

‘Addās of Nineveh and the Prophet Muḥammad: A Comparative Study of Sīra Narratives and Biblical Traditions

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Abstract

This study examines the figure of ‘Addās of Nineveh, a Christian slave in Meccan society during the Prophet Muḥammad’s period. While traditional Sīra sources state that ‘Addās welcomed and recognised Muḥammad as a prophet, these accounts are embedded within sīra narrative conventions that systematically privilege figures portrayed as expressing positive attitudes toward the Prophet. As a result, they provide limited insight into his background and the motivations underlying his attitude, and they diverge in their accounts of his alleged conversion to Islam. Employing a historical-comparative methodology that combines isnād analysis with internal historical criticism, this article analyses sīra narratives alongside tafsīr literature and Christian traditions, including biblical materials. It investigates ‘Addās’s origins in Nineveh, his Christian Syriac milieu, and his subsequent enslavement in Mecca. The study argues that his familiarity with the Old and New Testaments, particularly references to God, the angel Gabriel, and the Prophet Jonah, helps explain his sympathetic response to the Prophet Muḥammad’s message. At the same time, the extant sīra sources do not offer sufficient evidence to support a definitive conclusion regarding ‘Addās’s conversion to Islam. Rather, the available evidence more securely supports interpreting ‘Addās as an early example of Christian engagement with Islam, illustrating the role of biblical knowledge in shaping perceptions of the Prophet within Meccan society.

Keywords: The Prophet, ‘Addās, Islam, Christianity, Mecca, *Sīra*

Introduction

Early biographical works on the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) (*Sīra* and *Maghāzī*) record encounters with Christian figures who lived in the major cities of al-Ḥijāz, mainly Mecca, Yathrib, and al-Ṭā’if during the Prophet’s lifetime (571 – 632 CE). These narratives of *sīra* included both Arab converts and non-Arab Christians who had been brought to the region as slaves serving Meccan elites, particularly members of the Quraysh. They appear as interlocutors who debated with the Prophet, recognised aspects of his message, and were portrayed as converts to Islam. Among these figures, ‘*Addās of Nineveh* or ‘*Addās the Christian*, identified as a Christian slave owned by two brothers, Shaybah and ‘Utbah ibn Rabī’ah. Although Muslim authors preserved detailed accounts of his encounter with the Prophet at al-Ṭā’if, modern scholarship has largely confined its discussion of ‘Addās to this single episode, treating it as an isolated anecdote rather than situating it within a broader historical and religious context. However, biographical and exegetical sources preserve sufficient material to suggest that ‘Addās’s relationship with the Prophet may not have been confined to a single encounter and should instead be examined within a broader historical framework extending from the early Meccan proclamation to the Medinan period.

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Contemporary Western scholarship has devoted substantial attention to the Prophet's early interactions with the Christian milieu during the Meccan period. However, studies by writers such as Goddard, Shahīd, and Mourad emphasise the Prophet's contacts with particular Christian figures, most notably Baḥīrā the monk and Warāqah ibn Nawfal, as well as his encounter with Christians from Abyssinia, while offering no discussion of 'Addās of Nineveh.¹ Even recent Western research indicates that 'Addās has remained largely outside the scope of Western scholarly interest.²

Arabic scholarship, by contrast, has examined 'Addās primarily through narratives preserved in biographical sources. However, the authenticity of these accounts is doubtful as the *Isnād* (chains of transmission) of the story of the Prophet's meeting with 'Addās are *mursal* and "not sufficiently linked with each other," owing to a single source (i.e., Ibn Ishāq).³ Other studies have rejected the *Isnād* as an appropriate method, arguing that that earlier accounts provide sufficient evidence to show that 'Addās converted to Islam after meeting the Prophet at al-Ṭā'if.⁴

This study addresses these gaps by shifting the analytical focus in three ways. First, it moves beyond the narrow corpus of biographical narratives to incorporate exegetical materials preserved in discussions of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (The circumstances for revelation in the Qur'ān). Second, it situates 'Addās within his Christian Syriac background, foregrounding the role of biblical literacy in shaping his response to Muḥammad's prophethood. Third, it reassesses the question of conversion through a combined methodology of *isnād* analysis and internal historical criticism. The central research question guiding this study is, therefore, to what extent can his biblical knowledge explain 'Addās's sympathetic response to the Prophet, and what degree of historical certainty do the available sources permit regarding his alleged conversion to Islam? By addressing this question, the article advances a more critically grounded understanding of early Christian engagement with Islam and challenges tribal- and conversion-centred readings of the *sīra* tradition.

Methodology

The study adopts a comparative historical methodology by examining accounts of the figure of 'Addās of Nineveh in early Muslim historical sources, alongside reports in comparable sources, whether local ecclesiastical works (Greek and Syriac) or biblical accounts. First, the study will develop a more precise understanding of 'Addās's origins by comparing what early historians

¹ Hugh Goddard, *History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 20- 24. Irfan Shahīd, "Islam and Oriens Christianus: Makka 610-622 AD," *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 9-32. Suleiman A. Mourad, "Christians and Christianity in the Sīra of Muḥammad," *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 1 (600-900)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 57-71.

² Philip Wood (2021), "The Treaty between Muḥammad and the Christians of Najrān in the *Chronicle of Seert*: Negotiating the Rights of the Conquered and the Re-Writing of the Past." *Al-Masāq*, Vol. 33 No. 2, 156–68. Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo, Aris Fauzan, and Abd Razak Zakaria (2024), "Freudian Analysis of the Prophet Muḥammad's Historical Life and His Early Community." *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, Vol. 11, 1- 15. Valérie Gonzalez (2024), "Traces of the Prophets: Relics and Sacred Spaces in Early Islam: By Adam Bursi: Book review," *Material Religion*, Vol. 20, No. 3- 4, 312–14. Robert Hoyland, and Timothy Power (2025), "Christian Monasticism in Late Antique and Early Islamic East Arabia," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*, 1- 12.

³ Akram al-'Umarī, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah al-Ṣaḥīḥah: Muḥāwalah li-Taḥbīq Qawā'id al-Muḥaddithīn fī Naqd Riwayāt al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, (Medina: Maktabat al-'Ulūm wa-al-Ḥikam, 1994), 178.

⁴ Aḥmad Ghallūsh, *al-sīrah al-Nabawīyah wa-al-Da'wah fī al-'ahd al-Makkī*, (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2003), 323; Aḥmad Ghulush, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah wa-al-Da'wah fī al-'Ahd al-Madanī*, (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2004), 266; Amīrah Khaḍar (2022), "al-Naṣrāniyyah fī Bilād al-Ḥijāz mundhu Milād al-Rasūl ﷺ ḥattā Wafātih (AH / 571 CE – 11 AH / 632 CE)." *Majallat Qiṭā' Kulliyāt al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah wa-al-Shu'ab al-Munāzirah Lahā*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1451-1454.

of *sīra* record about his religious and background with what Christian works wrote about Christianity in Nineveh. Second, the study will examine the reasons that may have contributed to 'Addās's arrival in Mecca to join the slave class subject to the Qurashī nobles, in light of Mecca's late pre-Islamic commercial network. Drawing on early Muslim sources, it examines how trade relations within Arabia and with Mesopotamia may have intersected with patterns of mobility and enslavement under Qurashī authority.

Third, the study moves to the phase that concerns 'Addās's relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad and the figures of Mecca, undertaking a critical analysis of the issues reported to have been discussed between 'Addās and the Prophet and the Meccan figures. Here, narratives of *sīra* are examined alongside relevant passages from the Old and New Testaments that address the same theological or historical issues. The analysis focuses on identifying points of convergence and divergence, clarifying the scriptural background of the reported exchange, and assessing how Muslim sources may have framed the encounter in relation to biblical motifs.

Fourth, the study will use two methods: *isnād* analysis and historical criticism, to examine accounts of 'Addās's conversion to Islam. Historical criticism, applied throughout the early sources of *sīra* and *tafsīr*, is internal, evaluating the reliability of accounts in the principal *sīra* works. This assessment is carried out either by evaluating the historicity of these sources' narratives and their coherence with the contextual framework of events in the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, or by means of analysing the *isnād*, aiming to reach a balanced conclusion in line with standards commonly used by Muslim scholars when evaluating such claims⁵.

Overall, this four-step comparative strategy allows the research to contextualize 'Addās historically within late antique Near Eastern Christianity and assess the intellectual and religious content attributed to the meeting by testing it against contemporaneous Christian textual frameworks.

'Addās's Roots

The Muslim version presents 'Addās as a Christian slave from Nineveh, in Mesopotamia, who served the nobles of the Quraysh tribe. This raises three key questions concerning the class of white slaves in Mecca of which 'Addās was a part, his homeland, and his Christian environment. Those who study the history of Mecca during the period preceding or contemporary to the rise of Islam will see that slaves constituted a fundamental class in Meccan society for several reasons. The first is the nature of Quraysh's economic activities, particularly in trade⁶, grazing, craftsmanship, and agriculture in orchards in al-Ṭā'if.⁷

Nineveh is a well-known and historic city in northern Mesopotamia. It has a long history dating back to the Assyrian Empire era. The inhabitants of Nineveh were predominantly of Semitic origin and adopted the Syriac as a daily language and the language of the church, as described by al-Mas'ūdī's: "...Nabateans and Syriacs, of the same race and the same language..."⁸

⁵ See Table 1.

⁶ Faruk Tuncer (2023), "The Terms Trade (*Tijarah*) and Road (*Rihlah*) in Qur'anic Context: With Special References to the Trade of Prophet Muhammad in *Sirah*" *Religions*, Vol. 14, no. 8, 1055: 1- 17.

⁷ Aḥmad Ibrāhīm al-Sharīf, *Makkah wa-al-Madīnah fī al-Jāhilīyah wa-'ahd al-Rasūl*, (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1965), 248.

⁸ 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādīn al-jawhar*, (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣrīyah, 2005), 1: 146.

Mary the Apostle preached Christianity across: "...Babylon, Ahvaz (Khūzestan), and lands of Tigris and Persia..." in the second half of the first century CE.⁹ Gradually, Christianity was established in Nineveh, and the Nestorian and Jacobite churches competed to influence its Christians.¹⁰ Thus, the monastic life flourished, as evidenced by the construction of monasteries across most of northern Mesopotamia, including Nineveh, during the period preceding the emergence of Islam.¹¹

‘Addās was likely a pious Christian from a young age, and Syriac was clearly his mother tongue, in which he recited the Bible and worshipped, as it was the liturgical language of eastern Syriac churches.¹² This brings us to the important questions: how did ‘Addās arrive in Mecca and become a slave of two Qurashī nobles and what was the impact of the white slave class on shaping his identity? Some Muslim sources relate that the nobles of Quraysh did at times buy white slaves, especially those who were often captured by Persian or Byzantine armies during wars or by Arab tribes who attacked the borders of the Sassanian and Byzantine empires in the pre-Islamic period. These captives were sold in slave markets and transferred to the major towns of the Arabian Peninsula, where they engaged in trade, grazing, crafting, farming, and other economic activities.¹³ This finding is supported by ecclesiastical authors from the 4th century CE, who referred to a number of raids and instances of captivity carried out by Persian and Byzantine armies, as well as by the Arabs (the Saracens–Ishmaelites) in the Levant and Mesopotamia. The consequences of these incidents included the sale of many captives as slaves in the markets of Mesopotamia and the Levant.¹⁴ This provides clear evidence of the flourishing slave trade in the markets of these regions neighbouring the Arabian Peninsula to the north, from which slaves could have been exported to markets within the Peninsula itself, foremost among them Mecca.

Another example recorded by Ibn Sa’d is the story of Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān al-Rūmī, a member of Banū al-Namir bin Qāsit, a branch of the Rabi’ah tribe. He was captured by the Byzantines as a child when they invaded his tribe in Upper-Mesopotamia (*Jazīrah*). Later, Ṣuhayb was sold to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Jud‘ān in Mecca.¹⁵ This account may prompt Jawād ‘Alī to argue that ‘Addās was captured and sold to an unknown merchant, who brought him to al-Ṭā’if for ‘Utbah and

⁹ Mārī ibn Sulaymān, *Akhbār baṭārikat Kursī al-Mashriq min Kitāb al-Majdal*, (Rome: Maṭba‘at Rūmīyah al-Kubrā, 1899), 3.

¹⁰ Anonymous, *Mukhtaṣar al-akhbār al-bay‘īyah: wa-huwa al-qism al-mafqūd min*, ed. Buṭrus Ḥaddād (Baghdād :Sharikat ad- Dīwān li al-ṭibā‘ah, 2000),122. Bar Hebraeus, *The Ecclesiastical Chronicle: An English Translation*, Transl. David Wilmshurst, (Piscataway, NJ, Gorgias Press, 2016), 346.

¹¹ Albīr Abūnā, *Tārīkh al-Kanīṣah, al-juz’ al-Awwal, min intishār al-Masīḥīyah ḥattā majī’ al-Islām*, (Baghdad, 1995), 1: 227. Philip Wood (2018), "The Idea of Freedom in the Writings of Non-Chalcedonian Christians in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries." *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 44, No. 6, 774–94.

¹² Murād Kāmil et al., *Tārīkh al-adab al-Suryānī min nash’atuhu ilā al-‘aṣr al-ḥāḍir*, (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfah lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, n.d.), 23.

¹³ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makkah fī qadīm al-dahr wa-ḥadīthuhu*, ed. ‘Abd al-Malik ‘Abd Allāh ibn Duḥaysh, (Beirut: Dār Khidr, 1414 AH), 3: 248; Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Munammaq fī Akhbār Quraysh*, ed. Khūrshīd Aḥmad Fārūq, (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1985), 256; ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma‘ārif*, ed. Tharwat ‘Ukāshah, (Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1992), 264; Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh (Egypt: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1959), 1: 180.

¹⁴ Anonymous, "The Chronicle of Arbela," *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, volume 468*, Transl. Peter Kawerau & Timothy Kroll, (Lovanii, In Ædibus E. Peeters, 1985), 18. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History: With an English Translation*, by Lake, Kirsopp, et al. (London: W. Heinemann. 1926), II: 111. Philostorgius, *Philostorgius: Church History*, Transl. Philip Amidon, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Lit, 2007), 211. John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, transl. R. Payne Smith, M. A. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1853), 374-375. Joshua the Stylite, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite. Translated with notes and introduction*, Trombley, Frank and Watt, John. W.; R (Liverpool University Press, 2000), 108.

¹⁵ Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d, *Kitab At-Tabaqat Al-Kabir. Volume III, the Companions of Badr*, Translated by Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley, (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, 2012), 3: 172.

Shaybah ibn Rabī'ah.¹⁶ Therefore, 'Addās was most likely a Syriac who was captured as a child in Nineveh, located along the frontier between the Sassanian and Byzantine Empires and near the territories of nomadic Arab tribes.

Furthermore, 'Addās was not the only white Christian slave who lived in Mecca. Mesopotamia and the Levant were two of the most important regions from which slaves were brought to Mecca. Muslim sources mention other white slaves who were also Christians and brought from those regions. For example, Jabr al-Naṣrānī, the servant of Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī,¹⁷ Yasār al-Rūmī (Abū Fukayhah), and Naṣtas, servants of Ṣafwān bin Umayyah bin Khalaf.¹⁸ Furthermore, al-Wāḥidī states that Jabr and Yasār originally came from the town of 'Ayn al-Tamr in Mesopotamia, which is not far from Nineveh. He says that both: "...used to read books in their own language..."¹⁹ which means that both recited the holy Bible in Syriac—the liturgical language of Eastern Christians. Some sources also list other white Christian slaves such as Bal'ām (called the Christian Blacksmith), Qumṭah al-Rūmī, al-Azraq al-Rūmī, the servant of al-Ḥārith ibn Kaladah al-Thaqafī, and Ya'īsh al-Rūmī, the servant of Banū al-Mughīrah.²⁰

Thus, we can conclude that 'Addās came from a Christian Syriac background to a Meccan Arabic society. This society was open to diverse cultures and religions despite its Arab pagan identity. However, 'Addās lived among a large class of slaves, a significant proportion of whom were whites and Christians, with Syriac as a liturgical language for practicing their religious rituals. Therefore, 'Addās could retain his faith, Syriac language, and culture despite living in a predominantly pagan Arab society. In addition, it is important to remember that the Qurashī society was tolerant towards other religious groups, especially Christians, as long as their presence did not threaten its economic and social interests.²¹ Consequently, it is not surprising that Christianity existed in various forms in Mecca, not only exclusive to the slave class. Evidence from Muslim sources cites Qurashī individuals who embraced Christianity, such as 'Uthmān ibn al-Ḥuwayrith ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, and 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh.²² Moreover, Mecca attracted several Christian merchants who temporarily resided there for commercial purposes, given its economic importance as a market centre, for example, Bāqūm al-Qibṭī, who assisted Quraysh in the reconstruction of the Ka'ba.²³

¹⁶ Jawād 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab qabla al-Islām*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 200), 12: 183.

¹⁷ Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Shihātah, (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth, 1423 AH), 3: 226.

¹⁸ Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, Trans. and ed. Rizwi Faizer, Amal Ismail and AbdulKader Tayob, (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), 1: 207, 419.

¹⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, *asbāb nuzūl al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Iṣām ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Ḥumaydān, (Dammam: Dār al-islāh, 1992), 1: 281.

²⁰ Al-Wāqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 3: 418, 426, 456; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb At-Tabaqat*, 3: 247; Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Munammaq*: 59; 'Iyād ibn Mūsā ibn 'Iyād ibn 'Amrūn, *al-Shifā bi-ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, (Ammān: Dār al-Fayḥā, 1407 AH), 1: 705; Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abī al-karam Muḥammad ibn al-Athīr, *Asd al-ghābah fī ma'rīfat al-ṣaḥābah*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwad wa-'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1994), 5: 491; Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Hajar, *al-Isābah fī Tamyiz al-ṣaḥābah*, ed. 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd wa-'alā Muḥammad Mu'awwad, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1415 AH), 1: 457; Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālidi, *al-Qur'ān wa-naqd Maṭā'in al-rahbān*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2007), 723.

²¹ al-Sharīf, *Makkah*: 101.

²² Aḥmad ibn Ishāq al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, (Leiden: Brill, 1883), 2: 298.

²³ Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishāq's Sirat Rasul Allah*. Translation with Introductory and Notes, Alfred Guillaume, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 84; Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah wa-mā jā'a fihā min al-Āthār*, ed. Rushdī al-Ṣāliḥ Malḥas, (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, n. d.), 1: 157; Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makkah fī qadīm al-dahr wa-ḥadīthuhu*, ed. 'Abd al-Malik 'Abd Allāh ibn Duḥaysh, (Beirut: Dār Khidr, 1414 AH), 5: 210.

Additionally, al-Ṭabarī tells that Tamīm al-Dārī and ‘Addī ibn Bidā’, both Christians, frequently visited Mecca for trade before converting to Islam.²⁴

This highlights the presence of Christianity in Mecca, which continued even following the rise of Islam. Therefore, many Christians, particularly slaves of Meccan masters, remained even after the advent of Islam. Consequently, ‘Addās could maintain his Christian faith, retain the Syriac language, and practice religious worship freely, despite the hardships of life and slavery in the Meccan society.

‘Addās and the Prophet

Although the Prophet Muḥammad lived for 40 years before receiving revelation, biographical sources do not mention any direct relationship between him and ‘Addās during that time. Furthermore, these sources provide little information about the exact time and manner in which ‘Addās was brought to the Ḥijāz and enslaved by ‘Utbah and Shaybah bin Rabī‘ah. Jawād ‘Alī suggests that ‘Addās: “...fell into captivity and he was then sold in the slave market”²⁵ Although this suggestion is consistent with the details presented in the current study, it was not based on direct evidence. Nonetheless, ‘Addās was sold to two prominent Qurashī nobles.

According to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, ‘Addās’s interactions with the Prophet Muḥammad began on the first day of the revelation in the cave of Ḥirā’ in 610 CE. The Prophet Muḥammad returned home and informed his wife, Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, what had happened to him. In this regard, Ibn Shihāb states that:

...She went to a servant of ‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘ah, named ‘Addās, a Christian from Nineveh, and said: ‘O ‘Addās, I remind you of Allāh, so tell me, do you have any knowledge of Gabriel (Jibrīl)?’ When this man heard her mention Gabriel, he said: ‘Holy, Holy our Lord! What is the matter with Gabriel being mentioned in this land whose people are idol worshippers?’ She replied: ‘I wish to hear from you about him’. ‘Addās then said: ‘Gabriel is Allāh’s trusted messenger between Him and the prophets, and he was the companion of Moses (Mūsā) and Jesus (‘Īsā)...’²⁶

The remainder of Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī’s account reports that Khadījah then went to her cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a Christian scholar and well-familiar with the Bible, who agreed with ‘Addās’s statement about Muḥammad.²⁷ Al-Balādhurī and Ibn Ṭarkhān record the same account, but with different *isnād* (chain of transmitters of the account).²⁸ Meanwhile, Ibn Ishāq does not record this account, but tells the well-known account of Waraqah ibn Nawfal’s conversation with Khadījah.²⁹

²⁴ Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *tafsīr al-Ṭabarī al-musammā Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī wa-‘Abd al-sanaḍ Ḥasan Yamāmah, (al-Jīzah: Dār Hajar lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘ wa-al-I‘lān, 2001), 9: 88.

²⁵ Jawād ‘Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, 12: 183.

²⁶ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-Nubūwah*, ed. ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭī Qal‘ajī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, Dār al-Rayyān lil-Turāth, 1988), 2: 143.

²⁷ Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibat Allāh ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq, wa-dhikr faḍlihā wa-tasmiyat min ḥallihā min al-amāthil aw ijtāza bi-nawāḥihā min wāridihā wa-ahluḥā*, study and edited by: ‘Umar ibn Gharāmah al-‘Amrawī, (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 1995), 63: 8.

²⁸ al-Balādhurī, *ansāb al-ashraf*, 1: 111; Sulaymān ibn Ṭarkhān al-Taymī, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. Raḍwān al-Ḥuṣārī, (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal lil-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīyah, 2021) 56.

²⁹ Ibn Ishāq, *The life of Muhammad*, 107.

Evidently, the accounts of Ibn Shihāb, al-Balādhurī, and Ibn Ṭarkhān agree on the content of the conversation between Khadījah and ‘Addās. The mention of the angel Gabriel and his words to the Prophet was the key reason for ‘Addās to believe in Khadījah’s account and, consequently, the prophethood of Muḥammad. However, careful consideration of why Khadījah specifically questioned ‘Addās, rather than any other Christian slave, suggests that he was knowledgeable about his faith and the Bible. This perspective is supported by a commentator who described ‘Addās as a ‘monk’.³⁰

Khadījah’s conversation with ‘Addās highlights another important issue, represented in the Meccan society’s view of Christians, even those who were slaves. The Meccan society seemed to believe that Christians could interpret extraordinary events occurring around them, which the pagan, illiterate society struggled to understand. Hence, ‘Addās, as a Christian, was no exception, and Meccan society recognised that he was well-versed in the Bible and the Christian faith.

Here, it is significant to consider whether Khadījah’s inquiry about Gabriel attracted ‘Addās’s attention, and why he immediately associated Gabriel with Moses, Jesus, and the prophets of Children of Israel (*Banū Isrā’īl*)? In addition, how did Muḥammad, an illiterate prophet living in a pagan Meccan society, know about Gabriel?

The answers can be found in ‘Addās’s deep knowledge of the Bible, which mentions Gabriel multiple times as the divine messenger sent to the prophets. Specifically, in the Book of Daniel, Gabriel is mentioned twice: first, as the angel who foretells Daniel’s own prophethood and the coming of Jesus Christ,³¹ and second, in the Gospel of Luke, stating that Gabriel was the angel who informed Zechariah that his older wife would give birth to John the Baptist.³² Moreover, ‘Addās perhaps considered what the Book of Genesis says about the Sons of Ishmael, from whom Muḥammad’s society had descended, stating that God will bless the descendants of Abraham through his son Ishmael.³³ Thus, we can understand the reason of ‘Addās’s positive attitude towards Muḥammad as a true prophet in the light of biblical tradition. ‘Addās certainly witnessed the following events of Muḥammad’s call, up to the Prophet’s journey to al-Ṭā’if in 619 CE. Biographical sources mention nothing regarding ‘Addās’s relation with the Prophet during these nine years (610–619 CE). The most plausible explanation is that he lived on the margins of events, without a clear attitude, similar to many other slaves who did not convert to Islam.

The Meeting at al-Ṭā’if

Biographers mostly agreed on the details and outcomes of the meeting between the two men in al-Ṭā’if. However, they were based on Ibn Ishāq’s account, which reports that:

When ‘Utba and Shayba saw what happened, they were moved with compassion and called a young Christian slave of theirs called ‘Addās and told him to take a bunch of grapes on a platter and give them to him to eat.” ‘Addās did so, and when the apostle put his hand in the platter, he said ‘In the name of God’ before eating. ‘Addās looked closely into his face and said: By God, this is not the way the people of this country speak. The apostle then

³⁰ Abū al-Layth Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-‘Ulūm al-ma’rūf bi-tafsīr al-Samarqandī*, ed. ‘alā Muḥammad Ma’raḍ, ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd, Zakarīyā ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Tūbī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1993), 3: 493.

³¹ Daniel 8:14–19; 9:20–27.

³² Luke 1:10–20, 1:26–38.

³³ Genesis 12:1–2, 21:17.

asked, 'Then from what country do you come, O 'Addis? And what is your religion'? He replied that he was a Christian and came from Nineveh. 'From the town of the righteous man Jonah, the son of Mattai', said the apostle. 'But how did you know about him'? asked 'Addis. 'He is my brother; he was a prophet, and I am a prophet', answered the apostle. 'Addās bent over him and kissed his head, his hands, and his feet...³⁴

Evidently, the historical and religious backgrounds of 'Addās played a dominant role in shaping his conversation with the Prophet and understanding what he said, which was unfamiliar to the largely pagan society of Mecca and its surrounding regions. One key astonishment of 'Addās was the Prophet's invocation of the Name of God (*Bismillah*), which was uncommon amongst the pre-Islamic polytheistic Arabs. In contrast, Eastern Christians, including Nestorians, Jacobites and Melkites, invoked the Trinitarian formula that runs from the Name of God, despite the major theological division between Islam and Christianity. However, the most important astonishment of 'Addās was the Prophet's knowledge of Jonah, the son of Amittai (*Yūnus ibn Mattā*). From the conversation, we can understand that Jonah was unknown among pre-Islamic polytheistic Arabs, even though the Qur'ān mentions Jonah as a true prophet sent by God to Nineveh to call the people to worship God and not idols; however, he left them because they did not respond to his call. Jonah then boarded a ship and was swallowed by a whale, but God saved him.³⁵ In addition, Jonah is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments as one of the twelve minor prophets of the Children of Israel, specifically in the Books of Kings and Jonah, where he is the central figure.³⁶

The conversation between the Prophet and 'Addās attracted the attention of historians of *sīra*, especially in relation to later debates over whether this episode implies 'Addās's conversion to Islam. Ibn Ṭarkhān and al-Ya'qūbī claimed that 'Addās converted to Islam after hearing the Prophet and declared: 'I bear witness that you are the servant of Allāh and His messenger'.³⁷ The two historians' accounts present a significant methodological problem: neither author identifies the primary sources, namely, the informants on which the reports rely. Nor do they supply an *isnād*, as is customary in *sīra* historiography. Nevertheless, a crucial factor to consider in the source-critical assessment of the two historians' accounts is that Ibn Ṭarkhān is described in the biographical and *ḥadīth* literature as a transmitter whose reliability was generally accepted by a wide range of *ḥadīth* scholars.³⁸ Al-Ya'qūbī, by contrast, is frequently identified in the same critical tradition as having a Shi'i orientation, a characterisation that has influenced subsequent scholarly evaluations of his historical reports.

Whereas, when tracing the *isnād* of Ibn Ishāq's account, it becomes clear that he derived it from Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraẓī, whom *ḥadīth* scholars regard as a reliable transmitter.³⁹ A further observation that may be drawn from the narrative attributed to Muḥammad ibn Ka'b is that it neither explicitly affirms nor categorically denies the question of 'Addās's conversion to Islam. Consequently, this issue remains open and warrants further scholarly examination in light of comparative accounts.

³⁴ Ibn Ishāq, *The life of Muhammad*, 193.

³⁵ Surat Aṣ-Ṣaffat, Verses 139–148.

³⁶ Jonah 4:9–11; Matthew 12:39–41; Luke 11:29–36. And for further debates about Prophet Jonah in the light of Qur'anic and Biblical contexts. see: Adam Dodds and Joseph Kohring (2025), "Jonah in the Qur'an and the Bible: A Theological Study." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 36, No.2, 83–114.

³⁷ Ibn Ṭarkhān, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, 79; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*: 2: 36.

³⁸ Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb Al-Jarḥ wa-Al-Ta'dīl*, (Bayrūt: Dār al Umam, 1952), 4: 124. Muḥammad ibn Hibbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb Al-Thiqāt*, (Haydarābād al-Dakan: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyah), 1973), 4: 300.

³⁹ Ibn Abī-Ḥātim, *Al-Jarḥ wa-Al-Ta'dīl*, 8: 67. Ibn Hibbān, *Al-Thiqāt*, 5: 351.

A similar pattern is observable in two closely related reports attributed to 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr and al-Zuhrī,⁴⁰ both of whom are broadly comparable to Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraṣī in terms of reliability and their generational placement among early transmitters.⁴¹ These narratives recount the same episode with largely parallel details, yet, as in Muḥammad ibn Ka'b's account, they refrain from either affirming or denying 'Addās's conversion to Islam. Taken together, the narratives of the three early transmitters, al-Quraṣī, Ibn al-Zubayr, and al-Zuhrī, stand in marked contrast to certain modern studies that assert that 'Addās converted to Islam after meeting the Prophet in al-Ṭā'if. On the contrary, later narratives concerning 'Addās include details that run counter to this view, warranting further discussion and analysis in the following section.

Later Accounts and Debates

The consequences of this conversation on the Prophet's relationship with Quraysh provide an important answer to this question, as recorded in three early works of *Tafsīr* (exegesis) by Muqātil, Ibn Abī Tha'labat, and Ibn Abī Zamanayn, in addition to al-Wāqidī's *Maghāzī* (Campaigns). The three exegetes mentioned 'Addās at least three times in *asbāb al-nuzūl*, from the Prophet Muḥammad's return from al-Ṭā'if until he migrated to Medina (*hijrah*). The first refers to the same year in which the Prophet travelled to al-Ṭā'if in 618 CE. According to Muqātil, the verse: {And those who disbelieve say: 'This [Qur'ān] is not except a falsehood he invented, and another people assisted him in it...'}⁴² was revealed in response to the accusation by al-Naḍr bin al-Hārith, a member of Banū 'Abd Manāf bin 'Abd al-Dār, a branch of Quraysh. Al-Naḍr alleged that the Prophet had learnt the Qur'ān from some of the People of the Book, one of whom was 'Addās.⁴³ Another work refers to 'Addās in the light of the verse: {And We certainly know that they say, 'It is only a human being who teaches the Prophet...'}⁴⁴ that was shortly revealed before the Prophet's migration to Medina. Some Quraysh polytheists accused 'Addās of reading 'the Book in Hebrew' and teaching the Prophet some of what he read.⁴⁵ In the third occasion, the same accusation was repeated in debating the verse: {Then they turned away from him and said, '[He was] taught [and is] a madman'}.^{46,47}

The *asbāb al-nuzūl* of the three verses in which 'Addās is mentioned lead to an important conclusion. The influence of that famous conversation in al-Ṭā'if continued to fuel the polytheists of Quraysh's hostility toward the Prophet. However, only one accusation indicates that the Prophet was taught by 'Addās of Quraysh, without any persuasion or physical evidence. Here, it is significant to notice that the same accusation was repeated on other occasions, but with other Christian slaves, most notably Jabr and Yasār.⁴⁸ The most consequential inference that may be drawn from these three *asbāb al-nuzūl* accounts is that 'Addās appears to have remained Christian, since none of them provides positive evidence of his conversion to Islam. This stands in explicit contrast to the claims attributed to Ibn Ṭarkhān and al-Ya'qūbī, as well as to the conclusions reached by the modern studies discussed above.

⁴⁰ Ibn Abī-Hātim, *Ibid*: 6: 395- 396, 8: 71. Ibn Hibbān, *Ibid*: 5: 194, 5: 349.

⁴¹ Abū Na'im Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh, *Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*. ed. 'Ādil al-'azāzy, (Riyadh: Dār al-waṭan lil-Nashr, 1998), 1: 295; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubūwah*, 2: 143.

⁴² Surat al-Furqān, Verse 4.

⁴³ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*: 3: 226.

⁴⁴ Surat an-Naḥal, Verse 103.

⁴⁵ Yaḥyā ibn Sallām Ibn Abī Tha'labat, *Tafsīr Yaḥyā ibn Sallām*, ed. Hind Shalabī, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2004), 1: 90.

⁴⁶ Surat ad-Dukhān, Verse 14.

⁴⁷ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Abī Zamanayn, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*, ed. Abī 'Abd Allāh 'Ukāshah and Muḥammad al-Kanz, (Qāhirah: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadīthah lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 2002), 4: 200.

⁴⁸ Al-Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*: 1: 207, 419.

The name of 'Addās appears again, this time in al-Wāqidī's Maghāzī, when Quraysh prepared for the Battle of Badr, which occurred in Ramaḍān 2 AH/ March 624 CE. Al-Wāqidī records more than one account affirming that 'Addās was in Mecca at that time. First, he stated that when 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah and his brother Shaybah were preparing their armour and weapons for the battle:

... 'Addās saw them restoring their coats of mail, and their tools of battle and said: 'What do you intend'? They replied, 'Did you not see the man to whom we sent you with the grapes from our grape vine in al-Ṭā'if'? He said: 'Yes'. They both said, 'We will go out and fight him'. 'Addās cried out, 'Do not go out, for by God, he is surely a prophet'! But they rejected him and went out. 'Addās went out with them and was killed at Badr with them.⁴⁹

However, al-Wāqidī later revised this account, specifically his account of the fate of 'Addās. He transmitted, through Abū Bakr ibn Sulaymān bin Abī Khaythamah on the authority of Ḥakīm bin Ḥizām, a similar account of the previous details, but added regarding 'Addās's fate:

...he ('Addās) but continued to be doubtful until he was killed with the disbelievers in doubt and suspicion. Some say that 'Addās returned and did not witness Badr. Others, that he witnessed Badr and was killed at that time. The first saying is confirmed among us.⁵⁰

It is evident that al-Wāqidī explicitly identified his primary source as Abū Bakr ibn Abī Ḥatmah, who is classified by the majority of *ḥadīth* scholars as a reliable transmitter⁵¹. The problem, however, lies not with the source from whom al-Wāqidī transmitted the report, but with al-Wāqidī himself, who was not convinced by the account claiming that 'Addās was killed alongside the polytheists of Quraysh at Badr. He also added a brief account by 'Addās's masters, 'Utbah and Shaybah, just before they engaged in the Battle of Badr. 'Utbah suggested to his brother that they return to Mecca and refrain from fighting, because the dream allegedly seen by 'Ātika bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (the Prophet's aunt) and Juha'im ibn al-Ṣalt ibn Makhrama ibn al-Muṭṭalib ibn 'Abd Manāf about the fate of Quraysh's nobles in the battle. Al-Wāqidī also recorded what 'Utbah and Shaybah remembered about 'Addās's words regarding the truth of Muḥammad's prophethood, but the prominent Qurashī noble Abū Jahl dissuaded them from retreating.⁵²

Al-Wāqidī's previous accounts lead to several important conclusions regarding the relationship between 'Addās and the Prophet. Both of 'Addās's masters, 'Utbah and Shaybah, explicitly link what occurred at Badr to their earlier meeting in al-Ṭā'if. This emphasises the significance of that meeting and its consequences, particularly the question surrounding 'Addās's conversion to Islam. From Wāqidī's account, it is clear that 'Addās was sympathetic to the Prophet and acknowledged the truth of his prophethood, but it does not explicitly state that 'Addās converted to Islam.

Revisiting the question of 'Addās's conversion calls for an alternative analytical approach that may yield a more balanced conclusion. This approach involves situating his case alongside accounts of other slaves, especially Christians whose conversion to Islam is explicitly documented. More specifically, it is noteworthy that major historians of *sīra* such as 'Urwah bin al-Zubayr, al-Zuhrī, Ibn Ṭarkhān, Ibn Ishāq, Mūsā bin 'Uqbah, and even al-Wāqidī himself

⁴⁹ Ibid: 1: 18.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 1: 19.

⁵¹ Ibn Hibbān, *Al-Thiqāt*: 5: 566.

⁵² Al-Wāqidī, *The Life of Muhammad*, 1: 23.

explicitly mentioned the conversions of prominent Meccan slaves such as Bilāl bin Rabāḥ and Ṣuḥayb bin Sinān, as well as the alleged conversion of ‘Addās. If so, they would have recorded the persecution and tragedies that ‘Addās would have endured, similar to what other enslaved converts experienced in Mecca. In addition, historians of *ṭabaqāt* (classes of biographical literature) mentioned the slaves who converted to Islam, but nothing confirms ‘Addās’s conversion to Islam despite mentioning ‘Addās’s meeting with the Prophet in al-Ṭā’if.⁵³

Concerning the claim that ‘Addās joined the Battle of Badr and was killed in it, the detailed accounts of the circumstances and consequences, as well as those who fought and were killed or captured in the battle, appear in explicit contrast to al-Wāqidī’s earlier account. Moreover, the consensus of biographers of the Prophet does not support the claim that he was forced to join the battle.

Table 1: Selected primary sources for the *sīra*, mapping each source’s transmitter(s) and assessed reliability according to the classifications of *ḥadīth* scholars

No.	Title of Work	Name of the Author	Date of Death	Type of work	Transmitters	Degree
1.	<i>Sirat Rasul Allah</i>	Ibn Ṭarkhān	761 CE	Prophetic Biography	-	Trustworthy
2.	<i>Tafsīr Muqātil</i>	Muqātil	767 CE	Exegesis	-	Abandoned
3.	<i>Sirat Rasul Allah</i>	Ibn Ishāq	768 CE	Prophetic Biography	Muḥammad ibn Ka‘b al-Quraṣī	Trustworthy
					‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr	Trustworthy
4.	<i>Tafsīr Yahyā ibn Sallām</i>	Ibn Abī Tha‘labat	815 CE	Exegesis	-	Weak
5.	<i>Kitāb al-Maghāzī</i>	Al-Wāqidī	823 CE	Prophetic Biography	Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri’s	Trustworthy
6.	<i>Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr</i>	Ibn Sa‘d	845 CE	Biographical Dictionary	-	Trustworthy
7.	<i>al-Munammaq</i>	Ibn Ḥabīb	859 CE	History	-	Not Classified
8.	<i>Akhbār Makkah</i>	Al-Azraqī	863 CE	History	-	Trustworthy
9.	<i>Akhbār Makkah</i>	Al-Fākihī	885 CE	History	-	Not Classified
10.	<i>ansāb al-ashraf</i>	al-Balādhurī	893 CE	Biographical Dictionary	Al-Wāqidī	Weakness
11.	<i>al-Ma‘ārif</i>	Ibn Qutaybah	889 CE	History	-	Trustworthy
12.	<i>Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī</i>	Al-Ya‘qūbī	897 CE	Exegesis	-	Not-Classified
13.	<i>Jāmi‘ al-Bayān</i>	Al-Ṭabarī	923 CE	Exegesis	-	Trustworthy

⁵³ Abū Na‘īm, *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, 4, 2262; Ibn al-Athīr, *‘Asd al-ghābah*, 4, 4; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, 4, 385.

14.	<i>Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīz</i>	Ibn Abī Zamanayn	936 CE	Exegesis	-	Not Classified
15.	<i>Kitāb Al-Jarḥ wa-Al-Ta'dīl</i>	Ibn Abī Ḥātim	938 CE	Biographical Dictionary	ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr	Trustworthy
					Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraḏī	Trustworthy
16.	<i>Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar</i>	Al-Mas'ūdī	956 CE	History	-	Not-Classified
17.	<i>Kitāb Al-Thiqāt</i>	ibn Hibbān	965 CE	A Biographical Dictionary	ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr	Trustworthy with Exceptional Memory
18.	Baḥr al-'Ulūm.	Al-Samarqandī	983 CE	Exegesis	-	Not-Classified
19.	<i>Dalā'il al-Nubūwah</i>	Al-Bayhaqī	1066 CE	Prophetic Biography	Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī	Trustworthy
20.	<i>Asbāb Nuzūl al-Qur'ān</i>	Al-Wāḥidī	1076 CE	Exegesis	-	Not-Classified
21.	<i>Ma'rīfat al-Ṣaḥābah</i>	Abū Na'im	1083 CE	Biographical Dictionary	-	Truthful
22.	<i>Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq</i>	Ibn 'Asākir	1176 CE	Biographical Dictionary	-	Trustworthy
23.	<i>ʿAsd al-Ghābah fī Ma'rīfat al-Ṣaḥābah</i>	Ibn al-Athīr	1233CE	Biographical Dictionary	-	Trustworthy
24.	<i>al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah</i>	Ibn Ḥajar	1449 CE	Biographical Dictionary	-	trustworthy with exceptional memory

ʿAddās's name disappeared in the following episodes of *sīra* till the Conquest of Mecca (Ramaḏān 8 AH / January 630 CE) and the Farewell Pilgrimage (Ḥijjat al-Waḏā') in Dhu al-Ḥijjah 10 AH / 632 CE. This likely indicates that he remained on the margins of episodes and, as previously noted. In any case, the *sīra* sources, including those that address the later stages of ʿAddās's life, do not provide sufficient evidence to confirm his conversion to Islam. Accordingly, the lack of clear evidence for ʿAddās's conversion to Islam across these periods suggests that he might have remained Christian rather than converting, while maintaining a sympathetic stance toward the Prophet Muḥammad.

Conclusion

The analysis indicates that the religious and social backgrounds of ʿAddās of Nineveh played a significant role in shaping his character and attitudes towards the Prophet Muḥammad. Originating from Nineveh at a time when Christianity predominated, and when Nestorian and

Jacobite churches actively competed for influence, 'Addās emerged from an environment marked by strong monastic traditions and scriptural engagement. His subsequent enslavement and relocation to Mecca placed him within a social milieu that included a substantial number of non-Arab, Christian slaves, some of whom shared his Syriac culture. This context helps to explain his continued attachment to Christian belief and practice despite residence in a predominantly pagan society. The evidence further suggests that 'Addās possessed a degree of biblical literacy, reflected in narratives of his familiarity with the Old and New Testaments. This literacy provides a plausible explanation for his sympathetic response to Muḥammad's prophethood, particularly when confronted with references to God, the angel Gabriel, and the prophet Jonah, figures deeply embedded in biblical tradition. Such elements would have resonated with a Christian steeped in Syriac scriptural culture and would have helped account for his recognition of Muḥammad's prophethood without requiring assumptions of conversion.

At the same time, the claim that he embraced Islam appears to remain unsubstantiated in the available sources. The absence of explicit affirmation of his conversion in early, reliable accounts, combined with later exegetical and historical materials that continue to identify him as Christian, cautions against drawing definitive conclusions on this matter. Rather than confirming conversion, the sources more securely attest to 'Addās's sympathetic engagement with the Prophet while remaining religiously distinct. This suggests further scholarly examination into comparable instances of Christian slaves in Mecca who maintained connections with the Prophet and the early Muslim community during the Meccan period of the preaching of Islam.

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