

## Classical Islamic Historiography in Early Moslem and Orientalist Historiographical Works

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### Abstract

*The present paper elaborates some problems of classical Islamic historiography found in early and modern Islamic historiographical works. I found three problems concerning the historiography, i.e., epistemology, contents and methodology. This is an attempt to reconstruct the said problems by presenting some responses from various perspectives. The result of this study shows that the problems of classical Islamic historiography could be classified into three categories: Political history of classical Islamic historiography was mainly caused by historian biases through their interpretation to the historiography. Methodology of transmission of the prophet tradition employed by the early Moslem historians has not explained the problems yet. Last but not least, the problems must be comprehensively approached by applying a holistic perspective.*

**Keywords:** problem, Islamic historiography, reconstruction, methodology.

### A. Introduction

Classical Islamic historiography is a part of Islamic historical study. It is historically began in early development of Islam in Arab Peninsula along with early writing transmission of the prophetic tradition (*hadith al-riwayah*) in the last first or early second century A.D. up to the zenith of 'Abasid period. Viewed from historical perspective, the emergence of the historiography was derived from the tradition of the prophet that, in fact, has no connection to the development of art of the history itself. Yet, it has more relationship

to the reservation efforts of important events of the prophet and his early companions.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the method of transmission of the Prophet Muhammad tradition (*hadith al-riwayah*) employed by early Muslim historians in their works, such as *Sirah al-Nabi* by Ibn Ishaq, *al-Maghazi* by al-Waqidi as well as *Tarikh al-Thabari* by al-Thabari, clearly indicated that the historiography was nearer to the tradition rather than to the art of the history itself. Although the role of the transmission in relation to the emergence and spread of the historiography in early Islamic period was commonly significant, yet it has not explained the real events of early Islamic history at all. In addition, it concerned to cycle of transmitters and transmission, while the content and the validity of it are in general neglected. Consequently, early Islamic historiography written by early Muslim historians had no wide scope of themes but politics. As a result, the contents of the historiography mostly political history.

The first problem of the historiography that would be examined in this article based on both early and modern Islamic historiographical works, particularly those of orientalist. The second is the methodology employed by those historians, either early Muslim or modern historians. The methodology of transmission of early Muslim historians, adopted from transmission of the prophet tradition (*al-hadith*), for instance, although has significant role of bringing up early Islamic historical stories and events as well, yet it has not explained the trully substantial meaning of them compiled within their works of the historiography. Instead, it mere quoted those stories from transmitters and story tellers without any elaboration of the socio-historical context as well. This could lead empirically to misleading of the historiography, since as Ibn Khaldun

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<sup>1</sup> It was mentioned by early Islamic historical sources that the love of companions and their successors to the prophet and his important biography were of the main motivations to emergence early Islamic historical writing tradition. particularly conducted with spread of early Islamic teachings. See Ahmad Amin, *Duha al-Islam*, (Qahirah: Maktabah al-Nahdhah al-Mishriyah), vol. 2, p. 319. See also, Anthan Khalil Dhamit Dr., *al-Tarikh fi al-Ushur al-Wustha: Dirasah Naqdiyyah fi al-Manahij*, (Beirut: Dar al-Hadathah li al-Thaba'ah wa al-Nathr wa al-Tauzi'), 2005, p. 31.

argued that quotation of transmission of historical events without any criticism could imply diffraction.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of methodology was also found in orientalist's works, though it is strongly different from that of early Islamic historiographical ones. The problem here located on the western worldview based on secularistic and materialistic as well as positivistic philosophies on one hand, and the biases of their analysis interpretation framework of the historiography on the other. This worldview, however, was comparatively incompatible with spirit of early Islamic historical facts based on both metaphysical and physical outlooks. In addition, some of orientalists have bias outlook of Islamic historiography as well as the biography of Prophet Muhammad,<sup>3</sup> so that their historiographical works mostly tended to be misleading in nature. The alternative perspective of the historiography, therefore, is an effort to solve those problems and to find out some of alternative paradigms in order to searching the epistemological root of them and establishing it within the historiography along with these paradigms.

## **B. The Terms of Classic, Historiography and Islamic Historiography**

Most historians divide Islamic history, as they divide European history, to three categories, namely classical, medieval and modern periods.<sup>4</sup> The classical period, in the term of Islamic historiography

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<sup>2</sup> According to him, this kind of method was mostly occurred in early Islamic historiographical works written by early Muslim historians. See Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, vol. 1, hlm. 5.

<sup>3</sup> This bias was caused by their study of Islamic history involving western ideology and theology as well. According to Maryam Jamilah, in ideology they used to employ ideology of Marxism while and in theology was that of Christian. See Maryam Jamilah, *Islam and Orientalism*, (Lahore: al-matbaath ul-Arabiya, 1981, hlm. 19-21.

<sup>4</sup> Although the term of classic in the context of classification period including classic, medieval and modern follows western pattern, this classification is obviously different from that of Islam. According to western classification, the period of classic began from 300 up to 476 B.C., while the medieval began from 476 B.C. up to 1500 A.D. and the modern began from 1500 A.D. up to recently time. However in the context of Islamic history, the period of classic began from early emergence of Islam (571 A.D.) up to last Abbasid period (1258). See, Stewart C. Easton, *Ancient, Medieval and Modern History*, (New York: Berness & Noble, 1964), p.1. See also, G.E. Von Grunaboum, *Classical Islam: A History 600 A.D. – 1258 A.D.*, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company), p.7.

was the period beginning from the mission of prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing be upon him, up to the last period of 'Abbasid, i.e. from year 622 A.D until 1258 A.D.<sup>5</sup> The term of classic was employed by some modern historians, such as Tarif Khalidi, Franz Rosenthal, G.E.Von Grunebaum, M.A.J. Beg and George Mikdasi,<sup>6</sup> while others, such as Nizar Ahmad Faruqi and Martin Hinds, as well as Watt named it early Islam instead of classic.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the term widely indicated periodical stages of Islamic history and civilization as well, since it was part of periodical stages of Islamic civilization. Classical Islamic history, therefore, was the first Islamic historical stage of early Islamic history and civilization along with the emergence and development of Islam as formative period.

While the term of historiography is indeed derived from two different words, history and graph. The former means story, particularly past story while the latter means line, scratch, as well as writing. Historiography, therefore, means etimologically writing story (history) or history of writing history.<sup>8</sup> From this definition, the term of historiography is slightly different from that of history itself since the former covers methodological and epistemological meaning as well,<sup>9</sup> whereas the latter is past events, chronological process of time as well as empirical facts of the past. On the other word, it is merely story, action as well as experience about the past, while the former is of how to construct or reconstruct them accordance with

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<sup>5</sup> Tarif Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam: The Culture and Heritage of Golden Age*, (Princeton USA: The Darwin Press, 1985), p.7. See also, G.E. Von Grunaboum, *Classical Islam: A History 600 A.D. – 1258 AD.*, (Chicago), p.7.

<sup>6</sup> Tarif Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam: The Culture and Heritage of Golden Age*, (USA Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1985). Franz Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, (London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1965). G.E. Von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam : A History 600 A.D. – 1258 A.D.*, (Chicago). George Makdasi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam*, (London: Edinburgh Press, 1990), M.A.J Beg, *Social Mobility in Islamic Civilization: The Classical Period*.

<sup>7</sup> Nizar Ahmad Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography; A Survey of Transmitters of Arab History from the Rise of Islam up to the Umayyad Period*, (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1979). Martin Hinds, *Studies in Islamic History*, (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Luis Gotschalk, *Mengerti Sejarah*, translated by Nugroho Notosusanto, (Jakarta : UI Press, 1969), p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 143-144.

scientific paradigm, particularly methodological approach of writing history or historiography.<sup>10</sup>

As Agness Heller argued, the term of historiography has three characteristics. First of all is that it is a scientific concept or *epistheme* that is obviously different from daily information. Second, it is always criticism, by means that it filterizes outentic or not historical sources. Finally, it always relates to past scientific events.<sup>11</sup> In this context, the term closly relates to philosophy rather than merely history as past event or cronical, since methodology and epestimology are of philosomal study. According to Franz Rosenthal, the term examines the development process of historical concept and thought, characteristic of historical writing in certain age of history as well as the emergence, development and dicline of historical forms, examining the historical content and approach by historian.<sup>12</sup>

Classical Islamic historiography, therefore, meant early Islamic history and historiography began from the period of Prophet Muhammad up to Abbasid one. It focused on study of writing history, its development, historian, method as well as methodology employed by them of the period. In this article, however, classical Islamic historiography particularly covered two meanings. First, it signified early Islamic history particularly the conceptualization and the signification of it as well as historical events concerning the history. Second, it also implied the early historiographical works written by either Muslim historian such as Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi as well as al-Tabari and modern ones, particularly those of orientalis, such as H.A.R. Gibb, Montgomery Watt, as Well as Wellhausen.

### C. The Problems of Classical Islamic Historiography

A basic assumption of this study indicates that classical Islamic historiography constitutes the problem. It here means that early Islamic historiographical works written by early Muslim historians

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Agness Heller, *A Theory of History*, (London : Boston and Henley, 1982), hlm. 80-81.

<sup>12</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p. 3.

were not merely the historical fact rather than historical construction by historians in which their involvement of socio-historical and socio-political backgrounds, schools of ideology and politics as well as worldview influenced their works the historiography.<sup>13</sup>

The problems empirically mean that there were real historical misleading phenomenon of the historiography, those were scientifically accepted to be analyzed whether from methodology or from factual written source of the history. There are at least two main problems concerning the historiography we would like to furthermore discuss here, including the material content and methodological problems as well.

### **The Problem of Content**

What we mean about this problem is material one such as themes of Islamic historical study and its substance concerning the historiography. We could categorise the problem into at least two problems. The first is politics-oriented history or political history of the historiography, while the second is materialism or in some cases historical materialism problem.

In the context of classical Islamic historiography, political history has three distinctive meanings. Firstly, early Islamic historiography conceptually did not differ so far from the concept of pre Islamic history; even it continued the concept referring to pre Islamic tribal concept and political history as well. Secondly, the content of themes was directly connected with politic such as those of caliphate (*khilafah*), dynasty (*al-daulah*), battles (*al-maghazi*), the great slander (*al-fitnah al-kubra*), either for grabbing or replacing the power. Thirdly, it is indeed historiographical work written by either early Muslim or modern historians, either orientalist or Muslim

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<sup>13</sup> The involvement of internal and external aspects of historian such as ideology, socio-historical and socio-political contexts as well as worldview did not only occur of classical Islamic historiography but also did throughout historical period of history writing history. As Mohamad Abu Bakar pointed out that historian in various historical periods have been built up of perspectives derived from worldview they live in. Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Pandangan Dunia, Ideologi dan Kesarjanaan: Islam, Proses Sejarah dan Rekonstruksi Realiti Sosial" dalam *Tinta Kenangan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies, 1993), p. 307-345.

historians as well, examining or no political themes of the historiography, yet it deals with them.

**a. *The Problem of Political history of The Historiography***

One of misleadings found in the historiography was that it tended to be mostly predominated by politic-oriented or political history, whether it is written by early Muslim historians or modern ones, especially those of orientalist concerning the historiography. For the former, we could cautiously examine Ibn Ishaq's work of *Sirah al-Nabi*, al-Waqidi's work of *al-Maghazi* as well as al-Tabari's work of *Tarikh al-Tabari*; *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, The History of People and Kings, or *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, The History of Apostles and Kings. While for the latter, some orientalist historiographical works written by William Montgomery Watt, Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen (H.A.R.) Gibb, Margoliouth, Sir William Muir as well as Wellhausen<sup>14</sup> could be the representative works to be critically examined in order to show the problem in orientalist studies. Yet, in this article we are supeciently to expose the two first orientalists, namely William Montgomery Watt and H.A.R. Gibb since they are of representative orientalists in which their works mostly concern with both Islamic history and civilization as well.

*Sirah al-Nabi*, The Biography of Prophet Muhammad, by Ibn Ishaq,<sup>15</sup> for instance, was the first written work of classical Islamic historiography that its contents were mostly full of politic oriented or political history. It consist of three main themes, namely *al-Mubtada*, The genesis, *al-Mab'ath*, The Resurrection, and *al-Maghazi*,The

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<sup>14</sup> Some of historiographical works written by Watt were Muhammad at Mecca, Muhammad at Medina, Muhammad Prophet and Statesman, The Majesty that was Islam, etc. While H.A.R. Gibb's historiography works of early Islamic history were Islam: A Survey, Mohammedanism, Islamic civilization, etc.

<sup>15</sup> He is Abu Bakar Bin Ishaq Bin Yasar Bin Khiyar al-Matlabi al-Madaini Maula Qais Bin Makramah Bin Mutalib Bin Abdul Manaf. He was born in Medina in 85 /705. His ancestor was from Persia (Iran) and his grandfather, Yasar was the first one who immigrated to Medina. In this city, he studied al-Qur'an, the prophet tradition (*al-Hadith*) as well as *al-Maghazi* from some prominent scholars of companions. But in *Sirah al-Nabi* and *al-Maghazi* his special teacher was Muhammad Bin Sihab al-Zuhri, till he k al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabi, vol.1), p. 214, 216, 217.

Battles.<sup>16</sup> Of these themes, that related directly to political history was *al-Maghazi*, while the others have correlation with it indirectly.

*al-Maghazi* by al-Waqidi on the other hand, related directly to the battles led by either prophet Muhammad or his companions at Medina period of history.<sup>17</sup> These battles themes in fact were of political history, since the historian, who wrote the theme of *al-Maghazi*, neither explained the meaning nor the objective of the battles in Prophet Muhammad period, but pointed out some related verses to them without any interpretation at all.

While *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* by al-Tabari collected all early Islamic history sources and works, even his work begins the historical study from the genesis of creation up to the last of Abbasid. Accordingly, his work is more complex than the former, viewed either from the content or the source. al-Tabari's work, therefore, is compilation of various predecessor works and sources as well, hence he still continued his political history of his work as main subject matter. On the other word he solved nothing predecessor themes of the political history, rather he added more much about it. There are some facts that his work is mostly dominated by political history. The title of his work, namely *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* or *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, that means History of the Apostles and the Kings or History of the people and the Kings, indicates indirectly political history, since the kings itself closely relate to power and it close to politics. Similarly, his concept of history as mentioned in preface of his work is more clearly indicating political history, when he asserted that history is no more then merely quotation of transmission from other sources without any interpretation. In addition, the composed themes presented by him in most chapters as well as his focus on central court of Abbasid as Franz Rosenthal and

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<sup>16</sup> The first was theme of the first creation of nature including that of human being, while the second covered study about the birth of prophet Muhammad, peace and bless upon him up to his resurrection as an apostle signed by his receipt of revelation. And the third was early Islamic battles led by Prophet Muhammad, peace and bless upon hi *al-Maghazi* m, or his standing companion at Medina period.

<sup>17</sup> The work of *al-Maghazi* by al-Waqidi consists of two volumes. Both narrated story of battles in the period of Prophet Muhammad particularly that of Medina.



other historians said,<sup>18</sup> are of the facts that political history is the main subject of his work of the historiography. The problem of political history as material content of the historiography is losing of explaining context of political events presented on those works. For instance, Ibn Ishaq's, al-Waqidi's, and al-Tabari's works while narrated the battles attended by Prophet Muhammad and his companions in Period of Madina, had no involving socio-cultural and socio-political context, but narration.

Modern<sup>19</sup> historians, especially those of orientalist, on the other hand, presented apparently political history in other distinctive ways of their study. In addition, they particularly considered the biography of prophet Muhammad, including his mission of preaching Islam whether at Mecca or Medina, both as political and material projects.

Conducting with political project of the prophet mission, Watt and other orientalist such as D.S. Margoliouth, Wellhausen, Sir William Muir as well as Carl Brockleman, argued that the only objective of the battles led by the prophet-along with his companions-at Madina was political struggle. The prophet's mission at Medina as a political leader, therefore, was always addressed to power (political) desire.<sup>20</sup>

H.A.R. Gibb, an other modern prominent orientalist similarly pointed out that Islamic movement preached by the Prophet

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<sup>18</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden E.J. Brill, 1968, 2nd edition, p. 135. See also, Syakir Musthafa, *al-Tarikh al-Arabi wa al-Mu'arrikhun; Dirasah fi Tathawwur 'ilm al-Tarikh wa Ma'rifah Rijalih fi al-Islam*, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm wa al-Malayin, volume 1, p.160-161

<sup>19</sup> The word modern is derived from word modo (Latin), means today or contemporer. It is often used to distinguish either mode of life between traditional and contemporer or a something new and old in various historical period. Some scholars such as Asaf Husain, Abraham and James Robertson regarded it as an opposite term to traditional, hence modern society is strongly different from traditional one. According to their opinion, the former orientates individual, secularism, as well as tecnology, while the latter tends to to sicieble, sacred tradition as well as primitive oriented. Lawrence Cahoon (ed.), *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, Blackwell, p. 8. See also, Neil J. Smelser&Paul B. Baltes (ed.), *International Encyclopedia Of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15, p. 9955. See also, M. Rusli Karim, *Agama, Modernisme&Sekulerisasi*, Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad Prophet and Statesman*, p. 224-226. W.Montgomery Watt, *The Majesty that was Islam*, p.5. W.Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought; The basic Concept*, (Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), p.20-21.

particularly at Medina was merely political movement.<sup>21</sup> According to him, there are three reasons concerning his opinion that the prophet's Islamic movement was politics in nature. First of all that the conflict between Prophet Muhammad and unbelievers society at Medina was fundamentally driven by economic and political backgrounds as well. Furthermore, according to him these two backgrounds were ultimate points with which the prophet could defeat them in his struggle there.<sup>22</sup> Secondly, in connecting with expeditions led by the prophet at Medina, he also asserted that these expeditions (*al-sariyah*) against 'Arab tribals were of his great plans both to unite and conquer them into his power.<sup>23</sup> Third, that the expansions (*al-futuh*) led by the prophet along with his companions at Medina explicitly indicated that Islam in its early periods was the conqueror religion.<sup>24</sup>

### ***b. The Problem of Historical Materialism***

Historical materialism is, in fact, the concept derived from Karl Marx asserting that the structure of society, history and its development are considerably striceted by material process, such as economic production and its relations.<sup>25</sup> This means that material substance is a basis for overall historical change and development, even it is a main activator of the historical change. According to the concept, economic production is a founder of abstract ideas such as religion, moral, art, as well as philosophy.<sup>26</sup>

In conduction with classical Islamic historiography, historical materialism in fact was found whether in early Islamic historiography written by early Muslim historians or in modern Islamic historiographical works written by orientalist. In some early Islamic historiographical works, for instance, it is easely found in the cases of battle and conquest events written by whether Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi

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<sup>21</sup> H.A.R. Gibb, *Islam : A Historical Survey*, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. See also H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Helmut Fleischer, *Marxism and History*, translated by Eric Mosbacher, (Great Britain: Latimer Trend&Company Ltd Plymoth, 1969), p.

<sup>26</sup> Poul Edward, (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 4, (New York: Macmillan), p. 12-13.

or al-Tabari of their works. The case of battle of Badar as the first battle in Islamic history, for example, was one of the evidents of historical materialism found in early Islamic historiography, whether in Ibn Ishaq's, al-Waqidi's or al-Tabari's works. The battle historically accured between believers of Prophet Muhammad companions and unbelievers of Quraish tribble. In this battle, they similarly wrote that the prophet's command to his companions to blockade and attack the caravan of Quraish under the direction of Abu Sufyan who had just returned from Shiria (Sham). The command due to much material asset carried by the caravan that could be caught by the companions as a booty.<sup>27</sup> They implicitly argued that prophet's command to attack them was the merely objective of the battle, since there no any explanation context of the command except narration. According to Ibn Khaldun, this model is outer appearance of historical meaning that has not touched with the truly meaning of history.<sup>28</sup> While Beard identically asserting that history to touch with only happened events has no obtained truly historical meaning of thought including interpretation and alternatives.<sup>29</sup>

The problem of historical materialism, however, is more commonly found in orientalist's historiographical works, in which

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<sup>27</sup> Ibn Hisyam, (ed.) Abdul Salam Harun, *Tahdhib Sirah Ibn Hisham*, vol. 1, p. 193. al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, vol. 1, p. 20. al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari: Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol.2, p. 421.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldun*, (Berut: Muassasah Jamal li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nasr), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Morton White divides the meaning of history into two categories, i.e., history as thought that is the events of history and history as thought that is the wider meaning of history such as the meaning behind the events. See Morton White, *Can History be Objective?* In Mayerhorf, *Philosophy of History in Our Time*, New York: Doubleday Ancient Book, p. 191-192. Montgomery Watt similarly carried out that the attack led by the prophet, particularly that to be adressed over the Jews of Bani Qoinuqo, related closely to the economic interest such as the booty. See, Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad Prophet and Statesman*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 12. Such opinion was also mentioned by Carl Brockleman, while he asserted that the battles, that were began at Medina, clearly indicated that the prophet had great desire of grasping the booty (*al-ghanimah*). According to him, this desire became the main motivator for the prophet to hold the battles. Carl Brockleman, *History of The Islamic People*, p. 23-36. While Welhausen clearly accused that after the Prophet Muhammad immigrated to Medina, his main mission was political struggle that was restricted to power desire. Welhausen, *Tarikh al-Dual al-'Arabiyah*, p. 5-6. See also Jabal Muhammad Bauben, *Image of The Prophet Muhammad in the West : A Study of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt*, (United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1996), p. 79, 169.

they presented material motives of early emergence of Islam at Mecca as well as early Islamic battles led by the prophet at Medina. Montgomery Watt, for instance argued that economic interest comes to be most significant activator for Mecca society in general and the prophet's mission at Mecca particularly. Furthermore, he pointed out that economic or material factors are of the most important background of Mecca society life, as they at the same time, created condition of arrival Islam at the city. Therefore, the emergence of Islam in the city closely related to the economic background rather than spiritual one.<sup>30</sup> Although he frankly denied that he hasn't employed Marxism's theory of historical materialism, in which the production or economic factor is the main spirit of overall human being activity life. Yet, his notion of unity of economic spirit of Mecca society, however implicitly indicated that he adopted the Marxism's theory, as he identically admitted that economic factor of the society determined their activity life at the time.

Other orientalist such as Gibb, Watt, Muir, Margoliouth, Brockleman, as well as Wellhausen similarly accused that the battles were mainly addressed to grasp both power and wealth including booty.<sup>31</sup> This outlook, however, is obviously based on the concept of historical materialism of Marx, focusing on material substance of analytical historical process. Meanwhile, the reasons of being allowed of the battles by God, the condition of Prophet companions at Medina when they were threatened by unbelievers of Quraish tribe, as well as the real objective of the battles as mentioned in several verses of al-Qur'an<sup>32</sup> were not exposed at all in their historiographical works.<sup>33</sup> Since in several verseses of al-Qur'an, in

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<sup>30</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Macca*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press), 1965, p.19.

<sup>31</sup> In this relationship for example, Gibb argued that the actions done by the prophet at Medina were specifically based on two aspects, namely economic and politics, although the latter was more often asserted of his work of early Islamic historiography. H.A.R. Gibb, *Islam: A Historical Survey*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> About the reasons of being allowed of the battles see for example Q. S. al-Hajj (22): 40. While the objective of the battles was also mentioned in several verseses of al-Qur'an, such as Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 193, Q.S. al-Anfal (8): 7-8, 39.

<sup>33</sup> Montgomery Watt, for instance, although he has examined some phenomenon of the battles led by the prophet at Medina, yet he hasn't explained the motive, spirit, as well as objective of the battles as mentioned in al-Qur'an, whereas he quoted some verses of it in

fact, they have metaphysical sense, since some cases of them involved metaphysical facts, such as the aids of God and angles as well.<sup>34</sup> These facts were also not mentioned by those orientalist in their historiographical works.

## The Problem of Epistemology

### a. *The Problem of Epistemological Root*

As Luis Gottschalk said that historiography constitutes a study of methodology.<sup>35</sup> According to Agnes Heller, epistemology is of methodological study of historiography. Concerning Islamic historiography, it means that there is a problem of epistemological root of the historiography that has not been clearly mentioned yet By early Muslim and modern historians in their historiographical works as well. The problem here relates to the question of what is the root of epistemology of Islamic historiography?. Is the epistemological root of Islamic historiography derived from Pre Islamic Arab historiography or Arab culture? Or Does it come from Islamic culture itself or other religious cultures such as Christian and Judaism? Then, what is the epistemological paradigm could be constructed to build the concept of classical Islamic historiography.

The significance of searching the epistemological root of classical Islamic historiography is to reconceptualise it based on both historical fact and philosophical backgrounds. Since it, as Peter Burke pointed out, has close relationship to philosophy as well as social sciences. Or as Agness Heller argued that it means ephisteme tha has close relation to philosophy in neture.<sup>36</sup>

Although early Muslim historians such as Ibn Ishaq and al-Waqidi as well as al-Tabari began to write their historiography with the themes of *Sirah al-Nabi* (Biography of the Prophet Muhammad), *al-Maghazi* (The battles) *Tarikh al-'Alam* (Universal History), yet

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other place of his study of prophet mission at Medina. H.A.R. Gibb similarly neglected the verseses related to the battles in his historical study of the prophet at Medina. See, William Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina,

<sup>34</sup> See Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 251. Q.S. 'Ali 'Imran (3): 123-128, 152-158, Q.S. al-Anfal (8): 9, 11-12, 17-18, 26, 41, 65-66, Q.S. al-Taubah (9): 25, Q.S. al-Ahzab (33): 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Luis Gottscalk, *Mengerti Sejarah*, p. 143-144.

<sup>36</sup> Agness Heller, *A Theory of History*, (London: Boston and Henley, 1982), hlm. 80-81.

their main study of these was historically predominated by ‘Arab history, either pre or early Islamic Arab history. This implicitly indicated that the epistemological root of their works in general is Arab culture of history.<sup>37</sup>

Early Islamic historiography, therefore, was not only affected by pre Islamic Jahiliya concept of history, but also continued the concept as basic source of the history, hence pre Islamic concept of history was predominated by pre Islamic poems, tribal conflicts and political stories of the tribal as well. Ibn Ishaq, one of early prominent Muslim historians, for instance, enrolled a bulk themes of the political history of pre Islamic history of Jahiliya, even he involved a bulk of poetries, including the battles of ‘Arab tribes and their conflicts in his well known work of *Sirah al-Nabi* or *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, The Biography of Prophet Muhammad. Similarly, al-Waqidi’s work of *al-Maghazi* presented completely all battles of early Islam, whether in period of the prophet or in early guided caliphs one particularly in the period of Caliph of Abu Bakar as-Siddiq.<sup>38</sup> al-Tabari, an other early Muslim prominent historian wrote in the broadest scope of his work of *Tarikh al-Tabari; Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, not only narrated all early Islam battles of the Prophet period, but also collected a bulk of early Islam political history employing the tradition of transmission.<sup>39</sup> Although their title of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibn Ishaq, *Sirah Ibn Ishaq*, (ed.) Muhammad Hamidullah, Turkiye: Nasriyat Mudurulugu, 1981.

<sup>38</sup> al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, (ed.) Marsden Jhons, (Beirut: ‘Alam al-Kutub), vol. 1-3.

<sup>39</sup> These works mainly discussed political history in distinctive various themes, despite have similarities in some. The next historians after al-Tabari, in turn, adopted similiarly those works, in the themes of Islamic history, particularly political history, the contents, the methods, the scopes as well the concept of Islamic history that tends to be political history. After al-Tabari’s and al-Mas’udi’s works of *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* and *Muruj al-Dahab wa Ma’adin al-Jauhar*, the works of Islamic history almost has similar types of content. The works such *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* by Ibn Athir (550 – 630 A.D./ 1160 – 1232), *al-Muntadim fi Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* by Ibn al-Jauzi (510 – 597 A.D./ 1116 – 1200), ‘Uyun al-Athar by Ibn Sayidunnas (671 – 731 A.D./.....), *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* by Ibn Kathir and ‘*Uyun al-Tawarikh* by Ahmad al-Katibi are in general similar in content and systematic composition of the theme. See for example Ibn Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Beirut: Dar Shadar). Ibn al-Jauzi, *al-Muntadhim fi Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, (ed.) Muh. Abdul Qadir Ata and Musthafa ‘Abdul Qadir Ata. Ibn Sayidunnas, ‘Uyun al-Athar fi Funun al-Maghazi wa al-Syama’il wa al-Siyar, Ahmad al-Katibi, ‘Uyun al-Tawarikh (ed.) Hisyamudin al-Qudsi, Qahirah: Maktabah al-Nahdhah al-Mishriyah, 1980. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*. All of these works, though has had different forms in length, yet

historiographical works, such as *Sirah al-Nabi* by Ibn Ishaq, *al-Maghazi* by al-Waqidi and *Tarikh al-Rusul* by al-Tabary implicitly tend to Islamic historiography, however, the content and source of them were in general dominated by Arab and religious cultures, in which Islamic culture was included within.

Meanwhile modern historians, whether Muslims or orientalist, some identified the historiography as Islamic and Muslim historiography, such as Case Robinshon and Franz Rosenthal as well. While others regarded it as Arab Historiography, such as Abdul Aziz al-Dauri. These differentiations were also found of Islamic history. Some named it as 'Arab history, such as Bernard Lewis in his work, *The Arabs in History*, and Phillips K.Hitti in his work *The Arab*. They named explicitly the word 'Arab history in examining Islamic history, in which his study of it was began from early Islamic period of Muhammad up to 'Abbasid.<sup>40</sup> In fact, the content of his work was wholly Islamic history, yet he regarded it as 'Arab history. Phillip K. Hitti, an other prominent orientalist similarly named it as such. In his famous work "The Arab" he explained it in detail indicating throughout his study that 'Arab history covers Islamic history. For them and some the followers, therefore, Islamic history is identical to 'Arab history, though they have not carried out their argument clearly about it.

### ***b. The Problem of Methodology***

The problem of methodology was historiographically related to the method and perspective employed by both by early Muslim and modern historians as well, especially orientalist of their

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they were similarly identical in the concept, the method, the themes, as well as the chronological study of history. The distinctive work of the historiography was actually found in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqadima* work, in which he distinctively opened a new perspective of Islamic history and history in general by giving various methodological approaches, analysis as well as theories of historical studies, including socio-cultural ones, though his concept of history is still apparently influenced by political history. Ibn Khaldun's historiography in fact has philosophical framework and empirical perspective of history as well. In methodological aspect, he presented the concept of *'ilm al-'Umran*, that means socio-cultural perspective in historical study. In modern period, this perspective is well known by multi-dimensional approach of history. Sartono Kartodirdjo,

<sup>40</sup> See Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

historiographical works. The former, in general employed the only method, namely transmission,<sup>41</sup> when they presented various different themes of the historiography. This method in fact, has significance role in spread and development the historiography. Yet, on the other hand, it substantially gave impact to the historiography of being merely narration and annals as well, hence it more focused on the transmission outer aspect of the prophet tradition rather than the content. In addition, it also lead methodologically to lack of understanding of the historiography, since these various themes in fact have consequence of need to others sciences auxiliary, such sociology, Anthropology, etc. As a result, the method employed by those historians, therefore, has not shown up the substantial meaning of the history yet, but merely story.

While the latter, employed positivistic, secularistic as well as materialistic perspectives based on western worldview of modern age as already considered in the discourses about orientalist's historiographical works. Although these perspectives have a different sense each other, yet they all are similar by mean that they are.

The crucial problem of employing the method concerning the historiography was that it merely provided apparent historical meaning in which historical events were written accordance with what it was. This actually provided great consequence to the misleading of some historical events as part of the historiography and its implications. According to Ibn Khaldun, this method is apparent meaning of history based on what historians wrote as set of words, sentence, proposition as well as composition of text.<sup>42</sup> Or as Morton White said it just covered one side of historical meaning, namely history as knowledge that consist of past events and stories as well.<sup>43</sup> Whereas the meaning of history, in fact, is not only story and past events, but also the philosophy of both.

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<sup>41</sup> The transmission method was historically derived from pre Islamic (Jahiliya) oral tradition flourishing throughout the local tradition of the battle of 'Arab tribes (*ayyam al-'Arab*), till it flourished up to period of early Islam.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldun*, (Beirut: Dar al-Haniyah, vol. 1, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Morton White, "Can History be Objective" in Hens Mayerhorf, *Philosophy of History in Our Time*, (New York: Doubleday Anceint Book), p. 191-192.



#### **D. Alternative Perspectives of Reconstructing the Historiography**

From those problems of the historiography, it is necessary to reconstruct and solve them as one of alternative responses. The reconstruction we are going to hold is basically based on two main perspectives, namely Islamic and modern ones.

The former, is in fact, the primary perspective concerning study the historiography, while the latter is the secondary one encouraging the former of the study. Both perspectives are also regarded of multidimensional approaches reconceptualising the historiography from Islamic perspective firstly, then strengthening it by applying modern ones.

In order to build these frameworks, we neither need to refer to early Muslim historians perspective nor orientalist on the concept of history, since both were still considerably constitute the problems as we mentioned above. Instead, we attempt to apply Croce's concept of history; that it is a contemporary history in which every historian could reconstruct and interpret it due to his time. In relation to the historiography, we could realise it by reconstructing several conceptual frameworks as an alternative thought and historical interpretation as well. Some mentioned problems concerning the historiography, therefore, are to discuss and examine in the following study.

#### **Islamic Perspective: al-Qur'an as an Epistemological Framework of The Historiography (?)**

##### **a: Islamic and Historical Perspectives of the Historiography**

Having conceptualised the historiography by employing epistemological framework of al-Qur'an, it means that we, in fact, would like to build foundation of the historiography based on Islamic perspective as a first foundation. Why should we apply such perspective as a first foundation of the historiography? This question could be obviously answered from two distinctive outlooks, namely Islamic and historical ones concerning the historiography. The former means that Islam substantially has a firm concept of history, while the latter implies that the early Islamic historical facts could not be historically separated from the historiography.

Islamic perspective is particularly based on Quran both as primary source and basic epistemology of the historiography. In this term, it is worthy to involve it, since it is historically contemporary book covering a bulk of early Islamic historical facts of Prophet Muhammad period, as it is the most valid sacred document of them. It is as a primary source, since it is a contemporary historical live witness. Furthermore, in fact, it is also a basic epistemology of the historiography, since as a sacred revelation, revealed along with the process of early Islamic history of the prophet period either at Mecca or at Medina, it has own concept of history,<sup>44</sup> contains a bulk of historical events and implies historical paradigms, models and values that could become a framework of Quranic perspective of history. As an epistemology, it is, therefore, contains historical knowledge sources, could be referred by historians to become a framework of Islamic historiography.

The concept of history according to Qur'an, for instance, is based on physical and metaphysical facts, looking at the life as opportunity to perform a good action. The former is visible events indicating chronology, process and change, while the latter is invisible ones, yet they are factual and experience, happened in early Islamic history, such as the presence of angle in earliest verse of al-'Alaq, when the prophet held asceticism in Cave of Hira of Mecca and in various cases of battles at Medina.<sup>45</sup> Even these cases could form an Islamic perspective of the battles including the logic arguments of allowing, command, objective, and defense of the battles for socio-political and socio-cultural orders.<sup>46</sup>

Such is the socio-historical events of earliest people of the prophets before Prophet Muhammad mentioned in various verses of al-Qur'an, such as people of Ad, Thamud and Hud, implied models and moral values to present and future society. Although different age of a society has different historical background, the characteristic

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<sup>44</sup> al-Qur'an concept of history concerns both ideal and practical aspects. Some verses of it suggested mankind to think, observe as well as pay attention to the past events of ancient people, their behaviors and the consequences of them. See, for instance, Q.S.

<sup>45</sup> See Q.S. 2 : 123-125, Q.S. 9 : 9, Q.S. 10 : 25-26.

<sup>46</sup> Q.S. 9 : 8, 39-40, 41, Q.S. Q.S. 17 : 39-40

moral value and model are identically similar. Accordingly, al-Qur'an asserts repeatedly in its various verses, such as following verse:

أفلم يسيروا في الأرض فانظروا كيف كان عاقبة الذين كذبوا بآياتنا<sup>47</sup> . قل  
سيروا في الأرض فانظروا كيف كان عاقبة المكذبين.<sup>48</sup>

The significant point of the framework is that the historiography finds its peculiar nature and distinctive sense of history, characterized by involvement of metaphysical facts in the process of the history, such as the intervention of God, the present of God's aid throughout the angels in some battle cases at Medina, the process of receiving the revelation by Prophet Muhammad as well as the case of *Isra-Mi'raj*. These historical facts were obviously found within some Quranic verses, hence it would be absurd when we conceptually employ positivism perspective concerning the historiography. Instead, we employ Islamic perspective by emphasizing metaphysical approach of Islamic history as well as the concept of tawhid and its implications into real human being phenomena of life, including his/her belief in metaphysic.

Accordingly, this conceptual framework is particularly different from either historiography of early Muslim historians or that of modern ones as mentioned above. Both of them have failed to present the concept of Islamic history and Islamic historiography as well. The former tends to have politic oriented outlook, while the latter is more materialism and positivism in conceptualizing them. In addition, both neglected basic Islamic teachings of Quran covering most early Islamic historical facts.

Based on Quran perspective as mentioned above, therefore, the term of Islamic history indeed not only refers to the past phenomena of early Islamic period but also covers the inner meaning of Islam. This notion could be widely compared with historical perspective of early spread Islamic teachings began from the period of Prophet Muhammad up to Abbasid one. The word Islam its self in the term of Islamic history is not merely name of a religion born in 7th A.D. and

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<sup>47</sup> Q.S. 13: 109. See also Q.S. 21: 9

<sup>48</sup> Q.S. 7: 11.

spread by Prophet Muhammad. Yet it, in fact, covers the most essential meaning of submission to God (Allah). In the particular sense, it implies *tawhid*, the unity of God (Allah) as a basic teaching of Islam and its universal values. Thus, in the term of Islamic history it conceptually has two distinctive meanings. Firstly, it is the theological meaning connecting with core of Islam or as Afzal Iqbal argued it is the most fundamental system of belief.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, it also empirically means the historical fact connecting directly with historical phases of the Islamic civilization. Both of them relate to conceptual framework as a fundamental understanding of the history. As we commonly know that every age of both history and civilization in the world have main spirit that it distinctively characterizes and distinguishes them from other. For example, Roman civilization has the spirit of materialism derived from Greek philosophy of good. Indian civilization as such, has distinctive mysticism and that of China also has confucianism as well.

Islamic history and its historical development dynamic, therefore, could not be conceptually separated from the basic teachings of Islam, namely *tawhid*, the theology of Islam. Since the rise of it coincides with early arrival of Islam spread by Prophet Muhammad in Arab Peninsula in early seventh century. Moreover, some historians considerably regarded that the rise of it is closely related to the life of Prophet Muhammad, his words, deed and action, in which they became ideal model for early Muslim community, including his companions and following generation of them (*tabi'in*).

The most important point of what we asserted above that *tawhid* as a basic teaching of Islam is of early Islamic historical phenomena. It relates to both metaphysical and physical facts in Islamic history. In fact, this indicates that Islamic history has close relation to Islam as a religion, spiritual or metaphysical belief. In this context, it is relevant to study the history from Islamic perspective involving the *tawhid* as a system belief of Islam as it is empirically practiced within the history, particularly in the period of Prophet Muhammad. Accordingly, Prof. Masadul Hasan argued that Islamic

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<sup>49</sup> Afzal Iqbal, *The Culture of Islam: The Classical Period*, (Lahore: Institute of Classical Islam), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1974, p.51-52.

history must be studied and interpreted based on Islamic background emphasizing spiritualization of the history or historical spirituality of Islamic history.<sup>50</sup>

### **E. The Modern Perspectives of the Historiography**

Although Islamic historiography based on Islamic perspective using al-Qur'an as a basic epistemology and tawhid as a conceptual framework of it, the modern perspectives are also worthy of being an analytical tool of interpretation and historical explanation as well as reconstruction of the Islamic historiography. This means that Islamic perspective, as mentioned above, is not the only approach of examining both Islamic history and classical Islamic historiography. In fact, we urgently need to various modern perspectives, theories as well as approaches to precisely understanding the history and the historiography as well. Thus, employing the theories of Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Economic as well as politic are of significance of using these perspectives<sup>51</sup> in historical study including classical Islamic one.

This actually departs from two basic assumptions. First, that historical study has wider fields, covering politics, social, economic, and culture. In fact, the historical problems are often connected with one of these fields, hence it needs to the auxiliary of these social

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<sup>50</sup> Prof. Masadul Hasan, *The History of Islam*, (New Delhi: Adam Publisher & Distributor), vol.1, 1992, p.17.

<sup>51</sup> These are what some modern historians mean of multidimensional methodologies of Islamic historical study. In the other word, the meaning of multidimensional methodology refers to the significance of employing various social science approaches or theories in examining the history or historiography accordance with its problems. Although the methodology in modern period was lately developed in early nine tenth century, in fact, it has been developed earlier before the modern period by Ibn Khaldun, a prominent Muslim historian, by the name '*ilm al-'umran*', meaning the socio-cultural sciences. According to him, these sciences could be analytical tools for historical study, since one of common mistakes in historical study is caused by neither understanding of the happened historical events nor relationship between the events and the factual socio-culture. Charles Isawi, M.A., *An Arab Philosophy of History: Selection from Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis, (1332 – 1406 M.)*, (London: Jhon Murray, 1th edition, 1950), p.7-9. In addition, these sciences are also significant to correctly indicate writing method of historical events as to know in nature characteristic of the society differences. From this viewpoint, it is obvious that historical study and social science methodology mutually need. Accordingly, Peter Burke pointed out that there is a close relationship between history and sociology, even both are complementary.

science theories, accordance with its studied problems. In addition, as Berkhofer pointed out that theory itself, in the most general sense is crucial to every phase of historiography.<sup>52</sup> Second, some mentioned problems concerning the classical Islamic historiography, such as political history, historical materialism as well as methodology are partly caused by lack of various methodologies employed by early Muslim historians in examining the historiography. The problem of political history, for instance, is mostly made up by them, since they in general employ the only transmission method of the prophet tradition in describing various problems of Islamic history, such as the society, the politic as well as the culture. In fact, this solely method could not explain those problems of the history in detail yet, but rarely story and narration. Therefore, early Islamic historical events written by those early Muslim historians, by means it is classical Islamic historiography, have not touch with the inner meaning of history as Ibn Khaldun suggested. By this method, they in general more focus on of how both events and stories could be written as they were, then received them from the transmitters without any criticism and interpretation as well. Political history, therefore, dominated the historiography, since those events were historically simplified by luck of employing other distinctive methodologies, compatible with their problems. The historians, such as Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi as well as al-Tabari, similarly employed the transmission method in studying various themes of classical Islamic historiography.

### **The Applied Socio-Cultural and Socio-Historical Theories**

In the context of classical Islamic historiography, the employing of various modern perspectives could be practically applied in several crucial themes, such as Saqifah Bani Sa'idah, the battle of Shiffin, that of Jamal, *al-khilafah* (the leadership), etc. The case of *Saqifah Bani Sa'idah*, that was almost written by all early Muslim historians including Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi as well as al-Tabari, for instance, indicated obviously politic-oriented theme of their

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<sup>52</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *A Behavior Approach to Historical Analysis*, (New York: The Free Press), 1971, p. 23.

historiography, even it was presented with description of political hegemony among the great prophet companions, since they just recited it without any context explanation and methodology as well but annals and transmission of tradition. By employing modern perspectives, however, we could look curiously at the case in the context of transition theory of sociology, since it historically occurred in the periode between that of the Prophet Muhammad and that of *al-Khulafa al-Rasyidun*, the Pious Caliphates. Therefore, we might examine it from either historical or sociological perspectives employing the concept of transition so that the result of the study certainly would be distinctive. For, according to socio-historical theory, every historical transition in different various periods of history always arises the chaos, instability as well as disorder society. Accordingly, in this term, it was not merely political case, as it was commonly understood by most historians of their works, either early Muslim historians or modern ones, rather than the consequence of transition period of early Islamic history.

### **The Applied Contextual-Theory**

The term contextual that is derived from that of context, means condition or situation that could help to explain happened events.<sup>53</sup> It also means all condition and background that has connection with something else.<sup>54</sup> In relation to historical study, it covers all outside aspects of historical events, yet it has directly or indirectly close connection with them. Hence, the background, socio-politics and socio-cultural as well as socio-economic conditions relating to the events are of scope of the context. In this article, however, it is specifically objected to all historical condition encouraging the prime framework of Islamic perspective, whether social science perspectives or broader understanding of both Islamic history and historiography. The significance of the context is to analyze the historiography based on its problem and its correlation with socio-

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<sup>53</sup> *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 263.

<sup>54</sup> Hj. Noresah bt. Bahrom (ed.), *Kamus Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, (Kuala Lumpur: Harian Zulfadli Sdn. Bhd., 3<sup>th</sup> edition, 2002), p. 703.

cultural and socio political conditions. This correlation, therefore, needs directly to applying social sciences in analyzing the historiography.

## **F. Conclusion**

The problems of classical Islamic historiography are historically caused by at least three factors, namely the historical sources, the historians as well as the predomination of early caliphates. The historians played their role in determining political history and employing methodology of their historiography. Some of early Muslim historians such as Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi as well as al-Tabari took their sources of history from pre Islamic society (Jahiliya) those were mainly fulfilled by political history including that of tribals, ayyam al-‘Arab as well as that of ancient history of Arab. On contrary, some of orientalist built political history of classical Islamic historiography by employing both historical interpretation and methodology based on modern ideologies of secularism, materialism as well as positivism, those are identical with western ideology. In this term, political history of classical Islamic historiography, therefore, is the bias of historian construction that lead to misleading of the historiography.

The structure of classical Islamic historiography, in fact, is not political history rather than it is universal and civilization history, that is epistemologically built by the foundation of tawhid and flourished methodologically by some of modern perspectives.

Tawhid, therefore, is epistemological root of classical Islamic historiography, while the concept of civilization and universal history of Islamic history is the manifestation of it. In addition, some modern perspectives employed to elaborate classical Islamic history as well as historiography are the body of the historiography. This structure essentially indicates that the problems of classical Islamic historiography should be elaborated by holistic approaches involving Islamic and modern perspectives accordingly.



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