A Brief Observation Over The Resources Of Sira And History And Those Of Hadith

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Özet

Sîret Ve Tarih Kaynakları İle Hadis Kaynakları Üzerine Kısa Bir Değerlendirme

Allah Rasulü'nün irtihalinden sonra Sahabe, O'nun sözlerini, davranışlarını ve onaylarını nakletmenin yanı sıra, O'nun hayatını ve savaşlarını da anlatma görevini üstlenmişlerdi. Kabiliyetleri ve mizaçları doğrultusunda kimi ilgisini Hadis ve Sünnet'e teksif ederken, kimi de Sîret ve Meğâzî üzerine yoğunlaşmaktaydı. Elbette her bir sahabinin savaştaki konumu, gözlemi farklı olduğu gibi, zabt, hıfz ve anlatım gücü itibariyle naklettiği bilgiler de farklı olabilmekteydi.

Rivayet edilen bu bilgileri her alim, kendi amacı doğrultusunda tasnif ettiği için, siret ve tarih kitaplarıyla hadis kaynakları arasında ortak yönler kadar, farklılıklar da ortaya çıktı. Tarihi olayları esas alan Siyer yazarları eserlerini kronolojik olarak inşa ederken, ahlak ve ahkamı esas alan hadis kitapları ise Hz. Peygamber'in söz ve fiillerini tasnif etti. Tarihçiler olayla ilgili her türlü detayı yansıtmayı öncelerken, hadisçiler rivayetin sıhhatini önemsedi.

Bu yazı, Hz. Peygamber'in hadis, sünnet ve siretinin daha sağlıklı bir şekilde elde edilebilmesi ve anlaşılabilmesi için, hem siret ve tarih, hem de hadis kaynaklarının birlikte kullanılmasının gereğini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadis, sünnet, siret, tarih, Hz. Peygamber

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After the desease of the Prophet, his Companions took charge of telling about his life and his battles as well as conveying to people his words, deeds and approvals. They related whatever they knew, heard and experienced while answering questions or informing the people around. According to their personal abilities and natures, some were concerned with Hadith and the Tradition, and some others had an interest in Life (Sira) and Battles of the Prophet. At first, most of what they told had been the accounts based on what they heard or observed. For this period, "knowledge" was nothing more than an "accounting" of the facts. The Traditions were recited when and where they were needed, whereas account of the events which formed the contents of Sira and Maghazi were subjects of conversation in a lot of meetings and probably attracted more attention than the former one. The Companions who attended various battles told to the next generation (Tabiun/Successors) what they had experienced during the battles just like one describes a film. Of course, the accounts that the Companions gave were different from each other related to their different recording, memorizing and recounting abilities, as their position and observations during the battles were not the same.

So the task was not so easy for those who heard a certain battle from several witnesses and tried to compile what they had collected. Some of them narrated directly whatever they received from certain persons, whereas some others followed a method of narrating the accounts that they collected from several resources putting them into an integrated text. Some told the events without mention of those who gave the information, while some others narrated them also mentioning their resources. Some didn't ignore even the details, but some others preferred to give an outline of the events. Sometimes they used a style bearing exaggerations, extraordinary events and mysteries when they recounted scenes of battles. And there was no method yet followed in the oral accounts or in the early narratives of Sira and Maghazi with regard to compilation and classification.

However, the Traditionists who had been narrating the sayings of the Prophet by either their exact words or with a meaning reflecting what the Prophet meant, increasingly came to narrate the traditions together with the chain of narrators, as the fabrication of spurious traditions started to occur. As the terms such as "al-isnad al-muttasil" (uninterrupted chain of narrators), "validity conditions of a tradition" and "siyag al-ada" (form of the verbs that tell the transmission of a tradition from one narrator to another) had not been developed yet during the first two centuries of the Hijra, they didn't need to refrain from narrating "mursal" (a tradition narrated from the Prophet by someone from the second generation, Tabiun/Successors, "muallaq" (chains with missing first part) and "munqati" (the chain in which one or more narrators are omitted) accounts with verb forms "it was told that", or transmitting traditions from unknown narrators. And even the Traditionists narrated some subjects of Sira and Maghazi from the authors of these fields and by their methods of "talfiq".

"Talfiq" (compilation) method is that a narrator or a classifier, noting that he had received some traditions having the same chains of narrators and texts from several narrators, that their words are in harmony with each other, that they are close to each other and they confirm each other, composes the general meaning that he collected from those different texts in his own words and narrates it. The purpose for such a method is to give a certain matter in integrity, without interrupting it by mentioning different chains respectively and giving unnecessary details. For example, 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Sa'îd b. al-Musayyib, 'Alqama b. Waqqas and 'Ubaydullah b. 'Utba b. Mas'ûd, each had narrated the slander (al-Ifk) incident of 'Aisha (one of the wives of the Prophet) and Ibn Shihab, who received the tradition from those people and narrated it said that: "Each of them told me a certain part of the tradition about 'Aisha. Some had kept it in mind and narrated it better than others. I learnt the tradition that they narrated from 'Aisha, hearing each of them respectively. Some of those accounts confirmed some others..."[1]

'Urwa's account about the Hudaybiya peace agreement, which he heard from al-Miswar b. Mahrama and Marwan b. al-Hakim, saying "Account of each of them confirmed the other" is also similar.[2] This type of 'talfiq', which is a typical example of narration by meaning, is though considered permitted on the condition that all of the narrators are reliable by character and recording, Qadi 'Iyad (d. 544/1149) is said to have objected this, saying that "The tradition should have been narrated from each narrator respectively."[3]

Although Traditionists had already been inquiring the narrators when they felt a need for that at an earlier time, they started to pay a serious attention to the chain of narrators from the beginning of the second century after Hijra. Some sources held it no problem narrating in the form of "it was told that" or from unknown narrators, as we see in the works of Imam Malik (d.179/795) and Ma'mar b. Rashid (d.153/770), but the Traditionists mostly tried to give "muttasıl" and "sahih" (valid, verified) chains of narrators.[4] Historians like Ibn Ishaq (d.153/770) however, are seen to have used expressions such as "fima yaz'umun" (it was claimed that), "fima dhukira li", (it was told met hat) "huddithtu", (it was said to met hat), "fima balagani" (it was came to me that), "haddetheni man la attahimu" (told me

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[1] Al-Bukhari, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad b. Ismail, *al-Jami' al-Sahih*, Shahadat 15, III. 154, Istanbul-1981; Ibn Hisham, Abû Muhammad 'Abdulmalik, *al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*, II. 297-304, studied by Mustafa al-Saqa, Ibrahim al-Abyari, 'Abdulhafiz Shalabi, Cairo-1955, II. edition; 'Abdurrazzaq b. Hammam, al-San'ani, *al-Musannaf*, V. 410-9, studied by Habiburrahman al-'A'zami, Beirut-1970-1972, al-Majlis al-Ilmi, I-XI.

[2] Al-Bukhari, *Shurut* 15, III. 178; Ibn Ishaq-Ibn Hisham, *al-Sira*, II. 308-315.

[3] For an independent study on "talfiq", See. Shamali, Yasir Ahmed, *Jam' al-Muftaraq min al-Hadith al-Nabawi wa Atharuhu fi al-Rivaya wa al-Ruwat*, Amman-1999.

[4] For more detailed inf. See. Erul Bünyamin, Style of Narration in the II. Century After Hijra (I) Al-Jami' of Ma'mer b. Rashid (d. 153) With Respect to Narration, Periodical of the Faculty of Divinity of Ankara University, volume: XLIII. number: 1, pp. 27-61.

he whose honesty I am sure of) more in their chains of narrators.[5] Traditionists didn't narrate from the weak narrators as they cared about the reliability of the narrators, whereas the Historians didn't refrain from that. Even some source narrators such as Sayf b. Omar (d.200/815) and some classifiers like Ibn Ishaq and Waqidi (d.207/822) had been refuted by Traditionists. They could also easily narrate from refuted and unknown persons "garib" (a tradition in which only a single narrator relates at some stage of its isnad), "shaadh" (a tradition which is reported by a weak narrator and it goes against an authentic hadith) and "munkar" (a tradition which opposes by a lesser authority to a more reliable one) narratives.

In fact, the chain of narrators, which started to be used by the Traditionists hadn't become necessary at the beginning. That is why the authors of that century who wrote Sira and Maghazi did not feel the necessity of narrating accounts together with their chain of narrators and narrated them freely.

J. Robson, who makes observations about Ibn Ishaq's use of chain of narrators, concludes that he was a reliable person, who narrated what he had received as it was; and that the chain of narrators was used in various forms at the first part of the second century, but a constantly used method for an uninterrupted chain of narrators had not yet been developed, and a method of chain, which could sometimes go back to a narrated event was older than the time of Ibn Ishaq.[6]

Herald Motzki made similar remarks, criticizing the approach of Schacht in a different point of view. He argues in his successful research on "al-Musannaf" of 'Abdurrazzaq (d. 211/826) that the issues about narrators, which are found in 'Abdurrazzaq's narratives, such as doubts about source narrator, unknown narrators etc. showed authenticity of the accounts in al-Musannaf. Because, a real falsifier who have his aim to fabricate an accepted and an uninterrupted narrative from a well-known narrator would not be expected to use such expressions of doubt –which would weaken his aim.[7]

Of course, we should consider the aim of the two groups for making their compilations. Aim of the Traditionists is rather to narrate the 'sunna' (practised way of life of the Prophet) and hadith –especially traditions about legal provisions in 'sunan's (books of traditions written by the Traditionists). But the aim of Sira and Maghazi type works were to inform the readers about the life of the Prophet in general, and about his battles in particular. The Traditionist, to fulfill his purpose, makes some preferences regarding both the narrators and the text, and makes a selection from among

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[5] See. Ibn Hisham, al-Sira, I. 157, 160, 176, 181, 182, 183, 196, 197, 232.

[6] Robson James, "Ibn Ishaq's Use of Isnad", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, volume: 38, number: 2, March 1956, pp. 449-65. Compare: "İbn İshak'ın İsnad Kullanışı", trans. Koçyiğit Talat, Periodical of F.D.A.U., year 1962, X. 118-124.

[7] Motzki Harald, "The Musannaf of Abd al-Razzaq Al-San'ani as a Source of Authentic Ahadith of The First Century A.H.", p. 4. Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 50, no: 1, 1991.

hundreds of thousands of narratives. But the Historian aims to inform his readers about a certain historical event by collecting a number of accounts he heard from his reliable narrators and from others, or narrating them in a sensible order for him. The Historians were not as sensitive as the Traditionists regarding the validity, source and narrators of the knowledge.

Moreover, having different ways of classification, the Historians compiled their works in a chronological order, while the Traditionists classified their books either by the subjects or as the chapters including the traditions narrated by each Companion. Especially in those chapters, often the reason and time that the traditions had been spoken by the Prophet are not obvious, as they are separated from their contexts, whereas the Sira and Maghazi type works offer clearer information upon the issue. And this information helps us especially in the matter of "nasikh and mansukh" (the fact that some provisions prescribed by some religious texts is cancelled or altered by some newer texts) and to know the contexts of the traditions. The studies called Fiqh al-Sira written in recent years are some positive steps in this field.[8] Similar studies are needed in the field of "Fiqh al-Hadith" and "Fiqh al-Sunna". Use of "Sira" and History type resources will help a number of issues to be understood better.

Thus the fact that aims and concerns of those two groups were different caused them to have different methods and as a result to choose different materials. But as both groups' sphere of interest was the life and sayings of the Prophet, their common materials were a considerable amount. Therefore the number of traditions which exist in Waqidi's work but are not found in Musnad of Ahmad b. Hanbal is quite small; because the subjects as well as the narrative materials remarkably overlaps each other.

In the classification of the Traditionists are seen some intentions such as giving answer to both legal schools like Ahl al-Ra'y and to theological orders such as Mu'tazila, Khawarij and Murjia, defending themselves against them, and criticizing their narratives. Those attitudes can be seen in the preface of some collections as in the works of Darimi and Ibn Maja, can be the subject of separate books/sections as in Kitab al-Sunna of Abu Dawud, and can be given in certain chapters. But as the Sira and Maghazi type works do not have such a concern of jurisprudence or theology, they do not show an effort to defend some principles or to give an answer. In this sort of works, however, we can seen positive or negative influence of Ahl al-Bayt, or the dynasties of Umayyad and Abbasid to some extend.

Sira books have several features, which are remarkable:

In the books of Sira and History, we see a lot of details, lists of names, a quite detailed information about travels, which cannot be found in the books of Hadith. For example, we can find lists of the first Muslims, lists

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[8] See. Al-Ghazzâlî Muhammed, *Fiqh al-Sira.* Damascus-1989, Dar al-Qalam; al-Buti, Muhammad Sa'îd Ramadan, *Fiqh al-Sira.* Damascus-1977; Sa'îd Hawwa, *al-Asas fi al-Sunna ve Fiqhiha*, Cairo-1989, I-IV.

of those who migrated to Habashistan, and of those who were close to adopting Islam, in the books of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham[9], as well as we see the places that the Prophet arrived day by day, time by time, and the points where he stayed at night during his "Hajj al-Wada" (The Farewell Pilgrimage) in some good arranged details in the work of Waqidi.[10] Of course, those details fill in the blanks in the narratives of Hadith books. In the Jabir tradition in Muslim's book, which is the most detailed account of Hajj al-Wada among Hadith books, after it is told that the Prophet left Medina and stayed next day in Dhu'l-Hulayfa, the travel of a whole week is skipped and the account continues from the time just before his entrance to Mecca.[11] In fact during this travel of a week, which took place together with thousands of Companions for days and nights, a lot of hadith and sunna came out. But as the narrating Companions didn't give time and place for their traditions, it is not certain if those traditions came out during Hajj al-Wada. If the narratives are compared, the context of some of the traditions at least can be found out.

As the Arabs had a strong interest for poetry and literature, there are lots of poetic speeches of pages long uttered on various events. Many poems were narrated especially from Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham of this sort. It is told even that some of those poems were recited by jinns and seers. But authenticity and literary value of those poems have long been discussed.[12]

We see remarkably exaggerated expressions and extraordinary statements in the transmission of the traditions. There are a lot of accounts especially about blessings and miracles.

We can also see verses of the Qur'an and their causes to be revealed. There are hundreds of examples of that, in the books of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham. We find quite a strong relation between Sira and Tafsir in those works, and some academic studies can be made on this issue. In fact some narratives given by some historians like Ibn Ishaq and Waqidi regarding the revelation of the verses have not been accepted by Traditionists nor by the Commentators (of the Qur'an).

Traditionists sometimes prefer to omit and hide, in their accounts, some names, who they call "fulan" (a certain man) instead, and to remove some sentences, considering the possible problems that may occur therefrom. But Historians do not have such a concern.

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[9] See: Ibn Hisham, al-Sira. I. 240-260, 323-330, II. 488-500. For more inf. See. Öz Şaban, İlk Siyer Kaynakları ve Müellifleri, (The First Sources of Sira and Their Authors), Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, an unpublished thesis of Ph.D. in the Field of Islamic History, pp. 311-313.

[10] Al-Waqidi, Muhammad b. 'Umar b. Waqid, Kitab al-Maghazi, III. 1088-1116, studied by: Marsden Jones, Beyrut-1966, Alam al-Kutub, I-III.

[11] Muslim, Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. Hajjaj, al-Sahih, Haj, 147, I. 890, studied by: M. Fuad 'Abdulbaqi, Istanbul-1981.

[12] See. Öz Şaban, Ibid, pp. 273-275, 306-307.

But in the books of "tabaqat" (biographies of scholars), although there is some simple method, the information collected about the biography of a certain person is listed randomly, like in the index cards used for an academic study. Especially, most of the biographies for Companions consist of the scattered and insufficient materials collected from the limited narratives. It is impossible to collect from the works written in this field the information that will satisfy us. The study that may give the most comprehensive information in this regard is Tarikh al-Dimashq (History of Damaskus) of eighty volumes, which was written by Ibn Asakir (d.571/1176) about the celebrities of the province of Damascus. Among the considerable problems of this field are those: it is not obvious if some personalities are Companion or not; some are considered Companion just because they had narrated a single "marfu" (attributed to the Prophet) tradition, and some are given confused names or descendance. So it will be better to make much more comprehensive "tabaqat" studies, scanning both the books published in this field and CDs and some basic resources of Hadith concerned.

Another remarkable point to be emphasized is that the information about the paganists, hypocrites, Jews and Christians who lived in the first period have not been collected in certain books with titles like "Tabaqat al-Mushrikin", "Tabaqat al-Munafiqin", "Tabaqat al-Yahud", "Tabaqat al-Nasara" etc. Although we have some studies in Turkey in this regard, there is need to make comprehensive collections using especially CDs, similar to classical Arabic sources.

Meanwhile, it has been discussed whether Hadith books or the mere History books are more reliable. The traditional approach in this regard is in favor of the former. Even it has been argued that the accounts in the books of Sira, Maghazi and History have no origins. On the other hand, there have been scholars who relied on mere history rather than the hadith and claimed that "contrary to what the Muslim historians and traditionists argue, History is much more reliable than Hadith".

The studies made in recent years, actually, offered findings that, contrary to the classical point of view, the narratives in the books of Sira, Maghazi and History can sometimes be more reliable than those of the Traditionists. First of all, we should not forget that those sciences are essentially based on the narrative sciences as the others. Instead of taking the chain of narrators a base like a typical traditionist, they use the text, in other words the content as their base, thus narrating the content they have, without so much considering the weaknesses and defects in the chain. As they would not have the sensibility of a traditionist, their narrating the content they received as it is, without any intervention in the chain and texts, might sometimes be an advantage for us. The argument that "the narratives in the books of Maghazi and History do not have roots" and as a result of that argument the understanding that discards Waqidi

with the classical refuting pattern saying "Waqidi is abandoned despite his vast knowledge"[13] can not even be taken serious, especially considering the late studies on the compilation-classification period and narrative history of the traditions. Actually, due to this refutation that authors of the "al-Kutub al-Sitte" (the six most prominent and reliable Hadith books) didn't narrate any traditions from Waqidi, except Ibn Maja. I think we should use the resources of Hadith, Sira and History together in this regard, and prestige of the works and authority of the scholars shouldn't add a value to the data called "narrative" apart from its own narrators and text. For example, a narrative in the works of 'Abdurrazzaq (d.211) and Ibn Abi Shayba (d.235) is an ordinary narrative in Musannaf; but if Bukhari and Muslim took that narrative from those books, it can bear a much more different value, can have the quality of a "valid" and "generally accepted" tradition and become an indisputable proof.

In theory, Qur'an is considered to be the primary referrence in the writing of Sira. When we look in the resources of Sira and Maghazi of the first era, we see a lot of verses given in relation to the subjects. But this picture changed in the recent studies, and centuries old accounts could replace the verses. For example, it will be seen that 5-8. verses of the surah Anfal, which are about the discussions that occurred before the battle of Badr, and 152-3. verses of the surah Al-i 'Imran, which describes the escaping and scattering of the Muslims in the battle of Uhud are generally ignored.

Another problem is that what should be our preferences and criteria vis-à-vis various accounts that arrived us on a certain issue? The chain of narrators or the text? The source or the authority? The more respected one or the more reasonable one? The following event can be a good example for this fact.

We learn from some accounts that the Prophet, fearing that the voices he heard and visions he saw before he received the first revelation might be a haunt of demons and jinns, thought to suicide rather than being seen an insane or seer, which he extremely disliked.[14] It is told in some books that when the revelation ceased for a while (a few days or a week)[15] after the first revelation arrived, the Prophet attempted several times to commit suicide by throwing himself from high hills, but just when he would throw himself, the Angle Gabriel appeared and calmed him saying: "O Muhammad! You are truly the messenger of God!".[16] But we don't see it

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[13] See: Ibn Hajar, Ahmed b. Ali b. Hajar al-Asqalani, *Lisan al-Mizan,* VII. 521, Beirut-1986, Daira al-Maarif al-Nizamiya-Hind, II. Edition.

[14] See. Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad,* I. 312, Istanbul-1982; Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad, *at-Tabakat al-Kabir,* I. 194-5, Beirut-1985.

[15] See: Ibn Hajar, Ahmed b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari,* XII. 376-7, studied by: Muhibbuddin al-Khatib, al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, Cairo-1407, III. edition.

[16] See: 'Abdurrazzaq, *al-Musannaf,* V. 323, no: 9719; Bukhari, *Ta'bir* 1, VIII. 68.

possible at all that he climbed hills to commit a suicide. In fact, Buhari added this extension, which is particular to the account of Ma'mar b. Rashid (d. 124/741), as Ibn Hajar (d.852/1448) observes it.[17] But this extension comes from Zuhri (d. 124/741) and is "maqtu" (the words uttered by someone from the second generation, Tabiun/Successors)). Buhari himself didn't recite this part in his *Bed'u'l- Vahy*, as well as Muslim (d.261/875), who didn't include this account in his book.[18]

In fact, the following account narrated by Tabari (d.310/ 922) is more reasonable and realistic:

"(His life in solititude) continued until the revelation came to him; eventually one day (a being) came to him and said: "O Muhammad! You are the messenger of God!" The Prophet went on telling the event: "I was standing, and as soon as I heard that voice, I fell on my knees. Then, trembling heavily, I returned home and came to Khatija, saying her: Please cover me, please cover me!". Finally the fear left me. Then, another time, that being came once again (in the cave) to me and repeated his words: "O Muhammad! You are the messenger of God!" Thereupon, I thought to throw myself from the top of the hill for an instant, but as soon as I thought that, he appeared once again to me and said: "O Muhammad! I am Gabriel, and you are the messenger of God!" Then "read!" he said. And when I said "what shall I read", he held and pressed me so heavily that I was extremely exhausted, then he said: "Read (Iqra') in the name of your Lord, Who created..." and I repeated what he read. Then I came again to Khatija and said to her "I fear for my life!"...[19]

As seen in the account in Tabari, the event is just a thought (hamm) of an instant. We believe that this thought of an instant was exaggerated and was turned into a reality.

Another point is that the Traditionists acted more cautiously in taking information from "Israiliyyat" and "Ahl al-Kitab" (the information borrowed from Jewish and Christian culture), whereas the Historians didn't have such a concern, and they didn't avoid narrating from the people who have reputation for narrating from Israiliyat like Wahb b. Munebbih, as well as from non-muslim narrators.

In conclusion, although there are some common characteristics between the books of Hadith and the books of Sira and History with regard to style, method and references, yet the differences are more. The fact that some historical sources were underestimated by using a weapon called "jarh" (refutation) caused the available details in those books to be ignored. In fact, an integration of Hadith and Sira, which should complete each other with regard to their subject and origin, will help a lot of Hadith and Sunna

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[17] Ibn Hajar, Ibid, XII. 376.

[18] Muslim, *Iman* 252-5, I. 139-143.

[19] Al-Tabarî, Abu Jafar, Tarikh al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk, II. 298-9, studied by: Muhammed Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, Cairo-t.y., Dar al-Maarif, V. edition.

to be received and understood more correctly and detailed. So, we should make use of the resources of Sira, history and "tabaqat" in the researches on hadith, whereas we should use rich resources of hadith, which covers thousands of narratives, when writing "Sira" and history. Especially, the sections arranged for lots of historical events, as well as the separate chapters like "Kitab al-Maghazi", "Kitab al-Manaqib" etc. which exist in a lot of books of hadith should not be ignored. If the sources of those two branches are considered together, and the narratives are studied comparatively, the researches to be made in both fields, no doubt, will be richer and more efficient.