Conclusion

> Later, when Hishām entered Seville, Ibn ʿAbbād lodged him in his palace, saluted him with the title of caliph (*bi'l-khilāfa*) and made himself *ḥājib* like al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir, and his son Ismāʿīl ʿImād al-Dawla occupied the post of al-Muẓaffar ʿAbd al-Malik, son of al-Manṣūr.
>
> *Crónica Anónima de los Reyes de Taifas* 1991, 73

⁂

The Hishām in this passage refers to the 'counterfeit caliph' who was installed with great ceremony in 1035–6 by the first Taifa ruler of Seville, Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn ʿAbbād (r. 1023–1041), who proclaimed him as Hishām al-Muʾayyad, lost and then found again after 25 years of Fitna.[1] This was the Hishām for whom Shalem theorises that the magnificent gold and silk embroidery that was later turned into the Fermo chasuble (Figure 138) was produced, as a 'canopy, tent or pavilion created for the inauguration ceremony of Hishām's reappearance', made within ʿAbbādid Seville or at one of the other Taifa courts which recognised ʿAbbādid authority and which maintained production centres for luxurious textiles.[2] In reality, this 'Hishām' was probably a man of 'obscure and undistinguished origins', identified by Ibn Ḥazm as one Khalaf al-Ḥuṣrī.[3] A number of other Taifa states recognised him as caliph, naming him in the *khuṭba*s of their mosques, and even minting his name on their coins.[4] Ultimately, these states were being pragmatic, recognising that the ʿAbbādids' greater power gave them a claim to authority over the other Taifa states. But the ʿAbbādids still hoped to make that claim legitimately, and it is significant that the way in which they chose to manufacture this legitimacy was by inventing a Hishām in order that Ibn ʿAbbād and his son could cast themselves in the roles of the ʿĀmirid *ḥujjāb*. Despite the fall of the ʿĀmirid dynasty, the model of rule and legitimation that had been established and carefully shaped by al-Manṣūr was seen by his ʿAbbādid successors to have been effective.

The persistence of some form of ʿĀmirid legacy into the post-Fitna period was inevitable, due to the fact that more than half of the earliest Taifa states were ruled by 'people who belonged to what may be termed the ʿĀmirid elite'. More specifically, 'twenty-one of the first thirty-six political entities … had as their first rulers after the death of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī ʿĀmir people who seem to have stood quite high in the ʿĀmirid elite of the end of the fourth/tenth century'.[5] These 21 'post-ʿĀmirid' Taifa states were Algeciras, Almería, Arcos, Badajoz, Calatrava, Carmona, Ceuta, Denia and the Balearic islands, Granada, Jaén, Mallorca, Málaga, Mertola, Morón, Murcia, Niebla and Gibraleón, Ronda, Silves, Toledo, Tortosa, and Valencia.[6] A number of these men spawned their own dynasties, perpetuating the ʿĀmirid connection for several generations to come.

The first rulers of these states were, for the most part, men who had been appointed to posts in the provinces of al-Andalus during the ʿĀmirid *ḥijāba*. As Ibn al-Kardabūs relates,

1 Wasserstein 1985, 119–122; Wasserstein 1993a, 102–109.
2 Shalem 2017, 95, "The textile contextualized".
3 Wasserstein 1985, 119–122; Wasserstein 1993a, 102–109.
4 For a list, see Wasserstein 1985, 120–121; Wasserstein 1993a, 103 ff; Wasserstein 1993c, 94–95.
5 Wasserstein 1985, 100.
6 For details of the rulers of these states, see Wasserstein 1985, 83–98. Ibn al-Kardabūs 1986, 90–91 (§§67–69) adds the Hūdids of Zaragoza to this list, though they did not become rulers of this Taifa state until 1039.

"when [the] news arrived [of Sanchuelo's death and al-Mahdī's uprising], the military leaders (*umarā'*) rose up with the troops under their control, each one of them in their own region … Each *qāḍī*, each provincial governor (*'āmil*), each man who wielded any force, rose up in his own place …"[7]

The ways in which al-Manṣūr strove to form such an "Āmirid elite', and the nature of this elite's relationship with the *ḥujjāb*, was examined in particular in Chapter 3, where it was argued that bonds of personal loyalty were carefully forged by the ʿĀmirids with those whose support they required to legitimise their *ḥijāba*. For example, it is probable that the Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī named as the *fatā al-kabīr* in the inscription on the Pamplona casket and possibly the Braga pyxis (Appendix 4.11, 4.12) was the same man who was governor of Jaén, Baeza and Calatrava, and who later became the Taifa ruler of Almería.[8] Furthermore, as can be seen from the genealogy of the Banū Abī ʿĀmir (Appendix 1), some of these relationships extended to the familial: for example, Sanchuelo's son, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and his descendants ruled Valencia between 1021 and 1085; Mujāhid, the Ṣiqlābī ruler of Denia and the Balearics from 1012 to 1044, was an ʿĀmirid *mawlā* whose son was married to a granddaughter of al-Manṣūr; and Abū ʿĀmir ibn al-Muẓaffar, briefly ruler of Jaén (1021–1028), was an 'intimate' of Ibn Ḥazm. Some of these men appear to have collected physical mementoes of the ʿĀmirid *ḥujjāb*: for example, Mujāhid may have taken with him to the Balearics a marble capital signed by Fatḥ, from where it was looted by the Pisans in the early twelfth century, along with the more famous 'Pisa Griffin'.[9] Examples such as this led to the widespread dispersal of objects and architectural ornament from the Cordoba area throughout the rest of the Iberian Peninsula.

As Wasserstein has noted, there seems to be no sense in which these 'post-ʿĀmirid' states were conscious of forming an ʿĀmirid 'party', in that they do not seem to have remained loyal to an ʿĀmirid ideology or to each other.[10] Nevertheless, the ʿĀmirid formula of rulership was seen to be tried and tested, and these states do seem to have deliberately adopted some of the strategies the ʿĀmirids had employed to articulate their own legitimacy.

Most obvious among these strategies is the titulature adopted by some Taifa rulers. In Valencia, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz continued the family tradition by calling himself 'al-Manṣūr', and his son – whose name was ʿAbd al-Malik – took the title 'al-Muẓaffar'.[11] Silves was ruled by an 'al-Muẓaffar' between 1048 and 1053; and Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān ibn Hūd, who ruled Lérida from 1046 as a satellite of the Taifa of Zaragoza, also took 'al-Muẓaffar', though he had not been a member of the ʿĀmirid elite: Yūsuf was the founder of Castell Formós in Balaguer, from which some of the earliest datable architectural decoration of the Taifa period has been excavatad (see below). Some of these al-Muẓaffars are candidates for the ownership of the Suaire de Saint Lazare, as Miriam Ali-de-Unzaga points out.[12] Further, a number of Taifa rulers adopted the title *ḥājib*, 'with its evocation of al-Manṣūr, who had been the greatest to use the title in the peninsula'.[13] As mentioned above, the first ʿAbbādid ruler of Seville attempted the deliberate revival of the ʿĀmirid meaning of this title – 'for whom, it might be argued, were such rulers *ḥājib*s if not for the absent Umayyads?'[14] – in order to appropriate the authority delegated by the institution of an invented caliph. It is surely telling that many of the Taifa states who minted coins in the name of the 'counterfeit caliph' were 'post-ʿĀmirids'. The Berber

7 Ibn al-Kardabūs 1986, 90–91 (§§67–69).
8 Naváscues y de Palacio 1964a, 241–242; Wasserstein 1993a, 129–145.
9 Contadini 2018, 238.
10 Wasserstein 1985, 101.
11 Wasserstein 1985, 97. On the use of 'al-Manṣūr' as a Taifa title, see Guichard 1995, 51 n. 2.
12 Ali-de-Unzaga 2017, 119.
13 Wasserstein 1985, 123. For a list of these, see 123–124 n. 19.
14 Wasserstein 1985, 123.

Banū Dhū al-Nūn, who took power in Toledo, inscribed this title on the ivory objects which they commissioned: both the Palencia casket and the Narbonne pyxis are inscribed *li'l-ḥājib*,[15] and in this way they underscored their own attempts to legitimise their rule. The adoption of such inflated pseudo-caliphal titles by such small political entities caused one contemporary poet to remark that they were 'names of royalty out of place, like a cat which speaks in a puffed up way like a lion'.[16] However, it is clear that the Taifa rulers drew heavily upon the ʿĀmirid model of rulership, in which the adoption of titles had been one important strategy.

A further strategy adopted by the Taifa rulers in imitation of caliphal and ʿĀmirid models was to employ artistic and cultural patronage as a means of political expression. As discussed in Chapter 3, Ibn Ḥayyān credited the flourishing of literature at Taifa courts to the fact that al-Mustāʿīn drove the *shuʿarāʾ ʿāmiriyyīn* from Cordoba, by neglecting to engage sufficiently in his duties as their patron. These poets migrated to new centres of patronage – Ibn Darrāj, for example, pursued his career at the Tujībid court of Zaragoza.[17] Al-Lughawī (d. 423/1032), the ʿĀmirids' 'official chronicler' and librarian, found protection with Mujāhid al-Ṣiqlābī, the ʿĀmirid *fatā* who became a Taifa ruler, and lived at his court in the Balearic islands until his death. Mujāhid is known to have sponsored his own literary circle.[18] Such literary patronage was undoubtedly one of the most significant – and best attested – ways in which the Taifa rulers sought to recreate in microcosm the high cultural sophistication of the pre-Fitna courts, and their nostalgia for caliphal/ʿĀmirid Cordoba is reflected as much in the *ubi sunt?* genre which developed at their courts as it is in the titulature they adopted.[19]

As the ʿĀmirid court poets sought out new patronage in Taifa centres, so too did the artisans of the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Ṣināʿa: the iconographic and epigraphic similarities between ʿĀmirid and the earliest Taifa-period luxury objects certainly suggests that its craftsmen found new sources of patronage. The association of ivory manufacture with royalty and rule was understood and exploited by the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn, who established an ivory-carving industry in the 'eagles' nest' of Cuenca, more than 900 metres above sea level (Figure 174).[20] Although nearly 200 km from Toledo, their capital from around 1030, Cuenca had been their main settlement since the time of the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus, and dominated the eastern region of which the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn had been masters since the ninth century. It seems they chose to have their ivories produced in the ancestral lands that symbolised their dominance over the east of the Peninsula.[21]

The small size of the extant objects, such as the tiny pyxides in the David Collection (datable first half eleventh century) and in Narbonne Cathedral (c. 1040–50), and the techniques adopted to maximise the available material – such as the use of small, openwork ivory plaques fixed to a wooden core, on the Palencia casket (dated 411/1049–50) – indicate that ivory as a raw material was in scarce supply.[22] The Taifa regimes did not have the same level of control over the trans-Saharan trade routes as the Umayyad and ʿĀmirid rulers had been able to maintain, so it is unlikely that new supplies of ivory entered al-Andalus at this time. It is highly likely that the Cuenca industry was stimulated by

15 Makariou 1999; *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cats. 28, 29.

16 Cited in Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1956, 144; cf. also Pérès 1990, 114, and Wasserstein 1985, 124.

17 See Makkī 1963–1964, 86–104, and Viguera 1983.

18 Al-ʿAbbādī 1953, 15–24; Sarnelli Cerqua 1964.

19 Robinson 1998; Robinson 2002.

20 Makariou 1999, 133.

21 I would like to thank Xavier Ballestín for these observations. On the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn and Cuenca, see Guichard 1977, 316, 321.

22 *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cats. 26 (David collection pyxis), 28 (Narbonne pyxis), 29 (Palencia casket).

FIGURE 174 Silos casket, made by Muḥammad ibn Zayyān, Cuenca, dated 1026–7, ivory; Museo de Bellas Artes, Burgos

access to one or two tusks that had been stockpiled in the ʿĀmirid Khizānah (see Chapter 6).

Could these tusks have even been carried to Cuenca by an enterprising ivory-carver from the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Ṣināʿa? Perhaps this was even Muḥammad ibn Zayyān himself, who signed and dated the Silos casket, made in 417/1026.[23] Close stylistic connections between the ʿĀmirid ivories and the early products of the Taifa industry indicate that the same craftsmen or designers were involved, or at the very least they had seen ʿĀmirid ivories, which became their models. As discussed in Chapter 7, a diagnostic motif of the ivories made at Cuenca is the way that birds and animals bite down onto shoots, but this appears first in ʿĀmirid art. It is seen, for example, on the Pamplona casket (Figure 125E) and Braga pyxis (Chapter 7: 2.2). The animals on the lid of the Braga pyxis, especially, seem to prefigure the slightly more static style of, for example, the lions on the Palencia casket. The box in Doha, dated 1003–4 (4.1.1), features lions devouring men (on the front) and a man who spears the behind of another lion (on the back), images which prefigure the treatment of these motifs on the Silos and Palencia caskets. The leaves with very prominent veins on ʿAbd al-Malik's basin (2.3.1) also seem to prefigure those of the Cuenca ivories. The combination – in particular on the Silos casket – of the lion-gazelle combat motif, that distinctively ʿĀmirid emblem as discussed in Chapter 8, with the title of 'ḥājib' indicates deliberate references to their ʿĀmirid predecessors on the part of the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn. Whether the industry came into being under the dynasty's founder,[24] his son al-Maʾmūn (r. 1043–75),[25] or

23 *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cat. 25.

24 See Makariou 1999, 131–133, who believes the tiny Narbonne pyxis to have been made for the founder of the dynasty, Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Dhū'l-Nūn (r. 1018–1043).

25 As Cynthia Robinson 1995, 485–496, believes, who says (p. 490): 'the commission of [the Palencia casket] by al-Maʾmūn … supposes a significant … public gesture, one charged with meaning and which, I believe, may be seen as part of a programme of royal propaganda closely tied to this king's ambitions *vis-à-vis* the former Umawi (*sic*) capital of Cordoba'. However, this object's inscription clearly states that it was commissioned by

grandson Ismāʿīl,[26] they undoubtedly attempted to evoke the ʿĀmirid, and before that caliphal, connotations of this craft, and thereby to visualise the legitimacy of their rule.

Could another ivory-carver have carried another tusk, or several, to another centre of potential new patronage, this time under Christian rule, in the kingdom of León? By the 1060s, an ivory carving industry was flourishing in León under the patronage of Fernando I (r. 1037–65).[27] Though this industry was contemporary with Taifa production, the Leonese objects indicate a much greater supply of raw material; there was enough, for example, to allow the creation of highly three-dimensional sculptural objects such as the crucifix commissioned as part of the foundational gift to the royal monastery of San Isidoro in León, or the 'Carrizo christ'.[28] Was the arrival of ivory from Cordoba commemorated in the depiction of a huge tusk ceremonially carried by four men, one of whom is on horseback, on one of the plaques (sadly now lost) from the San Millán casket?[29] If tusks were stockpiled in the Cordoban Dār al-Ṣināʿa, they could have found their way – through diplomatic gifts, trade or booty – to Christian centres in northern Iberia: they may have travelled with craftsmen who left Andalusi centres to seek new patronage, or who might have been captured in Christian incursions into Taifa lands.

Rose Walker argues that the close relationship between Alfonso VI and al-Maʾmūn of Toledo could have led to the exchange (whether voluntary or involuntary) of craftsmen skilled in the designs and techniques of Andalusi carving, and that these craftsmen were involved in the commission of early stone capitals produced under Alfonso's patronage at several Castilian sites, including Santiago de Compostela and San Isidoro de León.[30] In Chapter 7, we also encountered two stone basins in San Isidoro that owe stylistic and technical debts to Andalusi models of carving: one, with entirely vegetal carving (Figure 144), relates to the Xàtiva basin and could have been brought to León from a Taifa centre; the other (Figure 159) appears to have been made in León, but with an awareness of the style of the ʿĀmirid marble basins. Perhaps the carver had been trained in an Andalusi tradition indebted to the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Ṣināʿa, a tradition that had been maintained at one of the Taifa centres in the intervening decades.

Turning to architecture, what remains of the palaces of the earliest Taifa rulers probably provides the closest surviving guide to the appearance of the ʿĀmirid palace-city, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. As discussed in Chapter 4, this seems to have still been standing, albeit in a ruinous state, until the late twelfth century, and as Cynthia Robinson noted, 'the Taifa kings would surely have responded to it'.[31] The problem is the state of preservation or excavation of these palaces, though there has been a remarkable increase in archaeological finds over the last two decades. Palaces like the Alcázar at Seville or the Aljafería in Zaragoza have remained seats of government until today, with additions and interventions by every major regime that has inhabited them, which limits the possibilities for fully understanding the archaeology of their Taifa phases. Nevertheless, remains of the decoration of three of the earliest palaces, all built by the middle

al-Maʾmūn's *son*, Ismāʿīl. It is possible that the Silos casket was commissioned for al-Maʾmūn, though the relevant section of its inscription is missing.

26 Of the nine ivories that can be associated with the Taifa-period industry, four of them are inscribed, three mentioning an Ismāʿīl (the fourth is the Silos casket). The Palencia and Bienaventuranzas caskets both clearly name Ismāʿīl ibn al-Maʾmūn as patron, and since we therefore know this member of the dynasty patronised the ivory industry, there seems no reason to doubt that the Ismāʿīl mentioned on the Narbonne pyxis is anyone but al-Maʾmūn's son: cf. Lévi-Provençal 1931, 190–191 (#206–#209).

27 *Art of Medieval Spain*, cats. 109, 111–117; Álvarez da Silva 2014; Martin 2019.

28 *Art of Medieval Spain*, cats. 111, 114.

29 This plaque, formerly in the Bode Museum in Berlin (inv. 3008), was destroyed during the Second World War: Goldschmidt 1914–26, vol. 4, cat. 87.

30 Walker 2015.

31 Robinson 1992, 51.

of the eleventh century, start to give tangible clues to the appearance of Taifa art as it emerged from the Fitna years and the debt these might owe to the lost ʿĀmirid palaces.

The first of these is a restored triple arcade opening onto an open pavilion preserved at the heart of the Alcazaba at Málaga, one of the 'post-ʿĀmirid' states, possibly built as early as the reign of Yaḥyā ibn Ḥammūd (r. 1026–35) (Figure 175).[32] While this small palace has long been likened to the buildings of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, a number of important differences can be noted: for example, in the method of construction employed in its intersecting arches, as well as in the functional shift from the arches having an entirely structural purpose to being essentially decorative. Furthermore, by the time of this palace's construction, 'architectural decoration [had] also evolved': the plaster reliefs are flatter and more uniform in texture, and the vegetal motifs are less varied – 'the pulpy stems, fruits and leaves of the caliphal stuccowork have been transformed into delicate, attenuated, elaborately curved leaves and stems'.[33] The flatter style of the leaf forms at Málaga recalls those carved in ivory on the Palencia casket (dated 1049–50). These 'clear stylistic differences' certainly represent the 'early intimations of a new Taifa aesthetic, that was to evolve more fully in later buildings in Zaragoza and elsewhere'.[34] Had these stylistic evolutions begun earlier, under the ʿĀmirids?

One characteristic of the ʿĀmirid architectural style, discussed in Chapter 7, was an increasingly flat relief in carving technique. This seems to prefigure the style of carving employed in the Alcazaba at Málaga, and in the decoration of al-Maʾmūn's palace in Toledo, built around the mid-eleventh century, and partially preserved in the Convento de Santa Fe.[35] A group of spectacular marble capitals and bases, found in the nearby church of Santo Tomé, shows heavy use of the drill but almost no undercutting (Figure 176);[36] the size and shape of the capitals relate closely to the flat relief capital with a worm in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan (Figure 24), which I have suggested is ʿĀmirid. The birds amid scrolling foliage on an elegant marble relief (Figure 177), which closely relates to the style of Taifa ivory carving, have parallels with the ʿĀmirid marble basin fragments in Granada (compare Chapter 7: 2.3.3).[37] The eye-witness accounts of al-Maʾmūn's palace

FIGURE 175 Arcade in the Taifa palace, Alcazaba, Málaga © ROSE WALKER / PHOTO: JOHNBATTENPHOTOGRAPHY

32 Ewert 1966; Robinson 1992, 52–55.
33 Robinson 1992, 53.
34 Robinson 1992, 55.
35 Calvo 2002.
36 *Al-Andalus* cat. 47.
37 *Al-Andalus* cat. 48. In the case of both this relief and the capital just mentioned, Robinson argues for the likely influence of artistic developments under the Banū Hūd at Zaragoza, who were beginning the construction of the Aljafería during the reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 1049–82).

FIGURE 176 Capital, probably from al-Ma'mūn's palace, Toledo, mid-eleventh century, marble; Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, inv. DO1272
© ROSE WALKER / PHOTO: JOHNBATTENPHOTOGRAPHY

FIGURE 177 Decorative wall panel, probably from al-Ma'mūn's palace, Toledo, mid-eleventh century, marble; Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, inv. CE400
© MUSEO DE SANTA CRUZ

in Toledo, such as the description of the fountain basins by Ibn Jabīr which was quoted in Chapter 3, indicate that al-Ma'mūn might have been following an ʿĀmirid model in the layout and decoration of his palace and in the public/private staging of his court activity.

In 1999, the remains of the decoration of an arcade of three horseshoe arches were excavated in the Convento de Santa Fe, opposite the Capilla de Belén, a domed hall that was also originally part of al-Ma'mūn's palace (Figure 178).[38] The decoration of these arches indicates new developments in the art of al-Andalus, above all in the decorative use of carved plaster. Both faces of the arcade feature figurative scenes against a blue background deriving from lapis lazuli, though there is also evidence of other colours (black, orange and green), with outlining in red and enhancements in gold. On the south side of the arcade, facing into the garden which separated this structure from the

38 Calvo 2002; Monzón Moya and Martín Morales 2006; Monzón Moya 2011; Calvo 2011, 77–8; Rabasco García 2019, 487–494. For a digital recreation of the arcade's original appearance, see https://parpatrimonioytecnologia.wordpress.com/2019/04/19/el-conjunto-monumental-de-santa-fe-de-toledo-iv-la-arqueria-taifa/ (accessed 9 February 2020).

FIGURE 178 Decorative arch from al-Maʾmūn's palace, Toledo, mid-eleventh century, plaster, glass; Convento de Santa Fe, Toledo
© VÍCTOR RABASCO GARCÍA

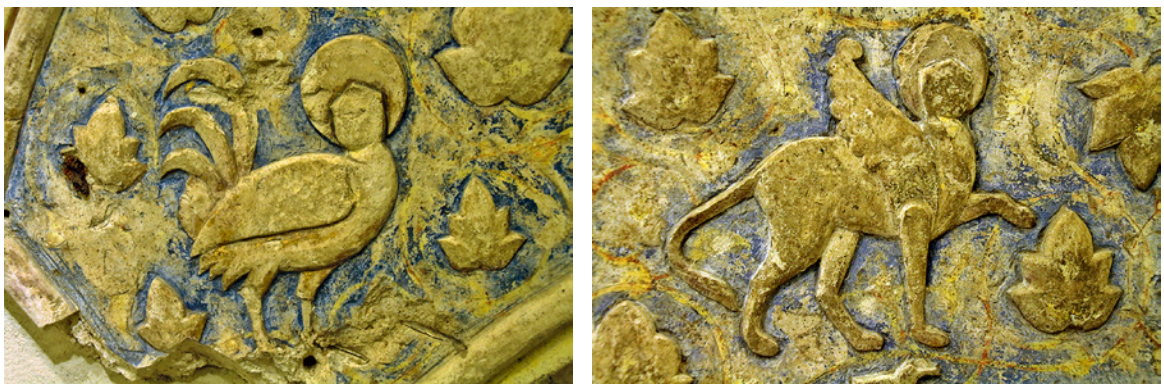

FIGURE 179 Decorative arch from al-Maʾmūn's palace: details; A. harpy B: sphinx
© VÍCTOR RABASCO GARCÍA

qubba opposite, are hunting scenes, with men on horseback carrying falcons in the mode of the Suaire de Saint Lazare or several of the ʿĀmirid ivories. On the north side, facing the interior of the hall for which this was the entrance, are mythical creatures such as harpies and sphinxes, distinctively represented with haloes (Figure 179). The compositions are symmetrical and surrounded by floral motifs. The intrados of the arches features a network of hexagonal compartments, again in carved plaster, containing affronted birds and animals, including birds whose tails join over their heads like the peacocks on the Pamplona casket, and upright winged lions, which recall a common motif on later textiles. The background to these compartments is formed from flat coloured panes of glass, which reflect the light and give an extremely rich overall effect. This technique is so

FIGURE 180
Harpy from Castell Formós, Balaguer, mid-eleventh century, plaster; Museu Noguera, Balaguer
© ROSE WALKER / PHOTO: JOHNBATTENPHOTOGRAPHY

far unprecedented in al-Andalus and does not seem to be repeated, though Calvo notes that it was known in Mamluk Egypt.[39]

Rabasco García likens the layout of the decoration on these arcades to luxury textiles that would have been in use at al-Maʾmūn's court – he cites another passage from the eye witness account by Ibn Jabīr of the circumcision ceremony of his heir, which describes how the palace was bedecked with soft furnishings.[40] Further, he associates the motifs themselves with parallels in textile, in particular the nimbed harpies whose tails look distinctly like those of a cockerel: this depiction is very different from the other eleventh-century harpy carved in plaster, that from the Castell Formós in Balaguer, which has the classical form of a woman's head on a bird's body (Figure 180). Instead, Rabasco likens the motif to the harpies on the embroidery from Oña, discussed in Chapter 7, and on earlier textiles from much further east – he illustrates a fragment of a silk samite from Tang China, which features paired cockerels or pheasants with accentuated plumage in their tails and also with haloes.[41] Does this parallel have relevance for the otherwise unusual presence of cockerels on the ivory pyxis associated with Sanchuelo (3.1)? The textile parallel also evokes the presence of sphinxes on the Suaire de Saint Lazare (2.4), possibly the first appearance of this motif in al-Andalus, and the overall blue-and-gold colour scheme of the arcade's design also recalls this embroidery. If the Suaire de Saint

39 Calvo 2011, 77, citing an article by Stefano Carboni on the painted glass decoration of the mausoleum of Aḥmad ibn Sulayman al-Rifāʿī in Cairo, built 1291.

40 Rabasco García 2019, 486–7.

41 Rabasco García 2019, 490–1.

Lazare is an example of ʿĀmirid textile production, these aspects might provide further evidence of continuity into the Taifa period, or of deliberate visual referencing of ʿĀmirid art.

Also unusual is the use of carved plaster as a material for architectural decoration. Calvo comments that its use in al-Maʾmūn's palace seems to evidence a 'mature technique'.[42] She notes that plaster was used to create the scallop shell dome above the mihrab at the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the frieze of lobed arches around its base,[43] so it was present in caliphal Córdoba as a material of architectural decoration. On the other hand, decoration in carved plaster is a feature of the Islamic architecture of North Africa: in Chapter 7, we discussed the carved plaster ornament of houses beneath the Almoravid extension of the Qarawiyyīn mosque in Fez. Other significant examples have been excavated at Sedrata in Algeria (dating imprecise, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries),[44] Ajdābiya and Surt (mid-tenth century, associated with the Fatimids in Ifrīqiya),[45] and, most famously, the substantial finds of 3000 fragments at Sabra-Mansuriyya, which Barrucand and Rammah have dated to different phases within the Zīrid period.[46] The first Zīrid palace was built there in 986, exactly contemporary with al-Manṣūr's construction of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. As at al-Maʾmūn's palace, the plaster decoration is set against a blue background, derived from lapis lazuli.

The use of carved plaster becomes widespread in the palaces built by Taifa rulers. Another early Taifa palace was that built at Castell Formós in Balaguer, near Lérida, whose construction can be credited to the Taifa ruler Yūsuf al-Muẓaffar: Christian Ewert wanted to date it as early as 1046, the year Yūsuf came to power.[47] While the decoration is predominantly vegetal, with a flat leaf style similar to that used at Málaga and on the contemporary Dhū'l-Nūnid ivories, the presence of a harpy amid scrollwork suggests that the decoration of this palace was at least partially figurative (Figure 180). It seems to have made use of complex arch forms as well, judging by other remains. The apotheosis of these trends – complex arch profiles, and elaborate decoration in plaster – occurs at the Aljafería in Zaragoza, initiated by the Hūdid ruler al-Muqtadir (r. 1046–1081) after 1065 when he took his regnal title (Figure 14).[48] By this point, it is unlikely that there any direct influences from ʿĀmirid architecture though, as noted in Chapter 4, the Aljafería is the only other building where doubled capitals and columns are widely used: however, these are twinned capitals, as used in the *maqṣūra* at the Cordoba Mosque, not the highly sophisticated, fully integrated double-capital carved by Faraj, Bāshir and Mubārak probably for one of the palaces at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira (Figures 37–38), or those which adorned the ʿĀmirid 'tribune' in the Cordoba Mosque (Figures 39–40).

Without wanting to diminish the inventiveness of Taifa patrons and architects, might the fact that elaborate decoration in plaster became part of the shared visual language of Taifa art have derived from the same original source – the lost palaces of the ʿĀmirids? Could al-Manṣūr have responded to trends in North African architecture, which he knew well from his time stationed in the Maghrib, introducing new materials for architectural decoration at his court? No surviving evidence has yet surfaced that could be identified as an ʿĀmirid use of carved plaster. Another explanation for the widespread adoption of plaster as a decorative material around the middle of the eleventh century might be a more general trend towards the use of more regionally-available materials, such as alabaster in the Aljafería, or the local Valencian stone Buixcarró rosa for the Xàtiva basin.

It is to be expected that the ʿĀmirid *mawāli* who came to form Taifa states during and after the Fitna should have taken away from Cordoba

42 Calvo 2011, 91.
43 Calvo 2011, 75.
44 Cressier and Gilotte 2013.
45 Bongianino 2015.
46 Barrucand and Rammah 2009.
47 Ewert 1979.
48 Cabañero Subiza 2007.

a sense of the cultural and artistic aesthetics that had defined the ʿĀmirid court, and the all-too-brief survey of the extant evidence presented here suggests that this was indeed the case. Although these ʿĀmirid cultural connections seem to have done little to promote a sense of political unity or mutual loyalty between the 'post-ʿĀmirid' Taifa states, they nevertheless facilitated the transmission of the high culture and tastes of the ʿĀmirid court to all the regions of al-Andalus, as well as beyond its borders into the Maghrib and Christian Iberia.

The art of the Taifa period is being reappraised, as continued archaeological investigation all over Spain provides more primary material that deepens our knowledge of this period and reveals the cultural wealth of these small kingdoms. For example, the extremely significant find of excavated fragments of lustre dishes made in Seville for the ʿAbbādid rulers al-Muʿtadid (r. 1042–69) and al-Muʿtamid (r. 1069–1091), reveal the beginnings of a ceramic technology for which Spain came to be famous in the later medieval period, as well showing the attraction of Fatimid art and the possible involvement of Fatimid potters in this production.[49] The recent re-examination of the 'Pisa Griffin' within the context of Mediterranean metalwork appears to confirm the creation of this fantastic beast in Taifa al-Andalus towards the end of the eleventh century, and its likely presence in Mallorca by the early twelfth century, when it was seized in one of the regular Pisan raids.[50] Though the Balearics were no longer under the control of Mujāhid or his son ʿAlī, who succeeded him in 1044, the islands had flourished under their rule, becoming an important centre for Mediterranean trade and a threat to Pisan hegemony. Mayurqa was one of the eight largest cities of al-Andalus. Their ships sailed to Egypt, Syria and other eastern ports, and on more than one occasion ʿAlī ibn Mujāhid sent provisions and gifts to the Fatimid rulers, during a time of famine and plague in Egypt.[51] Famously, Denia is where a hoard of eastern Mediterranean metalwork has been recovered.[52] Such close contact with the Fatimids and with the Islamic East led to new materials, techniques and decorative motifs entering the art of al-Andalus – though, as we discussed in Chapter 7, this process was beginning during the ʿĀmirid period.

This chapter cannot provide a full survey of Taifa art – which, in any case, will not be fully understood until many more excavations have happened – but, in evaluating the Taifa contribution to Andalusi society, art and culture, it is important to bear in mind the arguably seminal influences of the ʿĀmirids on the political and cultural developments of the early Taifa period. It has previously been difficult to gauge the manner or likely extent of these influences, in the absence of a framework for the study of ʿĀmirid culture in its own right. This book suggests some ways in which to pursue this relationship.

This book has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in order to evaluate the full spectrum of ʿĀmirid artistic and cultural patronage, and has encompassed discussions of ʿĀmirid domestic and foreign policies, the ʿĀmirid court and its literary patronage, the grand-scale architectural projects sponsored by al-Manṣūr, and the ʿĀmirids' use of the luxury arts industry. Between them, these fields of enquiry provide ample evidence for the study of ʿĀmirid patronage, though the difficulties presented by the evidence, and the wide range of different methodologies and skills required to evaluate it properly, have meant that such a study has never previously been undertaken. The recent historiographical reevaluation of the ʿĀmirid period has provided an historical framework within which this dynasty's patronage can be better contextualised. It can be shown that the main issue dominating the ʿĀmirid *ḥijāba* was

49 Barceló and Heidenreich 2014.

50 Contadini 2018, especially sections 3.3 and 3.7.

51 Calvo 2011, 88. Julian Raby in Contadini 2018, section 3.7 discusses the importance of Mallorca in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, especially pp. 318–22.

52 Azuar Ruiz 2012.

that of establishing its legitimacy – this was not a simplistic example of the usurpation of caliphal prerogatives. Neither al-Manṣūr nor his sons were unwilling patrons, as has been implied by those art historians who relate the construction of his extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba to his desire to placate the Maliki *fuqahā'*. Nevertheless, appropriation undoubtedly featured among the ways in which the ʿĀmirids articulated their rule, since in many respects al-Manṣūr imitated a model of legitimation that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III had codified in order to underscore his pretensions to be the rightful caliph of Sunni Islam.

Al-Manṣūr's adoption of caliphal-style titulature; his appropriation of caliphal court ceremonial; his strategic, even dynastic, marriage alliances; his perpetuation and intensification of diplomatic relations with the Umayyads' client states; his regular military campaigning in which he personally led his army into the field; his extension to the symbol *par excellence* of the Umayyads' temporal and religious rule in al-Andalus, the Great Mosque of Cordoba; his construction of a palace-city in a recognisably 'royal' architectural form; his patronage of the luxury arts industry, and the deployment of its products as *khilaʿ* – each of these elements made essentially the same statement: that the ʿĀmirid *ḥujjāb* were fulfilling the traditional duties of the caliph. Their authority was legally delegated from the caliph, who seems – due to health or mental health reasons – to have been incapable of effective rule. The central concern of the ʿĀmirid regime therefore became the *ḥājib*s' need to continually justify and legitimise their stewardship of royal power. Thus, al-Manṣūr deliberately articulated his *ḥijāba* as if it were a caliphate, and sought to legitimise his position by engaging in the types of cultural and artistic patronage that had traditionally been the preserve of caliphs.

The messages that al-Manṣūr sought to articulate by means of his cultural patronage were probably clearest to contemporaries in his massive extension to the Cordoba Mosque. Here his architects went to great pains to imitate the previous Umayyad phases, especially that of al-Ḥakam, completed only twelve years before. Here also, the words with which al-Manṣūr inscribed the gates of his extension literally stated his intention to continue the Umayyads' suppression of heterodoxy, and hence to preserve the stability of the state and the unity of the *umma*. The subtext of these inscriptions was, however, that now the effective power to champion Maliki orthodoxy no longer lay with the Umayyads, but instead with the ʿĀmirids. In this, as in his pursuit of twice-yearly campaigns against the Christians and the Fatimids' Berber allies, al-Manṣūr – and, later, his sons – laid claim to be the real defender of the faith. The two-sided coin of his military successes and his construction of pious works provided a fundamental basis for the legitimacy of the ʿĀmirid *ḥijāba*.

Lastly, the ʿĀmirids employed their patronage of the luxury arts industry as a means of visualising these same claims to legitimacy, and in particular to project their self-image as embodying the virtues of the ideal ruler. The images they used were the same as those employed in the poetry they commissioned, that was sung in their praise by the panegyrists of the ʿĀmirid court. Such a cultural-political project surely demanded production on an intensive scale, as may be judged by the many objects and fragments that still survive. By these means, ʿĀmirid patronage gave rise to a characteristic and definable style, which – as argued above – likely influenced the art of the emerging Taifa rulers.

The "Āmirid period' can thus be recognised in its own right as a time of stability and prosperity within the borders of al-Andalus, when high culture flourished under active and discerning patrons. Rather than merely a transitionary phase between the caliphal and Taifa periods, it was an interregnum, with its own defining political concerns, cultural priorities, and its own artistic style. Though today they are better remembered for their roles as warriors of Islam, for the ʿĀmirids themselves, an equally important role in the articulation of their *ḥijāba* was played by their artistic and cultural patronage.