the humble”), a manuscript completed in 1216/1801 when Ilhâmî was very ill and believed that he was dying (Sarajevo, Gazi Husrev-Beg Library, MS no. 4509; for a description and translation of selected passages into Bosnian, see Dobrača, 57–69). The verse compositions consist of religious and didactic poems (on the same topics as the Bosnian alhamijado ones), of which thirty-eight are recorded in the above mentioned Sarajevo manuscript no. 3056 and forty-six in the Visoko manuscript.

In these various texts, Ilhâmî repeatedly advocates (in a popular and often confused fashion) the absolute necessity of a spiritual and religious awakening and calls for a moral renewal of society. From a historical perspective, his most interesting works are the poems written in alhamijado. Indeed, these poems mirror the relations between the local Muslim population and the Ottoman authorities (secular and religious), as well as the everyday relations between the Bosnian Muslim population and the non-Muslims of Bosnia, while also revealing how the Muslims felt about the non-Muslims in the late twelfth/eighteenth and early thirteenth/nineteenth centuries. The study of these often enigmatic texts, however, confronts two major obstacles, the considerable differences among the many copies of Ilhâmî’s poems and the difficulties of deciphering the texts written in alhamijado; both obstacles are amplified by the lack of an autograph manuscript.

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ALEXANDRE POPOVIC

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (fl. sixth century C.E.) of the Banû Hāshim clan of the Quraysh was the father of the prophet Muḥammad, who was his only child. ‘Abdallāh’s mother was Fāṭima bt. ‘Amr of the Banû Makhzûm clan of the Quraysh.

According to some reports ‘Abdallāh was born in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Kiswa Anšīrwan (r. 531–79 C.E.). He married Āmina, and, according to the earliest reports, he died when she was pregnant with Muḥammad. He died in Yathrib (Medina), while he was staying with the relations of his father’s mother after having been taken ill on his way back to Mecca from Gaza with a trading caravân of the Quraysh. According to another report he died in Medina when sent by his father, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, to procure dates there. His grave is said to have been in Dār al-Nābiga, Medina.

The chronology of his biography is inconsistent. He reportedly married Āmina when he was seventeen and died at the age of eighteen, twenty-five, twenty-eight, or thirty. While some reports say that he died before Muḥammad’s birth, others say that he died when Muḥammad was very young—two, seven, nine, twelve, eighteen, or twenty-eight months, in various accounts. These inconsistencies indicate various attempts to give his biography
a fixed chronology. Common to all the reports is Muhammad’s growing up as an orphan, in accordance with Qur’an 93:6.

Because ‘Abdallah was the Prophet’s father, Islamic tradition gives his image a divine touch. His marriage to Amina is regarded as part of a divine scheme; an old Yemeni scholar, well versed in holy scriptures, reportedly recognised physiognomic signs of prophethood and invested the light with her; she conceived Muhammad, and the light then disappeared from ‘Abdallah’s forehead. Accordingly, ‘Abd al-Mutta'il married a woman of that clan (Hala bt. Wuhayb), and took another, Amina, for his son ‘Abdallah (Ibn Sa’d, 1:86).

Islamic tradition elaborates on the motif of the “light of Muhammad” (nur Muhammadi) that was seen blazing on ‘Abdallah’s forehead, revealing the essence of Muhammad that was hidden in his loins. It is related that ‘Abdallah’s divine blaze attracted several women who knew what it meant and hoped by gaining it to become the Prophet’s mother. However, ‘Abdallah eventually married Amina and invested the light with her; she consequently conceived Muhammad, and the light then disappeared from ‘Abdallah’s forehead.

His name occurs in traditions relating that ‘Abd al-Mutta’il, his father, vowed that, as soon as he was blessed with ten sons, he would sacrifice one of them, as a token of gratitude to God. He took this vow when he needed support against Quraysh after the digging of the well of Zamzam which had provoked their opposition against him. ‘Abdallah’s name was chosen by lot, but his father eventually sacrificed a hundred camels instead.

This earned ‘Abdallah the title al-dhabih (“intended sacrificial victim”)—the other dhabihih being Ishmael (Ar. Isma‘il)—and Muhammad the title ibn al-dhabihayn (see commentaries on Q 37:107).

Muslim writers had to deal with the fact that Muhammad’s father, as well as his mother, had died in a state of jahiliyya (pre-Islamic ignorance), before Muhammad began to act as a prophet. In an attempt to counter this circumstance, some scholars claimed that the Prophet’s parents belonged to the abl al-fatra (“people of the interval”), who lived in a period between two prophets (in their case, Jesus and Muhammad) and thus had no direct source of guidance. They are therefore given the chance to be tested in the next world, and if they profess belief they are saved from Hell. Another argument proposed was that God brought Muhammad’s parents back to life and that they expressed their belief in him, or, that they lived as adherents of the hanifiyya, the monotheistic religion of Abraham (for the various arguments see al-Suyuti, 225–43).

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Studies

first Umayyad caliph. In fact, he received an annual caliphal grant of one million dirhams, which he spent organising lavish feasts in Medina that were attended by poets, musicians, and singers, no doubt giving rise to his nickname “the Ocean of Generosity” (bahār al-jūd). We might ask why the caliph displayed such liberality toward an ‘Alid whose apoliticism and unpopularity among the Hāshimites were notorious. The cunning caliph no doubt wished ‘Abdallāh (and by extension, the Hāshimites) to be seen as party-loving squanderers. Later, in 60/680, ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far reportedly was one of the few ‘Alids who tried to dissuade his cousin al-Husayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Talib (d. 61/680) from going to Kufa, a journey that was to end in the drama at Karbala and the murder of al-Husayn and his family.

The sources cite several possible dates for ‘Abdallāh’s death, ranging from 80/699–700 to 90/708–709, specifically mentioning the years 84, 85, or 87 of the hijra.

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**Studies**


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