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The Methodology of *Ahmad Ibn A'tham al-Kufi* Pertaining to the Period of the Umayyad Caliphate in his Book *Al-Futuh* **

*Ibrahim Yousef and Ghayda' K. Katbi**

ABSTRACT

Ibn A'tham al-Kufi was a historian in the third century A.H. / ninth century A.D. and his book *al-Futuh* is an important historical work concerned with the *Futuh* and the events during the period of the Rightly-Guided, Umayyad, and Abbasid caliphs. Unfortunately, neither *Ibn A'tham* or his book received much attention from other authors of books on *Futuh* or other early historians, nor those concerned with the historiography of that period; hence the limited number of studies about him.

This study is an attempt to discover the methodology of *Ibn A'tham* in writing the history of the Umayyad period, a topic that has not been studied enough.

This study identifies his name and lineage and estimates his date of death, and establishes his sympathies as appear in his book.

The study shows that the claim that *Ibn A'tham* was a *Shi'ite* has not been proved, since most of his reports in the book about the important events in early Islamic history show obvious differences from the basic elements of *Shi'ite* ideology, such as his reports about the Imamate.

On the other hand, other reports indicate *Shi'ite* tendencies. That makes it very difficult to follow his line of thought, although that may indicate that he was an open-minded historian.

The study also mentions his diverse sources, which included both oral and written reports. He was interested in demonstrating his style of writing history, which can be considered under three points. First, his care for the *isnad* chain of reporters and his interest in being accurate, second, the level of objectivity that he showed in criticizing his reports and third, his interest in chronology.

He presented a continuous history of the events, following subjective history of personalities, cities or events in arranging his subjects, especially during the Umayyad period.

Keywords :Ibn A'tham al-Kufi, Umayyad Period, Al-Futuh book, Methodology.

** This paper is drawn from a Master thesis written by the first author, entitled: *Ibn A'tham Al-Kufi and His Methodology in the Umayyad Caliphate Period from His Book Al-Futuh*, which was discussed in the History Dept., the University of Jordan, and then accredited in 2003.

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