance of the emotive dimension of remembering and imagining the events recounted by Ibn Iṣḥāq for subsequent biographers and readers. The following passages examine the relationship between emotion and memory by unpacking the way in which these two phenomena have been understood to inform one another among memory theorists. We will then explore how scholars of

⁵¹⁵ Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 46.

⁵¹⁶ Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 46.

⁵¹⁷ Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 48.

Islam have used the term memory and what has been the yield of this discussion. In so doing, we will examine the practice of *remembering* and what this is assumed to entail, especially for those generations who are considered to reside outside the scope of “memory.” The remaining passages will then return to the topic of awe narratives and explore how biographers relied on these accounts to provide a framework for remembering Muḥammad characterized by an embodiment of emotional practices. Through their plotting of awe narratives, biographers idealized emotional practices such as weeping, trembling, fearfulness, pallor, and, in some circumstances, hostility toward others.

Memory and Emotion

The relationship between emotion and memory has been a locus of study for decades, particularly gaining traction among scholars of individual and collective trauma and, more specifically, historians of the Holocaust. Specialists have analyzed the impact of collective trauma on the generations following the Holocaust, focusing on the “internalization” of trauma that is felt by second- and third-generation survivors.⁵¹⁸ Others have drawn attention to the emotion work that individuals of post-generations describe when in the presence of Holocaust survivors, or when discussing the trauma experienced among family members who were not physically present, identifying this as a form of deep acting. Scholars like Mary Carruthers have additionally explored the relationship between memory and ethical practice, showing that the memorial training involved in writing and reading texts during the medieval period was

⁵¹⁸ For example, see: Simon Gottschalk, “Reli(e)ving the Past: Emotion Work in the Holocaust’s Second Generation,” *Symbolic Interaction* 26, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 355-380, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.3.355>.

understood as an ethical activity.⁵¹⁹ Memory as a theoretical concept becomes more complex (and, for some, controversial) when applied to generations coming after a particular event (i.e., when ascribed to those who are not eyewitnesses). Cognitive neuroscientists such as Daniel Schacter thus relegate the term memory to denote a process of storage and retrieval whereby an individual recalls an episodic experience.⁵²⁰ The model of storage and retrieval to some extent presumes that individual memory mimics a vivid snapshot of an event. This idea has been challenged by neuroscientists, as illustrated in many studies that describe the phenomenon of memory errors.⁵²¹ For others like Marianne Hirsch, memory is not essentially defined by the process of storage and retrieval; rather, memory may be better understood in terms of its deeply affective and experiential characteristics.

For several decades, Hirsch's work has dealt with the passing of traumatic memories into history or myth. She writes specifically about the "imaginative investment" that memories hold for children of survivors of traumatic events, particularly of the Holocaust.⁵²² This phenomenon, Hirsch explains, may more effectively be understood as *postmemory* due to its unique form of mediation:

⁵¹⁹ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 196.

⁵²⁰ See: Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Daniel L. Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001).

⁵²¹ There have been many studies conducted by scientists that examine the extent to which the encoding process that occurs during storage is a "successful" rendering of the "actual" events witnessed. See for instance: Elizabeth Loftus, "Our Changeable Memories: Legal and Practical Implications," *Science and Society* 4 (March 2003): 231-234. As Loftus writes, "Witnesses can be wrong for several reasons. A key reason is that they pick up information from other sources; they combine bits of memory from different experiences. A growing body of research shows that memory more closely resembles a synthesis of experiences than a replay of a videotape ... Attempts to distinguish the false memories from true ones have occasionally shown statistical differences, such as differences in confidence, vividness or amount of detail" (Loftus, "Our Changeable Memories," 231-232). See also: Daniel Schacter, "Adaptive Constructive Processes and the Future of Memory," *American Psychologist* (November 2012): 603-613.

⁵²² Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 5.

In my reading, postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. This is not to say that memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly connected to the past.⁵²³

She also makes a disclaimer about her hesitation in affixing the prefix “post,” out of concern that this might indicate “that we are beyond memory and therefore perhaps, as [Pierre] Nora fears, purely in history.”⁵²⁴ Hirsch is careful to emphasize that certainly one cannot have “literal ‘memories’ of others’ experiences.”⁵²⁵ This fact, however, does not make the experience of postmemory any less “real.” For instance, Hirsch describes the postmemory of her parents’ native Czernowitz as an imaginary city that, at the same time, is “no less present, no less vivid, and perhaps because of the constructed and deeply invested nature of memory itself, no less accurate.”⁵²⁶ The constructed nature of postmemory and episodic memory is also marked by its uniquely affective nature:

It is this presence of embodied and affective experience in the process of transmission that is best described by the notion of memory as opposed to history. Memory signals an affective link to the past—a sense, precisely, of a material ‘living connection’—and it is powerfully mediated by technologies like literature, photography, and testimony.⁵²⁷

Memory, for Hirsch, may therefore be better understood in terms of its deeply affective and experiential characteristics. Furthermore, memory is mediated not merely through eyewitness testimony, but through other technologies such as literature. Although Hirsch uses postmemory in an extremely specific context with well-defined parameters, there is still yield in describing

⁵²³ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 22.

⁵²⁴ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 22.

⁵²⁵ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 31.

⁵²⁶ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 244.

⁵²⁷ Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 33. Hirsch borrows the phrase “living connection” from Eva Hoffman.

her work, if only to consider the affective (or, emotive) experience involved in the transmission of memories. In reading Hirsch's description of the material "living connection" that distinguishes memory from history as well as her careful distinction between recollection and "imaginative investment," one may initially sense the theoretical substance these ideas could provide for a study of the *sīra* and the adjacent genre of *ḥadīth* (often called a "living" tradition), which became separate from biography but remained a central resource in its development. That is to say, Hirsch's work seems to illuminate an aspect of the *sīra* that is neglected in current scholarship, namely, the sense of a "living" connection that witnesses, biographers, and readers claim to experience which is mediated through literary depictions of the Prophet Muḥammad. Indeed, both Recep Şentürk and Jonathan Brown have used the term "living" to refer to the Muslim community's connection with Muḥammad after his death.⁵²⁸ The temporal proximity of early accounts of Muḥammad has led some historians to use memory theory in their analyses of eyewitness testimony. *Prophetic Biography* by Ibn Ishāq, Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī's (d. 823) *Book of Military Campaigns*, and Ma'mar ibn Rāshid's (d. 770) *Book of Military Campaigns* are among a few of the early biographies which have been examined by scholars in this manner. Consequently, the topic of memory becomes irrelevant in the study of biographies composed after the first few generations, at least according to these scholars. Studies of Shī'ism are an exception to this trend, as the practice of remembering is bound up in generational distance and imagining that one was physically present at Karbalā. As discussed in Chapter Four, it is through such imagining that one "should be moved to tears."⁵²⁹ In the same way, postmemory is a rich way to conceptualize the imaginative investment that is conveyed by

⁵²⁸ See: Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*; Şentürk, *Narrative Social Structure*.

⁵²⁹ Bard, "No Power of Speech Remains," 146.

biographers in their plotting of awe narratives. Despite these impressions, it is important to reflect on the precision with which Hirsch defines the theoretical parameters of postmemory. Hirsch poses the rhetorical question, “Why is postmemory particular to traumatic recall: cannot happy or otherwise transformative historical moments be transmitted across generations with the ambivalent intensity characterizing postmemory?”⁵³⁰ This is a question which she never directly answers, yet her use of postmemory implies a severe reluctance to allow it to lend interpretive yield for non-traumatic, emotionally-infused circumstances. As we will see, however, awe narratives depicting the remembrance of Muḥammad vividly convey a sense of trauma and loss experienced by Muḥammad’s Companions as well as the generations who came after him. In this way, I am particularly interested in the notion that postmemory is an *embodied* practice carried out after a collective trauma.

The Somatics of Remembrance

Whereas some biographers include awe narratives that depict others in the presence of Muḥammad (i.e., those who saw, interacted with, or were touched by him), al-Ṭabrisī and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ also include a wealth of awe narratives that portray righteous individuals’ spontaneous emotional responses when engaging in *dhikr*, or when hearing Muḥammad’s name. As with the above awe narratives, these accounts depict physiological outcomes, or what Plamper refers to as “the somatics of emotion.”⁵³¹ Most frequently, the emotional responses that are portrayed reflect tremendous grief and agitation. Writing about this phenomenon in *Informing Humanity* and other Shī‘a biographies, Pierce remarks,

⁵³⁰ Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 6.

⁵³¹ Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, 77.

All of the infallibles wept. Crying appears in these texts with compelling frequency. At nearly every turn the imams reacted in tears, and their emotional performances reinforced the logic of the biographies. The Prophet wept many times, particularly over the fate of Fatima and ‘Ali.⁵³²

Al-Ṭabrisī conveys the intensity of this weeping through recurring phrases such as “he wept violently.”⁵³³ The awe narratives that Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes also vividly depict a sense of grief and agitation: “It is related that when Qatada heard a *hadith* he began to sob and became very agitated.”⁵³⁴ Others such as Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī “wept until his eyes were red” whenever the Prophet Muḥammad was mentioned and ‘Amir ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr “wept until he had no more tears to weep.”⁵³⁵ One may see the striking similarity between these accounts and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s description of the continuous weeping of the Prophets Dawūd and Yaḥyā that was explored in Chapter Two. In another account, the weeping of Safwān ibn Sulaym was so severe and unending that it caused those near him to get up and leave.⁵³⁶ Along with weeping, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ also describes the trepidation felt by some when using Muḥammad’s name, as in the *ḥadīth*, ““Whenever ‘Abdu’r-Rahman ibn al-Qasim mentioned the Prophet, his face seemed as if the blood had drained from it and his tongue went dry out of awe of the Messenger of God.””⁵³⁷ These passages are consonant with Kleinberg’s compelling description of the relationship between forgetting and loss that pervaded medieval Christian hagiographical writing. While Kleinberg vividly describes witnesses’ tremendous fear of forgetting episodic events, the awe narratives provided by al-Ṭabrisī and Qāḍī convey a fear of *ghaflā* and a sense of loss even for those who never physically encountered Muḥammad.⁵³⁸

⁵³² Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 56. See also: al-Ṭabrisī, *I’lām al-Warā*, 24.

⁵³³ Al-Ṭabrisī, *I’lām al-Warā*, 44, 72, 118. See: Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 56.

⁵³⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 239; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 522.

⁵³⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 238-239; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 521-522.

⁵³⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 239; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 522.

⁵³⁷ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 238-239; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 522.

⁵³⁸ Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 42.

Repetition texture such as that seen above reinforces the notion that weeping and other somatic responses are consonant with the *sunna* of Muḥammad and the imams, and therefore should be emulated. Yet Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is far more explicit in describing the expected role of implied readers. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ sets the tone for a number of awe narratives containing emotional and physiological responses by advising implied readers that, “It is just as necessary to have esteem and respect for the Prophet after his death as it was when he was alive. This means to show it whenever the Prophet, his *ḥadīth* or *sunna* are mentioned, when anyone hears his name or anything about his life or how his family and relatives behaved.”⁵³⁹ Through his commentary, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is the most explicit of the biographers in revealing his motivations for plotting awe narratives and in articulating what is expected from implied readers. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s instruction that one must “show” esteem and respect is indicated for the audience through his plotting of a range of somatic responses, all of which appear to be spontaneous. For instance, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ relates that,

‘When the Prophet was mentioned, Malik would grow pale so that it distressed those with him. One day he was asked about this. He said, ‘If you had seen what I have seen, you would not be surprised at what you see me do. I used to see Muhammad ibn Munkadir, the master of the Qur’an reciters. Almost every time he was asked about a *ḥadīth*, he wept until his eyes were red. I saw Ja’far ibn Muhammad who joked and laughed a lot, but when the Prophet was mentioned in his presence, he grew pale.’⁵⁴⁰

Mālik’s response to his questioner is noticeably similar to Muḥammad’s words in the famous *ḥadīth* in which he is reported to have frequently said, “If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much.”⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁹ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 238; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 519.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 238; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 521.

⁵⁴¹ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 74; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 188.

Spontaneous Feelings and Deep Acting in the Practice of Remembrance

These passages, like the majority of the awe narratives described earlier in the chapter, idealize spontaneous emotional responses, thus complicating the practice of emulation. Almost in anticipation of this tension, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ includes other passages of righteous individuals engaging in *dhikr* as a form of emotion work. In these accounts, one gets a sense of the trauma and loss experienced by Muḥammad’s Companions as well as the generations who came after him. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ describes this sense of loss in a tradition about Khālīd, who

‘never went to bed without remembering how he yearned for the Messenger of God and his Companions among the Muhajirun and the Ansar, and he would name them. He said, ‘They are my root and my branch, and my heart longs for them. I have yearned for them a long time. My Lord, hasten my being taken to You!’⁵⁴²

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s commentary and plotting of accounts such as these serve to convey the effort involved in remembering Muḥammad, which may be conceived of as memory work, a concept used among scholars of memory studies. Memory work in *The Book of Healing* may take the form of ritualized *dhikr* (i.e., repeating formulaic blessings on Muḥammad), mentioning Muḥammad’s name or his *ḥadīth*, and yearning for him. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ thus weaves together the link between memory work and emotion work through awe narratives and commentary, such as when he says, “Another of the signs of love for the Prophet is to mention him often. Whoever loves something mentions it a lot.”⁵⁴³ For Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, such exertion may lead to spontaneous emotional reactions. This is illustrated in the account of a woman who sought to memorialize Muḥammad by visiting his grave: “It is related that a woman said to ‘A’isha, ‘Show me the grave of the Messenger of God.’ She showed it to her and the woman wept until she died.”⁵⁴⁴ By engaging in

⁵⁴² Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 225; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 496.

⁵⁴³ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 227; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 500.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 226; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 498.

memory work, the woman experiences a spontaneous reaction similar to the Prophet Muḥammad himself, who “laughed little and wept much.”

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ also relies on mask narration to communicate the gravity of one’s obligation to engage in this ethic of remembering. In one passage, he relates a tradition from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b to demonstrate a Muslim’s obligation to remember God and follow the *sunna* of Muḥammad:

‘You must follow the path of God and the *Sunna* [example of Muḥammad]. There is no slave who is on the path of God and the *Sunna*, remembering God, his eyes overflowing out of fear of his Lord, but that God will never punish him. There is no slave on the earth who is on the path of God and the *Sunna*, remembering God, his skin trembling out of fear of God, but that he is like a tree whose leaves are dry. In the same way that a tree loses its leaves when a strong wind hits it, his errors fall from him as the leaves are shaken from the tree ... See that your actions — whether they are striving or minimal — are on the path of the Prophets and their *Sunna*.⁵⁴⁵

In this passage, overflowing tears become a shield that protects a believer from the punishment of God. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ further relates that

Abu Ibrahim at-Tujibi said, ‘It is obligatory for every believer to be humble, fearful, show respect and be still when they mention the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, or the Prophet is mentioned in their presence. They should be as respectful as they would have been if they had actually been in his presence taking on the *adab* which Allah taught us.’⁵⁴⁶

This passage is particularly compelling given the way in which one is expected to have the same emotional comportment as those who interacted with Muḥammad during his lifetime despite temporal distance. By engaging in the obligatory practice of *dhikr*, one is expected to behave as if he or she “had actually been in his presence.” Similarly, memory work in *Informing Humanity* consists of the emotional effort involved in imagining the martyrdoms of the imams and the loss

⁵⁴⁵ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 220; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 399.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 238; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 428.

of the spiritual guidance that resulted in the deaths of Muḥammad, ‘Alī, and those in this familial line. The concept of deep acting may add further nuance to the connection between memory work and emotion work. Referring to the techniques used by actors who adhere to the Stanislavsky school, Hochschild explains that one who attempts to “guide his memories and feelings in such a way as to elicit the corresponding expressions” that appropriate in a given context is engaging in deep acting.⁵⁴⁷ Deep acting is therefore comparable to emotion work in that it conveys the effort of *trying to feel*.⁵⁴⁸ Yet, as Hochschild shows, it also involves the recall of one’s memories, experiences, and associated feelings in order to elicit an emotional response.

Through their repetitive plotting of awe narratives, biographers sought to communicate the importance of sincerity, as spontaneous physiological reactions (such as that conveyed in the sweat dripping from Ibn Mas‘ūd’s brow) reveal the true state of one’s spiritual heart.⁵⁴⁹ This preoccupation leads Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ to provide signs of true love (*ṣādiq fi ḥubb*), which he contrasts with the conduct exhibited by someone who is “a pretender, insincere in his love (*mudda ‘ī*).”⁵⁵⁰ One sign of sincere love that Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ provides is hostility to those who hate God and Muḥammad.⁵⁵¹ Though Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is the most explicit about sincerity, a number of *ḥadīth* included in other works indicate that he was not the only biographer concerned with this issue. Ibn Ishāq’s inclusion of a number of *ḥadīth* regarding the female practice of weeping indicates a similar preoccupation, such as the report attributed to Muḥammad in which he says, “every wailing woman lies except the one who wept Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh.”⁵⁵² As Halevi reminds us, though,

⁵⁴⁷ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 558.

⁵⁴⁸ Hochschild, “Emotion Work,” 569.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 239; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 523.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 226; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 499.

⁵⁵¹ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 227; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 501.

⁵⁵² Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad*, 469; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawīya*, 807.

ḥadīth such as these also point to Ibn Ishāq’s preoccupation with articulating rules of lamentation and public displays of mourning: “Still, it is important to remember that Ibn Ishāq was an authority on Islamic law. This expertise colored his biography. Furthermore, his most attentive audience consisted of legal-minded Muslims from cities of Mesopotamia and Khurasan.”⁵⁵³ This is also reflected in Ibn Hishām’s commentary.

Pierce further explains that, “Public displays of mourning, such as crying (*buka*) and wailing (*niyaha*), were often topics of contention. Proto-Sunni traditionalists collected many *ḥadīth* narratives that denounced such activities.”⁵⁵⁴ As such, Islamic rulings related to mourning practices add complexity to biographers’ privileging of excessive weeping in awe narratives. Proto-Sunni pietists were often explicit when describing the proper behavioral moods at funerals, recommending “austerity and patient restraint” rather than weeping.⁵⁵⁵ Though, as Pierce notes, “silent tears were permitted.”⁵⁵⁶ This viewpoint is occasionally reflected in *sīra* passages, such as in *The Book of Military Campaigns* when Ibn Rāshid relates that “Whenever [Muḥammad’s] body was racked with pain, he would remove [a cloak] from his face and declare, ‘God’s curse be upon the Christians and Jews, for they have adopted the graves of their prophets as places of worship!’”⁵⁵⁷

Alternatively, other biographers use legislative discourse to uphold the position that somatic responses such as weeping or trembling are idealized practices. This is of course a reflection of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s experience as a legal scholar, though it is no less unusual the manner in which Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ incorporates judgments for those who curse or revile Muḥammad and rulings

⁵⁵³ Halevi, *Muhammad’s Grave*, 51.

⁵⁵⁴ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 58.

⁵⁵⁵ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 58.

⁵⁵⁶ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 59. See also: Halevi, *Muhammad’s Grave*, 114-142.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 178-179.

for loving and venerating him. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ supplements his use of redundant telling and mask narration by incorporating legalistic language and *ḥadīth* reports that describe the reward of Paradise for those who love Muḥammad. Expressions of grief in remembrance of Muḥammad also result in the reward of Paradise, as shown in a *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Sa‘id, who reported that Muḥammad said, ““No people sit in a gathering in which they do not bless the Prophet without grief coming upon them. When they enter the Garden, they will not see some of its reward.””⁵⁵⁸ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ also uses legal terms such as obligatory and forbidden in his discussion of emotional practices, particularly those that pertain to the remembrance of Muḥammad and God. Through legislative discourse and *ḥadīth* reports that convey the reward for proper emotional conduct, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ legitimates descriptions of emotional and physiological responses that are depicted in recurring awe narratives. Other biographers rely on repetition texture, redundant telling, and mask narration to convey the idealization of spontaneous reactions such as pallor, trembling, sweating, and fear. These narratives function to both elicit emotional reactions from implied audiences and articulate an ethic of remembering the Prophet Muḥammad despite generational distance. Reading the *sīra* therefore emerges as a medium by which spontaneous emotional reactions comparable to those experienced by Muḥammad’s Companions and the religious elite may occur for implied readers. Though spontaneous emotional reactions are idealized by each of the five biographers, al-Ṭabrisī and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ are the most explicit in regard to the crucial role of memory work in this process. The active practice of remembering Muḥammad is described in awe narratives as the catalyst that leads to weeping, trembling, and other somatic responses. In this way, implied readers are invited to engage in both emotion and

⁵⁵⁸ Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah*, 262; Ibn Mūsā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, 573.

memory work to cultivate ethico-emotional comportment and gain temporal proximity to Muḥammad and God.

The topic of memory in studies of the *sīra* has thus far been relegated to an examination of the validity of eyewitness testimony. Such scholarship has been constrained by the prevailing definition of episodic memory, which emphasizes a process of storage and retrieval. This has sometimes resulted in clinical descriptions of memory somewhat akin to the image of data processing. Moreover, the ritualized practice of remembering has been a wholly neglected topic of study for the genre. Hirsch's concept of postmemory was introduced as a way to highlight some of the neglected areas within studies of the *sīra*. Through her emphasis on affect, trauma, imaginative investment, and alternative technologies of mediation, such as photography and literature, Hirsch's work may yield new ways of conceptualizing the construction of Muḥammad as a "living" ideal in biographical writing. By drawing on memory studies in this chapter, I have sought to explore how the practice of *dhikr* emerges as an alternative form of mediation, thereby offering another facet to the question of how emotions are mediated.

CONCLUSION

I have read and re-read [the Bible] until in many parts the pages have faded out—I mean, my fingers have rubbed off the dots, and I must supply whole verses from memory. — Helen Keller⁵⁵⁹

Texts are designed by authors to affect readers. — James Phelan

Affecting Readers

This project began as a response to a passage in Robinson’s *Islamic Historiography* in which he states that biography was intended to “edify [and] inspire” the Muslim community.⁵⁶⁰ I became particularly interested in how this statement alluded to the notion that the *sīra* was composed to affect readers, both emotionally and ethically, especially because the connection between emotion and ethics is so firmly embedded in representations of the Prophet Muḥammad’s conduct and in the Islamic tradition more broadly. While there is a rich amount of scholarship on the ways in which sacred biographies function as sources of ethical reflection, specialists in this field have been conspicuously absent from conversations among both historians of emotion and narratologists regarding the crucial role of emotion in the formation of the ethical self. I have sought to unpack Robinson’s claim by drawing attention to four rhetorical techniques used by biographers to both communicate ethico-emotional comportment and invite readers to manage their emotions. In this sense, this study did not merely focus on representations of emotional practices, but on the questions: “What feelings are evoked through this literature?” and “What was the anticipated response from the reader/audience?”⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ Newton, *To Make the Hands Impure*, 70.

⁵⁶⁰ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 63.

⁵⁶¹ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 8.

The questions and methods I have chosen reflect my desire to move beyond the issue of historical authenticity and the topic of literary motifs. The “Authenticity Question,” which centers on whether or not biographies reflect historical events, has particularly dominated analyses of early biographies.⁵⁶² On the other hand, studies that have utilized literary theory have emphasized the constructed nature of elements of the Prophet Muḥammad’s life while leaving undertheorized (or unacknowledged) the emotive aspects of the genre. Studies that have drawn attention to literary conventions such as fictionalization, abridgment, or the selection of ennobling events have largely centered on authorial concerns. These works have enormously contributed to the field by enhancing our understanding of biographers’ agency in plotting the life of Muḥammad, as well as how such plotting was influenced by patronage, sectarian concerns, and the institutional affiliations to which biographers were attached. My study sought to extend this discussion to include the interpretive role of implied readers, allowing us to more richly conceive of the relationship between authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response.

By the 12th to 14th centuries, Reynolds writes that Arabic autobiographers were well aware of what he calls the “autobiographical act” and of certain “precedent-setting texts.”⁵⁶³ The previous analyses have similarly shown the ways in which genre precedents, largely set by Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām, shaped biographers’ rhetorical modes. Despite these precedents, however, the *sīra* genre exhibits significant diversity in regard to biographers’ plotting techniques. For instance, Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Rāshid heavily rely on dialogue, yet the two works are remarkably distinct in regard to their length, chronological structure, and use of poetry. Al-Iṣfahānī and Qāḍī

⁵⁶² See: Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad*.

⁵⁶³ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 241.

‘Iyād’s works are comparable in that both are “studded with evidentiary miracles,” but Qāḍī ‘Iyād’s use of first- and second-person voice, as well as his expansive focus on issues of permissibility, greatly distinguishes the two texts.⁵⁶⁴ And al-Ṭabrisī’s work is distinct from the other four biographies given his focus on the lives of the Shī‘a Imams and the way in which he demarcates the boundaries of the Muslim community. This has led Pierce to classify *Informing Humanity* as a collective biography (i.e., a subgenre of its own) rather than a *sīra*.⁵⁶⁵ Given these differences, someone unfamiliar with the *sīra* genre would likely be perplexed by the categorization of these five works. Notwithstanding their diversity, I have sought to tie these texts together by examining biographers’ preoccupation with conveying an ethic of emotional practice to implied readers. In so doing, I was centrally interested in examining biographer-audience dynamics, and the ways in which the techniques of narrative function to impact audiences’ ethical and emotional responses. By focusing on the techniques of narrative, this dissertation presented a fuller framework for considering the ways in which a particular narrative “moves from mere rhetoric ... to become viscerally felt, somatically embodied, or to gain the status of a social norm.”⁵⁶⁶

Toward the Demarginalization of an Analytical Category

Attempting to generalize, describe, and segment historical eras comes with a range of practical and theoretical drawbacks. By selecting five works between the 8th and 12th centuries, this study has focused on biographers’ key rhetorical strategies while at times neglecting broader analyses of textual influence. The ways in which Jewish and Christian conceptions of the body,

⁵⁶⁴ Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, 33.

⁵⁶⁵ Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 14.

⁵⁶⁶ Eustace, et al., “AHR Conversation,” 1498.

or Arabo-Islamic theoretical writings on the question of human character, may have influenced biographers' rhetorical modes have perforce remained largely unaddressed in this study.⁵⁶⁷ By drawing on emotion theorists such as Ahmed and Nussbaum, I have sought to highlight the “sociality of emotions,” yet much work remains to be completed regarding the influence of social mechanisms and histories on the production of emotional norms in Islamicate society.⁵⁶⁸

One may take as an example the influence of epistles or texts that discuss the permissibility of various emotional states on biographers' writing. In the Islamic tradition, moods are not legal categories, and thus cannot be regulated like external acts. Yet, as we saw with Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, some scholars used legal terms colloquially to convey their views on the “permissibility” of emotional practices.⁵⁶⁹ An enormously influential text that comes to mind in this regard is al-Ghazālī's work *The Alchemy of Happiness*, which explores, among other issues, the origin and nature of anger, hatred, and envy. Given al-Ghazālī's reputation as being a *mujaddid* (renewer of the religion), it is likely that this work would have been read by medieval biographers and, in turn, influenced their conceptions of ethico-emotional comportment. Al-Ghazālī discusses a range of topics in relation to anger, including its causes (i.e., pridefulness; lack of understanding of God's unity), reasons one should suppress anger, and purgative and oxymel treatments for anger. Al-Ghazālī's discussion of the distinction between thinking and acting is particularly compelling as it invites one to consider how views on culpability influence writing on the regulation or management of emotional practices.⁵⁷⁰ As with philosophical treatises, discussions

⁵⁶⁷ Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self*, 244.

⁵⁶⁸ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8.

⁵⁶⁹ The five decisions (*al-aḥkām al-khamsa*) function to regulate Islamic society by categorizing actions into varying levels of permissibility, namely, obligatory, recommended, lawful, discouraged, and prohibited.

⁵⁷⁰ Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazzali on the Treatment of Anger; Hatred and Envy*, trans. Muhammad Nur Abdus Salam (Great Books of the Islamic World, 2013).

of emotional practices arise in legal writing, such as in rulings regarding mourning practices, or in texts indicating that judges should not give verdicts if an emotional state (such as anger) may impact his or her ruling.⁵⁷¹ I draw out this point to argue that the issues I have presented are deeply relevant to other genres of Islamic writing, even those which are not traditionally characterized as driven by a storytelling impulse.

Moreover, the temporal parameters of this study provoke one to consider how the questions that orient my project may be more broadly applied to biographies of Muḥammad composed in other contexts. As with the above topics, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine rhetorical strategies in later medieval *sīra* written under the Mamluk Empire and during the early Ottoman periods (ca. 13th-18th centuries), a period during which the genre took on new forms, as well as the ways in which the issues presented intersect with 19th-century European polemics.⁵⁷² I proffer that much can be gained from excavating the emotive dimensions in the late medieval, early modern, and contemporary periods. A recent biography of Muḥammad composed by Meraj Mohiuddin demonstrates this point. Mohiuddin explains,

I wanted to write a book for people from all backgrounds that presents the Prophet ﷺ in a way that is accessible and authentic. From there I'd like to help people to rekindle a relationship with the Prophet ﷺ in a way that makes an actual difference in their day to day lives. The Prophet ﷺ started a grassroots effort—one individual at a time—in order to bring beauty and balance back into his community. I hope this book can be an extension of his legacy, one reader at a time.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ Emotional states also pertain to whether or not one is rational (*‘āqil*), which is a requirement in determining if one is legally responsible (*mukallaf*).

⁵⁷² Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, 208.

⁵⁷³ Al-Madina Institute, “Telling the Story of the Prophet in a New Way: Meraj Mohiuddin,” last modified 11 January 2016, <http://almadinainstitute.org/blog/telling-the-story-of-the-prophet-in-a-new-way-meraj-mohiuddin/>.

To accomplish this, Mohiuddin integrates figures, visual aids, and a “*sīra* timeline” to allow readers to more intimately connect with the material.⁵⁷⁴ Mohiuddin’s description of his work is evocative of Phelan’s observations regarding the mimetic component of narrative, and it is noteworthy that Mohiuddin diverges from standard genre conventions to accomplish his aims. More broadly, it is my hope that this project may provoke others in the field of Islamic studies to conceive of emotion as an analytical category, rather than a specialized subfield. This is particularly important as Islam remains noticeably underrepresented in the history of emotions as well as emotion studies more generally. The need for more rigorous and comprehensive studies that integrate emotion in the field of Islamic studies is especially paramount when considering the current political climate, as caricatures of the emotional comportment of Muḥammad and the global Muslim community have become a mainstay.

The questions I am left with center on thinking of biographies of Muḥammad as material objects, and the way in which the physicality of reading, composing, or listening to the *sīra* further illuminates its emotive and ethical dimensions. As shown with Ali’s careful analyses of *adab* manuscripts, the field of codicology may offer fruitful ground for thinking through the above questions, perhaps even revealing evidence of haptic practices that accompanied reading biographies of Muḥammad. The physicality of reading a sacred text is signaled in the above epigraph from Helen Keller, who describes the tactile process of reading the Bible in braille. Keller’s words convey the literal and figurative acts of “rubbing a text.”⁵⁷⁵ In the literal sense, her

⁵⁷⁴ Al-Madina Institute, “Telling the Story of the Prophet.”

⁵⁷⁵ The physicality of reading or composing a work is not only relevant for those studying sacred texts. Some scholars have drawn attention to the somatic effects of reading and composing other forms of narrative. For instance, Jane F. Thrailkill describes what John Dewey calls “strenuous acts of mind,” or the physical effort involved in trying to remember lines of poetry. Dewey writes, “First, I am conscious of drawing myself together, my forehead contracts, my eyes and ears seem to draw themselves in and shut themselves off. There is a tension of the muscles of

act of returning to the text actually fades the pages. In the figurative sense, rubbing the text refers to the interpretive work the text solicits. Through this process of returning, a reader may internalize (or embody) the work, and discover something new with each reading. Alternatively, one may think about the process of inscribing, illuminating, or binding a sacred manuscript as a form of emotion work. In this regard, the fields of Qur'ānic studies and Islamic calligraphy would likewise provide excellent contributions. Emotion work was a central topic in this study, but these remaining reflections illustrate some compelling avenues of inquiry for the field of Islamic studies.

limbs. Secondly, a feeling of movement or plunge forward occurs” (Jane F. Thraikill, *Affecting Fictions: Mind Body, and Emotion in American Literary Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 135).

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