

The *Quṣṣāṣ* of Early Islam

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The *Quṣṣāṣ* of Early Islam

By

Lyall R. Armstrong



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For my wife April



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Abbreviations

- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
- EI1* *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition. Edited by M. Th. Houtsma, A.J. Wensinck, T.W. Arnold, W. Heffening, and E. Lévi-Provençal. Leiden, 1927.
- EI2* *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition. Edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. von Donzol, and W.P. Heinrichs. Leiden, 1960–2002.
- EQ* *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*. Edited by Jane McAuliffe, et al. 6 vols. Leiden, 2001–2006.
- GAS* Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Leiden, 1963–2000.
- JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
- JSAI* *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
- TG* Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols. Berlin, 1991–7.
- ZDMG* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Introduction

Some time during the latter portions of the first Islamic century, the renowned scholar ‘Amir b. Sharāḥīl al-Sha‘bī (d.c. 103/721) passed through the Syrian city of Palmyra, as had many caraveneers who traversed the desert before him. During his sojourn in the city he happened upon a man, identified only as a *qāṣṣ*, holding a teaching session. Al-Sha‘bī reported that this *qāṣṣ* was instructing his audience on aspects of the eschaton, saying: “God has created two trumpets each having two blasts: the blast of death (*ṣa‘aqa*) and the blast of resurrection (*qiḡyāma*).” Al-Sha‘bī, taking issue with this teaching, challenged the *qāṣṣ* informing him that there was only one trumpet with two blasts. The *qāṣṣ*, however, insisted that he received his information from reliable sources that he traced to the Prophet himself and, therefore, did not acquiesce to al-Sha‘bī’s rebuke. Furthermore, his audience rose up and beat al-Sha‘bī with their shoes for disagreeing with their teacher. Indeed he reported they did not stop beating him until he “swore to them that God created thirty trumpets each having but a single blast.”¹

This story illustrates the general perception of the early Islamic *quṣṣās* (sg. *qāṣṣ*). It is one in a number of traditions that depict them as second-rate religious figures lingering on the fringes of Islamic orthodoxy and even, at times, contributing directly to the corruption of the faith, and this general perception has been reiterated in most modern studies of their class. Additionally, and stemming from the lexical meaning of *qaṣṣa* as “to tell stories,” the *quṣṣās* have largely been associated with storytelling, and, thus, have been identified by most scholars as “storytellers.” It is believed that they drew most of their stories, or, worse yet, fabricated them, from accounts of the ancient prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*) and from the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth, sunna*). Even though their intentions in telling these stories were good, such as expounding on the meaning of the Qur’ān and encouraging right belief and upright behavior among their listeners, their seeming laxity in knowledge of religion scarred their reputations, as is suggested in the unidentified Palmyrene *qāṣṣ*’s

1 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-quṣṣās wa-l-mudhakkirīn*, ed. and trans. Merlin Swartz (Beirut, 1971), 97–98 (translation taken from Swartz, 177–178); al-Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr al-khawāṣṣ min akādhīb al-quṣṣās*, ed. Muḥammad b. Luṭfī al-Ṣabbāgh (Beirut, 1972), 152–154; al-Qārī al-Harawī, *al-Asrār al-marfū‘a fī-l-akhbār al-mawḍū‘a*, ed. Muḥammad b. Luṭfī al-Ṣabbāgh (Beirut, 1971), 57. See also Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, ed. S.M. Stern and trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (London, 1971), 156–158; Adam Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*, translated by S. Khuda Bukhsh and D.S. Margoliouth (London, 1937), 350–351.

independent judgment on the trumpet blasts of the end of times. As a result, they are often set in opposition to the “orthodox” teachers of the Islamic community and are believed to have told their stories to the uneducated and gullible masses, who, to al-Sha‘bī’s ill fortune, seem to have been loyal and vigorous supporters of their *quṣṣās*; thus, they have at times been identified specifically as “popular” preachers. This image, however, was not as ubiquitous as previously believed.

Much of the confusion surrounding the *quṣṣās* is a result of the sources themselves, giving varying reports about them and painting a complex, and at times contradictory, image of them. An essential contributing factor to this dilemma is the large number and many types of Islamic sources addressing the *quṣṣās*. In fact, no genre of Islamic literature can be overlooked when researching them. References to them abound in chronicles (both universal and local), *ḥadīth* compilations, biographical dictionaries and Qur’ān commentaries. In addition, more specialized works, like those on Sufism and asceticism, such as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s (d. 386/998) *Qūt al-qulūb* or Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfahānī’s (d. 430/1038) *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, as well as literary works, such as al-Jāhīz’s (d. 255/869) *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, are also important sources for our knowledge of the *quṣṣās*. Naturally, each of these works tends to approach the *quṣṣās* from the angle of the conceptual framework of their genre. Consequently, we learn of their involvement in military expeditions from chronicles and works on the conquests (*futūḥ*). *Ḥadīth* works and biographical dictionaries often emphasize the scholarly reputations of the *quṣṣās*, casting light, in particular, on their role in *ḥadīth* transmission. While works on Sufism and asceticism highlight the piety of the *quṣṣās*, they also can be critical of them, in order to distinguish Sufi sessions from those of the *quṣṣās*.² This diversity of literary genres indicates that the *quṣṣās* were, themselves, a diverse group with interests and affiliations in many segments of early Islamic society. It is not surprising then that the sources present multiple images of them. For the researcher, the breadth of the information on them is a boon, because of its quantity, as well as an obstacle, because of its range.

Three works written by prolific and distinguished Islamic scholars of the medieval period focused specifically on the *quṣṣās* and were largely critical of them. These works impacted modern scholars’ evaluation of the *quṣṣās*. The earliest and most important by far is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī b. al-Jawzī’s (d. 597/1200) *Kitāb al-quṣṣās wa-l-mudhakkirīn*, “The Book of the *Quṣṣās*”

2 Johannes Pedersen noted this especially with regard to Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s *Qūt al-qulūb*; see his “Islamic Preacher: *Wā’iz*, *Mudhakkir*, *Qāṣṣ*,” *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume I*, eds. S. Löwinger and J. Somogyi (Budapest, 1948), 233, 243–249.

and the Admonishers.” A second treatise, *Aḥādīth al-quṣṣās*, “The Ḥadīth Transmissions of the *Quṣṣās*,” was written by the famous medieval Ḥanbalī scholar Aḥmad b. Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) who argued that the *quṣṣās* fabricated and misused *ḥadīth*.³ And lastly, the prolific ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) wrote an extensive critique of the *quṣṣās* entitled *Taḥdhīr al-khawāṣṣ min akādhīb al-quṣṣās*, “Warning the educated about the lies of the *quṣṣās*”; he began his work with numerous citations of the famous and widely-circulated Prophetic *ḥadīth* damning those who lie about the Prophet to hell-fire and, thus, not too subtly revealing his thoughts on the final abode of the *quṣṣās*.⁴ While the latter two works are certainly important, Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Kitāb al-quṣṣās* has proven to be the most influential of all.

Merlin Swartz published the first modern critical edition of the *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*, along with an English translation of the work, in 1971.⁵ In spite of the lateness of this edition, Ibn al-Jawzī’s work already exerted a profound influence on the modern study of the *quṣṣās* since the work of the inimitable Ignaz Goldziher, who read it in manuscript form and depended heavily on it, with approximately one-quarter of his citations in his analysis of the *quṣṣās* in his *Muslim Studies II* coming from it.⁶ This *Kitāb al-quṣṣās* is the most comprehensive compendium of traditions about the *quṣṣās* compiled by any Muslim writer. In it, Ibn al-Jawzī, according to Swartz, set out to refute those who categorically condemn all *quṣṣās* (“preachers”) and *wu‘āz* (“sermonizers”), to criticize certain aberrant tendencies among the *quṣṣās* and *wu‘āz* and to provide directives for the *quṣṣās* and *wu‘āz* in the conduct of their meetings; he did not, however, censure them outright.⁷ Indeed, Ibn al-Jawzī—a public preacher and teacher in his own right—often defended them.⁸

Ibn al-Jawzī defended the legitimacy of *qaṣaṣ* (“preaching”) when properly exercised by listing among the ranks of his *quṣṣās* and the *mudhakkirūn* a number of luminaries of early Islam, including the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁹ With this list, Ibn al-Jawzī seems to

3 Ibn Taymiyya, *Aḥādīth al-quṣṣās*, ed. Muḥammad b. Luṭfī al-Ṣabbāgh (Beirut, 1972).

4 Al-Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr*, 8–65.

5 Since Swartz’s publication, two other editions of the *Kitāb al-quṣṣās* have been published; one by Muḥammad b. Luṭfī al-Ṣabbāgh (Beirut, 1983) and another by Qāsim al-Sāmarrāī (Riyadh, 1983).

6 See Goldziher’s footnotes in *Muslim Studies II*, 149–159.

7 See Swartz’s introduction to the *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*, 52–55.

8 See Swartz’s introduction to the *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*, 55–61.

9 He also defended the legitimacy of *qaṣaṣ* by recording traditions which speak of it in a favorable light, such as a handful of sayings from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal praising reputable *quṣṣās*; see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 19–20.

argue that with such distinguished personalities as these, *qaṣaṣ* cannot be all that bad. However, his list presents one chief problem. It is often not possible to know whether the person in question was a *qāṣṣ*, a *mudhakkir* or a *wāʿiẓ*. In fact, while Ibn al-Jawzī begins his treatise with definitions of each, he also notes that “the term *qāṣṣ* has come to embrace all three” and often uses the terms synonymously.¹⁰ Yet, as S.D. Goitein has noted, “synonyms, of course, are not synonymous.”¹¹ This appears to be the case with the term *qāṣṣ* for, while the designation *mudhakkir* and *wāʿiẓ* never came to be viewed critically in the community, the *qāṣṣ* eventually was associated with charlatanism and buffoonery. Obviously, the terms were not completely synonymous.

This generally critical perception of the Islamic *qāṣṣ* has held sway in modern scholarship since the work of Goldziher who described them as primarily embellishers and fabricators of religious stories attempting to interpret the Qurʾān and promote religious devotion among the masses, often with the subsidiary intent of lining their own pockets with largesse from their audiences.¹² He also noted, however, that while the *quṣṣāṣ* were generally an unorthodox, if not unruly, bunch, they did have in their number reputable scholars, specifically in the early period of Islamic history, and that they were religious teachers and also active in encouraging the soldiers of the Muslim armies to fight valiantly.¹³ Indeed, the renowned scholar Charles Pellat, following Goldziher, who he claimed provided “the most thorough study of this social group,” may best sum up the prevailing view of the *quṣṣāṣ*; he said that they related “fabulous deeds and marvelous stories which the credulous masses took for gospel truth, thus placing the authentic Islamic tradition in real jeopardy. Because of this conduct, they incurred the theoretical and practical condemnation of the religious authorities.”¹⁴ This association between the *quṣṣāṣ* and fanciful stories led to their being identified by some scholars as a primary source for the fabrication both of the predominantly narrative-style exegetical material

10 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 11 (translation taken from Swartz, 98). See also Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 226–232.

11 S.D. Goitein, “Individualism and Conformity in Classical Islam,” *Individualism and Conformity in Classical Islam*, eds. Aman Banani and Speros Vryonis, Jr. (Wiesbaden, 1977), 5.

12 Ignaz Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, ed. and trans. Wolfgang H. Behn (Wiesbaden, 2006), 36–38; idem, *Muslim Studies II*, 149–159.

13 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 149–159.

14 Charles Pellat, “Ḳāṣṣ,” *El2*, 4:733–735. See also his discussion of the *quṣṣāṣ* in his *Le milieu basrien* (Paris, 1953), 108ff. For similar analyses, see Duncan Black MacDonald, “Ḳiṣṣa,” *El1*, 2:1042–1044; Louis Massignou, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris, 1922), 144.

on the Qurʾān and of Prophetic *ḥadīth*.¹⁵ Some scholars, based on the assumption that the *quṣṣās* were primarily storytellers, proposed that their stories laid the groundwork for the literary works of later ages, such as *Alf layla wa-layla*, “A Thousand and One Nights”.¹⁶ Indeed, even when it was admitted that not everything related to the *quṣṣās* was gloomy—that some *quṣṣās*, in fact, possessed the requisite knowledge to be judges, for example—these researchers were often drawn back to this basic image.¹⁷

While the *quṣṣās* seem to have been primarily men of religious interests, there are a number of traditions describing their political affiliations and the role that they played in the political movements of the early period. Exactly when these affiliations began to form is unclear, although some believe that they exerted political influence by the time of the first Civil War (*fitna*), or even earlier.¹⁸ Jamāl Jūda argues that once the previously reputable preachers became tainted by the political trends of the early period they descended into fabrications and falsehoods.¹⁹ In fact, the majority of the *quṣṣās*, according to

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- 15 On their role in Qurʾānic interpretation, see John Wansbrough, *Qurʾānic Studies* (Oxford, 1977), 122ff; Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, 1987), 213–216. On *ḥadīth* in particular, see Muḥammad b. Luṭfi al-Sabbāgh, in his introduction to his edition of Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*, 77; and James Robson who follows Goldziher in his article, “Ḥadīth,” *El2*, 3:24.
- 16 Wadīʿa Ṭāhā al-Najm, “al-Qaṣaṣ: Nashaʾtuḥu fī-l-Islām wa taṭawwaruḥu,” *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb Jāmiʿat Baghdad*, 1967, 166–178 (henceforth “Qaṣaṣ”); idem, *al-Qaṣaṣ wa-l-quṣṣās fī-l-adab al-islāmī* (Kuwait, 1972) (henceforth *Quṣṣās*). For her discussion of the growth of stories from oral to literary, see “Qaṣaṣ,” 177–178 and *Quṣṣās*, 87–152. Pellat, who seems to have not been familiar with al-Najm’s work since he fails to cite her in his *El2* article “Kāṣṣ,” proposed the same evolutionary development also mentioning *Alf layla wa-layla* as an example of the culmination of the process; see “Kāṣṣ,” 4:735.
- 17 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 152–153, Johannes Pedersen is a good example of this. In his “Islamic Preacher,” he noted a number of positive attributes of the *quṣṣās*; see 233, 237, 237, 243–249. Then, in a later article, he notes the Sufi tendency to criticize the excesses of the preachers; see his “The Criticism of the Islamic Preacher,” *Die Welt des Islams 2* (1953), 215–231. Jamāl Jūda, “al-Qaṣaṣ wa-l-quṣṣās fī ṣadr al-Islām: bayna al-wāqīʿ al-tārīkhī wa-l-naẓra al-fiqhiyya,” *Dirāsāt tārikhiyya* 33/34 (Damascus, 1989), 105–141. See also Jonathan Berkey’s excellent monograph on the medieval preacher, *Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle, 2001), 21.
- 18 Al-Najm, “Qaṣaṣ,” 170–1; idem, *Quṣṣās*, 32–33; Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 127; Khalil ʿAthamina, “al-Qaṣaṣ: Its emergence, religious origin and its socio-political impact on early Muslim society,” *Studia Islamica*, 76 (1992), 59–74. See also Malak Abyaḍ, *al-Tarbiya wa-l-thaqāfa al-ʿarabiyya-islāmiyya fī-l-Shām wa-l-Jazīra khilāl al-qurūn al-thalātha al-ūlā li-l-hijra* (Beirut, 1980), 307–314.
- 19 Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 126–128.

my research, maintained solid reputations throughout the Umayyad period. Furthermore, in light of the highly politically charged nature of many of the traditions pertaining to the *fitna*, whether they are from *quṣṣās*, traditionists (*muḥḥadithūn*) or historians (*akhbārīs*), the proposal that it was the defining point in the decline of the reliability of the *quṣṣās* must be reconsidered.

In spite of the significant contributions of the scholars mentioned above to our perception of the *quṣṣās* in early Islam, two basic assumptions permeate these studies and have contributed to what I believe are essential misunderstandings of the character and role of the early *quṣṣās*. First, as I have mentioned above, the *quṣṣās* are assumed to have been storytellers in that they related stories of a narrative kind. While on its surface this assumption seems logical, considering the accepted meaning of *qaṣṣa* as “to tell stories,” it is not entirely accurate. An important example of this assumption is John Wansbrough’s and Patricia Crone’s argument that the historical-exegetical material on the Qur’ān came from the stories of the *quṣṣās*, although they are by no means alone in this assumption.²⁰ In essence, this concept of the *quṣṣās* as tellers of stories has been discernible in modern studies since Goldziher’s studies on the *quṣṣās* in both Qur’ān commentary and *ḥadīth*.²¹ In fact, while it is true that some Islamic sources, as will be seen below, also depicted the *quṣṣās* as tellers of stories, the statements of the early *quṣṣās* reveal thematic and stylistic interests broader than simply narrative.

Second, and on the other side of the spectrum, lies the equally problematic tendency, evident in some modern studies, of defining *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣās* too broadly to the point of almost denuding the terms of any independent meaning. To be sure, part of the problem stems from the sources themselves. A “preacher” was a *wā’iz*, a *qāṣṣ*, or a *mudhakkir*, yet it is not clear what distinguished one from the other. Furthermore, some studies considered sayings of a preacher to be *qaṣaṣ* (“storytelling” in this sense) even if there was no textual evidence that this was the case. However, because of the often-imprecise designations of the genre of a particular tradition or statement in the Islamic sources, either an assumption that whenever a *qāṣṣ* spoke, his statement was a story (*qiṣṣa*), or, even more importantly, that anyone who told a story was a *qāṣṣ*, would not be valid.²² As a matter of fact, this was rarely the case. Since a

20 Wansbrough, *Qur’ānic Studies*, 122ff; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 213–216.

21 See n. 1. As mentioned above, Pellat also maintained that the *quṣṣās* were basically tellers of “fabulous deeds and marvelous stories.” See his “Kāṣṣ,” *EL*2, 4:734–735.

22 Malak Abyaḍ, for example, stated that the famous Companion of the Prophet Abū al-Dardā’ (d. 32/652) stood on the steps of the Umayyad mosque telling stories, when in fact the text she used does not indicate that he was giving a *qiṣṣa* but that he was merely

large number of the *quṣṣās* held other positions and engaged in other activities in the community, their statements were equally indicative of their roles as judge (*qādī*), legist (*faqīh*) or Qurʾān interpreter (*mufassir*), and not, primarily, as a *qāṣṣ*.

This lack of specificity seems to have contributed to a very general definition of the role of the *quṣṣās*. Khalil ʿAthamina gives an accurate summation of the widely held view of the *qāṣṣ* as someone who was involved in a number of religious matters “from interpretation of the Qurʾān; through traditions of the Prophet (*ḥadīth*), stories of ancient prophets, and moral preaching; to admonition against the evil of sin and transgression.”²³ This definition, however, describes almost any Islamic religious teacher; and although the definition may not be entirely inaccurate even when applied to the *qāṣṣ*, it is still unclear exactly what *qaṣaṣ* was and what role a *qāṣṣ* played in the early community of Muslims.

It was this imprecision in terminology, both in the early and medieval Islamic sources as well as in modern studies on the *quṣṣās*, that led to the establishment of the first criterion of the present study for identifying a *qāṣṣ* or a *qīṣṣa*: a direct association with the root *qaṣṣa*. In order to avoid the conflation of *qaṣaṣ* with other types of statements, the only sayings considered in this research were those identified explicitly within a source as *qaṣaṣ* or were preceded by a phrase indicating, in some way, that the following statement was a *qīṣṣa*, such as *kāna yaquṣṣu fa-qāla*, “he used to give *qaṣaṣ* and say.” As a result, some people who were identified by Ibn al-Jawzī in his list of *quṣṣās* and *mudhakkirūn* did not find their way into my pool of *quṣṣās*, such as ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, Salmān al-Fārisī and Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, to name a few. While each of these men may have related “stories” in the sense of narratives, or gave admonitions according to the tendency of the *mudhakkirīn* and

addressing a crowd; Compare Abyad’s *Tarbiya*, 309, with Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. ʿUmar b. Gharāma al-Amrawī (Beirut, 1995), 47:132–133. See also Jamāl Jūda who based much of his description of the topics of the *quṣṣās* on selected narratives ascribed to various *quṣṣās*. While this may account for the general themes in which a particular *qāṣṣ* showed interest, it does not give any indication of what comprised a *qīṣṣa* or what a scholar was doing when he was giving *qaṣaṣ*. Thus, Jūda gave forty-five examples of topics related by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. While these were statements allegedly made by al-Ḥasan, it is uncertain how many of them were identified by the sources as *qaṣaṣ* statements; see Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 110–5. In fact, I was able to find only one statement made by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī that was identified explicitly as a *qīṣṣa*; see Chapter One, 23.

23 ʿAthamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 54.

wu'āz, they were never identified directly by the Islamic sources as *quṣṣāṣ* or as having given *qaṣaṣ*.²⁴

I restricted the source material to a direct connection to the term *qaṣṣa* and its derivatives in order to deal with some of the more problematic aspects of this material. Among the most cogent are the overlap, and therefore confusion, in terminology. The distinction between a *qāṣṣ* and a *mudhakkir* or a *wā'iz*, as noted above, is not always entirely clear. This is most evident in Ibn al-Jawzī, and this lack of clarity has extended into modern works on the *quṣṣāṣ* due, in part, to the pull of Ibn al-Jawzī. This is also evident in the varied descriptions of certain reports on *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣāṣ*. Indeed, an identical report can be identified as a *ḥadīth*, *wa'z* or *dhikr* in some sources and in another as a *qiṣṣa*—these forms of overlap will be noted throughout the present study. On its surface this overlap indicates that these terms are synonymous. However, the terms cannot have been entirely congruous because only one, *qaṣaṣ*, eventually developed a negative connotation.

Secondly, since my interest lies in the *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam, I have set the chronological parameters of the present study at the end of the Umayyad period. This is not intended to imply that at the end of the Umayyad period there was a discernible change in the nature of *qaṣaṣ*. Indeed, one of the objectives of my research is to clarify the nature of early *qaṣaṣ* in order to lay a foundation for determining why the *quṣṣāṣ* were eventually perceived as mediocre scholars, even charlatans. This transformation, like much in intellectual history, is not necessarily bound by the political movements of the day. However, since I have not yet been able to establish precisely when this transition occurred, though it appears to have bridged the Umayyad and 'Abbāsid periods, I have chosen to limit the project to the Umayyad period. Hopefully, future research will build on this current work and illuminate our understanding of the *quṣṣāṣ* of the post-Umayyad periods and establish a more firm time period for the transformation of their reputations.²⁵ As a result, I have restricted the pool of information to people living and events occurring prior to 132/750. Some

24 It is worth noting that Ibn al-Jawzī includes 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb among the *quṣṣāṣ* and *mudhakkirīn*. He noted, for example, in his introduction that the *quṣṣāṣ* related inauthentic stories of ancient peoples, namely those of ancient Israel. He condemned this by citing a tradition in which the Prophet told 'Umar to avoid such stories; see his *Quṣṣāṣ*, 10. The fact that Ibn al-Jawzī rarely explicitly identifies a man in his list as either a *qāṣṣ* or a *mudhakkir* made it impossible to simply integrate every name into my research as a *qāṣṣ*.

25 For studies on preaching in the medieval period, see Jonathan Berkey *Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle, 2001) and Linda Gale Jones *The power of oratory in the medieval Muslim world* (Cambridge, 2012).

quṣṣāṣ who died after the year 132/750 have been included in the research because they acted as *quṣṣāṣ* prior to 132/750.

This periodization reveals another problem in the material on the *quṣṣāṣ* of the early period. The basic questions surrounding the *quṣṣāṣ* are not solely connected to the meaning of *qaṣaṣ* or to the identification of the role of the *quṣṣāṣ*. In addition to these important matters are a number of salient issues relating to chronology, such as the origins of the *quṣṣāṣ*, the development in their function over time, especially in their affiliations with religio-political movements of the early period. For example, traditions proposing to give the origins of *qaṣaṣ* and those that connect *qaṣaṣ* or specific *quṣṣāṣ* to Umayyad caliphs and administrators purportedly provide insight into historical progressions as well as meaning and identification. This raw material provided the foundation for the exploration of these issues of chronology in the latter portions of the present study.

Lastly, because of the lack of clarity in the precise meaning of the term *qaṣaṣ* as it pertains to early Islam, a direct translation of the term is fundamentally problematic. The term is not reserved only for narratives, as will be demonstrated in Chapter One. As a result, a *qāṣṣ* was not, in the most precise sense, a “storyteller.” In addition, many *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam were considered by the Islamic community to have been reputable scholars and were numbered among the scholarly class, who were later subsumed under the title *‘ulamā’*. Likewise, the *quṣṣāṣ* were not necessarily “popular” preachers, if the intended meaning of “popular” is to be understood as a teacher of frivolous learning interacting essentially with the uneducated masses. Consequently, the *quṣṣāṣ* were, as it appears, simply “preachers.” They taught on a number of religious and even political themes by means of an equally diverse array of styles defying, therefore, easy categorization.

However, the translation of *qāṣṣ* as “preacher” comes with its own problems manifested most clearly in the definitions of cognates of the verb *qaṣṣa*. If a *qāṣṣ* is a “preacher” as opposed to a “storyteller,” then what is a *qiṣṣa* or *qaṣaṣ*? Herein lies the complexity of designations. *Qaṣaṣ*, translatable as “preaching,” refers to the act of conveying some form of instruction from the *qāṣṣ*. The term *qiṣṣa* (pl. *qiṣaṣ*) is more problematic; “story” does not adequately encompass the breadth of the term in the early Islamic period. In addition, while “sermon” is an appropriate rendering under certain circumstances, it seems better reserved for the term *wa‘z*. As a result, a *qiṣṣa*, during the period of time in question, seems to indicate any general piece of instruction given by a *qāṣṣ* when acting as a *qāṣṣ*, as opposed to a particular genre of statement, such as narratives. The term incorporates a number of different types of instruction, including actual stories, verses of poetry, legal rulings, *ḥadīth*, as well as

martial statements given on the field of battle. This representative list of forms of instruction suggests that “to tell stories” is not an adequate translation of *qaṣṣa*, at least when applied to the early period. As a result, I have opted to not translate the various derivatives of the verb *qaṣṣa* so as to preserve the broader meanings of the terms that were active in the early period of Islam.

These three basic criteria yielded an entirely new pool of information on which my present study of the early *quṣṣāṣ* is based. The novelty of this information may be grasped best by comparing it to the only other generally comprehensive list of *quṣṣāṣ* available to us, that of Ibn al-Jawzī.

Ibn al-Jawzī’s list of *quṣṣāṣ* and *mudhakkirūn* includes names from the beginning of Islam until his own time. In general, he arranges his names according to geographical regions of the empire, although his first eighteen names, including the Prophet and seventeen of his Companions (*al-ṣaḥāba*), have no regional affiliations. In all, Ibn al-Jawzī names forty-five men who were *quṣṣāṣ* or *mudhakkirūn* prior to the year 132/750.²⁶

Alternatively, using the criteria listed above, I have identified one hundred and nine people mentioned in the sources as *quṣṣāṣ* in the same time period. This group of *quṣṣāṣ* provided the primary pool of information for the current research. I assembled this pool through a number of means. These included the searchable database *al-Jāmi‘ al-kabīr*, my own reading of a broad array of Islamic sources and secondary literature on the *quṣṣāṣ*.²⁷ The names of these *quṣṣāṣ*, their primary regions of operation and a brief biography of each, focusing primarily on their connections to *qaṣaṣ*, can be found in the Appendix. When this list is compared to that of Ibn al-Jawzī’s, surprisingly, only twenty-seven names, or 25% of the names found in the Appendix, are common to both. Consequently, when Ibn al-Jawzī’s list is matched against the rest of the Islamic sources only sixty percent of his list (27 out of 45 *quṣṣāṣ*) is independently verified from another Islamic source as having been considered among the *quṣṣāṣ*. This appears to indicate that Ibn al-Jawzī either considered the remaining eighteen of the forty-five as *mudhakkirūn* or that his criteria for designating someone as a *qāṣṣ* as opposed to a *mudhakkir* were fluid.²⁸

26 To be sure, Ibn al-Jawzī included a number of other *quṣṣāṣ* who died after 132/750, many of whom were active during the ‘Abbāsīd era and were located in Iraq and the eastern regions of the empire—regions with which the Baghdādī Ibn al-Jawzī would certainly have been more familiar—though these have not been considered in this research.

27 The database *al-Jāmi‘ al-kabīr* is produced by the al-Turāth company; see www.turath.com.

28 It must be noted that my inability to independently confirm all forty-five men named by Ibn al-Jawzī could very well be the result of the limitations of our sources. Certainly many

In addition, the geographical distribution of the *quṣṣāṣ* in both my list and Ibn al-Jawzī's list is noteworthy. In order to compile an accurate geographical distribution from Ibn al-Jawzī's list, I assembled the first eighteen names, which, as I mentioned above, Ibn al-Jawzī did not categorize geographically, according to their regions, contrary to his practice with the rest of the men on the list. I arranged these eighteen names according to their associated regions, placing, for example, the Prophet, Abū Bakr and Tamīm al-Dārī in Medina and al-Aswad b. Sarī in Basra.

The resulting breakdown of the *quṣṣāṣ* according to number and region can be seen in Table 1. This breakdown includes the number of *quṣṣāṣ* in our current list, the number of *quṣṣāṣ* in Ibn al-Jawzī's list and the number of *quṣṣāṣ* common to both lists. The actual names of the men in Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ* as well as the names of the *quṣṣāṣ* common to both my list and his have been provided in footnotes; I have not provided a footnote for the *quṣṣāṣ* in my list since this information is given in the Appendix.

The distributions are noteworthy, especially regarding the significant difference between my list and Ibn al-Jawzī's list in the regions of Syria, Kufa and Egypt. Indeed, Ibn al-Jawzī apparently possessed no information on the *quṣṣāṣ* of Umayyad Egypt since he only mentions one *qāṣṣ* who lived there, Dhū al-Nūn (d. 246/861).²⁹ Consequently, it is not surprising that Goldziher, who depended heavily on Ibn al-Jawzī, was led to believe that the majority of the *quṣṣāṣ* were in the east.³⁰ He, furthermore, noted that there were few *quṣṣāṣ* in Medina, a situation that he attributed to Mālik b. Anas's (d. 179/796) dislike for them.³¹ In fact, my research indicates that Medina during the Umayyad period contained a rather significant number of *quṣṣāṣ*, sixteen to be exact. Ján Pauliny followed Goldziher's assessment by alleging that the *quṣṣāṣ* were not spread evenly across the empire; my current list of *quṣṣāṣ* does not support this position.³²

This new list of one hundred and nine *quṣṣāṣ*, in tandem with the compilation of a number of *qaṣaṣ* texts, has provided an essential pool of information

sources that might have confirmed the others' affiliation to *qaṣaṣ* may be lost. Regardless of this possibility, the fact that Ibn al-Jawzī combines the two terms *qāṣṣ* and *mudhakkir* and fails to distinguish with any precision the difference between the two would suggest that he himself did not demand that those in his list be directly connected to the term *qaṣṣa*.

29 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 85.

30 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 158.

31 Ibid.

32 Ján Pauliny, "Zur Rolle der *Quṣṣāṣ* bei der Entstehung und Überlieferung der populären Prophetenlegenden," *Asian and African Studies* 10 (1974), 126.

TABLE 1 Quṣṣās according to geographic region as compared to Ibn al-Jawzī

	List from the Appendix	Ibn al-Jawzī's List	Names in Common
Medina	16	10 ^a	7 ^b
Mecca	5	3 ^c	2 ^d
Syria	24	8 ^e	6 ^f
Kufa	25	8 ^g	4 ^h
Basra	22	15 ⁱ	7 ^j
Yemen	2	1 ^k	1 ^l
Egypt	11	0	0
Khurasan	4	0	0
Totals	109	45	27

- a They are the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, Abū Hurayra, Tamīm al-Dārī, Muḥammad b. Ka'b, al-Agharr al-Muzanī, Muḥammad b. Munkadir, and Abū Ḥāzim al-A'rāj.
- b They are the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, Abū Hurayra, Tamīm al-Dārī, Muḥammad b. Ka'b and Abū Ḥāzim al-A'rāj.
- c They are Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr and Mujāhid b. Jabr.
- d They are 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr and Mujāhid b. Jabr.
- e They are Ibn Mas'ūd, Mu'adh b. Jabal, Abū Dharr, Abū al-Dardā', Shaddād b. Aws, Ka'b al-Aḥbār, Khālid b. Ma'dān and Bilāl b. Sa'd.
- f They are Ibn Mas'ūd, Mu'adh b. Jabal, Abū Dharr, Abū al-Dardā', Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Bilāl b. Sa'd.
- g They are 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Salmān al-Fārisī, Ḥudhayfa, 'Alqama b. Qays, Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, Sa'īd b. Jubayr, 'Awn b. 'Abd Allāh and 'Umar b. Dharr.
- h They are Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, Sa'īd b. Jubayr, 'Awn b. 'Abd Allāh and 'Umar b. Dharr.
- i They are 'Utba b. Ghazwān, al-Aswad b. Sarī', Ibn 'Abbās, Muṭarrif b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh, Qatāda b. Dī'āma, Thābit al-Bunānī, Abū 'Imrān al-Jawnī, Muḥammad b. Wāsi', Farqad al-Sabakhī, Mālik b. Dīnār, Yazīd al-Raqāshī, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī and Sulaymān al-Taymī.
- j They are al-Aswad b. Sarī', Muṭarrif b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh, Qatāda b. Dī'āma, Thābit al-Bunānī and Yazīd al-Raqāshī.
- k He is Wabb b. Munabbih.
- l He is Wabb b. Munabbih.

to re-examine the *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam. The present book, based on this new group of *quṣṣāṣ*, seeks to reexamine the content, nature, reputations, conduct and political affiliations of the early Islamic *qaṣṣ*. By restricting this research to statements and personalities who were directly connected to the term *qaṣṣa*, I argue that the early Islamic *qāṣṣ* was, for the most part, a reputable religious scholar who made statements on a wide range of topics (Chapter 1), who engaged in a number of religious disciplines (Chapter 2) and who distinguished himself, ideally, by three primary character traits of knowledge (*ilm*), linguistic abilities (*lisān*) and rhetorical skills (*bayān*) (Chapters 3). These factors challenge aspects of the prevailing opinion of the early Islamic *quṣṣāṣ* and help clarify the hitherto murky view of his role in the community. This image accords with some traditions implying that the *quṣṣāṣ* were conformist scholars who trace their origins back to the earliest periods of the community, arriving ultimately at the Prophet himself. This image, however, stands in contrast to a second group of traditions alleging that *qaṣṣa* was a negative innovation (*bid'a*) whose origins can be found in the religio-political divisions of the community at the end of the period of the Rāshidūn caliphs, the *terminus ad quem* for Chapter Four. Undergirding this tension are the issues of precedence in the community and political affiliations—two issues that impact the reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ* as either conformist scholars or innovators. These political associations and the reputations that the *quṣṣāṣ* developed as a result of their affiliations with the governing elite extend throughout the Umayyad period and reveal that the *quṣṣāṣ* found themselves embroiled in the growing political divisions, as both pro- and anti-government supporters (Chapter 5). Indeed, this evolution in function and reputation, as well as the tendency of the scholarly circles to find themselves involved in the political movements of the day, are not specific to the *quṣṣāṣ* and suggest that the early Islamic *quṣṣāṣ* were in essence mainstream scholars and not merely the mediocre charlatans they were often held to be during the medieval period.

Qaṣaṣ: Textual Evidence

The Islamic sources broach the issue of *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣāṣ* in three ways. First, they simply identify a named person as a *qāṣṣ* or as having given *qaṣaṣ*. They will report, for instance, that al-Aswad b. Sarīʿ was the *qāṣṣ* in Basra or that Ibn Masʿūd used to give *qaṣaṣ* (*kāna yaquṣṣu*) every Monday and Thursday.¹ Second, the sources give reports about *qaṣaṣ* and *quṣṣāṣ* identified by the position they occupy rather than by name, such as stating that *qaṣaṣ* was given by the *amūr*, the one appointed by the governmental authorities (*maʿmūr*) or the deceiver (*murāʿ*).² These types of reports are important for determining attitudes towards the *quṣṣāṣ*, although they can also be tendentious. Thirdly, the sources give reports that purportedly preserve actual *qaṣaṣ* statements.

This last category of reports on *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣāṣ* provides information on the content of *qaṣaṣ* and is, therefore, a fundamental source in establishing the nature of *qaṣaṣ*.³ As will be shown below, these *qaṣaṣ* sayings fall under three rubrics: those given in a religious context, those given in a military context and a single religio-political *qiṣṣa* which, in spite of many similarities between it and other *qiṣaṣ*, especially martial *qiṣaṣ*, has specific features and will hence be treated separately. For the purposes of this research, only those statements textually identified as *qaṣaṣ*, will be examined. Therefore, in order for a statement to be considered here as *qaṣaṣ*, in either a religious, a martial or a religio-political context, it has to have been identified in the sources as *qaṣaṣ* and not merely to have been attributed to a *qāṣṣ*. In so doing, I seek to avoid the tendency to consider all statements reportedly said by *quṣṣāṣ* as *qaṣaṣ*-material, for each time a *qāṣṣ* spoke he was not necessarily giving *qaṣaṣ*. The use of this criterion in approaching *qaṣaṣ*-material led to the identification of forty-three *qaṣaṣ* texts: thirty-four religious texts, eight martial texts and one religio-political text.

1 For al-Aswad, see Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar (Cairo, 2001), 9:41. For Ibn Masʿūd, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 33:180.

2 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, eds. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʿūṭ and ʿĀdil Murshid (Beirut, 1999), 2:183. This tradition is found in many variants and will be analyzed in Chapter Four.

3 Heretofore, modern studies have largely overlooked this category of *qaṣaṣ* reports. ʿAthamina even alleged that we do not have examples of the content of the earliest preachers; see his “Qaṣaṣ,” 60.

While these texts have been included because of their direct connection to the verb *qaşsa*, this does not mean that the statements themselves are necessarily authentic to the attributed author. While it is certain that authentication of these statements provides even further clarification on the exact nature of *qaşsa* statements, this requires in-depth analysis of each text and would make the current project unmanageable. Indeed whole articles have been devoted to single *hadith*, sermons or literary texts, and future work on these current texts will prove quite beneficial to our understanding of the transmission of religious knowledge in the early period. For my part, I have accepted the attribution of the statement as a *qişsa* recognizing that this, in itself, reveals the viewpoint of what constitutes a *qişsa* in the mind of the author of the specific source text, if not of the Islamic community in general at the time of the compilation of the source, preserving an even earlier view of the features of *qaşsa*.⁴ Lastly, I have included the Arabic text of most of the *qaşsa* statements; only one long *qişsa* (# 3) and those *qişsa* that included only Qur'anic verses have been left without the Arabic text.

Religious *Qaşsa*

The thirty-four *qaşsa* statements of religious orientation cover a broad spectrum of themes that utilize a number of methods of presentation with the common aim of inspiring faith and piety in the listener. The *quşşās* sought to foster piety by addressing six topics: 1. the complex relationship between divine will and human responsibility (*qadar*); 2. the imminence of death, the final judgment and the afterlife; 3. the lives of earlier prophets who provide an example of faith and piety (exemplars); 4. the practices of the Prophet Muḥammad (*sunna*); 5. legal issues; 6. the general promotion of religious knowledge in the community. This categorization does not imply that the themes are entirely independent. On the contrary, there is certainly a degree of overlap amongst them, exemplified most clearly by the subject of *qadar*, so that some texts discussing God's forgiveness also address the question of one's eternal fate and God's role in determining it. In such cases, my best judgment as to the primary function of the statement guided my classifications.

4 Indeed, the skepticism that is rife towards the sources seems overstated, and thus the need for authenticating each statement is untenable. For an astute critique of this critical approach to the sources, see Aziz al Azmeh, *The Arabs and Islam in Late Antiquity: A Critique of Approaches to Arabic Sources* (Berlin, 2014).

It will become clear, in spite of the variety of categories, that all religious *qaṣaṣ* statements are woven together by a concern for both faith and practice. The texts reveal a definite sense that the *qāṣṣ* is attempting to affect a response in his listener, both to right belief and right behavior. In this regard, the six topics emphasized by the *quṣṣāṣ* extend from exhortations to piety, to be internalized and the texts of which focus, therefore, on the personal spiritual condition of the individual believer, to instruction in Prophetic *ḥadīth* on topics of an essentially legal nature to be applied community-wide. In each case, even in those *qaṣaṣ* texts concentrating on legal matters, devotion to the tenets of the faith and to moral rectitude indeed remain the foremost intents of the *qāṣṣ*.

Divine Will and Human Responsibility (qadar)

In the *qaṣaṣ* sayings of the early *quṣṣāṣ*, we observe the theological tension surrounding the debate on *qadar*. This debate focused on the question of God's predetermination of events as opposed to man's freedom to act according to his own will. Though the term *qadar* means "fate" or "destiny," and therefore should likely have been applied to those who emphasized God's predetermination of events, it in fact came to denote those who underscored man's free will.⁵ The debate over this theological issue is discernible in multiple statements of the *quṣṣāṣ*. In truth, it is not surprising to find the *quṣṣāṣ* engaged in this debate as it was a fundamental theological issue for the early community. Their involvement in the debate indicates undeniably that they were just as invested in the theological questions of the faith as any other group of scholars.

The Basran *qāṣṣ* al-Faḍl b. ʿĪsā al-Raqāshī (d.c. mid-second/eighth century), for example, described God's relationship to man in terms of the creation itself, emphasizing that all of creation is dependent upon its Creator and, by its very nature, obedient to the will of God. In his *qiṣaṣ* (*fī qiṣaṣihi*) he said:

(1) Ask the earth and say, "Who divided your days and planted your trees and harvested your fruit?" If it does not answer you by speech, it has already answered by example.

سَلِ الْأَرْضَ فَقُلْ: مَنْ شَقَّ أَنْهَارَكَ، وَغَرَسَ أَشْجَارَكَ، وَجَنَى ثَمَارَكَ؛ فَإِنْ لَمْ
تُجِبْكَ حِوَارًا، أَجَابَتَكَ اعْتِبَارًا.⁶

5 For an overview of *qadar*, see J. van Ess, "Kadariyya," *El2*, 4:368–372; William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford, 2002), 82–118.

6 Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1968), 1:308.

Al-Faḍl's *qiṣṣa* uses the natural order of creation, unable to express itself audibly, as a testament to mankind of God's supremacy. The natural order simply obeys the command of God, and in so doing it shows the goodness of God's creation. On its surface, the text suggests that al-Faḍl is advocating an anti-*qadarī* position by emphasizing creation's obedience to the sovereignty of God. However, the belief in the initial state of the goodness of God's creation (and the subsequent introduction of evil into the world by mankind and Satan) is a characteristic of what J. van Ess has described as an early "moderate" *qadarī* ideology.⁷ This *qaṣaṣ* statement may incorporate aspects of that ideology. If this is the case, then it is not surprising that such a sentiment emanated from al-Faḍl who himself was known to have held *qadarī* beliefs and to have also been a missionary for the cause.⁸

A similar emphasis on the sovereignty of God in the affairs of His creation was expressed by the early Syrian *qāṣṣ* Rabī'a b. 'Amr al-Jurashī (d. 64/684).⁹

(2) He used to say in his *qiṣaṣ*, "Verily God, most high, has placed the good in relation to you like the lace of his shoe, and has made the evil in relation to him as far as his eye can see."

انه كان يقول في قصصه: ان الله عز وجل جعل الخير من أحدكم كشرائك
نعله وجعل الشر منه مدّ بصره.¹⁰

Here Rabī'a appears to emphasize God's sovereignty by claiming that He brings the good close to mankind and therefore within his sphere of control ("like the lace of his shoe"), despite making evil pervasive ("as far as his eye can see") and hardly within man's control. Thus, even though God is indeed the prime mover in human affairs, He enables the believer to control a measure of the good within the pervasive evil that swirls around him. In this regard, this *qiṣṣa* seems to advocate a position, emphasizing that man's good deeds (*ḥasanāt*) ultimately emanate from God, a belief later associated with *qadarism*.¹¹

The debate surrounding *qadar* was closely tied to the issue of man's accountability for his actions—if God predetermined man's actions, then

7 Van Ess, "Qadariyya," *El2*, 4:369.

8 For al-Faḍl, see the Appendix # 90.

9 For Rabī'a, see the Appendix # 21.

10 Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, ed. Shukr Allāh b. Ni'mat Allāh al-Qawjānī (Damascus, 1980), 1:234.

11 Watt, *Formative*, 94.

what accountability did man have for his behavior? Two *qiṣaṣ* from ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (d. 68/688), the alleged first *qāṣṣ* of Mecca, exemplify this debate by asserting simultaneously God’s sovereign beneficence towards man and man’s responsibility to sincerely recognize the work of God and, therefore, to not behave hypocritically towards Him.¹² In the longest *qaṣaṣ* statement of this early period (3), which happens to also be one of the few narratives told by a *qāṣṣ*, ‘Ubayd related a Prophetic *ḥadīth* recounting the plight of three men of the children of Israel: one leprous, one bald and one blind, whom God wanted to test and thus sent an angel to each of them.¹³ Each was asked by the angel what they desired and each replied that he wanted his condition remedied. After granting them these wishes, along with prosperity in herds of various species, the angel returned to each of them in the form of a man suffering from their previous conditions. The once-leprous and once-bald man both refused to help their poor leprous and bald counterparts. When the beggars/angels exposed these men as having previously suffered from the same defects and as having received their prosperity through the generosity of God, both men denied that to be true and claimed that they received their prosperity from their ancestors. Only the blind man recalled God’s provisions and helped the poor blind man who asked of him charity. To the blind man the angel replied:

Keep your property with you. You all have been tested, and God is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions.

The report suggests that the hypocrisy of man, epitomized by the two Israelites who claimed that their prosperity came as a result of their own efforts, not through divine beneficence, will be judged by God, while the honest recognition of God’s provision, exemplified in the blind man, will be blessed. This theme of man’s hypocrisy surfaced in another of ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr’s *qiṣaṣ* (4) citing a Prophetic tradition analogizing the hypocrite to a sheep roaming between two flocks.

¹² For ‘Ubayd, see the Appendix # 25.

¹³ According to al-‘Uqaylī, ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr used to relate this *qiṣṣa*; see his *al-Ḍu‘afā’ al-kabīr*, ed. ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭī Amin Qal‘ajī (Beirut, 1984), 4:369–370. Other sources identify it only as a *ḥadīth*, see al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* (Beirut, n.d.), 2:85–86; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Bughā (Beirut, 1987) 3:1276; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo, 1956), 4:2275–2276; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūtī (Beirut, 1993), 2:13–16; al-Sahmī, *Tārīkh Jurjān*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘īd Khān (Beirut, 1981), 465–466.

يعفر بن رودي قال: سمعت عبيد بن عمير وهو يقصّ، يقول: قال رسول الله: مثل المنافق كمثل الشاة الرابضة بين الغنمين.¹⁴

The imagery displayed here is that of a person who aimlessly, yet somewhat purposefully, wanders from one thing to another with no definitive commitment to either.

While these *qiṣaṣ* of ‘Ubayd focus specifically on man’s hypocrisy, they affirm the general interest of the *quṣṣāṣ* in explicating man’s responsibility to respond in gratefulness to God’s goodness and in commitment to Him. Likewise, the early Medinan *qāṣṣ* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Amra (d. 37/657) emphasized that as long as man confessed his sin and therefore avoided hypocrisy towards God, God was willing to forgive even in the face of repeated sin. According to al-Ṭabarānī’s *al-Du‘ā’*:

(5) Ishāq b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Ṭalḥa (d. 132/750)¹⁵ said, “There was a *qāṣṣ* in Medina who was named ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Amra. I heard him say, “I heard Abū Hurayra say, “I heard the Messenger of God say, “There was a man who sinned and he said, “O Lord, I have sinned, forgive me.” And his Lord said, “My servant knows that he has a Lord who forgives sin and who holds him to account for it.” So he forgave him. Then the man sinned again and said, “O Lord, I have sinned, forgive me.” And his Lord said, “My servant knows that he has a Lord who forgives sin and who holds him to account for it.” Then he continued to do what God desired until he committed another sin. He said, “O Lord, I have sinned, forgive me.” And his Lord said, “My servant knows that he has a Lord who forgives sin and who holds him to account for it. I have forgiven my servant, so let him do what he desires.”

إسحاق بن عبد الله ابن أبي طلحة، قال: كان قاص بالمدينة يقال له عبد الرحمن بن أبي عمرة فسمعه يقول: سمعت أبا هريرة رضي الله عنه يقول:

14 ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī (Beirut, 1971), 1:435–436; Muslim, *al-Tamyīz*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A‘zamī (Riyadh, 1975), 173. The same tradition is recorded in Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* though with no mention of ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr; see 4:2146.

15 On him, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, eds. Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq and ‘Ādil Murshid (Beirut, 2001), 1:122–123.

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: أن عبداً أذنب فقال يا رب أذنبتُ ذنباً فاغفر لي، فقال ربه عز وجل: علم عبدي أن له رباً يغفر الذنب ويأخذ به فغفر له، ثم أذنب ذنباً آخر فقال: يا رب أذنبتُ ذنباً فاغفر لي، فقال ربه عز وجل: علم عبدي أن له رباً يغفر الذنب ويأخذ به ثم مكث ما شاء الله، ثم أذنب ذنباً آخر فقال: يا رب أذنبتُ ذنباً فاغفر لي، فقال ربه عز وجل: علم عبدي أن له رباً يغفر الذنب ويأخذ به قد غفرتُ لعبدي فليعمل ما شاء.¹⁶

The stipulation for God's forgiveness in this *qiṣṣa* is His confidence in the servant's constant awareness of three truths: his sin, his accountability to God for his sin and God's willingness to forgive His servants.

Man's awareness of God's sovereign right to forgive and judge sin as He so desires undergirds a strong anti-*qadarī* *qiṣṣa* from one of the most celebrated *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period, Bilāl b. Sa'd, known as the "al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī of Syria."¹⁷ Bilāl pronounced woe upon the unwitting unbelievers who live their lives for themselves unaware that they have already been doomed by God to hell-fire. He said in his *qiṣṣa*:

(6) Many a happy person is deceived! Woe to him who is afflicted yet does not sense it. He eats and drinks while it has already been pronounced upon him by the fore-knowledge of God that he is one of the people of hell-fire.

رُبَّ مسرورٍ مغبونٍ، والويل لمن له الويل ولا يشعر، يأكل و يشرب فقد
حق عليه في علم الله أنه من أهل النار.¹⁸

Bilāl related his anti-*qadarī* position precisely because he was accused of being a *Qadarī*—hence refuting this accusation. In this case, God's will and judg-

16 Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Du'ā'*, ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Beirut, 1992), 503. See also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:2113.

17 For Bilāl, see the Appendix # 60.

18 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 10:505.

ment were said to have been pronounced on some men, and these men have no recourse. Furthermore, it is certainly noteworthy that the one *qışsa* attributed to Bilāl, the scholar who possessed the character traits of the ideal *qāşş*, as will be seen in Chapter 3, addresses the issue of *qadar*. In addition, the fact that the sources preserve more *qaşaş* texts dealing with this controversial theological topic than any other issue may shed light on the eventual disparagement of the *quşşās* as a scholarly class. Undoubtedly, engagement in discussions on *qadar* served to divide the scholarly community and thus may have contributed to the progressive degeneration of the reputation of the *quşşās*.

Death, the Final Judgment and the After-life

Exhortations to piety have as their goal right belief and behavior in the here-and-now, and also in the preparations for the hereafter. The *quşşās*, therefore, drew upon themes of an eternal nature in their *qaşaş* by emphasizing the imminence of death, the coming judgment and the eternal abodes. Indeed, the association between *qaşaş* and these themes of eternal consequence has a precedent in the Qurʾān, stating, “O you assembly of *jinn* and mankind! Came there not unto you messengers of your own who recounted unto you My tokens (*yaquşşūna ʿalaykum ayātī*) and warned you of the meeting of this your Day? (Sūrat al-Anʿām [6]:130).” Furthermore, the story of God’s judgment of Pharaoh was recounted in the Qurʾān (*naquşşu ʿalaykum*) as a warning to all who reject the revelation of God (Sūrat Hūd [11]:100). Considering this Qurʾānic precedent, it is of little surprise then that these themes are peppered throughout the sayings of the *quşşās* in the early period.¹⁹

Undergirding any statement about God’s judgment or the hereafter is the subject of death and its imminence. The foreboding prospect of death and the grave were the wells from which the pious, *quşşās* and others, drew inspiration. Abū Bakr, in a *khutba* of his, described death as pursuing mankind.²⁰ ʿAwn b. ʿAbd Allāh, a famous Kufan *qāşş*, lamented, in a statement not strictly *qaşaş*, yet employing the verb *qaşşa*, that death stalked him unrelentingly (*wayhī innahu yaquşşu atharī*).²¹ Death’s persistent pursuit of mankind elicited anxiety in one *qāşş* about his impending judgment. Yazīd b. Abān al-Raqāshī (d. 110–20/728–37),²² a Basran *qāşş* and uncle of the previously mentioned al-Faḍl b. ʿĪsā al-Raqāshī,

19 For references to these themes and their presence in the Qurʾān and in the sayings of the *quşşās*, see Pedersen, “Criticism,” 215; Pauliny, “Quşşās,” 127.

20 Dimitri Frolov, *Classical Arabic Verse: History and Theory of ʿArūd* (Leiden, 2000), 122.

21 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 47:70.

22 For Yazīd, see the Appendix # 63.

(7) said in his *qiṣaṣ* (addressing himself), “Woe to you, O Yazīd! Who is going to reconcile you with your Lord? Who is going to fast for you and pray for you?” Then he said, “O my brothers, those for whom the grave is home and death is appointed, how is it that you do not weep?” And he wept until his eyelashes fell out.

كان يزيد يقول في قصصه: ويحك يا يزيد! من يرضى عنك ربك؟ ومن يصوم لك أو يصلى لك؟ ثم يقول: يا معشر (إخواني) من القبر بيته و الموت موعده ألا تبكون؟ فبكي حتى سقطت أشفار عينيه.²³

For Yazīd, death’s imminence reminded him that he would soon be gone and forgotten. He opines that he will have no one to bring his case before God—“who is going to reconcile you with your Lord?”—nor will he have anyone to fast or pray for him when he is gone. Eventually he will indeed be in the grave and simply a memory, and a fading one at that. He uses this fact to remind himself—suggesting that the audience of the *qāṣṣ* was at times limited to himself—and his “brothers”/listeners that death is also their appointed destiny and that they should weep, as he had, over this prospect.

As we noted above, the imminence of death was a concern of many in early Islam. Van Ess noted that this type of piety, characterized by despondency over the evil among mankind and the inauspiciousness of one’s eventual demise, was also found among early *qadarīs*, especially among the circle of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who was, as a matter of fact, a teacher of Yazīd al-Raḡāshī and, furthermore, allowed Yazīd to teach theology in his sessions.²⁴ This statement accords with that of Yazīd’s nephew al-Faḍl (text number 1) and implies the perpetuation of *qadarī* tendencies among this Basran cluster of *quṣṣāṣ*. In these statements, we have indeed an example of these Basran *quṣṣāṣ*’s theology and a snap-shot of what they emphasized in their *qaṣaṣ* sessions.

Physical death, however, was not always portrayed by the *quṣṣāṣ*, nor by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī himself, as the most disconcerting condition facing mankind, even though the subject of death was still used as a means for encouraging devotion and piety in the temporal world. Thus, while al-Ḥasan’s student Yazīd sought to inspire faith by portraying death as a menacing image to be feared, al-Ḥasan, on at least one occasion, sought to draw his listeners’ attention away

23 Abū Nu’aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut, 1997), 3:59–60. See also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 75.

24 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:308. See also van Ess, “Kadariyya,” *El2*, 4:369.

from physical death and towards a worse form of death, the spiritual type of death characterizing some of the living.²⁵

- (8) He said in his *qişas*, “believe the one who says:
[The dead one is] not the one who dies and finds rest in death.
Rather, the dead one is the dead among the living.”

يقول في قصصه: صدق الذي يقول:

ليس من مات فاستراح بميت إنما الميت ميت الأحياء²⁶

Here, al-Ḥasan depicts physical death as, in fact, a state of rest for which the soul longs. The more ominous form of death is the moral one, characterizing some of the physically alive as spiritually dead. This image carries some similarity to that expressed by Bilāl b. Sa’d in his *qaşas*, mentioned above, bemoaning the condition of those who walk the earth unaware that their fate has already been sealed—the living dead. According to al-Ḥasan this is the worst type of death.

It is clear that the above *qaşas* sayings about death are intended to promote in the listener a greater concern for what lies beyond that veil of death and for the judgment that awaits all mankind. In the only *qişsa* found thus far that has been attributed to the Prophet, he, while allegedly giving *qaşas* from the pulpit of the mosque (*wa-huwa yaquşsu ‘alā-l-minbar*), expounded upon Sūrat al-Raḥmān (55):46 stating:

- (9) For he who fears the time of standing [in judgment] before his Lord there are two gardens.

Even though the only portion of the *qişsa* that has been preserved is the Qur’ānic verse, the theme of the verse as well as the discussion that reportedly ensued indicates that the Prophet was addressing the topic of eternal judgment and paradise. And indeed, the report goes on to say that Abū al-Dardā’, the distinguished Companion of the Prophet, raised the following question to the Prophet: “What about the one who commits adultery or steals, O Messenger of God?” The Prophet responded by reciting the verse again. Twice more Abū

²⁵ For al-Ḥasan, see the Appendix # 66.

²⁶ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:220.

al-Dardā' asked the same question, and twice more the Prophet repeated the verse, adding after the third time, in a rather frustrated state because of Abū al-Dardā's constant rebuttal: "Yes, in spite of Abū al-Dardā's objection (*in raghima anf Abī al-Dardā*)."²⁷ This exchange with the Prophet left such an impact upon Abū al-Dardā that he included the addendum "even if he commits adultery or steals" in his recitation of this verse when he gave *qaṣaṣ* from the Prophet's pulpit.²⁸

Later, the Kufan *qāṣṣ* Kurdūs b. al-'Abbās explained that paradise was only to be obtained by performing good deeds.²⁹ He said in his *qīṣaṣ*:

(10) Paradise is only obtained by virtue of [good] deeds. Combine desire [for God] with fear [of God], persist in doing good deeds and meet God with pure hearts and sincere deeds.

إن الجنة لا تتال إلا بعمل، اخلطوا الرغبة بالرهبة، وداوموا على صالح الأعمال، واتقوا الله بقلوب سليمة وأعمال صادقة.³⁰

27 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 14:311–312, 45:483; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, eds. 'Abd al-Ghaffār Sulaymān al-Bandārī and Sayyid Kisrawī Ḥasan (Beirut, 1991), 6:478; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Cairo, 1954–1968), 27:146–147; al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ (Beirut, 1994), 10:167; al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (Beirut, 1985), 2:734; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* (Beirut, 1981), 4:280. For other variants of this tradition, see Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī (Beirut, 1971), 1:325; Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb al-āthār*, ed. Abū al-Wafā' al-Afghānī (Hyderabad, 1936), 197; Ibn Fuḍayl al-Ḍabbī, *al-Du'ā*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm al-Ba'imī (Riyadh, 1999), 173–174.

28 Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *al-Sunna*, ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (Beirut, 1980), 2:472; Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* (Beirut, 1993), 7:707. Not only did Abū al-Dardā' recite it this way but he apparently influenced others to do likewise. Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 83/702), the son of the famous Companion Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 50s/670s) recited this verse with Abū al-Dardā's addition and when challenged on this recitation he responded by saying, "I heard the Messenger of God recite it like that and I will recite it that way until I die." See Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 7:707. However, according to Mizzī, Muḥammad never met the Prophet; see his *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf (Beirut, 1980–1992), 25:259. This reading persisted until the time of the caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743) when the famous *ḥadīth* scholar Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741–742) claimed that this addendum was only necessary in the absence of any explicit statements against adultery and theft, but that once these requirements (*farā'id*) had been revealed the addendum became moot and should be left off; see Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 7:707.

29 On Kurdūs, see the Appendix # 46.

30 Abū Nu'aym, *Hilya*, 4:199; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, eds. Maḥmūd Fākhūrī and Muḥammad Rawwās Qal'ajī (Beirut, 1979), 3:72.

Kurdūs calls his listeners to “desire” and “fear” God and to approach Him “with pure hearts and sincere deeds.” This pursuit of God was to be combined with the consistent performance of good deeds. Only under these circumstances was paradise to be obtained. As for Kurdūs, he sought to inspire righteous behavior by promoting its eternal benefits. Other *quşşās*, however, revealed an anxiety about eternity that they expressed in *qişaş* on eternal damnation and hell-fire.

Hell-fire was a salient topic for the *quşşās*. Ostensibly from shortly after the time of the Prophet, a *qāşş* in Mecca, who converted to Islam from Christianity, related in a *qişşa* the account of a man who circumambulated the Ka‘ba moaning ([11] *fa-ja‘ala awwah*) about hell-fire. This unnamed Meccan *qāşş* said that when the Companion of the Prophet Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 32/652–3) heard the man moaning he complained to the Prophet who replied simply: “He is a moaner.”³¹ While this particular *qāşş* does not seem to have used hell-fire to terrorize his audience, he certainly intended to convey its ominousness by speaking of one who moaned when thinking of it. Furthermore, the tradition communicates a sense of uncertainty about one’s destiny upon death, similar to the *qişşa* of Yazīd b. Abān.³²

Another *qāşş* expressed the same tension though in a somewhat less dramatic fashion than the above-referenced unidentified *qāşş*. The purported first *qāşş* of Basra, al-Aswad b. Sarī‘ (d.c. 36/656), allegedly stated in his *qaşaş*, expressed in verse:

(12) If you are saved from it [hell-fire] then you are saved from a great disaster

And if not, then I do not consider you to be saved

فإنَّ تَبَّجَ مِنْهَا تَبَّجٌ مِنْ ذِي عَظِيمَةٍ وَإِلَّا فإِنِّي لَا إِخَالِكَ نَاجِيَا³³

While al-Aswad seems to indicate that the prospect of hell-fire was apparently real indeed for the believers, other *qaşaş* statements indicate that hell-fire was the certain final destination for the unbeliever. Against them God will bring

31 The *qāşş* related the account of the man circumambulating the Ka‘ba. Other variants do not specify that the report came from this Meccan *qāşş* although they reveal that the reason for the man’s moaning was that he was thinking about hell-fire (*idhā dhakara al-nār qāla awwāh min al-nār*); see Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 11:50–51.

32 See *qişşa* # 7 above, 22.

33 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:367. On al-Aswad, see the Appendix # 14.

witnesses, including the Prophet, whose testimony will seal their fate, as predicted in *Sūrat al-Nisā'* (4):41, "But how (will it be with them) when We bring of every people a witness, and We bring you (O Muhammad) a witness against these?" It was based on this prospect that the pious scholar 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 73/693),³⁴ while listening to 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr give *qashaṣ* on this verse (13), was brought to tears.³⁵

While the possibility of judgment in hell-fire was a common subject among the pious, including the *qāṣṣ*, one unidentified *qāṣṣ* took his exposition of the horrors of hell-fire further than the distinguished Companion Ibn Mas'ūd condoned. Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have entered a mosque and found there

(14) a *qāṣṣ* engaged in *qashaṣ* during which he recalled hell-fire and the fetters. So he [Ibn Mas'ūd] came and stood over the man and said, "O warner (*mudhakkir*), why do you discourage the people?" Then he quoted [the Qur'ān], "O my servants, who have been prodigal to their own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of God, who forgives all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful (*Sūrat al-Zumar* [39]:53)."

دخل عبد الله بن مسعود المسجد فإذا قاص يقص وهو يذكر النار
والأغلال بجاء حتى قام على رأسه وقال: يا مذكر لم تقنط الناس، ثم
قرأ ﴿قل يا عبادي الذين أسرفوا على أنفسهم لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله﴾³⁶

Ibn Mas'ūd sought to temper the tendency of the *qāṣṣ* to emphasize the terrors of hell-fire by encouraging a proportionate emphasis on God as a giver of mercy and as one "who forgives all sin."³⁷

34 On him, see L. Veccia-Vaglieri, "'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,'" *EL2*, 1:53–54.

35 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 31:126.

36 Al-Tha'labī, *al-Kaṣḥ wa-l-bayān*, ed. 'Abū Muḥammad b. 'Āshūr (Beirut, 2002), 8:242–243; al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-tanzīl fi-l-tafsīr wa-l-ta'wīl (Tafsīr)*, ed. Khālid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Ikk (Beirut, 1986) 4:83. Ṭabarī gives a variant of this tradition in which he identifies the man as a *qāṣṣ* but then describes his saying as *dhikr*. His variant reads, "There was a *qāṣṣ* recalling (*yudhakkir*) hell-fire and the fetters." See Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 24:16. Both variants suggest a close connection between a *qāṣṣ* and a *mudhakkir* as Ibn al-Jawzī affirmed in his work, noted in the introduction.

37 This point is made again in a report from Zayd b. Aslam (d. 136/753), a student of the *qāṣṣ* 'Aṭā' b. Yasār, a man about whom Zayd said, "He used to tell us *qishaṣ* until we would cry, and then he would tell us more beautiful *qishaṣ* until we would laugh." See Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 40:449; Chapter Three, 201. It may be that 'Aṭā's levity in his sessions influenced

The *quşşās* were not only interested in identifying those who would be consigned to either paradise or hell-fire, they also took up the matter of the events surrounding the end of days, the eschaton. In one *qişsa*, the famous Qur'ān interpreter and scholar Qatāda b. Dī'āma expounded on a Prophetic *ḥadīth* about the duration of the world.³⁸ The Prophet said: "When I was sent (with the revelation of God), I and the hour were like these two (meaning his index and middle finger)." In explaining this tradition, Qatāda said

(15) in his *qişaş*, "like the excess of the one over the other."

يقول في قصصه: كفضل احدهما على الأخرى.³⁹

Qatāda thus interpreted the Prophet's words as a comparison between the length of the middle finger to that of the index finger with the first indicating the beginning of Islam, and the second indicating the day of judgment. By so doing, he was emphasizing the brevity of this world and its approaching end after the emergence of Islam.⁴⁰

Nu'aym b. Ḥammād (d. 229/844) in his *Kitāb al-fitan*, an early work on the internecine strife putatively prophesied to arise among the Muslims signaling the arrival of the eschaton, recorded an eschatological *qişsa* told by an unnamed *qāşş* in Medina.⁴¹ In his *qişsa*, this *qāşş* allegedly transmitted a tradition from Anas b. Mālik predicting the signs of the end times:

Zayd for he transmitted a report about a man from the nations of old who was pious, devout and would discourage the people about God's mercy, apparently by speaking too often and ominously of God's judgment. When he died, God consigned him to hell, much to the man's surprise, and told him, "You used to discourage the people about my mercy while on earth, so I will discourage you today about my mercy." See Tha'labī, *Kashf*, 8:243. On Zayd, see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:507; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:658–659.

38 On Qatāda, see the Appendix # 71.

39 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1879–1901), 1:11.

40 Franz Rosenthal noted the meaning attributed to Qatāda but also mentioned an alternate interpretation found in Ibn Ḥajar's *Fath al-bārī* in which the closeness of the two fingers together was the intended meaning. See Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī Volume 1: General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood* (Albany, 1989), 176, n. 76; 177, n. 88. See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (Beirut, n.d.), 14:134–138.

41 Because the *qāşş* is not named by Nu'aym, it is not possible to date the tradition precisely. The text states that this *qāşş* was relating a tradition from his father, who heard it from Anas b. Mālik (d. 91–93/709–711). This would place the *qāşş* close to the first half of the second/eighth century, close enough to our period of interest for inclusion as a text.

(16) “The hour will be close when [precious] metals will appear [from the earth], rain will increase, vegetation will decrease, a man walks with *dirhams* (*bi-l-wuqiyya wa-l-wuqiyyatayn*)⁴² but finds no one to take them in order to become richer. And they [the people] on that day would have been struggling with each other over the goods of their world, because of the appearance of certain signs, so that the rich take refuge with the poor.” He says, “What will I do with this [the money] when it is the last days?” So that a man will have only a piece of bread to his name and will find no one to take it from him. That day, “it will not benefit any soul to believe that had not believed before or had earned through his faith some good (Sūrat al-An‘ām [6]:158).”

من اقتراب الساعة: ظهور المعادن، وكثرة المطر، وقلة النبات، ويمشي الرجل بالوقية والوقيتين لا يجد أحداً يقبله، حتى يستغني كل أحد، وهم يومئذ أشد ما كانوا تنافساً على دنياهم: وذلك لآيات تظهر، فيفرغ الغني إلى الفقير. فيقول: ما أصنع بهذا وهذه الساعة تقوم؟ حتى إن الرجل ليذهب بالرغيف ما يملك غيره، يجول به، فلا يجد من يأخذه، وذلك يوم ❖ لا ينفع نفساً إيمانها لم تكن آمنت من قبل أو كسبت في إيمانها خيراً ❖ (الأنعام: 158)⁴³

According to this *qiṣṣa/hadīth* of Anas b. Mālik, the sign of the end of times will be the proliferation of precious metals along with a complete transmutation in the ordinary processes of life. Rain will increase; instead of vegetation increasing as expected, vegetation will decrease, as if the entire world order is reversed. Likewise, contrary to normal experience, the one who carries money or bread with him will find no one to take it from him so as to add to their

42 The exact value of a *wuqiyya* is unclear since, as Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī noted in his *Tāj al-‘arūs*, the value changed depending on the region (*wa-yakhtalīfu bi-ikhtilāfi iṣṭilāhi al-bilād*). One report valued a *wuqiyya* at the weight of ten and five-sevenths *dirhams* while another listed it at forty *dirhams*; in either case, it was a small amount of money considering that *ṣadaqa* did not have to be paid on anything less than 200 *dirhams*; see Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘arūs*, ed. Ḍāhī ‘Abd al-Bāqī et al. (Kuwait, 1965–2001), *w-q-y* (وقى), 40:231.

43 Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, ed. Samīr b. Amīn al-Zuhayrī (Cairo, 1991), 2:646–647.

own coffers. This will be the case because at that hour the goods of this world will provide no benefit for mankind; man will say, “What will I do with this [money] when it is the last days?” Finally, instead of the rich shunning the poor and living separated from them, they will seek safety and security under their wings. This is, thus, a *qişsa* predicting a toppling of the natural order of life. According to this *qişsa*, the eschaton will alight when the present world turns topsy-turvy. The *qişsa* intends to encourage the establishment of correct priorities, especially faith, as indicated in the use of Sūrat al-An‘ām (6):158, in contrast to the ultimately fruitless pursuit of this world’s goods.

The tyranny and tribulation that will befall the world at the end of times was also connected, in Islamic thought, to the appearance of the Antichrist (*al-dajjāl*) responsible for the multiple trials inflicted on mankind.⁴⁴ In a second *qişsa* attributed to Qatāda b. Di‘āma, he addressed the issue of the Antichrist by relating a formula for warding off the tribulations brought by him. When relating this *qişsa*, Qatāda incorporated a Prophetic *ḥadīth*, transmitted by Abū al-Dardā’, stating:

(17) He who memorizes the first ten verses of Sūrat al-Kahf (18) will be protected from the trials of the Antichrist.

مَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ سُورَةِ الْكَهْفِ، عُصِمَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدَّجَالِ.⁴⁵

In this case, the *qāşş* emphasized that divine protection came from the power of the Qur’ān.

According to some *quşşās*, similar spiritual power was found in repeating other religious and devotional sayings. One unnamed *qāşş* from Jordan at the time of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān claimed that a handful of well-known statements of faith and religious maxims shook “the throne of God and the trees of paradise.” With his listeners’ rapt attention, he related to them the sayings:

(18) There is no god but God alone. He has no partners. Blessings come from His hand and He is able to do all things... God be praised and lauded. There is no power nor strength save in God, the most High, the Great. I seek refuge in God, the Generous, from His painful torments.

44 A. Abel, “al-Dadjdjāl,” *El2*, 2:75–77.

45 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 45:526–528.

ألا أخبركم بكلمٍ يهتزلها عرش الرحمن وشجر الجنة قلنا: بلى، قال: لا إله إلا الله وحده، لا شريك له، بيده الخير، وهو على كل شيء قدير، يهتزلها عرش الرحمن وشجر الجنة، ثم قال في أثر ذلك: سبحان الله وبحمده، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي الكبير، أعوذ بوجه الله الكريم من عذابه الأليم.⁴⁶

An unnamed *qāṣṣ* also encouraged the repetition of *dhikr* phrases, such as (19) “Praise be to God (*sabbiḥū*)” and “There is no god but God (*hallilū*),” ten times each.⁴⁷ These *qīṣaṣ* which focused on the memorization of Qurʾān, the articulation of short religious and devotional statements and the repetition of *dhikr* sayings enhanced piety among the listener by offering to them special access points to greater spiritual strength.

In addition to the above signs of the end of time, the coming of the eschaton will be signaled by trumpet blasts announcing death and resurrection. As we encountered in the introduction, an unidentified *qāṣṣ* in Palmyra expounded on this event by alleging in his *qīṣa*

(20) God has created two trumpets each having two blasts: the blast of death (*ṣaʿaqa*) and the blast of resurrection (*qīyāma*).

أَنَّ الله التعالى خلق صورين له في كل صور نفختان، نفخة الصعق ونفخة القيامة.⁴⁸

The tradition is of interest for the perception that it conveys about the *quṣṣāṣ*, as well as for the content that interested them. While this tradition was certainly recorded in the Islamic sources as an example of the fabrications of the *quṣṣāṣ*, it also confirms the early *qāṣṣ*'s interest in the signs of the eschaton and

46 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 68:128.

47 The text in Arabic reads: *سبحوا عشرا وهللوا عشرا*; see Ibn Waḍḍāh, *al-Bidaʿ*, ed. M. Isabel Fierro (Madrid, 1988), 162–163.

48 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 97–98 (translation taken from Swartz, 177–8); Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr*, 152–154; al-Qārī al-Harawī, *al-Asrār al-marfūʿa*, 57. See also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 156–158; Mez, *Renaissance*, 350–351.

perhaps also their going beyond the usual in describing them—presumably in order to frighten their audiences of them.

Another unidentified *qāṣṣ*, this time from Kufa, expounded the details of the eschaton in his interpretation of the “smoke” (*dukhkhān*) mentioned in *Sūrat al-Dukhkhān* (44):10. The report can be found in many variants throughout the sources. According to a report in Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr*, the Kufan scholar Masrūq b. al-Ajda’ (d. 63/682)⁴⁹ heard a man giving *qaṣaṣ* at the mosque. This *qāṣṣ* said:

(21) “A day when the sky will produce visible smoke (*Sūrat al-Dukhān* [44]:10).” Do you know what that smoke is? That smoke will come on the Day of Resurrection and it will take away the hearing and sight of the hypocrites and will afflict the believers with something like nasal congestion.

مسروق قال دخلنا المسجد فإذا رجل يقص على أصحابه ويقول ﴿يوم تأتي السماء بدخان مبين ﴿ تدرّون ما ذلك الدخان؟ ذلك دخان يأتي يوم القيامة فيأخذ بأسماع المنافقين وأبصارهم ويأخذ المؤمنين منه شبه الزكّام. ⁵⁰

Masrūq informed Ibn Mas’ūd of the *qāṣṣ*’s words, and the Companion responded in anger calling on his listeners to speak only of things that they know. He then informed them of the correct meaning of the smoke: the smoke referred to past events of Quraysh’s rejection of the Prophet and the judgments that came upon them as a result and, thus, it was not a sign of the end of times.⁵¹ Other variants identify the alleged *qāṣṣ* differently. He was either a *qāṣṣ* giving *qaṣaṣ*,⁵² a man relating stories/*ḥadīth* (*rajul^{un} yuḥaddithu*),⁵³ a man interpreting the Qur’ān according to his own opinion (*rajul^{un} yufassiru al-Qur’ān bi-ra’yi-hi*)⁵⁴ or an indignant man saying such things (*rajul^{un} āniḥ^{an}*

49 On Masrūq see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:197–205; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:59–60.

50 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 25:111.

51 Ibid.

52 Abū Khaythama al-Nasā’ī, *Kitāb al-‘ilm*, ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (Beirut, 1983), 19; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:2155; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Aṭwah ‘Awḍ (Cairo, 1975), 5:379; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 25:111.

53 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, eds. ‘Ādil b. Yūsuf al-Ghazzāwī and Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazyadī (Riyadh, 1997), 1:177; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 7:179; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 14:548.

54 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 6:106.

yaqūlu).⁵⁵ The use of these expressions for the description of the activity of the *qāṣṣ* indicates the extent of the overlap between the terms *qaṣṣa*, *ḥaddatha*, *fassara*, and even *qāla*. Furthermore, other variants reveal that a number of reputable Companions, such as ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, and Ibn ‘Umar, concurred with the unnamed *qāṣṣ*’s interpretation of the smoke, in contrast to Ibn Mas‘ūd.⁵⁶ Indeed, Ibn Ḥajar speculated, based on these latter variants, that Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān may have actually been the unnamed *qāṣṣ*.⁵⁷

These *qiṣaṣ* of the coming eschaton and the judgments to be meted out at that time reveal that these topics captured the interest of the *quṣṣāṣ*. From the authoritative pronouncements of the Prophet to the fanciful musings of an unidentified Palmyran *qāṣṣ*, these topics seem to have been ready sources in the repertoire of the *quṣṣāṣ*. Jāḥiẓ, for example, recorded a report that the Basran *ḥadīth* scholar Dāwūd b. Abī Hind (d.c. 140/757)⁵⁸ rebuked al-Faḍl b. ‘Īsā, one of the city’s *quṣṣāṣ*, saying:

If it were not that you interpret the Qur’ān according to your own opinions, we would join your session. [al-Faḍl] said, “Do you think that I am forbidding the permissible and permitting the forbidden?” [Jāḥiẓ noted that al-Faḍl responded this way because] he was reciting the verses which mention heaven and hell, death and resurrection, and similar topics.”

لولا أنك تفسّر القرآن برأيك لأتيناك في مجلسك. قال: فهل تراني أحرّم
حلالاً، أو أحلّ حراماً؟ وإنما كان يتلو الآية التي فيها ذكر الجنة والنار،
والموت والحشر، وأشباه ذلك.⁵⁹

Thus, while this report may not strictly provide textual evidence, it corroborates the *quṣṣāṣ*’s involvement in transmitting reports on these subjects. Yet it

55 ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad ‘Abduh (Beirut, 1999), 3:206; al-Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār (al-Musnad)*, ed. Maḥfūz al-Raḥmān Zayn Allāh (Medina, 2003–2009), 5:339. See also al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad* (Hyderabad, 1903), 38, 143; al-Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī (Karachi, 1963), 63; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:1785, 1791, 1809, 1823–1824; Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ*, 2:421.

56 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 25:112–115. See also ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, 3:206; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, ed. As‘ad Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib (Sidon, n.d), 10:3288.

57 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, 8:572.

58 Abū Bakr Dāwūd b. Abī Hind al-Qushayrī (d.c. 140/757). He was a reputable *ḥadīth* scholar, *muftī* and Qur’ān reciter; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:204–205.

59 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:291.

must be emphasized that interest in these topics was not at all restricted to the *quşşās*. Since these themes are mentioned often in the Qurʾān, it is not unusual to find them represented throughout the literature of the community.⁶⁰

Exemplars—Pre-Islamic Prophets

One method by which the *quşşās* encouraged piety was through framing their *qışaş* around the inspirational sayings or virtuous actions of prophets who, therefore, became exemplars of devotion to God. While it is true that no human was able to fully attain the level of piety attained by a prophet specially-chosen by God, the *quşşās* drew lessons from their lives in order to promote greater sincerity of faith among their listeners.⁶¹ Indeed the efficacy of appealing to prophets as examples of pious belief and behavior can be found in the teaching of the Qurʾān itself, where the messengers of God narrate to their people the signs of God (*yaquşşūn ʿalaykum āyāt*; Sūrat al-Aʿrāf [7]:35), they are upheld as examples to be followed (Sūrat Hūd [11]:120; Sūrat al-Kahf [18]:13; Sūrat Ghāfir [40]:78) and the Prophet Muḥammad is commanded to relate the stories of the people of old (*fʿuqşuş al-qaşaş*) as a warning to those who reject God’s revelations (Sūrat al-Aʿrāf [7]:176).⁶²

Possibly the most significant Qurʾānic passage using the term *qaşaş* in relating the stories of pre-Islamic prophets is the one in Sūrat Yūsuf (12):1–3:

These are verses of the Scripture that make plain. (2) Lo! We have revealed it, a Lecture in Arabic, that you may understand. (3) We narrate unto you (Muḥammad) the best of narratives (*naquşşu ʿalayka aḥsan al-qaşaş*) in that We have inspired in you this Qurʾān, though aforetime you were of the heedless.⁶³

60 These themes can be found throughout the sources, dating from sermons of the Prophet himself. See Tahera Qutbuddin, “*Khuṭba*: The Evolution of Early Arabic Oratorical,” *Classical Arabic Humanities in Their Own Terms*, ed. Beatrice Gruendler (Leiden, 2008), 200; Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Y. Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Albany, NY, 1981); David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, 2002); Nerina Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic Culture* (New York, 2009).

61 This fact is most evident in the role of the *sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad. While no believer could ever completely emulate the life of the Prophet, his practices serve as the model of right belief and behavior for each individual in the community.

62 On *qaşaş* in the Qurʾān, see also Pedersen, “Criticism,” 215.

63 Translation adapted from M.M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qurʾān* (New York, 2003).

This passage suggests that the term *qaṣaṣ*, in its Qurʾānic sense, does not simply refer to sayings about the Qurʾān, the religion or even pre-Islamic prophets, rather that *qaṣaṣ* was, in some broader way, part of the Qurʾān. In particular, the identification here of God's revelation to the Prophet as *qaṣaṣ* is instructive since Sūrat Yūsuf, at the beginning of which these verses occur, is a long narrative passage about a pre-Islamic prophet. Certainly the association of *qaṣaṣ* with this Sūra suggests that *qaṣaṣ* was a term used to describe narratives about earlier prophets who provided a model of faith for the believers. As we have seen above, this image of *qaṣaṣ* seems to have been the dominant image since at least Ibn al-Jawzī, who described the *quṣṣāṣ* as tellers of stories of the earlier prophets.⁶⁴

Precisely how the connection of *qaṣaṣ* of the earlier prophets and the Qurʾān was to be interpreted became an issue for later exegetes of this passage. According to reports attributed to either Ibn ʿAbbās or ʿAmr b. Qays, these verses were revealed in response to a wish of certain Companions of the Prophet, who said to him: "If only you had given *qaṣaṣ* to us (*law qaṣaṣta ʿalaynā*)!"⁶⁵ An expanded variant of this report was transmitted by the scholar and *qāṣṣ* ʿAwn b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 110–120/728–738).⁶⁶ He claimed that the Prophet was asked by a group of his Companions: "Relate something to us (*ḥaddithnā*)!" In response to this request, God revealed Sūrat al-Zumar (39):23 "God revealed the best *ḥadīth* (*Allāh nazzala aḥsan al-ḥadīth*)." ʿAwn then noted that a second group asked the Prophet to "relate to us something above the *ḥadīth* but below the Qurʾān (*ḥaddithnā fawq al-ḥadīth wa-dūn al-Qurʾān*)." ʿAwn glossed this request with the statement: "They meant *al-qaṣaṣ*;" and so God revealed Sūrat Yūsuf (12):1–3. ʿAwn ends the report by asserting: "So, if they wanted *ḥadīth*, he [the Prophet] pointed them to "the best *ḥadīth*," and if they wanted *qaṣaṣ*, he pointed them to "the best *qaṣaṣ*" (*fa-arādū al-ḥadīth fa-dallahum ʿalā aḥsan al-ḥadīth wa-arādū al-qaṣaṣ fa-dallahum ʿalā aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ*)."⁶⁷

64 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 9–10.

65 Al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, ed. Hāshim al-Nadwī (Beirut, n.d.), 6:374; Bazzār, *Musnad*, 3:352; Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī, *al-Muʿjam*, ed. Irshād al-Ḥaqq al-Atharī (Faysalabad, 1986), 139; idem, *al-Musnad*, ed. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad (Damascus, 1984), 2:87; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 12:150; Ṭahāwī, *Sharḥ*, 3:196; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, 7:2100; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 14:92; Thaʿlabī, *Kaṣf*, 5:196, 9:240.

66 On him, see the Appendix # 65.

67 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 12:150. The confluence of these reports about *qaṣaṣ* and *ḥadīth* is epitomized in Ṭabarī's use of the exact same report as the occasion for the revelation (*sabab al-nuzūl*) of both passages. At Sūrat Yūsuf (*Tafsīr*, 12:150), he gives the reports from Ibn ʿAbbās and ʿAmr b. Qays with the Companions saying: "If only you had given *qaṣaṣ* to us

This report is curious for its obvious creation of a hierarchy of expression: the Qurʾān comes first, then *qaşaş*, and finally *ḥadīth*. Of the three forms of expression, the last, *ḥadīth*, seems to be the most opaque. Its use in Sūrat al-Zumar does not help in defining parameters for its meaning since the verses surrounding verse 23 cover many topics, including God as Creator (vv. 4–6, 38), the preferred position of the faithful believer to the unbeliever (vv. 9–12), multiple references to the eternal abodes (vv. 15–19, 24–26, 31–37) and examples of belief and unbelief (v. 27). Thus, while Sūrat Yūsuf, described as *qaşaş*, is clearly a passage about a pre-Islamic exemplar of faith, Sūrat al-Zumar, described as *ḥadīth*, contains multiple themes and is less easily categorized. Furthermore, even if we were to posit that this hierarchy is anachronistic, projecting later technical meanings of these terms back onto the Qurʾān, the order made even less sense, since it alleged that *qaşaş* was above *ḥadīth*—a prospect that would certainly not be readily supported by later generations, and maybe not even by ʿAwn himself, who, even though a *qāṣṣ*, was widely respected as a transmitter of Prophetic *ḥadīth*. ʿAwn’s report, then, remains odd. Exactly what he meant by glossing *qaşaş* “above the *ḥadīth* but below the Qurʾān” is unclear. What seems to be clear, however, is that, at least in ʿAwn’s view, *qaşaş* was an honorable form of expression associated, in this instance, with Qurʾānic narratives about the pre-Islamic prophet Joseph. This same interest in pre-Islamic prophets as models for the believers persisted throughout the Umayyad period as revealed in a number of sayings of the *quṣṣāṣ*.

The Qurʾānic foundation for the retelling of the stories of the prophets can be seen in a *qiṣṣa* of the Meccan *qāṣṣ* ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, who simply recited three verses from Sūrat Maryam (19) recalling the lives of the earlier prophets, although they are not consecutive in the Sūra:

(22) “mention in the book of Abraham that he was a friend and prophet,”
 “and mention in the book of Ismāʿīl,” “and mention in the book of Idrīs.”⁶⁸

In spite of the fact that this *qiṣṣa* was composed purely of Qurʾān, the esteemed Ibn ʿAbbās appears to have taken issue with ʿUbayd and his cursory, or perhaps random, selection of verses. When Ibn ʿAbbās heard the *qiṣṣa*, he encouraged ʿUbayd to expand his praise to each of the prophets. Basing his admonition on Sūrat Ibrāhīm (14):5 stating, “Remind them of the days of God,” he said: “Praise

(*law qaşašta ʿalaynā*)!” While at Sūrat al-Zumar (*Tafsīr*, 23:211) the same report became: “If only you had related to us (*law ḥaddathtanā*)!”.

68 The *qiṣṣa* itself is recorded in Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 5:525. ʿUbayd cited Sūrat Maryam (19):42, 54, 56.

those whom God praises.”⁶⁹ In a variant of the report, Ibn ‘Abbās augmented this rebuke to ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr with an admonition to avoid negative innovations; he said: “Recite the Book of God, O Ibn ‘Umayr! Mention the recollection of God, and woe to you about innovation in the religion of God.”⁷⁰ Indeed, Ibn ‘Abbās’s warning to ‘Ubayd to avoid innovation seems odd since ‘Ubayd allegedly only recited Qur’ān. It may be that Ibn ‘Abbās felt ‘Ubayd was showing a preference for certain prophets, interpreting this as an innovation, and thus he advised him to consider all of the prophets, “Praise those whom God praises.” Furthermore, reports that fail to connect Ibn ‘Abbās’s admonition directly to ‘Ubayd’s reputation as a *qāṣṣ* merit note.

Another *qāṣṣ*, Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Taymī also used Qur’ān in his *qaṣaṣ*, as had ‘Ubayd.⁷¹ Ibrāhīm turned to Qur’ānic passages about his prophetic namesake when he sought to convey the inevitability of trials and obstacles in the life of the believers. He emphasized that although Abraham was tempted to worship idols, he was preserved from doing so. Ibrāhīm said in his *qaṣaṣ*:

(23) Who is safe from affliction after the friend of God Abraham when he said, “Preserve me and my sons from serving idols (Sūrat Ibrāhīm [14]:35)”?

كان إبراهيم التيمي يقص ويقول في قصصه: مَنْ يَأْمَنُ مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ بَعْدَ خَلِيلِ
اللَّهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حِينَ يَقُولُ ﴿ رَبِّ اجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴾.⁷²

For Ibrāhīm and his audience, then, Abraham provided an example of God’s protection of his prophets from idolatry, as well as a reminder of the destructive effects of idol worship—they lead mankind astray, as mentioned in the next portion of the verse.

In a statement addressing similar themes as that of Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, Ibn ‘Abbās told his student Sa‘īd b. Jubayr of God’s protection of Moses in the face of multiple trials. According to Ibn ‘Abbās, Moses’s life revealed how God tries the believer and saves him from troubles in order to make him stronger in his faith, like gold refined by fire.⁷³ This *qiṣṣa* emphasizes the sovereign will of God

69 Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 5:525.

70 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida’*, 176.

71 On Ibrāhīm, see the Appendix # 38.

72 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:228.

73 Baghawī, *Tafsīr*, 3:218. Ṭabarī, when referring to Ibn ‘Abbās’s telling of the story of Moses, described it as a “long story,” using the phrase *ḥadīth^{an} tāwīl^{an}*; see his *Tafsīr*, 16:164. Only

to try the believers while also encouraging them with the prospect that they, too, can withstand these trials as their faith is strengthened, as exemplified in the life of Moses.

In addition to idolatry and various troubles allowed by God, the many attractions of this world damaged believers' faith and drew them away from devotion to God. As a result, the anti-*qadarī* *qāṣṣ* Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī upheld Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā (John the Baptist) as an exemplar who actively avoided the corrupting effects of worldly pleasures.⁷⁴ In his *qiṣṣa*, he asked the crowd:

(24) “Shall I tell you who was the best man in terms of the food [he ate]?” . . . He said, “John was the best man in terms of food. He ate with the wild animals in order not to mix with people in their pursuit of their livelihoods.”

ألا أخبركم مَنْ كان أطيب الناس طعاماً؟ . . . إن يحيى بن زكريا كان أطيب
الناس طعاماً، إنما كان يأكل مع الوحش كراهة أن يخالط الناس في
معاشهم.⁷⁵

According to Abū Idrīs, John's rustic, ascetic lifestyle of isolation from humanity illustrated righteous rejection of the attractions of this world. Thus, while Abū Idrīs suggests that no other human ever attained, or apparently was

in later sources, like Baghawī (d. 516/1122) and Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), is the term *qiṣṣa* associated with Ibn ‘Abbās and the story of Moses. See Baghawī, *Tafsīr*, 3:218; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr fi ‘ilm al-tafsīr* (Beirut, 1983), 5:286. Therefore, as in the case of Ibn Taymiyya's reference to the Prophet's affinity for this *qiṣṣa*, the attribution of the *qiṣṣa* of Moses to Ibn ‘Abbās indirectly substantiates the types of subjects affiliated with *qaṣaṣ* more than providing definitive proof that either the Prophet or Ibn ‘Abbās were *quṣṣās*; see Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-‘Āsimī al-Najdī (Riyadh, 1961–1966). The association of the Prophet with the origins of *qaṣaṣ* will be explored in Chapter Four based on other reports connecting him to it.

74 For Abū Idrīs's anti-*qadarī* tendencies, see van Ess, *TC*, 1:72. On Abū Idrīs, see the Appendix # 31.

75 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fi-l-aḥādīth wa-l-āthār*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Beirut, 1989), 7:74; al-Fasawī, *al-Ma‘rifā wa-l-tārīkh*, ed. Akram Diyā’ al-‘Umarī (Baghdad, 1974–1976), 2:185; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 5:141.

capable of attaining, an equivalent ability to resist the draw of this world as had John (he was, after all, “the best man in terms of food”), he clearly intended to endorse John as an example of pious, if not ascetic, behavior.

Indeed, even the Prophet Muḥammad reportedly found succor in the tales of the lives of the prophets and fulfilled the Qur’ānic command in Sūrat al-A‘rāf (7):176 to relate their stories to others. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) claimed that the Prophet related the “*qiṣṣa*” of Moses and Pharaoh to his Companions in the evening and that the Prophet found personal comfort in the life of Moses on many points. As a result, Ibn Taymiyya stated: “The *qiṣṣa* of Moses and Pharaoh became the greatest *qiṣṣa* in terms of providing an example for the believers and the unbelievers.”⁷⁶ While Ibn Taymiyya may not have been pleased with the *quṣṣās*’ ability to transmit *ḥadīth*, as indicated in his work *Aḥādīth al-quṣṣās* criticizing them for this, he obviously did not object to *qiṣaṣ* in general since some found their roots firmly planted in the Book of God.

While most examples of piety and faith included in the sayings of the *quṣṣās* were drawn from the Qur’ānic prophets, a non-Qur’ānic source was used in one instance as a model of wisdom. In the only example of a caliph relating *qaṣaṣ*, Abū Bakr, the first caliph of the community, gave *qaṣaṣ* purportedly drawing on the proverbial wisdom of the pre-Islamic orator Quss b. Sā‘ida al-Iyādī.⁷⁷ Even though we don’t know which of Quss’s sayings Abū Bakr related, the fact that this famous orator was used as a source for *qaṣaṣ* illustrates the diversity of sources in exemplar-oriented *qaṣaṣ*-sayings.

The stories of the prophets emphasized in the Qur’ān and by the early believers, including the Prophet himself according to Ibn Taymiyya, eventually developed into a separate genre of Islamic literature, the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, whose emergence has often been directly connected to the *quṣṣās*.⁷⁸ This generalization, while true in part, does not account for the many other themes the *quṣṣās* addressed or for the presence of non-*quṣṣās* as transmitters of these stories. Certainly the stories of the earlier prophets, while undoubtedly comprising a portion of the sayings of the *quṣṣās*, were not a domain exclusive to them. As a result, evaluations of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* literature must consider the interest in the prophets by the broader religious community without ascribing too much influence to the *quṣṣās* as its source.

76 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, 12:9.

77 Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, ed. Tharwat ‘Ukāsha (Cairo, 1969), 1:61.

78 This assumption is most clearly expressed by Tilman Nagel who wrote, “They are the result of the imaginative art of story-telling cultivated by the popular narrators (*quṣṣās*), and they are an abundant source for the study of the religious feeling and thinking of the average mediaeval Muslim.” See “*Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*,” *El2*, 4:180.

The Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad

When laying before the community examples for emulation, it is natural that the Islamic *qāṣṣ* found inspiration in the Prophet Muḥammad himself. In some of the texts we've encountered, the *qāṣṣ* used Prophetic *ḥadīth* as part of his *qaṣaṣ*. At other times, the Prophet himself became the example. In one instance, the eminent Companion Abū Hurayra is reported to have recited three verses originally composed by 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa. Abū Hurayra said,

(25) in his *qaṣaṣ*, while he was mentioning the Messenger of God: Verily you have a brother who does not speak indecently; he was referring to 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa [who said]:

We have the Messenger of God who recites His Scripture
At the luminous light of dawn.

He revealed to us the correct path while we were blind, so that our hearts
Are assured that all which he said would transpire.

He passed the night next to his bed (in worship?)
While the unbelievers slept soundly.

وهو يقصُّ في قصصه، وهو يذكر رسول الله: إِنَّ أَخًا لَكُمْ لَا يَقُولُ الرَّفَثَ،

يعني بذلك عبد الله بن رواحة:

وَفِينَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو كِتَابَهُ إِذَا انشَقَّ مَعْرُوفٌ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ سَاطِعٌ

أَرَانَا الْهُدَى بَعْدَ الْعَمَى فَقُلُوبُنَا بِهِ مُوقِنَاتٌ أَنْ مَا قَالَ وَقِيعٌ

يَبِيْتُ يُجَافِي جَنَبَهُ عَنِ فِرَاشِهِ إِذَا اسْتَقَلَّتْ بِالْمُشْرِكِينَ الْمَضَاجِعُ⁷⁹

In this poem within a *qiṣṣa*, the Prophet is portrayed as a source of enlightenment for the believers, for he is the one from whom they received the word of

79 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:387, 5:2278; idem, *al-Tārikh al-kabīr*, 8:212; al-Dāraqutnī, *Sunan*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Hāshim Yamānī al-Madanī (Beirut, 1966), 1:120; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:105. See also Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 25:13.

God, by whom they are rightly guided, in whom they can trust and through whom they find the inspiration to discipline themselves in worshiping God.

However, the clearly pious intent of Abū Hurayra in transmitting these honorable traits of the Prophet must be filtered through the alleged provenance of these verses suggesting that it originated as a rather humorous, if not irreverent, statement given in the midst of a marital squabble between Ibn Rawāḥa and his wife. Ibn Rawāḥa ostensibly composed these verses and pawned them off on his unwitting wife as Qurʾān.⁸⁰ Apparently, the verses were then picked up by others, such as Abū Hurayra, who related them in praise of the Prophet although without any reference to the story purportedly laying behind them.⁸¹ Consequently, we have here a poem that was originally a portion of a story about Ibn Rawāḥa that became a part of a *qiṣṣa* of Abū Hurayra, who used it to extol the virtues of the Prophet. Not only does this progression indicate how stories were reappropriated for other purposes, it further reveals the complexity in determining exactly how the Islamic sources defined a “*qiṣṣa*.”

The ability of the community to trust the guidance and wisdom of the Prophet is expressed in a second *qiṣṣa*, in the form of a *ḥadīth*. It is a rather long tradition recounting the Prophet’s choice between guaranteeing paradise for only a fixed number of his followers, seventy thousand to be exact, or being privy to a divine secret (*khabīra*). The tradition was transmitted as part of a *qiṣṣa* by the *qāṣṣ* Abū Ruhm (26).⁸² It upholds the Prophet as an exemplar because of his wise choice of the latter option, which the Companion Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī later revealed to be entry into paradise for all those who say the *shahāda* in full belief—a decision affording paradise to numbers much greater than seventy thousand.⁸³ By retelling this tradition, the *qāṣṣ* Abū Ruhm extolled the wisdom of the Prophet. And while the individual believer could not replicate the Prophet’s choice, a *qiṣṣa* of this type affirmed the image

80 The account states that Ibn Rawāḥa left his wife at night to have sexual relations with his handmaiden. When his wife awoke in the night, she found him with her, grabbed a knife and set off after him. He, however, claimed that he did not have relations with her and stated that, according to a ruling by the Prophet, he could not recite Qurʾān if he was in a state of impurity, as would be his condition if he had had sexual relations with the handmaiden. When his wife then challenged him to recite, he composed these verses extemporaneously and ostensibly pawned them off on his ignorant wife as Qurʾān. His ruse worked and caused the Prophet to laugh when he heard the story. See al-Dāraqutnī, *Sunan*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Hāshim Yamānī al-Madanī (Beirut, 1966), 1:120; and Ze’ev Maghen, “The Merry Men of Medina,” *Der Islam* 83:2 (2006): 337–338.

81 Note the lack of context in the variants recorded by Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 25:13; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:387, 5:2278; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:105.

82 On Abū Ruhm, see the Appendix # 53.

83 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 38:491.

of the Prophet and, by extension, encouraged in the believer greater trust in him as the prime exemplar for the community. Indeed, reference to the life of the Prophet in the sayings of the *quṣṣāṣ* is noteworthy since the *quṣṣāṣ* are most often associated with stories of pre-Islamic prophets. This and the previous report indicate that traditions concerning the life of the Prophet of Islam also garnered the attention of the *quṣṣāṣ*.

Legal Rulings

The Islamic community upheld the example of the Prophet Muḥammad through a number of ways. In fact, while the stories of the pre-Islamic prophets continued to educate the community about the faith and to promote piety in it, the primary model for the community was certainly the Prophet himself insofar that his words and actions (the *sunna*) became the supreme standard of belief and conduct for the faithful. It is not surprising, then, that the *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam showed an interest in stories about the Prophet and also engaged in the transmission of *qaṣaṣ* expounding upon how his words and actions were to be adopted for reasons of practical piety. The sources preserve a handful of *qaṣaṣ* texts indicating that the *quṣṣāṣ* addressed issues of legal relevance (*fiqh*) in their *qaṣaṣ* by recounting the example of the Prophet. Although the issues dealt with in these statements are related to legal rulings, they remain, nevertheless, issues of piety, since questions related to *fiqh* are ultimately questions of right faith and conduct and, consequently, are still matters of piety.

Sham‘ūn Abū Rayḥāna, a Companion of the Prophet, a *qāṣṣ* in Jerusalem and a fighter on the frontier (*thugūr*), related in a *qiṣṣa* of his a list of ten activities forbidden by the Prophet.⁸⁴ They are,

(27) Filing teeth, tattoos, hair removal, a man sleeping next to another man without wearing his undergarments, a woman sleeping next to another woman without wearing her undergarments, a man putting silk on the hem of his clothes as the Persians do, a man putting [silk] on his shoulders as the Persians do, plunder, riding on tigers, and wearing a ring unless he is in charge.

نهى رسول الله عن عشرة: عن الوشْرِ، والوشْمِ، والتف، وعن مُكامة الرجلِ الرجلِ بغيرِ شعار، ومُكامة المرأة المرأة بغيرِ شعار، وأن يجعل

84 On Sham‘ūn Abū Rayḥāna, see the Appendix # 50.

الرجل في أسفل ثيابه حراراً مثل الأعلام، وأن يجعل على منكبيه مثل الأعلام، وعن النهبي، وركوب الثمور، ولبوس الخاتم إلا لذي سلطان.⁸⁵

This *qiṣṣa* may be the clearest example of the early *quṣṣāṣ*'s interest in issues of practical pious behavior. On the surface, the list looks like a hodge-podge of unrelated prohibitions. However, it may well be a series of responses to questions of practical relevance, some reflecting Abū Rayḥāna's own connection to the *thughūr*; for we know that he lived for a time in the military garrison city of Mayyāfāriqīn, in the region of the upper Tigris.⁸⁶ If the list is viewed as the exposition of a religious teacher and soldier living among other soldiers in a peripheral area on the border of the empire, then some of the more unusual prohibitions may yield to clarification. It is not difficult to imagine, for instance, that soldiers would raise questions on topics such as how to sleep next to one another without sin, how plunder was to be allocated, and the legitimacy of wearing rings when one is not in authority.⁸⁷ Furthermore, references to the dress of the Persians and the riding of tigers may be a product of the location of the *thughūr* and the subsequent exposure of the Muslims to new and unusual cultures. As for the first three items on the list, these are issues of grooming and may simply be here to address common issues of daily living. When looked at from this perspective, the seemingly strange mix of prohibitions may be understandable. However, regardless of the context of the *qiṣṣa*, it still reveals that the *quṣṣāṣ* addressed issues of practical piety in their *qaṣaṣ*.

A second *qiṣṣa*, given by an unknown *qāṣṣ* dealt with a legal question that appears to have also been of particular importance to soldiers. Ibn 'Awf al-A'rābī said:

(28) A sheikh who was giving *qaṣaṣ* to us related to us in a session before the events of Ibn al-Ash'ath (80–3/699–702), saying, "I learned that the Companions of the Prophet were traveling and they came to a stream which had a cadaver on its bank. So they stayed away from it until the

85 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 28:441–442; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1950–1951), 4:48; Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 1:302, 2:299; Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 5:426; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:194–195. See also Jūda, "Qaṣaṣ," 109.

86 See the Appendix # 50.

87 One may argue that this does not explain the ruling on women sleeping next to each other in a military context. It seems possible to me that if the statement about the men was a reply to a question on the topic, then a natural follow up question would be to ask if the same applied to women. This, however, must remain speculation.

Messenger of God came. Then they said, “O Messenger of God, there is a cadaver in it.” He said, “Use it for watering and drinking because the water makes it permissible not forbidden.”

حدثنا في مجلس الأسيخ قبل وقعة ابن الأشعث شيخ فكان يقص علينا
قال: بلغني أن أصحاب رسول الله كانوا في مسير لهم فاتتهوا الى غدير في
ناحية منه جيفة فامسكوا عنه حتى أتاهم رسول الله فقالوا: يا رسول الله
هذه الجيفة في ناحيته فقال: اسقوا واستقوا فإن الماء يحل ولا يحرّم.⁸⁸

That the *qāṣṣ* related the Prophetic tradition prior to the events of Ibn al-Ash'ath seems to indicate that the legal predicament expressed here possessed particular relevance in a military context. The obvious intent of the *qiṣṣa* was to teach that the Prophet allowed drinking water from a stream when a cadaver was in it because the continual flow of the water made the cadaver ritually pure.

Other *qaṣaṣ* addressed issues of legal import as they pertained to subjects related to the ritual pillars of the faith. There may be, for instance, no other more persistent reminder for the Muslim of pious belief and practice than the obligatory daily prayers (*al-ṣalāt*). The importance of the correct performance of those prayers, as well as that of other supererogatory prayers, became a major concern for the community such that references to it are found extensively throughout the Islamic sources, including in *qaṣaṣ* statements. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (29) reportedly gave a *qiṣṣa* discussing the proper implementation of the required daily prayers by noting that he personally witnessed the Prophet having once forgotten to pray the correct number of *rak‘as* in the afternoon prayer (*‘aṣr*): he did two while the required were four. When the Prophet’s attention was drawn to that, he returned and did the remaining two *rak‘as*.⁸⁹ The intent of the *qiṣṣa* may be interpreted in a number of ways, including identifying the correct number of prescribed prostrations in the afternoon prayer. However, there is a strong sense that the *qiṣṣa* is intended to offer the Prophet as an example to the community of not only what to do when one forgets aspects of devotional practices—return and correct the mistake—but also, perhaps, as a consolation to those who also forgot, as the Prophet himself forgot on at least one occasion. Therefore, while the statement is, on its surface, a *qiṣṣa* related to the proper performance of *ṣalāt*, it is equally an illustration of

88 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 1:131.

89 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 2:298.

the pious humility—and humanity—of the Prophet in correcting his mistake and, thus, of his worth as an exemplar.

This overlap in function of the *qaṣaṣ* statements is evident in other sayings of a legal nature. Zayd b. Thābit, for example (30), gave a *qiṣṣa* stating, if a man did not ejaculate during sexual intercourse, he did not have to perform the major ablutions; he only needed to wash himself and perform the standard ablutions (*wuḍūʿ*).⁹⁰

أَنْ زَيْدَ بْنَ ثَابِتٍ كَانَ يَقْصُّ، فَقَالَ فِي قِصِّهِ: إِذَا خَالَطَ الرَّجُلُ الرَّأْسَةَ، فَلَمْ
يُمْنِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ غَسْلٌ فَلْيَغْسِلْ وَجْهَهُ وَلْيَتَوَضَّأْ⁹¹

This statement led to a confrontation between Zayd and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who disagreed with Zayd. Ultimately, after seeking the opinion of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Ḥaḥṣa bt. ‘Umar, the Prophet’s wife, neither of whom were able to provide an answer, the matter was presented to ‘Ā’isha, who stated that the question surrounding major ablution did not center on ejaculation rather on the degree of penetration.⁹²

A second *qiṣṣa*, this time from Abū Ḥurayra, addressed another aspect of sexually-related defilements and how they affect the implementation of religious practices, namely fasting. Abū Ḥurayra said in his *qiṣṣa*:

(31) Anyone who finds himself in a state of major ritual impurity at the time of the dawn prayer, let him not fast.

مَنْ أَدْرَكَهُ الْفَجْرُ جَنْبًا فَلَا صَوْمَ لَهُ.⁹³

Some of Abū Ḥurayra’s listeners disagreed with him, and the issue was brought before ‘Ā’isha and Umm Salama, the wives of the Prophet. They stated that the issue depended upon the reason for the impurity: “When the Prophet used to wake at the dawn prayer in a state of major ritual impurity not because of

90 On Zayd, see the Appendix # 18.

91 Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī b. ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Mosul, 1984), 5:42.

92 She stated that if the circumcised part of the penis penetrates the woman, then the man is obligated to perform a major ablution. The text continues by noting that her answer raised the question of circumcision among the discussants. See Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 5:42.

93 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 4:180; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:779.

nocturnal emissions from a dream, he would fast.” Upon hearing this, Abū Ḥurayra acquiesced and alleged his judgment derived from al-Faḍl b. ‘Abbās (d. 18/639) and not from the Prophet.⁹⁴

Both of these statements reveal that *qaṣaṣ* in early Islam incorporated pronouncements on *fiqh* based on the Prophet’s *sunna*. While these statements certainly intend to foster pious behavior in the believers, they addressed specific legal issues rather than called in general to greater piety based on religious positions about the nature of God, death or the hereafter, for example. It is evident from these two statements, as well as those on the prohibitions, cadavers-in-water, and prayer, that the *quṣṣās* were equally comfortable with incorporating legal rulings in their *qiṣaṣ* as they were with expositions of the hereafter or the stories of the prophets.

Religious Knowledge (‘ilm)

All of the above suggests that the *quṣṣās* of early Islam were genuinely interested in promoting the religious knowledge of the Islamic community from multiple angles. Indeed, the general concern of the *quṣṣās* with the religious education of the community was expressed in a final handful of *qaṣaṣ* statements addressing the issue of religious knowledge (*‘ilm*) and its importance to the community.

One of the most well-known *quṣṣās* of early Islam was certainly Tamīm al-Dārī, with some reports going so far as to make him the first *qāṣṣ* in Islam.⁹⁵ In a *qiṣṣa* attributed to him, while Tamīm emphasized the community’s need for trustworthy examples, he seems to have been particularly concerned with propagating the Prophet’s knowledge in his own time. He asserted that, in the absence of living prophets, the guidance of the faithful fell to the scholars and that destruction threatened the community when a scholar lapsed into error. In one of his *qiṣaṣ* he stated: (32) “Beware of the errors of the learned man (اتقوا زلّة العالم)

94 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:779–780. On al-Faḍl b. ‘Abbās, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:392.

95 These reports will be analyzed in Chapter Four. On Tamīm, see the Appendix # 16.

96 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 32–33 (translation taken from Swartz, 117). See also Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 1:508; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Madkhal ilā al-sunan al-kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Ḍiyā’ al-Raḥman al-A’zamī (Kuwait, 1983), 445; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmi’ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa-ādāb al-sāmi’*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān (Riyadh, 1982), 1:211; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:81. The same phrase has been attributed to at least three other people: the Prophet (Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Kāmil fī du’afā’ al-rijāl*, [Beirut, 1984], 6:60; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā [Mecca, 1994], 10:211; Ibn al-Qaysarānī, *Dhakhīrat al-ḥuffāz*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Faryawā’ī [Riyadh, 1996], 1:231); Ibn Mas‘ūd (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 65:340); and Ibrāhīm al-Nakha’ī (Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, eds. ‘Abd

Ibn ‘Abbās, two influential leaders of the community, were attending his session. When the two distinguished Companions asked Tamīm what he meant by his comment, he explained: “The learned man commits sins before the people and the people imitate him in this. The learned man might, perhaps, repent of an evil, but the people will go on imitating his sin.”⁹⁷ In this *qiṣṣa*, Tamīm conveys the idea that the scholar was a living exemplar; it was his responsibility to teach the people correctly and also, perhaps more importantly, to be a model of right faith and conduct for the community.

Even here, according to another *qiṣṣa*, while the community was in danger, it was not necessarily because of the failures of its scholars, rather on account of the steady loss of its scholars as a result of death. Ibn Mas‘ūd warned his audience of this danger in a proclamation/*qiṣṣa* that he gave in Damascus on a Thursday, his regular day for giving *qaṣaṣ*. He said:

(33) Oh people, you must gain knowledge before it is taken away, for it is being taken as those who possess it pass on! So beware of innovation and of excessive speculation into meanings, but rather keep the long-standing traditions, for there will come at the end of this *umma* groups who will allege that they are calling others to the Book of God, when in fact they have forsaken it (lit. “threw it behind their backs” [*wa qad nabadhūhu warā’ zuhūrihim*]).

يا أيها الناس عليكم بالعلم قبل أن يُرفع، فإنّ من رفعه أن يُقبض
أصحابه، وإتاكم والتبدع والتنتطح، وعليكم بالعتيق، فإنه سيكون في آخر
هذه الأمة أقوامٌ يزعمون أنهم يدعون إلى كتاب الله، وقد نبذوه وراء
ظهورهم.⁹⁸

Ibn Mas‘ūd offered a solution to this problem: the people themselves should “gain [correct] knowledge” (*ayyuhā al-nās ‘alaykum bi-l-‘ilm*), one that does not include innovations and speculative interpretations of religious issues yet that maintains the tried and true traditions of the faith. He allegedly conveyed the same conviction in another Thursday statement (*qaṣaṣ*?) in Damascus:

al-Ḥamīd Madkūr and ‘Amir al-Najjār [Cairo, 2005–2007], 4:310; al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* [Beirut, 1982], 2:183).

97 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 32–33 (translation taken from Swartz, 117).

98 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:52.

“Learn, for knowledge is beneficial (*ta'allamū fa'l-'ilm yanfa'u*).”⁹⁹ In a third pronouncement, whose attribution to Ibn Mas'ūd and identification as a *qişsa* is uncertain, Ibn Mas'ūd expounded broadly on the beliefs and practices of the faith using a series of more than seventy aphorisms.¹⁰⁰

If, indeed, the *quşşās* were interested in promoting the religious knowledge of the community, then it came as little surprise that the Kufan *qāşş* Kurdūs highlighted the benefits of the *qaşaş* sessions:

(34) He used to give *qaşaş* and say, “A man from the people who fought at Badr related to me that the Prophet said, “Sitting in this session (meaning that of *qaşaş*) is preferable to me than freeing four slaves.”

كان يقص فقال: حدثني رجلٌ من أهل بدرٍ، عن النبي قال: لأنَّ أُجِلِسَ
في هذا المجلس، أحبَّ إليَّ من أعتقَ أربعَ رقبات. ¹⁰¹

Arguably, this *qişsa* was merely an attempt at professional self-validation, whereby a *qāşş* extols the virtues of his type of gatherings.¹⁰²

The above thirty-four *qaşaş* statements are quite tame and a far cry from what has normally been associated with the *quşşās* by reputation. In fact, in spite of the diverse array of themes represented in these statements, from those

99 Ibid.

100 Variations of the statement can be found throughout the sources. A shorter version, containing approximately thirty-three proverbs, was attributed to the Prophet by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī; see his *al-Başā'ir wa-l-dhakā'ir*, ed. Wadād al-Qāḍī (Beirut, 1988), 7:10–12. Al-Mas'ūdī claimed that the sayings should be attributed to the Prophet, arguing that these aphorisms are repeated often and the speakers rarely know that they originated with the Prophet; see his *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. Charles Pellat (Beirut, 1965) 3:35. Other variants of the statement have been attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd and are often identified as a *khuṭba* or even as simply “a saying (*qāla 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd*).” See Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 2:56–57; Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Bida'*, 172; al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo, 1997), 147; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 1:188; al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durar*, ed. Khālid 'Abd al-Ghanī Maḥfūz (Beirut, 2004), 2:49; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:179–180. In only one variant is the pronouncement identified as a *qişsa*; see Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:180. However, even here, the precise identification of the statement is uncertain since Ibn Mas'ūd is said to have either given *qaşaş* or given an oration (*kāna yakhtubunā*). For a discussion of the attribution of the statement to both the Prophet and Ibn Mas'ūd, see the comments of Qaḍī in her edition of Tawḥīdī's *Başā'ir*, 7:10; 9:246–248.

101 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, 2:417.

102 The relevance of this tradition to the question of *qaşaş* at the time of the Prophet will be explored in Chapter Four.

on *qadar* to legal pronouncements, the message of some of these *qiṣaṣ* is rather unclear. While this analysis has shown that the term *qaṣṣa* was applied to a number of topics, precisely what the term indicates is still elusive. It may be helpful to note, in this regard, that virtually every statement presented above is only a portion of what seems to have been a larger statement or teaching session. Indeed, only one statement, that *qiṣṣa* about the three men of the children of Israel (# 3), may be complete, although even this is not entirely certain.

The sources often indicate that these statements were delivered in a broader context by mentioning that the saying came “in” the *qiṣṣa* of the speaker. This is most obvious in a *qiṣṣa* attributed to Abū Hurayra introduced by the following statement: “in his *qaṣaṣ*, while he was mentioning the Messenger of God.”¹⁰³ The portion of the *qaṣaṣ* statement preserved by the sources is, therefore, a sub-set of the *qiṣṣa*, if not a second sub-set: *qiṣṣa* -> “mentioning the Messenger of God” -> poetic verse about the Prophet. The sources only preserve the last statement—the verse.

Clearly this makes any definitive statements about the precise meaning of *qaṣṣa* difficult. At this juncture, a *qiṣṣa* was taken in multiple directions—this, in itself, however, is not surprising. What appears to be unusual, though, is the extent of its applicability; it led to statements about the nature of God, incorporated examples of the Prophet Muḥammad and other prophets, yielded legal judgments, as well as other functions. Indeed, it suggests that the term *qaṣaṣ* is not to be defined simply on content; other factors seem to be at play when distinguishing it from other disciplines and functions.¹⁰⁴ This breadth of association is, in fact, reflected in the types of religious associations *quṣṣāṣ* held throughout the Umayyad period to be addressed in Chapter Two.

The above evaluation also sheds light on the sources that the *quṣṣāṣ* used for their *qaṣaṣ*. The majority of the *qaṣaṣ* sayings, 17 of the 34, were original statements of the *quṣṣāṣ*.¹⁰⁵ These *qiṣaṣ* reveal that the *quṣṣāṣ* were not averse to giving their own opinions, even on matters of legal import, such as the *qiṣaṣ*-legal rulings of Zayd b. Thābit and Abū Hurayra; in these instances, only when the correctness of their opinion was challenged did they seek out assistance in establishing the *sunna* of the Prophet.¹⁰⁶ The second most common source was the *sunna* of the Prophet, with eleven sayings based on a Prophetic *ḥadīth*

103 See above, 39.

104 One criterion for distinguishing between different sessions may be the way *qaṣaṣ* sessions were conducted. See Chapter Three.

105 These are numbers 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32 and 33.

106 These are numbers 30 and 31.

or on the practice of the Prophet.¹⁰⁷ Five sayings of the *quşşās* were essentially expositions—selections and interpretations—of the Qurʾān.¹⁰⁸ And finally, one *qaşaş* statement comes from a saying of the Companion Anas b. Mālik.¹⁰⁹ These statistics indicate that while the teaching of the *quşşās* was often a product of their own musings, they also relied on other authoritative sources.

Martial *Qaşaş*

In addition to the thirty-four distinctly religious *qaşaş* sayings presented above, the Islamic sources have preserved eight *qaşaş* sayings ostensibly delivered in military contexts. Since as early as the research of Goldziher, modern scholars have been aware that *quşşās* were used in military expeditions and have noted that their intent was to encourage the warriors to fight on fearlessly and valiantly.¹¹⁰ Thus, Goldziher, and others after him, saw in these *quşşās* an Islamic-period expression of the pre-Islamic tribal warrior-poet who eulogized the merits of his own tribe while maligning the reputation of the opposing tribe.¹¹¹ While aspects of this phenomenon are certainly relevant to the *quşşās*, it must be noted that, for the purposes of this research, the sources preserve a large number of battlefield exhortations; hitherto, only eight such statements have been connected directly to *qaşaş*. This does not mean that the *qāşş* did not display characteristics similar to the pre-Islamic warrior-poet, for certainly he did; however, one must beware of making the connections between the poets and the *quşşās* too rigid.

107 These are numbers 3, 4, 5, 11, 15, 17, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 34.

108 These are numbers 9, 13, 21, 22 and 23.

109 This is number 16. One could add to this the *qaşaş* of Abū Bakr based on Quss b. Sāʿida although we have no specific example of the caliph's use of the sayings of the legendary orator.

110 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 152–153; Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 231–232; ʿAthamina, “*Qaşaş*,” 57–58.

111 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 152; Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 232; T. Fahd, “*Shāʿir*,” *EL2*, 9:226–227. It should be noted that the reciters of poetry in the battlefields prior to Islam as well as during the Islamic period were often tribal leaders and renowned warriors in their own right. Certainly the image of the pre-Islamic legendary warrior-poet ʿAntara is applicable here; see R. Blachère, “*ʿAntara*,” *EL2*, 1:521–522; B. Heller, “*Sīrat ʿAntara*,” *EL2*, 1:518–521. However, examples can also be found in the Islamic period; see Naşr b. Muzāhim, *Waqʿat Şiffīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), 484, 547; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Namarī (Beirut, 1998), 2:30.

Furthermore, the identification of the following texts as martial texts does not imply that they were devoid of religious themes, since the martial *quṣṣās* relied heavily on those themes in their exhortations. In fact, some of the following *qāṣaṣ* statements expanded their emphasis into explications of religio-political ideologies, revealing an even broader spectrum for subject material. Conversely, other martial *qāṣaṣ* sayings narrowed their focus to deal only with military strategy. It is evident, therefore, that *qāṣaṣ*, even in a martial context, was a medium applicable to a number of needs in the community.

The Conquest of Syria

The sources for the conquest of Syria tell of five men who engaged in martial *qāṣaṣ*: Saʿīd b. Zayd, Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ, Muʿādh b. Jabal, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ and Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb. As the names indicate, these men were Companions of the Prophet and major figures in the early Islamic community. According to both al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* and al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, they were all military leaders who, by their *qīṣaṣ*, sought to exhort their soldiers to bravery in battle. In this regard, they played dual roles, first as military leaders, and second as morale officers. Even though the sources identify five martial *quṣṣās* in the conquest of Syria, only four *qāṣaṣ* sayings have been preserved. For the fifth, Azdī states that Saʿīd b. Zayd, who died in the conquest of Damascus, purportedly in the year 15/636, led the right flank of the Muslims' army; when the Byzantines attacked he "called out in supplication to God and gave *qāṣaṣ* to them (i.e., the soldiers), (*yadʿū Allāh wa-yaquṣṣu ʿalayhim*)."¹¹² While the content of this particular *qīṣṣa* is not given, the association of *yaquṣṣu* and supplication to God suggests that the phenomenon was, at least in part, religious in nature, in spite of the military environment of its delivery.

The merging of religious and martial themes only hinted at in the previous text was expressed overtly in other martial *qāṣaṣ* sayings. In a later battle at Fiḥl, Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 18/639), one of the ten leading Companions to whom paradise was allegedly promised (*al-ʿashara al-mubashshara*), delivered a *qīṣṣa* to his soldiers.¹¹³ Azdī recorded:

112 Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, eds. ʿIṣām Muṣṭafa ʿUqla and Yūsuf Aḥmad Banī Yāsīn (Irbid, 2005), 181. For an excellent historiographical analysis of al-Azdī's *Futūḥ*, see Lawrence Conrad, "Al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests in Bilād al-Shām: Some Historiographical Observations," in *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām during the Early Islamic Period up to 40 A.H./640 A.D.*, ed. Muḥammad Adnan Bakhit (Amman, 1987), 1:28–62. For Saʿīd b. Zayd, see the Appendix # 4.

113 For Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ, see the Appendix # 5.

(1) He rode and surveyed the lines from front to back and stopped at each tribal flag and gave *qaṣaṣ* to the people and incited them, saying, “Servants of God, you are deserving of the victory from God through patience, for “God is with the patient” (Sūrat al-Baqara [2]:153). Servants of God, I bring you good tidings: he among you who is killed will have died as a martyr and he who survives does so in victory and booty. But prepare yourselves for battle, for being pierced by lances, struck by swords, hit by arrows, and seized upon by the enemy; for one only knows what God has prepared for him by obedience to Him, by patience while in loathsome situations, and by petitioning [God] for his good favor. You will never attain these except through God[’s help].”

وركب أبو عبيدة بن الجراح، واستعرض الصف من أوله إلى آخره، يقف على كل راية وكل قبيلة يقص على الناس ويمرّضهم، و يقول: عباد الله، استوجبوا من الله النصر بالصبر، ﴿فإن الله مع الصابرين﴾ عباد الله، أنا أبشركم، مَنْ قُتِلَ مِنْكُمْ بالشهادة، وَمَنْ بَقِيَ مِنْكُمْ بالنصر والغنيمة، ولكن وطنوا أنفسكم على القتال، والطعن بالرماح، والضرب بالسيوف، والرمي بالنبل، ومعاينة الأقران، فإنه والله ما يدرك ما عند الله إلاّ بطاعته، والصبر في المواطن المكروهة والتماس رضوانه، ولن تبلغوا ذلك إلاّ بالله. ¹¹⁴

This text connects *qaṣaṣ* directly to inciting the soldiers. Here, Abū ‘Ubayda instructed the soldiers in both religious and military matters as to how to fight the coming battle; and, for the most part, the two areas of emphasis are intertwined throughout the text. First, certain features of the *qiṣṣa* emphasize a religious line of argumentation. Abū ‘Ubayda, for example, affirmed the rectitude of the soldiers’ cause by twice noting their privileged relationship to God by identifying them as “servants of God.” He also insisted that they must patiently trust in God, even in the midst of “loathsome situations,” doing so by virtue of

114 Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 221–222. See also Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 2:148. Al-Kalāṭī recorded a variant of Abū ‘Ubayda’s *qiṣṣa*; see his *al-Iktifā*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī (Beirut, 1997), 3:203.

a Qur'ānic passage, Sūrat al-Baqara (2):153. Moreover, he encouraged them to pray to God for His blessings and His assistance.¹¹⁵

Abū 'Ubayda's *qiṣṣa*, while steeped in religious terminology, remains, however, a statement primarily intended to bolster the martial awareness of the soldiers. The most obvious example of this aim is his description of the potential horrors of battle awaiting his soldiers: "But prepare yourselves for battle, for being pierced by lances, struck by swords, hit by arrows, and seized upon by the enemy." He compounded this foreboding description with an exposition of the uncertainties of battle couched in religious terminology. He informed his soldiers that no one can know exactly what was going to happen in the coming battle and that the only way to find out was to commit oneself to it by obedience, by patience, and by invocation: "For one only knows what God has prepared for him by obedience to Him, by patience while in loathsome situations, and by petitioning [God] for his good favor."

This stark image could make the knees of even the strongest soldier quiver, and so Abū 'Ubayda surrounded this explication of the harsh reality of battle with words of encouragement: "Servants of God, I bring you good tidings." In the beginning, he told them that they will either die as martyrs (i.e., the death of those who are in the right) or they will survive the day victoriously and enjoy booty from the battle: "He among you who is killed will have died as a martyr and he who survives does so in victory and booty." In the end, he assured them of the help of God: "you will never attain these [meaning God's good favors] except through God[*'s* help]." Even the multiple references to the need for patience ("you are deserving of the victory from God through patience, for God is with the patient . . . by patience while in loathsome situations"), though they are presented as religious arguments, reveal a military commander's concern for his soldiers' ability to persevere and to remain level-headed in battle. Abū 'Ubayda appears to have been an effective orator for his soldiers were "energized to meet their foes, dashing towards them (*wa-l-muslimūn nushshāt ilā liqā' 'aduwwihim surrā' ilayhim*)."¹¹⁶

A martial *qaṣaṣ* statement attributed to Mu'ādh b. Jabal, the eminent Companion of the Prophet, also joins together religious and martial themes.¹¹⁷

115 The use of religious themes in a martial context can be found in other works, such as Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, as will be seen below, but it is particularly evident in Azdī's *Futūḥ* which, as Lawrence Conrad, has noted, is keen on portraying the conquest as a divine plan. Thus, as Conrad has phrased it, Azdī's presentation of the conquest of Syria, "while certainly a triumph of arms, should primarily be seen as an expression of the divine will and plan of God at work in the domain of human affairs;" see his "al-Azdī," 39–40, 46–47.

116 Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 222.

117 For Mu'ādh, see the Appendix # 6.

Mu‘ādh allegedly delivered this *qiṣṣa* before the soldiers at the battle of al-Yarmūk. He said:

(2) O reciters of the Qur‘ān, memorizers of the Book, defenders of the true religion, protectors of the truth! Verily God’s mercy, by God, cannot be obtained nor can His paradise be entered by simply wishing it so (*bi-l-amānī*). Nor does He grant forgiveness and great mercy except to the faithful who believe in what God has promised them. Did you not hear the saying of God, “God has promised those of you who believe and do good work that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others) (Sūrat al-Nūr (24):55)?” You, God willing, are the victorious ones “And obey God and His Messenger, and dispute not one with another lest you falter and your strength depart from you; but be steadfast! Lo! God is with the steadfast (Sūrat al-Anfāl (8):46).” Be ashamed before your Lord who sees you fleeing from your enemies though you are in His grasp and have His mercy. There is neither sanctuary for you nor refuge other than with Him. Nor can one be strengthened by anyone other than God.

يا قراء القرآن ومستحفظي الكتاب وأنصار الهدى وأولياء الحق،
 إن رحمة الله لا تُتال، وجنته لا تُدخل بالأمانى ولا يؤتي الله المغفرة
 والرحمة الواسعة إلا للصادقين المصدقين بما وعدهم الله عز وجل،
 ألم تسمعوا لقول الله عز وجل: ﴿ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمَلُوا
 الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ﴾ أأنتم،
 إن شاء الله، منصورون ﴿ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَسَارَعُوا فَنَفْسَلُوا وَتَذَهَبَ
 رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴾ واستحيوا من ربكم أن يراكم فراراً من
 عدوكم، وأنتم في قبضته ورحمته، وليس لأحد منكم ملجأ ولا ملتجأ من
 دونه، ولا متعزز بغير الله.¹¹⁸

118 Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 323–324; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 2:148–149; Kalā‘ī, *Iktifā’*, 3:263. For a parallel verse to Sūrat al-Nūr (24):55, see Sūrat al-Mā‘ida (5):9.

In similar fashion to Abū ‘Ubayda, who called his soldiers “servants of God,” Mu‘ādh identified his soldiers as “reciters of the Qur’ān (*yā qurrā’ al-Qur’ān*), memorizers of the Book, defenders of the true religion, protectors of the truth,” apparently with the intent of fostering in them feelings of honor, in addition to faith. These are appellations of piety, and these types of religious sentiments can be found throughout the statement. The dominant theme of the *qiṣṣa* centers on the relationship between faith and works and is presented in three stages: the principle, the Qur’ānic defense of the principle and the application of the principle. Although this subject matter is presented in religious terminology, it, like Abū ‘Ubayda’s saying above, contains a very definite martial objective.

First, the principle of the *qiṣṣa* is that the blessings of God can only be obtained through faith followed by actions. His mercy and paradise, for example, cannot be obtained by simply wishing for them; and the wishing described here is not simply hoping that one will eventually merit entry into paradise; in fact, it is indicative of those who lack belief, and even of Satan himself.¹¹⁹ Thus, God’s forgiveness and mercy are reserved for the faithful who believe his promises. Secondly, the *qiṣṣa* supports the principle with two Qur’ānic verses.¹²⁰ The first verse, a citation of Sūrat al-Nūr (24):55, emphasizes that God will grant the honor of succeeding the current powers of the earth only to those who believe and do good works; the Byzantines, who once enjoyed the favor of God and were therefore allowed to rule, have lost that favor, and the Muslims have

119 The Qur’ān uses *al-amānī*, and its derivatives, to describe the actions of Satan in stirring up “desires” against God (Sūrat al-Nisā’ [4]:119–123, Sūrat al-Ḥajj [22]:52–53), the Jews and Christians who wrongly believe they will enter heaven—they are merely wishing, or desiring, this to be true (Sūrat al-Baqara [2]:78,111)—and the wishful thinking of the hypocrites (Sūrat al-Ḥadīd [57]:14).

120 In only five speeches delivered during the conquest of Syria and recorded by Azdī is the Qur’ān used, and two of these are referred to as *qiṣaṣ*: that of Abū ‘Ubayda above and this statement by Mu‘ādh. For the other examples, see Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 230, 337, 342. According to this source, the Qur’ān was cited in letters exchanged between leaders of the Islamic forces such as from caliphs to generals or vice-versa (139, 144, 259, 281–283). While these letters were not directed expressly to the soldiery, they could have been read publicly and have acted as a form of encouragement to the armies. Also, the Qur’ān was used apologetically in meetings with the Byzantines (206–207, 296–297), in prayers (316), and the sermon of ‘Umar at al-Jābiya (363). For other uses, see *Futūḥ*, 85, 373, 382. As Conrad has shown, there are a host of Qur’ānic expressions throughout the work that are not cited as direct quotations; see his “al-Azdī,” 47–48.

been raised to take over the mantle of earthly authority.¹²¹ The second Qur'ānic citation combines the need for obedience to God with a call for communal unity (“dispute not with one another”)—clearly an important factor for a military force. Thirdly, the principle is applied to a martial context by discouraging desertion in battle: “Be ashamed before your Lord who sees you fleeing from your enemies though you are in His grasp and have His mercy.” Since the intent of desertion is to seek refuge from the battle, Mu‘adh declared that the only sanctuary, refuge or strength that soldiers found was with God, and, in this instance, that meant on the battlefield.

The previous two *qaşaş* statements reveal a definite merging of religious and martial themes with the objective of inciting the soldiers to valiant conduct in battle. The military focus of each has been distinct, although the terminology and the approach in emphasizing the martial objective relied heavily on religious phraseology and imagery. This is not the case in a third *qaşaş* saying allegedly delivered during the conquest of Syria. Azdī attributed it to the famous general and future conqueror of Egypt ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ and, aside from reference to God in an oath, contains no religious sentiments whatsoever. It was purportedly given at al-Yarmūk when the general passed among his soldiers and began to admonish them (*ya‘īzuhum*), *yaquşsu ‘alayhim* and to stir them up (*yuḥarriḍuhum*), saying:

(3) Lower your glances and kneel on your knees, point the arrows and maintain your posts and your battle lines. When your enemy attacks you, wait for them until they fasten the tips of their spearheads, then pounce in their faces as would a lion. And by the One Who is pleased with truth and rewards it, and detests lying and punishes it, and recompenses with beneficence, I have been informed that the Muslims will conquer it (the land), village by village, and palace by palace. So do not fear their troops or their numbers: if you fight them forcefully, they will be frightened like the chicks of the partridge.

أيها الناس، غضوا أبصاركم، واجثوا على الركب، و اشرعوا الرماح، والزمو
مراكزكم و مصافكم، فإذا حمل عليكم عدوكم فامهلوهم حتى إذا ركبوا
أطراف الأسنة فثبوا في وجوههم و ثوب الأسد، فوالذي يرضى الصدق و

121 Historiographically, this *qişsa* corroborates Conrad's assessment of Azdī's objective by arguing that the Byzantines' time was simply finished; God was now doing something new through the Muslims. See Conrad, “al-Azdī,” 39–40, 46–47.

يثيب عليه، يمقت الكذب و يعاقب عليه، ويجزى بالإحسان، لقد بلغني
 أن المسلمين سيفتحونها كَفْرًا كَفْرًا، وقصرًا قصرًا، فلا يهولنكم جمعهم
 ولا عددهم، فإنكم لو صدقتموهم الشدة لقد اندعروا اندعار أولاد
 الحجل.¹²²

This *qiṣṣa* is unique among the martial *qiṣaṣ* because it is predominantly a lesson in military strategy and not simply encouragement of the soldiers' martial spirit.¹²³ From the beginning of the statement, 'Amr drew attention to his soldiers' posture before the approaching enemy. He tells them to lower their heads (lit. their glances, *abṣarakum*) and kneel, then to raise their spears and hold fast their battle lines. He then encourages them to be patient and to attack only after the enemy fastens the tips of their spears—most likely a reference to their closeness.

Then 'Amr, swearing an oath to his honesty ("by the One Who is pleased with truth and rewards it, and detests lying and punishes it"), declares to his soldiers that he knows that they will be victorious: "I have been informed that the Muslims will conquer it (i.e. the land), village by village, and palace by palace." It is unclear from the text precisely how 'Amr came upon this information, though, as Conrad has shown, the belief that Syria and the Byzantines will fall (soon) to the Muslims was widespread and is attested in several *ḥadīths* of the Prophet; this sentiment is alluded to in a report in Azdī's *Futūḥ*.¹²⁴ Thus, 'Amr, allegedly basing himself either on a common conviction possibly rooted in Prophetic *ḥadīth*, or on a personal conviction, told his soldiers that, even if they encounter numbers greater than theirs, their valiant fighting will result in victory, and the enemy will scatter before them like small chicks.

The latter portion of the *qiṣṣa* is important for its complete lack of religious terminology. Unlike previous *qaṣaṣ* sayings, this one does not encourage greater dependence on God, nor does it imply that assistance and victory come by His hand. Even 'Amr's saying, that he was certain of their ultimate victory, lacks any direct association with religion. Thus, while 'Amr's statement may express a sentiment derived from a Prophetic *ḥadīth*, it is thoroughly veiled in

122 Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 324.

123 There is a similarity here with the *khuṭba* which Qutbuḍḍīn noted can also contain military instructions; see her "Khuṭba," 207.

124 Conrad, "al-Azdī," 44. Whether the conviction that the Muslims would be victorious is to be connected to 'Amr or that this belief has been projected back into his *qiṣṣa* by a later source is unclear.

this pronouncement. The *qışsa*, then, portrays ‘Amr as a general confident of victory based on tactics, on his own sense about the outcome and on the fierce fighting of his soldiers more than on the intervention of God.¹²⁵ Thus, while the *qışsa* is not lacking in religious terminology (i.e., the oath by God), it is entirely devoid of religious arguments.

A final example of *qaşas* during the conquest of Syria comes in a statement allegedly delivered at al-Yarmūk by Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb, the once-notorious Qurashī opponent of the Muslims who, after accepting Islam at the time of the submission of Mecca to the Muslims, became a fighter in defense of the faith.¹²⁶ This *qaşas* statement was recorded by Ṭabarī, unlike the previous martial *qaşas* sayings, which are all cited in Azdī’s *Futūḥ al-Shām*. However, Azdī does record a battlefield speech by Abū Sufyān at al-Yarmūk, although he describes the Companion’s actions as “stirring the people up (*yuḥarriḍu al-nās*), inciting them (*yaḥuḍḍuhum*) and admonishing them (*ya’izuhum*),” then recording a statement differing entirely from the *qaşas* saying attributed to him by Ṭabarī.¹²⁷ It seems apparent, however, that the various terms used for encouraging soldiers in warfare are largely synonymous, in like fashion to the similarities between *qaşsa* and other terms, such as *dhikr* and *ḥadīth*, as was noted above.

Ṭabarī’s account of the battle of al-Yarmūk informs us that at that time Abū al-Dardā’ was the judge and Abū Sufyān was the *qāşş*.¹²⁸ Shortly thereafter, he records:

(4) Abū Sufyān went about, stopping at the squadrons to say, “God, God! You are the defenders of the Arabs and the supporters of Islam. They are the defenders of the Romans and the supporters of polytheism. O God, this is a day from among your days. O God, send down your help to your worshippers.”

وكان أبو سفيان يسير فيقف على الكراديس، فيقول: الله الله! إنكم زادة العرب، وأنصار الإسلام، وإنهم زادة الروم وأنصار الشرك! اللهم إن هذا يومٌ من أيامك؛ اللهم أنزلْ نصرَك على عبادك!¹²⁹

125 This is not to imply that ‘Amr was not a man of religious conviction, for he apparently was; see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 22:78–85.

126 On Abū Sufyān, see the Appendix # 7.

127 Compare Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 325 to Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2095.

128 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2095.

129 Ibid. Translation taken from Khalid Yahya Blankinship; see his *The History of al-Ṭabarī XI: The Challenge to the Empires* (Albany, 1993), 11:94.

Abū Sufyān's *qiṣṣa* was expressed as a *du'ā'*, though with the clear intention that his supplication to God be used as a source of motivation for battle. He expresses an essential disparity between his soldiers and those of the Byzantines; the former are Arabs and Muslims, the latter Romans and polytheists. As a result, the Muslim armies can rest assured that they are on the right side and will rule the day. Furthermore, he pleads to God to intercede on behalf of those who worship Him. His emphasis on the rectitude of their cause and on God's ability to support them in their fight is quite similar to the other martial sayings ostensibly given during the conquest of Syria.

This particular *qiṣṣa* of Abū Sufyān has drawn the attention of modern scholars about the role of the *quṣṣāṣ* on the battlefield. Johannes Pedersen deduced from it that, beginning with the conquest of Syria, the *qāṣṣ* was "an official orator in the field to rouse the warriors."¹³⁰ The above examples of martial *qaṣaṣ* do not support this, however. They do not indicate that the *qāṣṣ* was an "official" position on the battlefield at that time—a point that 'Athamina correctly raised in his review of Pedersen. Yet in the process of righting this overstatement, 'Athamina may have swung too far in the opposite direction by asserting that Abū Sufyān, whom he notes was once a staunch opponent of the Prophet, did not act at all as a *qāṣṣ* and that this report is an example of a later attempt to redeem the reputation of the father of the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'āwiya.¹³¹ As we have seen above, Abū Sufyān's *qiṣṣa* on the battlefield is not that dissimilar to the *qiṣaṣ* of other military leaders during the conquest of Syria, and thus, its ascription to him is not beyond reason.

Moreover, both Azdī and Ṭabarī report that this type of exhortation was part of the morale effort put in place by the Byzantines, with Azdī using the term *qaṣṣa* to characterize such exhortations. Ṭabarī, on the other hand, says that "the priests, deacons and monks urged them (i.e. the Byzantine fighters) on and bewailed to them [the fate of] Christianity."¹³² Azdī records that Mu'ādh b.

130 Pedersen, "Islamic Preacher," 232.

131 In addition to arguing that this account is a pro-Umayyad fabrication to redeem the image of Mu'āwiya's father, 'Athamina rejected this tradition alleging that "from an objective standpoint, a man like Abū Sufyān could not perform such a role [as a *qāṣṣ*], since its minimal requirements included proficiency in the religious material and semblance of religious piety—both of which he lacked." See his "Qaṣaṣ," 57. Yet the requirements to which 'Athamina refers should not be applied to the Abū Sufyān tradition. First, these requirements were taken from a much later source on *qaṣaṣ*, the relatively unknown 8th/14th-century source, Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's (d. 729/1329) *Ma'ālim al-qurbā fi aḥkām al-ḥisba*. Furthermore, Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's work does not address the martial aspect of *qaṣaṣ* and therefore does not account for its varied expressions.

132 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2091.

Jabal himself heard the speeches of encouragement from Byzantine religious men; presumably a translator informed him that

the Byzantines incited [their soldiers] and challenged [the Muslims], and the bishops and monks delivered *qışaş* (*qaşşat*) to them. And they approached the Muslims. When Mu‘ādh b. Jabal heard that from them he said, “O God, shake their feet and strike fear into their hearts; send down your majesty (*al-sakīna*)¹³³ upon us; put within us the word of fear [of You]; make us love the meeting [in the hereafter]; and make us satisfied with [Your] judgment.”

إن الروم تحاضوا وتداعوا، وقصت عليهم الأساقفة والرهبان، وقد دنوا من المسلمين، فإذا سمع معاذ ذلك منهم قال: اللهم زلزل أقدامهم، وارعب قلوبهم، وأنزل علينا السكينة، والزمننا كلمة التقوى، وحبب إلينا اللقاء، ورضنا بالقضاء.¹³⁴

These texts show Muslim historians applied the term *qaşaş* to exhortations given on the battlefield, even those given by the Byzantines. Although no actual statement made by the Byzantine *quşşāş* has been preserved in the Islamic sources, it is evident that their *qaşaş* was comprised of religious themes. First, Ṭabarī states that the Byzantine religious men appealed to their soldiery based on the prospect that the fate of Christianity hung in the balance. Secondly, the Byzantine *quşşāş* were identified in both Azdī and Ṭabarī as men of religion; “bishops and monks” in Azdī and “priests, deacons and monks” in Ṭabarī. In contrast, while the *quşşāş* on the Muslim side may have been men revered for their piety and respected for their knowledge of the faith, as was certainly true of men like Abū ‘Ubayda, Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, all of whom were paragons of the faith, they were, during the conquests, not merely military men, indeed, military leaders. To be sure, this distinction between the Byzantine and Muslim *quşşāş* is not unusual. Even if the professional class of religious men in Islam was not less defined than that of Christianity by principle, it was less

133 For the Qur’ānic foundation of the calling upon the *sakīna* of God, the presence of God as in the Jewish *shakīna*, for aid in battle, see T. Fahd, “Sakīna,” *EL* 2, 7:888.

134 Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 328. See also Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 2:151 where he uses the verb *dhakkarat* in the place of *qaşşat*. ‘Athamina was aware that the sources described the actions of the Byzantine religious men as *qaşaş* but dismissed its relevance; see his “Qaşaş,” 57–58.

defined at this time, in light of the fact that these events occurred at an early stage in the evolution of the Muslim community.

In spite of these distinctions, it is noteworthy that the Muslim historians applied the term *qaṣṣa* to the sayings of the Byzantine religious men. Therefore, while some *qaṣaṣ* were comprised of purely non-religious statements (as indicated by the words of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ), Muslim historians (among them, Azdī) considered them religious phenomena and, therefore, chose the term to describe statements by Byzantine men of religion in battle.

Yazīd b. Shajara al-Rahāwī (d. 58/677)

Aside from the *qaṣaṣ* statement attributed to ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (which we argued is a statement of military tactics), each of the preceding *qaṣaṣ* sayings have indicated that religious ideology and terminology were often used in martial *qaṣaṣ*. Apparently, the use of religious themes, delivered by men who were both warriors and pious believers, in martial contexts was not uncommon, for both the Muslims and the Byzantines engaged in this practice. The conjoining of religious and martial themes, therefore, may at times make distinctions between the type of pronouncement difficult, if not unnecessary. Such seems to be the case with a martial *qiṣṣa* attributed to Yazīd b. Shajara al-Rahāwī (d. 58/677).¹³⁵

Yazīd b. Shajara was a military man with close ties to the Umayyad governor of Syria and later caliph, Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, dating back at least to the battle of Ṣiffīn (37/657).¹³⁶ In the year 39/659, Mu‘āwiya selected him to lead the pilgrimage where he came in conflict with Qutham b. ‘Abbās al-Hāshimī (d. 57/677), ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib’s cousin and the governor of Mecca, regarding leadership of pilgrimage rituals; a compromise was struck and Shayba b. ‘Uthmān led the prayers.¹³⁷ He continued to serve Mu‘āwiya as a military commander leading his forces, usually as a naval commander, against Constantinople,

135 On Yazīd, see the Appendix # 20.

136 Mas‘ūdī records a story about Yazīd and Mu‘āwiya in which Yazīd models how people should listen to and pay deference to their rulers. According to the account, Mu‘āwiya and Yazīd were walking together when Yazīd was struck in the head with a rock and began to bleed. He, however, never flinched and maintained undivided attention on the conversation with the caliph; see his *Murūj*, 4:112–113. Balādhurī recorded that Yazīd participated on Mu‘āwiya’s side at Ṣiffīn and identified him as a fervent supporter of ‘Uthmān (*kāna ‘Uthmāniyyan*); see his *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. Maḥmūd Firdaws al-‘Aẓm (Damascus, 1996), 2:332.

137 Khalifa b. Khayyāt, *Tārīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī (Beirut, 1977), 198; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-‘Aẓm, 2:332–334; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:3448; Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, 2:209. On Qutham b. ‘Abbās, see C.E. Bosworth, “Qutham b. ‘Abbās,” *EL*2, 5:551.

where he died while on a campaign in the year 58/677.¹³⁸ In the course of his career, he ostensibly made statements preserved in a number of sources, one identified as a *qişşa* before his soldiers. It occurs in the *Sunan* of Sa‘īd b. Manşūr, recorded within the following report:

(5) Yazīd b. Shajara used to give *qaşaş* and his deeds confirmed his words and he used to say, “Swords are the keys to paradise.” And he used to say, “When the two sides met in the path of God and the prayer was held, the heavenly maidens descended and appeared. If the man was advancing they [the heavenly maidens] say, “O God strengthen him, God give him victory, God help him.” If he was fleeing, they veil themselves from him and say, “God forgive him.” And if he is killed, all of his sins are forgiven at the shedding of the first drop of his blood. Then two virgins will come to him and wipe the dirt from his face and say, “Your time has come.” And he will say, “Your time has come.”

كان يقص، وكان يصدق قوله فعله، وكان يقول: السيوف مفاتيح الجنة، وكان يقول: إذا التقى الصفان في سبيل الله، وأقيمت الصلاة نزلن الحور العين فاطلن، فإذا اقبل الرجل قلن “اللهم ثبته، اللهم أنصره اللهم أعنه، فإذا أدبر احتجبن منه قلن “اللهم اغفر له، وإذا قُتِلَ غفر له بأول قطرة تخرج من دمه كل ذنب له، وتنزل عليه ثنتان من الحور العين تمسحان عن وجهه الغبار تقولان “قد أنى لك،” و يقول “قد أنى لكما.”¹³⁹

This statement was, without doubt, delivered in a martial context. A number of phrases in it confirm this: the reference to swords as the keys to paradise, the description of two rows (of soldiers) meeting “in the path of God,” the juxtaposition of “advancing” and “fleeing” and the promise to the slain that their spilled blood will bring them forgiveness. These four themes were used by

138 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:449; Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Akram Diyā’ al-‘Umarī (Riyadh, 1982), 75, 148; idem, *Tārīkh*, 223, 225; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-ṣaghīr*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid (Cairo, 1977), 1:120; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 448; al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, (Beirut, 1960), 2:240; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:86, 173, 181.

139 Sa‘īd b. Manşūr, *Sunan*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī (Dabihl, 1967), 2:219.

Yazīd to spur his soldiers to fight; their swords were the keys to paradise, they must advance and not retreat and their shed blood would yield forgiveness.

In addition, much of the statement focuses on the prospect of heavenly maidens awaiting the slain. First, and apparently in an effort to spur in the soldiers an attitude of honor and chivalry, he told his soldiers that they were being watched by these maidens. If the soldiers faced the enemy and advanced against them, the maidens were prepared to intercede for them before God for victory. If the soldiers turned their backs and fled, the maidens would plead to God that they be forgiven. In effect, these maidens conjure in the modern mind a type of cheerleader; and while this specific classification is certainly one out of its time, the image depicted by Yazīd is timeless. The valiant receive the encouragement of the heavenly maidens; the cowardly, however, disappoint the maidens causing them to plead for their forgiveness. Yazīd, thus, implores them in one variant to “not disappoint the heavenly maidens (*lā tukhzū al-ḥūr al-ʿīn*).”¹⁴⁰ Secondly, two heavenly maidens will care for each man slain in battle, wiping the dirt from his face. They then announce to the slain that his time to enter paradise has arrived, and the slain warrior responds with a sexual allusion saying: “Your time has come.” Thus, Yazīd inspired his soldiers by warning them of the detriments of dishonorable performance in battle and by enticing them with the benefits of valor.

This *qaṣaṣ* text is important for its contribution to our understanding of the themes found in martial *qaṣaṣ* and in demonstrating how the scholarly community imbibed these texts. The report itself can be found extensively throughout the sources, though not always in its complete form. Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), in the section of his *Muṣannaf* “on the coming of the *quṣṣās*, their sessions and their deeds,” recorded only a variant of the initial portion of the Yazīd report given above: “He used to *yaquṣṣu* and his deeds agreed with his words (*wa-kāna yuwāfiqū fi’luhu qawlahu*).”¹⁴¹ The impression given by this short statement is simply that Yazīd was an honest, unhyprocritical *qāṣṣ*; there is no indication that this description applied to a military man. Yet, Ibn Abī Shayba was aware of the expanded report and recorded a variant of it in his section on *jihād*, albeit without the statement that Yazīd was a *qāṣṣ* whose actions confirmed his deeds.¹⁴² Moreover, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī

140 Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Jihād* (Tunis, 1972), 38; idem, *Zuhd*, 43.

141 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290. He recorded the variant in a later section using the verb *yusaddiqu* in place of *yuwāfiqū*; see 7:161.

142 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 4:207. It is worth noting that there was also a Prophetic tradition which was quite similar to this report and, thus, raises the question of its prov-

(d. 211/827) also recorded the *qışsa* in his section on *jihād* with this description about Yazīd though he claimed he was giving an oration (*wa-kāna yakḥṭubunā wa-yaqūlu*).¹⁴³ Similarly, an even earlier compiler, Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), recorded the report in a longer form than that found in Ibn Abī Shayba, in two of his works, his *Kitāb al-jihād* and his *Kitāb al-zuhd*, both also contain a variation on the assertion that Yazīd was an honest man: “And he would cry and would confirm with his crying his deeds (*fa-yabkī wa-kāna yuṣaddiqu bakā’ahu bi-fi’lihi*).¹⁴⁴

The above citations of the report indicate that the *qışsa* was perceived as both a pronouncement on *jihād* and on *zuhd*.¹⁴⁵ It therefore suggests that the two subjects were not considered to be mutually exclusive. Indeed, the use of pietistic themes in martial pronouncements was quite common; we have already encountered examples of this above and will see more below. As a result, while this is a martial *qışsa* in the literal sense, its application to the community extended much further beyond its military content. Yet, it must be noted that while the statement itself may have bridged categories, Yazīd was known almost exclusively as a military man, to the extent that, even though his *qışsa* was recorded in *zuhd* works, he himself is not mentioned in works of *taṣawwuf* or compendiums on ascetics, such as Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s

enance; see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 4:204; idem, *Musnad*, 2:13; Ibn al-Sarī, *al-Zuhd*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Faryawā’ī (Kuwait, 1985), 1:122; ‘Abd b. Ḥumayd, *al-Muntakhab min musnad*, eds. Ṣubḥī al-Badrī al-Sāmarrā’ī and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Khalīl al-Ṣa’īdī (Cairo, 1988), 163; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *al-Āḥād wa-l-mathānī*, ed. Bāsim Fayṣal Aḥmad al-Jawābira (Riyadh, 1991), 5:114.

143 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 5:256. His description of the *qışsa* as an oration reveals the flexibility in the sources in classifying statements such as these; in addition to describing the statement as a *qışsa*, the sources also classify the statement as “reminding [*yudhak-kir*]” (Ibn al-Mubārak, *Jihād*, 38; idem, *Zuhd*, 43); as a *khuṭba* (‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 5:256; Ibn Sallām, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu’īd Khān (Hyderabad, 1964–1966), 4:358; Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-kabīr*, 22:246; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 65:230–232); or simply as a “saying [*qāla* or *yaqūlu*]” (Sa’īd b. Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 2:258; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 4:204, 207; Ibn al-Sarī, *Zuhd*, 1:122–123).

144 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Jihād*, 38; idem, *Zuhd*, 43.

145 It can be found in other works of these types, such as Ibn al-Sarī, *Zuhd*, 1:122–3; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *al-Jihād*, ed. Musā’id b. Sulaymān al-Rāshid al-Ḥumayd (Medina, 1989), 2:528, as well as in works of other genres, such as Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-kabīr*, 22:246–247; al-Azhārī, *Tahdhīb al-lughā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Awaḍ Mur’ib (Beirut, 2001), 7:204; al-Ḥākīm al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut, 1990), 3:564; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 65:230–232.

Qūt al-qulūb, Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfahānī’s *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’* or Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*.

Sulaymān b. Ṣurad and the Rebellion of the Tawwābūn (65/685)

Just as *qaṣaṣ* was a tool in the battles against non-Muslim forces, it also was utilized in the military conflicts that arose as a result of the growing internal strife within the Muslim community. The first recorded example of its use in this context, transmitted by Ṭabarī, is that of the pro-‘Alid rebellion of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad al-Khuzā‘ī (d. 65/685) in Iraq in 65/685. His movement in Kufa, called that of the *Tawwābūn* (“penitents”), for their repentance for having failed to aid al-Ḥusayn, developed into a fighting force of approximately 3000 defeated by a significantly larger Umayyad force under the leadership of ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād at ‘Ayn al-Warda, located in al-Jazīra along the modern border of Syria and Turkey.¹⁴⁶ In his rebel army, Sulaymān made use of three *quṣṣās*: Rifā‘a b. Shaddād al-Bajalī, Ṣukhayr b. Ḥudhayfa al-Muzanī and Abū al-Juwayriya al-‘Abdī.¹⁴⁷ Of these three men, the sources provide the least amount of information on Abū al-Juwayriya, informing us only that he was injured on the second day of the battle and remained thereafter with the supplies. His connection to *qaṣaṣ* is unclear. Rifā‘a, on the other hand, is the most well-known of the three *quṣṣās*. Ṭabarī records information on him spanning the years before and after Sulaymān’s rebellion; all we know of his involvement in *qaṣaṣ* is that he incited the soldiers on the right flank of Sulaymān’s army; we have no example, for instance, of his *qaṣaṣ* sayings. Of the three *quṣṣās*, Ṣukhayr b. Ḥudhayfa is the only one for whom a *qaṣaṣ* saying has been recorded. He allegedly made rounds all night among the soldiers saying:

(6) Rejoice, servants of God, in His generosity and pleasure! All that is required from someone who is kept from meeting those he loves, entering paradise, and obtaining rest from the ties to this world, by separation from this base self that incites to evil, is that he should be content to separate from it [i.e., the self] and be joyful at meeting his Lord.

146 For information on the event, see E. Kohlberg, “Sulaymān b. Ṣurad,” *EL2*, 9:826–827; F.M. Denny, “Tawwābūn,” *EL2*, 10:398; E. Honigsmann, “Ra’s al-Ayn,” *EL2*, 8:433–435.

147 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:559. See also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 152. Also see the Appendix: Sukhayr # 22; Rifā‘a # 23; and Abū Juwayriya # 24.

أبشروا عباد الله بكرامة الله ورضوانه فحق والله لمن ليس بينه وبين لقاء
الأحبة ودخول الجنة والراحة من إبرام الدنيا وأذاها إلا فراق هذه
النفس الأمارة بالسوء أن يكون بفراقها سخيًّا، وبلقاء ربه مسرورًا.¹⁴⁸

Şukhayr prepared his warriors for battle by expressing the eternal benefits accompanying death, such as reuniting with loved ones, entering paradise, and finding rest from this world toward which his baser soul is constantly pulled. His emphasis, therefore, was not on the fearful aspects of the coming battle, rather on the overall heavenly blessings that await the believer. Şukhayr's *qişsa* differs from other martial *qaşaş* sayings by its lack of clearly discernible military emphases, in spite of its martial setting. Indeed, if not for the context, this *qişsa* might have been included among the religious texts addressing the topic of death.¹⁴⁹

Khārijī Quşşāş

Two Khārijī rebels of al-Jazīra, Şāliḥ b. Musarriḥ al-Tamīmī (d. 76/695) and his alleged successor Shabīb b. Yazīd al-Shaybānī (d. 77/697), also used *qaşaş* as a means of inciting fighting fervor among their supporters. Şāliḥ was a pious man and moderate Khārijī of the Şufriyya sect—a denotation ascribed to those who “remained seated” (*qāʿad*) instead of engaging in armed revolt against their adversaries.¹⁵⁰ He spent approximately twenty years preaching his Şufri

148 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:559. The translation is a slightly modified translation of G.R. Hawting, *The History of al-Ṭabarī XX: The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority and the Coming of the Marwānids* (Albany, 1989), 20:145.

149 Ṭabarī recorded another speech delivered by Şukhayr before he gave this *qişsa* in which he called the men of Kūfa to join their rebellion. In this speech, he stated that their goal was “seeking vengeance for the blood of the son of our Prophet’s daughter (i.e., Ḥusayn)” and then he specifically raised martial concepts by saying, “We have neither *dīnār* nor *dirham* with us, we bring only the blades of our swords and the tips of our spears.” See his *Tārīkh*, 2:541 (translation taken from Hawting, *Collapse*, 20:127). Therefore, while the speech which was identified as a *qaşaş* saying has no clear martial associations to it, except for the context, it would be wrong to claim that this was common in the public statements made by Şukhayr.

150 W. Madelung, “Şufriyya,” *El2*, 9:766. Madelung noted that the description Şufriyya was derived from the yellow color of their faces as a result of their ascetic practices. In Ṭabarī, Şāliḥ is described as *muşfarr al-wajh*, “yellow-faced,” or as Rowson has nicely translated,

views in the region of Dārā in Northern Mesopotamia.¹⁵¹ He was, in fact, the first Ṣufī Khārījī to rise in armed rebellion against the Umayyads, apparently in response to al-Ḥajjāj's persecution of the *imām* of the Ṣufriyya, 'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān al-Sadūsī (d. 84/703).¹⁵² Ṭabarī, relying on Abū Mikhnāf's account of the rebellion, described Ṣāliḥ's actions among his supporters: "He would recite Qur'ān, teach religious law and give *qashaṣ* to his supporters (*la-hu aṣḥāb yuqri'uhum al-Qur'ān wa-yufaqqihuhum wa-yaquṣṣu 'alayhim*)."¹⁵³ One of his *qishaṣ* was allegedly recorded by a supporter of his, Qabiṣa b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khath'amī, and was circulated in written form.¹⁵⁴

Ṣāliḥ's *qishaṣa* is rather long, comprising just over two pages in M.J. De Goeje's edition.¹⁵⁵ He began with Sūrat al-An'ām (6):1 stating, "Praise be to God, who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light. Yet those who have disbelieved ascribe rivals to their Lord." After this, he gave a statement about the basics of the faith, affirming the oneness of God, His supremacy over all of creation and the Prophetic career of Muḥammad. He then related some core ascetic principles and Khārījī doctrines. He said:

(7) I commend to you the fear of God, austerity in this world, desire for the afterlife, frequent recollection of death, avoidance of the sinners, and love for the believers.

أوصيكم بتقوى الله والزهد في الدنيا، والرغبة في الآخرة، وكثرة ذكر الموت،
وفراقِ الفاسقين، وحب المؤمنين.¹⁵⁶

He followed this with an exposition of all of these statements except for the first, "the fear of God." He began with asceticism (*al-zuhd*) arguing that it encourages the believer to desire the things of God and "frees his body for obedience to God (*wa-tufarrighu badanahu li-ṭā'at Allāh*)."¹⁵⁷ He then asserted that *dhikr* produces the fear of God causing the one involved in *dhikr* to seek God's

"sallow of mien." See Ṭārīkh, 2:881; Everett Rowson, *The History of al-Ṭabarī XXII: The Marwānid Restoration* (New York, 1989), 22:33, n. 136.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid. On 'Imrān, see J.W. Fück, "'Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān," *El2*, 3:1175.

153 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:881. On Ṭabarī's reliance on Abū Mikhnāf, in particular his *Kitāb Shabīb al-Ḥarūrī wa Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ*, see Rowson, *Marwanid*, 22:32, n. 134.

154 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:881–882.

155 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:882–884.

156 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:882 (translation taken from Rowson, *Marwānid*, 22:34).

157 Ibid.

help and submit to Him. Next he expounded on an important Khārijī doctrine on the status of sinners (*fāsiqīn*) saying that they were not believers and one must separate oneself from them. He based this argument on Sūrat al-Tawba (9):84, “Do not pray over any of them who dies, ever, nor stand by his grave; they disbelieved in God and His messenger, and died as sinners.”¹⁵⁸ Conversely, the Khārijī rejection of the *fāsiqīn* was supplemented with their love of the believers (*al-muʾminīn*). Loving the believers, according to Ṣāliḥ, brings God’s grace, mercy and paradise.

Ṣāliḥ then moved into an exposition of the progression of the early caliphate. He praised the first of the caliphs, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, then excoriated ‘Uthmān alleging that “he expropriated the spoils, failed to enforce the Qur’ānic punishments, rendered unjust judgments, and treated the believer with contempt and the evildoer with esteem.”¹⁵⁹ According to Ṣāliḥ, ‘Uthmān’s assassination was justified because of these offenses and thus God, His Messenger and the righteous believers were free of him (*barīʾa Allāhu min-hu wa-rasūluhu wa-ṣāliḥ al-muʾminīn*).¹⁶⁰ Not only was the community free of ‘Uthmān, they were eventually free of ‘Alī whom Ṣāliḥ rebuked for submitting the decision of the leadership of the community to human judges (*ḥakkama fī amr Allāh al-rijāl*) and for his lack of certainty concerning “the people of error (*wa-shakka fī ahl al-ḍalāl*).”¹⁶¹

Ṣāliḥ, building on his argument that the deaths of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī were legitimate, concluded his *qiṣṣa* with a call to his followers to rise against the current illegitimate rule of the Umayyads. In doing so, he utilized themes of death and the after-life that we have encountered in previous martial *qaṣaṣ* sayings. He said:

Be not anxious about being killed for God’s sake, since being killed is easier than dying naturally. Natural death comes upon you unexpectedly (*ghayr mā tarjum al-ẓunūn*), separating you from your fathers, sons, wives, and this world, even if your anxiety and aversion for it is strong. Thus, indeed, sell your souls and your wealth to God obediently, and you will enter paradise in security and embrace the black-eyed *houris*.

158 On the debate surrounding the *fāsiq*, see L. Gardet, “Fāsiq,” *El2*, 2:833–834.

159 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:882 (translation taken from Rowson, *Marwānid*, 22:34).

160 The phrase *ṣāliḥu al-muʾminīn* is Qur’ānic from Sūrat al-Taḥrīm (66):4 and, auspiciously, a play on the rebel’s name.

161 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:883. See also Rowson, *Marwānid*, 22:35, n. 148.

ولا تجزعوا من القتل في الله، فإنَّ القتل أيسرُ من الموت، والموتُ نازلٌ
بكم غير ما ترجم الظنون، فمفترق بينكم و بين آبائكم وأبنائكم، وحلائلكم
ودنياكم، وإن اشتدَّ لذلك كرهكم وجرعكم. ألا فيبعوا الله أنفسكم طائعين
وأموالكم تدخلوا الجنة آمنين، وتعانقوا الحور العين.¹⁶²

Like Sulaymān b. Ṣurād, Ṣāliḥ described the benefits of death in battle, although his arguments in advocacy of it differed from Sulaymān. Ṣāliḥ argued that death in battle was better because it is an expected death, apparently in the sense that the day of one's death may be anticipated, as opposed to an unknowable natural death. He then, using typical Khārijī language, encouraged them to give all they owned to God ("sell your souls and your wealth to God obediently") so that they were able to gain paradise with its rewards of security and heavenly maidens.

While certain aspects of this *qiṣṣa* have been encountered in other statements, such as references to the nature of God, to death, and to heavenly blessings for those who die in battle, this *qiṣṣa* differs from the previous martial *qiṣaṣ* inasmuch as it is, in actuality, a doctrinal justification for military action. Consequently, in spite of the general martial context—it was delivered in the lead up to the battle not at the battle itself—the *qiṣṣa* focuses on religio-political positions, particularly the sound rule of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, as opposed to 'Uthmān and 'Alī, the legitimacy of the murder of 'Uthmān, the unacceptability of 'Alī's decision in favor of arbitration and the correctness of armed rebellion against corrupt leaders. It therefore stands as an example of the flexibility of the meaning of *qaṣaṣ*. This is a hybrid statement merging religious, martial and even politico-doctrinal themes together in one *qiṣṣa*.

When Ṣāliḥ was killed, another Ṣufrī Khārijī, Shabīb b. Yazīd, led a rebellion against the Umayyads, possibly as the immediate successor to Ṣāliḥ's rebellion.¹⁶³ According to Ṭabarī, who again used Abū Mikhnaf as his source, both the Umayyad general 'Attāb b. Warqā' and Shabīb delivered *qaṣaṣ* to their soldiers, although only a portion of Shabīb's *qiṣṣa* has been recorded. Shabīb stood before his supporters and gave many *qiṣaṣ* (*waqafa 'alaynā fa-qaṣṣa*

¹⁶² Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:883–884 (translation taken from Rowson, *Marwānid*, 22:35).

¹⁶³ The precise connection between Ṣāliḥ and Shabīb is unclear. Shabīb was listed among Ṣāliḥ's supporters in Dārā and Abū Mikhnaf claims that he continued Ṣāliḥ's rebellion, though others have doubted this connection; see a discussion of the issue by K.V. Zettersteen and C. Robinson, "Shabīb b. Yazīd," *El2*, 9:164.

'*alaynā qīṣaṣ^{an} kathīr^{an}*'), only one of which was remembered by a certain Tamīm b. Hārith al-Azdī, who related that Shabīb said:

(8) O people of Islām! Those who have the best lot in paradise are the martyrs. God praises none of his creatures more than the steadfast; hear how He says, “Be steadfast; God is with the steadfast (Sūrat al-Baqara [2]:153).” He whose deeds God praises, how great is his status! But God despises no one more than those who commit outrages. See how this enemy of yours slaughters the Muslims with his sword, and they insist that they thereby win God’s favor. They are the most wicked people on earth, the dogs of the people of hell! Where are the *quṣṣāṣ*?” When he asked that, not one of us, by God, answered him. Seeing this, he asked, “Where is he who recites the poetry of ‘Antara?” And no, by God, not a single man breathed a word of reply to this. He said, “We are God’s! It seems to me I can see you fleeing from ‘Attāb b. Warqā’ and leaving him with the wind whistling up his ass.”

يا أهل الإسلام، إن أعظم الناس نصيباً في الجنة الشهداء، وليس الله لأحد من خلقه بأحمد منه للصابرين، ألا ترون أنه يقول: ﴿وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾! فمن حمد الله فعله فما أعظم درجته، وليس الله لأحد أمقت منه لأهل البغي؛ ألا ترون أن عدوك هذا يستعرض المسلمين بسيفه، لا يرون إلا أن ذلك لهم قربة عند الله! فهم شرار أهل الأرض وكلاب أهل النار، أين القصاص؟ قال ذلك فلم يحببه والله أحد متاً؛ فلما رأى ذلك، قال: أين من يروي شعر عنترة؟ قال: فلا والله ما ردّ عليه إنسان كلمةً. فقال: إن الله! كأنى بكم قد فررتم عن عتاب بن ورقاء وتركتموه تسفي في استه الرجح.¹⁶⁴

Shabīb’s *qīṣa* distinguishes the true Muslims, i.e. his Khārijī supporters, those he called “people of Islam,” from the imposters, i.e. his Umayyad opponents led by ‘Attāb b. Warqā’, those whom he called “the most wicked people on

164 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:950–951 (translation was taken from Rowson, with some modifications; see *Marwānid*, 22:101–102).

earth.” The true Muslims are those who will have the best positions in paradise because they died as martyrs. The two descriptions are diametrically opposed to each other: Shabīb’s side will be blessed with the best places in paradise, while the Umayyads will be the lowest in hell, “the dogs of the people of hell.” Even here, once again, the theme of death and the afterlife is evident in martial *qaṣaṣ*. Furthermore, Shabīb encouraged his followers to be steadfast/patient in battle, citing Sūrat al-Baqara (2):153 as had Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ before him.

Shabīb then summoned two groups of people. He called for the *quṣṣāṣ*, and when no one responded, he called for someone to recite the poetry of ‘Antara. Again no one answered. He interpreted his followers’ silence as a lack of martial spirit and an omen that they would flee the battlefield as fast as the wind.

Shabīb’s summons to the *quṣṣāṣ* and to those who can recite the poetry of ‘Antara is noteworthy for what it reveals about the role of the martial *quṣṣāṣ*. We have already encountered examples of the *quṣṣāṣ* promoting courage and a fighting spirit in the soldiery. This is precisely what Shabīb was looking for in his summons. He himself had just delivered a *qiṣṣa*, yet he called for others to do likewise. When this summons fell unheeded, he called for the next-best option—those who were able to provide a similar passion for courage and valor by reciting the heroic poetry of ‘Antara, the famous pre-Islamic warrior-poet immortalized for his great courage and astounding victories, extending across Arabia and beyond against foes and forces far larger than he. Not only was ‘Antara a powerful warrior, he was also chivalrous, willing to fulfill a number of dangerous conditions placed on him by the father of his beloved ‘Abla in order to win her hand. ‘Antara, thus, came to symbolize the character traits of courage and chivalry and, in spite of being pagan, he embodied the image of the ideal Arab and Muslim. As Heller has noted, “by a bold stroke ‘Antar, the solitary hero, is raised to be the representative of all that is Arab, ‘Antar the pagan is made the champion of Islam.”¹⁶⁵ Therefore, when Shabīb appealed for someone to recite the poetry of ‘Antara, he was seeking someone who, in the absence of *quṣṣāṣ*, was prepared to inspire in his soldiers these traits of courage and chivalry. The association that Shabīb made between the *quṣṣāṣ* and those who recite the poetry of ‘Antara indicates that, in his view, the two groups fulfilled similar objectives.

165 B. Heller, “Sirat ‘Antar,” *El2*, 1:518.

Religio-political *Qaşaş*: Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī

It has become evident that the term *qaşsa* was applied to various sayings of both a religious nature and martial nature. Even within these broad categories, *qaşaş* sayings incorporated a number of themes revealing a great degree of diversity. We have already encountered, for instance, the merging of religious and political themes in a martial context in the *qişsa* of the Khārijī leader Şālih b. Musarriḥ al-Tamīmī. We will now turn to the last *qaşaş* text to be analyzed in this chapter integrating religious and political themes yet, unlike Şālih's *qişsa* or even that of his successor Shabīb, not in a martial context. This last religio-political *qişsa* has been attributed to Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī in his famous opposition to Mu'āwiya, when he was the governor of Syria, and to 'Uthmān, the then caliph. It, therefore, is purported to be an early testament of a *qaşaş* saying.

I have placed this text here, by itself, for two reasons. First, the saying is not strictly a religious *qişsa* since its objective is as much politically oriented as it is religiously oriented, in spite of the use of religious argumentation. Secondly, even though the saying challenged the political leaders, it is not a martial text *per se*, since it was not delivered in a military situation. The text is, in fact, a religio-political text similar to some martial *qaşaş* sayings in its intent, not necessarily in its context.

The *qişsa* comes to us in a late source, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī's (d. 1110/1698) *Bihār al-anwār*, although al-Majlisī drew from earlier sources.¹⁶⁶ Without doubt, the lateness of the source (12th/17th century) raises the question of the statement's authenticity, and the Shī'ite advocacy of its author augments doubts about it. Still, questions surrounding the authenticity of the text as well as its identification as a *qişsa* do not diminish its importance. For, if the saying was considered a *qaşaş* saying and was delivered by Abū Dharr, then it provides another example of the content of early *qaşaş* sayings. If, on the other hand, it is merely described as a *qişsa* by a late and tendentious source, the text remains significant for it indicates that a later source was aware of the applicability of the term *qaşsa* in the early period to an ideological statement of this type, or that the term *qaşsa* continued to be applied to a broad array of statements, and thus its lexical parameters accommodated, even in later centuries, a statement of this nature.

According to an unidentified Syrian source:

166 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār* (Beirut, 1983), 22:395.

(1) When ‘Uthmān sent Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī from Medina to Syria he used to give *qaṣaṣ* to us (*yaqūṣṣu ‘alaynā*). He praised God, testified the *shahāda* of truth, prayed for the Prophet, and then he said, “Verily we were in our period of ignorance before the Book came upon us and the Messenger was sent to us. We kept oaths, honored our words, were kind to our neighbors, entertained guests and were charitable to the poor. So when God sent to us His Messenger and sent down to us His book, God and his Messenger were pleased with these ethical behaviors and the people of Islam were indeed more worthy of them. So he charged them to maintain them. Thus they continued to do that which God desired for them to do. Then the rulers [meaning, ‘Uthmān] did wicked deeds of which we are all aware, such as extinguishing the *sunna*, enlivening *bid’a*, calling the one who tells the truth a liar, siding with those who do not fear God nor are trustworthy, preferring them over the pious. By God, if that which You have (ordained) was better for me, then take me to you (i.e., make me die) without me having altered or changed (the correct faith).” He used to repeat this saying and declare it. So Ḥabīb b. Maslama¹⁶⁷ came to Mu‘āwiya and said, “Abū Dharr is corrupting the people against you with what he is saying.” So Mu‘āwiya wrote to ‘Uthmān about this and ‘Uthmān wrote back, “Send him to me.” When he went to Medina, ‘Uthmān banished him to al-Rabadha.

لَمَّا سَيَّرَ عَثْمَانُ أَبَا ذَرٍّ مِنَ الْمَدِينَةِ إِلَى الشَّامِ كَانَ يَقْصِّرُ عَلَيْنَا، فَيُحْمَدُ اللَّهُ
فِي شَهْدِ شَهَادَةِ الْحَقِّ، وَيُصَلِّي عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَيَقُولُ: أَمَا بَعْدَ فَاثَا كُنَّا فِي جَاهِلِيَّتِنَا
قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابَ وَ يَبْعَثُ فِيْنَا الرَّسُولَ، وَ نَحْنُ نُوْفِي بِالْعَهْدِ، وَ
نُصَدِّقُ الْحَدِيثَ، وَ نَحْسِنُ الْجَوَارِ، وَ نَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ، وَ نُوَاسِي الْفَقِيرَ، فَلَمَّا بَعَثَ
اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيْنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَأَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابَهُ كَانَتْ تِلْكَ الْأَخْلَاقُ يَرْضَاهَا اللَّهُ
وَ رَسُولُهُ، وَ كَانَ أَحَقَّ بِهَا أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَ أَوْلَى أَنْ يُحْفَظُوهَا، فَلَبِثُوا بِذَلِكَ
مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَلْبِثُوا، ثُمَّ إِنَّ الْوَلَاةَ قَدْ أَحْدَثُوا أَعْمَالًا قَبَاحًا مَا نَعْرِفُهَا:
مِنْ سَنَةِ تَطْفِي، وَ بَدْعَةِ تَحْيِي، وَ قَائِلِ بِحَقِّ مَكْذَبٍ، وَ أَثْرَةِ لَغَيْرِ تَقِيٍّ وَ أَمِينِ

167 He was one of Mu‘āwiya’s military commanders; see J.W. Fück, “Ḥabīb b. Maslama,” *El2*, 3:12.

مستأثر عليه من الصالحين، اللهم إن كان ما عندك خيراً لي فاقبضني إليك
غير مبدّل ولا مغيّر، وكان يعيد هذا الكلام وبيديه، فأتى حبيب بن
مسلمة معاوية بن أبي سفيان فقال: إنّ أبا ذرّ يفسد عليك الناس بقوله:
كيت وكيت، فكتب معاوية إلى عثمان بذلك، فكتب عثمان: أخرجته إليّ،
فلما صار إلى المدينة نفاه إلى الريدة.¹⁶⁸

In this *qaṣaṣ* statement, Abū Dharr bemoaned what he perceived to be the destructive conduct of ‘Uthmān and his governor of Syria, Mu‘āwiya. His famous opposition to these political powers, expressed in Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh* as stemming from their misappropriation of God’s money, ultimately led to his being exiled to al-Rabadha, where he eventually died in 32/653.¹⁶⁹

This *qiṣṣa* presents a number of other complaints against Mu‘āwiya and ‘Uthmān. Abū Dharr began by arguing that the Arabs, even prior to the coming of the Prophet, proved themselves to be a noble people, as is reflected in their keeping of oaths, honoring their words, being kind to neighbors, showing hospitality to guests and being charitable to the poor. The virtue of these traits was affirmed when God sent His Messenger since, according to the *qiṣṣa*, they were told to continue these behaviors. In suggesting the existence of a continuity in ethical standards from the pre-Islamic Jāhili Arabs to the Prophet, Abū Dharr sought not only to portray Mu‘āwiya and ‘Uthmān as diverting from the conduct of the Prophet yet also to place them outside the purview of Arab cultural mores; they were guilty in both religious and cultural terms. Abū Dharr described their wickedness as “extinguishing the *sunna*, enlivening *bid’a*, calling the one who tells the truth a liar, siding with those who do not fear God nor are trustworthy, preferring them over the pious.” Then, in what seems to be presented as a foreshadowing of his death in exile (“By God if that which You have [ordained] was better for me”), he appealed to God to take him from this world in a state of correct faith.

This *qiṣṣa* attributed to Abū Dharr is a statement of exhortation, if not provocation. It is quite similar in its intent to that of Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ, whose *qiṣṣa* recounted the golden years of the faith under the Prophet and the first

168 Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 22:395. See also Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 122.

169 On the incident, see J. Robson, “Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī,” *El2*, 1:114; A.J. Cameron, *Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: An Examination of His Image in the Hagiography of Islam* (New Delhi, 2006), 67–68, 73, 78, 80, 89–90, 107–109.

two caliphs, the decline of the faith under ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī, and an appeal to the true believers to remain faithful till death in opposing illegitimate leaders. In this regard, Ṣāliḥ’s *qiṣṣa* was also meant to provoke; its aim was to provoke his followers to stand firm on the correctness of their cause and in the face of those who have corrupted the faith.

Regardless of the difference in context between the religious and martial *qaṣaṣ*, as well as this religio-political *qiṣṣa*, each category reveals that the term *qaṣaṣ* is not exclusively a descriptive term as far as the content of the statement is concerned. The diversity of themes in both religious *qaṣaṣ* and martial *qaṣaṣ* suggests that more than content is at play when applying the term *qiṣṣa* to a saying. For example, a martial *qiṣṣa* could draw upon the themes of death and the afterlife, as did religious *qiṣaṣ*. A martial *qiṣṣa* could also simply be instruction in military tactics. Furthermore, a religious *qiṣṣa* could describe legal rulings, which, while still illustrating the *quṣṣāṣ*’s interest in advocating piety, are, nonetheless, more practical in their application than calls to piety of a general nature. It may be, therefore, that *qaṣaṣ* was identified as much on intent as on content. The intent, for example, of the above statements is to challenge the listener to a higher level of devotion; in the religious sayings, this meant greater devotion to the faith while in the martial sayings it meant greater devotion to a military or politico-doctrinal objective. The aim of eliciting a fervent response from the listener seems to be the unifying factor between *qaṣaṣ* of a religious nature, of a martial nature and of a religio-political nature.

The objective of the *qāṣṣ* to encourage his listeners to a decision uncovers the social nature of *qaṣaṣ*. The *quṣṣāṣ* were social actors whose effectiveness was connected not only to what they said but also to how they said it. This social aspect of their personae will be looked at below in Chapter Three. However, before moving there, I will continue to explore the diversity of the *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam by analyzing their associations with many of the religious disciplines that emerged in the Muslim community. Indeed, these associations parallel many of the subjects addressed in the *qaṣaṣ* discussed in this chapter, such as Qur’ān interpretation, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh*, to name a few, and, thus, an analysis of these associations will hopefully produce a more accurate assessment of the men who were identified as *quṣṣāṣ* in the early period.

Quṣṣās Associations: With Whom Are the Quṣṣās Associated?

The *quṣṣās* of the Umayyad period are represented throughout the broad spectrum of the scholarly activities in the community, some aspects of which (such as Qurʾān commentary, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh*), have already been encountered in the previous chapter's discussions. The connections that the *quṣṣās* enjoyed with other disciplines, including their reputations in them, can help clarify our understanding of their identity and influence in the early period. Upon analysis of the one hundred and eight identified *quṣṣās* of this period, it was evident that their associations were as diverse as the themes of their *qiṣaṣ*.¹ Nine categories of main group associations, however, emerged: Qurʾān reciters (*qurrāʾ*), Qurʾān commentators (*mufasssīrūn*), *ḥadīth* transmitters (*muḥaddithūn*), jurists (*fuqahāʾ*), judges (*quḍāt*), orators (*khuṭabāʾ*), admonishers (*wuʿāz*), those involved in *dhikr* (*mudhakkirūn*), and ascetics (*zuhhād*, *nussāk*).

Since some of these categories are fluid, certain restraints in methodology are necessary in order to allow for manageable analysis. For example, the categories of *dhikr* and admonition (*waʿz*), in which some *quṣṣās* are sometimes included, are quite broad, and, because of the intent of *qaṣaṣ* to exhort and inspire, as seen in Chapter One, all the *quṣṣās*, even those identified as purely martial *quṣṣās*, fall within them. Thus, in order to avoid subjectivity in identifying a statement of a *qāṣṣ* as *dhikr* or *waʿz*, only those *quṣṣās* who were expressly connected to these terms will be included in those categories. In other words, only the *qāṣṣ* who has been identified by the sources specifically as a *wāʿiz* ("admonisher") or as having given a *mawʿiza* ("admonition") of some sort will be categorized with the *wuʿāz*. This condition will be enforced even if the content of a particular saying of a *qāṣṣ* is available for interpretation as an admonition, and these same restrictions will be applied to each of the nine categories.

Unfortunately, the large number of *quṣṣās* and the even larger number of sources available to be mined for information on them present an insurmountable obstacle to any claim of comprehensiveness in this regard. The current chapter is, therefore, only a first, though important, step in categorization, as

1 Since the Prophet could be considered the progenitor of each of these disciplines, I have left him out of the statistical analysis.

well as identification, of the affiliations of the *quṣṣās*. Those *quṣṣās* who have distinguished themselves in a particular discipline will be noted and evaluated in order to draw general conclusions about their role in these disciplines. I will begin with those who were associated with disciplines of the religious sciences, such as Qurʾān recitation, Qurʾān commentary and *ḥadīth*, and will proceed to those who were associated with various forms of religious expression, including *khuṭābaʾ* (“orators”), *wuʿāz* (“admonishers”) and ascetics.

Qurʾān Reciters (*qurrāʾ*)

Qurʾān recitation was an essential component of *qaṣaṣ* from its inception.² According to Ibn al-Jawzī, the Qurʾān was the primary source of admonition (*waʿz*) for the Companions of the Prophet.³ The central importance of the Qurʾān in *qaṣaṣ* is alluded to in a report about Tamīm al-Dārī who, as one of the first *quṣṣās*, listed its recitation as his first objective when giving *qaṣaṣ*.⁴ Another tradition, traced back to ʿĀʾisha, suggests that the teaching of the Qurʾān, along with its interpretation (*tafsīr*), was the main objective of the early *quṣṣās*. Upon meeting the Medinan *qāṣṣ* Ibn Abī al-Sāʾib, she told him to “give *qaṣaṣ* to the people once a week, and if you want, then give *qaṣaṣ* twice, and if you want, then give *qaṣaṣ* three times a week, but do not make the people bored with this Book.”⁵ ʿĀʾisha’s warning that the proliferation of *qaṣaṣ* ses-

2 The Qurʾān played a fundamental role in the religious education of the community from the outset and was also an essential source in the various disciplines of religious education. Wadad Kadi and Mustansir Mir, for example, have argued that the Islamic sermon is a genre of prose whose existence is directly dependent upon the Qurʾān; see their “Literature and the Qurʾān,” *EQ*, 3:221.

3 The overlap in meaning of the terms *waʿāza* and *qaṣṣa* in Ibn al-Jawzī’s usage can be seen in this report which is recorded in a section on *qaṣaṣ* but in which he uses the term *waʿāza* to describe the nature of the Qurʾānic recitation; see his *Quṣṣās*, 136.

4 Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Mudhakkir wa-l-tadhkir wa-l-dhikr*, ed. Khālid b. Qāsim al-Raddādī (Riyadh, 1993), 66; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 11:80. See also Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 107–108; ʿAthamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 60.

5 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 43:19–20; Ibn Shabba, *Kitāb tārikh al-Madīna al-munawwara*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Mecca, 1979), 1:13; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:258. See also Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 108–109. Other versions of the tradition identify ʿĀʾisha’s interlocutor only as al-Sāʾib and do not state that he was a *qāṣṣ*; see Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī, *Musnad*, 7:448; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (Beirut, 1984), 2:248; Ṭabarānī, *Duʿāʾ*, 37. Bukhārī gives another version of the tradition transmitted by Ibn ʿAbbās in which he commands an unidentified listener to *ḥadīth al-nās*; see his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5:2334. Ibn al-Jawzī cited both variants; see his *Quṣṣās*, 31.

sions lead the people to apathy toward the Qurʾān suggests that it must have occupied the lion's share of the sessions. It comes as little surprise, then, that a significant number of *quṣṣās* were singled out for their abilities as *qurrāʾ*.

Of the one hundred and eight *quṣṣās*, thirty-one, or 29%, were specifically associated with Qurʾān recitation.⁶ Among these are well-known Companions of the Prophet. Four of them, Muʿādh b. Jabal, Abū al-Dardāʾ, Ibn Masʿūd and Zayd b. Thābit, were numbered among the original collectors of the Qurʾān.⁷ Not only did they allegedly collect the Qurʾān, they were also teachers and reciters of it. Muʿādh and Abū al-Dardāʾ were dispatched by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to Syria upon the request of Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān for men to teach the Qurʾān and to instruct the people/soldiers (*yuʿallimuhum al-Qurʾān wa yufaqqihuhum*).⁸ Ibn Masʿūd was extolled by the Prophet himself for the excellence of his recitation.⁹ Ibn Masʿūd's alleged influence on Qurʾān recitation is legendary, especially with regard to his defense of his recitation against that of the ʿUthmānic recension.¹⁰ Ibn Masʿūd even questioned the competence of the famous *qāṣṣ* Zayd b. Thābit in compiling the Qurʾān.¹¹

Tensions related to Qurʾān recitation were tangible in other circles as well. When the *qāṣṣ* Kaʿb al-Aḥḥār challenged Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān on his recitation of Sūrat al-Kahf (18):86, the governor referred the matter to Ibn ʿAbbās

6 These are: (6) Muʿādh b. Jabal, (9) Kaʿb al-Aḥḥār, (10) Abū al-Dardāʾ, (11) Ibn Masʿūd, (12) Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, (16) Tamīm al-Dārī, (18) Zayd b. Thābit, (25) ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, (26) Abū al-Aḥḥās, (27) Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, (28) Sulaym b. ʿItr, (29) Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ, (31) Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī, (39) Zurāra b. Awfā, (40) Saʿīd b. Jubayr, (56) Saʿīd b. Abī al-Ḥasan, (57) Tubayʿ b. ʿĀmir, (58) Mujāhid b. Jabr, (60) Bilāl b. Saʿd, (61) Muslim b. Jundab, (65) ʿAwn b. ʿAbd Allāh, (66) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (71) Qatāda b. Dīʿāma, (77) Tawba b. Namir, (79) ʿAbd Allāh b. Kathīr, (83) Thābit al-Bunānī, (86) Maṭar al-Warrāq, (89) Khayr b. Nuʿaym, (93) Hilāl, Abū Ṭuʿma, (102) ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika, (108) Mūsā b. Sayyār.

7 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 47:110–111, 137. On the compilation of the Qurʾān, as well on the role of some of these Companions in the process, see A.T. Welch, “al-Ḳurʾān,” *EL2*, 5:404–406; J. Burton, “Collection of the Qurʾān,” *EQ*, 1:355–358.

8 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 47:137.

9 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 33:60, 66.

10 Goldziher, *Schools*, 5–6. A student of his, the *qāṣṣ* Mujāhid b. Jabr, confessed that without the variant recitation of Ibn Masʿūd the proper meaning of a verse in Sūrat al-Isrāʾ (17):95 would have remained elusive; see Goldziher, *Schools*, 11.

11 On Zayd's role in the compilation of the ʿUthmānic recension, see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:311; al-Dhahabī, *Maʿrifat al-qurrāʾ*, eds. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, Shuʿayb al-Arnāʿūṭ and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAbbās (Beirut, 1983), 1:36–38; M. Lecker, “Zayd b. Thābit,” *EL2*, 11:476; Welch, “al-Ḳurʾān,” *EL2*, 5:404–406; Burton, “Collection,” *EQ*, 1:355–358. On Ibn Masʿūd's criticism of Zayd as a worthy resource for the task of compiling the Qurʾān, see Goldziher, *Schools*, 6.

who confirmed Ka'b's recitation. Mu'āwiya, however, refused to acquiesce, and only the council of Ibn 'Abbās assuaged Ka'b's anger at Mu'āwiya's obstinace. Eventually, Ibn 'Abbās was able to bring Mu'āwiya to agree with their recitation.¹² The affirmation of the Jewish convert's knowledge of Qur'ānic recitation, in this instance superior to that of a distinguished Arab Companion of the Prophet, substantiates the general importance of Qur'ān recitation as well as indicating that the Muslims did not perceive his "Jewishness" as a necessary obstacle to his engagement in the propagation of the sacred text of Islam.

The *quṣṣāṣ* maintained a strong connection to Qur'ān recitation with some reputed to have been the best Qur'ān reciters and teachers of their time and region. 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr (d. 68/688) was considered a source for proper Qur'ān recitation.¹³ Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 72–5/692–4) taught Qur'ān recitation in the grand mosque of Kufa for forty years.¹⁴ In Syria, Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī (d. 80/700) was considered "their reciter"¹⁵ and, later, Bilāl b. Sa'd (d.c. 105–25/724–43) was called "the Qur'ān reciter," *al-qārī*, of Damascus.¹⁶ Even when on campaign, Qur'ān recitation was taught. While deployed on the island of Rhodes, the famous *qārī* and *qāṣṣ* Mujāhid b. Jabr taught his recitation to Tubay' b. 'Āmir, the *qāṣṣ* and step-son of the *qāṣṣ* Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who himself was considered a legitimate source in Qur'ānic recitation.¹⁷ It is doubtful that the relationship of the *quṣṣāṣ* to Qur'ān recitation was as serendipitous as here.

In 76/695 in Egypt, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ḥujayra (d. 83/703) was both *qāṣṣ* and Qur'ān reciter. According to Maqrīzī, his practice of reciting Qur'ān in the congregational mosque on Friday and then giving *qaṣaṣ* became the practice of Egyptian *quṣṣāṣ* well into the 'Abbāsīd period.¹⁸ Abū Ṭu'ma, a *mawlā* of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz who gave *qaṣaṣ* and recited the Qur'ān in Egypt, seems to verify

12 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī (Weisbaden, 1978), 3:43.

13 Ibn Sallām, *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, ed. Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ al-Mudayfir (Riyadh 1997), 10. Qur'ān recitation persisted in 'Ubayd's family; 'Abd Allāh, 'Ubayd's son, was known as the master of the *qurrā'*, *sayyid al-qurrā'*; see Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:284. Ibn Qutayba seems to have confusingly identified 'Abd Allāh as 'Ubayd Allāh's brother; see his *Ma'ārif*, 587.

14 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī (Berlin, 2002), 7/2:232.

15 Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, ed. al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad (Beirut, 1975), 5:227; Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-huffāz*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo, 1973), 18.

16 Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:607.

17 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1968), 236.

18 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār fi dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār (al-Khiṭaṭ)*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (London, 2003), 4/1:31–132. See also Pedersen, "Islamic Preacher," 233–234.

Maqrīzī's observation.¹⁹ In the year 108/726, the *qāṣṣ* Tawba b. Namir was paid three *dīnārs* each month for reciting from the *muṣḥaf* during the congregational prayer.²⁰ Khayr b. Nu'aym, Tawba's successor in the year 120/738, was the first *qāṣṣ* in Egypt to recite from the *muṣḥaf* while standing.²¹ These traditions of receiving money for and of standing during recitation are of particular interest since both phenomena could be interpreted as signaling the official enterprise of *qaṣaṣ*.²² That they were implemented separately and that payment came before standing seem to indicate that these traditions may not always signify governmental sanction of a *qāṣṣ*.

Not only were some *quṣṣāṣ* Qur'ān reciters and teachers, others were known for more specific associations to the Qur'ān and its recitation. 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr, Mujāhid b. Jabr and Sa'īd b. Jubayr, for example, were known to have specific written recensions, *maṣāḥif*, attached to their names.²³ Maṭar b. Ṭahmān, known by the nickname (*laqab*) al-Warrāq, was reciter, copyist and seller of copies of the Qur'ān.²⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm mentioned in his *Fihrist* that 'Aṭā' b. Yasār wrote a "Book of the Numbers (of the Qur'ān)" tallying the number of sūras, verses, words and letters of the Qur'ān.²⁵ 'Abd Allāh b. Kathīr's recitation was considered by Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid (d. 324/936) to be one of the seven authoritative Qur'ān recitations.²⁶ For one *qāṣṣ*, Zurāra b. Awfā, the last words uttered from his mouth were those of the Qur'ān.²⁷ Other distinguished scholars, like the Basrans Qatāda b. Dī'āma, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Thābit al-Bunānī, were also identified as accomplished Qur'ān reciters. Likewise, Muslim b. Jundab, a

19 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl* (Hyderabad, 1952), 9:398; idem, *ʿIlal al-ḥadīth*, 2:35; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 74:98. See the Appendix # 93.

20 Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:31.

21 Ibid., 4/1:31–32.

22 On the issue of standing, see Mez, *Renaissance*, 331–332 and the discussion in Chapter Three.

23 See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* in *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, ed. Arthur Jeffrey (Leiden, 1937), 88–89; Jūda, "al-Qaṣaṣ," 108.

24 Besides the sources that identify him by his *laqab* of al-Warrāq (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:253; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7:400; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 3:89; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:87), see in particular Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1987), 8:269; idem, *Sīyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūtī (Beirut, 1981–1988), 5:452–453. See also Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Qur'ānic Commentary and Tradition* (Chicago, 1967), 229–230.

25 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Beirut, 1964), 27, 37. See also Jūda, "Qaṣaṣ," 108.

26 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 28. See also Jūda, "Qaṣaṣ," 108. On Ibn Mujāhid and the selection of the authoritative Qur'ān recitations, see R. Paret, "Ḳirā'a," *El2*, 5:127–128.

27 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:251; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Zuhd*, ed. 'Abd al-A'lā 'Abd al-Ḥamid Ḥamid (Cairo, 1987), 247; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:293; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfat*, 3:230; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:516.

qāṣṣ in Medina, taught thirty verses in his morning sessions and thirty in his evening sessions.²⁸

Indeed, the connection of the *quṣṣāṣ* with the *qurrā'* may reflect an image of them that appeared from the textual evidence discussed in the previous chapter better than any other association. Just as the textual evidence revealed that *qaṣaṣ* drew upon both religious and martial themes, the association of the *quṣṣāṣ* with the term "*qurrā'*" indicates the same. While most of the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period were considered *qurrā'* by virtue of their recitation, a second group of *quṣṣāṣ* was numbered among those *qurrā'* whose reputations were formed in the fires of civil strife in Iraq; these associations will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter Five.²⁹

Qur'ān Commentators (*al-mufasssīrūn*)

The *quṣṣāṣ*' relationship to Qur'ān commentary is abstruse. They have long been associated with *tafsīr*, and it was believed that one of the primary functions of the *qāṣṣ* was explication of the Qur'ān.³⁰ This assumption was born out, in part, by the textual evidence for *qaṣaṣ*, mentioned in the previous chapter. However, the nature of the relationship between the *quṣṣāṣ* and Qur'ān commentary is uncertain, as is their affiliations with the traditions of the Jews and Christians, which are often associated with commentary on those verses about the pre-Islamic prophets. While it is true that much of the commentary tradition relies upon narratives for explication of unclear passages, and since the *quṣṣāṣ* have often been associated with the term "storytellers," it has been widely assumed in modern literature on *tafsīr* that the *quṣṣāṣ* were the source of these "stories" and, thus, were major players in the development of the *tafsīr* tradition—and it must be noted that this apparent influence is rarely expressed in positive terms. These perceptions of the *quṣṣāṣ*, at least as presented in modern scholarship, date to Goldziher, although a more dis-

28 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:368; Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'a fi-l-qirā'āt*, ed. Shawqī Dayf (Cairo, 1972), 59–60.

29 For the various views concerning the meaning of the term *qurrā'* as it relates to opposition groups in Iraq, see Redwan Sayed, *Die Revolte des Ibn al-Aš'at und die Koranleser* (Freiburg, 1977), 277–278; T. Nagel, "Ḳurrā'," *El2*, 5:499–500.

30 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 152–153; Pedersen, "Islamic Preacher," 237; MacDonald, "Ḳiṣṣa," *El1*, 1043; Pellat, "Ḳāṣṣ," *El2*, 4:733–734; Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 119–148, esp. 146–148; Fred Leemhuis, "Origins and Early Development of the *Tafsīr* Tradition," *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford, 1988), 27, 29; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 213ff; Athamina, "Qaṣaṣ," 54, 59–60.

tinctly critical view of their role has emerged more recently among revisionist scholars like John Wansbrough and Patricia Crone. Wansbrough and Crone, for example, have challenged the validity of much of the *tafsīr* tradition because of its “narrative framework” and because of the doubtful historicity of commentaries on some Qur’ānic passages. Blame for the tradition’s ahistoricity was placed largely upon “the storytellers.”³¹

It is here that designations must be made. Both scholars maintain a broad definition of a *qāṣṣ*/“storyteller” as anyone who related narratives.³² However, as we have seen above, the designation between the *quṣṣāṣ* and those who “tell stories” is often unclear in the sources, with the latter being as broad as the researcher’s definition of a “story.” Crone, for example, is correct in identifying ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatāda b. al-Nu‘mān (d.c. 120/737) as one who told stories of the *maghāzī* and the Companions of the Prophet in the mosque of Damascus.³³ Clearly, he was involved in telling “stories.” However, no Islamic source identified him as a *qāṣṣ*. Apparently not every storyteller was a *qāṣṣ*.

The blurred lines between storytelling and *qaṣaṣ* do not imply that the *quṣṣāṣ* neither related narratives nor that they were not involved in *tafsīr*. While it cannot be denied that the *quṣṣāṣ* played an important role in the *tafsīr* tradition, the type and extent of their involvement has not yet been determined. Modern works on *tafsīr* often implicate the *quṣṣāṣ* as a group for the narrative underpinnings of the commentary tradition. Now, in light of the current list of scholars identified by the Islamic sources as *quṣṣāṣ*, more accurate evaluations can be made about the role the *quṣṣāṣ* played in the development of the *tafsīr* tradition. A first attempt at determining this relationship will be made here. First, general conclusions about the *quṣṣāṣ*’ involvement in *tafsīr* will be drawn by analyzing the number of *quṣṣāṣ* who are directly associated with *tafsīr*, as well as by reviewing anecdotal evidence about their affiliations with *tafsīr*. From these two criteria, the percentages of *quṣṣāṣ* involved in *tafsīr* can be determined and tentative conclusions on how they were perceived by the community can be offered. Secondly, the extent of the *quṣṣāṣ*’ influence upon the early commentaries of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 211/827) and Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) will be analyzed. This evaluation will provide a basis for determining how prevalent the *quṣṣāṣ* are in the commentary tradition and

31 Wansbrough *Quranic Studies*, 146–148; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 213–225.

32 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 146–148. Crone refers to the sources of the commentary tradition as “storytellers” but does not directly use the term *qāṣṣ*. She does, however, cite the section in Wansbrough’s *Quranic Studies* in which he discusses the *quṣṣāṣ* and the article on the *qāṣṣ* (“*kāṣṣ*”) in *El2*. See her *Meccan Trade*, 216 n. 61; 225 n. 94.

33 Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 217–218.

what type of impact they evidenced on individual commentaries. Thirdly, the widely-held belief that the *quṣṣās* were an essential, if not primary, source for the introduction of the traditions of the pre-Islamic prophets (*isrāʿīliyyāt* or *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*) into the Islamic tradition will be evaluated. This analysis will be based on anecdotal evidence on the *quṣṣās* who purportedly knew the earlier Scriptures and the opinions of the *quṣṣās* on reports about two pre-Islamic figures, Abraham and Moses. Lastly, the commentary of the *qāṣṣ* Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) will be reviewed as an example of the alleged conflation of *tafsīr* with *qasaṣ* and *isrāʿīliyyāt*.

Percentages and Reputations

According to the sources, only twenty-seven of the *quṣṣās* were explicitly associated with Qurʾān commentary.³⁴ This means that only one-quarter of the *quṣṣās* identified by the Islamic sources were recognized specifically as commentators (*mufasssīrūn*). As was mentioned above, these statistics do not imply that only a quarter of the *quṣṣās* ever gave commentaries on the Qurʾān. This is certainly not true, as will be seen below. However, in light of the general impression that one of the primary functions of the *qāṣṣ* was Qurʾān commentary, it is revealing that so few were distinguished specifically for their commentaries.

Also the relatively low percentage of commentators from among the *quṣṣās* is not to be interpreted to mean that they were not influential in the development of the *tafsīr* tradition. Some of the most important sources in the *tafsīr* works are included among these men, such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Ibn Masʿūd, Saʿīd b. Jubayr, Mujāhid b. Jabr, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatāda b. Diʿāma and Muḥammad b. Kaʿb al-Qurazī. The commentaries of these men are strewn throughout the *tafsīr* tradition, not least within the important early extant works of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī, Ṭabarī and, to a lesser degree, Muqātil b. Sulaymān. While a compilation and analysis of their individual commentaries and transmissions

34 They are: (3) Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, (6) Muʿadh b. Jabal, (9) Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, (10) Abū al-Dardāʾ, (11) Ibn Masʿūd, (16) Tamīm al-Dārī, (18) Zayd b. Thābit, (19) Abū Hurayra, (25) ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, (26) Abū al-Aḥwas, (31) Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī, (36) Nawf b. Faḍāla, (38) Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, (40) Saʿīd b. Jubayr, (46) Kurdūs b. al-ʿAbbas, (57) Tubayʿ b. ʿĀmir, (58) Mujāhid b. Jabr, (61) Muslim b. Jundab, (63) Yazīd b. Abān, (66) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (67) Wahb b. Munabbih, (71) Qatāda b. Diʿāma, (72) Muḥammad b. Kaʿb, (79) ʿAbd Allāh b. Kathīr, (80) Muḥammad b. Qays, (88) Muqātil b. Ḥayyān and (97) Muqātil b. Sulaymān.

helps construct a picture of the types of themes that were particularly relevant to the *quṣṣāṣ*, such an endeavor is beyond the scope of this work.³⁵

It is evident though, throughout the sources, that the *quṣṣāṣ* played a pivotal role in the *tafsīr* tradition. The earliest *quṣṣāṣ* who were among the first religious authorities of the community in recitation and law, like Abū al-Dardā', Ibn Mas'ūd, Zayd b. Thābit and Abū Hurayra, are likewise listed among the sources for the *tafsīr* tradition. Even at this early level, the diversity of the interests of the *quṣṣāṣ* may be felt. Goldziher, for instance, clearly associated the *quṣṣāṣ* with legendary and fantastical traditions drawn mostly from the "People of the Scriptures."³⁶ His evaluation has, in fact, played a significant role in establishing the image of the *quṣṣāṣ* in modern studies. However, Goldziher also asserted that Ibn Mas'ūd, who was one of the most influential reciters of the Qur'ān and commentators on it among the Companions of the Prophet, was against the mythological interpretations of the Qur'ān characterized by the *quṣṣāṣ*.³⁷ However, Ibn Mas'ūd's own affiliation with *qaṣaṣ*, as discussed in Chapter One, calls into question Goldziher's assessment and confirms the diversity within *qaṣaṣ*, indicating that the associations of *quṣṣāṣ* are not limited to legend, myth and fantasy. Unfortunately, accurate assessments of the specific commentaries of the Companions of the Prophet are not easy to obtain because of the difficulty in confirming their authenticity. As a result, it is the influence of the *quṣṣāṣ* at the level of the next generation, that of the "Successors," that is of greater interest to us, since it is among this group of scholars that we find mention of the recording of commentaries, and it is they who are named most prominently throughout the extant commentaries.

Sa'īd b. Jubayr, for example, was one of the chief students of "the father of Qur'ānic exegesis," Ibn 'Abbās, known as the "rabbi/doctor of the Arabs" (*ḥabir al-'arab*), and, therefore, much of his *tafsīr* and his knowledge of the stories of

35 Heribert Horst analyzed the number of citations of various *isnāds* and transmitters, many of whom were *quṣṣāṣ*, in Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* but did not analyze their actual sayings; see his "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar aṭ-Ṭabarīs," *ZDMG* 103 (1953), 290–307. As mentioned in the Introduction, Jūda attempted to reconstruct the topics of the *quṣṣāṣ* by evaluating their sayings. He selected a number of *quṣṣāṣ* and then gave samples of their sayings found throughout the sources; see his "Qaṣaṣ," 110–115. This approach, however, is unavoidably subjective since the researcher himself, by virtue of the examples he has selected, has already decided what type of report is a *qiṣṣa*. If the researcher believes that *qaṣaṣ* is made up of stories of cosmogony and the biblical prophets then he may have a tendency to prefer reports of these kinds as examples of the sayings of the *quṣṣāṣ* and may leave out sayings of a different type, such as legal rulings.

36 Goldziher, *Schools*, 37–39.

37 Ibid., 39.

the pre-Islamic prophets was putatively drawn from his teacher.³⁸ Saʿīd allegedly recorded his own commentary, commissioned by ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān and preserved in his *dīwān*, and some of Saʿīd’s students possessed copies of it.³⁹ Yet Saʿīd’s involvement in commentary and in *qaṣaṣ* did not mean that he offered interpretations unscrupulously. In one instance, when asked for an interpretation, he replied: “I would prefer my side to collapse rather than [do] this.”⁴⁰ His reticence to explain a passage stands in contrast to the widely-held perception of the *quṣṣāṣ* as men who were willing to dash into fabricating an interpretation before abstaining or admitting that they did not know.⁴¹

A contemporary of Saʿīd’s and fellow student of Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujaḥhid b. Jabr, was also extolled as one of the great commentators of the Successors. The Islamic sources allege that he, like Saʿīd, learned his commentary from Ibn ʿAbbās, and a *tafsīr* attributed to him is extant.⁴² So great was his reputation as a *mufasssīr* that the famous Sufyān al-Thawrī said: “If you receive the *tafsīr* of Mujaḥhid, then you have all you need.”⁴³ Mujaḥhid’s orthodox reputation as a commentator raises further questions about the general perception of the *quṣṣāṣ* in Qurʾān interpretation. Goldziher, for example, put Mujaḥhid forward as a precursor to the dogmatic, rationalistic school of Qurʾān interpretation

38 According to a report in Ibn Saʿd, when Ibn ʿAbbās became old and blind, he would send inquirers to Saʿd for instruction; see his *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:375. Ṭabarī alleged that the commentary of al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim was essentially that of Ibn ʿAbbās transmitted through the mediation of Saʿd; see his *Tafsīr*, 1:91. Saʿd’s dependence on Ibn ʿAbbās for *tafsīr* and for knowledge of the pre-Islamic prophets is evident from the large number of his transmissions from Ibn ʿAbbās in Ṭabarī’s section on pre-Islamic history; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:88ff. On Ibn ʿAbbās and his role in *tafsīr*, see Goldziher, *Schools*, 42f.; L. Veccia Vaglieri, “Abd Allāh b. ʿAbbās,” *EL*, 1:40; F. Sezgin, *GAS*, 1:25–28; Abbott, *Studies II*, 99; Leemhuis, “Origins,” 15. A *tafsīr* has been attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās, but the authenticity of its ascription to him is doubtful; see Andrew Rippin, “*Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās* and the Criteria for Dating Early *Tafsīr* Texts,” *JSAI* (1994), 38–83.

39 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:376, 384; Abbott, *Studies II*, 98–99.

40 Goldziher, *Schools*, 37.

41 *Ibid.*, 37–39.

42 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:90; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 33. Leemhuis argues that, while we may have proof of mid-second century “written fixation of the works that transmit *tafsīr ʿan Ibn Abī Najīh ʿan Mujaḥhid*,” they do not preclude the raising of commentary traditions to the level of Ibn ʿAbbās, leaving the question of the authenticity of Mujaḥhid’s transmissions from Ibn ʿAbbās unresolved; see his “Origins,” 13–30, esp. 21. See also, Abbott, *Studies II*, 98. As for the *tafsīr* attributed to Mujaḥhid, see *Tafsīr Mujaḥhid*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Sūrī (Beirut, [1970s]).

43 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:91.

later characterized by the Mu'tazila.⁴⁴ The rationalism adopted by Muḡāhid does not accord well with the common perception of the *quṣṣāṣ*. However, as Goldziher correctly noted, Muḡāhid was not a systematic dogmatist, as some Mu'tazilites, who claimed that his commentary contains exegesis that is anti-rationalistic, later asserted.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Muḡāhid, as Andrew Rippin noted, also integrated traditions of the people of the Book, frequently connected to the *quṣṣāṣ*, into his commentary, such as his explanation of how Solomon lost his kingdom for forty days to Satan, referred to in Sūrat Ṣād (38):34–5.⁴⁶ Muḡāhid offers an important example of the difficulty in identifying the characteristics of a *qāṣṣ*. While he was certainly aware of the traditions of the Jews and Christians, neither he nor his commentary is associated with *qaṣaṣ* by modern scholars. Contrariwise, if he does harbor aspects of a pre-Mu'tazilite rationalism, it seems that he was the antithesis of the *qāṣṣ*. The reality seems to lie somewhere in the middle.⁴⁷

A slightly younger contemporary, Muḡammad b. Ka'b, a descendant of the Jewish tribe of Qurayza, was purportedly the author of a *tafsīr* and was the most knowledgeable person in Qur'an recitation whom the distinguished

44 He based this assessment on Muḡāhid's assertion that no man could see God, an issue which Goldziher claimed developed from interpretations of Sūrat al-An'ām (6):102 in reference to the debate whether man will be able to see God in the hereafter—an issue in which Goldziher saw competing views between orthodoxy and Mu'tazilism. Muḡāhid actually makes the statement in reference to Sūrat al-Qiyāma (75):20–25; see Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 29:192–193; Goldziher, *Schools*, 70. On Goldziher's characterization of Muḡāhid as a pre-Mu'tazilite rationalist, see his *Schools*, 61–72.

45 Ibid., 72, citing his position on Sūrat al-Isrā' (17):81.

46 Muḡāhid, *Tafsīr*, 2:549–551. Muḡāhid's commentary stands out on two points. First, it is strikingly similar to a story about Solomon found in the apocryphal legends of the Jews; see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1968), 4:150, 153, esp. 168–172. Second, he names the incarnation of Satan Āsaf, diverging from the Jewish legend which identified him as Asmodeus and from later Islamic traditions which give him various names, such as Sakhr b. 'Ufayr; see Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. Aḡmad Farīd (Beirut, 2003), 3:118–119. However, Muḡāhid's identification of the demon/king as Āsaf further reveals his familiarity with the traditions of the Jews since Āsaf (Āsaph) was the name of a musician in the court of both David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 6:31–43, 25:1; Psalm 73–83). These factors suggest that Muḡāhid was intimately familiar with the traditions of the Jews, both scriptural and apocryphal, on Solomon's reign. Both Muqātil b. Sulaymān (*Tafsīr*, 3:118–120) and Ṭabarī (*Tafsīr*, 23:156–160) also demonstrate a familiarity with the traditions of the Jews in their commentaries on this passage. On Andrew Rippin's evaluation of Muḡāhid, see his "Mudḡāhid b. Djabr," *EL2*, 7:293.

47 Andrew Rippin also noted that Muḡāhid and his commentary resist easy categorization; see his "Mudḡāhid b. Djabr," *EL2*, 7:293.

“Successor” and fellow *qāṣṣ* ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh ever met.⁴⁸ Possibly even more influential than these was their Baṣran contemporary Qatāda b. Di‘āma.⁴⁹ While Ibn al-Nadīm does not list a work of *tafsīr* by Qatāda, he notes that two written *tafsīrs* were taken from him: those of Sa‘īd b. Bashīr and Muḥammad b. Thawr, with the latter having been transmitted by Ma‘mar b. Rāshid.⁵⁰ A perusal of later commentaries, such as those of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī and of al-Ṭabarī, confirms Qatāda’s importance.⁵¹ The extent of his influence, as well as that of his contemporaries, is clearly evident in the early commentary of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī.

Quṣṣāṣ Representation in Tafsīr

The *Tafsīr* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī

An analysis of the 3755 reports in ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī’s *Tafsīr* reveals that his commentary is dominated by the exegesis of the early *quṣṣāṣ*.⁵² I tallied the first source of the *isnād* for each report and compared it to the list of *quṣṣāṣ* assembled in the Appendix. This analysis revealed that 2614 reports, or 70%, originated with *quṣṣāṣ*. Furthermore, among those reports from the *quṣṣāṣ*, an overwhelming number, 1894, or 50% of the total commentary, come from Qatāda b. Di‘āma. The next three highest representatives in the commentary lag significantly behind Qatāda b. Di‘āma—al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with 240 reports, or 6.4% of the commentary, Mujāhid b. Jabr with 218, or 5.8%, and Ibn ‘Abbās with 180, or 4.8%. It is not simply the large number of traditions from Qatāda, as well as those from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Mujāhid, that hint at this *tafsīr*’s connection to the *quṣṣāṣ*, there are also nineteen other *quṣṣāṣ* cited throughout the work.⁵³ Even though ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s commentary is not usually associated with the *quṣṣāṣ*, these numbers undeniably affirm that he depended heavily on them. In addition, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s commentary does not incorpo-

48 Ibn Ḥajar, 3:685; Sezgin, *GAS*, 1:32. On Muḥammad b. Ka‘b, see the Appendix # 72. On ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, see the Appendix # 65.

49 C. Pellat, “Qatāda b. Di‘āma,” *EL*, 4:748; Appendix # 71.

50 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 34.

51 Horst tallied that Qatāda is listed as an authority 3060 times in Ṭabarī’s *tafsīr*; see his “Überlieferung,” 301. On Qatāda as a Qur’ān commentator, see also Raif George Houry, *Les légendes prophétiques dans l’Islam* (Wiesbaden, 1978), 91–93.

52 This analysis was based on Maḥmūd Muḥammad ‘Abduh’s edition (Beirut, 1999).

53 Sa‘d b. Jubayr (72 times); Ibn Mas‘ūd (67 times); Abū Hurayra (53 times); Ka‘b al-Aḥbār (16 times); ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (11 times); Thābit al-Bunānī (10 times); Muḥammad b. Ka‘b (8 times); Abū al-Aḥwaṣ (6 times); Zayd b. Thābit (4 times); Mu‘ādh b. Jabal (3 times); ‘Umar b. Dharr, Yazīd b. Abān and Nawf al-Bakālī (2 times); Ibn Rawāḥa, Abū al-Dardā, Sa‘d b. Abī l-Ḥasan, Maṭar al-Warrāq, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī and Zurāra b. Awfā (1 time).

rate a large amount of narrative exegesis, and therefore does not appear to follow the commonly-accepted character traits of *qaṣaṣ*-material. In fact, much of the commentary is identifiable as “paraphrastic.”⁵⁴ Many of the statements attributed to Qatāda, for example, are concise and lack the characteristics of a narrative. This suggests that, at least in the case of ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *qaṣaṣ*-material was not necessarily, nor even primarily, composed from narratives. Here, as in the evidence culled from the sayings of the *quṣṣāṣ* in Chapter One, the *quṣṣāṣ* display a wide variety of interests. As a result, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s commentary indicates that statistically the *quṣṣāṣ* played a major role in the *tafsīr* tradition, yet that this role did not always include stories.

The *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī

Similar conclusions can be drawn from analyses of Ṭabarī’s *tafsīr*, though he utilizes narrative exegesis more than ‘Abd al-Razzāq. Ṭabarī also depended much upon the *quṣṣāṣ*. Horst’s research on the transmitters in Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr* is particularly relevant here for the *quṣṣāṣ* can be found throughout his article.⁵⁵ He noted, for example, that the *isnad* most often cited by Ṭabarī, at 3060 times, was traced back to Qatāda b. Di‘āmā.⁵⁶ Other *qaṣaṣ*-sources for Ṭabarī’s *tafsīr* include Mujaḥid b. Jabr,⁵⁷ Sa‘īd b. Jubayr,⁵⁸ al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,⁵⁹ ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr⁶⁰ and Wahb b. Munabbih.⁶¹ It merits mention that Ṭabarī cited ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī as a source, and thus the presence of common sources between the two commentators is not surprising.⁶²

Complementing the results gleaned from Horst’s analysis is a tradition from Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) hinting further at Ṭabarī’s dependence upon the *quṣṣāṣ*. Yāqūt listed the “writings” (*kutub*) of a handful of men, many of whom were numbered among the *quṣṣāṣ*, from whom Ṭabarī drew his *tafsīr*. He states:

54 Leemhuis argued that the earliest commentaries were “paraphrastic,” characterized by providing synonyms and paraphrases for unclear passages, and that to this were added later narratives from the *quṣṣāṣ*; see his “Origins,” 22–23, 29.

55 Horst, “Überlieferung,” *passim*.

56 *Ibid.*, 301–302. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 101.

57 Horst, “Überlieferung,” 295–298, 301, 304. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 101.

58 Horst, “Überlieferung,” 303. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 101.

59 Horst, “Überlieferung,” 301.

60 *Ibid.*, 295.

61 *Ibid.*, 303.

62 *Ibid.*, 301.

[Al-Ṭabarī] mentioned in it [his *tafsīr*] the *tafsīr* books of other authors, from Ibn ‘Abbās five “recensions” (*ṭuruq*),⁶³ from Sa‘īd b. Jubayr two recensions, from Mujāhid b. Jabir three recensions and possibly from him in other places more than that, and from Qatāda b. Dī‘āma three recensions, and from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī three recensions, and from ‘Ikrima three recensions and from al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim two recensions and ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd one recension along with the *tafsīrs* of ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Zayd b. Aslam, Ibn Jurayj, and Muqātil b. Ḥayyān. Additionally, it contains well-known traditions from the Qur‘ān commentators and others. It includes all that is necessary of traditions transmitted with *isnads*. He did not take into consideration untrustworthy *tafsīrs* so he did not bring into his book anything from Muḥammad b. al-Sā‘ib al-Kalbī, nor Muqātil b. Sulaymān, nor Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wāqidi because in his opinion they are suspect.⁶⁴

Among the eleven men mentioned as sources for his commentary, six are *quṣṣās*. Moreover, al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim purportedly took his *tafsīr* directly from Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, suggesting that his *tafsīr* was already that of a *qāṣṣ*.⁶⁵

The statistics on the sources for ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s and Ṭabarī’s commentaries suggest that the *quṣṣās* played a fundamental role in the development of *tafsīr*. As already noted, this assumption has been held by a number of scholars though usually in light of doubts about the historicity of the tradition stemming from the *quṣṣās*’ alleged emphasis on narratives, both those taken from Jewish and Christian materials as well as those connected to the biography (*sīra*) of the Prophet.⁶⁶ While the extent of the *quṣṣās*’ influence on ‘Abd al-Razzāq and Ṭabarī is obvious, the nature of their influence is unclear. It would be beneficial, for example, to compile the commentaries of individual *quṣṣās* and analyze their content and style in order to produce a more accurate definition of “*qaṣaṣ*-material.” I suspect that the diversity found in the textual evidence in Chapter One would be mirrored in the results of this type of analysis.

On the surface, statistical evidence on the prevalence of the *quṣṣās* in the *tafsīr* tradition seems to confirm the revisionist supposition that the commentary tradition is a creation of the *quṣṣās*. However, the revisionist argument is not based on sheer number of citations of the *quṣṣās* in the *tafsīr* sources.

63 This is Rosenthal’s translation for *ṭuruq*; see his *General Introduction*, 1:109.

64 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Irshād al-arīb ilā ma‘rifat al-adīb (Mu‘jam al-udabā’)*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (Leiden 1907–1927), 6:440–441, as cited in Rosenthal, *General Introduction*, 1:109–110.

65 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:40.

66 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 119–148, esp. 146–148; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 216–226.

Heretofore, quantitative analyses were not accurate, because there was no body of names against which to cross-reference these sources. Rather, the revisionist argument is based largely on the assumption that *qaṣaṣ* means narrative, and that narratives, i.e. “stories,” are ahistorical. The current research calls into question the validity of the former argument. Conclusions as to the accuracy of the latter can only be made by stringent analysis of individual traditions. It is evident, however, that the *quṣṣāṣ* played an essential role as source material for the commentary tradition. It is less obvious, though, that this role was associated primarily with narratives.⁶⁷

Furthermore, one of the implied intents behind the attribution of the *tafsīr* tradition to the *quṣṣāṣ* seems to be the marginalization of its reliability because of its association with second-rate, “popular” scholars. Due to the prevalence of the *quṣṣāṣ* throughout the tradition, this supposition was maintained by advocating an extreme position that the majority of the commentary tradition, even those passages not explicated by narratives, is suspect. This conclusion, however, is untenable. First, the large number of well-respected scholars of the community who are numbered among the *quṣṣāṣ* and the *mufassirūn* challenges the perception of the *qāṣṣ* as an unreliable “popular preacher.” The evidence seems to suggest that the *qāṣṣ* was much more orthodox and mainstream than previously believed. Secondly, the fine reputation of many of the *quṣṣāṣ* can be attested in their presence throughout the commentary tradition. Their exegesis was by no means restricted to narratives. However, these factors do not altogether acquit them of potential fabrications in their commentaries. It is clear that commentators often were unsure of the explication of certain passages of the Qur’ān, as shown by Crone’s analysis of *Sūrat Quraysh*.⁶⁸ How much of this uncertainty is the product of the *quṣṣāṣ* in particular can only be determined by more detailed evaluations of individual *quṣṣāṣ* and their commentaries.

67 Leemhuis argued that narratives in the commentary tradition were added by the *quṣṣāṣ* to the earlier “paraphrastic” commentaries. See his “Origins,” 22–23, 29. This connection between the *quṣṣāṣ* and narratives is unclear. Moreover, the large number of citations of *quṣṣāṣ* who gave “paraphrastic” commentaries, to use Leemhuis’s description, further challenges this view. Wansbrough’s argument that the *quṣṣāṣ* introduced narratives, primarily from the Jews and Christians, is correct in part. It is so because the *quṣṣāṣ* appear to have played a broad and extensive role in the *tafsīr* tradition. It is, nevertheless, based on an inaccurate assumption that the *quṣṣāṣ* were the primary purveyors of these narratives; see Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 146–148. This does not appear to garner credible (or sufficient) evidence.

68 Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 203f.

Isrāʿīlyyāt

Not only are the *quṣṣāṣ* most often associated with providing a “narrative framework” for Qurʾānic exegesis, they are, more controversially, often named as the source for the introduction of lore from “the people of the Book” into the Islamic tradition—commonly referred to as *isrāʿīlyyāt* or *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*.⁶⁹ The Islamic tradition’s perception of this material has been controversial since early in the community, and the sources contain conflicting reports about its permissibility. M.J. Kister, in his study on a Prophetic *ḥadīth* advocating for the transmission of traditions from the Children of Israel (*ḥaddithū ʿan banī isrāʿīla wa-lā ḥaraja*), argued that “there was no serious opposition to the Jewish and Christian traditions transmitted by Jewish and Christian converts, in so far as they concurred with the views of orthodox Islam.”⁷⁰ How the Islamic tradition defined what “concurred” with its view was more complicated.⁷¹

- 69 Goldziher, *Schools*, 37–38; Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 242; G.H.A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature* (Leiden, 1969), 121–138; al-Kisāʿī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ: Tales of the Prophets of Kisāʿī*, trans. William Thackston (Boston, 1978), xiv–xv; Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 146–148; M.J. Kister, “Legends in *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* Literature,” *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford, 1988), 82–114; Leemhuis, “Origins,” 27; Roberto Tottoli, “Origin and Use of the Term *Isrāʿīlyyāt* in Muslim Literature,” *Arabica* xlvī (1999), 193–210; Claude Gilliot, “Exegesis: Classical,” *EQ*, 2:105–106; al-Thaʿlabī, *Arāʾis al-majālis fī qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ or “Lives of the Prophets”: As Recounted by Abū Ishāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Thaʿlabī*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden, 2002), xi–xxiv.
- 70 M.J. Kister, “*Ḥaddithū ʿan banī isrāʿīla wa-lā ḥaraja*: A Study of an Early Tradition,” *Israel Oriental Studies* ii (1972), 238. Kister chose a variant of this tradition as recorded in ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ* as his exemplary tradition. Yet the complexity of the issue surrounding the permissibility of the knowledge of the people of the Book may be better characterized in the following tradition in the *Muṣannaḥ* in which Zayd b. Aslam related that the Messenger of God said: “Do not ask the people of the Scripture about anything because they will not lead you correctly, for they have already led themselves astray.” So he [Zayd] said, “We said, “O Messenger of God, should we narrate (traditions) from the Banū Isrāʿīl?” He said, “Narrate, and there is nothing objectionable in that.” See ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 6:110. The tradition presents an obvious interpretive challenge. It seems to indicate that the Muslims were not to seek out unsubstantiated information from the people of the Scripture by asking them questions, yet they could narrate traditions from them which, I postulate, may have already been recorded, i.e. in the books themselves, and were, therefore, reliable as revelations of God.
- 71 Even the medieval scholar Ibn al-Jawzī who challenged the *quṣṣāṣ* on their use of *isrāʿīlyyāt* in his *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ* (10–11) included in his *al-Mudhish* a section on *dhikr al-mawāʾiʿ*, which is divided into *al-qīṣaṣ* and *al-mawāʾiʿ wa-l-ishārāt*. The former are tales of pious believers of the past, like Adam, and the second are sermons; see Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Mudhish*, ed. Marwān Qabbānī (Beirut, 1985), 76f.; Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 242.

To be sure, the association of *qaşas* with the Jews is expressed in various traditions, both positive and negative, throughout the sources. The commentary tradition preserves some generally positive reports about the relationship of the Banū Isrāʾīl to *qaşas*, one being the commentary on Sūrat al-Isrāʾ (17):1–8. Here the Prophet, when he ascended into the seven heavens (*al-miʾrāj*), found Aaron, the brother of Moses, in the fifth heaven giving *qaşas* to the Banū Isrāʾīl.⁷² The connection of the term *qaşas* to Aaron's session seems to highlight the "Jewishness" of the term, although the report also suggests that *qaşas* was not only important temporally, it maintained its relevance eternally. A less flattering evaluation of the relationship between the Jews and the *qaşas* is conveyed in a report alleging that the downfall of the Banū Isrāʾīl occurred precisely because they engaged in *qaşas*.⁷³ Regardless of the sentiment, be it positive or negative, the implication in both reports is that *qaşas* is directly affiliated to the Banū Isrāʾīl.

This allegedly essential connection between *qaşas* and the Banū Isrāʾīl, along with the connection of influential *quşşās* like Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb b. Munabbih to the stories of the prophets, seems to have played an important role in the perception that the *quşşās* were directly connected to the traditions of the people of the Book. Eventually *qaşas* became virtually synonymous with those *isrāʾīliyyāt* that were rarely viewed positively. While not every report about this relationship was antagonistic, *isrāʾīliyyāt* in the Islamic tradition were increasingly shunned, and the *quşşās* were often blamed as the source

It appears then that the tension between the acceptance of these stories and their rejection is still palpable in the medieval period. Juynboll's study on the perception of the *isrāʾīliyyāt* in contemporary Egypt reveals the same sorts of fluctuations between acceptance and rejection of these traditions; see his *Authenticity*, 121–138.

72 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 15:9; Thaʿlabī, *Kashf*, 6:62; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 5:202; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:20. Al-Samʿānī adds that Moses was giving *qaşas* and admonishing the Banū Isrāʾīl; see his *Tafsīr*, eds. Yāsir b. Ibrāhīm and Ghanīm b. ʿAbbās b. Ghanīm (Riyadh, 1997), 4:158.

73 The report is found in three variants. One states: "When the Banū Isrāʾīl engaged in *qaşas* they perished (*anna banī isrāʾīl lammā qaşşū halakū*)." See al-Daylamī, *al-Firdaws bi-maʾthūr al-khiṭāb*, ed. Muḥammad al-Saʿd b. Basyūnī Zaghlūl (Beirut, 1986), 1:231; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fi gharīb al-ḥadīth wa-l-athar*, eds. Ṭāhīr Aḥmad al-Rāzī and Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī (Cairo, 1963–1965), 4:71; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut, 1956), q-ş-ş. A second variant reads: "When the Banū Isrāʾīl perished they engaged in *qaşas* (*inna banī isrāʾīl lammā halakū qaşşū*)." See Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 4:80; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 127; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 176. The third variant states that when the Banū Isrāʾīl perished they gave judgments (*lammā halakū qaḍaw*). See Abū Nuʿaym, *Hilya*, 4:401; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 127, n. 4.

for their introduction.⁷⁴ Abū Mansūr al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) cited Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī, a fourth/tenth century poet, who connected *qaṣaṣ* to either Israel (*wa-man qaṣṣa li-Isrāʾīl*), glossed by al-Thaʿālibī as “the reports of the prophets (*al-ḥadīth ‘an al-anbiyā’*),” or to those who told short stories.⁷⁵ A contemporary of al-Thaʿālibī was Aḥmad b. Muḥammad of the similar *laqab* al-Thaʿālibī (d. 427/1035) who compiled his famous compilation of these traditions in his *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, commonly known as his *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, one of a number of works in this genre, and who, by doing so, further established the connection between the *quṣṣāṣ* and the traditions of the people of the Book.⁷⁶ Thus, by the sixth/twelfth century, Ibn al-Jawzī, in devoting a whole work to the *quṣṣāṣ* and *mudhakkirūn*, bemoaned their role in the introduction of these reports, saying that “the stories (*akhbār*) of the ancient peoples were seldom authentic, especially those that were related concerning ancient Israel... such as their teachings that David sent Uriah out in order that he might be killed and then married his wife.”⁷⁷ The fundamental role of the *quṣṣāṣ* in introducing the *isrāʾīliyyāt* into the Islamic tradition has been widely accepted in modern scholarship. In light of our expanded list of *quṣṣāṣ*, these assumptions can now be evaluated more closely.

The *Quṣṣāṣ* and *Isrāʾīliyyāt*

Of the twenty-seven *quṣṣāṣ* who were associated with *tafsīr*, only sixteen were singled out for their knowledge of the Jewish and Christian scriptures.⁷⁸ In relation to those identified with *tafsīr*, this amounts to over half; in terms of the total number of *quṣṣāṣ*, this indicates that only 15% were known specifically for their knowledge of the scriptures of the people of the Book. Yet even though this percentage is quite small, it may not reflect the relative influence of these sixteen in regards to the development of the *tafsīr* because listed among this group are some of the more influential commentators of the Umayyad period, such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Abū al-Dardāʾ, Tamīm al-Dārī, Zayd b. Thābit, Abū Hurayra, Saʿīd b. Jubayr, Mujāhid b. Jabr, Wahb b. Munabbih, Qatāda b.

74 Abbott argues that these attitudes were forming by the mid-second century, *Studies II*, 10. On the connection of the *quṣṣāṣ* to this development, see Vajda, “Isrāʾīliyyāt,” *El2*, 4:211–212. See also the sources mentioned above in n. 69.

75 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, ed. Mufid Muḥammad Qumayḥa (Beirut, 2000), 3:419.

76 See Brinner’s introduction to his translation of Thaʿālibī’s *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, xi–xxiv.

77 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Quṣṣāṣ*, 10–11 (translation taken from Swartz, 97).

78 They are: (9) Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, (10) Abū al-Dardāʾ, (16) Tamīm al-Dārī, (18) Zayd b. Thābit, (19) Abū Hurayra, (25) ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, (36) Nawf b. Faḍāla, (40) Saʿīd b. Jubayr, (46) Kurdūs b. al-ʿAbbas, (57) Tubayʿ b. ʿĀmir, (58) Mujāhid b. Jabr, (63) Yazīd b. Abān, (67) Wahb b. Munabbih, (71) Qatāda b. Dīʿāma, (72) Muḥammad b. Kaʿb and (97) Muqātil b. Sulaymān.

Di‘āma and Muḥammad b. Ka‘b. On the other hand, these statistics do not take into consideration other scholars who, though not identified as *quṣṣāṣ*, were also directly associated with the traditions of the people of the Book. The most prominent representatives of this group are ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,⁷⁹ ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām,⁸⁰ Ibn ‘Abbās,⁸¹ Abū Mūsa al-Ash‘arī⁸² and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ,⁸³ though they are certainly not alone in their interest in the pre-Islamic Scriptures.⁸⁴ The Islamic sources’ failure to identify this latter group of scholars as *quṣṣāṣ* suggests the Muslims may not have always drawn a direct correlation between the reports of the *quṣṣāṣ* and the traditions of the pre-Islamic prophets.

The *quṣṣāṣ* who are most often associated with the introduction of *isrā’īliyyāt* into the Islamic tradition are Ka‘b al-Aḥbār⁸⁵ and Wahb b. Munabbih,⁸⁶ though they were by no means the only *quṣṣāṣ* who knew the pre-Islamic Scriptures. Tamīm al-Dārī was numbered among the scholars of the people of the Scriptures.⁸⁷ Zayd b. Thābit was famously instructed by the Prophet to learn Hebrew in order to inform him of the content of the Jewish scriptures.⁸⁸ At the turn of the century, *quṣṣāṣ* from across the empire were still known for their associations with sacred scriptures. In Kufa, Kurdūs b. al-‘Abbās “used to read the pre-Islamic Scriptures and speak about the Gospel and the Torah.”⁸⁹ Mujaḥid b. Jabr of Mecca ostensibly drew much knowledge from the people of the Book, either by reading their Scriptures or by consulting them.⁹⁰ Exposure to the earlier Scriptures continued into the first quarter of the second century.

79 Ibn Mufliḥ al-Maqdisī, *al-Ādāb al-shar‘iyya*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūt and ‘Umar al-Qiyām (Beirut, 1996), 2:100; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 10. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 8.

80 J. Horowitz, “‘Abd Allāh b. Salām,” *EL* 2, 1:52.

81 L. Veccia Vaglieri, “‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās,” *EL* 2, 1:40–41.

82 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 32:41–54.

83 Abbott, *Studies II*, 9.

84 For a summary of this issue, see Abbott, *Studies II*, 7–10.

85 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2408–409. See also, M. Schmitz, “Ka‘b al-Aḥbār,” *EL* 2, 4:316; Bernard Chapira, “Légendes bibliques attribuées à Ka‘b al-Aḥbār,” *Revue des Etudes Juives*, lxxix, 86 ff., lxx, 37 ff.; Brinner, *Arā’is*, xxvi–xxvii; Juynboll, *Authenticity*, 121–138.

86 Khoury argued that Wahb should be considered the progenitor of the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* tradition; see his *Légendes*, 84. See also Raif George Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 210–221; idem, “Wahb b. Munabbih,” *EL* 2, 11:34–36; Juynboll, *Authenticity*, 121–138.

87 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:259.

88 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:308–309. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 256–258.

89 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:342. See also Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7:242; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 4:200; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fi tamyiz al-ṣahāba*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajjāwī (Beirut, 1992), 5:639; idem, *Tahdhīb*, 3:467–468.

90 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:28.

Qatāda in Basra argued on Islamic topics based on teachings of the Torah.⁹¹ In Medina, Muḥammad b. Kaʿb, a descendant of the Jewish tribe of Qurayza, gave commentary based on reports about the pre-Islamic prophets.⁹²

Certainly, some of these scholars, like Wahb b. Munabbih, came to be affiliated with the *isrāʾīliyyāt* more than others. It may be helpful to mention, though, that in spite of his association with stories of pre-Islamic prophets, Wahb, thus far, has only explicitly been connected to the term *qaṣṣa* in two, rather late, sources.⁹³ How this is to be interpreted is open to debate. On its surface, however, it suggests that the earliest biographers did not perceive of him as a *qāṣṣ* or, at least, as primarily a *qāṣṣ*, despite his well-established connection with the stories of the pre-Islamic prophets. Considering his widely recognized association with “stories,” it seems rather odd that he is not consistently identified as a *qāṣṣ* or as having given *qaṣaṣ*, unless the biographers agreed with regard to a different view of the role of a *qāṣṣ* than simply as one who related traditions of the people of the Scriptures. Even more unusual, though, is that even later biographers, those who would already have associated the *quṣṣās* with *isrāʾīliyyāt*, such as Mizzī, Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar—all of whom lived after Ibn al-Jawzī who himself already made this connection—never specifically identify Wahb as a *qāṣṣ*.

The *Quṣṣās* on Moses

While the reports presenting anecdotal evidence of the *quṣṣās*’s knowledge of the traditions of the Jews and Christians are by and large positive, other reports challenge their trustworthiness because of their questionable interpretations. In one instance, the Kufan *qāṣṣ* Nawf b. Faḍāla al-Bakkālī, the step son of Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, alleged that the Moses who was the Companion of the enigmatic Qurʾānic figure al-Khiḍr was not the same Moses of the Banū Isrāʾīl. Saʿīd b. Jubayr, himself a *qāṣṣ*, informed his teacher Ibn ʿAbbās of Nawf’s opinion. Ibn ʿAbbās exclaimed: “The enemy of God lied!”⁹⁴ On the surface, this tradition seems to affirm the *quṣṣās*’ tendency, especially those with ties to the Jewish

91 Jāhiz, *Bayān*, 1:104.

92 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:298–299, 923–925.

93 See the Appendix # 67.

94 Al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Risāla*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr (Cairo, 1939), 442; ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī, *Tafsīr*, 2:408; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 35:43–46, 48–57; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:56–57, 3:1246–1247, 4:1752–1754; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:1847–1850; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:417, 424; idem, *Tafsīr*, 15:279–280; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkiyyīn*, ed. Ismāʿīl Ḥasan Ḥusayn (Riyadh, 1997), 410, 412; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:250. For more citations for this tradition, see the editor’s note in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 35:46. See also Goldziher, *Studies II*, 154; Pedersen, “Criticism,” 217.

and Christian traditions, as in the case of Nawf, for promoting the *isrāʿīliyyāt*. In addition, Nawf's familial connection to Ka'b al-Aḥbār did not mitigate the perception that he relied upon *isrāʿīliyyāt*. Therewithal, the report lends itself to be interpreted as a judgment upon the *quṣṣāṣ* for distorting the faith by false teaching. Other factors, however, suggest that this deduction may not be accurate.

First to be noted, Saʿīd b. Jubayr, the informant in the tradition—a role suggesting his opposition to Nawf's interpretation—and one who was the source of many reports about the pre-Islamic prophets, was also a *qāṣṣ*.⁹⁵ Consequently, this report claiming to give the opinion of only one *qāṣṣ*, Nawf, in fact preserves the opinions of two *quṣṣāṣ*. Furthermore, these two *quṣṣāṣ* are portrayed in opposition to each other over a Qurʾānic interpretation suggesting that commentators who knew the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity did not automatically default to these traditions. In addition to this, even the medieval scholar al-Nawawī in his commentary on Muslim's version of this tradition, being aware of Nawf's strong reputation as a scholar and apparently fearing that this report marred the reputation of a distinguished scholar, noted that Ibn ʿAbbās's accusation that Nawf was “the enemy of God” not be taken literally, rather as hyperbole (*mubālagha*).⁹⁶

The *Quṣṣāṣ* on Abraham

A second example, from the *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī, confirms that *quṣṣāṣ*, even those from Jewish background, did not always defer to their own traditions while expounding upon the Qurʾān. One Qurʾānic passage exemplifying the exegetical tension between Judaism and Islam is that describing God's testing of Abraham, asking him to sacrifice his son.⁹⁷ The Jewish Scriptures identify the boy as Isaac (Iṣḥāq); the Qurʾān, on the other hand, is silent about the identity of the boy. This silence, though, did not keep the commentators from speculating on his identity. The commentary tradition preserves the various opinions

95 Saʿīd gave reports on many of the pre-Islamic prophets as indicated in the opening sections of Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*; see 1:150; 1:332; 1:417; 1:458; 1:523; 1:654–655. He also allegedly inquired from the “People of the Scriptures” on interpretive matters; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:461–462.

96 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut, 1972), 15:137. Therefore, Pedersen, in my opinion, rightly deduced that this report is “not a general criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ*,” see his “Criticism,” 217.

97 On this event, see Norman Calder, “From Midrash to Scripture: The Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition,” *Muséon* 101:3–4 (1988), 375–402.

of the earliest scholars of the community, and Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* is a valuable repository of opinions on this debate.

Ṭabarī records traditions advocating for each of the two sons of Abraham, Ismā'īl and Ishāq, as the requested sacrifice. As for those who alleged that Ishāq was the sacrifice, Ṭabarī cites Ibn 'Abbās and al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, along with five *quṣṣās*: Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū al-Aḥwaṣ, Abū Hurayra, Ka'b al-Aḥbār and 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr.⁹⁸ Only one of the five *quṣṣās*, Ka'b al-Aḥbār, comes from Jewish background, seeming to confirm Ka'b's role in introducing *isrā'īliyyāt*.⁹⁹

Furthermore, the list of those who believed that Ismā'īl was the son whom Abraham was to sacrifice is just as diverse. In addition to distinguished Companions like Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar, three *quṣṣās*, Mujāhid b. Jabr, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓī, are named as sources who advocate for Ismā'īl, while a fourth *qāṣṣ*, Sa'īd b. Jubayr, is cited as the one who transmitted this report from Ibn 'Abbās.¹⁰⁰ Just as was true among those who made the case for Ishāq, only one of these *quṣṣās*, Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓī, descended from Jewish lineage. In the report attributed to him, he informed the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz that, while the Jews admit that Abraham was called to sacrifice Ismā'īl, they intentionally hid this from the Arabs so as to keep from them the honor of having their father be the sacrifice.¹⁰¹ The strength of his argument for identifying the boy as Ismā'īl is therefore rooted in what appears to be "insider" information. In this instance, a Muslim of Jewish heritage exposed the Jews' hidden agenda behind keeping this information secret.¹⁰²

The commentary on this passage indicates the complex relationship of the *quṣṣās*, even those of Jewish lineage, to Jewish material. This example suggests that, while the *quṣṣās* certainly engaged in Qur'ānic commentary, the role that

98 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23:81–83.

99 For allegations against Ka'b for introducing *isrā'īliyyāt*, see Brinner in Tha'labī, *Arā'is*, xxvi–xxvii; Juynboll, *Authenticity*, 121–138.

100 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23:83–85. It should be mentioned that Ibn 'Abbās is cited as having advocated both Ishāq and Ismā'īl. Goldziher noted that opposing or mutually-exclusive commentaries were attributed to Ibn 'Abbās; see his *Schools*, 51.

101 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23:85. Goldziher refers to this tradition but, instead of identifying the source as Muḥammad b. Ka'b, he identifies him as "a servile convert;" see his *Schools*, 52.

102 This type of putative manipulation of information by the Jews was considered by the Muslims as *tahrīf*. After the 5th/11th century, largely as a result of Ibn Ḥazm's influence, the term was extended to apply to alleged distortions in the text. See H. Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tahrīf," *El2*, 10:111–112; Gordon Nickel, "Early Muslim Accusations of *Tahrīf*: Muqātil b. Sulaymān's Commentary on Key Qur'ānic Verses," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden, 2007), 207–223.

they played in introducing the traditions of the People of the Scriptures into the Islamic tradition is still uncertain: on the particular issue of Abraham's sacrifice eight *quṣṣāṣ*—nine if Sa'īd b. Jubayr is included—are divided among the opposing opinions. Furthermore, each interpretation enjoyed the support of one scholar of Jewish descent.¹⁰³ At least in this instance, the attribution of the *isrā'īliyyāt* to the *quṣṣāṣ* or to individuals who allegedly maintained a propensity and sympathy for the *ahl al-kitāb* seems unjustified.

The Tafsīr of Muqātil b. Sulaymān: The Merging of Tafsīr with Qaṣaṣ and Isrā'īliyyāt

Familiarity with and utilization of the traditions of the People of Book were allegedly factors in the repudiation of the famous Qur'ān commentator and *qāṣṣ* Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767).¹⁰⁴ Muqātil was a prolific author on topics related to the Qur'ān and its commentary.¹⁰⁵ His most famous work is certainly his extant *Tafsīr*.¹⁰⁶ This *Tafsīr* is of particular importance to the study of the *quṣṣāṣ* and the *isrā'īliyyāt* since it has been presumed that it preserved the vestiges of early *qaṣaṣ* material.¹⁰⁷ Criticisms of Muqātil's *Tafsīr* occur in early attestations in the Islamic sources. Al-Jāhīz preserved the opinion of his

103 Goldziher noted that Ka'b was not the only advocate for Isaac; but by referring to him as "the Jewish scholar" and by not identifying the "servile convert" who supported Ismā'il as the reputable Muḥammad b. Ka'b of the Jewish Qurayza tribe, he may have unintentionally left the impression that Jewish converts defended the Torah; see his *Schools*, 52–53.

104 Goldziher, *Schools*, 38–40; Sezgin, *GAS*, 1:36–37; Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 136; Plessner and Rippin, "Muqātil b. Sulaymān," *EL2*, 7:508. Plessner and Rippin noted that Muqātil was also criticized for anthropomorphism and for affiliation with questionable theological groups such as the Murji'a and the Zaydiyya. These accusations, however, do not appear to be connected to criticisms of his *tafsīr* for as Plessner and Rippin noted, "Certainly there is little or no evidence for any of these stances in his extant works;" see Plessner and Rippin, "Muqātil b. Sulaymān," *EL2*, 7:508.

105 Ibn al-Nadīm names twelve different works attributed to him; see his *Fihrist*, 179.

106 There are still important unresolved issues surrounding the two modern editions of Muqātil's *Tafsīr*. Specifically, the modern edition of 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shihāta is based on the "Baghdādī" recension alone, while other recensions of the work, in particular the recension from Marw, could prove helpful in supplying a more accurate production of the work. For discussions of these issues, see Claude Gilliot, "Muqātil, grand exégète, tradionniste et théologien maudit," *Journal Asiatique* 279:1 (1991), 39–50; van Ess, *TG*, 2:519–523.

107 Plessner and Rippin state this outright ("Muqātil b. Sulaymān," *EL2*, 7:508), but they are certainly following in the path of earlier scholars who noted the connection between Muqātil and the traditions of the *ahl al-kitāb*, like Goldziher (*Schools*, 38–39) and, in particular, Wansbrough (*Quranic Studies*, 119–148, esp. 136, 146–148). For similar analyses, see also Leemhuis, "Origins," 29; Gilliot, "Muqātil," 70–76; idem, "Exegesis: Classical,"

teacher Abū Ishāq al-Nazzām (d. 220–30/835–45)¹⁰⁸ who disparaged Muqātil, along with a number of other commentators, such as ‘Ikrima (d. 105/723),¹⁰⁹ al-Ḍaḥḥāk [b. Muzāḥim] (d. 105/723),¹¹⁰ al-Suddī (d. 127/745),¹¹¹ al-Kalbī (d. 146/763),¹¹² and Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 200–1/816–7),¹¹³ for “saying things without giving a source, and these were, thus, baseless, and that the stranger the commentary the more beloved it was by them.”¹¹⁴ Al-Nazzām’s criticism of these commentators was based on two points: first, that their commentaries lacked an authority and were, thus, merely their personal opinions, and second, that their commentaries were odd and, in fact, the odder the commentary the more sought after it was.¹¹⁵ About a century later, Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), in his work on unreliable *ḥadīth* transmitters, mentioned Muqātil’s associations with the traditions of the *aḥl al-kitāb*, stating: “He took from the Jews and Christians knowledge of the Qur’ān which agreed with their books (*‘ilm al-Qur’ān alladhi yuwāfiqū kutubahum*).”¹¹⁶ It has been this criticism, supplemented by the sentiment portrayed in al-Nazzām’s criticism, which contributed to a generally negative assessment of Muqātil and his *Tafsīr*.

The role that Ignaz Goldziher played in the modern perception of Muqātil as a “storyteller” is crucial and warrants more analysis. Goldziher, building on Ibn Ḥibbān’s report, connected Muqātil with “the old guild of storytellers (*quṣṣās*),” whose invented stories were “dominated by the element of phantasy (sic).”¹¹⁷ He criticized Muqātil, and the *quṣṣās* in general, as people who “knew no secrets and shunned neither effort nor scruples credibly to fashion

EQ, 107; van Ess, *TG*, 2:516–519; G.H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, (Leiden, 2007), 298.

108 J. van Ess, “al-Nazzām,” *EL2*, 7:1057–1058.

109 J. Schacht, “‘Ikrima,” *EL2*, 3:1081–1082.

110 Sufyān al-Thawrī purportedly advocated taking *tafsīr* from al-Ḍaḥḥāk, as well as from Sa’d b. Jubayr, Mujaḥid and ‘Ikrima; see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 13:293.

111 G.H.A. Juynboll, “al-Suddī,” *EL2*, 9:762.

112 W. Atallah, “al-Kalbī,” *EL2*, 4:494–495.

113 J. van Ess, “al-Aṣamm,” *EL2*, Supplement 12:88–90.

114 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1996), 1:343. See also van Ess, *TG*, 2:518.

115 Van Ess noted that al-Nazzām considered Muqātil’s commentary “outlandish” but he did not mention al-Nazzām’s primary criticism of the commentators, their lack of an authoritative source; see his *TG*, 2:518.

116 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn min al-muḥaddithīn*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid (Aleppo, 1976), 3:14. See also Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-zamān*, ed. Ihsan ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1970–1973), 5:257; Goldziher, *Schools*, 38.

117 Goldziher, *Schools*, 38.

their phantasies woven into the Koran by way of misleading borrowing from reputable authorities.”¹¹⁸ In the case of Muqātil, in particular, Goldziher cites two examples of this type of “misleading” whereby Muqātil took his *tafsīr* from “reputable authorities”: one from al-Ḍaḥḥāk [b. Muzāḥim] and another from Ibn ‘Abbās.¹¹⁹ The commentary that Goldziher claims Muqātil ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās is worthy of further examination.

Goldziher’s judgment of Muqātil, and by extension of the *quşşāş* as lacking in “scruples” and dependent on “phantastic” stories is based largely on a tradition that he read in Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Damīrī’s (d. 808/1405) zoological lexicon, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*.¹²⁰ Here, Damīrī records multiple traditions about the goat that will be slaughtered on the Day of Resurrection symbolizing for the people of paradise and hell-fire the eternality of their existence.¹²¹ Damīrī based his discussion on a Prophetic tradition found in many variants transmitted by Abū Hurayra, Ibn ‘Abbās and Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and also found in orthodox *ḥadīth* compilations.¹²² It is at this juncture that Damīrī introduces traditions on this subject from Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Kalbī and Muqātil claiming that they alleged that Gabriel and the prophets rode on this goat. Damīrī, in fact, does not attribute this commentary directly to Muqātil, although Goldziher read it as such; instead he makes it appear that it was common to all three men.¹²³ In addition, even if al-Damīrī’s intention was in fact to ascribe this interpretation to Muqātil, the interpretation itself does not derive from a single citation in Muqātil’s commentary of Sūrat al-Mulk (67):2; rather, it is a compilation of his commentaries on a variety of passages, in particular Sūrat al-Isrā’ (17):1, Sūrat Maryam (19):39 and Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ (21):103.¹²⁴

Damīrī, therefore, exercised creative license in constructing a *tafsīr* and then attributing it to Muqātil, or to all three commentators. While he implied that these commentators actually said that Gabriel and the prophets rode on

118 Ibid., 39.

119 Ibid., 38–39.

120 Al-Damīrī *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Basaj (Beirut, 2003), 2:367, s.v. *kabsh*. This passage was clearly a proof-text for Goldziher because he translated it, in its entirety, in his *Schools*; see 39. Van Ess noted that Goldziher drew his impressions on Muqātil from secondary sources, like al-Damīrī, though van Ess still believed that his observations were accurate; see his *TG*, 2:518.

121 Damīrī, *Ḥayāt*, 2:367.

122 Ibn Sallām, *Gharīb*, 2:206; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 17:120; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:1760; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:2188; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 5:315; Nasā‘ī, *Sunan*, 6:393; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 15:99, 16:88. See similar traditions in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 14:215–216, 31:265–267.

123 Compare Damīrī, *Ḥayāt*, 2:367 with Goldziher, *Schools*, 39.

124 Compare Damīrī, *Ḥayāt*, 2:367 with Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 2:246–247, 313, 371.

this goat, the reference he is citing is actually of Muqātil's commentary on the *mi'rāj* and the Prophet's journey into the heavens on a mythical horse.¹²⁵ Indeed, by mixing commentaries, Damīrī created his own commentary and played himself the role of "storyteller." Arguably, the statement that he created is in fact more fanciful than what is found in the individual commentaries of these three passages found in Muqātil's *Tafsīr* when those are left in their contexts. Furthermore, as for the interpretations of the Prophet's night journey, Muqātil's commentary is no more fanciful than later commentators; in actuality, it is wholly orthodox. Thus, Goldziher's assessment of Muqātil as an unscrupulous *qāṣṣ* characterized by "capricious Koranic exponents, subject to no limitations" and therefore lying outside the pale of orthodoxy, as opposed to orthodox scholars like Ibn Mas'ūd (though Goldziher is apparently unaware that Ibn Mas'ūd was also identified by the sources as a *qāṣṣ*), is entirely unjustified.¹²⁶ The Muqātil that Goldziher evaluated was almost a caricature of Damīrī's creation. Lastly, it must be remembered that Damīrī's invented story about Muqātil's commentary comes within a passage telling of orthodox *ḥadīth* scholars who related similar traditions about the nature of this eschatological goat. In other words, Muqātil's comments were apparently not too far removed from those of the most orthodox of authorities.

Goldziher's view of Muqātil and the *quṣṣāṣ* in the *tafsīr* tradition affected Muqātil's reputation profoundly.¹²⁷ His initial evaluation was later expanded such that Muqātil's *Tafsīr* was believed to have preserved the earliest form of Qur'ānic commentary—a form established primarily on providing a narrative framework for passages and rooted in Rabbinic literature that served to fill in "the gaps in the Quranic narrative."¹²⁸ Indeed, based on these factors, it

125 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 2:246–247. Damīrī noted that the gait of the beast on which Gabriel and the prophets rode "is—as far as the eye can reach—greater than that of a donkey and smaller than that of a mule (*khuṭwahā madd al-baṣar faḥq al-ḥimār wa-dūn al-baḥl*)."¹²⁵ See Damīrī, *Ḥayāt*, 2:367 (translation is that of Goldziher, *Schools*, 39). The passage is clearly problematic since a gait that is greater than a donkey but smaller than a mule is not very long and, therefore, cannot be described as "as far as the eye can reach." The difficulty stems from Damīrī's combination of two separate descriptions of the animal given by Muqātil, and his implication that they apply to the gait of the animal, in particular, as Goldziher read it. According to Muqātil the animal itself is larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule and its gait is as far as the eye can see; see his *Tafsīr*, 2:247 on Sūrat al-Isrā' (17):1.

126 Goldziher, *Schools*, 38–39.

127 Van Ess, *TG*, 2:518.

128 Wansbrough said, "For Muqātil and Ibn Ishāq it was the story that mattered." See his *Quranic Studies*, 127. While he noted both scholars' interest in stories, he believed that

was precisely Muqātil's "undisciplined employment of Jewish material" which made him suspect in the eyes of "later generations."¹²⁹

Muqātil's apparent dependence on these types of narratives was likewise interpreted as an indication of the "popular," as opposed to "scholarly," thinking preserved in his commentary—a perception that seemed to find support in a report stating that Muqātil, "assembled together the *tafsīr* of the people (*jama'a tafsīr al-nās*)."¹³⁰ Leemhuis interpreted this reference to the "*tafsīr al-nās*" as having "probably . . . just meant that this kind of material (by which Leemhuis means stories with 'no identifiable source') was thought to stem from the popular store of the *quṣṣās*."¹³¹ This analysis upholds the perception that Muqātil's *Tafsīr* is essentially based in narratives.¹³²

The belief that Muqātil based his commentary on the traditions of the Jews and Christians is by no means reserved to Western revisionist circles. The perception that Muqātil was sympathetic towards these traditions can be found in modern Islamic scholarship where it is accompanied by an impassioned

the importance of the narrative framework, what he called haggadic exegesis, was better attested in Muqātil's *Tafsīr* than in Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra*; see his *Quranic Studies*, 127. See also Gilliot's summary of Wansbrough's position, as well as that of other modern scholars on the earliest types of *tafsīr*, in his "Exegesis of the Qur'an: Classical," *EQ*, 2:99–104. For the belief that Muqātil preserves Rabbinic literature, see Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 123, 135.

129 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 136. Wansbrough cites al-Suyūṭī (*Itqān* [Cairo, 1967], 4:207–209) and Goldziher (*Richtungen*, 58–60, 87, 112 [=trans. *Schools*, 38–40, 57–58, 73]).

130 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Beirut, 2005), 13:163; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:143–144.

131 Leemhuis, "Origins," 29. Leemhuis, however, did not give the rest of the quote which says: "And he interpreted [the Qur'an] without having heard [from an authority] (*wa-fassara 'alayhi min ghayr samā'*)." See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, 13:163; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:143–144. This second criticism of Muqātil may be more relevant to his repudiation by the Islamic sources than the first. Rippin also considers Muqātil's *Tafsīr* to be an example of a "popular" commentary, as opposed to an "intellectual" commentary, which he claims includes "technical" matter such as grammatical analyses as he notes can be found in the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. Though Rippin is aware of the significant time difference between the two commentaries, his decision to pit Muqātil's "popular" commentary against the *Jalālayn* seems somewhat self-serving. More accurate conclusions could certainly be drawn by comparing two commentaries from a similar time period. In that situation, the artificial designations of "popular" and "intellectual" may fall by the wayside; see Rippin, "*Ibn 'Abbās*," 70. See also Calder, "Midrash," 392–393.

132 Leemhuis, following on his comment about the "*tafsīr al-nās*" being based on material from "the popular store of the *quṣṣās*," said, "to us, in any case, it seems clear that this must have been the origin of this kind of narrative *tafsīr*," and supported his conclusion with a reference to Wansbrough; see his "Origins," 29.

antagonism not found in Western scholarship. Each of the editors of the two modern editions of Muqātil's *Tafsīr* was highly critical of its author for allegedly introducing the traditions of the Jews and Christians into the commentary tradition.¹³³ Both editors cited Muqātil's reference to the story of David and Bathsheba in his commentary on Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33):36–8 as a specific example of the damage created through the transmission of Jewish lore.¹³⁴ This passage, on its surface reflecting negatively on Muqātil's orthodoxy, may, upon further review, shed light on his intentions and help clarify his connection to *qaṣaṣ* and the *isrā'īlyyāt*.

According to Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33):36–8, the Prophet was granted permission by God to marry Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh, his cousin and the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zayd b. Ḥāritha.¹³⁵ Permission for this marriage required a special revelation by God allowing an adopting father to marry the wife of an adopted son since the Prophet's contemporaries viewed it skeptically, in spite of the fact that Zayd was not the Prophet's blood relative.¹³⁶ In his commentary on verse 38, stating: "there is no reproach for the Prophet in that which God makes his due; that was God's way with those who passed away of old—and the commandment of God is certain destiny," Muqātil analogized the Prophet's situation to that of David and Uriah. On this verse, though, Muqātil gave no details about what transpired between David and Uriah. He simply argued that what happened between the Prophet and Zayd had a precedent in David and Uriah, thus clarifying the statement in the Qur'ān "that was God's way with those who passed away of old." Only later, in his commentary on Sūrat Ṣāḍ (38):21–26 (of David being rebuked for some unspecified misdeed) does Muqātil explain that David wanted to marry Uriah's wife, so he sent Uriah to battle where he was killed.¹³⁷

133 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shihāta said: "In our countries, we submit to trials from the State of Israel. In our exegesis, we submit to the trials of the lies of the Children of Israel. When will we purify our lands of the Jews? When will we preserve our exegesis from the biblical legends of the Jews?" See Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shihāta (Cairo, 1979–1989), 3:640–641, n. 5. See also Gilliot, "Muqātil," 71, n. 131. Aḥmad Farīd, editor of the Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya edition, said that the primary flaw of the commentary is "the *isrā'īlyyāt* and the introduction of the knowledge of the Jews and Christians into the *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān." See *Tafsīr Muqātil*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd, 1:10.

134 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, ed. Shihāta, 3:640–641, n. 5; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, ed. Farīd, 1:10.

135 See Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, ed. Farīd, 3:46–48; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 22:11–15.

136 Ibid.

137 For this version of the story, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:563–570; idem, *Tafsīr*, 23:148–151; Tha'labī, *Arā'is*, trans. Brinner, 468–480. In these accounts, the Islamic tradition does recognize the moral failure of David and his need for repentance. It differs from the biblical account,

Muqātil's account of the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab, alluded to in Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33):36–8, is, furthermore, not significantly different than what is recorded by Ṭabarī in his *tafsīr*.¹³⁸ One of the basic differences between the two is that Ṭabarī gives no historical reference for his commentary on verse 38, preferring, in contrast to Muqātil's reference to David and Uriah, only to argue that God did not cause the Prophet to sin by asking him to do something that prophets before him had not already done.¹³⁹ While he admits that there was a precedent, unlike Muqātil, he gave no concrete example.

Muqātil's allusion to a "Jewish" story is available for a surface interpretation as proof that he relied on these traditions more than other commentators, like Ṭabarī. However, this does not account for the presence of the story as a commentary on Sūrat Ṣād (38):21–6 in Muqātil's, Ṭabarī's, as well as 'Abd al-Razzāq's, *tafsīrs*. Each of them related the expanded Islamic account of David and Uriah in their commentaries on this pericope, and that suggests that Muqātil was no more dependent upon *isrā'īlyyāt* than 'Abd al-Razzāq or Ṭabarī, whose names are not as often associated with the traditions of the *ahl al-kitāb* as his is.¹⁴⁰ As

however, as to the identity of those who confronted David; the biblical account claims that a man named Nathan challenged the prophet-king (2 Samuel 12) while the Islamic account states that two angels were sent to him. The Islamic versions, however, do not contain the more scandalous aspects of the biblical account, such as David's adulterous relationship and Bathsheba's pregnancy, both of which, according to the biblical account, were the impetuses for his plot to have Uriah sent to the battlefield to die (2 Samuel 11). However, this information was known by the Islamic scholars, for Ibn Ḥazm refers to it and states that anyone who would ascribe such behavior to a prophet has upon himself "a thousand thousands of curses." See his *al-Fiṣal fī-l-mīlāl* (Cairo, 1903), 1:143. Tha'labī records a tradition attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib who threatened with flogging those who believed that David had committed a sin even in the marrying of Bathsheba, without allusion to the adulterous affair and pregnancy found in the Jewish account; see Tha'labī *Arā'is al-majālis*, trans. Brinner, 472. The absence of narrative detail in Muqātil's commentary on Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33):38 is revealing, for it rather fits Wansbrough's halakhic paradigm of derivation of law from scripture—in this case the permissibility of marrying the wife of an adopted son—than his haggadic paradigm of narrative exegesis which he allegorized characterized Muqātil's *Tafsīr*.

138 Gilliot noted the similarity between Muqātil's commentary and Ṭabarī's commentary in regards to a report about Solomon; see his "Muqātil," 72. It applies elsewhere also, such as here in the case of the story of David and Uriah.

139 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 22:14–15.

140 This is not meant to suggest that 'Abd al-Razzāq and Ṭabarī's use of Jewish and Christian sources has not been previously noted. In fact, Ṭabarī's use of the stories of the Jews and Christians has been known in Western scholarship since at least Goldziher; see his *Schools*, 58–59. However, in spite of this, neither Ṭabarī nor 'Abd al-Razzāq have been

a result, when Ibn al-Jawzī, and modern scholars, censured the *quṣṣās*'s scurrilous claim that David sent Uriah to his death, he was standing squarely against influential scholars, not all of who were considered to have been among the *quṣṣās*, who related this account.¹⁴¹

What is at stake in the comments of Aḥmad Farīd, one of the editors of Muqātil's commentary, seems, then, not to be Muqātil's use of this account in his commentary, rather how and where he applies it. By referring to David and Uriah in the passage about Zayd and Zaynab, Muqātil is walking a slippery slope. Since there is a scandalous aspect to the story of David and Uriah, its introduction at this juncture associated the Prophet with less than honorable behavior. It is this sentiment that seems to lie behind Farid's accusation that Muqātil's use of *isrāʾīliyyāt* in this passage "magnified the calumny against the messenger of God."¹⁴² It is possible, as Gilliot suggested, that Muqātil's interpretation here was an example of an earlier, less rigid view of the impeccability of the Prophet.¹⁴³ Muqātil, however, does not seem to have intended it this way. He seems to have intended the exact opposite result.

In this instance, Muqātil's use of *isrāʾīliyyāt* was available for interpretation as advantageous to the Prophet. The story helps legitimize the actions of the Prophet by giving a concrete example of the precedent merely alluded to in verse 38, with the added benefit of accomplishing this with the utmost care for the reputation of the Prophet. By omitting the details of the David and Uriah story (which he certainly knew as attested in his commentary at Ṣāḍ (38):21–26), Muqātil preserved the Prophet from the ignominy that resulted from comparison to David and his machinations against Uriah. This suggests that when the Qurʾānic text refers to an earlier prophet, even one of David's stature, potentially damaging details were allowed.¹⁴⁴ In this case, Muqātil seems to preserve a theology pre-existing to the established doctrine of the impeccability of the prophets.¹⁴⁵ However, Muqātil's reference to the David and Uriah narrative in the passage about the Prophet need not necessarily be interpreted as allowing for the fallibility of the Prophet. Muqātil, in this as well as other passages, indicates that he maintained no definitive theology of the impeccability

subjected to the same types of criticism leveled against Muqātil for their use of these stories. Goldziher, on the contrary, classified Ṭabarī's commentary under "traditional exegesis;" see his *Schools*, 57.

141 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 10–11.

142 See Farīd's introduction to his edition of the *Tafsīr*, 10.

143 Gilliot, "Muqātil," 84. On this position, see W. Madelung, "Iṣma," *EI*2, 4:182–184.

144 Gilliot notes this in other instances in Muqātil's *Tafsīr*; see "Muqātil," 70–76.

145 Gilliot, "Muqātil," 84.

of Muḥammad, and definitely not of the earlier prophets, though his tendency seems to be to protect the Prophet from association with misdeeds.¹⁴⁶

Unfortunately for Muqātil, these sensitivities were not enough to keep him from the negative reputation associated with the *isrāʿīliyyāt* and therefore with the assumption that his *Tafsīr* contains early *qashaṣ* material. Beyond this particular factor, his identification as a *qāṣṣ* may also have influenced this impression, although it is rarely referred to in studies of him.¹⁴⁷ If the identification of Muqātil as a *qāṣṣ* has influenced his reputation as an untrustworthy purveyor of Jewish and Christian lore, then it must be noted that the majority of the Islamic sources identify Muqātil as a *qāṣṣ* only in connection to his teachings in Marw and related, in some way, to his interaction with his nemesis, the pro-Abbāsīd Jahm b. Safwān.¹⁴⁸ Only Ibn Abī Ḥātim described Muqātil's position as a *qāṣṣ* from a different vantage point; he mentioned his role as a *qāṣṣ* in the context of his poor transmission of *ḥadīth*, not for any association with *isrāʿīliyyāt*.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the connection of the term *qashaṣ* to the

146 Gilliot, for example, includes it as an example of the openness of the early tradition on the theology of the infallibility of Muḥammad. This is not to say that the principle is entirely false. In fact, Gilliot cites a later passage, Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33):52, which seems to support his position better. Here Muqātil, while commenting on the number of wives allowed for the Prophet, stated: "Then He (God) warned the Prophet about committing some offense that should not be done with regard to their (his wives') situation." See his *Tafsīr*, ed. Farīd, 3:52. In this instance, Muqātil alludes to the possibility that the Prophet would do something wrong and thus had to be warned by God. Gilliot shows how some later exegetes dealt with this passage by claiming it had been abrogated by verses 50–51 of the same Sūra; see his "Muqātil," 76. Furthermore, Muqātil's commentaries on passages which mention the Prophet asking forgiveness for sin (Sūrat Ghāfir [40]:55, Sūrat Muḥammad [47]:19 and Sūrat al-Faṭḥ [48]:2) are equally as diverse. In his commentary on the first two, he mentions nothing about the Prophet; see his *Tafsīr*, ed. Farīd, 3:152 and 3:238. In his commentary on al-Faṭḥ (48):2 which states: "That God may forgive thee of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come," Muqātil glossed "that which is past" with "what happened during the *jāhiliyya* (*mā kāna-fi-l-jāhiliyya*)" and "that which is to come" with "and after the coming of prophethood (*wa-baʿd al-nubuwwa*)." See his *Tafsīr*, ed. Farīd, 3:244. These passages support Gilliot's assessment that Muqātil was not beholden to a strict view of the infallibility of the Prophet.

147 Plessner is an exception. He states, for example: "It did not help his fame also that he is said to have told pious stories [cf. *ḳiṣṣa*] in the mosque, at a time when this was strictly forbidden." See "Muqātil b. Sulaymān," *ElI*, 3:712.

148 Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6:437; Ibn Asākir, *Dimashq*, 60:123; al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, eds. ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwaḍ and ʿAdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd (Beirut, 1995), 6:505; idem, *Tārīkh*, 9:641; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:143.

149 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 8:354.

political movements within Khurasān at the end of the Umayyad period was not reserved for Muqātil. Ṭabarī, for example, who fails to identify Muqātil as a *qāṣṣ*, reported that Jahm incited the supporters of the anti-Umayyad rebel al-Ḥārith b. Surayj by means of *qaṣaṣ* he gave in his tent.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, the appellation of Muqātil as *qāṣṣ* may be relevant only within narrow geographical and chronological parameters.¹⁵¹

This is not to deny, however, that Muqātil's *Tafsīr* contains material from Jewish and Christian sources; this fact is attested clearly in his *Tafsīr* as well as in biographical citations about him.¹⁵² It is uncertain, though, if Rippin's conclusion that Muqātil's *tafsīr* "likely . . . presents versions of the stories told by the early *kuṣṣās*" is entirely justified.¹⁵³ The attribution of Muqātil's *Tafsīr* to *qaṣaṣ* material appears to be a product of the general impression that Jewish and Christian traditions are inherently *qaṣaṣ* material.¹⁵⁴ This position, however, cannot be sustained. Furthermore, Muqātil was not the only commentator to draw from what Wansbrough classified as Rabbinic literature. In addition to Muqātil, Wansbrough mentions al-Kalbī and Sufyān al-Thawrī, suggesting that Muqātil and al-Kalbī were reproached opprobriously by later generations because of their use of Jewish materials and that even though Sufyān also utilized these sources he, for some unknown reason, emerged unscathed in reputation among later scholars, unlike his two unfortunate contemporaries.¹⁵⁵

150 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1919. See also the discussion of Muqātil's relationship with Jahm in Chapter Five.

151 If this is accurate, then it would call into question van Ess's assertion that Muqātil b. Sulaymān and Muqātil b. Ḥayyān make up a "Khurāsānī *qāṣṣ*-tradition;" see his *TC*, 2:518. Van Ess intended by this statement that the two preserve legendary stories in their commentaries and thus apparently established a continuity of *qaṣaṣ* in the region. The political aspect of the references to Muqātil as a *qāṣṣ*, as well as his political alliance with Muqātil b. Ḥayyān in supporting Naṣr b. Sayyār, may indicate that their *qaṣaṣ* connection is a result of political affiliations more than their use of legendary stories in their commentaries; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1918.

152 For biographical references to his knowledge of Jewish and Christian materials, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:14; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 5:257.

153 Rippin, "Muqātil," 7:509.

154 The connection between the *quṣṣās* and the *isrā'īliyyāt*, *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and the Jewish and Christian traditions is widely accepted; see, for example, Goldziher, *Schools*, 38–40; Vajda, "Isrā'īliyyāt," *EL* 2, 4:211–212. See above, 91–94.

155 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 136–137. W. Atallāh also mentioned al-Kalbī's use of Jewish and Christian sources; see his "al-Kalbī," *EL* 2, 4:495. For a discussion of the Islamic tradition's views of Muqātil and al-Kalbī, see Abbott, *Studies II*, 104–106.

Yet the perseverance of the *isrāʿīliyyāt* within the Islamic tradition suggests that Muqātil was not censured for this reason.¹⁵⁶ Other exegetes who were known for their transmission of the traditions of the Jews and Christians, most notably Wahb b. Munabbih, were not disregarded solely because of this issue.¹⁵⁷ Even later exegetes, like Ṭabarī, relied upon reports from Wahb, Sufyān al-Thawrī and others who used Rabbinic literature.¹⁵⁸ Yāqūt, for example, does not provide a reason why Ṭabarī rejected Muqātil beyond that his *tafsīr* contained “suspect” things.¹⁵⁹ This criticism does not seem to be tied to concerns about Muqātil’s use of legendary traditions or reports from the *ahl al-kitāb*, for Ṭabarī himself did not reject material simply because a source was affiliated with these traditions.¹⁶⁰ One of many examples is his utilization of reports from Mujāhid b. Jabr, who also drew from the traditions of the Jews and Christians. Moreover, when Ṭabarī disagreed with Mujāhid, he was not averse to challenging his opinion—an approach he could have applied to those interpretations of Muqātil with which he disagreed.¹⁶¹ Additionally, Muqātil also depended upon Mujāhid, as well as other sources used by Ṭabarī, like Saʿīd b. Jubayr,

156 The presence of Jewish and Christian material within the Islamic tradition is extensive and undeniable. These traditions are found in histories, e.g. Ṭabarī, and al-Maṣūdi, *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, e.g. al-Kisāʿī and Thaʿlabī, in commentaries, e.g. Ṭabarī, and even in *ḥadīth* collections, e.g. Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in particular in his chapter on Qurʾānic commentary. For modern studies, see Vajda, “Isrāʿīliyyāt,” 4:211; Kister, “*Ḥaddīthū*,” 215–239; Tottoli, “*Isrāʿīliyyāt*,” 193–210.

157 A later scholar, Yāqūt al-Hamawī (d. 626/1229) would certainly have been aware of the negative connotation attached to the term *isrāʿīliyyāt* and yet he praised Wahb as “the purveyor of historical reports (*al-akhbārī*), the master of *qaṣaṣ*. He was one of the best of ‘the Successors,’ trustworthy (*thiqa*), truthful (*ṣadūq*) and transmitted much from the old books known as the *isrāʿīliyyāt* (*al-kutub al-qadīma al-maʿrūfa bi-l-isrāʿīliyyāt*).” See his *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 7:232. He obviously harbored no prejudice against those who used Jewish materials.

158 See Goldziher, *Schools*, 58–59; Horst, “Überlieferung,” 290–307; Abbott, *Studies II*, 101–102.

159 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 6:440–441.

160 Rippin noted Ṭabarī’s use of reports that could be classified as *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*. See his citation of Tilman Nagel’s *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte* in “al-Thaʿlabī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad,” *EL*2, 10:434. Van Ess also believed that Ṭabarī’s suspicion of Muqātil stemmed from the latter’s use of legend and myth; see his *TC*, 2:518. However, Yāqūt also noted that Ṭabarī used the *tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Ḥayyān; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 6:440–441. If, according to van Ess, the common denominator between Muqātil b. Ḥayyān’s and Muqātil b. Sulaymān’s commentaries is their use of legendary material, then one has to wonder why Ṭabarī considered only the latter Muqātil suspicious.

161 Goldziher, *Schools*, 57–58.

Qatāda and al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim, indicating that at least on some points Muqātil and Ṭabarī were drawing inspiration from the same pool of sources.¹⁶²

It must also be recalled that affiliation with the traditions of the Jews and Christians was a complicated matter. Even though many commentators depended on these traditions, the corpus as a whole was often viewed negatively. This negative image came to predominate in the minds of later scholars and has largely clouded the reputations of even earlier purveyors of these traditions in suspicion.¹⁶³ The tension surrounding the legitimacy of the *isrāʿīliyyāt* and the *quṣṣās* is certainly tangible in Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*, where he at once censures them, cautions against them and advocates for them, with the determining factor in their permissibility apparently rooted in periodization and identification. In general, the *quṣṣās/mudhakkirūn* of the early period and those who enjoyed sound reputations, i.e. the Companions of the Prophet, are granted more grace in this matter. Nevertheless, the future caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was warned by the Prophet about taking information from the Torah. Ibn al-Jawzī reported:

Certain of the pious ancestors despised storytelling (*qaṣaṣ*)... [because] the stories (*akhbār*) of the ancient peoples were seldom authentic, especially those that were related concerning ancient Israel... ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb once took some excerpts from the Torah to the Prophet whereupon the latter responded: "Rid yourself of them, ʿUmar, especially in view of the ridiculous things that are known in Judaism such as their teachings that David sent Uriah out in order that he might be killed... [and] some people who introduced into religion that which did not belong there told stories."¹⁶⁴

The *qāṣṣ*, then, was often stigmatized as having surreptitiously and subversively corrupted the faith by infecting the community, either consciously or unwittingly, with the traditions of the *ahl al-kitāb*. The *qāṣṣ* was, therefore, generally portrayed as sympathetic, not antagonistic, towards the Jews and Christians.

162 In his *tafsīr*, Muqātil refers to Saʿd b. Jubayr three times (2:304; 2:346 and 3:306), to Mujāhid four times (1:24; 1:27; 1:233; 3:375) and to al-Ḍaḥḥāk 15 times (1:23, 1:24, 2:164, 2:254, 2:264, 2:283, 2:299, 2:312, 2:319, 2:349, 2:350, 3:381, 3:427, 3:431, 3:503). He also lists Qatāda b. Dīʿāma as one of his thirteen sources (1:21), though he cites him only three times (2:298; 3:20; 3:345); see his *Tafsīr*, ed. Farīd. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 97–101.

163 On this evolution, see Brinner's Introduction to Thaʿlabī's *ʿArāʾis*; Tottoli, "Isrāʿīliyyāt," *passim*. For discussions of this issue in 20th century Egypt, see Juynboll, *Authenticity*, 121–138.

164 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 10 (translation taken from Swartz, 96–97).

However, if an early Islamic scholar embarked on a systematic commentary of the Qurʾān, those passages criticizing the *ahl al-kitāb* presented an ideological dilemma for an alleged sympathizer of the Jews and Christians. An analysis of Muqātil's commentary indicates that, while he may have used reports about the Jews and Christians, as did his successors, his work can hardly be read as sympathetic to the *ahl al-kitāb*. He refers to them as hypocrites (at Sūrat al-Baqara [2]:9), as liars (at Sūrat al-Baqara [2]:105), as trying to seduce Muslims from the faith (at Sūrat al-Baqara [2]:107–8), as deserving of death or the poll-tax (*al-qatal aw al-jizya*) on earth and hell-fire in the next life (at Sūrat Āl ʿImrān [3]: 56), as adulterers and idolaters (at Sūrat al-Nūr [24]:3) and as rejecting the call to Islam (at Sūrat al-Shūrā [42]:15).

This representative sample of references to the *ahl al-kitāb* does not at all suggest that Muqātil maintained an affinity for the Jews and Christians. Such are not the types of opinions normally associated with a *qāṣṣ* who has introduced Jewish and Christian elements into Islam.¹⁶⁵ Generally, the *quṣṣāṣ* are connected to reports of the kind found in the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* literature, basically devoid of critical statements about the Jews and Christians because it is not a commentary grappling with those passages that lend themselves to such interpretations. In spite of Ibn Ḥibbān's criticism that Muqātil took his *ʿilm al-Qurʾān* from the Jews and Christian, his commentaries on these passages do not portray him as an advocate for them.¹⁶⁶

Muqātil and his *Tafsīr* represent the tension that surrounds the *quṣṣāṣ* and their association with the traditions of the people of the Book. Some believe that these associations contributed to his repudiation by later generations of scholars. This factor, as I have attempted to show above, may not have been as instrumental in the evolution of his poor reputation as previously believed. A more likely reason was proposed by Abbott, who noted that his *tafsīr* was respected by many leading scholars of the second/eighth and third/ninth century, such as Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāh, al-Shāfiʿī and Ibn Ḥanbal, although it was mistrusted because he did not receive his information aurally from his sources, and because it lacked *isnāds*.¹⁶⁷ It is to be recalled that this was the primary criticism leveled against Muqātil and his fellow commentators

165 Muqātil's critical views of the Jews can be seen in his comments on other Qurʾānic texts, such as on the various ways they tampered with God's revelations; see "Tahrīf," *EL2*, 10:111; Nickel, "Tahrīf," 207–223.

166 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:14.

167 Ibn Ḥanbal purportedly said: "[Though] he had books that he consulted, I admit that he possessed knowledge of the Qurʾān." See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, 13:161. See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 100, 104f.

by Nazẓām.¹⁶⁸ He allegedly copied from written works and thus was rebuked for not having “conform[ed] to the standards of oral transmission of *ḥadīth* that were current in his day and thereafter.”¹⁶⁹ It is his poor transmission of reports and traditions that outweighed any other judgment leveled against him.¹⁷⁰ Goldziher, who in the body of his *Schools of Koranic Commentary* depicts Muqātil as an unscrupulous *qāṣṣ*, gave another reason in his footnotes as to why Ṭabarī may have rejected his *tafsīr*. He supported his position that Ṭabarī “displays little appreciation of independent, arbitrary, and subjective ideas” by noting that Ṭabarī’s opposition to Muqātil was not a product of the latter’s use of reports from the Jews and Christians, rather for his failure to provide sources for his opinions.¹⁷¹ Moreover, Ibrāhīm b. Ishāq al-Ḥarbī, who also criticized Muqātil’s lax use of sources, recognized the value of his *Tafsīr* and did not connect opposition to it to the types of sources he used, rather to professional jealousy.¹⁷²

The Quṣṣāṣ as Qur’ān Commentators

Clearly, the *quṣṣāṣ* left a major imprint on *tafsīr* works. Their names can be found throughout these works and indicate that they were generally considered by the Muslims to be reliable sources for commentary on the Qur’ān. They appear to have engaged in more “real exegesis” than was previously believed.¹⁷³ The ascription to the *quṣṣāṣ* of stories of the pre-Islamic prophets, i.e. the *isrā’īliyyāt* and the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, seems to be a product of the perception that these were the primary domains of the *quṣṣāṣ*.¹⁷⁴ This assumption, however, is not borne out by the current research. According to the textual evidence presented above, the *quṣṣāṣ* were interested in a number of topics, including (although not exclusively or even predominantly) stories of cosmogony, the pre-Islamic prophets and interpretations from the people of the Book. Moreover, the breadth of their associations with other religious disciplines

168 Jāhiz, *Ḥayawān*, 1:343.

169 Abbott, *Studies II*, 104.

170 In addition to Abbott’s summary, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s *Tārīkh*, where his lack of concern for sources is presented in multiple anecdotes; see 13:165–169.

171 Goldziher, *Schools*, 57.

172 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, 13:162–163; Abbott, *Studies II*, 104.

173 Pellat restricted “real exegesis” to only “certain ‘sermonisers.’” See his “Kāṣṣ,” *EL*2, 4:734.

174 Wansbrough states that “much if not all of his [the *qāṣṣ*] material, however, is found in the writings of the haggadic exegetes.” See his *Quranic Studies*, 147. By this he means that the *qāṣṣ* drew his material from narratives of the traditions of the *ahl al-kitāb*, what he also refers to as *narratio*; see his *Quranic Studies*, 146. For the same sentiment, see Khoury, *Légendes*, 107.

reveals a diversity not normally attributed to them. Since there are early testaments to works of cosmogony, proto-*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and commentaries, some by the mid-second/eighth century, it seems more accurate to argue that these stories, i.e. *isrā'īliyyāt* and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, were not so much the focal point of one particular segment of religious educators, i.e. the *quṣṣāṣ*, but were the product of the natural evolution of the religion—sought out, transmitted and recorded by the scholarly community in general.¹⁷⁵

In spite of being commonly associated with *isrā'īliyyāt*, it appears, on the basis of the above analysis, that the *quṣṣāṣ* were only part of a general trend within the first two centuries of Qur'ān commentary of using these reports. Their “stories” seem to have been no different in content than other scholars, and thus there is no reason to disparage them because of their apparent questionable relations with the Jews and Christians. When Muqātil b. Sulaymān's *Tafsīr* was evaluated from this perspective, it was evident that he did not depend upon the narratives of the Jews and Christians any more than other commentators of the early period, nor did he reveal a particular empathy for these traditions. As a result, it appears that to classify his *tafsīr* as having preserved early *qaṣaṣ*-material seems to betray a presupposition about the nature of *qaṣaṣ* and that Muqātil stood apart among his colleagues in his reliance upon them. Furthermore, since, statistically, more *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period are not mentioned in the commentary tradition than those who are, the introduction of *isrā'īliyyāt* into the Islamic tradition does not seem to have been the primary interest of the *quṣṣāṣ* as a whole. Consequently, precisely what role they played in the development of the commentary tradition can only be accurately determined by further comparative studies of the identified *quṣṣāṣ* and their transmissions within the Qur'ān commentaries.

175 It may be helpful here to consider the statement of R.G. Khoury, following Zaki Mubarak's *La Prose Arabe au IV^e siècle de l'hégire*, in describing the rise of Arabic/Islamic literature, that these developments are a natural process of human society. They do not come into existence *ex nihilo*; see Khoury, *Légendes*, 73–76. The same could be said about the *quṣṣāṣ* and their transmission of *isrā'īliyyāt*. It would be wrong to assume that they alone were interested in these traditions. Compartmentalization of religious materials according to disciplines seems to argue against the normal trends in the evolution of religious systems. Averil Cameron has shown that the same tendency to utilize extra-canonical materials was at play in the evolution of stories in early Christianity; see her *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley, 1991), 89–119. The presence of these stories in multiple genres of Islamic literature further supports the view that they attracted the interest of the scholarly community at large; for a summary, see Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers* (New York, 1996), 13–21.

Ḥadīth Transmitters (muḥaddithūn)

The Critical Image of the Quṣṣās in Ḥadīth Transmission

The image derived from much of the Islamic literature is that the *qāṣṣ* was a disreputable transmitter of *ḥadīth*. A number of reports perpetuate this image and serve as a basis for the general repudiation of the *quṣṣās*. Again, the inimitable Ignaz Goldziher assembled a few of these reports in his insightful work on the *quṣṣās*' involvement in the fabrication of *ḥadīth*.¹⁷⁶ While he recognized that *qaṣaṣ* in the early period was not necessarily a negative phenomenon, he also maintained a consistently critical view of the *quṣṣās* by distinguishing the practitioners of *qaṣaṣ* from the men of "official theology."¹⁷⁷ Even though not every *qāṣṣ* was antagonistic to the scholars, the tension between the *qāṣṣ* and the *ḥadīth* scholar is illustrated in a report from al-Sha'bī (d.c. 103/721), who, as we have seen before, admitted that he was beaten by a mob in Palmyra for challenging their *qāṣṣ*'s explanation of the trumpet blasts on the day of judgment.¹⁷⁸ This report alleges that prior to the turn of the first century, *quṣṣās* were engaged in the elaboration of, if not the outright fabrication of, traditions of the Prophet. This image eventually became the standard characterization of the *quṣṣās*. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) states this, in part, in his *Kitāb al-quṣṣās* and in more definitive terms in his *Kitāb al-mawḍū'āt* where he numbers the *quṣṣās* among those who fabricate *ḥadīth*.¹⁷⁹ Almost two centuries later, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) propagated this image in his *Aḥādīth al-quṣṣās* through recording what he alleged to be some of the *quṣṣās*'s fabricated traditions. Then, the prolific al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), approximately two centuries after Ibn Taymiyya, vilified the *quṣṣās* in his *Taḥdhīr al-khawāṣṣ min akādhīb al-quṣṣās* ("Warning the educated about the lies of the *quṣṣās*"), devoting his first chapter to relating numerous variants of the famous Prophetic tradition condemning those who lie about the Prophet, i.e. the *quṣṣās*, to hell-fire.¹⁸⁰

The attribution of *ḥadīth* fabrication to the *quṣṣās* has not diverged significantly from these reports and from Goldziher's analysis and can be summarized as follows:

Before the recognized books were compiled the body of Tradition had grown enormously, and serious students recognized that much of it was

176 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 151, 153–155, 156–158.

177 Ibid., 151–154.

178 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 177–178; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 156–158.

179 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-mawḍū'āt*, ed. Tawfiq Ḥamdān (Beirut, 1995), 1:19–22.

180 Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr*, 8–65. For this *ḥadīth*'s connection to the *quṣṣās*, see also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 146.

fabricated. The *kuṣṣāṣ* (storytellers) were men who invented the most extraordinary traditions to which they attached seemingly impeccable *isnāds*, their purpose being to astonish the common people and receive payment for their stories.¹⁸¹

This image of the *quṣṣāṣ* is not entirely wrong, although it has often been drawn from the later medieval sources largely contentious towards the *quṣṣāṣ*.¹⁸² It is true that the sources contain reports of fabrications from the *quṣṣāṣ*. It is not clear, however, when the *quṣṣāṣ* developed this reputation or how rampant this fraud was among their ranks.

It is not a significant leap from this position to argue that the *quṣṣāṣ* not only engaged in the fabrication of *ḥadīth*, they were, in fact, the originators of *ḥadīth*. Basing his argument on *awā'il* traditions that purport to name the first *quṣṣāṣ*, be they Tamīm al-Dārī, 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr or Sulaym b. 'Itr, G.H.A. Juynboll claims that "the earliest *qīṣaṣ* may well have contained sermon-like accounts of an edifying nature concerning the Prophet and the Muslims of the first period" and alleges that these *qīṣaṣ* were the first stage in the evolution of *ḥadīth*.¹⁸³

While it may be true that *qīṣaṣ* were proto-*ḥadīth*, Juynboll's suppositions fail to prove his point because of his assumptions about the *quṣṣāṣ* and the nature of *qāṣaṣ*. First, his decision to focus on the *awā'il* traditions about the *quṣṣāṣ* betrays his presupposition that they were the sources for the *ḥadīth* tradition; he selects these *quṣṣāṣ* because they were putatively the first of their kind. He could have chosen, rather, other scholars who were ostensibly the first of their particular disciplines. Al-'Askarī, for example, discusses the first judges of various regions, some of whom date to the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb—the exact time period of the three *quṣṣāṣ* mentioned by Juynboll.¹⁸⁴ The rulings of these judges could also represent the earliest stages of *ḥadīth*, just as *qīṣaṣ* allegedly did. Juynboll, however, argues that the rulings of these judges did not depend upon earlier precedent, an essential factor in

181 J. Robson, "Ḥadīth," *EL*2, 3:24. See also G.H.A. Juynboll, *Canonical Ḥadīth*, 57, 298, 704.

182 Albrecht Noth drew the same conclusions about the *quṣṣāṣ* based on Ibn al-Jawzī's *Mawḍū'āt*; see his "Common Features of Muslim and Orientalist Hadith Criticism," *Ḥadīth*, ed. Harald Motzki, (Aldershot, 2004), 314.

183 G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), 10–23, esp. 12. Juynboll chose the *awā'il* traditions believing that they contain reliable historical information. Aziz al-Azmeh, on the other hand, reads the *awā'il* literature not as history but as the propagation of exempla for the community; see his *Arabic Thought and Islamic Societies* (London, 1986), 267–269.

184 See al-'Askarī, *al-Awā'il*, eds. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī and Walid Qassāb (Damascus, 1975), 2:111–117, where he reports that 'Umar himself was appointed judge by Abū Bakr and that Abū Maryam al-Ḥanafī was appointed judge over Baṣra in 14/635.

ḥadīth transmission, and therefore cannot constitute early *ḥadīth*. While this may be accurate in part, it does not clarify how *qaṣaṣ* was any more reliant upon precedent than was judging. I speculate, however, that his assumption that “legal thinking on the basis of individual judgement as well as precedent in Islam is a development of somewhat later times” may have contributed to his preference for the *quṣṣāṣ* as progenitors of *ḥadīth* rather than the judges.¹⁸⁵ Secondly, his assumption that the first *ḥadīths* were edifying stories like those told by the *quṣṣāṣ* is premised on the belief that *qaṣaṣ* remained static “in conformity with the later position of the *qāṣṣ* in society.”¹⁸⁶ While this also may prove true in certain aspects, it has heretofore been unsubstantiated, and the existence of a few examples of legal rulings by the *quṣṣāṣ*, as seen in the textual evidence given in Chapter One, seems to argue that the *quṣṣāṣ* were neither static nor always storytellers. Thus, when presented with two options for scholarly functions which may have been the precursor to the *ḥadīth* tradition, Juynboll seems to have chosen the *quṣṣāṣ* based on a back-projection of their medieval role into the early period as well as a concern that attributing these origins to the judges implies that “legal thinking” was an early phenomenon in Islamic society.

While the image of the *quṣṣāṣ* as *ḥadīth* fabricators can be supported by various reports and seems to have particular merit beyond the Umayyad period, their role in the formation of the *ḥadīth* tradition in the earliest periods of the community has not yet been adequately evaluated. Although some anecdotal evidence of the connections between the *quṣṣāṣ* and *ḥadīth* transmission will be evaluated, much of the following analysis will focus on the how the Islamic community viewed the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period. Since the Muslims themselves were aware of the presence of *ḥadīth* fabrications, *ḥadīth* scholars attempted to isolate those whom they believed to be weak in *ḥadīth* transmission. If the *quṣṣāṣ* were systematically involved in such fabrications, then we should expect to find them associated with these weak transmitters. Therefore, drawing from biographical information, the reputations of each of the 108 *quṣṣāṣ* have been determined and assembled into four categories: 1. those who are generally reputable; 2. those who are generally weak; 3. those who have mixed reputations; 4. those whose reputations in *ḥadīth* were indeterminate due to limited information. The following analysis will show that the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period were overwhelmingly considered to be trustworthy *ḥadīth* scholars.

185 Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 12 (emphasis his).

186 Ibid., 12.

Statistical Analysis of the Reputations of Quṣṣāṣ in Ḥadīth

Even a cursory perusal of the names of the *quṣṣāṣ* of the early period reveals a number of well-known *ḥadīth* scholars many of whom were Companions of the Prophet and provide the putative first line in transmission from him, such as the first caliph Abū Bakr, Abū al-Dardā', Ibn Mas'ūd, Zayd b. Thābit, Abū Hurayra and Mu'ādh b. Jabal. Aside from the question surrounding the number of *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abū Hurayra, these men are beyond reproach as sources for *ḥadīth*. They are not alone among the ranks of exemplary personalities in *ḥadīth* transmission. Reputable Successors such as Qatāda b. Dī'āma and Thābit b. Aslam al-Bunānī, both of whom were considered among the best transmitters of traditions from the prolific Anas b. Mālik, are numbered among the *quṣṣāṣ*.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, two Kūfan *quṣṣāṣ*, Abū al-Aḥwaṣ and Sa'īd b. Jubayr were known both for their reliability in transmissions and for the number of *ḥadīth* that they transmitted. Abū al-Aḥwaṣ tended to inundate his listeners with *ḥadīth* and his companions rebuked Sa'īd b. Jubayr for relating too many traditions.¹⁸⁸ Sa'īd allegedly replied to these critics: "To relate *ḥadīth* to you and your companions is preferable to me than taking it with me to my grave."¹⁸⁹ Even pro-Shī'ī scholars, like the *qāṣṣ*, 'Adī b. Thābit, enjoyed good reputations among the Sunnī scholars, especially if they were reputable *ḥadīth* transmitters.¹⁹⁰

This anecdotal evidence on the reliability of the *quṣṣāṣ* as *ḥadīth* transmitters was confirmed statistically. Slightly over two-thirds of them, i.e. 74 of the 108 or 68.5%, were considered trustworthy or reputable *ḥadīth* transmitters.¹⁹¹ The remaining one-third fell within the other three categories. Only fifteen of the *quṣṣāṣ*, or 14%, were generally considered to have been weak transmitters.¹⁹² Among them is the Kufan Nufay' b. al-Ḥārith, about whom the famous *ḥadīth* compiler Bukhārī said: "[He was] a *qāṣṣ* about whom the *ḥadīth*-folk

187 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:449; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 4:347; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:262–263; Suyūṭī, *Huffāz*, 1:57. On Anas b. Mālik, see A.J. Wensinck and J. Robson, "Anas b. Mālik," *EL*, 1:482.

188 On Abū al-Aḥwaṣ, see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:302. On Sa'd b. Jubayr, see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:377.

189 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:377.

190 See the Appendix # 69.

191 Due to the large number of reliable *quṣṣāṣ*, I have not listed them here. I have noted them in the Appendix by the addition of a (*) at the beginning of their biographies.

192 They are: (44) 'Ā'idh Allāh al-Mujāsha'ī, (47) Shaqīq al-Ḍabbī, (55) Ḥumayd b. 'Atā' al-A'raj, (63) Yazīd b. Abān, (64) Ziyād b. 'Abd Allāh, (74) Nufay' (Nāfi') b. al-Ḥārith, (84) Jahm b. Ṣafwān, (85) 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd, (86) Maṭar al-Warrāq, (90) al-Faḍl b. 'Isa, (97) Muqātil b. Sulaymān, (103) al-Nahhās b. Qahm, (105) Yūnus b. Khabbāb, (108) Mūsā b. Sayyār and (109) al-Haytham b. Jammāz.

speak disparagingly (*qāṣṣ yatakallimūna fīhi*).¹⁹³ The implication in Bukhārī's assessment is that his weakness in *ḥadīth* was connected to his involvement in *qaṣaṣ*. This negative association between *ḥadīth* and *qaṣaṣ* was stated explicitly in reference to the *qāṣṣ* ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika who was otherwise numbered among those of mixed reputations in *ḥadīth*.¹⁹⁴ ʿAbd al-Aʿlā b. Mushir (d. 218/833) said of him: “ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika was a *qāṣṣ* so if there was any error [in *ḥadīth*], then it was from him (*fa-in kāna wahm fa-huwa minhu*).”¹⁹⁵ Yet involvement in *qaṣaṣ* was certainly not the only reason that led to a *qāṣṣ*'s rejection as a *ḥadīth* scholar. The weakness of the Baṣran *qāṣṣ* Yazīd b. Abān in *ḥadīth* was attributed not to his *qaṣaṣ*, rather to his excessive piety reputedly making him lax in his transmissions.¹⁹⁶

In total, seven *quṣṣās*, or 6.5%, including ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika, enjoyed mixed reputations as transmitters.¹⁹⁷ The most recognized name among this group is Kaʿb al-Aḥbār. Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān most aptly expressed the uncertainty that hovered over his reputation in *ḥadīth* saying, “He is the most trustworthy of the *ḥadīth* scholars who relate from the people of the Book, even though we used to accuse him of lying.”¹⁹⁸ Twelve among the remaining *quṣṣās*, or 11%, were either relatively unknown personalities or their role in *ḥadīth* was indeterminable, and, therefore, it was not possible to draw any conclusions as to their trustworthiness in *ḥadīth*.¹⁹⁹

These statistics indicate the Islamic community considered an overwhelming majority of the *quṣṣās* of the Umayyad period to have been sound *ḥadīth*

193 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 8:114; idem, *al-Tārīkh al-ṣaghīr*, 1:267; ʿUqaylī, *Duʿāfāʾ* 4:307; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 7:60. It should be noted, though, that since this is Bukhārī's opinion, it is a later assessment (third/ninth century) of the *quṣṣās* whose reputations, as a whole, had, by then, become increasingly suspect.

194 For a summation of the positions on his reliability in *ḥadīth*, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:65.

195 ʿUqaylī, *Duʿāfāʾ*, 3:221; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 38:394; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:65. Abū Mushir ʿAbd al-Aʿlā b. Mushir was a reputable scholar of Syria who himself exhibited traits of a “storyteller” according to some criteria since he was known to have been an expert on reports of the conquests (*maghāzī*) and other historical traditions (*ayyām al-nās*); see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:466–468. On him, see also Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 16:369–379.

196 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:98.

197 They are (9) Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, (32) ʿImrān b. ʿIṣām, (49) Abū Yaḥyā al-Aʿraj, (81) Darrāj b. Simʿān, (93) Hilāl, Abū Ṭuʿma, (94) Sumayr b. ʿAbd al-Raḥman and (102) ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika.

198 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:471.

199 They are: (4) Saʿd b. Zayd, (13) ʿAmr b. Zurāra, (14) al-Aswad b. Sarīʿ, (22) Ṣukhayr b. Ḥudhayfa, (24) Abū al-Juwayriyya al-ʿAbdī, (29) Sāliḥ b. Musarriḥ, (30) Shabīb b. Yazīd, (45) Ibn Abī ʿUyayna, (52) Ibn Abī al-Sāʿib, (78) ʿAbd Allāh b. Zayd, (92) al-Naḍr b. ʿAmr and (100) al-Qāsim b. Mujāshīʿ.

scholars. These results stand in stark contradiction to the generally held belief among medieval and modern scholars that the *quṣṣāṣ* were lax and, thus, unreliable in *ḥadīth* transmission.

Conflicting Sentiments on the Reliability of the Quṣṣāṣ in Ḥadīth

While statistical and some anecdotal evidence reveal that the *quṣṣāṣ* were reliable *ḥadīth* transmitters, other reports reveal an underlying suspicion of the *quṣṣāṣ* with regard to their knowledge of *ḥadīth*. This suspicion seems to have manifested itself early. We have already encountered two traditions describing the *quṣṣāṣ* as poor transmitters. The Syrian *qāṣṣ* ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika was implicated as the source of weak *ḥadīths* by virtue of the fact that he was a *qāṣṣ*. The above report on Shaʿbī's beating at the hands of the followers of a *qāṣṣ* in Palmyra also indicates that some *quṣṣāṣ* were involved in fabrications prior to the turn of the century.

Other *quṣṣāṣ*, however, proved more than capable in their transmissions. When Abū Idrīs al-Khawḷānī, who died in 80/700, was challenged on his knowledge of the *isnād*, he responded with acrimony for having his reliability questioned; he retorted to his inquisitor: "I know *isnāds* better than I know *ḥadīth*; get up and don't sit with me!"²⁰⁰ Indeed, the question surrounding the *quṣṣāṣ*'s reliability in *ḥadīth* transmission was addressed directly in a tradition about the *qāṣṣ* Thābit al-Bunānī. Ḥammād b. Salama (d. 167/783), the distinguished Successor of Baṣra and student of Thābit, set out to test the popular theory of his day that the *quṣṣāṣ* were poor *ḥadīth* scholars by intentionally mixing up the *isnāds* of *ḥadīth* in Thābit's presence in order to see if his teacher could catch the mistakes.²⁰¹ Thābit's reputation, along with that of the *quṣṣāṣ* by extension, was ostensibly vindicated as he put each of them aright.²⁰² Thābit was praised for his knowledge of *ḥadīth* and it was even said of him that any bad things in his *ḥadīth* were not of his doing, rather, originating from those who transmitted from him, many of whom were weak and unknown.²⁰³

While the report of Ḥammād's experiment seems to redeem the reputation of an early *qāṣṣ*, it simultaneously confirms that by at least the end of the first quarter of the second/eighth century, the time of Thābit's death, the *quṣṣāṣ* developed a reputation as poor *ḥadīth* transmitters because of their laxity in *isnāds*. It was for this reason, after all, that Ḥammād conducted his experiment.

200 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:164.

201 On Ḥammād, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:481–483.

202 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:449; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2:100; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 4:347; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:262.

203 Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2:100.

While some reports directly censure certain *quṣṣāṣ* as poor transmitters prior to the turn of the first/seventh century, such as those on Abū Idrīs al-Khawḷānī and al-Shaʿbī, the report about Ḥammād's experiment hints at a general skepticism towards the *quṣṣāṣ* at Thābit's time.

In fact, another tradition implicates a Baṣran contemporary of Thābit and Ḥammād, the reputable scholar Qatāda b. Dīʿāma, as also having been lax in using *isnāds*. He allegedly did not attach full *isnāds* to his *ḥadīth* until he was inspired to do so by Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 120/738), the teacher of the illustrious Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), when the former came to Baṣra reciting *ḥadīth* with *isnāds*.²⁰⁴ These reports on the *quṣṣāṣ* in Baṣra suggest that *isnād* transmission was not strongly emphasized there around the turn of the first/seventh century. If this was true in Baṣra, what does it indicate about the Syrian transmitters whom Makhūl al-Shāmī (d. 112–7/730–5), a contemporary of these renowned scholars of Irāq, claimed were even less strict in their use of the *isnād* than the Iraqīs?²⁰⁵ It must not be overlooked, though, that these traditions, while they raise the issue of lack of interest in *isnāds* in Baṣra, also confirm that these *quṣṣāṣ*/*muḥaddithūn* of Baṣra actually produced *isnāds* when required, as in the case of Thābit. The obvious intent of the report of Ḥammād's experiment is to suggest that the *quṣṣāṣ* were not as bad as they seemed.

Exactly how and when the *quṣṣāṣ* developed a general reputation as poor *ḥadīth* transmitters is difficult to ascertain, especially in light of both the statistical and anecdotal evidence for their trustworthiness in the early period. Heretofore, it has been suggested that those who engaged in transmitting *ḥadīth* on pious behavior, moral admonitions, the coming judgment, etc.—essentially those topics that were commonly associated with the *quṣṣāṣ*—did not need to meet the same rigid transmission standards, particularly in terms of the *isnād*, expected of those who related traditions on issues of legal import.²⁰⁶ This supposition, however, accommodates neither the textual evidence reviewed above, indicating that the *quṣṣāṣ* transmitted traditions of *fiqh* as well those of piety, nor the number of *quṣṣāṣ* considered to be *fuqahāʾ*, as will be seen below, nor, finally, the quite large number of early *quṣṣāṣ* who were considered reputable *ḥadīth* scholars. While the community may have accepted laxity in transmissions of traditions of piety and morality, it cannot

204 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:230. I have not been able to determine when this incident occurred. On Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 7:269–279; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:231–239. On his relation to Abū Ḥanīfa, see Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:236 and *El*2, s.v. “Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān.”

205 See Abbott, *Studies II*, 75, citing Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 1:362.

206 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 145–147; Abbott, *Studies II*, 76.

be deduced as the reason for the poor reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ* as *ḥadīth* scholars, at least prior to 132/750.

Unidentified Quṣṣāṣ

It may be the case that the reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ* was sullied by a growing number of unnamed *quṣṣāṣ* and that, to a large degree, only the more reputable *quṣṣāṣ* are identified in the sources.²⁰⁷ Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776), for example, declined to relate *ḥadīth* to a young, unnamed *qāṣṣ* because he charged that the *quṣṣāṣ* “receive traditions from us the span of a hand and stretch them into a cubit.”²⁰⁸ This tradition adds to the previous criticism of the Baṣran *quṣṣāṣ* who were lax in providing an *isnād* for their traditions the accusation that they also tamper with the *matn*, the text of the tradition. It purports to make a general criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ* for whom the unidentified *qāṣṣ* stands as representative. However, Shu‘ba was not entirely opposed to the *quṣṣāṣ* for he himself transmitted from some of their number, in particular Thābit al-Bunānī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim, ‘Adī b. Thābit, Qatāda and Muḥammad b. Qays.²⁰⁹ This tradition, therefore, indicated an evolution in the criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ*, suggesting that slackness was a characteristic of a growing number of unidentified *quṣṣāṣ*.

In addition, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, a *sūfī* and opponent of the *quṣṣāṣ*, reported that Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-A‘mash (d. 148/765) overheard an unidentified *qāṣṣ* claiming to have received *ḥadīth* from him. Al-A‘mash stormed into his circle and began to pull the hair from his armpits causing the *qāṣṣ* to exclaim: “Old man, have you no shame? We are involved in religious knowledge (*‘ilm*) and you do this?” Al-A‘mash retorted, “What I am doing is better than what you are doing. . . . I am following the *sunna* and you are lying. I am al-A‘mash and I did not relate to you anything that you said!” When the people heard this, they left the *qāṣṣ*, gathered around al-A‘mash and asked him to relate *ḥadīth* to them.²¹⁰ In this instance, the *qāṣṣ* is depicted as deceiving his audience both in

207 Malak Aḥmad noted this tendency in Ibn ‘Asākir. She claimed that he gave biographies of only those *quṣṣāṣ* who were ‘*ulamā’* because the community did not respect those who fabricated reports, and therefore those *quṣṣāṣ* who did so were only mentioned indirectly and critically within other biographies; see her *Tarbiya*, 313.

208 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 101–2 (translation taken from Swartz, 181). On Shu‘ba, see G.H.A. Juynboll, “Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥadīdjāj,” *El2*, 11:491–492. Juynboll notes that Shu‘ba stands as the primary source of the tradition on lying about the Prophet—the tradition to which Suyūṭī devoted his first chapter in his work of criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ*, see his *Taḥdhīr*, 8–66.

209 Mizzī, *Taḥdhīb*, 12:480–484.

210 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:207.

his *ḥadīth* transmission and in his claim to be involved in religious education (*‘ilm*). Just as in the case of Shu‘ba, al-A‘mash was not entirely antagonistic to the *quṣṣāṣ* for he also learned *ḥadīth* from many of them, including Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, Dharr b. ‘Abd Allāh, Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, ‘Adī b. Thābit, Mujāhid b. Jabr and Yazīd b. Abān al-Raqāshī, who, it is to be recalled, was considered a weak transmitter.²¹¹

The Quṣṣāṣ as Ḥadīth Transmitters

While the sources do preserve reports about the weaknesses of the *quṣṣāṣ* in *ḥadīth* transmission, their association with *ḥadīth* fabrication seems to be no more prevalent than what is found among other scholars. If weakness in transmission was endemic among the ranks of the *quṣṣāṣ* then we expect to find their names littered throughout the *du‘afā’* literature. This is not the case, however. In fact, as our statistical analysis suggests, the majority of *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period were considered by the community to be trustworthy and reputable *ḥadīth* scholars. On the other hand, it appears that by the turn of the first/seventh century the *quṣṣāṣ* were developing reputations as poor *ḥadīth* scholars. This reputation seems to have characterized primarily unnamed *quṣṣāṣ*. Eventually, however, the title *qāṣṣ* became equated with a poor *ḥadīth* scholar. Hitherto, this image of the *quṣṣāṣ* prevailed in studies of them, and when reputable *ḥadīth* scholars were found among them, they were considered the exception, not the rule. This image is to be refined, hereafter, in light of the high percentage of reputable *ḥadīth* scholars among the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period.

Jurists (Fuqahā’)

The Islamic sources identify eighteen *quṣṣāṣ*, or 16.7%, as being particularly adept in law, *fiqh*.²¹² Four of the earliest of these luminaries were also numbered among the *qurrā’*, the commentators and the *ḥadīth* transmitters:

²¹¹ Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 12:77–80. On Yazīd as a transmitter, see above, 116 and the Appendix # 63.

²¹² They are: (6) Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, (10) Abū al-Dardā’, (11) Ibn Mas‘ūd, (18) Zayd b. Thābit, (19) Abū Hurayra, (21) Rabī‘a b. ‘Amr, (27) Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, (29) Šālih b. Musarriḥ, (40) Sa‘d b. Jubayr, (58) Mujāhid b. Jabr, (59) ‘Aṭā’ b. Yāsār, (62) Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh, (65) ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, (66) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (68) Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa, (71) Qatāda b. Dī‘āma, (72) Muḥammad b. Ka‘b and (91) ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yazīd. For others who have noted the overlap between *qāṣṣ* and *fiqh*, see Pedersen, “Criticism,” 218; Athamina, “Qāṣṣ,” 63.

Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, Abū al-Dardā’, Ibn Mas‘ūd and Zayd b. Thābit. Zayd b. Thābit, along with a fifth distinguished Companion of the Prophet, Abū Hurayra, gave legal rulings as part of their *qaṣaṣ*, as was discussed in Chapter One. Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and Abū al-Dardā’, were identified by the *ḥadīth* scholar and compiler al-Nasā’ī as the *fuqahā’* of Syria.²¹³ Likewise, Ibn Mas‘ūd was considered the *faqīh* of Kūfa.²¹⁴ Since these eminent scholars were major sources of religious knowledge for the community, it comes as little surprise that they were also considered *fuqahā’*.

The association of the *quşşās* with *fiqh* continued throughout the Umayyad period. Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī of Syria, himself a *qāṣṣ*, stressed the importance that the *quşşās* know *fiqh* by stating that he preferred to see the mosque in flames than a man giving *qaṣaṣ* who was not a *faqīh*.²¹⁵ While Abū Idrīs’s wish was not fulfilled by each and every *qāṣṣ* of the Umayyad period, a number of *quşşās* were distinguished for their acumen in *fiqh*. Rabī‘a b. Amr was “the *faqīh* of the people in the time of Mu‘āwiya.”²¹⁶ A contemporary of his, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, learned *fiqh* from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and his colleague the *qāṣṣ/qārī’* Abū al-Aḥwaṣ reportedly said of him: “Learn [lit. take] from him for he is a *faqīh*.”²¹⁷ The similarity between these two scholars is noteworthy. Each of them were Qur’ān reciters, pro-‘Alids and *quşşās* in Kūfa. These similarities seem to have generated a mutual respect, for Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī returned Abū al-Aḥwaṣ’ complement by stating: “Don’t sit with the *quşşās* except Abū al-Aḥwaṣ.”²¹⁸

The city of Kufa later boasted the *qāṣṣ/qārī’* ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, brother of one of the renowned *fuqahā’* of Medina ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh, as its *faqīh*.²¹⁹ In Basra, two of its more famous scholars, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh, were both named among the *quşşās* and the *fuqahā’*.²²⁰ Meanwhile, Syria was honored with the influential scholar and political leader Rajā’ b.

213 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:124.

214 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:53.

215 Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 5:142; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 131. See also ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 63.

216 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti‘āb fi ma‘rifat al-aṣḥāb*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajjāwī (Cairo, 1960), 2:493; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:600.

217 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:293; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-Ya‘lāwī, 7/2:232.

218 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:292–293.

219 Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 5:103. On the seven legists of Medina, see C. Pellat, “Fuqahā’ al-Madīna al-Sab‘a,” *EL*, 12:310–312.

220 On al-Ḥasan, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:389, 391. On Bakr, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:208. Ibn Sa‘d recorded a report that connects the two men with the intent of honoring Bakr which states, “al-Ḥasan is the shaykh of Baṣra and Bakr is its young man;” see his *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:208.

Ḥaywa as one of its legists. His convictions about the importance of *fiqh* can be summarized in a *ḥadīth* transmitted by him, whereby the Prophet said: “A small amount of *fiqh* is better than much worship (*qalīl al-fiqh khayr^{un} min kathīr al-‘ibāda*).”²²¹ His own capabilities as a legal scholar were praised by a fellow *qāṣṣ*, Maṭar al-Warrāq, who testified that he “never saw anyone more knowledgeable in *fiqh* than he [Rajā’].”²²²

Yet not all reports about the *quṣṣāṣ*’s knowledge of *fiqh* were positive. Ibn al-Jawzī recorded a Prophetic tradition transmitted by the *qāṣṣ/faqīh* Ibn Mas‘ūd with the Prophet himself allegedly distinguishing between the sessions of *qaṣaṣ* and the sessions of *fiqh*, telling his listeners: “When you pass by the gardens of paradise graze [on them]! I do not mean by this the circles of the *quṣṣāṣ* but, rather, the circles of *fiqh*.”²²³ This report, however, is problematic and since it proposes that the Prophet advocated *fiqh* sessions to *qaṣaṣ* sessions, it is worthy of further consideration. A number of variants of the report reveal that its transmission history was complicated. Ibn al-Jawzī, for example, was aware of another variant of the tradition with “the gardens of paradise” simply identified as “sessions of *dhikr* (*majālis al-dhikr*)” without any reference to the *quṣṣāṣ*, yet he chose to record for his work on the *quṣṣāṣ* a variant setting them at odds with the *fuqahā’*, even though his intention, as noted by Swartz, was not necessarily to disparage the *quṣṣāṣ*.²²⁴

The first recorded citation that I have located of the variant specifically noting that the sessions were *fiqh*, not *qaṣaṣ*, sessions is in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s (d. 463/1071) *al-Faqīh wa-l-mutafaqqih*, transmitted there on the authority of both Ibn Mas‘ūd and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ.²²⁵ Other variants, many of which are recorded in earlier compilations, do not mention the *quṣṣāṣ* and yet are still important in the analysis of the tradition. For example, a variant identifying the sessions as “sessions of *dhikr* (*majālis*, or more often, *ḥalaq al-dhikr*)” was traced back to Anas b. Mālik through one of two *quṣṣāṣ*, either Thābit al-Bunānī or Ziyād al-Numayrī.²²⁶ The presence of *quṣṣāṣ* in both variants at the level of transmitter from Anas implies that the *quṣṣāṣ* faithfully transmit-

221 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1:381.

222 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 18:104. On Rajā’ as a *faqīh*, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:237.

223 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 129 (translation taken from Swartz, 212).

224 He noted that Anas b. Mālik transmitted a Prophetic tradition in which the “gardens” are “*majālis al-dhikr*.” See Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Tabṣira fī-l-wa‘z*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Wāḥid (Cairo, 1970), 2:305.

225 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Faqīh wa-l-mutafaqqih*, ed. Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Ādil b. Yūsuf al-‘Azzāzī (Riyadh, 1996), 1:95–96.

226 For the variant from Thābit, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 19:498; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 5:532; Abū Ya‘lā, *Musnad*, 6:155; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 6:136; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab al-īmān*, ed. Muḥammad

ted the tradition and did not gloss *dhikr* with *qaṣaṣ*. Furthermore, a variant from Abū Hurayra identified the “gardens” as “places of prayer (*masājid*)” while another, traced to Ibn ‘Abbās through the *qāṣṣ* Mujāhid b. Jabr, claimed that they were “sessions of religious knowledge (*majālis al-‘ilm*).”²²⁷ The complexity of the transmission history of this tradition, as well as the many variants failing to connect the statement to the *quṣṣāṣ*, calls into question its reliability as a source for the proposed differentiation between *fiqh* and *qaṣaṣ*. It also indicates how later scholars, in this case Ibn al-Jawzī, readily utilized variants of a tradition for their own ends.

Other reports suggesting that *qaṣaṣ* and *fiqh* were incompatible exhibit similar problems. When ‘Āṭā’ b. Yasār (d. 103/721) ruled that a Bedouin man who had not yet consummated his marriage must divorce his wife with one, as opposed to three, declarations of divorce (*innamā ṭalāq al-bikr wāḥida*), ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (d.c. 65/685) reprimanded him saying: “You are merely a *qāṣṣ*!”²²⁸ This reprimand clearly suggests that ‘Āṭā’s ruling was incorrect because he was a *qāṣṣ* who, presumably, possessed no legal training. However, as was the case in the report about the *qaṣaṣ* sessions discussed above, other factors suggest that this assessment may not be entirely accurate.

First, ‘Āṭā’ hailed from a family of jurists and he himself enjoyed a reputation as a reputable scholar.²²⁹ On its surface then, this rebuke may not necessarily be intended as a denigration of his character as much as an example of an antagonistic tendentiousness towards the *quṣṣāṣ*. As a result, this report suggests that already by the middle of the first century, since ‘Abd Allāh died around 65/685, the *quṣṣāṣ*, in general, developed a negative reputation because when ‘Abd Allāh sought to criticize the otherwise reputable ‘Āṭā’, he exploited his affiliation with *qaṣaṣ* as his Achilles’s heel.

Furthermore, variants of the report state that ‘Abd Allāh did not rebuke ‘Āṭā’ for being a *qāṣṣ*, rather, for being a judge: “You are merely a *qāḍī*, and not a *muftī*!”²³⁰ This variant, however, is equally puzzling since distinctions

al-Sa’d Basyūnī Zaghūl (Beirut, 1990), 1:398. For the variant from Ziyād, see Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā’*, 528; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 6:291; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī, *Faqīh*, 1:93–94.

227 For the variant from Abū Hurayra, see Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 5:532. For the variant from Ibn ‘Abbās, see Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, 11:95.

228 Mālik, *Muwatta’a*, ed. al-‘Azamī, 4:821. On ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 15:357–363.

229 On the other members of ‘Āṭā’s family who were respected as *fuqahā*, see Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 459.

230 Mālik, *Muwatta’a*, ed. ‘Abd al-Majīd Turkī (Beirut, 1994), 282; Fasawī, *Ma‘rifa*, 1:549–550; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 40:448. ‘Abd al-Majīd Turkī noted that some manuscripts read *qāṣṣ* while others read *qāḍī* or were unclear. He opted for *qāḍī* in his edition. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-‘Azamī, another editor of Mālik’s *Muwatta’a*, read the word as *qāṣṣ*; see Mālik,

in expertise between a *qāḍī* and a *muftī* seem to be minimal, and, therefore, the censure seems incongruous. It seems that censuring ‘Aṭā’ as a *qāṣṣ* appears to have been more justified than censuring him as a judge except for the fact that the association of some *quṣṣāṣ* of the early period with judging (*qaḍā’*) indicates that even these two disciplines/professions may be more similar to each other than initially expected.²³¹ Unfortunately, the sources themselves are unclear about whether ‘Aṭā’ was a judge, a *qāṣṣ* or both—notwithstanding the orthographic similarity between the words *qāṣṣ* (قاص) and *qaḍī* (قاضى) in Arabic, their being almost identical if they were undotted.²³²

Thirdly, other information about ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr suggest that while his remark seems to have disparaged the *quṣṣāṣ* as a whole, his own opinion of and association with *quṣṣāṣ* indicate that he harbored no animosity towards them. On a separate occasion, for instance, when the *qāṣṣ/qāḍī* of Egypt Sulaym b. ‘Itr challenged ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr on failing to give his allegiance to the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya, ‘Abd Allāh reprimanded Sulaym saying: “As for you Sulaym, when you were a *qāṣṣ*, you had two angels aiding you and reminding you; then you became a judge and you had two devils turning you away from the truth and seducing you.”²³³ According to this report, ‘Abd Allāh viewed *qaṣaṣ* preferentially to judging, at least under certain circumstances. Moreover, two of ‘Abd Allāh’s *mawlās*, Abū Yaḥyā al-A‘raj and Darrāj b. Sim‘ān, were *quṣṣāṣ*.²³⁴ When his personal leanings are taken in tandem with the variants of the report, they call into question the reliability of the previous tradition as an accurate portrayal of the early *quṣṣāṣ*.

In spite of a number of *quṣṣāṣ* who were also reputable legal scholars, reports distinguishing the two from each other persisted. Ibn al-Jawzī relates a report from the Basran legal scholar ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn (d. 150/767) that in his city *qaṣaṣ* surpassed *fiqh* in its popularity among the people.²³⁵ He allegedly bemoaned that upon entering the mosque of Basra: “I found in it only one study circle devoted to *fiqh*; it was associated with Muslim b. Yasār. The

Muwatta’ (Abu Dhabi, 2004), 4:821. Fasawī recorded a report from Sa’d b. al-Musayyab, one of the renowned *fuqahā’* of Medina, that Sulaymān b. Yasār, the brother of ‘Aṭā’, was a *muftī* and that ‘Aṭā’ was only a judge.

231 For a discussion of the relationship between the *quṣṣāṣ* and the *quḍāt*, see below, 126–131.

232 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 40:447–448.

233 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, ed. C.C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922), 235; Wakī‘, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī (Cairo, 1947–1950), 3:224; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:278; Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 117.

234 On Abū Yaḥyā al-A‘raj, see the Appendix # 49. On Darrāj b. Sim‘ān, see the Appendix # 81.

235 On him, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:398–399.

rest of the mosque was taken over by *quşşās*.²³⁶ Since Muslim b. Yasār died in 100/718 and Ibn ‘Awn was born in 66/685, this report suggests that in Basra in the last quarter of the first/seventh century, the number of *quşşās* proliferated noticeably. However, as in the case of reports discussed above, the distinction between *fiqh* and *qaşaş*, here is so clearly alleged, does not seem to be as conspicuous as the report suggests, especially considering that both Muslim b. Yasār and Ibn ‘Awn maintained close scholarly ties to the *quşşās*. The report does indicate, nevertheless, that the designation “*quşşās*” was ascribed in a tendentious manner to circles deemed disreputable.²³⁷

Somewhat surprisingly, the only identified *qāşş* who engaged in *fiqh* and who was generally derogated as a scholar was the Khārijī rebel Şāliḥ b. Musarriḥ. Ṭabarī noted that he gathered his followers to himself in his home region of Mosul in the province of the Jazīra and instructed them in Qur’ān recitation, taught them the requirements of the faith and delivered to them *qaşaş* (*yuqrī’uhum al-Qur’ān wa-yufaqqihuhum wa-yaquşşu ‘alayhim*).²³⁸ This report claims then that Şāliḥ was a religious educator (*faqīh*) as well as an opposition leader and that his *qīşaş*, though they were used politically, were just one component of the propagation of his religious ideology. However, since he was a Khārijī, his reputation among future generations was not stellar even though

236 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 17 (translation taken from Swartz, 103).

237 Muslim b. Yasār taught *ḥadīth* to two famous and reputable Basran *quşşās* Qatāda and Thābit al-Bunānī; see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 27:552. Ibn ‘Awn learned *ḥadīth* from a number of *quşşās*, including Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa, Mujāhid b. Jabr, Sa’d b. Jubayr and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who became the *muftī* of Basra after Muslim b. Yasār; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:398, 4:74. Moreover, Goldziher extrapolated from this tradition that the growth of *qaşaş* circles led to the persecution of the street preacher; see his *Muslim Studies II*, 154–155. This position cannot be supported by the report. In fact, while the report hints at Ibn ‘Awn’s despair at the trend in the proliferation of the number of *quşşās*, Ibn al-Jawzī’s choice to include it in a section on the “Commendable Character of *Qaşaş* and *Wā’z*,” and specifically between a report in which the great Medinan legal scholar Sa’d b. Musayyib (d. 91/709) says of the *quşşās* that they are people of prayer and a report from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī which describes *qaşaş* as a praiseworthy innovation, suggests that the report should not necessarily be interpreted negatively; see his *Quşşās*, 17.

238 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:881. Rowson translated *yufaqqihuhum* as he “taught . . . its [the Qur’ān’s] interpretation;” see his *Marwānid*, 22:33. This is certainly a valid translation although I have opted to preserve the more technical sense of the term. Dhahabī gives a slightly modified version of Ṭabarī omitting Ṭabarī’s reference to Şāliḥ’s recitation of the Qur’ān. In this instance, the phrase *yufaqqihuhum* is best interpreted according to its technical sense for it has no antecedent specifically connecting it to Qur’ānic interpretation. See Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:148.

he was respected for his humility (*kāna lā yarfa‘u ra’sahu khushū‘ān*).²³⁹ He is, albeit, the only example thus far of an identifiable *qāṣṣ* who engaged in *fiqh* yet was not regarded as a reputable scholar.

It is not insignificant that approximately one-fifth of the *quṣṣās* of the Umayyad period were *fuqahā’*. This suggests that the claim that the *qāṣṣ* was a poor legal scholar was not entirely justified. In fact, the men listed above were grouped among the best scholars of early Islam, four of whom were particularly influential among the scholars of *tafsīr*, as we have seen above. Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, known for his transmissions from his renowned teacher Ibn ‘Abbās and for his commentary on the Qur’ān, was also praised by Ibn ‘Umar for his knowledge of the religious requirements for the community.²⁴⁰ Muḥāhid b. Jabr was known as a *faqīh* in Mecca.²⁴¹ Qatāda b. Di‘āma proved victorious over al-Zuhri in a test of wits and was described by the caliph Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 96–99/715–7) as a “witty legist” (*faqīh malīḥ*).²⁴² Finally, Muḥammad b. Ka‘b, from the Jewish tribe of Qurayza, was considered one of the best scholars of *fiqh* of the people of Medina.²⁴³

Judges (*Quḍāt*)

In light of the relatively sizeable number of *quṣṣās* who were also identified as scholars of *fiqh*, it is not surprising that some *quṣṣās* also held the position of judge. The *qāṣṣ* apparently possessed skills which proved useful in judging. As was noted in Chapter One, the *quṣṣās*, even in their *qaṣaṣ* statements, discussed issues of legal import and a significant number of the earliest *quṣṣās* were distinguished for their religious knowledge. In fact, in every instance uncovered to date of a scholar who was both *qāṣṣ* and *qāḍī*, the scholar held the positions simultaneously or, more commonly, began as a *qāṣṣ* and was later moved to the ranks of the judiciary. It seems then that involvement in *qaṣaṣ* helped to develop some skills sought after in a judge. However, the progression from *qāṣṣ* to *qāḍī* was never considered a promotion, not by the *qāṣṣ* nor by those around him. Greater responsibility by the judge to both the community and the government may have contributed to this sentiment.

239 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-‘Azīm, 6:572.

240 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:376.

241 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:28; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:419; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh al-Laythī (Beirut, 1987), 2:243.

242 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:243.

243 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:351; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:204.

Before the particularities of the relationship between the *quṣṣāṣ* and the *quḍāt* can be explored, an even more fundamental issue must be addressed—the orthographical similarity between the terms *qadā* (“to judge,” قضي) and *qaṣṣa* (“to relate,” قص).²⁴⁴ The potential for conflating these two terms is obvious. Ibn ‘Asākir, for example, records a tradition about Abū al-Dardā’s involvement in the conquest of Syria, identifying him as both a *qāṣṣ* of the armies at al-Yarmūk and a *qāḍī* of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Damascus.²⁴⁵ Similarly, Abū Ḥāzim Salama b. Dīnār was identified as both the *qāṣṣ ahl al-Madīna* and the *qāḍī ahl al-Madīna*.²⁴⁶

At times, these discrepancies prompted me to omit scholars from my list of *quṣṣāṣ*, as was the case of Sulaymān b. Ḥabīb (d. 126/743) who was known throughout the sources as the judge of the caliph Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik but was identified only in Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Mashāḥir* as a *qāṣṣ*.²⁴⁷ At other times, a scholar generally known to be a *qāṣṣ* was identified in a single source as a judge, as in the case of ‘Uqba b. Muslim whom Ibn Abī Ḥātim identified as a judge or in that of al-Faḍl al-Raqāshī whom Ibn Qutayba identified as a judge.²⁴⁸ In these cases, the scholars were listed among the *quṣṣāṣ*, not the judges.

The sources identify fourteen *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period as also having held the position of judge.²⁴⁹ Among the most illustrious of this group of judges were Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, Abū al-Dardā’, Ibn Mas‘ūd and Zayd b. Thābit. Mu‘ādh was appointed by the Prophet to be judge in Yemen.²⁵⁰ In Damascus, Abū al-Dardā’ was appointed judge though by whom is uncertain.²⁵¹ Ibn

244 Juynboll, *Canonical*, 45.

245 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:93. Umar b. Gharāma al-‘Amrawī, the editor of Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, noted that the manuscript read *qāḍī* at the reference to *qāṣṣ*. He opted to emend the edition to read *qāṣṣ*.

246 Juynboll, *Canonical*, 45. On Salama b. Dīnār, see the Appendix # 87.

247 On him as a judge, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1265, 1338; Wakī’, *Quḍāt*, 3:210–212; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:87; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:309. On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāḥir ‘ulamā’ al-amṣār* (Beirut, 1959), 116.

248 On ‘Uqba, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 6:316. On al-Faḍl, see Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 475.

249 They are: (6) Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, (10) Abū al-Dardā’, (11) ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, (18) Zayd b. Thābit, (19) Abū Hurayra, (28) Sulaym b. ‘Itr, (31) Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī, (35) ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥujayra, (39) Zurāra b. Awfā, (54) Marthad b. Wadā’, (61) Muslim b. Jundab, (67) Wahb b. Munabbih, (77) Tawba b. Namir, (89) Khayr b. Nu‘aym.

250 He allegedly told the Prophet that the standards for his judgments would be the Qur‘ān, the practice of the Prophet (*sunna*), and, lastly, his own opinion; see Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 3:1404. See also Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, 2:300.

251 Some say that he was appointed by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, others by Mu‘āwiya, and others that Mu‘āwiya appointed him upon the command of ‘Umar. For a summation of the

Mas'ūd was the judge in Kufa and also supervisor of the treasury during the reign of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.²⁵² Zayd b. Thābit was also appointed by 'Umar and was remunerated for his work as a judge.²⁵³

Judging, though, appears to have been a burdensome affair.²⁵⁴ As a result, some reports show the disappointment certain *quṣṣās* felt when appointed to judgeships. When the people congratulated Abū al-Dardā' on his appointment to judge, he replied: "If the people knew what being a judge entailed they would detest it and loathe it. If they knew what was involved in calling people to prayer they would desire it and covet it."²⁵⁵

Similar concerns over judging occupied Sulaym b. 'Itr, the *qāṣṣ/qāḍī* of Egypt. He held the position of *qāṣṣ* for one year, from 39–40/659–60, until Mu'āwiya appointed him judge in 40/660.²⁵⁶ Although he was generally considered a reputable scholar, his role as judge brought criticism on him, especially from 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ. 'Abd Allāh expressed the general impression of the *quṣṣās* and the judges when he told Sulaym b. 'Itr: "As for you Sulaym, when you were a *qāṣṣ*, you had two angels aiding you and reminding you; then you became a judge and you had two devils turning you away from the truth and

positions, see Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 3:1229–1230; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:341. See also Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 198.

252 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:63–64.

253 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:309; Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 1:108.

254 Ibn 'Umar refused being appointed judge by the caliph 'Uthmān. He told the caliph that there were three types of judges: "A man who judges in ignorance and ends up in hell-fire, a man who judges unjustly and the wind drags him to hell-fire (*māla bihi al-hawā' fa-huwa fi-l-nār*) and a man who works hard and judges correctly though he receives no benefit for it—no recompense for him nor blame against him." When 'Uthmān reminded him that his father had acted as judge, Ibn 'Umar retorted that his father had the Prophet to fall back on and the Prophet could ask Gabriel, while he had neither; see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:136–137. For other variants of this tradition, see 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 11:328; Ibn al-Ja'd, *Musnad*, ed. 'Amir Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut, 1990), 155; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 4:540; 'Abd b. Ḥumayd, *Musnad*, 46.

255 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:140. The responsibility of judging, as opposed to the one who calls people to prayer, was a burden that weighed so heavily on Abū al-Dardā' that, when he would give a judgment, he would ask the two parties to return to him and tell him their case once again. This prompted an observer, identified as a certain Ibn Mayrūd (Ibn Mas'ūd?), to exclaim: "Your judge is a quack (*qaḍā'kumā mutaṭabbib*)."²⁵⁵ See Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:141.

256 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:272–274. See also Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 231; Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 3:221–222; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:132; idem, *Tārīkh*, 5:409.

seducing you.”²⁵⁷ Sulaym himself appears to have preferred to be rid of the responsibility of the judgeship. One day he passed by the infamous Umayyad general and governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf and his father. Yūsuf informed Sulaym that he planned to journey to the caliph, asking to convey any need that Sulaym may have. Sulaym said:

“Yes, my need is that you ask him to remove me from the position of judge.” And Yūsuf said, “By God, I wish that all judges were like you, so how can I ask this?” Then [Yūsuf] went away and sat down. Al-Ḥajjāj, his son, said to him, “O father, who is this that you stood up for?” He said, “My son, this is Sulaym the judge of the people of Egypt and their *qāṣṣ*.” And he said, “God forgive you, father! You, Yūsuf b. Abū ‘Aqīl, stand up for a man from Kinda or Tujīb?” And he [Yūsuf] said, “These are the kinds of people by whom the people (*al-nās*) receive mercy.” And he [al-Ḥajjāj] said, “The people are not corrupted towards the *amīr al-mu’minīn* except by the influence of these people. They sit and young people sit with them; they call to remembrance the lives of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and they rise against the *amīr al-mu’minīn*. By God if it were possible I would ask the *amīr al-mu’minīn* to allow me to kill this and his likes.” And Yūsuf said, “By God, O son, I think that God created you wretched.”²⁵⁸

According to the report, Sulaym sought to be removed from judging, although the reason why is not stated. Since Yūsuf assigns to him only two positions, *qāṣṣ* and judge, it is implied that Sulaym preferred to return to his position as *qāṣṣ*. By stating that he was representative of those who “sit and young people sit with them; they call to remembrance (*yudhakkirūn*) the lives of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and they rise against the *amīr al-mu’minīn*,” al-Ḥajjāj seems to connect his actions more closely with those of the *quṣṣāṣ* rather than the judges and suggests that he was censuring him as a *qāṣṣ*. Nevertheless, the apparent overlap between *qaṣaṣ* and judging makes it difficult to determine with certainty the session described here. If indeed al-Ḥajjāj’s description is of the *quṣṣāṣ*, then it indicated that *qaṣaṣ* was just as politically sensitive as judging—a fact that we have already encountered in Chapter One.²⁵⁹

257 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 235; Wakī’, *Quḍāt*, 3:224; Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 72:278; Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 119. See also above, 153.

258 Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 72:273.

259 Jūda suggested that scholars preferred *qaṣaṣ* over judging because the former did not carry as much political baggage; see his “Qaṣaṣ,” 118. This tradition, however, suggests that *qaṣaṣ* could be just as politically dangerous as judging.

Sulaym's request to be removed from the position of judge is echoed by other *quṣṣās*/judges of the Umayyad period. Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī (d. 80/700) was judge in Syria during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik.²⁶⁰ When 'Abd al-Malik removed him from *qaṣaṣ* and appointed him judge, he reportedly replied: "You have removed me from my flock (*ra'yyatī*) and left me in that which I dread."²⁶¹ However, once he was in the position of judge he argued that he be retained unless he was found to have been spreading lies.²⁶² In Egypt, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥujayra (d. 83/702) received 200 *dīnārs* per year for both *qaṣaṣ* and judging.²⁶³ His father, though, did not view the two positions as equanimous; when he learned that Ibn Ḥujayra had been appointed *qāṣṣ* he was pleased and said: "Praise God, my son has remembered [God] and has caused others to remember [God] (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh dhakara ibnī wa-dhakkara*)!" However, when he was appointed judge, his father said: "We belong to God! My son has perished and has caused others to perish (*innā li-llāh halaka ibnī wa-ahlaka*)!"²⁶⁴ This exclamation is particularly informative since the statement used here to bemoan the appointment to the judiciary was used in another report to condemn

260 Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 2:320; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:137, 151, 152, 160, 166; Suyūṭī, *Ḥuffāz*, 1:26.

261 Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 200; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:166.

262 Ibid.

263 Al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-quḍāt alladhīna walū qaḍa' Miṣr*, ed. Richard J.H. Gottheil (Paris, 1908), 15; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 235; Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 3:229, 325; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:501. Ibn Ḥujayra reportedly also received 200 *dīnārs* annually as a treasurer (*alā bayt al-māl*), as a stipend (*aṭā'uhu*) and as an award (*jā'izatuḥu*). Wadād al-Qādī showed that his payment as a judge, which equates to 16.6 *dīnārs* per month, is reasonable even though it is slightly higher than the payment of other judges of his time. However, she also noted that the even figures of 200 *dīnārs* for each category "make one a little uneasy." See her "The Salaries of Judges in Early Islam: The Evidence of the Documentary and Literary Sources," *JNES* 68:1 (2009), 22, 28.

264 Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 239; Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 3:229. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam notes that the precise identity of the speaker is uncertain since there are two men known as Ibn Ḥujayra: Ibn Ḥujayra the Elder, who is 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥujayra, and Ibn Ḥujayra the Younger, who is the Elder's son, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥujayra; see *Miṣr*, 239. Wakī's report suggests that it was 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān who was appointed over *al-qaṣaṣ* and the one who opines over the appointment to judging was 'Abd al-Raḥmān; see his *Quḍāt*, 3:229. I have chosen to identify the one who was appointed as Ibn Ḥujayra the Elder because he is the only one who was associated with *qaṣaṣ* independently of this report; see Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 3:225; al-Dūlābī, *al-Kunā wa-l-asmā'*, ed. Abū Qutayba Naẓar Muḥammad al-Fāriyābī (Beirut, 2000), 1:314; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:501; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4/1:31; Pedersen, "Islamic Preacher," 236. Jūda believed that the one appointed was the Younger; see his "Qaṣaṣ," 119.

the *quṣṣāṣ*. The caliph ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib allegedly said of a *qāṣṣ* who did not know *al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*: “You perish and you cause others to perish!”²⁶⁵ Apparently this was a ready criticism applicable to a variety of functions.

Some *quṣṣāṣ* scholars sought to avoid appointments to the judiciary in the first place. Two Basran scholars and *quṣṣāṣ*, Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, sought to avoid being appointed judges.²⁶⁶ When Bakr heard that he was to become a judge, he rationalized his way out of the appointment, saying: “By the God of whom there is only one, I do not have the knowledge for judging. . . . If I am trustworthy [in what I have just sworn before God], then you should not appoint me. If I am a liar [in what I have just sworn before God], then you should not appoint a liar.”²⁶⁷

Orators (*Khuṭabā’*)

The *khuṭba* was an Islamic period public pronouncement allegedly maintaining vestiges of pre-Islamic judicial pronouncements and also showing similarities to *qaṣaṣ*.²⁶⁸ The *khuṭba* is most often regarded as the oration delivered at the time of the Friday congregational prayer and at other formal occasions, such as at the celebrations of the two main feasts of al-Aḏḥā and al-Fiṭr.²⁶⁹ During the Umayyad period, the term *khuṭba* was fluid in its application, used to describe pronouncements given at other times and occasions.²⁷⁰ In general, however, the *khuṭba* appears to have been a rather formal and official pronouncement, especially in comparison to *qaṣaṣ*. For example, the purported first *qāṣṣ* of Egypt, Sulaym b. ‘Itr (d. 75/694), was also identified as a *khatīb*

265 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290; Ibn Sallām, *Nāsikh*, 4; al-Muḥāsibī, *Al-‘Aql wa-Fahm al-Qur’ān*, ed. Ḥusayn al-Quwwatī (Beirut, 1971), 327.

266 On Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:208; Jāḥiz, *Bayān*, 1:100. On al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1346.

267 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:208; Jāḥiz, *Bayān*, 1:100.

268 On the relationship between *qaṣaṣ*, judging and the *khuṭba*, see Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 233–235; ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 63; Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 118. On the question of the *khuṭba* as a practice with roots in pre-Islamic judging, see Wensinck, “Khuṭba,” *El2*, 5:74, citing C.H. Becker, *Die Kanzel im Kultus des alten Islam*, in *Nöldeke-Festschrift*, (Giessen, 1906), 33; Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 194.

269 Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 180. See also Wensinck, “Khuṭba,” *El2*, 5:74; Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 226.

270 Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 189–198.

because he gave the *khutba* on al-Adhā and al-Fitr.²⁷¹ Normally though, Sulaym was known to be either a *qāṣṣ* or a judge. This suggests that even at this early stage one difference between the *qāṣṣ* and the *khaṭīb* was that the *khaṭīb* gave a more official oration, such as the *ʿid* orations.

In spite of this difference, the fact that the *khutba* could be delivered by a *qāṣṣ* indicates that the difference between them was not so great as to preclude one from engaging in the work of the other. In fact, in terms of content, the *khutba* and the *qiṣṣa* in early Islam were quite similar. Tahera Qutbuddin noted that the *khutba* “roused warriors to battle, legislated on civic and criminal matters, raised awareness of the nearness of death and the importance of leading a pious life, called to the new religion of Islam, and even formed part of its ritual worship.”²⁷² As was seen in the textual evidence in Chapter One, many of these same objectives characterized *qaṣaṣ*. It is not surprising, then, for a scholar identified as a *qāṣṣ*, religious or martial, to have also given a *khutba*. A *khutba* of Abū al-Dardā’ encouraging his listeners to live their lives for eternal and not temporal rewards exemplifies these common characteristics, for it was given in a military environment to the people of Damascus, at a time other than the Friday congregational prayer and drew upon themes of admonition and piety.²⁷³

In addition, similarities in style connected the *khutba* to the *qiṣṣa*. Jāḥiẓ intimated that the Raqāshī family of Baṣra, known for their affiliations with *qaṣaṣ*, was predisposed to be *quṣṣāṣ* because they were descendants of the *khutabā’* of the Persian royal house.²⁷⁴ Since the content of the Islamic Basran Raqāshī family certainly differed from their pre-Islamic Persian ancestors, Jāḥiẓ is clearly speaking of other traits necessary in public speaking. His belief that this family was well-suited for *qaṣaṣ* indicates that he saw in the two forms of expression commonalities in style, not only content.

In light of these similarities, it comes as somewhat of a surprise that only nine *quṣṣāṣ* were explicitly identified as *khutabā’*.²⁷⁵ It seems that the difference in formality may have been an important factor in this disparity. Even though, as Qutbuddin noted, a *khutba* was delivered in different settings, it

271 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:276. Jūda noted the similarities between the *khaṭīb* and the *qāṣṣ* and that their association with each other extended beyond the Umayyad period into the ‘Abbāsīd; see his “Qaṣaṣ,” 120–121.

272 Qutbuddin, “Khutba,” 177.

273 Azdī, *Futūh*, 389–390.

274 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:308.

275 They are: (10) Abū al-Dardā’, (11) Ibn Mas‘ūd, (28) Sulaym b. ‘Itr, (41) Muṭarrif b. ‘Abd Allāh, (46) Kurdūs b. al-‘Abbās, (62) Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh, (63) Yazīd b. Abān, (66) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and (90) al-Faḍl b. ‘Isa.

still seems to have been a more formal pronouncement than *qaşaş*. The degree of formality for the two was determined by the time and location of the pronouncements, the decorum expected at each of the sessions and the political sanction bestowed upon the speaker. In each of these factors, the *khuṭba* appears to have been more official and to have demanded more rigid parameters in its implementation. These distinguishing factors were a product more of the environment in which *qaşaş* and *khaṭāba* were given than even of their style or content; an issue to be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Three.

Admonishers (*Wu‘āz*)

The association of *qaşaş* with *wa‘z* is evident from its usage in the Qur‘ān. Pedersen noted that in the Qur‘ān *wa‘z* was applied to the law of Moses (Sūrat al-A‘rāf [7]:142), the gospels (Sūrat al-Nisā’ [5]:52) and the Qur‘ān itself (Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān [3]:132; Sūrat Hūd [11]:121), because each revelation was an admonition.²⁷⁶ The term *qaşşa* was used in like manner in the Qur‘ān with the *qaşaş* of the lives of the pre-Islamic prophets as well as *qaşaş* of the Qur‘ān acting as a form of admonition and exhortation.²⁷⁷ It was the common objective of admonition that bound the two forms of public expression together. Both the *qāşş* and the *wā‘iz* drew inspiration for their admonitions from pietistic themes, such as the renunciation of this world, the imminence of death and the final judgment. Since admonition of this type was a common component of religious education in general, other terms, such as *dhikrā*, *‘ibra* (“example”, “lesson”), *naşīha* (“advice”) or *irshād* (“right guidance”), can also be found as synonyms for *wa‘z*.²⁷⁸ For Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d.c. 139/756), the connection of the *wā‘iz* to the *qāşş* stemmed from their common objective of recalling the end of time, the cessation of existence and the passage of time (*yadhkuru al-zawāl wa-l-fanā’ wa-l-duwal*).²⁷⁹ The confluence of meaning for these terms makes

276 Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 227. On the Qur‘ān as the *wā‘iz* of God to the Muslims, see Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā‘il al-Qur‘ān*, eds. Marwān al-Aṭīyya, Muḥsin Kharāba and Wafā’ Taqī al-Dīn (Beirut, 1995), 2:283; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 29:181–182, 184–185.

277 See the discussion of *qaşaş* utilizing the exemplar of the Prophet Muḥammad and the pre-Islamic prophets in Chapter One.

278 B. Radtke, “Wā‘iz,” *EL2*, 11:56.

279 Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, *al-Adab al-kabīr*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Bāshā (Beirut, 1994), 123. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ mentions these two in passing in a passage describing his disdain for those who belittle the blessings of their friends out of envy: they belittle and spoil the blessing by telling the other that eventually his existence will cease and that time marches on. While the topics discussed by the *wā‘iz* or the *qāşş* may be difficult for the listener to take in, they are better

drawing clear and fast lines of distinction between them difficult, especially in the early period.²⁸⁰

Considering the similarities between *qaṣaṣ* and *waʿz*, we expect to find a large number of those who engaged in the former to be identified with the latter. Surprisingly this is not the case. Only seven *quṣṣāṣ* have, as of yet, been directly associated with the term *waʿz*.²⁸¹ Certainly, this does not mean that only seven made statements that were admonitory in tone. Just as was noted with *tafsīr*, this number indicates only those *quṣṣāṣ* who have been expressly affiliated with the term *waʿz* or its derivatives. Pedersen alleged that the title *qāṣṣ* preceded *wāʿiz* as a designation for the one who gave admonitions.²⁸² It may be for this reason that we find so few *wuʿāz* among the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period. Regardless of the order of the designations, it appears that the title *qāṣṣ* was more common.²⁸³

Two men who exemplify the complexity in differentiating between these various disciplines of public religious education are Bilāl b. Saʿd and Yazīd b. Abān. The *qāṣṣ* Bilāl b. Saʿd, one of the most eloquent (*ablagh*) of the *wuʿāz* whose admonitions (*mawāʿizihī*) addressed similar themes found in the statements of the *quṣṣāṣ*, such as the imminence of death and the need for religious knowledge and pious living, indicates that a *qāṣṣ* and *wāʿiz* were distinguished by the same character traits.²⁸⁴

Similarly, Yazīd b. Abān was a *qāṣṣ* and *wāʿiz*, as well as a *khaṭīb*. As a *wāʿiz* he was called upon by ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to admonish him and he did so by means of the theme of the imminence of death—a topic common to the *wuʿāz* and the *quṣṣāṣ*.²⁸⁵ This practice may be a vestige of the *madhī* pre-Islamic poets gave to the rulers and to those seeking guidance from a sage.²⁸⁶ A *wāʿiz* might be sought during times of despair, as ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz did upon the

than such a “friend” who stoops to the level of trying to create displeasure and grief over the good that has come to a friend.

280 Radtke stated that the distinction between a *wāʿiz*, *qāṣṣ* and *mudhakkir* was not clear until the 4th/10th century; see his “Wāʿiz,” *EL*2, 11:56. See also Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 231; ʿAthamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 53.

281 They are: (28) Sulaym b. ʿItr, (36) Nawf b. Faḍāla al-Bakālī, (60) Bilāl b. Saʿd, (63) Yazīd b. Abān, (66) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (79) ʿAbd Allāh b. Kathīr, and (104) ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Abī Sulaymān.

282 Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 231.

283 ʿAthamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 53.

284 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 10:485; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 4:293. For examples of Bilāl’s admonitions, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 10:486; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 84–85.

285 Al-Jāhīz, *al-Maḥāsin wa-l-addād* (Beirut, 1950), 300; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 32:76.

286 Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 231.

death of his son.²⁸⁷ This summons, however, is not to be interpreted that the *qāṣṣ* held an official appointment as a *qāṣṣ*.²⁸⁸ While some *quṣṣāṣ* were indeed appointed by the political administration, many seem to have engaged in *qaṣaṣ* independently and to have done so because of their religious knowledge and skill. In the case of Yazīd b. Abān, he does not appear to have been officially appointed by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as his admonisher; rather, this activity seems to have developed out of Yazīd’s reputation as a pious religious man.

The association of *qaṣaṣ* with *wa‘ẓ* confirms that admonition was a fundamental aspect of *qaṣaṣ*. While the two terms seem to have enjoyed a certain symbiosis in the early period, the role of admonition in the practice of the *quṣṣāṣ* continued beyond the Umayyad period and was expressed by a third term, *nadhīr*—a term the Qur’ān also applies to the Prophet.²⁸⁹

Mudhakkirūn

One role often associated with the *qāṣṣ* is that of *mudhakkir*, “one who calls others to be cognizant of God.” The primary lexical meaning for the verb *dhakkara* is “to remind,” although in religious contexts it incorporates an exhortative element with the sense of reminding someone about God. This meaning can already be found in the Qur’ān.²⁹⁰ Thus the term *dhikr*, eventually characterizing the practices of the ascetics, was used in the Qur’ān for “the admonishing preaching of the Prophet” and is, in this regard, quite similar to *wa‘ẓ*.²⁹¹ With the passage of time, terms such as *dhakkara*, *ḥaddatha*, *wa‘āza* and *qaṣṣa* came to describe specific religious phenomena, even then, by virtue of the similarities of their meanings within the Qur’ān, they maintained a close association with each other. In fact, *qāṣṣ* and *mudhakkir* are often used synonymously in the sources so that the requirements given by Abū Zayd al-Samarqāndī for a good *mudhakkir* were identical to those given by Ibn al-Jawzī for a good *qāṣṣ*.²⁹²

287 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 18:112. ‘Umar also consoled others, including *quṣṣāṣ*, in their times of loss. See his words of consolation to ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:71.

288 Pedersen held this interpretation. See his “Islamic Preacher,” 231.

289 It was said of Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī (d. 172/788): “He is no *qāṣṣ*; he is a *nadhīr*.” See Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:369. On Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:189–190. For the Qur’ān’s use of *nadhīr* for the Prophet, see Sūrat al-Baqara (2):119.

290 Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 227–228, 231; Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 107.

291 Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 228, 231. See also Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 106–107. On the various applications and evolution of the term *dhikr*, see L. Gardet, “Dhikr,” *El2*, 2:223–227.

292 Pauliny, “Quṣṣāṣ,” 130.

The Prophet as Qāṣṣ and Mudhakkir

In addition to their association with each other in the Qurʾān, the correspondence of *qaṣṣa* with *dhikr* is alluded to in a report from Aws b. Abī Aws that says that the Prophet “used to give *qaṣaṣ* to us and call us to remember God, (*yaquṣṣu ʿalaynā wa-yudhakkirunā*).”²⁹³ Therefore, the Prophet, by virtue of his own affiliation with these two disciplines, was upheld as a model for each. His grandson, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 49/669–70), apparently viewed these two practices precisely from this perspective.²⁹⁴ When he happened upon a *qāṣṣ* in the Prophet’s mosque in Medina, he asked: “What are you?” The man replied: “I’m a *qāṣṣ*, O son of the Messenger of God.” Al-Ḥasan said: “You lie! Muḥammad is the *qāṣṣ*, for God said, “Relate *qaṣaṣ* (*fa-uqṣuṣ al-qaṣaṣ*) [Sūrat al-Aʿrāf (7):176].” The man replied: “I am a *mudhakkir*.” Al-Ḥasan repeated: “You lie! Muḥammad is the *mudhakkir*, for God said to him, “Remember that you are the *mudhakkir* (Sūrat al-Ghāshiyā [88]:21).” To this the man was left dumbfounded and said: “Then what am I?” Al-Ḥasan answered: “A fake (*al-mutakkalif min al-rijāl*)!”²⁹⁵ A similar report alleges that ʿUmar confronted a *qāṣṣ* in much the same way as al-Ḥasan had, although with two important exceptions: ʿUmar beat the man each time he claimed he was a *qāṣṣ* and a *mudhakkir* and he did not draw any comparisons to the Prophet.²⁹⁶

Two important conclusions can be drawn from these reports. First, both reports indicate that *qaṣaṣ* and *dhikr* were similar enterprises since the unidentified teacher believed that they both were accurate descriptions of his conduct. Secondly, in the report attributed to al-Ḥasan, usurpation of Prophetic authority is the stated offense. Al-Ḥasan excoriated the *qāṣṣ* by implying that he did not possess the authority to engage in this form of instruction. The report suggests that the *qāṣṣ* represented an impingement on the role of the Prophet by engaging in an activity that was reserved only for him. Furthermore, since this incident allegedly occurred after the Prophet’s death—at the time, al-Ḥasan was only seven—it seems to imply unequivocally that any *qāṣṣ* or *mudhakkir*, even one who lived after the Prophet, was usurping the position of the Prophet. Clearly, by virtue of the large number of scholars identified as *quṣṣāṣ* and *mudhakkirūn*, this sentiment failed to take hold within the community, though it may have contributed to the evolving negative image of the *quṣṣāṣ*.

293 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:289. On Aws b. Abī Aws, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 3:388.

294 On al-Ḥasan, see L. Veccia Vaglieri, “al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib,” *El2*, 3:240–243.

295 Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2:227–228; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 153–154.

296 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:9.

Statistical Analysis and Textual Evidence

Since the overlap in the two terms *qāṣṣ* and *mudhakkir* appears seminal, it is somewhat surprising that only seventeen *quṣṣās*, or 16%, are directly connected by the sources to *dhikr*.²⁹⁷ In spite of this low number, the association between *qāṣaṣ* and *dhikr* is well-established even in reports about the lives of the Companions of the Prophet. When ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ, for instance, went with the Meccan *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr to visit ‘Ā’isha, she said:

“You are the *qāṣṣ* of the people of Mecca?” He said, “I am ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr.” She said, “O ‘Ubayd, when you call others to remember [God], do so lightly for calling to remembrance kills, (*yā ‘Ubayd idhā dhakkarta, fa-akhiffa, fa-inna al-dhikr yaqtul*).”²⁹⁸

In a report attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr was depicted calling his listeners to remembrance [of God], (*yudhakkiru al-nās ḥawlahu*).²⁹⁹ Another anecdote alleges that the Successor Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Kurayz³⁰⁰ said:

I saw ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr and ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ talking to each other while the *qāṣṣ* was giving *qāṣaṣ*. So I said, “Do you not want to listen to the *dhikr* (the mentioning of God) and to be deemed worthy at the appointed time [before God]?”³⁰¹

Each of these reports unequivocally associates *qāṣaṣ* to *dhikr* and two of them connect ‘Ubayd directly to *dhikr*.

The affiliation of *qāṣaṣ* with *dhikr* persisted across the empire and throughout the Umayyad caliphate. Al-Aswad b. Sarī, the purported first *qāṣṣ* of Baṣra, “used to call people to the remembrance of God (*yudhakkir*) in the inner section of the mosque.”³⁰² Sulaym b. ‘Itr, the first to give *qāṣaṣ* in Egypt, was

297 They are: (2) ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, (14) al-Aswad b. Sarī, (16) Tamīm al-Dārī, (25) ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, (28) Sulaym b. ‘Itr, (31) Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī, (33) ‘Abd Allāh b. Ghālib, (38) Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, (40) Sa’d b. Jubayr, (46) Kurdūs b. al-‘Abbās, (60) Bilāl b. Sa’d, (66) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (68) Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa, (80) Muḥammad b. Qays, (81) Darrāj b. Sim‘ān, (94) Sumayr b. ‘Abd al-Raḥman and (104) ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Abī Sulaymān.

298 Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 250–251. A variant in Ibn Sa’d reads: “Remembering is heavy (*thaqīl*).” See his *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24. On ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ, see J. Schacht, “‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ,” *El2*, 1:730.

299 Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 250–251.

300 See Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 13:324–326.

301 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 9:163; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:282.

302 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:41.

considered a *mudhakkir* as well as a *qāṣṣ*.³⁰³ Ibrāhīm al-Taymī called on people to remember God in sessions that he held in his home. These sessions were so spiritually moving that they left one of his listeners, Abū Wā'il (d. 99–101/717–20), trembling like a bird.³⁰⁴

Some of the *qūṣṣāṣ/mudhakkirūn* expressed their *dhikr* through the repetition of religious phrases. Ka'b al-Aḥbār alleged that anyone who says *subḥāna Allāh* ("God be praised") and *al-ḥamdu li-llāh* ("Praise be to God") two hundred times will have his sins forgiven.³⁰⁵ The Baṣran *qāṣṣ*, 'Abd 'Allāh b. Ghālib, continually repeated phrases like *subḥāna Allāh*, *al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, and *lā ilāha illā Allāh* ("There is no god but God").³⁰⁶ Darrāj b. Sim'an of Egypt advocated that his listeners "increase in remembrance of God until people say they are insane (*akthirū dhikr Allāh ḥattā yaqūlū majnūn*)."³⁰⁷ According to the opinion of the eminent Companion and *qāṣṣ* Ibn Mas'ūd, the repetition of these religious phrases was a blameworthy innovation. He reportedly came across a group of people, either in a mosque or while on their way out of the city, listening to and repeating after a certain *qāṣṣ* named 'Amr b. Zurāra who was instructing them to say "God be praised (*subḥāna Allāh*)" multiple times.³⁰⁸ Ibn Mas'ūd rebuked the *qāṣṣ* and his followers, saying: "You are either better guided than the Messenger of God and his Companions or you are holding onto an error."³⁰⁹ Yet, in spite of this reprimand from a man of impeccable reputation like Ibn Mas'ūd, the practice continued among the *qūṣṣāṣ* as indicated in the reports about 'Abd Allāh b. Ghālib and Darrāj b. Sim'an, as well as in a report about Abū Ṭu'ma Hilāl, another *qāṣṣ* of the second/eighth century, who, although he

303 Dhahabī, *Tārikh*, 5:409.

304 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:289; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:171. Abū Wā'il is Shaqīq b. Salama who died during the caliphate of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20); see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:178–179.

305 Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārikh*, 1:373.

306 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247. On him, see the Appendix # 33.

307 Yahyā b. Ma'in, *Tārikh*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Sayf (Mecca, 1979), 4:413; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 17:220; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:479.

308 For the variant placing the event in a mosque, see Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 9:128. For the variant placing the event on the outskirts of the city, see 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:222.

309 The report can be found in three slightly different versions in Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 9:128. See also 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:222, Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Maṭālib al-'āliya bi-zawā'id al-masānid al-thamāniya*, ed. Sa'd b. Nāṣr b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Shithrī (Riyadh, 1998–1999), 12:518, and Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī, whose version says that the one giving *qāṣṣ* was telling them to say *subḥāna Allāh* and *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, each ten times; see his *al-I'tisām* (Cairo, 1913–1914), 2:28.

transmitted only a few *ḥadīths*, reported that the Prophet told his family: “If one of you was struck with some distress or sadness, let him say seven times, “God, God is my Lord. I do not associate anything with Him.”³¹⁰

Yet *dhikr* was not composed simply of the repetition of religious phrases. Other *quṣṣāṣ* associated *dhikr* with the performance of good deeds as well. The distinguished Syrian *qāṣṣ* Bilāl b. Sa’d argued for the excellence of *dhikr* in the form of acts of religiosity and kindness over that of mere words when he said: “There are two types of *dhikr*: *dhikr* of God by the tongue, which is good and beautiful, and *dhikr* of God when I do what is right and not what is wrong—this is the better of the two.”³¹¹ In Egypt, Darrāj b. Sim’ān transmitted and interpreted a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, that on the day of reckoning the people who horde will be divided from those who are generous; Darrāj classified the people of generosity as those who sat in *dhikr* sessions in the mosque.³¹²

Later scholars reckoned that the affiliation of *qaṣaṣ* with *dhikr* in their time was a vestige of the practice of the early community. Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), in a section of his *Zuhd* on those who engaged in *qaṣaṣ* and specifically in a report that Ibn ‘Abbās saw Tamīm al-Dārī give *qaṣaṣ* during the caliphate of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, glossed the verb *yaquṣṣu* with *yudhakkiru*.³¹³ Fākihī (d. 275/889), in an introduction to a brief section in his *Akḥbār Makka* on the practice of the *quṣṣaṣ*, stated:

The *qāṣṣ* stood in the Holy Mosque after the morning prayers (*al-subḥ*) and called people to the mention God (*fa-yadhkuru Allāh ta’ālā*), offered up supplications to Him (*yad’ū*) and encouraged faith in the people. This occurred behind the place where the *imām* stood (*al-maqām*) after he had finished.³¹⁴

According to Fākihī, mentioning God (*dhikr*) was the common practice in his time. Also, like Ibn Ḥanbal, he alleges that this practice dated back to the beginning of Islam and, in the case of his city, Mecca, back to ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr.³¹⁵

310 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 74:100. A second version encourages the repetition of this phrase three times; see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 74:100.

311 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 10:497.

312 Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 3:114.

313 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 215. Later, Maqrīzī in his *Khiṭaṭ*, gave a similar report in which Tamīm was granted permission to *yudhakkir*; see *Khiṭaṭ* 4/1:28. See also Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 232–233.

314 Al-Fākihī, *Akḥbār Makka*, ed. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Duḥaysh (Beirut, 1994), 2:338.

315 Ibid.

Not all scholars, however, appreciated the confluence of *qāṣaṣ* with *dhikr*, and some actually saw them as distinct disciplines. According to some reports, *dhikr* was a phenomenon incorporating religious knowledge (*‘ilm*) while *qāṣaṣ* sessions lacked any such value whatsoever. The distinguished Successor Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728) entered the mosque in Baṣra and a *qāṣṣ* named Sumayr (Samīr?) b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was giving *qāṣaṣ* in one corner while Ḥumayd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥimyārī was “mentioning religious knowledge (*yadhkuru al-‘ilm*)” in another.³¹⁶ Ibn Sīrīn chose ostensibly Sumayr’s session, sat down and became tired. Then someone came to him (*atānī ātin*) and said: “You leaned towards one of them and you sat down. If you had wanted, I would have shown you the place of [the angel] Gabriel with Ḥumayd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.”³¹⁷ The session of the *qāṣṣ* is first distinguished from the *dhikr* session, then disparaged throughout the report. First, the report does not elaborate on the details of the *qāṣaṣ* session, though it elevates the *dhikr* session over it because *dhikr* contained religious knowledge (*dhikr al-‘ilm*). Secondly, the impotence of *qāṣaṣ* is depicted in its inability to stimulate the listener, for after Ibn Sīrīn sat with Sumayr he became tired, a consequence of boredom. Apparently, not all *qāṣṣ* were entertaining.³¹⁸ Lastly, the anonymous interlocutor confirms the supremacy of *dhikr* to *qāṣaṣ* by stating that the angel of the revelation, Gabriel, was present in the former. The image is undeniable—*dhikr* and *qāṣaṣ* are not only different enterprises, *dhikr* is decidedly superior.

The conviction that *dhikr* and *qāṣaṣ* were distinct enterprises and that *dhikr* was preferable is argued in two third/ninth century texts: Aḥmad b. ‘Amr b. Abī ‘Aṣīm’s (d. 287/900) *al-Mudhakkir wa-l-tadhkīr wa-l-dhikr* and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s (d. 386/998) *Qūt al-qulūb*. Despite the title of Ibn Abī ‘Aṣīm’s book suggesting its topic is *dhikr*, much of its content is concerned with the censure of *qāṣaṣ*. He argues, for example, against the legitimacy of *qāṣaṣ* in his time, stating that it is practiced in specially built prayer areas in the homes of the *qāṣṣ*. The *qāṣṣ* then attracts women and weak men to his sessions and fills their minds with all sorts of innovations. Ibn Abī ‘Aṣīm claims that the *amīr* of the city has the responsibility to shut these sessions down. He advocates this position by citing anti-*qāṣaṣ* traditions. He gives multiple variants of a tradition stating that there was no *qāṣaṣ* at the time of the Prophet, Abū Bakr or

316 On Sumayr (Samīr?) b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, see the Appendix # 94. Ḥumayd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥimyārī was a *faqīh* in Baṣra; see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 7:381–383; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:497.

317 Al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, eds. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī and Khālid al-Sab‘ al-‘Alamī (Beirut, 1986), 1:110.

318 On the issue of the danger of boredom in a *qāṣaṣ* session, see Chapter Three.

‘Umar,³¹⁹ as well as variants of one claiming that there are only three type of people who give *qaṣaṣ*: the *amīr*, the *ma’mūr* (the one appointed by the *amīr*) and the hypocrite,³²⁰ and, finally, of another stating that permission from a governmental authority is required for giving *qaṣaṣ*. All of this is intended to encourage the authorities of his day to close down the *qaṣaṣ* sessions.

Ibn Abī ‘Aṣim compares *qaṣaṣ* to *dhikr*, defending the latter as the legitimate form of religious education. In support of *dhikr* he lists Qur’ānic verses and *ḥadīths* on the angels’ desire to sit in *dhikr* sessions and on God’s willingness to forgive those who attend *dhikr* sessions.³²¹ While the general theme of the incompatibility of *dhikr* and *qaṣaṣ* is clear in the work, Ibn Abī ‘Aṣim cannot completely avoid the striking similarity between the two terms, *qaṣaṣ* and *dhikr*, as seen in his citation of a report that Tamīm al-Dārī was the first *qāṣṣ*. The report states that when ‘Umar, caving to Tamīm’s persistent petitioning, granted him permission to give *qaṣaṣ*, the caliph asked him what he intended to do in his sessions. Tamīm answered: “I will recite the Qur’ān to them (*aqra’u ‘alayhim al-Qur’ān*), call them to remember God (*udhakkiruhum*) and admonish them (*a’iẓuhum*).”³²² Ibn Abī ‘Aṣim tried to avoid the clear association between *qaṣaṣ* and *dhikr* in this report by arguing that the *qaṣaṣ* of his day was unlike the type proposed by Tamīm. His use of the report suggests, however, that he recognized the integral relationship between *dhikr* and *qaṣaṣ*, at least in the earliest years of the community.

Ironically, Ibn Abī ‘Aṣim was not the only third/ninth century scholar who advocated for *dhikr* while juxtaposing it to *qaṣaṣ*. His more famous contemporary, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, devoted a section of his *Qūt al-qulūb* to expounding the differences between the two phenomena and, like Ibn Abī ‘Aṣim, unabashedly supported the sessions of *dhikr* while censuring the sessions of *qaṣaṣ*. He did so by referring to reports of earlier scholars critical of the *quṣṣās* and *qaṣaṣ*. One of his most preferred sources was the scholar/*qāṣṣ* al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, although Makkī never identified him as a *qāṣṣ*.

Makkī presented his position quite clearly. He established a hierarchy of religious meetings: “Attending the sessions of *dhikr* is better than prayer and prayer is better than attending the sessions of the *quṣṣās*.”³²³ *Dhikr* sessions are

319 Ibn ‘Abī ‘Aṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 62–66. For a more detailed analysis of this tradition see Chapter Four.

320 Ibid., 67–81. For a more detailed analysis of this tradition see Chapter Four.

321 Ibid., 53–60.

322 Ibid., 66.

323 See Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:370, n. 6, which notes this reading in an alternate manuscript. In another edition of Makkī’s *Qūt al-qulūb*, the statement is included as part of the text; see *Qūt al-qulūb*, ed. ‘Aṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut, 2005), 1:123.

better than all others because of their content. This was true from the time of the Prophet, his Companions and the Successors. *Dhikr* sessions were better because the attendees were interested in,

Knowledge of the faith (*‘ilm al-īmān*) and esoteric knowledge (i.e. gnosis, *al-ma‘rifā*), along with the disciplines of communal relations (*wa-‘ulūm al-mu‘āmalāt*) and legal rulings (*al-tafaqquh*), known [only] by seeing from the heart (*baṣā’ir al-qulūb*) and by perceiving through the mind’s eye (*al-naẓar bi-‘ayn al-yaqīn*) the secrets of the hidden aspects of life (*sarā’ir al-ghuyūb*).³²⁴

The benefits of *dhikr*, therefore, included religious knowledge (*‘ilm al-īmān*), practical application of the faith within the community (*‘ulūm al-mu‘āmalāt* and *al-tafaqquh*) and the exploration of the hidden truths (*al-sarā’ir al-ghuyūb*) of the faith (*al-ma‘rifā*) only obtainable by deeper spiritual awareness (*baṣā’ir al-qulūb wa-l-naẓar bi-‘ayn al-yaqīn*). As a result of these benefits, Makkī believed that the one who attends the *dhikr* session enjoys an elevated status in paradise. In defense of his position, he cites a portion of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33): 35, “The male Muslims and the female Muslims and the male believers and the female believers,” and interprets it as meaning that the term “Muslim” denotes a higher level of faith than the term “believer,” *mu‘min*.³²⁵

In contrast to the *dhikr* sessions are the *qaṣaṣ* sessions. According to Makkī the benefits found in the *dhikr* sessions were of no interest to the *quṣṣāṣ* (*walāyṣa yurīdūna bihi majālis al-qaṣaṣ wa-lā ya’nūna bi-dhalika al-quṣṣāṣ*).³²⁶ He cites reports from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī who allegedly characterized the sessions of the *quṣṣāṣ* as innovation (*bid‘a*)³²⁷ and as nothingness (*farāgh*).³²⁸ He claims: “If *al-qaṣaṣ* was a part of the *dhikr* sessions and if the *quṣṣāṣ* were among the *‘ulamā’*, then Ibn ‘Umar, with his piety and asceticism, would not have removed them from the mosque.”³²⁹ However, according to a separate

324 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:196.

325 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:198. Makkī’s selection of this passage is revealing for it is the verse which immediately precedes those verses over which the *qāṣṣ* and *mufassir* Muqātil b. Sulaymān was censured for utilizing *isrā’īlyyāt*, see above 119 f.. For the relationship between the two terms “Muslim” and “mu‘min” and their application to the earliest believers in Islam, see Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 56–61.

326 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:196.

327 Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:370, 2:196.

328 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:198.

329 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:196, see also 1:370. Ibn ‘Umar is not the only early Muslim leader who allegedly removed the *quṣṣāṣ* from the mosque. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib is reported to have done

tradition, Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on the *quṣṣāṣ* was not as antagonistic as Makkī portrayed. Al-Azraq b. Qays (d. 105–20/723–37) reportedly said: “I was sitting with Ibn ‘Umar and the people (*al-nās*) were asking him questions while ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr was giving *qaṣaṣ* (*yaquṣṣu*). So Ibn ‘Umar said, “Leave me alone with our *mudhakkir* (*khallū baynanā wa-bayna mudhakkirinā*)”³³⁰ This report not only portrays Ibn ‘Umar as supportive of the *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd, it also expresses the synonymous relationship between the terms *qāṣṣ* and *mudhakkir* directly from Ibn ‘Umar.

For Makkī, not only were the *qaṣaṣ* sessions themselves innovations, they contained within them specific practices considered innovations. He cites al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in giving three examples: they allow men and women to meet together, offer supplications with loud voices and extend hands during supplications.³³¹ This tradition will be examined further in Chapter Three.

In addition to the accusation of innovation, Makkī argues that the *qaṣaṣ* sessions offer no benefits—they are nothingness, *majālis al-farāgh*. He cites two reports from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in defense of his opinion. The first illustrates the lack of content in the sessions, while the second emphasizes the social good accomplishable during the sessions of the *quṣṣāṣ*. As for the former, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī reportedly said to Yazid al-Raqāshī and Ziyād al-Numayrī:

The sessions of *dhikr* are not like your session where one of you exhorts and preaches to his colleagues (*yakhṭubu ‘ala aṣḥābihi*) and narrates *ḥadīths* as if they were stories (*yasradu al-ḥadīth sard^{an}*). We, on the other hand, meet and remember the faith (*fā-nudhakkiru al-īmān*), reflect on the Qur’ān (*nataḍabbaru al-Qur’ān*), give legal rulings on the religion (*natafaqqahu fī-l-dīn*) and enumerate the blessings of God on us (*nu’uddu ni’am Allāh ‘alaynā*).³³²

likewise. Another report about ‘Alī corroborates his passion for purifying the mosque of unseemly characters. He purportedly kicked a tailor out of the mosque. When he was informed that this man was the caretaker of the mosque, i.e. he cleaned the mosque and locked the doors to it, ‘Alī refused to bend saying: “I heard the Messenger of God say: “Remove your modes of work from your mosques.”” See Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 48:348.

330 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:218. Al-Azraq b. Qays was a Basran scholar who died during the governorship of Khālīd al-Qasrī over Iraq (105–120/723–37); Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:103–104.

331 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:196.

332 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:203. Ibn al-Jawzī recorded a variant of this report traced back to Anas b. Mālik; see his *Quṣṣāṣ*, 129.

In this report al-Ḥasan described the *quṣṣāṣ* as a group exhorting, preaching and telling *ḥadīths* in the form of stories. In essence, these sessions provide no real religious or spiritual benefit, and even when they attempt to engage in religious disciplines, like *ḥadīth* transmission, they betray their ineptitude by failing to include *isnāds* so that the *ḥadīths* come across as simply stories. The *dhikr* sessions, on the other hand, engage in actual religious disciplines like Qurʾān recitation and *fiqh*, while also emphasizing spiritual matters by encouraging one to recount the blessings of God. In Makkī's view, only when compared to the sessions of the deplorable Muʿtazila do the *qaṣaṣ* sessions enjoy pride of place.³³³

The *qaṣaṣ* sessions were not only futile because of their lack of content. They also led people away from participating in activities enhancing communal relations. The Basran *ḥadīth* scholar Muʿāwiya b. Qurra (d. 115/733) purportedly asked al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī:

“Do you prefer that I visit the sick or sit with a *qāṣṣ*?” Al-Ḥasan said, “Visit your sick.” I (Muʿāwiya) said, “Do you prefer that I participate in a funerary procession or sit with a *qāṣṣ*?” He said, “Participate in your funerary procession.” I said, “Should I help a man in need if he asks of me or sit with a *qāṣṣ*?” He said, “Go where you are needed so that you do something better than the sessions of nothingness (*majālis al-farāgh*).”³³⁴

In each case, al-Ḥasan prefers the activity offering some benefit to the community over the *qaṣaṣ* sessions which are empty, at least in their social setting.

In spite of Makkī's obvious animosity towards *qaṣaṣ*, the relationship between it and *dhikr* is more complicated than he implies. The gnarly relationship between the *quṣṣāṣ* and the *mudhakkirūn* is exemplified in al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who is Makkī's exemplar for the *mudhakkirūn*. First, our sources indicate that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was himself a *qāṣṣ*.³³⁵ His position as a *qāṣṣ* may even be alluded to in a report that Makkī records whereby ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib entered the mosque in Baṣra and began to kick out the *quṣṣāṣ*. Then he came upon al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī “who was speaking about *this* religious knowledge (*yatakallamu fī ḥadhā al-ʿilm*).” So ʿAlī listened for a while and then left without removing him from the mosque.³³⁶ The obvious intent of the tradition is to distinguish the type of teaching that al-Ḥasan gave—instruction Makkī

333 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:199.

334 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:198.

335 See the Appendix # 66.

336 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:197.

certainly classified as *dhikr*—from that of the other *quṣṣās* in the mosque. The report, however, implies that al-Ḥasan was numbered among the *quṣṣās* in the mosque and only when ‘Alī heard his instruction did he choose to leave him alone. Furthermore, the validity of the report itself has been questioned based upon the improbability of ‘Alī having met al-Ḥasan.³³⁷

Secondly, not only was al-Ḥasan himself considered a *qāṣṣ*, some of his closest colleagues were also numbered among the *quṣṣās*. The precarious nature of the relationship of these men to both *qaṣaṣ* and *dhikr* is exemplified in another of Makkī’s reports. He says:

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was one of the *mudhakkirīn*. His sessions were *dhikr* sessions where he isolated himself in his house with his colleagues and his followers from among the ascetics, like Malik b Dīnār, Thābit al-Bunānī, Ayyūb al-Sijistānī, Muḥammad b. Wāsi‘, Farqad al-Sanjī, and ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd, and would say, “Let us propagate the light (*hātū unshurū al-nūr*).” He spoke to them of this religious knowledge, the knowledge of the absolute truth (*‘ilm al-yaqīn*) and the potency in the desires of the heart, the putridity of actions and the evil delusions of the souls.³³⁸

Of the seven men identified by name, three of them—al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Thābit al-Bunānī and ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd—were *quṣṣās*. One of them, Thābit al-Bunānī, was widely-known as a *qāṣṣ*.³³⁹ Clearly, therefore, the difference between a *qāṣṣ* and a *mudhakkir*, and even between these and the ascetics, as the report states, is less distinct than Makkī claims.

Lastly, while Makkī clearly disliked the *quṣṣās*, he did not deny that they were of some benefit and that traditions traced back to early authorities of the community affirmed these benefits. He records that Ziyād al-Numayrī, a *qāṣṣ* criticized earlier in his work, said:

I went to Anas b. Mālīk when he was in the corner [of the mosque] and he said to me, “Give *qaṣaṣ* (*quṣṣa*)!” I said: “How, when the people allege that it is *bid‘a*?” Anas said, “Nothing that recalls God is *bid‘a*.” [Ziyād] said, “So I gave *qaṣaṣ* and began to increase supplication in my *qiṣaṣ* hoping that he would concur (*rajā’ a an yu’ammina*).” He (Ziyād) said, “So I began to

337 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:389–390.

338 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:199–200.

339 See the Appendix # 83.

give *qaṣaṣ* and he did concur (*wa-huwa yu'amminu*).” And they began to make the supplication like *qaṣaṣ*.³⁴⁰

This tradition suggests that during the lifetime of the Companion of the Prophet Anas b. Mālīk (d.c. 91–3/709–711), *qaṣaṣ* was already considered suspect. So much so, that Ziyād, who is not considered a reputable scholar in the sources, refused to engage in it until he received the support of Anas. In spite of Anas’s positive opinion of *qaṣaṣ*, the report was used to Makkī’s advantage by its allusion that *qaṣaṣ* was questionable from the earliest period and that it continued to have a seditious component which supplanted the orthodox practice of *du‘ā’*.³⁴¹

Despite Makkī’s and Ibn Abī ‘Aṣim’s attempts at distinguishing *qaṣaṣ* from *dhikr*, the Muslims maintained the connection between the two. The synonymous use of the terms in the Qur’ān and the application of both terms to the Prophet as well as to some of his Companions confirm this fundamental association between them. Even three centuries after Makkī, the *quṣṣāṣ* were still associated with the *mudhakkirūn* as evidenced in the title of the most famous work on the *quṣṣāṣ*, Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*.

Ascetics

Even though Makkī, in his *Qūt al-qulūb*, indicates that later Sūfīs were antagonistic to the *quṣṣāṣ*, the ascetic tendencies characterizing Sufism are found

340 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:207–208; Pedersen, “Criticism,” 220. The tension between the respectability of the *quṣṣāṣ* and their censure continued among later generations as reported by Makkī. He noted that Ibn Ḥanbal praised reliable *quṣṣāṣ* because “they mention the balance (*al-mīzān*) and the punishments of the grave (*‘adhāb al-qabr*).” However, according to Makkī’s variant, when Ibn Ḥanbal was asked if he attended the meetings of the *quṣṣāṣ* he replied in the negative; see his *Qūt*, 2:207. Later, Ibn al-Jawzī recorded a variant in which Ibn Ḥanbal, after praising the content of *qaṣaṣ* as mentioned in al-Makkī, told Abū Bakr al-Marwazī that he recommended sitting at their meetings if they were reliable; see his *Quṣṣāṣ*, 19–20. Finally, a later variant found in Ibn Muflīḥ al-Maqdisī combines the two variants such that Ibn Ḥanbal tells Abū Bakr to sit with a reputable *qāṣṣ* but when Abū Bakr asks the master if he ever sat with them, he said, “no.” See his *Ādāb*, 2:83.

341 The relationship between *qaṣaṣ* and *du‘ā’* is complicated by the various meanings associated with each term. ‘Athamina noted the integration of *du‘ā’* and *qunūt* into *qaṣaṣ* as a political tool for cursing one’s enemies, both internal and external; see his “Qaṣaṣ,” 66. This text on Anas and Ziyād seems to suggest that the connection could also be apolitical.

among the early *quṣṣāṣ*.³⁴² Reports ascribed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib confirm the importance of piety in the life of the *qāṣṣ*. When ‘Alī came upon a certain *qāṣṣ* in the marketplace of Kufa, he threatened to scourge him if he was unable to answer the query: “What upholds religion and what destroys it?” The *qāṣṣ* answered, “Piety (*waraʿ*) upholds religion and covetousness (*tamaʿ*) destroys it.” ‘Alī replied, “Well done! Give *qaṣaṣ* (*quṣṣa*)! People like you ought to give *qaṣaṣ*.”³⁴³ While this pious *qāṣṣ* may have remained anonymous, a number of luminaries of early Islam who were idealized by the Sūfis for their piety and asceticism were ranked among the *quṣṣāṣ*. For Makkī, the most relevant example of them is al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; in fact, 44 of the 108, or 41%, were known to have been ascetics or to have displayed ascetic tendencies as indicated by their association with terms such a *nusk*, *zuhd* and/or *ʿibāda*.³⁴⁴ In comparison to all other groups associated with the *quṣṣāṣ*, only reputable *ḥadīth* transmitters were more numerous.³⁴⁵

Asceticism is, indeed, a general term used to describe various practices of a pious nature. Some *quṣṣāṣ*, for example, manifested their asceticism in acts of supererogatory devotion, such as extended prayer, Qurʾān recitation and *dhikr*. Ibrahīm al-Taymī, for instance, allegedly remained so long in motionless prayer that birds alighted on his back.³⁴⁶ Thābit al-Bunānī who was considered one of the most pious men (*aʿbad*) of Basra also devoted long hours to prayer.³⁴⁷ ‘Abd Allāh b. Ghālib committed himself to both *dhikr* and to long prayer vigils.³⁴⁸ Saʿīd b. Jubayr was known for his devotion to Qurʾān recitation.³⁴⁹ Tamīm al-Dārī, combining both prayer and recitation, purportedly recited the whole Qurʾān in one *rakʿa*.³⁵⁰

Some *quṣṣāṣ* expressed their asceticism by denying worldly goods, including food, money and human relations. Abū al-Dardā, for example, abandoned his

342 The connection between the *quṣṣāṣ* and the ascetics has been established in Western scholarship for some time. See in particular Massignon, *Essai*, 141–152; MacDonald, “Kīṣṣa,” *EH*, 1043–1044; Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 238–239, 241–242.

343 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 25.

344 Due to the large number of ascetics, I have not listed them here but have identified them by a (a) in the Appendix.

345 These statistics challenge Pauliny’s allegation that the *quṣṣāṣ* were not interested in piety but in more base objectives such as material gain and popularity; see his “Quṣṣāṣ,” 127.

346 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:92.

347 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:231–232; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:89; idem, *Mashāhīr*, 1:89.

348 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247–248; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:117–118.

349 On Saʿd, see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:377–378.

350 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6:256.

job as a merchant because it did not accord with devotion to God.³⁵¹ He said to his colleagues: “I command you to give pious obedience to God and to asceticism in this world and to desire that which is God’s. If you do this, God will love you for desiring what He has and people will love you for leaving them what the world has.”³⁵² Sulaym b. ‘Itr, Ibrāhīm al-Taymī and Sa‘īd b. Jubayr expressed their ascetic tendency through the more common avenue of seclusion from society and denial of worldly attractions.³⁵³

Two *quṣṣās*, Abū al-Dardā’ and Sham‘ūn, displayed their piety by spurning conjugal relations. As for the illustrious Companion Abū al-Dardā’, he devoted so many of his nights to prayer and fasting that his wife appealed to his “brother” Salmān al-Fārisī, saying, euphemistically: “Your brother does not have any need in this world.” Salmān told Abū al-Dardā’ to give God, his wife and his body their equal due. When Abū al-Dardā’ told the Prophet of Salmān’s advice, the Prophet said: “[Do] just as Salmān said.”³⁵⁴ In similar fashion, Sham‘ūn avoided his wife upon returning from battle by going to the mosque and devoting himself to prayer. When his wife asked him why he did so, he replied: “My heart still desires what has been described in His [God’s] paradise: its clothes, its female companions and its niceties.” The prospect of heavenly rewards—themes whose expression on the battlefield has already been attested through texts of martial *qaṣaṣ*—still engaged him to the point that he was distracted from his temporal, marital relations. However, unlike Abū al-Dardā’, who needed the intervention of the Prophet to change his mind, Sham‘ūn assented to his wife’s request. He confessed: “Of course, by God! You did not come to my mind. Now that I have remembered you, you deserve your rights from me.”³⁵⁵

351 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:124, 156, 159.

352 Ibid., 47:141. This statement is quite similar to a Prophetic *ḥadīth* related from Sahl b. Sa‘d al-Sā‘idī which al-Nawawī included in his famous collection of forty *ḥadīths*. The tradition states that “a man came to the Prophet and said: ‘O messenger of God, direct me to an act which, if I do it, will cause God to love me and people to love me.’ He said, ‘Renounce the world and God will love you, and renounce what people possess and people will love you.’” See *Sharḥ al-arba‘īn al-Nawawīyya*, composed by Aḥmad b. Sūda, ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Shafrūn, Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib b. Kīrān and Muḥammad Banīs and edited by Najlā’ al-Tijkānī (Rabat, 2010), 3:817.

353 On Sulaym, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:275–276. On Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:7. On Sa‘d, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:379.

354 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:115. For other examples of Abū al-Dardā’’s piety and asceticism, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:114, 124, 151, 156.

355 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:202.

Such absent-mindedness was not a trait of the Egyptian *qāṣṣ*/judge Sulaym b. ʿItr, known by the epithet “the ascetic” (*al-nāsik*). In addition to his involvement in typical ascetic behavior such as absconding to the desert where he did not eat or drink for seven days, he was lauded for being able to recite the Qurʾān and have conjugal relations with his wife three or four times during the night. Upon his death, his wife stated: “He made his Lord happy and his wife happy.”³⁵⁶

Along with these various displays of asceticism, the *quṣṣāṣ*-ascetics were also reputed for being blessed in supernatural ways for their intense devotion. ʿAbd al-Wāhid b. Zayd, a colleague of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, was miraculously rewarded for his piety. In spite of being paralyzed and bed-ridden, he was granted by God, in answer to his supplications, the temporary use of his faculties when he needed to use the restroom. Then, once he finished his ablutions, he was struck down again with paralysis.³⁵⁷ Shamʿūn also had miraculous acts attributed to him, like stilling a raging sea and recouping a needle that had fallen into the sea by appealing to God to return it to him.³⁵⁸ When Muṭarrif b. ʿAbd Allāh was lied to, the perpetrator was struck dead.³⁵⁹ Even death was not able to suppress the influence of their asceticism. The grave of the pious Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ, the Khārījī rebel, became a pilgrimage site, while the soil from the grave of ʿAbd Allāh b. Ghālib purportedly smelled like musk, prompting admirers to leave their pilgrimages to his grave-site with handfuls.³⁶⁰ Even more astounding is the miraculous event of the death of Saʿīd b. Jubayr, whose head, after having been decapitated by al-Ḥajjāj, continued to say, “There is no god but God,” until al-Ḥajjāj had Saʿīd’s feet stuck into the mouth.³⁶¹

While ascetic behavior is often associated with the denial of worldly pleasures, some *quṣṣāṣ* who were otherwise known for their piety appear to have shunned one of the traditional and easily discernible expressions of piety: the wearing of humble clothing—a practice possibly relating to the origins of

356 Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 1:231; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 72:274–275.

357 Al-Jāhiz, *al-Burṣān wa-l-ʿurjān wa-l-ʿumyān wa-l-ḥulān*, ed. Muḥammad Mursī al-Khūlī (Cairo, 1972), 282–283; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fi tārikh al-umam wa-l-mulūk*, eds. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAtā and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAtā (Beirut, 1939), 7:268.

358 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 23:204. The miracle of the stilling of the sea finds a parallel in the well-known story of the miracle of Jesus’s stilling of the sea (Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:39, Luke 8:22–25). The more enigmatic report about the needle betrays similarities with a lesser-known miracle of the Israelite prophet Elisha who recovered an iron axe head that had fallen into the water by causing it to float to the surface (2 Kings 6:1–7).

359 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat*, 3:222, 225.

360 On Ṣāliḥ, see Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 410. On ʿAbd Allāh, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247.

361 Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 445.

the term *Sūfī*.³⁶² Tamīm al-Dārī, Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh and Thābit al-Bunānī, for example, all reportedly wore nice and expensive clothes; another *qāṣṣ*, Abū al-Aḥwaṣ even wore silk.³⁶³ This disregard for expressing piety through the visibly appreciable renunciation of worldly pleasures was later affirmed by Ibn al-Jawzī in one of his criticisms of the *quṣṣās*. He censured them for promoting weak *ḥadīth* that malign the rich and glorify poverty, though he asserted that the real scholars, the ‘*ulamā*’, know the truth about this issue—a statement he supported with a Prophetic *ḥadīth* telling of the affluent Companions of the Prophet in paradise.³⁶⁴ Contrariwise, Ibn al-Jawzī also ironically asserted, following a famed Ḥanbalī predecessor, Ibn ‘Aqīl, that the *wā’iz* dress in woolen clothes, have an emaciated body and eat little in order to draw attention away from his appearance and to his character and message.³⁶⁵ The reports of the conduct of some of the earliest *quṣṣās* suggest that not every *qāṣṣ-wā’iz* viewed their ascetic responsibilities in the same light.

One of the more common expressions of piety and penitence was weeping, *al-bakā’*.³⁶⁶ Nine of the *quṣṣās*-ascetics were known for their weeping. Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī emphasized the importance of weeping as a sign of penitence by saying: “Between heaven and hell is a desert that cannot be crossed except by the tears of the weepers.”³⁶⁷ In Basra, two *quṣṣās* were known for their weeping: Thābit al-Bunānī asserted that the eyes that do not weep are no good and Yazīd b. Abān wept during his *qaṣaṣ* sessions.³⁶⁸

Some *quṣṣās* were not known as weepers yet they prompted weeping in their listeners. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr caused the pious Ibn ‘Umar to weep in his *qaṣaṣ* sessions, while Ibrāhīm al-Taymī evoked the same response in the Kufan

362 “Taṣawwuf,” *El2*, 10:313.

363 On Tamīm, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6:256; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifāt*, 1:737; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2:447. On Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:209. On Thābit, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:232. On Abū al-Aḥwaṣ, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:302.

364 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mawḍū‘āt*, 327–328.

365 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 26–27.

366 Meier has noted that the weepers, *al-bakkā’ūn*, were not a separate class of ascetics but were simply ascetics known for their copious weeping; see his “Bakkā’,” *El2*, 1:959–961.

367 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut, 1966), 2:53.

368 On Thābit, see Abū Nu’aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:366–367. On Yazīd, see Abū Nu’aym, *Ḥilya*, 3:59–60; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 75. In Yazīd’s case, though, weeping was considered a liability since his devotion to worship (*‘ibāda*), characterized by his mourning, allegedly distracted him from being disciplined in *ḥadīth*; see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 3:98; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:404.

scholar Abū Wā'il Shaqīq b. Salama.³⁶⁹ In 'Awn b. 'Abd Allāh's sessions, weeping ruled both speaker and listener. 'Awn reportedly wept until his beard dripped with tears.³⁷⁰ Salama b. Dīnār, himself a *qāṣṣ*, wept while attending 'Awn's sessions, and when asked why he was crying, he responded: "I learned (*balaghani*) that the fire of hell does not touch the spot touched by tears shed because of one's fear of God."³⁷¹ In contrast to these examples stands the *qāṣṣ* Muḥammad b. Ka'b, who reportedly hated to hear crying in his teaching sessions.³⁷²

The *Qāṣṣ* as Scholar

The above analysis of the *quṣṣās* and their associations with various religious disciplines reveals that the *quṣṣās* of the Umayyad period were by no means merely popular religious teachers targeting the simple masses.³⁷³ The contrary appears true. The *quṣṣās* of this period included some of the most capable and respected religious authorities of the Islamic community.³⁷⁴ Of the 108 names connected to *qaṣaṣ*, 74, or 69%, were generally considered reputable religious scholars (*ulamā'*). This percentage includes only those who were considered reliable *ḥadīth* transmitters and is even higher if other scholars, such as Ka'b al-Aḥbār and 'Uthmān b. Abī al-Ātika, who, for the most part, were viewed as legitimate scholars even though their reputations as *ḥadīth* transmitters were less than admirable, were added. Not only did the early *quṣṣās* engage in virtually all aspects of the religiously-oriented activities of the community, they often played important roles in the development of the religious disciplines, notably Qur'ān recitation, commentary, as well as *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*. Furthermore, their involvement in the evolution of the foundations of the religion was supplemented with an interest in its practical outworkings, characterized by their associations with *khaṭāba*, *wa'z*, *dhikr* and asceticism.

The fine reputation of the early *quṣṣās* was not lost on later Muslim scholars in spite of traditions disparaging the practice. Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*

369 On 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr, see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:162, 169; Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 41; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 1:378; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 31:126. On Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:358; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:171.

370 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:69; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:338–339.

371 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 22:26.

372 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:419–420.

373 For this view, see 'Athamina, "Qaṣaṣ," 54.

374 Jūda recognized this but stated that it applied primarily through the period of the Rāshidūn Caliphs; see his "Qaṣaṣ," 118.

wa-l-mudhakkirīn preserves this tension. He cites, in one instance, a tradition from Abū Qilāba ‘Abd Allāh b. Zayd al-Jarmī (d.c. 104/722) who blamed the *quṣṣāṣ* for destroying religious knowledge (*‘ilm*) and that one might sit with a *qāṣṣ* for a year and receive no benefit.³⁷⁵ On the other hand, his list of the first *quṣṣāṣ* contains a number of reputable scholars of the early community.³⁷⁶ Ibn al-Jawzī also related a number of reports from his Ḥanbalī master Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who praised the value of the *quṣṣāṣ*, in one instance describing them as “those who speak about paradise and hell, who arouse people to fear, and who are upright in intention and honest in matters of *ḥadīth*.”³⁷⁷ Thus, even into the third/ninth century, the *quṣṣāṣ* were still considered capable of providing spiritual benefit to the community.³⁷⁸ Dhahabī likewise recognized the reliability of the early *quṣṣāṣ*. He noted in his biography of Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī that: “The *qāṣṣ* in the beginning had an outstanding image in both religious knowledge and practice.”³⁷⁹ This anecdotal evidence is supported by the above statistical analysis of the *quṣṣāṣ* and by a comparison of the *quṣṣāṣ* to other religious disciplines and functions. These results also confirm the conclusions drawn in Chapter One about the textual diversity in *qaṣaṣ*. The associations of the *quṣṣāṣ* mirror their sayings, including *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh* sayings about the prophets and pietistic sayings. When taken together, the sayings of the *quṣṣāṣ* and their associations suggest that the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period were predominantly mainstream and orthodox scholars.

375 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 132.

376 Ibid., 42–52.

377 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 19 (translation taken from Swartz, 104). For other reports from Ibn Ḥanbal, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ* 19–20.

378 Ibn al-Jawzī’s concern was with how *qaṣaṣ* had been overtaken by unscrupulous men, and he clearly believed that this was a later progression which did not necessarily apply to the earliest *quṣṣāṣ*; see his *Quṣṣāṣ*, 20–21, 129–130. Studies on the *quṣṣāṣ* which depend largely on Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ* tend to overstate the negative image of the *quṣṣāṣ*, even when noting that Ibn al-Jawzī was supportive of the earliest *quṣṣāṣ*. This leaves the false impression that the *quṣṣāṣ* had always been largely unreliable scholars. See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 153–155 and especially Pauliny, “Quṣṣāṣ,” 126–127.

379 Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:275.

Qaṣaṣ Sessions: The Skills and Conduct of the *Quṣṣāṣ*

While many people of early Islam were known as religious teachers of various specializations, only a limited number, one hundred and nine according to this research, were identified as *quṣṣāṣ*. It appears that one important reason for this was that the *quṣṣāṣ* were not simply educators of religion, be it Qurʾān recitation, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and so forth, or morale officers for the military; they were performers. Of course, this is not meant to imply that they were, by virtue of being performers, merely showmen, “popular” preachers or charlatans. It does suggest, though, that a reputable *qāṣṣ* was expected to possess more than religious knowledge (*ʿilm*); he was to add to this skill the requisite oratorical skills for drawing out of his listeners some type of response, such as one to greater piety or to valor in battle.

To be sure, these traits were not characteristic of the *quṣṣāṣ* only. As we noted in the previous chapter, other public speakers, notably the *khuṭabāʾ*, were also expected to possess knowledge and oratorical skills.¹ The *khuṭba*, for instance, certainly entailed aspects of a performance, namely direct address to an audience, elevation of the speaker above the audience, a strong-voiced and eloquent speaker, and even props, such as a sword or a bow.² The *khuṭba*, however, was a formal monologue; the *khaṭīb* was the speaker/performer and the audience listened.³ With the *quṣṣāṣ*, conversely, the performance was less formal and more interactive, incorporating both speaker and listener, so that *qaṣaṣ* sessions took on lives of their own, sometimes to their detriment. In this sense, the performance aspect of the *qaṣaṣ* session is one factor setting it apart from other religious sessions and presentations.

1 See Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 180–181, 204–222.

2 Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 204–214. While the leaning on the sword or bow by the *khaṭīb* was apparently a remnant of the practice of pre-Islamic judges, it certainly added to the performance of the *khuṭba*, in the least by conveying an image of authority for the *khaṭīb*. On the use of swords or bows, see Wensinck, “Khuṭba,” *EL* 2, 5:74; Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 210–211.

3 Wensinck noted that the audience was to listen and be silent. He quoted a tradition in Bukhārī: “He who says to his neighbor, ‘listen,’ has spoken a superfluous word.” See Wensinck, “Khuṭba,” *EL* 2, 5:75. Qutbuddin showed that sometimes the audience could respond aloud with short answers to questions posed by the *khaṭīb*, though most often the questions were rhetorical; see her “Khuṭba,” 216.

As is true with any public performance, a number of factors were important in a *qaṣaṣ* session. For our purposes, these factors fall under two rubrics: skills and conduct. Skills reflect the set of skills and traits that the *qāṣṣ* possessed, or at least that the ideal *qāṣṣ* possessed. These skills fall into three categories: *lisān*, *bayān* and *ʿilm*.

Additionally, the execution of a *qaṣaṣ* session entailed more than a qualified practitioner. The conduct of the session was also important in establishing its traditions and reputation, in both positive and negative ways. Expectations of proper behavior, the locations and times of the sessions, as well as the presence of malpractice in the sessions are just a few of the factors contributing to establishing the reputation of the *qaṣaṣ* sessions and, by extension, the *quṣṣāṣ*. Alongside these issues of the conduct of the session lay, subtly yet still discernibly, the question of the degree of formality in *qaṣaṣ* sessions; this is an issue that will be addressed throughout the analysis of the conduct of the *quṣṣāṣ*.

Skills

The effective performance of *qaṣaṣ* depended on a skilled practitioner. The set of skills that exemplified the skills an ideal *qāṣṣ* must possess was said to belong to one of the most respected *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period, Bilāl b. Saʿd. Bilāl enjoyed a stellar reputation as a *ḥadīth* transmitter and was known as “the Qurʾān reciter of Syria” as well as “the admonisher (*wāʿiẓ*) of Damascus.”⁴ Not only did he excel in the religious sciences, he was also admired for his piety, and was, by all accounts, an outstanding scholar. In addition to all of this, he was the exemplary *qāṣṣ*.

According to Ibn Ḥibbān, Bilāl possessed the three traits necessary for *qaṣaṣ*: “He was among those who was given *lisān*, *bayān* and *ʿilm* in *qaṣaṣ*.”⁵ This means that he possessed a speaker’s voice with its concomitant linguistic abilities (*lisān*), rhetorical skill (*bayān*) and religious knowledge (*ʿilm*). The combination of these skills allowed him to produce “polished *qaṣaṣ*”—he is described as being *ḥasan al-qaṣaṣ*.⁶ Although these three traits, as a group, have been attributed only to Bilāl, the report clearly implies that the reason for his being such an effective *qāṣṣ* was that he possessed these traits and, therefore, they represent the skills that exemplified the ideal *quṣṣāṣ* in the Umayyad period. Indeed, gradations of these skills can be found among many of the

4 See the Appendix # 60.

5 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāḥir*, 115.

6 Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:607; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 10:482; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:292.

early *quşşāş*. The skills thus provide us with a paradigm for identifying the specific characteristics expected in the *quşşāş*.

‘Ilm

We have already seen in Chapter Two that the *quşşāş* were spread throughout the religious space of the early Islamic community, having been associated with at least nine other religious disciplines in the community. The discussion there showed that a significant number of the *quşşāş* of the early period were considered by the community to be reputable scholars noted for their *‘ilm* in such disciplines as *Qur’ān* recitation, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. It is not surprising then that one of the traits distinguishing Bilāl b. Sa’d as a *qāşş* was his possession of religious knowledge, *‘ilm*.⁷ And according to Abū Zur’a al-Dimashqī, there was no conflict between Bilal’s possession of *‘ilm* and *qaşaş*, as Bilāl to him “was one of the *‘ulamā*’ in the caliphate of Hishām and was a *qāşş* of polished *qaşaş*.”⁸

Of course, the *quşşāş*’s involvement in religious instruction was not new since the transmission of religious knowledge was a basic function of the *qāşş* from the beginning. To be sure, as we have already seen in Chapter Two, the overlap between *qaşaş* and *‘ilm* in the Umayyad period seems to have been more common than not, with approximately two-thirds of the *quşşāş* of this period numbered among the reputable scholars of the community. Even earlier, Tamīm al-Dārī, for example, was allegedly granted permission by the caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to give *qaşaş* on the condition that he “recite the *Qur’ān* and command them [his listeners] to do good and forbid the evil.”⁹ In the least, therefore, the early *qāşş* was expected to know the *Qur’ān* and the moral parameters of the faith.

The *quşşāş* continued to play an active role in the religious education of the early community, and the fear that the community lost *‘ilm* with the passing away of the first generation of believers was a concern for many, and even affected the *quşşāş*. This concern prompted Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān to ask ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to send people to him (i.e. in Syria) who taught the people the *Qur’ān* and the legal requirements of the faith (*yu‘allimuhum al-Qur’ān wa yufaqqihuhum*). Two of the three whom ‘Umar sent to Yazīd were renowned scholars who were identified as *quşşāş*: Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and Abū al-Dardā’.¹⁰ Later, the Basran *qāşş* ‘Abd Allāh b. Ghālib considered his role as a *qāşş* to

7 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr*, 115.

8 Abū Zur’a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:607.

9 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:80–81.

10 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:124, 137. The third scholar sent to Syria was ‘Ubāda b. al-Şāmit.

include three objectives: teaching religious knowledge, warning others of the nearness of death and reminding the community that it was continually losing righteous believers to death, challenging them, presumably, to take up the mantle of that lost generation. He said: “We complain to you about the foolishness of our dreams and we give *qaṣaṣ* of our religious knowledge (*naquṣṣu ‘ilmanā*), the closeness of our deaths and the departure of the righteous from among us.”¹¹ His last point echoes the statement of Ibn ‘Abbās at the passing of the scholar/*qāṣṣ* Zayd b. Thābit: “Today a great amount of religious knowledge died.”¹² According to the *qāṣṣ*/scholar Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, the damage to the community from the lack of religious knowledge was also a product of poor scholars; he was asked: “Why do the people perish?” He answered: “Because of their *‘ulamā’*.”¹³

Along with those mentioned above, a number of *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period were celebrated for their religious knowledge. In Syria, Mu‘ādh and Abū al-Dardā were joined by Ka‘b al-Aḥbār who was known for his *‘ilm* and wisdom¹⁴ and Abū al-Dardā himself praised Ka‘b saying: “The son of the Ḥimyarī has much knowledge.”¹⁵ The eminent Syrian scholar Makhūl (d. 112–7/730–5) commended Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī, the *qāṣṣ*, for his great religious knowledge.¹⁶ Later, in Syria, the two stepsons of Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, Nawf b. Faḍāla and Tubay‘ b. ‘Āmir, were considered among the *‘ulamā’* of the region.¹⁷ In Baṣra, Muṭarrif b. ‘Abd Allāh said that he preferred *‘ilm* over *‘ibāda*, worship—a sentiment that later Islamic scholars did not normally associate with the *quṣṣāṣ*.¹⁸ Mecca, prior to the turn of the first century, boasted the *qāṣṣ* Mujāhid b. Jabr as one of its great scholars.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Medina, in the first quarter of the second/eighth century, contained renowned *quṣṣāṣ/‘ulamā’*, such as Muḥammad b. Ka‘b al-Qurazī,²⁰ Muḥammad b. Qays al-Madani²¹ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b.

11 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:118.

12 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:311. See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:659–660.

13 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:380; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 10:365.

14 Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 5:650–651; idem, *Tahdhīb*, 3:471. See also Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:113.

15 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:449; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:471.

16 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:161–162. On Makhūl, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 28:464–474.

17 On Nawf, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:249–250. On Tubay‘, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:455.

18 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:142.

19 Ibid., 8:28.

20 Al-‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifat al-thiqāt*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Alīm ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Bastawī (Medina, 1985), 2:251; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:351; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:204; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:685.

21 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:511; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:681.

al-Qāsim.²² The association of these *quşşāş* with religious knowledge certainly confirms its importance as an expected character trait of the early *qāşş*.

Lisān

The scholar who possessed *lisān*, literally “a tongue,” is one who possessed a public speaker’s voice. This incorporated a number of vocal qualities, such as volume, melodiousness and even fluency. In the case of Bilāl b. Sa’d, his description as having “a tongue” for *qaşaş* meant that he possessed a loud voice, *kāna jahīr al-şawt*.²³ This trait was particularly important for Qur’ān recitation, especially in an age devoid of artificial amplification.²⁴ According to one tradition, the Prophet himself was the first to recite the Qur’ān with a loud voice and this was allegedly the reason for the revelation of Sūrat Banī Isrā’īl (17):110, “Don’t speak loudly in thy prayer and don’t be silent; adopt a middle course.”²⁵ Other traditions claim that Ibn Mas’ūd was the first person to recite the Qur’ān loudly.²⁶ As a matter of fact, strength of voice was a characteristic of the *quşşāş* from the beginning: Tamīm al-Dārī, for example, was one of only two men (the other being Mu’ādh al-Qārī’) who aroused the people from sleep because of the power of his voice in Qur’ān recitation.²⁷

It seems having a loud voice that projected in *qaşaş* and recitation would be appreciated at all times. Even in the third/ninth century, strength of voice was still considered an essential trait for the *qāşş*. Ibrāhīm b. Hānī, an apparent contemporary of al-Jāhīz (d. 255/869), said: “Among the tools that complete the practice of *qaşaş* is that the *qāşş* be blind and a mature man (*şaykh*) whose voice travels far.”²⁸ While the need for the third trait of a loud voice seems logical, the former two are somewhat more perplexing, although they may intend to promote greater respect for the *qāşş*.

Yet not always was a loud voice in *qaşaş* and recitation appreciated. When the *qāşş* Ziyād al-Numayrī visited Anas b. Mālik, he was asked to recite from the Qur’ān. In his recitation, he raised his voice causing Anas to throw down a cloth that was covering his face and exclaim: “What is this? What is this? They

22 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 5:339; Ibn Hibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:62.

23 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 10:481; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:292.

24 Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:292.

25 Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya*, ed. Ṭahā ‘Abd al-Ru’ūf Sa’d (Beirut, 1990), 2:155.

26 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, 2:156.

27 Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqāt*, 6:258.

28 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:93. I was not able to identify Ibrāhīm b. Hānī beyond the comments made by Hārūn, the editor, at 1:93, n. 4.

never used to act in this manner!"²⁹ Why Ziyād's loud recitation was received so negatively while other *quṣṣāṣ* of the time were praised for theirs in unclear. It is worth noting, though, that, according to the tradition mentioned above, the Prophet himself was told to speak with a voice of medium strength in order to avoid driving people away with loud volume and drawing them too close by being soft.³⁰ Anas's opposition could be rooted in a tradition like this. It is also possible that the overall reputation of the scholar influenced how his *lisān* was evaluated since Tamīm and Bilāl, both of whom were respected in the community, were commended for their strength of voice, while Ziyād, who was generally scorned by the community, was reprimanded.

A second praiseworthy vocal quality possessed by the *quṣṣāṣ* was melodiousness or sweetness, of particular importance in Qur'an recitation. The *qāṣṣ* and famous Qur'an reciter Ibn Mas'ūd was reportedly one of four men whom the Prophet endorsed for the beauty of his recitation.³¹ Later, the pious caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz praised Muslim b. Jundab, a "Successor" and *qāṣṣ*, for his beautiful recitation of the Qur'an: "He who takes pleasure in listening to an exquisite recitation of the Qur'an, let him listen to the recitation of Muslim b. Jundab (*man sarrahu an yasma'a al-Qur'an ghaḍḍan*, *fa'l-yasma' qir'at Muslim b. Jundab*)."³² Qur'an recitation was not the sole domain where a rapturous voice was esteemed. 'Umar b. Dharr, for example, was blessed with such an enchanting voice that during the *ḥājj*, when he said the *talbiya* (*labbayka Allāhumma labbayk*), all other pilgrims fell silent due to the magnificence of his voice.³³

A third component of someone's *lisān* was his fluency in language. By the far the most well-known possessor of this trait was the Basran *qāṣṣ* Mūsā b. Sayyār. Jāḥiẓ recorded that he was equally fluent in Arabic and Persian. In his *tafsīr* sessions, he commented on a verse in Arabic to the Arabs on his right side and then in Persian to the Persians on his left. Jāḥiẓ said of him: "Two languages when they meet in one tongue will cause harm to the tongue's owner, but not in the case of Mūsā." This ability prompted Jāḥiẓ to call him one of the wonders of the world.³⁴ Mūsā's linguistic abilities were not the only example

29 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 118 (translation taken from Swartz, 203).

30 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, 2:155.

31 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:62.

32 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:368. See also Ibn Mujāhid, *Sab'a*, 59–60; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:257; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66.

33 Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 21:337; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:537.

34 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:368. See also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 153; Massignon, *Essai*, 146; Pellat, "Kāṣṣ," *El2* 4:734; idem, *Le milieu basrien*, 110–111; 'Athamina, "Qaṣaṣ," 61.

of the proficiency of his *lisān*. Jāḥiẓ also ranked him among the best Qurʾān reciters of his era.³⁵

Joining Mūsā as an exemplar of fluency among the *quşşās* was his younger contemporary and fellow Basran Qatāda b. Diʿāma. Qatāda b. Diʿāma was the son of a Bedouin father and a non-Arab mother who, however, was raised among the Bedouin—a *muwallada*.³⁶ As a result, Qatāda was known to have been adroit in Arabic. This strength prompted him to relate *ḥadīth* with proper Arabic and inspired his students to do likewise.³⁷ While Qatāda was sought out for his prowess in Arabic in Iraq, the *qāşş* Muslim b. Jundab was leaving his mark on the language itself in Medina. Muslim, who was previously mentioned for the rapturous tone of his voice, ostensibly contributed to the evolution of the Arabic language in the city of Medina by being the first to pronounce the *hamza* there (*kāna ahl al-Madīna lā yahmizūna ḥattā hamaza Ibn Jundab*).³⁸

The possession of a strong, melodious and fluent *lisān* was no doubt an admirable and sought after trait for a *qāşş*, only within the proper parameters. Too little or too much of a good thing appears to have been deemed detrimental. On the one hand, according to the *qāşş* Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh, taciturnity compromised eloquence: “Lengthy periods of silence bring speech impediments.”³⁹ Such a sentiment emanating from a *qāşş* may come as little surprise. On the other hand, excess *lisān*, as in the case of the loudness of Ziyād’s voice, was scorned. This latter point, though, surfaced as a criticism of misconduct in some *qaşaş* sessions rather than as a general condemnation of the *quşşās*, as will be discussed below.

Bayān

A third skill possessed by the *qāşş* Bilāl b. Saʿd was *bayān*—a skill including rhetorical abilities and style of speech.⁴⁰ While there may be some overlap between *bayān* and *lisān*, *bayān*, here is concerned more with style while *lisān* seems to emphasize mechanics and tone quality. As a result, *bayān* most often manifested itself in one’s eloquence—a trait that also characterized other

35 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:368.

36 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 6:202.

37 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:229.

38 Ibn Mujāhid, *Sabʿa*, 59–60; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:257. The sporadic use of the *hamza* persisted through the mid-second/mid-eighth century; see Abbott, *Studies II*, 92.

39 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:272.

40 On *bayān*, see G.E. von Grunebaum, “Bayān,” *El2*, 1:1114–1116. On Bilāl b. Saʿd possessing *bayān*, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāḥir*, 115.

forms of public expression such as *waʿz* and *khiṭāba*.⁴¹ Al-Awzāʿī, for example, said that Bilāl was the most eloquent admonisher he had ever heard (*wa-lam asmaʿ wāʿizʿan qaṭṭu ablagha minhu*).⁴² And just as was true with the trait of *lisān* finding exemplars in the early *quṣṣāṣ* like Tamīm al-Dārī, *bayān* among the *quṣṣāṣ* also dates to the earliest purveyors of the phenomenon and continued to be a sought after trait after the Umayyad period.

The first *qāṣṣ* of Mecca, ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, was praised for being eloquent and well-spoken (*balighʿan wa-faṣiḥʿan*).⁴³ In Medina, Muslim b. Jundab not only received praise for his contribution to language development and the beauty of his Qurʾān recitation, i.e. his *lisān*, he was also numbered among the most eloquent scholars (*al-fuṣṣahāʿ*) of this time.⁴⁴ This seemingly fundamental association between linguistic style and *qaṣaṣ* persisted beyond the Umayyad period such that the ʿAbbasid-era *qāṣṣ* Abu ʿUmar Muḥammad al-Bāhili al-Baṣrī (d. 300/912) was also known for “the delicacy of his linguistic style.”⁴⁵

Bayān as a component of the style of the individual *qāṣṣ* extended further than his own personal linguistic skills into the style of the sessions over which he presided. His rhetorical style therefore influenced how he framed his *qiṣaṣ*. As was observed in Chapter One, one method adopted by a number of *quṣṣāṣ* was to express their *qiṣaṣ* through rhetorical questions. Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd, for example, asked his audience who among them expected to be kept from trials in this life knowing that even the prophet Abraham faced trials.⁴⁶ Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī, in order to launch into a *qiṣṣa* about John the Baptist, asked those around him if they knew who was the best person in terms of food (*mān kāna aṭyab al-nās ṭaʿāmʿan*).⁴⁷ The unidentified *qāṣṣ* who interpreted the verse of the smoke did likewise by asking his audience: “Do you know what that smoke is?”⁴⁸ And al-Faḍl b. ʿĪsā told his audience to “ask the earth, “Who divided your days and planted your trees and harvested your fruit?”⁴⁹

41 For the necessity of eloquence in the *khuṭba*, for example, see Qutbuddin, “Khuṭba,” 205–206.

42 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 10:485; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 4:293.

43 ʿIjlī, *Maʿrifā*, 2:118. ʿUbayd’s eloquence continued in his son, ʿAbd Allāh, though he was not identified as a *qāṣṣ*. He was said to have been “among the most eloquent people of Mecca (*min aḥṣāḥ al-nās min ahl Makka*).” See Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:34.

44 Ibn Mujāhid, *Sabʿa*, 59–60; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:257; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66.

45 Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 236.

46 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:228 (at Sūrat Ibrāhīm [14]:35–36). See Chapter One, 36–37.

47 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7:74; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 2:53. See Chapter One, 37–38.

48 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 25:111 (at Sūrat al-Dukhān [44]:10–12). See Chapter One, 31.

49 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:308. See Chapter One, 16–17.

Some *quşşās*, like Yazīd b. Abān and ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, turned such questions back to themselves.⁵⁰ Yazīd b. Abān, in fact, posed questions to both himself and his audience. He asked himself: “Woe to you, Oh Yazīd! Who is going to reconcile you with your Lord? Who is going to fast for you and pray for you?” Then in an effort to elicit tears for the foreboding approach of death, he asked his listeners: “Why do you not weep?”⁵¹

By using the rhetorical and pedagogical device of posing questions to the audience, these *quşşās* sought to enhance the interaction, and therefore performance, of their session. For example, Abū Idrīs al-Khawḷānī clearly meant to play on the word *atyab*, meaning both “best” and “tastiest,” thereby leaving his listener wondering about his exact intention. His choice of words was thus not haphazard. His premeditation in constructing the question this way is, in fact, indicated in the next phrase of the report: “And when he saw that he had their attention, he said . . . (*fa-lammā raʿā al-nāsa qad nazarū ilayhi, qāla*).”⁵² Therefore, both the posing and the construction of the question were rhetorical devices to draw the listeners into the *qişsa* and, thereby, into the performance.

This component of performance in a *qaşaş* session is fully evident in the actions of the unidentified *qāşş* from Jordan who was with Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān in al-Jābiya. This *qāşş* held sessions and: “If a man on the fringes of the group stood up to leave, he said, ‘Would you like me to tell you the words which shake the throne of God and the trees of paradise?’ We said, ‘Certainly.’”⁵³ Once the *qāşş* realized that he was losing his audience, he did what any good performer or speaker does: he changed pace and tactic in order to draw the attention of his audience back to him. He accomplished this by implying that he was privy to some type of “inside” information and was willing to divulge it to his audience. Falling for the tease, the crowd stayed, saying, “Certainly.” This is performance *par excellence*.

The ability of some *quşşās* to purposefully and effectively manipulate the emotions of the audience was further testament to the importance of style as an aspect of performance in *qaşaş*. This type of *bayān*, or rhetorical ability, was clearly a facet of the *qāşş*’s concern with performance, reflecting his awareness of the emotional wants and needs of the audience. Two *quşşās*, Sa‘īd b. Jubayr and ‘Aṭā’ b. Yasār, were particularly adept at swaying the emotions of their audiences, swinging them between the poles of sadness and joy. It was

50 On ‘Awn, see Chapter One, 21.

51 Abū Nu‘aym al-Işfahānī, *Hilya*, 3:59–60; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 75. See Chapter One, 21–22.

52 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muşannaḡ*, 7:74. See Chapter One, 32–38.

53 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 68:128. See Chapter One, 29–30.

said of both that they gave *qiṣaṣ* that made their listeners cry, then told *qiṣaṣ* making them laugh.⁵⁴ These men appear to have kept their audiences needs in mind and to have left them emotionally satisfied from the performance.

This was precisely the advice ʿĀ'isha allegedly gave to ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, the first *qāṣṣ* of Mecca. She told him to lighten up on the people with his *qaṣaṣ* because it was “heavy” (*thaqīl*) with the potential of boring them.⁵⁵ Furthermore, since boredom was a potential consequence of *qaṣaṣ*, ʿĀ'isha recommended to ʿUbayd that he only give *qaṣaṣ* every other day in order to allow the people to rest.⁵⁶ An alternate version of this tradition cautions of an even more damaging consequence for the listener. In it, ʿĀ'isha tells ʿUbayd that he go easy in his *qaṣaṣ* because “*dhikr* kills.”⁵⁷ She also reportedly told Ibn Abī al-Sā'ib, the *qāṣṣ* of the people of Medina, to give *qaṣaṣ* three times a week, so as not to bore the people and to only interrupt them and speak to them if they asked him.⁵⁸ Indeed the same sentiment has also been attributed to ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.⁵⁹

Certainly boredom is the death knell of any performance. While some religious rites, by virtue of their obligatory nature, always draw the faithful into attendance, a boring *qāṣṣ* had a bleak future. ʿĀ'isha's concern is one that has already been addressed in Chapter Two. There we noted that *qaṣaṣ* maintained a close connection with *dhikr* (recollection) and *waʿz* (admonition) such that the difference between it and these two phenomena was at times indiscernible. It appears, though, that the light-heartedness ʿĀ'isha advocated and Sa'īd and ʿAtā' seem to have perfected was one characteristic setting *qaṣaṣ* apart from these other disciplines. Thus, while *waʿz* and *dhikr* always struggled to entertain because the admonition that is characteristic of them has always been, and still remains, as ʿĀ'isha said, “heavy” (*thaqīl*), *qaṣaṣ*, with its potential for levity, transcended that barrier. Herein lays the importance of *bayān* to *qaṣaṣ*.

Not all scholars concurred on the importance of cheerfulness in meetings of religious instruction, however. The medieval scholar Ibn al-Jawzī, drawing on

54 On Sa'd, see al-Ibshihī, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṭraf*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Qumayḥa (Beirut, 1983), 2:505. On ʿAtā', see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 40:447.

55 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 248.

56 Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:339.

57 Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 250–251.

58 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 6:217; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:13; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:258. In an almost identical version of the report, for which Ibn ʿAbbās is the transmitter, there is no mention of Ibn Abī al-Sā'ib and the verb that he uses is not *qaṣṣa* but *ḥaddithu*; see Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5:2334. See also Abū Ya'lā, *Musnad*, 7:448; Ṭabarānī, *Du'ā'*, 37; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *ʿIlal*, 2:248.

59 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-ʿulūm wa-l-ḥikam*, eds. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ and Ibrāhīm Bājis (Beirut, 1997), 267.

traditions from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and al-Sha‘bī, advocated that the *qāşş* refrain from connecting too closely with his audience through humor and interpersonal associations; ‘Alī purportedly commanded: “Do not mix learning with laughing, for the people will not be able to assimilate it (learning).”⁶⁰

Clearly, the *qāşş*, as a performer, had as his goal the assimilation of his message by his listeners. In addition to using humor to achieve this goal, some *quşşāş* allegedly employed *saj‘*, commonly known as rhymed prose and another somewhat controversial practice in Islam.⁶¹ As Frolov has pointed out, *saj‘* was widespread prior to and subsequent to the rise of Islam in spite of being shunned by some Muslims.⁶² Thus, even though it was condemned after the rise of Islam for its association with the pre-Islamic soothsayers (*kuhhān*), in reality it continued to be used throughout the early period and beyond.⁶³ In the tradition mentioned above, ‘Ā’isha, or possibly Ibn ‘Abbās, warned the Medinan *qāşş* Ibn Abī al-Sā’ib to not bore the people with his *qaşaş*; she also warned him to avoid *saj‘* in his statements, arguing that the Prophet did not do this and his Companions hated it.⁶⁴ Regardless of the authenticity of this tradition, it certainly implies that the *quşşāş* used *saj‘* and seeks to limit its practice. Jāḥiẓ, on the other hand, specifically identified the *qāşş* al-Faḍl b. ‘Īsā al-Riqāshī as having used *saj‘* in his *qaşaş*.⁶⁵ As ‘Athamina has noted, Jāḥiẓ did not oppose the use of *saj‘*; rather, he saw in its rejection an attempt to repulse any potential influence exerted by the *kuhhān al-‘arab* of the Jāhiliyya. Once this potential threat was suppressed, *saj‘* was allowed.⁶⁶

According to al-Najm, *saj‘* was an important method used by the *quşşāş* to influence their listeners, to play on their emotions and to draw them into their pronouncements.⁶⁷ ‘Athamina, however, believed that the *quşşāş*’s use of *saj‘* in statements to the masses was counter-productive and “interfered with the instructional aims to which *qaşaş* was devoted,” since the people, because of their limited and possibly non-existent education, were not able to understand

60 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşāş*, 136.

61 Frolov, following Goldziher, argued that the identification of *saj‘* as “rhymed prose” is accurate when applied to later expressions such as *maqāmāt* or *rasā’il*, but that *saj‘* in earlier times was “nothing but primitive verse.” See his *Arabic Verse*, 98.

62 See his excellent summary of the use of *saj‘* in early Islam and the mixed response by Muslim scholars to it, even in regard to its use in the Qur’ān; *Arabic Verse*, 105–110.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:290. Abū Nu‘aym gives examples of al-Faḍl’s *saj‘* sayings; see his *Hilya*, 6:223–224; al-Najm, *Quşşāş*, 75–76.

66 ‘Athamina, “*Qaşaş*,” 62. He is citing here Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:289–290.

67 Al-Najm, *Quşşāş*, 68–69, 73, 75.

their statements.⁶⁸ The reality seems to lie somewhere between these two poles. In fact, in spite of the above traditions, it does not seem that *saj'* was a major component of *qaṣaṣ*. It is noteworthy, for instance, that there are no examples of *saj'* among the *qaṣaṣ* listed in Chapter One. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine that the tradition attributed to 'Ā'isha forbidding the *quṣṣāṣ* to use *saj'* was transmitted (or, for that matter, fabricated) if *saj'* had not been perceived, at least in some circles, as potentially damaging to broad segments of society. If the masses failed to understand *saj'* (for instance), then little need for a tradition prohibiting it remained. In addition, the widespread use of *saj'* in early Islam, including its presence in the Qur'^{ān}, in statements prior to battles, in orations by prominent men of early Islam, such as Abū Bakr, Ibn al-Zubayr and al-Ḥajjāj, and in other forums, suggests that it was readily comprehensible by the simple folk of the time.⁶⁹

A third and equally contentious expression of *bayān* in *qaṣaṣ* was poetry. In spite of reports demeaning poetry, like that from the Prophet alleging that he liked neither poets nor the insane/possessed (*majnūn*),⁷⁰ poetry remained important in the Islamic community, even during the lifetime of the Prophet, who used Ḥassān b. Thābit as "his accredited panegyrist."⁷¹ The community's knotty rapport with poetry is evident in the *qāṣṣ* al-Aswad b. Sari's relationship with the Prophet.⁷² According to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Aswad, the eventual first *qāṣṣ* of Basra, was a polished poet (*shā'ir muḥsin*),⁷³ and indeed the one recorded example of his *qīṣaṣ* is a verse of poetry.⁷⁴ His attachment to poetry was, in fact, long, harkening back to the era of the Prophet. He allegedly recited poetry to the Prophet, except when 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb entered into their presence. At such times, the Prophet told al-Aswad to stop his recitation because 'Umar "is a man who does not like trivial pleasures (*hadhā rajal lā yuḥibb al-bāṭil*)."⁷⁵

Along with al-Aswad, two other *quṣṣāṣ* gave poetry as part of their *qaṣaṣ*. Abū Hurayra, a contemporary of al-Aswad and also close Companion of the Prophet, gave a *qīṣṣa* including a poem about the virtues of the Prophet.⁷⁶ In

68 'Athamina, "Qaṣaṣ," 62.

69 For the extent of the use of *saj'* in early Islam, see Frolov, *Arabic Verse*, 105–134.

70 Fākihī, *Akhhbār*, 4:87.

71 T. Fahd, "Shā'ir," *El2*, 9:226–227.

72 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:41; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 1:89; Abū Nu'aym al-Isfahānī, *Ma'rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. 'Ādil b. Yūsuf al-'Azzāzī (Riyadh, 1998), 1:270.

73 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 1:89.

74 See a discussion of this *qīṣṣa*/poem in Chapter One, 25.

75 Abū Nu'aym, *Ma'rifa*, 1:271.

76 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 25:13–14. See Chapter One, 39.

Basra, the eminent al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī gave a *qīṣṣa* containing verses on the meaning of death.⁷⁷

Some *quṣṣās* were known to be poets although it is unclear if they ever used poetry as part of their *qaṣaṣ*. Indeed, the various perceptions of poetry found throughout the community are reflected in the reputations of these *quṣṣās*/poets. For the reputable Qatāda, his expertise in poetry was an advantage and was sought after by other scholars of his time.⁷⁸ For ‘Imrān b. ‘Iṣām and al-Nahhās b. Qahm, on the other hand, their involvement in poetry seems to have in no way ameliorated their bad reputations.⁷⁹

Finally, *bayān* was a useful, yet potentially dangerous, trait for the *qāṣṣ* in the political sphere. The influence of an eloquent *qāṣṣ* is evident in the lives of Dharr b. ‘Abd Allāh and his son ‘Umar b. Dharr who were used as propaganda tools in the internecine conflicts of the community. Dharr, for example, was identified as one of the most eloquent *quṣṣās* of his time and was likewise pegged by Ibn al-Ash‘ath to deliver politically-oriented *qaṣaṣ* against al-Ḥajjāj.⁸⁰ In spite of the fact that Ibn al-Ash‘ath previously ordered Dharr flogged and imprisoned for supporting the rebel’s brother, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, against him, he removed him from prison when he set out against al-Ḥajjāj, showering him with a mount, clothes and other gifts, and utilized him as a *qāṣṣ* and *khaṭīb* in his rebellion.⁸¹ Dharr was commanded to incite the people against al-Ḥajjāj. He did so every day and allegedly caused much damage to al-Ḥajjāj.⁸² In this instance, the expediency of an effective *qāṣṣ* trumped past animosities.

Dharr’s eloquence and usefulness in the political struggles of the community seems to have been bequeathed to his son ‘Umar, and it is through his experience that the danger associated with *qaṣaṣ* becomes evident. ‘Umar, whom we have already encountered as one who possessed a spell-binding

77 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:220. See Chapter One, 23.

78 Yāqūt, *Muṣjam al-udabā’*, 6:202; Ibn Khallikhān, *Wafayāt*, 2:513–514.

79 On ‘Imrān, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:320; Appendix # 32. On al-Nahhās, see Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 1:307; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:243; Appendix # 103. It is noteworthy that al-Nahhās, who was considered an untrustworthy *ḥadīth* transmitter, has only a few *ḥadīth* connected to him, one of which is that the Companions of the Prophet recited poetry while circumambulating the Ka’ba. This practice apparently had roots in the pre-Islamic period as attested in Hishām b. al-Kalbī’s *Kitāb al-aṣnām* in which he noted that Quraysh would circumambulate the Ka’ba while reciting verses in praise of their three goddesses (Manāt, Allāt and al-‘Uzza), verses which became known notoriously as the “Satanic Verses.” See Hishām b. al-Kalbī *The Book of Idols*, trans. by Nabih Amin Faris (Princeton, 1952), 16–17.

80 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:410; Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 280; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1055.

81 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1055.

82 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 280.

voice, was, like his father, an eloquent (*balīgh*) *qāṣṣ* and effective propagandizing force. He gave *qaṣaṣ* and incited the supporters of the Umayyads in Wāsiṭ against the ‘Abbāsids in 132/750.⁸³ He was joined in this venture by al-‘Awwām b. Ḥawshab, and it was by virtue of their apparent effectiveness in rousing the populace against the ‘Abbāsids that they were two of the three men who were not granted amnesty when the region fell to the new dynasty.⁸⁴ ‘Umar’s life, though, was eventually spared because of the intercession of Ziyād b. ‘Ubayd Allāh.⁸⁵

It is worth noting that ‘Umar and al-‘Awwām were quite similar in scholarly reputation and political practice. Both men were considered reputable *ḥadīth* and religious scholars and both engaged in a somewhat usual “*qaṣaṣ*” practice of inciting soldiers to fight. However, according to the sources, only ‘Umar was a *qāṣṣ*, and a major trait possessed by ‘Umar not by al-‘Awwām was the former’s possession of eloquence and a beautiful voice. It may be, then, that ‘Umar’s *bayān* was the trait that set him apart from al-‘Awwām as a *qāṣṣ*.

Conduct

The performance of the *qāṣṣ* depended not only on his own skills as a scholar and speaker, it also incorporated practical aspects associated with the conduct of the session itself. The conduct in a *qaṣaṣ* session included both the actions of the *qāṣṣ* as well as the format of his sessions. Five issues appear to be particularly relevant in this regard: the decorum of the session, the posture of the *qāṣṣ*, the location of the sessions, the times they were held and various malpractices of the *quṣṣāṣ*. It is these five features that the sources emphasize when describing the sessions themselves. An attendant issue lingering just below the surface of each of these is a question about the degree of formality of the *qaṣaṣ* sessions, i.e. the degree to which a *qaṣaṣ* session was a formal or informal meeting, aspects located in a number of the practices of the *quṣṣāṣ*.

Decorum

The type of decorum expected in a *qaṣaṣ* session indicates much about how the *quṣṣāṣ* were perceived by the community. The Meccan legal scholar ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d.c. 115/733) described the etiquette expected in a *qaṣaṣ* session by

83 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69–70; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 16:94; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:404–405.

84 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69–70; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:404–405.

85 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69–70. Why ‘Umar was spared and al-‘Awwām was not is unclear. Could it be that his prowess as a *qāṣṣ* made him particularly valuable to Ziyād?

comparing it to the most formal expression of religious education, the official sermon (*khuṭba*).⁸⁶ His evaluation suggests that the difference between the *khuṭba* and the *qāṣṣa* is based on the conduct/decorum of the session rather than the content of the teaching, particularly in regard to the degree of formality expected in each. Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767) posed the problem to ‘Aṭā’:

“So, the *qaṣaṣ* of the *qāṣṣ*, is something different than the *khuṭba* of the *imām* on Friday. Can I engage in *dhikr* to God while listening to him (i.e. the *qāṣṣ*) and trying to pay attention to him?” He [‘Aṭā’] said, “Yes. You can sit with him if you want and leave him if you want and raise your voice during some of the recollections.” I [Ibn Jurayj] said, “So if someone sneezed and said ‘*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*’, can I bless him?” He said, “Certainly.” I said, “Can another person and I talk while listening to him?” He said, “Yes, but if you praised God (*tasabbuḥ*) and recalled God (*tadhakkur*), this would be preferable to me.”⁸⁷

‘Aṭā’ confirmed for Ibn Jurayj that the atmosphere in the *qaṣaṣ* session was more lax and freewheeling than the *khuṭba*. Since the Friday oration of the *imām* was a formal meeting, strict decorum, in particular silence and attention to the oration, was preserved.⁸⁸ In the *qaṣaṣ* sessions, conversely, little discipline was required.

According to ‘Aṭā’, the laxity in the *qaṣaṣ* session was expressed in a number of ways. First, the *qāṣṣ* did not demand one’s full attention. While sitting in his session, the listener engaged in his own religious exercise of *dhikr* and essentially ignored the instruction of the *qāṣṣ*. Thus, secondly, the listener came and went as he saw fit and said his *dhikr* audibly and not simply to himself. This aspect of the atmosphere in the *qaṣaṣ* session was apparent in the sessions of the Jordanian *qāṣṣ* at al-Jābiya with Mu‘āwiya. At some point in the session, someone stood up to leave the session, obviously having felt no obligation to wait until the *qāṣṣ* was finished.⁸⁹ Thirdly, interaction between the attendees was also allowed so that if someone sneezed, he received a blessing, and was able to carry on a conversation with a friend (if he desired).

However, while ‘Aṭā’ portrayed the *qaṣaṣ* session as an unfettered affair such that one *did* almost as he pleased in it, this did not mean that he believed one

86 On ‘Aṭā’, see J. Schacht, “‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāh,” *El2*, 1:730.

87 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:218. Ibn Jurayj is ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Jurayj; on him, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 18:338–354.

88 See above 153, n. 3.

89 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 68:128.

act in a *laissez-faire* manner. In fact, according to this report, ‘Atā’ personally maintained that one actively and reverently participate in the session, suggesting that he viewed the session as worthy of respect and demureness.

Yet ‘Atā’ allegedly did not always uphold his own standard. A certain Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Kurayz (n.d.)⁹⁰ saw ‘Atā’ engaged in a conversation with the distinguished scholar and *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr while another, unidentified *qāṣṣ* was giving his *qaṣaṣ* near-by. Ṭalḥa said to ‘Atā’ and ‘Ubayd:

“Do you not want to listen to the *dhikr* and to be deemed worthy at the appointed time [before God]?” They (‘Atā’ and ‘Ubayd) looked at me (Ṭalḥa) and then continued their conversation. So I (Ṭalḥa) repeated it to them and they continued their conversation. So I did it a third time and they looked at me and said, “That [meaning, “listening”] is for prayer time.” Then they recited the verse: “And when the Qur’ān is recited, give ear to it and heed it” (Sūrat al-A‘rāf [7]:204).⁹¹

The two scholars, one of whom, ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, was himself a famous *qāṣṣ*, felt no compulsion to listen to the unidentified *qāṣṣ* because the conditions that demanded silence and giving heed, i.e. prayer time and the recitation of the Qur’ān, did not exist during the *qaṣaṣ* session. Nonetheless, while ‘Atā’ and ‘Ubayd upheld the letter of the law, they did not abide by its spirit, even according to ‘Atā’s own opinion, which, as was mentioned above, encouraged active participation in the session.

Not only was interaction between the attendees during a *qaṣaṣ* session apparently acceptable, it also appears that *qaṣaṣ* sessions were in essence interactive sessions in which the *qāṣṣ* allowed for and, at times, even encouraged input and questions from the audience. As we saw in Chapter One, the Prophet, while giving *qaṣaṣ* from the pulpit of the mosque, allowed Abū al-Dardā’ to interject a question about the meaning of a verse from the Qur’ān.⁹² Ibn ‘Umar also interrupted Ibn Mas‘ūd while he was standing and giving *qaṣaṣ* by asking him about “the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*).”⁹³ Likewise, the eminent

90 Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 13:424–426. He is not to be confused with the famous Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Uthmān; see W. Madelung, “Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh,” *EL*, 10:161–162; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 13:412–424.

91 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 9:163; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:282. Tha‘labī identified the speaker as a Qur’ān reciter (*al-qārī*); see his *Kashf*, 4:321.

92 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 14:311–312, 45:483. See also the discussion of the *qiṣṣa* in Chapter One, 23.

93 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida’*, 177.

Syrian *qāşş* Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī purportedly sat on the steps of the mosque in the evenings where he gave *qaşaş*, related *ḥadīth* and fielded questions from his listeners who sat on the steps below him.⁹⁴ Abū Idrīs also gave *qaşaş* in the mosque in response to inquiries made by those who attended Qurʾān recitation and study circles in the mosque. When a group came across a *sajda* verse, they sought out Abū Idrīs to recite the verse for them. He then led them in prostrations repeating the *sajda* up to twelve times, presumably in order to solidify the proper recitation of the verse in the minds of the inquirers. Then, when the circle of students finished their recitation, Abū Idrīs began giving *qaşaş*.⁹⁵ At some later time, this order was reversed so that *qaşaş* came first and the recitation came afterward (*thumma quddīma al-qaşaş baʿda dhālika wa akhkhārū al-qirāʾa*).⁹⁶

These reports indicate that *qaşaş* sessions were collegial affairs, promoting interaction between the *qāşş* as teacher and his students. Only when the student was obstinate or directly challenged the teaching of the *qāşş* does the *qāşş* seem to have taken offense. Thus, we have the example of the Prophet's frustration with Abū al-Dardāʾ for repeating the same question as if the Companion was surprised by the Prophet's response and not entirely convinced of its validity.⁹⁷ Also, Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī allegedly expelled a student from his *qaşaş* session when the student challenged him on a *ḥadīth* that he related.⁹⁸ Even the report we encountered in Chapter One about the unlearned *qāşş* whom al-Shaʿbī confronted for having alleged that the end of days would be announced by two trumpets instead of one indicates that the *quşşāş* faced limits in the amount of opposition they allowed in their sessions.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, *qaşaş* sessions were essentially teaching sessions fostering an environment of open inquiry. This aspect set it apart from other public pronouncements, namely the *khuṭba*, both decidedly more formal and requiring a level of decorum not demanded in *qaşaş* sessions.

94 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:163.

95 The text gives no indication about the content of his *qaşaş* but it seems safe to say that it had something to do with Qurʾān recitation and interpretation (*tafsīr*) since this was the context in which he gave his *qaşaş*, not unlike those of the Prophet and Ibn Masʿūd.

96 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:162–163. It seems likely that the last portion of the report which tells of the reversal of order merely indicates that when a group would come to Abū Idrīs he would give *qaşaş* (*tafsīr*?) to them before answering their question about the recitation of the verse or that he would answer their question in the process of giving *qaşaş*. It is unclear what prompted the change.

97 See Chapter One, 23.

98 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:163.

99 See Chapter One, 30.

Posture

The distinguished scholar Adam Mez claimed that the difference between “official” preachers, by whom he meant “the Friday preacher,” and “unofficial” preachers, or as he calls them elsewhere, “popular” preachers, was that “while the former preached standing, the latter did so sitting on a stool.”¹⁰⁰ However, he also noted that the early *quṣṣāṣ* of Egypt combined both positions by reciting the Qur’ān while standing and delivering *qaṣaṣ* while seated.¹⁰¹ Later, Merlin Swartz, building on Mez’s evaluation, noted that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb’s decision to allow Tamīm al-Dārī to relate *qaṣaṣ* while standing indicated that Tamīm was acting in an official capacity, as opposed to “the free *qāṣṣ*” who gave his *qaṣaṣ* while seated.¹⁰² Indeed, the fact that the sources, at times, emphasize whether a *qāṣṣ* was standing or sitting does seem to imply that there is a connection between that posture and how “official,” or formal, the *qaṣaṣ* session was. In the case of the report of ‘Umar granting permission to Tamīm, standing may be a sign he had been “officially appointed.”¹⁰³ Yet, as we have noted above, *qaṣaṣ* sessions were conducted along a graded line of formality, such that even when standing, certain expectations in decorum were not enforced, although we expected the posture of standing to have required greater decorum from both the speaker and the audience than the posture of sitting. In spite of this, the distinction between an “official,” or formal, meeting and an “unofficial,” or informal, meeting does not seem to have hinged on the posture of the *qāṣṣ* as either standing or sitting; other factors seem to have been active.

The sources preserve for us a number of references to the posture of the *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam while they related *qaṣaṣ*. According to a tradition about the Prophet, as we have already seen above, he gave a *qiṣṣa*, engaging in Qur’ānic exegesis, while standing at the pulpit of the mosque.¹⁰⁴ Ibn Mas‘ūd also stood when giving *qaṣaṣ* on Mondays and Thursdays, as was noted above as well.¹⁰⁵ Another Companion of the Prophet Abū Hurayra gave a *qiṣṣa* while standing on Friday, the day of congregational prayer, as did an unknown *qāṣṣ* identified only as Abū Shayba.¹⁰⁶ Tamīm al-Dārī was granted permission from

100 Mez, *Renaissance*, 331–332. Swartz followed Mez in this assessment, see his translation of Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Quṣṣāṣ* (108, n. 2).

101 Mez, *Renaissance*, 332.

102 See Swartz’s translation of Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 108, n. 2.

103 Ibid.

104 See above 168, n. 92.

105 See Chapter One, 14, 46.

106 ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī, *Aḥādīth al-shi‘r*, ed. Khayr Allāh al-Sharīf (Damascus, 1993), 53. On Abū Shayba, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:290.

the Caliph ‘Umar to give *qaşas* once a week while standing.¹⁰⁷ This was eventually increased by ‘Uthmān to three times a week while standing.¹⁰⁸ The first *qāşş* of Egypt, Sulaym b. ‘Itr, as well as one of his successors, Marthad b. Wadā’a, also gave *qaşas* while standing.¹⁰⁹

These examples show that the meaning behind standing when giving *qaşas* is unclear. First, standing when giving *qaşas* was practiced both during the Friday meeting, as in the case of Abū Hurayra and Abū Shayba, and at other times during the week, as in the case of Ibn Mas‘ūd and Tamīm al-Dārī. Moreover, the day when the Prophet, Sulaym b. ‘Itr and Marthad b. Wadā’a gave *qaşas* is unknown. Thus, contrary to Mez’s assessment, “official” status was not necessarily connected to standing when preaching on Friday. Secondly, even when standing, the *quşşās*, namely the Prophet and Ibn Mas‘ūd, interacted with their audiences suggesting that their sessions were conducted according to a lesser degree of formality than what was expected from the “official” *khuṭba*, for example.

Although a number of *quşşās* gave their *qişas* while standing, the default posture of *qaşas* seems to have been sitting down. This practice, like that of giving *qaşas* while standing, allegedly found precedent in the practice of the Prophet.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the practice of sitting while giving *qaşas* existed during the time of the Prophet’s Companions, as evident in reports about ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, Abū Dharr, Ibn Mas‘ūd and al-Aswad b. Sarī‘.¹¹¹ In fact, most references to *qaşas* sessions tell of the *qāşş* and his listeners seated together.¹¹² As we noted above, Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī, for example, gave *qaşas* while sitting on the steps of the mosque where he received and answered questions from his listeners.¹¹³ This practice appears to be more of an informal and, therefore, unofficial forum for *qaşas*, even though the public nature of his discourses and his position as an appointee of ‘Abd al-Malik as both a *qāşş* and a judge suggested that while his sessions seemed to be “unofficial,” he himself may have been “official.” The *qāşş* Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī expressed

107 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 22.

108 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muşannaḥ*, 3:219. For more analysis of this tradition, see Chapter Four.

109 For Sulaym, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:277; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 128. For Marthad, see Fasawī, *Ma’rifā*, 2:248.

110 See the discussion about the Prophet seated while giving *qaşas* in Chapter Four.

111 On ‘Abd Allāh, see Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:204. On Abū Dharr, see Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 22:395. On Ibn Mas‘ūd, see Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-kabīr*, 9:128. On al-Aswad, see Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 1:232.

112 For other examples, see ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (Jāḥiz, *Bayān*, 1:367); Sulaym b. ‘Itr (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:273), and Ibn Hujayra (Dulābī, *Kunā*, 1:314).

113 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muşannaḥ*, 7:74; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:163. See also the Appendix # 31.

the reality clearly when he admonished his own students: “Do not *sit* with the *quṣṣāṣ* except with Abū al-Aḥwāṣ (*lā tajālasū al-quṣṣāṣ ghayr Abī al-Aḥwāṣ*).”¹¹⁴

All this seems to indicate that attempting to describe a session as either “official” or “unofficial” or as either “formal” or “informal” based on the posture of the *qāṣṣ* as standing (i.e. official/formal) or seated (i.e. unofficial/informal) is, at the very least, imprecise. If “official” is meant to indicate a governmentally-appointed preacher, for instance, then we have examples of appointed *quṣṣāṣ* who gave their sessions while standing (i.e. Tamīm al-Dārī) as well as while sitting (i.e. Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī). Furthermore, the designation between “formal” and “informal” also seem indistinct because, in comparison to the “formal” *khuṭba*, the *qaṣaṣ* session, whether the *qāṣṣ* was standing or sitting, was in its essence informal since it allowed for interaction between the speaker and the audience, as ‘Aṭā’ noted in the report discussed above and as we have seen in the practices of some *quṣṣāṣ*, most notably the Prophet himself who gave *qaṣaṣ* while standing at the pulpit of the mosque and while seated in a circle of students.¹¹⁵

Location

The impression drawn from the posture of the *qāṣṣ* that *qaṣaṣ* was a flexible medium is reflected also in the variety of locations where *qaṣaṣ* sessions were held. The most common forum for *qaṣaṣ* was certainly the mosque of the city. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr held sessions in the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* of Mecca.¹¹⁶ Muslim b. Jundab was the *qāṣṣ* of the Prophet’s mosque in Medina.¹¹⁷ Ibn Mas‘ūd and Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī gave *qaṣaṣ* in the mosque in Damascus, presumably the Umayyad mosque.¹¹⁸ In Iraq, Ibn Mas‘ūd observed a *qaṣaṣ* session in a mosque in Kufa,¹¹⁹ while al-Aswad b. Sarī’ was the first to give *qaṣaṣ* in the mosque in

114 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:293.

115 It may also be helpful to note that a similar debate about standing and sitting was waged around the Friday *khuṭba* during the reign of al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik in which the *qāṣṣ* and Umayyad political advisor Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa capitulated that he was unable to correct the Umayyad caliphs’ practice of sitting during the first sermon and standing during the second since they believed, erroneously according to him, that this was the custom of the caliphs dating back to ‘Uthmān; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1233–1234.

116 Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkiyyīn*, 1:160.

117 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:367–368.

118 For Ibn Mas‘ūd, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:52. For Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:151, 160.

119 Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, 9:128. The *matn* does not indicate that the mosque was in Kufa but the fact that the first transmitter of the tradition, al-Aswad b. Hilāl, was Kufan suggests that it was.

Basra and another Basran, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ghālib, gave *qaşaş* there in “the congregational mosque (*al-masjid al-jāmi‘*).¹²⁰ On the other side of the empire, Sulaym b. ‘Itr, Egypt’s first *qāşş* gave *qaşaş* in the mosque of Fustāt (the mosque of ‘Amr b. al-Āş).¹²¹ Since these sessions were held in the main mosque of the city, we deduce that the *qāşş* must have been a reputable man in the community in order to have his name connected so firmly with the primary mosque of the city, and, indeed with some of the more famous mosques of the empire, and, furthermore, that the rulers of the city were aware, at the very least, of his sessions in the mosque.

Not only did *quşşāş* work in mosques of the cities of the empire, they also delivered their *qaşaş* in tribal mosques. The mosque of the Banū Nabhān in Kūfa at one point housed the *qāşş* Abū ‘Amr.¹²² There was even a mosque in Kūfa known as the “the mosque of the *quşşāş*” where people congregated to listen to *qaşaş*; it was also known as the Mosque of Abū Dāwūd and was located in the tribal district of Wādī‘a.¹²³ In Basra, a few *quşşāş* were associated with tribal mosques. Zurāra b. ‘Awfā, for example, the pro-Umayyad *qāşş* known as one of the *imāms* of the people of Başra gave his *qaşaş* at the mosque of the Banū Qushayr.¹²⁴ Likewise, the anti-Umayyad *qāşş* ‘Imrān b. ‘Işām gave *qaşaş* in the mosque of the Banū Ḍubay‘a.¹²⁵

Even though holding a session in a mosque appeared to grant the session a certain degree of legitimacy, the precise location of the session within the mosque also seems to have influenced perceptions of the sessions conveying a feeling of respect for or criticism of the relevant *qāşş*. Certainly, when the Prophet was said to have given *qaşaş* from the pulpit of the mosque, both his own reputation and the place where he spoke demanded the respect of the audience, as was true for others who spoke from the pulpit. In addition, the practice in Mecca, during at least the lifetime of ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, was that the *qāşş* stood behind the *maqām*, presumably meaning the *maqām Ibrāhīm*.¹²⁶ Therefore, by simply mentioning that the *qāşş* conducted his session near such

120 On al-Aswad, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:41; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 1:89–90. On ‘Abd Allāh, Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:291.

121 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:273.

122 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī *Mūdiḥ awḥām al-jam‘ wa-l-tafriq*, ed. ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭī Amīn Qal‘ajī (Beirut, 1987), 2:394.

123 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:656.

124 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:150; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:247; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:516.

125 Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:159.

126 Fākihī, *Akḥbār*, 2:338. On the *maqām*, see A.J. Wensinck, “al-Masjd al-Ḥarām,” *El2*, 6:708–709 and M.J. Kister, “Maḳām Ibrāhīm,” *El2*, 6:104–107.

a highly honored place in the mosque, the report projects greater status upon the *qāṣṣ*.

Other traditions express the opposite sentiment and seem to marginalize the *quṣṣāṣ* by confining them to the deep corners of the mosque. Al-Aswad b. Sarīʿ in Basra allegedly held his sessions in the back-part (*muʿakkhar*)/corner (*nāḥiya*) of the mosque, and even then, though sitting in the furthest reaches of the mosque, the noise from his session was heard by others.¹²⁷ The Basran *qāṣṣ* Sumayr b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān also gave *qaṣaṣ* in the corner of the mosque.¹²⁸ These references to space and the access to space carry meaning. By noting that a *qāṣṣ* was on the pulpit or at a recognized position in the mosque, such as behind the *maqām Ibrāhīm*, or that he held his sessions at the “back-part” or “corner” of the mosque, the reports convey a clear impression about the legitimacy, or at least about the status, of his sessions. Some reports, like those describing *quṣṣāṣ* speaking from the stairs of the mosque, do not portray a distinct image concerning the status of the *qāṣṣ* and his session and, therefore, may reiterate the flexibility inherent in *qaṣaṣ*.¹²⁹

Not all *qaṣaṣ* meetings, though, were held in mosques. This fact, however, was not unusual for teachers and mirrored the varied practices of the scholarly community in general. As Nabia Abbott has noted, scholars and judges in early Islam often held sessions in their homes and legal rulings were even handed down in the marketplace.¹³⁰ Thus, even “official” or “formal” meetings were held outside the mosque. A strikingly similar situation obtained with the *quṣṣāṣ*. We know of one *qāṣṣ*, the Basran Zurāra b. Awfā, who held his *qaṣaṣ* sessions in his home and that the governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf allegedly attended some of his sessions.¹³¹ Furthermore, *quṣṣāṣ* also worked in the marketplace (*sūq*) as indicated in a report about the caliph ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib being impressed

127 Ibn al-Mubārak (*Zuhd*, 1:232) and Ibn Saʿd (*Ṭabaqāt*, 9:41) say he was in the back-part of the mosque. Ibn Sallām says he was in the corner; see his *Gharīb*, 4:304.

128 Dārimī, *Sunan*, 1:110.

129 Ibn Masʿūd (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 33:52), Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:163) and Abū Shayba (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 68:128) gave *qaṣaṣ* from the stairs of the mosque.

130 Abbott, *Studies II*, 13. See also the report of Ibn ʿAbbās holding sessions in his house in which he would give legal rulings, teach and interpret the Qurʾān and even feed his guests; see Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-ʿAẓm, 3:63.

131 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247; Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya*, 2:293; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifa*, 3:230. It is not entirely clear if the sessions that al-Ḥajjāj attended were *qaṣaṣ* session or were of another type; see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:150–151.

with the religious knowledge of a *qāşş* holding sessions in the *sūq* of Kufa.¹³² Among the more odd places where a *qāşş* gave *qaşaş* was “the wilderness (*al-barriyya*).”¹³³

The *quşşās* were also active in Mecca during the *hajj*. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ostensibly heard al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī giving *qaşaş* while on the pilgrimage although variants of the report as well as allegations by later scholars that ‘Alī never saw al-Ḥasan have called into question the reliability of the report.¹³⁴ Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh also gave *qaşaş* during the pilgrimage on the Day of Standing at Mt. ‘Arafat after the afternoon (*‘aşr*) prayers.¹³⁵ Of course, religious instruction during the *hajj* was not unusual and so we hear from ‘Ā’isha that, after circumambulating the Ka’ba in the morning, some people sat with the *mudhakkir*.¹³⁶

Besides the open spaces of Mt. ‘Arafat, the locations of the sessions mentioned above suggest that the sessions themselves were small, and if small, then they were limited in attendance and presumably somewhat exclusive. Indeed, in one instance, when Ibn ‘Umar sat with ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, the session was so private that when some inquirers interrupted them asking Ibn ‘Umar questions of legal import, he shunned them saying: “Leave us and our *qāşş* alone (*khallū baynanā wa-bayna qāşşinā*).”¹³⁷ In light of the locations where the early *quşşās* held their sessions, the assumption that the early *quşşās* addressed the masses and enjoyed wide, popular appeal may have been overstated.

Time

Just as the locations of the *qaşaş* sessions varied so did the times when they met. We have already encountered some references to when *qaşaş* was given. For example, the Prophet appears to have given *qaşaş* at various times. Earlier citations of his *qaşaş* do not specify the times this occurred and a later scholar, Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1392), confirmed that the Prophet did not have a specific time for *qaşaş*, although he added that he did so on Fridays and holidays (*fa-inna al-nabī lam yakun la-hu waqt^{un} mu‘ayyin^{un} yaquşşu ‘alā aşḥābihi fī-hi ghayr khuṭbatihī al-rātiba fī-l-juma‘ wa-l-a‘yād*).¹³⁸

132 Wakī‘, *Quḍāt*, 2:196; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 4:148–149; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşās*, 25; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 193. See the discussion in Chapter Four.

133 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:222.

134 Ibn Khāllikān *Wafayāt*, 2:70.

135 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:304.

136 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:588.

137 Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 251.

138 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi‘*, 267. Ibn Rajab alleged that the Prophet would give *tadhkīr* whenever it was needed (*innamā kāna yudhakkiruhum ahyān^{an} aw ‘inda ḥudūth amryahtāja ilā tadhkīr ‘indahū*); see his *Jāmi‘*, 267. According to a report recorded by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya,

Qaṣaṣ, in fact, was given on almost any day of the week in early Islam. Ibn Mas‘ūd did so twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.¹³⁹ A handful of reports about Tamīm al-Dārī give mixed information on when he was allowed to give *qaṣaṣ*. Some reports allege that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb told him to give *qaṣaṣ* only once a week though the day varied, with one report claiming it was Friday and another Saturday.¹⁴⁰ The first report claims that he was later allowed by ‘Uthmān to increase this to twice per week.¹⁴¹ Another report claims that Tamīm gave *qaṣaṣ* twice a week and that ‘Uthmān increased this to three times per week, though without specifying days.¹⁴² Likewise, ‘Ā’isha allegedly told a *qāṣṣ* to give *qaṣaṣ* once a week and, if he desired, to increase that number to twice or even three times a week.¹⁴³ A slight variation of this routine, still approximating three times per week, was suggested by ‘Ā’isha for the Meccan *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr. She told him to give *qaṣaṣ* every other day so that his listeners would not get bored.¹⁴⁴ The option for giving *qaṣaṣ* twice or three times a week persisted into the caliphate of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz who, on one occasion, commanded a *qāṣṣ* to give *qaṣaṣ* on Tuesday or Saturday, but also ostensibly allowed for *qaṣaṣ* three times per week.¹⁴⁵ It is quite evident, therefore, that there was no consensus as to when *qaṣaṣ* was given. It appears that it occurred at a number of possible times and that the sources themselves were unsure about its routine.¹⁴⁶

al-khuṭba al-rātibā (“the established *khuṭba*”) is the traditional Friday sermon, as opposed to the *al-khuṭba al-‘arīḍa* (“the non-essential *khuṭba*”) which is a supererogatory sermon; see his *Zād al-ma‘ād*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūt and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā‘ūt (Beirut, 1979), 1:191.

139 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:180.

140 See both reports in Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11.

141 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11.

142 Ibid., 1:12.

143 For ‘Ā’isha, see Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:13. A strikingly similar tradition was attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās in which he uses the phrase *ḥaddith al-nās*, instead of *quṣṣ*, which is the command in the reports from ‘Ā’isha. However, Ibn ‘Abbās, in the same tradition, instructed that the teacher should give *qaṣaṣ* as well, “*taquṣṣu ‘alayhim*.” This suggests that these may be two variants of the same tradition. See Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh*, 5:2334.

144 Fākihī, *Akḥbār*, 2:339.

145 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi‘*, 267.

146 In fact, *qaṣaṣ* seems to have maintained its flexibility into the medieval period when Ibn al-Jawzī gave his presentations which were a combination of Qur’ān recitation, a *khuṭba* and *wa‘iz*, in sessions allegedly attended by thousands on Thursdays and Saturdays; see Pedersen, “Islamic Preacher,” 240–241. See also Swartz’s Introduction to Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Quṣṣāṣ*, 34–35.

This same flexibility can be seen in the time of day when *qaşaş* was given. On at least two occasions during the first few decades of Islamic history, the session was held after the *maghrib* prayers. During the lifetime of Ibn Mas‘ūd, an unidentified *qāşş* appears to have assembled his listeners in the evening between the *maghrib* and the *‘ishā’* prayers.¹⁴⁷ Tamīm al-Dārī, during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, also allegedly gave his *qaşaş* at this time, although another report claims that he was told by ‘Umar to give *qaşaş* twice: “mornings and evenings (*bukra wa-‘ashiyya*).”¹⁴⁸ Similarly, ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr, the first *qāşş* in Mecca, gave *qaşaş* once a day after the morning (*ṣubḥ*) prayer¹⁴⁹ and/or twice a day after the morning (*al-ṣubḥ*) and afternoon prayers (*al-‘aṣr*).¹⁵⁰ Also, while ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz allowed the *quşşās* to give *qaşaş* three times a week, as mentioned above, they allegedly only held sessions one time during the day.¹⁵¹ The ‘Abbāsīd *qāşş* al-Qāsim b. Mujāshī‘ adopted the practice of giving *qaşaş* once a day after the evening prayer, when speaking against the Umayyads.¹⁵²

However, the practice alluded to in the reports about Tamīm and ‘Ubayd giving *qaşaş* twice a day seems to have emerged as the most common custom of the *quşşās* of the Umayyad period. The two times a day were usually around the morning (*al-fajr* or *al-ṣubḥ*) and afternoon (*al-‘aṣr*) prayers. While ‘Ubayd seems to have been the first to be connected with giving *qaşaş* at these specific times, others maintained the practice. The famous Sa‘īd b. Jubayr and two Medinan *quşşās*, ‘Atā’ b. Yasār (d. 103/721) and his older contemporary Salama b. Dīnār (d. 130–40/747–57), all purportedly held their *qaşaş* sessions at these times.¹⁵³ Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī held sessions during these times, teaching twenty verses of the Qur’ān in each session.¹⁵⁴

Slight variations on this routine did occur, though. ‘Abd al-Malik, in fact, commanded that his *quşşās* give *qaşaş* in the morning (*al-ghadāt*) and the

147 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:221.

148 For the report about ‘Uthmān, see Ibn Wahb, *al-Jāmi‘ fi-l-ḥadīth*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ḥasan Ḥusayn Muḥammad Abū al-Khayr (Al-Dammam, Saudia Arabia, 1996), 2:664. For the report about ‘Umar, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:81.

149 Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:338.

150 Fasawī, *Ma‘rifā*, 1:542.

151 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi‘*, 267.

152 See the Appendix # 100.

153 On Sa‘d, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:377; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:336. On ‘Atā’, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 40:447 and the Appendix # 59. On Salama, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 22:20; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 8:32; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 11:272; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 6:101; al-Şafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, eds. Aḥmad al-Arnā’ūt and Turkī Muṣṭafā (Beirut, 2000), 15:199.

154 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:291.

evening (*al-‘ashīyya*).¹⁵⁵ Another report even alleged that the practice of teaching the Qur’ān after morning prayer began in the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik with Hishām b. Ismā‘īl al-Makhzūmī and his *mawlā* Rāfi‘.¹⁵⁶ However, later *quṣṣāṣ*, such as the Medinan Muslim b. Jundab and the Basran Zurāra b. Awfā, continued to give *qaṣāṣ* twice a day, and Muslim, who, as was mentioned above, was known for his fine recitation of the Qur’ān, used this time to teach his audience thirty verses of the Qur’ān.¹⁵⁷

Malpractices

The danger with *qaṣāṣ* was that it existed on a fine line between virtue and vice. The traits and set of skills advocated for an effective *qāṣṣ* were, when misused, the same traits that led to his excoriation. Thus, loudness of voice easily became a scourge when the session as a whole became loud. The weeping that signified piety and devotion was interpreted as dissimulation when done *en masse*. The gaiety encouraged in a *qāṣṣ* became irreverence when entertainment superseded religiosity. And, eventually, the negative expressions of these generally positive tendencies came to define the practice of *qaṣāṣ* as a phenomenon, while the orthodox manifestations of the practice came to represent the exception, not the rule. The examples of misconduct attributed to the *quṣṣāṣ* range from the relatively innocuous, such as the pride of the *qāṣṣ*, to the more deplorable, such as mixing genders in the same session and even allowing women to give *qaṣāṣ*.

Pride: “Know me (*‘irifūnī*)!”

A number of reports accuse the *quṣṣāṣ* of pride and, therefore, of trying to attract attention to themselves unjustifiably. This accusation is expressed ubiquitously by alleging that the real, though unspoken, objective of the *qāṣṣ* is to declare, “Know me!” This charge proposes to expose a flaw in the *qāṣṣ* that is more seminal than merely undisciplined or inappropriate behavior in his ses-

155 Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:30.

156 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 18:24. ‘Athamina claimed that Rāfi‘ was a *qāṣṣ* citing the second Badrān edition as his source; see his “Qaṣāṣ,” 60. I was unable to locate this edition but was able to check the first Badrān edition ([Damascus, 1911–1913], 5:295) which does not identify Rāfi‘ as a *qāṣṣ* nor does the more recent al-‘Amrawī edition. Hishām b. Ismā‘īl b. Hishām al-Makhzūmī was a religious scholar, father-in-law to ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, who appointed him governor of Medina, and grandfather to the future caliph Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik; see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:240–241.

157 On Muslim, see Ibn Mujāhid, *Sab‘a*, 59, 82. On Zurāra, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:150.

sions. According to these reports, the *qāşş* himself is to blame for improper motives.¹⁵⁸

When Tamīm al-Dārī requested the permission of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to give *qaşaş*, ‘Umar told him that in giving *qaşaş* he only wanted to say: “I am Tamīm al-Dārī, so know me (*anā Tamīm al-Dārī, fa-i-rifūnī*)!”¹⁵⁹ According to another variant of the report, ‘Umar underscored the tendency towards increased pride through giving *qaşaş* by telling Tamīm that giving *qaşaş* is “slaughter” (*al-dhabh*); by it, Tamīm exalted himself (to the level of Pleiades), to the extent that God would need to humble him.¹⁶⁰

This same opinion was ascribed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib when he purportedly criticized an unnamed Kufan *qāşş*. ‘Alī described the *qāşş* by saying: “This one is saying, “Know me!” So know him (*inna hādhā yaqūlu i-rifūnī fa-i-rifūhu*)!”¹⁶¹ A variant of the report alleges that ‘Alī asked the *qāşş* to identify himself by his *kunya*. When he replied, “Abū Yaḥyā,” ‘Alī answered, “You are Abū I-rifūnī!”¹⁶² ‘Alī’s sardonic alteration of the *qāşş*’s *kunya* conveys, in no uncertain terms, his disapproval of the *qāşş*. Other variants portray the *qāşş* in an even more

158 The sources also indicate that similar expressions using the Arabic root ‘-r-f were used as means for announcing one’s identity to an audience. Two examples from *quşşāş* illustrate this practice. Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī identified himself to those people of Mecca who did know him (*li-man ‘arafanī*) as “Jundab b. Junāda” and to those who did not yet know him (*li-man lam ya-rifnū*) as “Abū Dharr.” See al-Tūsī, *Ikhtiyār ma-rifa al-rijāl (Rijāl al-Kashī)*, ed. al-Sayyid Mahdī al-Rajā’ī (Qumm, 1984), 1:115. It must be noted here, however, that this was not said in a *qaşaş* session. Ibn Mas‘ūd also announced his identity in this way and did so in a *qaşaş* session though he was not the *qāşş* of the session. After listening to a *qāşş* who was leading his audience in the repetition of *dhikr* phrases, Ibn Mas‘ūd, who disagreed with the practice of the *qāşş*, announced his presence to the group, before correcting their *qāşş*, by saying: “He who knows me, knows who I am. As for he who does not know me, I am ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (*man ‘arafanī fa-qad ‘arafanī wa-man lam ya-rifnū, anā ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd*).” See ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:221.

159 Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi‘*, 2:664; Al-Tamīmī, *al-Miḥan*, ed. Yahyā Wahīb Jabbūrī (Tunis, 2006), 245.

160 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10, 12; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dīnashq*, 11:81.

161 Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi‘*, 2:663; Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, 1:69.

162 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:220. Some variants do not identify Abū Yaḥyā beyond his *kunya*; see al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad (Kuwait, 1987), 47–48, 52; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Navāsikh al-Qur‘ān* (Beirut, 1984), 30–31. Others identify him as either ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Dāb (Ibn Salāma, *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, ed. Zuhayr al-Shāwīsh and Muḥammad Kan‘ān [Beirut, 1984], 18–19; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār Sulaymān al-Bandārī [Beirut, 1986], 6; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ghawāmiḍ al-asmā’ al-mubhama al-wāqī’a fī mutūn al-aḥādīth al-musnada*, eds. ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Sayyid and Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn [Beirut, 1986], 4:259) or Abū Yaḥyā al-Mu’arqab (Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ghawāmiḍ*, 4:257–258, Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:82–83).

unfavorable light noting that ‘Alī reprimanded him only when he discovered that the *qāṣṣ* did not know the difference between the abrogating and abrogated verses of the Qur’ān.¹⁶³ These latter variants not only depict the *qāṣṣ* as a man of pride, they also allege that his pride was wholly unjustified.

A third example of the use of the expression “Know me” as a critical judgment leveled on a *qāṣṣ* comes from the distinguished ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Even though a number of sources report that Ibn ‘Umar, indeed, visited *quṣṣāṣ*, he allegedly reiterated to at least one *qāṣṣ* the same accusation that his father had thrown at Tamīm al-Dārī. While passing through the Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca, Ibn ‘Umar’s son asked about a *qāṣṣ* holding a session in the mosque. The boy said: “What is this one saying?” His father answered: “This one is saying, “Know me, know me (*i’rifūnī, i’rifūnī*)!”¹⁶⁴ Clearly, the intention here, as was the case with the previous reports, is to show that the *qāṣṣ* was proud and self-absorbed. And even though the similarity of the statements is conspicuous and hints at a trope (analogous statements are attributed also to Ibn Mas‘ūd¹⁶⁵ and Ibn ‘Abbās¹⁶⁶), the same sentiment, conveyed by the phrase “know me,” was applied to *ḥadīth* transmitters who placed an inordinate emphasis upon pronunciation of the *ḥadīth* to the expense of meaning, or to any person who claimed to have knowledge in fact having none.¹⁶⁷

Loudness

While a strong voice was a meritorious quality of the *qāṣṣ*, it came with limits. In fact, loud volume among the *quṣṣāṣ* was not universally appreciated.¹⁶⁸ ‘Ā’isha allegedly complained to Ibn ‘Umar about a *qāṣṣ* who held his session

163 Nahḥās, *Nāsikh*, 48, 51–52; Ibn Salāma, *Nāsikh*, 18–19; Ibn Ḥazm, *Nāsikh*, 5–6. Abū Nu‘aym claimed that Ibn Mas‘ūd said the same thing though I have not been able to confirm this. The closest report that I have been able to find is the one mentioned above in n. 158. That report, however, does not mention the issue of abrogation.

164 Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 12:264.

165 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:218; Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, 1:69.

166 Ibn Sallām, *Nāsikh*, 3; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 10:259; Nahḥās, *Nāsikh*, 5; Ibn Salāma, *Nāsikh*, 19.

167 Makkī recorded a report from Sufyān (al-Thawrī?) in which the *ḥadīth* scholar allegedly said: “If you see a man stressing the pronunciation of the *ḥadīth* in the meeting then know that he is saying, ‘Know me.’ (*idha ra’ayta al-rajul yushaddid fi alfāz al-ḥadīth fi-l-majlis, fa-i’lam innahu yaqūlu i’rifūnī*).” See Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, ed. Sa’d Nasīb Makārim (Beirut, 1995), 1:357. The report itself is somewhat suspect since I found it only in Makārim’s edition of *Qūt al-qulūb*. Al-Mawārdī used the phrase “Know me” to apply to any person who claims to be a scholar even though they know nothing; see his *Adab al-dunya wa-l-dīn*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā (Cairo, 1955), 40–41.

168 See also the discussion above, 157–159.

right outside her home. She told Ibn ‘Umar: “This guy disturbed me and made it so that I was not able to hear a sound (*hādhā qad ādhānī wa tarakanī lā asma‘ al-ṣawt*).”¹⁶⁹ Ibn ‘Umar resolved the situation by beating the *qāşş*.

A number of reports about the practices of the *quşşāş* of Basra tell of inordinate volume from the *qāşş* and his sessions. From the very beginnings of *qaşaş* in Basra, the decibel level of the session was a problematic issue. Al-Aswad b. Sarī‘, the first *qāşş* of Basra, was rebuked by Mujālid b. Mas‘ūd al-Sulamī (d. 36/656) because his session became loud and was a distraction to others in the mosque.¹⁷⁰ Mujālid’s rebuke was humbly accepted by the attendees who replied in conciliation: “We receive your advice.”¹⁷¹ Later, and again in Basra, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī reproved a *qāşş* for allowing three negative innovations (*bida‘*) in his session: mixing men and women together, raising hands, and raising voices.¹⁷²

Not all *quşşāş*, however, were guilty of raising their voices. The reputable Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh wept while giving *qaşaş* after the morning prayer on the Day of the Standing at ‘Arafat during the pilgrimage. Even though he wept, he did not raise his voice.¹⁷³

Raising Hands

As the above report from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī stated, the *quşşāş* of his era engaged in another behavior provoking even greater debate about its legitimacy, namely the raising of hands. The relative importance of this topic is reflected in the amount of ink it received in the early *ḥadīth* compilations, all containing sections devoted to it. These sources contain citations about its practice during funeral processions (*janāza*),¹⁷⁴ during the *khuṭba*,¹⁷⁵ during *qunūt*,¹⁷⁶

169 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:15. Another variant of the report suggests that the *qāşş* disturbed ‘Ā’isha while she was involved in an act of supererogatory devotion: “This guy disturbed me with his *qaşaş* and distracted me from performing my supererogatory prayers (*hādhā qad ādhānī bi-qaşāşihī wa shagalanī ‘an subḥatī*).” See Makkī, *Qūt*, ed. Madkūr and al-Najjār, 1:371; Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, 1:185. The term *subḥa* seems to mean either the act of using prayers beads for the repetition of phrases of praise to God or of praying supererogatory prayers; see Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Repr. Beirut, 1997), *s-b-h*.

170 On Mujālid, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 27:227.

171 Ibn al-Mubāarak, *Zuhd*, 1:232–233.

172 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:197.

173 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 304.

174 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:469–470; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 3:388.

175 In particular, during the *khuṭba* given when praying for rain; see Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh*, 1:315.

176 Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 2:211–212. *Qunūt* has multiple meanings depending upon the context in which it is used; see A.J. Wensinck, “*Qunūt*,” *EL*, 5:395.

during an eclipse of the sun,¹⁷⁷ upon seeing the Ka'ba during the *ḥājj*,¹⁷⁸ and, of course, during prayer itself.¹⁷⁹ While raising hands may have been appropriate at certain times, it remained a topic of debate in the community.¹⁸⁰

In regard to the *quṣṣās*, it seems that raising hands was actually a common practice in their sessions and just as there were various opinions as to its legitimacy in other acts of religious devotion, it was also controversial as part of the *qaṣaṣ* sessions. We know of at least two leading scholars of the first century, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ, who attended *qaṣaṣ* session with all joining the *qāṣṣ* in raising their hands.¹⁸¹ The distinguished Companion Ibn 'Umar seems to have held mixed views on the necessity of raising hands, based on the degree of one's attachment to the *qaṣaṣ* session in question. According to one report, 'Abda b. Abī Lubāba (d.c. mid-late second/eighth century) claimed that he prayed the afternoon prayer (*al-ʿaṣr*) with Ibn 'Umar.¹⁸² Afterwards, Ibn 'Umar turned his back to the *qāṣṣ* and began to relate *ḥadīth*. Then the *qāṣṣ* raised his hands in supplication (*yad'ū*) while Ibn 'Umar did not.¹⁸³ A second report states that 'Ubayd Allāh b. Abī Yazīd (d. 126/744) said: "I saw Ibn 'Umar raising his hands while with the *qāṣṣ*."¹⁸⁴ In another tradition, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad (d. 112/730), whose son 'Abd Allāh was a *qāṣṣ*, said: "I saw Ibn 'Umar in the meeting of a *qāṣṣ* raising his hands while in supplication (*yad'ū*), until they were even with his shoulders."¹⁸⁵

177 Ibn Khuzayma, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A'zamī (Beirut, 1970), 2:310.

178 Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ*, 2:176–178.

179 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 2:247–252; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:257–259; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:612; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 1:191, 289, 303; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo, 1952–53), 1:279–282, 2:1271–1272; Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 2:121–123, 205–206, 231–234; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2:35–44.

180 See, for example, Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 1:197. In an excellent overview of the issue of raising hands, Swartz, drawing in part on Goldziher, argued that the mixed perception of the practice may have been a product of its pre-Islamic usage in both pagan and monotheistic traditions, "those who opposed *raf' al-yadain* were those who were aware of, and concerned about, its pagan roots; those who admitted it were those, on the other hand, who saw its monotheistic background or, at least, saw in it nothing incompatible with monotheistic conceptions." See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 120, n. 5.

181 On 'Umar, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 36; idem, *Sīrat 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (Cairo, 1912), 172. On 'Aṭā', see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 35–36.

182 'Abda b. Abī Lubāba was a Kufan legal scholar who allegedly met Ibn 'Umar in Syria. Ibn Ḥajar does not record a death date for him but does give a report which indicates that he was alive in 123/740; see his *Tahdhīb*, 2:644.

183 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:218.

184 Ibid., 3:220. For 'Ubayd Allāh, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 19:178–179.

185 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 33–4. For al-Qāsim, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:419–420.

Ibn ʿUmar’s practice indicates that the deciding factor regarding the necessity of raising hands depended on whether or not one was an active participant in the session. Ibn ʿUmar, for example, did not raise his hands when he turned his back to the *qāşş* (*wa-jaʿala zahrahu naḥwa al-qāşş*), indicating that he excused himself from the session. Conversely, he raised his hands if he was attending the session (*inda al-qāşş*). These two reactions to the raising of hands clearly suggest that the practice was expected only when in attendance at a *qaşaş* session. In fact, as we have seen above, similar standards applied to other religious practices. During prayer time or Qurʾān recitation, silence was expected. At other times, like during *qaşaş* sessions, neither silence nor paying attention was obligatory.¹⁸⁶

In addition to the unidentified *quşşāş* who presided over the sessions mentioned above, a number of other named *quşşāş* allowed raising hands in their sessions. Egypt’s Sulaym b. ʿItr, the first *qāşş* of the province, raised his hands in his *qaşaş* while he was invoking God (*duʿā*).¹⁸⁷ Across the empire in Basra, al-Aswad b. Sarī, that city’s first *qāşş*, raised his hands although he was rebuked for it by Mujālid b. Masʿūd.¹⁸⁸ The practice appears to have continued in Basra with the famous al-Ḥasan al-Başrī. He raised his hands with their backs upward during the *duʿā* portion of his *qaşaş* session and then closed his session with a special prayer after finishing his “story (*ḥadīth*).”¹⁸⁹ However, a separate report claims that al-Ḥasan held the exact opposite opinion about the *quşşāş* raising their hands. According to Makkī’s *Qūt al-qulūb*, which we have already noted above as being particularly antagonistic towards the *quşşāş*, al-Ḥasan allegedly described the raising of voices and the extending of hands in *duʿā* by the *quşşāş* as *bidʿa*.¹⁹⁰ Yet, even here, the meaning is not entirely clear, for al-Ḥasan at one time reportedly admitted that *qaşaş* was *bidʿa*, then confessed that it was, in fact, a good innovation: “How many a prayer is answered, request granted, companion won, and how great is the knowledge received through it (*al-qaşaş bidʿa, wa-niʿmat al-bidʿa kam min daʿwa mustajāba, wa-suʿl muʿṭā wa-akh mustafād, wa-ʿilm yuṣāb*).”¹⁹¹ Al-Ḥasan al-Başrī’s precise opinion on the *quşşāş* and their practices seems nuanced, at best, or indiscernible, at worst.

186 See above, 166–169.

187 Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:30.

188 Ibn Sallām, *Gharīb*, 4:304.

189 Ibn Saʿd, *Tabaqāt*, 9:167. See also Pedersen, “Criticism,” 218.

190 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:197.

191 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşāş*, 18 (translation taken from Swartz, 103). It is important to note here that care must be taken in interpreting reports about the *quşşāş* from al-Makkī since he often betrays a distinct anti-*quşşāş* bias. This could be the case here since Makkī’s variant

Things became formalized during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān who made the ostensibly discretionary practice of raising hands during invocation compulsory, ordering all the *quṣṣās* of his empire to raise their hands in invocation during their sessions, mornings and evenings.¹⁹² Indeed, both *qaṣaṣ* and raising hands appear to have been controversial topics during ‘Abd al-Malik’s reign and he attempted to set the situation straight in one fell swoop. He proudly exclaimed to Ghudayf b. al-Ḥārith al-Kindī al-Ḥimṣī, a Companion of the Prophet, that he united the people together in raising their hands on the pulpit during Friday prayers and during *qaṣaṣ* after the morning and afternoon prayers (*innā qad jama’nā al-nās ‘alā amrayn . . . raf’u al-aydī ‘alā al-manābiri yawm al-jum’a wa-l-qaṣaṣ ba’d al-ṣubḥ wa-l-‘aṣr*). Ghudayf, however, was not impressed. So, when ‘Abd al-Malik told Ghudayf that he wanted him to raise his hand on the pulpit, Ghudayf refused and rebuked the caliph, telling him that his decree was a sign that he was falling into *bid’a* (*amā innahumā amthalu bid’atikum ‘indī, wa-lastu mujībaka ilā shay’in minhumā*). When ‘Abd al-Malik asked why he disagreed with the order, Ghudayf responded with a Prophetic tradition: “No group of people makes some new innovation without removing something in the *sunna* similar to it. Therefore, adhering to the *sunna* is better than making some new innovation (*mā aḥdatha qawm^{un} bid’at^{an} illā rafa’a mithlahā min al-sunna, fa-tamassuk^{un} bi-sunnatⁱⁿ khayr^{un} min ihdāthi bid’atⁱⁿ*).”¹⁹³

While it is not clear what happened to Ghudayf in light of his open refusal to abide by a caliphal decree, the seriousness with which ‘Abd al-Malik took his order is evident by his dismissal of the famous Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī from his position as *qāṣṣ* because he also refused to abide by the order.¹⁹⁴ In spite of the official decree, the raising of hands during religious practices continued to be an issue of dispute in the Umayyad period. The Basran Iṣḥāq b. Suwayd (d. 131/748) expressed, in poetry, his objection to a *qāṣṣ* who raised his hands frequently:

does not have the description of *qaṣaṣ* as a good innovation but rather simply that *qaṣaṣ* is *bid’a*; see his *Qūt*, 2:197. Whether Makki omitted this description or Ibn al-Jawzī added it cannot be determined at present.

192 Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:30.

193 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 28:172–173. See also the variants in Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 48:82; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 203. We will look at this tradition again in an analysis of *qaṣaṣ* as *bid’a* in Chapter Four. Ghudayf is said to have died in the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān; see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 23:112–116; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:377.

194 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:166.

I swear by the One who created the heavens,
 The strata, and who created me,
 I pray to God and I neither moved my hands
 When I prayed nor my tongue
 Being fully convinced
 That the one to whom I pray sees me.
 For He sees and hears what I say
 So if I rely on Him, that is enough for me.¹⁹⁵

For Ishāq, he was content with the fact that God saw him and heard him even if he did not speak or make demonstrable movements with his hands. Though he may not have interpreted the practice as a negative innovation and a violation of Prophetic *sunna*, as did his predecessor Ghudāyf, the practice was, in Ishāq's opinion, unnecessary in light of God's omniscience.

Mixed-gender Meetings

Some *quşşāş* engaged in the even more reprehensible conduct of allowing men and women to mix together in their sessions, the third innovation attributed to them by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Indeed, when Abū al-Tayyāḥ (d. 130/747) complained to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī about the conduct of the *qaşaş* sessions, he named this issue first in his list of their offenses.¹⁹⁶ The practice appears to have persisted beyond the Umayyad period such that the mother of the famous Abū Ḥanīfa, for example, refused to accept the ruling of her famous son, preferring the advice of the *qāşş* whose sessions she frequented.¹⁹⁷ Centuries later, Ibn al-Jawzī even allowed the two genders to be in the same session on the condition a partition separate them.¹⁹⁸

It merits stress here that the issue of dispute was the mixing of genders and not that women attended *qaşaş* sessions. In fact, in one instance, women convened their own *qaşaş* session presided over by their own *qāşş* (*qāşşā?*), the mother of the famous al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Usāma b. Zayd (d. 153/770)¹⁹⁹ related that his mother saw al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's mother giving *qaşaş* to women (*ra'aytu*

195 Yahyā b. Ma'īn, *Tārīkh*, 4:178.

196 Makki, *Qūt*, 1:297; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşāş*, 97; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīb*, 227. Abū al-Tayyāḥ is Yazīd b. Ḥumayd; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:409.

197 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quşşāş*, 108.

198 *Ibid.*, 142.

199 Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 2:347–351.

umm al-Ḥasan taquṣṣu ‘alā al-nisā’).²⁰⁰ She is the only woman from the rise of Islam until the close of the Umayyad period who is reported to have given *qaṣaṣ* legitimately to women. She was not, however, the only woman to give *qaṣaṣ*.

An even more scandalous situation than men and women meeting together in a *qaṣaṣ* session was that of a woman giving *qaṣaṣ* to men and, while doing so, reciting the Qur’ān in intonation (*alḥān*). Making this egregious behavior worse, her *mawlā*, the distinguished Kufan scholar and *qāṣṣ* ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, condoned her actions.

The event comes to us in two reports. First, al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam (d.c. 136/753)²⁰¹ reported that when ‘Awn stopped giving *qaṣaṣ*: “He ordered his female servant to give *qaṣaṣ* and to sing (*amara jāriya lahu taquṣṣu wa-tuṭribu*).” Al-Mughīra sent him a message saying: “You are among a trustworthy people (*min ahli bayt ṣidq*). God did not send His Prophet with foolishness (*bi-l-ḥumq*) and this thing that you are doing is foolish.”²⁰² The prospect that a distinguished scholar allowed such a thing continued to be scandalous into the late medieval period when Ibn al-Jawzī refused to believe that these events happened in this way. He sought to preserve ‘Awn’s dignity by alleging that he did not command the female servant to sing in front of the men, rather, to him personally, alone (*munfarid^{an}*). Nonetheless, Ibn al-Jawzī admitted that al-Mughīra’s reprimand showed that he did not approve of even that behavior.²⁰³

A second report of this event comes to us through an interesting convergence of *quṣṣāṣ* since, in addition to describing what happened between the *qāṣṣ* ‘Awn and his female servant, who also acted as a “*qāṣṣ*”, it was transmitted by another *qāṣṣ*, Thābit al-Bunānī. While his report does not say specifically that the female servant, who is named in this report, gave *qaṣaṣ*, it most likely describes the same event. According to Thābit’s recollection,

‘Awn employed a female servant named Bushrā, who recited the Qur’ān in intonation (*bi-l-alḥān*). He [‘Awn] said to her one day, “Recite to my colleagues (*iqra’ī ‘ala ikhwānī*)!” She recited with a voice of grief and sadness (*bi-ṣawt rajī’ ḥazīn*). So I [Thābit] saw them (the listeners) throwing off their turbans and crying. And he [‘Awn] said to her one day, “O Bushrā, I have given you 1000 *dīnār* because of your wonderful voice. Now go. No

200 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:442.

201 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:456; ‘Ijlī, *Ma’rifā*, 2:293; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:138–139.

202 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:89.

203 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, ed. Al-Sayyid al-Jumaylī (Beirut, 1985), 297–298.

one owns you but me and you are free, for the sake of God (*idhhabī fa-lā yamlīkuki ‘alayya aḥad^{um} fa-anti ḥurra^{tum} li-wajh Allāh*).”²⁰⁴

Thābit then noted that she remained in Kufa until she died.²⁰⁵

Thābit’s description of these events is much more gracious to ‘Awn and his female servant than that of al-Mughīra. Even the ostentatious display of emotion from the listeners received no explicit condemnation from him. In fact, that aspect of the story is followed by an account of ‘Awn rewarding his servant with a large sum of money and freeing her from his ownership. It may be that the positive perception conveyed by the report lay in the fact that Thābit himself was a *qāṣṣ* and was thus trying to justify the actions of the *quṣṣāṣ*. However, neither ‘Awn nor Thābit was considered to have been a charlatan, nor was their trustworthiness as scholars questioned. Consequently, it is perhaps premature to simply write this tradition off as an attempt by the *quṣṣāṣ* to validate their controversial conduct and to defend their own.

Regardless of the intent of the transmitters, both accounts affirm that *qaṣaṣ* was a performance and, according to Mughīra, the performance aspect of the practice at times crossed over into sheer folly. In both instances, though, the *qāṣṣ* was not the only performer. As was noted above, the show also featured the audience. This was, therefore, an interactive performance at its peak with both actor and observers contributing flamboyantly to the performance. The female servant gave *qaṣaṣ*, sang and recited the Qur’ān in intonation and the listeners tossed off their turbans and wept.²⁰⁶ To an outside observer, like Mughīra or, even later on, Ibn al-Jawzī, the whole scenario is that of a show, and a reprehensible one at that.

Swooning

An equally controversial practice ostensibly occurring during the *qaṣaṣ* sessions was the losing of consciousness by those in the session at the reading of the Qur’ān, i.e. swooning. Condemnations of swooning can be traced back to

²⁰⁴ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:89.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ It should be noted that reciting the Qur’ān in intonation (*alḥān al-ghinā’*) was not always condemned. ‘Aṭā’b. Abī Rabāḥ allegedly said that it was permissible and based his opinion on a tradition from the *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr who related that the Prophet David would recite while playing music and that the echo of his music and recitation would cause him to weep; see Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 3:24–25.

early Companions of the Prophet, such as ‘Ā’isha,²⁰⁷ Ibn ‘Umar²⁰⁸ and the other daughter of the first caliph, Asmā’ bt. Abī Bakr.²⁰⁹ Another Companion, Anas b. Malik, claimed that the Khawārij were the ones who fainted—an assessment appearing to be a tendentious ascription of any controversial practice to them.²¹⁰ In fact, the practice was so questionable that Ibn Sirīn believed it to be a sham. In order to determine the genuineness of the display, he proposed that the swooners “sit on a wall and the Qur’ān will be recited to them from beginning to end. If they swooned, they [would fall and] die. Then the situation will be as they said it was.”²¹¹ A more effective, although potentially fatal, test was not to be found.

The connection between the *quṣṣās* and swooning, however, is tenuous. The only report that directly connects the two comes from a certain Qays b. Jubayr al-Nahshalī, who alleged: “The swooning that occurs at the *quṣṣās* comes from Satan (*al-sa‘qa ‘inda al-quṣṣās min al-Shayṭān*).”²¹² This report, though, is problematic on two levels. First, the identity of Qays b. Jubayr is unknown—a fact that led Ibn Ḥajar, drawing from Ibn Ḥazm, to claim that he was Qays b. Jabtar.²¹³ Secondly, the earliest citation that I have been able to find of this tradition is in Ibn Abī Shayba’s (d. 235/849) *Muṣannaf* and it does not mention the *quṣṣās* simply saying: “Swooning is from Satan (*al-sa‘qa min al-Shayṭān*).”²¹⁴ The first

207 She reportedly said: “The Qur’ān is more dignified than to have men lose their minds when it is read, but as God said (*al-Qur’ān akram an tanzifa ‘anhu ‘uqūlu al-rijāl, wa lakinnahu kamā qāla Allāh*), ‘Whereat shivers the flesh of those who fear their Lord, so that their flesh and their hearts soften to the remembrance of God (al-Zumar [39]:23).” See Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, 214–215; Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Yāsir b. Ibrāhīm (Riyadh, 2000), 10:282; al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabī‘ al-abrār*, ed. ‘Abd al-Amīr Muḥannā (Beirut, 1992), 4:301; Ibshihī, *Mustaṭraf*, 1:225.

208 He said: “We fear God but do not fall down (*innanā li-nakhsha‘ Allāh wa mā nasquṭ*).” See Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ*, 10:282.

209 She was asked if the first believers (*al-salaf*) lost consciousness at the recitation of the Qur’ān and she said: “No, but they used to weep (*lā, wa-lakkinahum kānū yabkūn*).” See Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ*, 10:282.

210 Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā’il*, 215; Zamakhsharī, *Rabī‘*, 4:302. It is important to note here that the rise of the *quṣṣās* was also connected by some to the Kharijites. This issue will be addressed below in Chapter Four.

211 Ibn Baṭṭa, *al-Ibāna ‘an sharī‘at al-firqa al-nājiya*, eds. Riḍā b. Na’sān Mu’tī et al. (Riyadh, 1994), 3:200; Ibshihī, *Mustaṭraf*, 1:225.

212 Ibn Baṭṭa, *Ibāna*, 3:200; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 118; Ibshihī, *Mustaṭraf*, 1:225.

213 The orthographical similarity between Jubayr (جبیر) and Jabtar (جبتر) is obvious; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:446.

214 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7:207.

citation adding the *quşşāş* to the report is that of Ibn Baţţā (d. 387/997).²¹⁵ It remains possible, then, that this report was only later attached to the *quşşāş*.

Qaşaş Sessions

Each of these instances of misconduct shows how the performance of a *qaşaş* session might easily go awry. In the face of mounting cases of malpractice such as these, the reputation of the *quşşāş* suffered. Yet not all was lost. To be sure, if the *qāşş* effectively balanced the three skills of *‘ilm*, *lisān* and *bayān*, and kept his sessions under reasonable control, he joined the ranks of the best of the *quşşāş*, if not the best of the scholars in general, of their time, as the example of Bilāl b. Sa‘d illustrates.

The *quşşāş* of early Islam, then, seem to have existed in a constant state of flux between respectability and impropriety. As we saw in Chapter Two, this tension was manifested in reports challenging the efficacy of the *quşşāş* as religious scholars, in spite of a significant amount of evidence that a large percentage of the early *quşşāş* were well-respected scholars. And, as has been shown above, the performance aspect of a *qaşaş* session exacerbated this tension by demonstrating how admirable traits easily became detrimental when not utilized properly. All of this contributed to a very mixed view of the early *quşşāş* teetering between seeing them as conformist scholars or as innovators. As we will see now, the debate about whether the *quşşāş* were conformists or innovators incorporated a number of issues, foremost among them being the question of when *qaşaş* originated and, concomitantly, if *qaşaş* was at all a negative innovation (*bid‘a*).

215 Ibn Baţţā, *Ibāna*, 3:200.

The *Quṣṣāṣ*: Conformists or Innovators?

The textual evidence of the sayings of the *quṣṣāṣ*, the affiliations of the *quṣṣāṣ* with other religious disciplines and functions other than *qaṣaṣ* and the set of skills that the ideal *qāṣṣ* was expected to possess (*‘ilm*, *lisān* and *bayān*) give the impression that the *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period were, by and large, reputable scholars who addressed myriad topics of religious, martial and even political importance to the early Islamic community. Therefore, despite reports that are critical of the early *quṣṣāṣ*, this analysis suggests that the *quṣṣāṣ* were, in terms of their role in the early Islamic religious environment, for the most part, mainstream religious conformists. In fact, they were found throughout the religious sectors of the early community and were often respected for their contributions to it.

Yet this rather positive image differs from other reports that paint a much more negative picture of the *quṣṣāṣ*, some of which we have already encountered. The most salient of these reports fall into three groups: those that place the origins of *qaṣaṣ* among later Companions of the Prophet; those that connect it to political movements; and those that describe it as an (negative) innovation, sometimes identified by the term *bid‘a*, foisted upon the community. The first group of reports implies that *qaṣaṣ* was a late and, thus, new phenomenon that cannot be traced back to the Prophet and his *sunna*. The second group shows disapproval of *qaṣaṣ* by connecting it to the internal religio-political strife (*fitna*) and the emergence of the sectarian Khawārij, both of which hit the community hard. The last group makes of *qaṣaṣ* a (negative) innovation, with some of them going as far as describing its emergence in apocalyptic terms.

The existence of competing sentiments regarding *qaṣaṣ* and the early *quṣṣāṣ* challenges their image as reputable, conformist scholars, suggesting that they were essentially innovators—a new and destructive development in the community. Two areas are particularly relevant for distinguishing the degree of conformity versus innovation in *qaṣaṣ*; the issues of precedence and politics. As for the former category, conformity and innovation in the Islamic tradition are often presented as a product of precedence in the history of the community so that the earlier a judgment on the acceptability of a particular practice was adduced the more certain the community was of its authority. If, for example, a practice was traced to the time of the Prophet, or better yet to the Prophet himself, then its existence in later periods was defended based

upon its precedence.¹ Precedence, therefore, influenced the perception of certain phenomena as being conformist, not innovative. This sentiment seems to be operative in reports discussing the origins of *qaṣaṣ* as well as in those that describe it as *bid'a*, since the term implies that the practice had no precedent in the early community.

An additional factor relevant to the perception of the *quṣṣāṣ* as conformists or innovators relates to their political affiliations. Traditions attributing the *quṣṣāṣ*'s origins to the *fitna* and to the Khārājites as well as those seeking to limit their practice, as in the case of a tradition restricting its legitimate implementation to the *amīr* or his representative, all carry a decidedly political tone. These connect the *quṣṣāṣ* to controversial political movements in the community and intend to impart the impression that they were instruments of a destructive development in the community.

The issues of precedence and politics contributed to the emergence of contrasting views of the *quṣṣāṣ* and can be seen in the three groups of reports mentioned above and that will be analyzed below: reports about the origins of *qaṣaṣ*; reports about their connections to political developments; and reports about them as innovators. The following analysis of these three groups will begin by tracing references to the existence of *qaṣaṣ* from the time of the Prophet through the reigns of the first four caliphs. The end of this period is the *terminus ad quem* for the current chapter since, according to these reports, *qaṣaṣ* was an established practice, in religious and political terms, by then. We have no reports, for example, alleging that *qaṣaṣ* originated after this period.

Qaṣaṣ at the Time of the Prophet

The Prophet as a Qāṣṣ

In Chapter One, we encountered a few reports connecting the Prophet to *qaṣaṣ*, one being the enigmatic report of Companions of the Prophet asking him for *qaṣaṣ*, resulting in the revelation of Sūrat Yūsuf.² We also came across a report of the Prophet giving *qaṣaṣ* as an exposition of Sūrat al-Raḥmān (55):46 and discussing its meaning with the eminent Companion Abū al-Dardā'.³ Other reports claim that the Prophet gave *qaṣaṣ* while seated and surrounded by his

1 One of the more well-known illustrations of this principle is the concern raised by some compilers of the Qur'ān that they were engaging in something that the Prophet had not done; see A.T. Welch, "al-Ḳur'ān," *El2*, 5:404–405.

2 See Chapter One, 33–35.

3 See Chapter One, 23.

listeners. These last two reports are worthy of further analysis since they are relevant for dating the beginning of *qaṣaṣ*.

The account of the Prophet giving *qaṣaṣ* while standing at the pulpit and interpreting Sūrat al-Raḥmān (55):46 comes to us in multiple variants. In spite of these variants, the *qaṣaṣ* component of the report persisted and may reveal an historical kernel of truth since the *qaṣaṣ* portion of the account is incidental to the overall objective of the report. Clearly, the primary objective is to explain the existence of an alternate Qurʾānic recitation associated with the Companion Abū al-Dardāʾ and not to either affirm or deny the existence of *qaṣaṣ* at the time of the Prophet. The *qaṣaṣ* aspect of the report, therefore, is tangential to it and, by virtue of this fact, presents an easy target for excision by later redactors, especially in light of a steadily-evolving skepticism towards the *quṣṣās*, as well as the existence of alternate descriptions of the Prophet's conduct on the pulpit as "reciting" or even that he made the statement while in his house and not at the pulpit.⁴ In spite of the possibility for redaction, the *qaṣaṣ* element in the report was preserved and was still in circulation well into the late medieval period as evidenced in its inclusion in Ibn Kathīr's (d. 774/1373) commentary.⁵ Not until ʿAlī b. Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605) was the *qaṣaṣ* variant expressly glossed with "relating *ḥadīth* to the people and admonishing them (*yuḥaddithu al-nās wa-yaʿizuhum*)."⁶

Similar issues seem to apply to a second report about the Prophet giving *qaṣaṣ* from the pulpit of the mosque. According to this report, Abū Qatāda [al-Anṣārī] (d. 54/673) related that while the Prophet was giving *qaṣaṣ* a man entered and sat down.⁷ A conversation ensued between him and the Prophet ending with the Prophet declaring the legal injunction: "If you enter the mosque and [the prayer session] has already begun, then perform two *rakʿas* before you sit."⁸ As in the case of the above report about Abū al-Dardāʾ, the *qaṣaṣ* aspect of this tradition is incidental to its primary objective of elucidating the proper procedures for joining belatedly prayer sessions and therefore interpretable as historically sound. However, in this instance, only a variant

4 For a variant which describes his actions as reciting, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 1:49. For a variant which claims that the Prophet made the statement while in his house, see Ibn Fuḍayl, *Duʿāʾ*, 174.

5 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 4:280.

6 Al-Qārī al-Harawī, *Mirqāt al-mafātīḥ* (Beirut, 1992), 5:213.

7 On Abū Qatāda, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:573–574.

8 Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 3:241. A *qaṣaṣ* text from ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr alleged that even the Prophet, on at least one occasion, forgot to pray the correct number of *rakʿas*; see Chapter One, 43–44.

recorded by al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) described the Prophet as giving *qaṣaṣ* from the pulpit. Every other reference, many predating al-Ṭabarānī, makes no mention of *qaṣaṣ*.⁹ It appeared then that the *qaṣaṣ* element was inserted later. One might be tempted to attribute this insertion to later *quṣṣāṣ* seeking to justify their practice by establishing a precedent for it in the *sunna* of the Prophet; yet the *isnad* of the report contains no identifiable *qāṣṣ*. Furthermore, since *qaṣaṣ* was, by al-Ṭabarānī's time, well on its way to being widely disparaged, it seems odd that an insertion of this type went unchallenged. Nonetheless, this report is intriguing if for no other reason than being an example of how *qaṣaṣ* still apparently garnered enough support in the early to mid-fourth/tenth century to be associated with the Prophet.

A second cluster of reports alleges that the Prophet held *qaṣaṣ*-sessions, seated and surrounded by students. Ibn Abī Shayba, in a section of his *Muṣannaḥ* entitled "On going to the *quṣṣāṣ* and sitting with them, and those who did this," recorded that the Companion Aws b. Ḥudhayfa al-Thaqafī (d. 59/678) said: "We sat with the Messenger of God, and he gave *qaṣaṣ* and admonished us (*innā la-qu'ūd 'inda rusūl Allāh wa-huwa yaquṣṣu 'alaynā wa-yudhakkirunā*)."¹⁰ This report claims that the Prophet presided over teaching sessions including *qaṣaṣ* and *dhikr*. Beyond this, it provides no other information about the session, not even a context for it. However, a variant of this report does offer a context for the Prophet's *qaṣaṣ* and indicates that the primary intent of the report was for the explication of a specific legal ruling and not simply a description of those who visited the *quṣṣāṣ*.

According to this variant, the Prophet gave an order to have an enemy killed. However, upon learning that the man previously testified, "There is no god but God," the Prophet reversed his ruling, saying: "Go and leave him alone, for I was commanded to fight people until they say, "There is no god but God." If they say this, then their blood and money are off limits (*fa-idha fa'alū dhālika ḥaruma dimā'uhum wa-amwāluhum*)."¹¹

9 The citations for this tradition are numerous. See Mālik, *Muwatta'*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A'zamī (Abu Dhabi, 2004), 2:225–226; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 1:428; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 37:202; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:170, 391; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:495.

10 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:289.

11 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 6:480. The tradition can be found in many other sources. Ibn Ḥanbal cites only the longer tradition; see his *Musnad*, 26:86–88. Ibn Mājah included the tradition in his section entitled "The Book of Dissension (*fitan*): the chapter on desisting [from fighting] the one who says, "There is no god but God." See his *Sunan*, 2:1295. Obviously he considered the objective of the tradition to be the rules of engagement in dealing with unbelievers. See also Ṭahāwī, *Sharḥ*, 3:213. See also Ṭabarānī for a variant

The primary intent of this tradition, as was also true of the two previous traditions, is legal in nature—in this instance to define the parameters for opposing non-Muslims. Ibn Abī Shayba's decision to include a condensed variant as an example of the Prophet giving *qaṣaṣ* may reveal his awareness of the relevance of this secondary component in the tradition. His decision to include the report in his section on the *quṣṣāṣ* affirms the sentiment expressed above, in regard to other reports, that later compilers had no qualms associating the Prophet with *qaṣaṣ* even when, by their time, *qaṣaṣ* was evolving into a controversial practice.

The Prophet with a Qāṣṣ

Not only does it appear that the Prophet engaged in *qaṣaṣ*, he was ostensibly not the only *qāṣṣ* of his time. In a widely-spread tradition in many variants, it is said that the Prophet preferred attending a session of religious education in the mosque to freeing slaves, mentioned in text number 34 in Chapter One.¹² At times the variants clearly identify the session as a *qaṣaṣ* session. However, even in those variants not directly connecting the tradition to *qaṣaṣ*, the variant often maintained an indirect association to the practice of *qaṣaṣ*, suggesting that this component of the report may be historically reliable.

One variant unequivocally identifying the meeting as a *qaṣaṣ* session alleges that when the Prophet passed by a *qāṣṣ* in his session, the *qāṣṣ* stopped his *qaṣaṣ* in an apparent act of deference to the Prophet. The Prophet, however, commanded him to resume, saying: “Give *qaṣaṣ*, for sitting [in that *qaṣaṣ*-session] from the time of the prayer of daybreak until sunrise is preferable to me than freeing four slaves, and sitting in this place after the evening prayer until the setting of the sun is preferable to me than freeing four slaves.”¹³ This report contends unequivocally that not only was *qaṣaṣ* practiced during the time of the Prophet, it met with his definite approval.

A similar report, transmitted by the Kufan *qāṣṣ* Kurdūs, also alleges, albeit somewhat indirectly, that the session during which the Prophet spoke was a *qaṣaṣ* session. This report does not identify the type of session, merely recording that the Prophet said: “Sitting in this type of session (*la-an aq'uda fī mithli hādihā'l-majlis*),” was preferable to him.¹⁴ When Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776),

which states that the Prophet was not giving *qaṣaṣ* when he was approached with this issue, but rather was sleeping; see his *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 1:217.

12 See Chapter One, 47.

13 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 36:507; Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 8:260; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 5:382.

14 The identity of Kurdūs the *qāṣṣ* of Kufa is uncertain. Ibn Ḥanbal records two variants of the tradition. In one he is identified simply as Kurdūs and in the other he is said to be

a later transmitter named in the *isnād* of the tradition, inquired as to the specific type of that session, he was told it was a *qaṣaṣ* session.¹⁵

The initial ambiguity surrounding the identity of the session along with the presence of the *qāṣṣ* Kurdūs as the first identified transmitter of the tradition indicates that any subsequent identification of the session as a *qaṣaṣ* session betrays a pro-*qaṣaṣ* bias and was therefore a self-serving interpolation. However, the eminent *ḥadīth* scholar Shu‘ba, who criticized the *quṣṣāṣ* for their mendacity, transmitted the tradition with no apparent redaction, including both his confession of uncertainty as to the session’s identity and its subsequent identification as a *qaṣaṣ*-session.¹⁶ Here, even his opposition to the *quṣṣāṣ* did not goad him into glossing the *qaṣaṣ* element of the tradition. Shu‘ba clearly had the opportunity to redact the tradition away from *qaṣaṣ*, yet he did not seize it, preferring to be faithful to the tradition even when it contained aspects with which he may have disagreed. This also implies, for our purposes, that the *qaṣaṣ* context of the tradition continued to be understood as such, even though the text of the tradition itself did not explicitly state what type of session it was.

The persistence of the *qaṣaṣ* element in the same tradition is evident in another group of variants, most were transmitted on the authority of Anas b. Mālik; they state that the people in the session were “mentioning God” (*yadhkurūna Allāh*).¹⁷ Here again, despite the absence of any explicit mention of *qaṣaṣ* in these variants, one notes four factors that allude to *qaṣaṣ*’s lingering influence upon the tradition. First, each of the variants traced back through Anas b. Mālik was transmitted from him by *quṣṣāṣ*: Qatāda, Thābit al-Bunānī or Yazīd al-Raqāshī.¹⁸ Second, in a variant ascribe to Abū Umāma, the session is

Kurdūs b. Qays; see his *Musnad*, 25:235–237. For a discussion of the different opinions, see the Appendix # 46.

15 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 25:236–237; Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:411; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:81. Bayhaqī recorded the tradition in his *al-Sunan al-kubrā* in the section on the decorum of judges (*kitāb adab al-qāḍī*) in which he identified Kurdūs as a judge; see his *Sunan*, 10:88–89. In his *Shu‘ab*, Bayhaqī identified the session as a *majlis al-dhīkr*, see 1:410.

16 On Shu‘ba’s opposition to the *quṣṣāṣ*, see G.H.A. Juynboll, “Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥadjdjādī,” *El2*, 9:491–492.

17 For variants of this group transmitted by Anas, see Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3:324; Abū Ya‘lā, *Musnad*, 6:119, 7:128, 7:154; Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ*, 10:52–53; Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā’*, 524–525. For variants of the same report but transmitted by Abū Umāma, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 36:521–522; Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā’*, 525. For a variant from Abū Hurayra, see Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā’*, 525. These variants also differ in the number of slaves to be freed, either four or eight.

18 That the tradition was transmitted by both reputable (Qatāda and Thābit) and irreputable (Yazīd) students of Anas indicates that it was widely transmitted.

said to have included the repetition of religious phrases like “*Allāhu akbar*” and “*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*,” indicative not only of *dhikr* sessions, also found in *qaṣaṣ* sessions.¹⁹ Third, Makkī, in his decidedly anti-*qaṣaṣ* *Qūt al-qulūb*, identified the speaker of the session as ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, whom, though Makkī fails to do so, we have identified as a *qāṣṣ*.²⁰ Lastly, and most importantly, Abū Dāwūd’s decision to include this variant in his chapter on *qaṣaṣ* (*bāb fī-l-qaṣaṣ*), in spite of the lack of any reference to *qaṣaṣ* within the variant, signifies that the tradition was still well connected to *qaṣaṣ* in the third/ninth century.²¹

Still another variant, though different in its primary aim, also maintains a decidedly strong connection to *qaṣaṣ*. The famous traditionist and Qur’ān reciter Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-A‘mash (d. 148/765) transmitted this tradition.²² He reported that the people (soldiers?) of Basra (*ahl al-Baṣra*) disagreed on the topic of *qaṣaṣ* and so they asked Anas b. Mālik:

“Did the messenger of God give *qaṣaṣ*?” He replied, “The Prophet was sent with a sword and to fight, but I heard him [also] say, “Sitting with a group that mentions God (*yadhkurūna Allāh*) after the afternoon (*‘aṣr*) prayer until sunset is preferable to me than the world and all that is in it.”²³

This variant is similar to the previous variants in its emphasis on the preferability of religious sessions to the material goods of this world. It differs, however, in its overarching intent. The broader question posed here lies in a comparison of *qaṣaṣ* and *jihād*. Nevertheless, even when the tradition seemed to branch off into other domains, such as *jihād*, the elemental connection to *qaṣaṣ* persisted.

The last variant of this tradition is particularly striking since it puts forward an entirely contradictory position on the benefits of *qaṣaṣ* sessions and, consequently, may preserve remnants of the tension surrounding the legitimacy of *qaṣaṣ* that seem to have been present at the turn of the first/seventh century. When the tradition was related to the Kufan legist and traditionist ‘Āmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Sha‘bī (d.c. 103/721), he opposed it by saying: “To free a slave

19 See Chapter Two on the *quṣṣāṣ* as *mudhakkirūn*, 135–146.

20 Makkī identified the session as a *dhikr*-session; see his *Qūt*, 2:203–204. On ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa as a *qāṣṣ*, see the Appendix # 2.

21 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3:324.

22 On al-A‘mash, see C. Brockelman and C. Pellat, “al-A‘mash,” *El2*, 1:431.

23 Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 7:218; Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab*, 1:409; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 14:448; idem, *Siyar*, 9:424. Suyūṭī claims to have taken this report from Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī (d. 294/906) who transmitted it by means of a chain that went back to Anas through Yazīd al-Raqāshī, though I have not been able to locate it in any of al-Marwazī’s extant works; see Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 195. On this variant, see also Ibn Ḥajar, *Maṭālib*, 13:399.

is preferable to me than to sit with the *quṣṣāṣ* for four months (*la-an u'tiqū raqaba aḥabbu ilayya min an ajlisa ma'a al-quṣṣāṣ arba'at ashhur*).²⁴ Al-Sha'bī here boldly repudiates the tradition by completely reversing its intent, even swapping the numbers of slaves freed (one) and the months sitting with the *quṣṣāṣ* (four). Whether the attribution of this tradition to al-Sha'bī is correct is of no consequence to our discussion although the position ascribed to him here does reveal a degree of animosity that might be expected from him since, at one point in his life, he was allegedly beaten by a *qāṣṣ* and his audience in Palmyra.²⁵ For our purposes, this variant betrays, once again, that the issue of *qaṣaṣ* remained connected to this tradition and that, in the opinion of at least one reputable early Muslim scholar, this association with *qaṣaṣ* was sufficiently reprehensible to trigger in him a visceral rejection of it.

The above allows us to conclude that, when evaluated from a variety of perspectives, the tradition under discussion appears to have been unable to rid itself of its elemental link to *qaṣaṣ*. By directly identifying the session as a *qaṣaṣ* session, by naming the teacher as the Companion/*qāṣṣ* 'Abd Allāh b. Rawḥa, by Abū Dāwūd's choice to include a non-*qaṣaṣ* variant in a chapter on *qaṣaṣ* in his canonical *Sunan*, by introducing the tradition in a separate *qaṣaṣ*-context connected to *jihād* and, finally, by preserving a variant of the tradition ascribing to a distinguished Successor of the first/seventh century the polar opposite intention of the Prophetic tradition, the tradition maintained its relationship to *qaṣaṣ*. In addition, the presence of *quṣṣāṣ* in many of the *isnāds* of the tradition (those describing it as *qaṣaṣ*, in particular those identifying it as *dhikr*), suggests that the tradition was not a fabrication of later *quṣṣāṣ* attempting to justify their own controversial practices. If these *quṣṣāṣ* were truly so mendacious, we expect them to have redacted the *dhikr* elements of the tradition to *qaṣaṣ*. Indeed, the preservation of the *dhikr* components also indicates that the difference between a *dhikr* session and a *qaṣaṣ* session appears to have been minimal. While it is not possible to say definitively that the Prophet visited a *qāṣṣ*, the imprint that *qaṣaṣ* left upon this tradition seems indelible and leaves a strong impression that men who were recognized as "*quṣṣāṣ*" existed even at the time of the Prophet.²⁶

24 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:289. On al-Sha'bī, see G.H.A. Juynboll, "al-Sha'bī," *Elz*, 9:162–163.

25 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 97–98. See also the discussion of this incident in Chapter One, 30–31.

26 'Aṭhamina believed that the reports about the Prophet giving *qaṣaṣ* or sitting in *quṣṣāṣ* sessions "intended to grant legitimacy to the phenomenon of *qaṣaṣ*, which was a controversial issue in Islamic society;" see his "Qaṣaṣ," 56. This postulate is counterintuitive if *qaṣaṣ* had truly developed into a controversial issue. If this was so, then one would expect

Qaṣaṣ under the Rāshidūn Caliphs

Abū Bakr “al-Ṣiddīq”

Aside from the Prophet himself, the only leader of the Islamic community through the end of the Umayyad period, either caliph or governor, to have purportedly personally given *qaṣaṣ* was the first caliph Abū Bakr “al-Ṣiddīq”. In addition, he is the only practitioner of *qaṣaṣ* whose *qīṣaṣ* do not appear to have been drawn directly from within the Islamic community. According to a tradition recorded by Ibn Qutayba, and mentioned previously in Chapter One, Abū Bakr related *qaṣaṣ* composed from “the wisdom of the Arabs” drawn from the semi-legendary pre-Islamic orator Quss b. Sā‘ida al-Iyādī.²⁷ Yet while Quss’s sayings may not have been unequivocally Islamic, the fact that the Prophet himself, upon learning of Quss’s demise, honored him by reciting portions of one of his speeches reveals that his wisdom sayings were by no means anathema to the young community.²⁸

Not only did Abū Bakr give *qaṣaṣ*, at least one other man did likewise, either before or during his caliphate:

Abū Bakr observed a *qāṣṣ* who was droning on and he said, “If he was told to get up, pray two *raka‘as* and recite something, he would have found that boring (*rajul min āl Ḥazm qāla ‘naẓara Abū Bakr ilā qāṣṣ qad ṭawwala fa-qāla law qīla li-hādhā qum fa-ṣalli raka‘tayn iqra‘a fihima kadhā wa-kadhā la-malla dhālika*).”²⁹

a greater amount of redaction in later sources in order to remove references to *qaṣaṣ* at the time of the Prophet, especially since the phenomenon only seems to have grown more controversial with time. It seems to me that the trend would have been to delegitimize *qaṣaṣ* rather than legitimize it. The preservation of the *qaṣaṣ* element in multiple reports connecting the Prophet to it suggests that it was an active enterprise during his time.

27 Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 1:61. While Abū Bakr’s *qīṣaṣ* may be the only explicit reference to non-Islamic sources used in *qaṣaṣ*, it does not imply that stories from non-Islamic sources were not told in the community. An example of this is the famous encounter between the Prophet and Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith who claimed that he could produce stories, drawn from the Persians, of the same quality of the Prophet’s stories; see Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, 136. However, this account, and others like it, though certainly dealing with stories of non-Islamic origins, does not connect the stories to the root *qaṣṣa* and therefore lies outside the scope of the present research.

28 C. Pellat, “Quss b. Sā‘ida,” *EL*2, 5:528.

29 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:222.

Like the report about the Prophet observing a *qaṣaṣ* session, this report suggests the presence of *quṣṣāṣ* from the earliest periods of the community and implies that some form of religious instruction identified as *qaṣaṣ* existed uninterruptedly from the time of the Prophet.

Moreover, this report corroborates the importance placed on the expectation of oratorical skills in a *qāṣṣ*, as discussed in Chapter Three. Abū Bakr bemoaned the incompetence of this particular *qāṣṣ*, specifically his long-windedness and his failure to attract the attention of his audience. According to the caliph, this *qāṣṣ*, rather than possessing any particular oratory prowess, turned even religious requirements requiring no creative genius (such as prayer and recitation) into doldrums. The resulting sentiment conveyed by the report is that eloquence was expected from, and valued in, a *qāṣṣ* from the early period. Indeed, when this aspect of the report is considered in light of Abū Bakr's own interest in the wisdom sayings of Quss b. Sā'ida, the pre-Islamic eloquent orator *par excellence*, an image of the caliph as a speaker concerned with the effectiveness of oration rises from amidst the shadows.

Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb

In spite of the above traditions alleging that *qaṣaṣ* was practiced by the Prophet, Abū Bakr and others from the outset of the community, the Islamic sources preserved several traditions stating that *qaṣaṣ* did not begin until the reign of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Among the most common of these reports are those alleging that *qaṣaṣ* started with one of three men: Tamīm al-Dārī, 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr or al-Aswad b. Sarī'.³⁰ Reports about al-Aswad often specify that he was the first *qāṣṣ* in Basra and thus do not seem to apply to the question of the actual origins of *qaṣaṣ*.³¹ More numerous, however, are those claiming that either 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr or Tamīm al-Dārī was the absolute first *qāṣṣ*. Among these, the most common are those ascribing the origins of *qaṣaṣ* to Tamīm.

The reports attributing the beginnings of *qaṣaṣ* to Tamīm al-Dārī, some of which we have already encountered above, are found in many variants. Most importantly, while they allege to preserve information on the origins of *qaṣaṣ*,

30 On them see the Appendix: Tamīm # 14, 'Ubayd # 25 and al-Aswad # 16.

31 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 1:232; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:41; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2:124; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:291; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 51. See also Pedersen, "Islamic Preacher," 233; Pellat, "Kāṣṣ," *El2*, 4:733. The only early source that identified him as the first *qāṣṣ* with no statement connecting him to Basra is Ibn Qutayba's *Ma'arif*, see 557. De Goeje's edition of Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān* states that al-Aswad was the first to judge (*qaḍā*) in the mosque; but the editor notes the possibility for confusion in orthography here; see his *Futūḥ*, 346.

they do not agree on precisely when Ṭamīm began to do so. Most claim that he began giving *qaṣaṣ* in the caliphate of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb whereas others allege that he did so under ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān.³²

The most common variant of this report states that *qaṣaṣ* did not exist at the time of the Prophet, nor Abū Bakr; Tamīm, after asking ‘Umar for permission, was allowed to give *qaṣaṣ*.³³ Other variants expand upon this short report by asserting, for example, that after hearing from Tamīm that his *qaṣaṣ* consisted of Qur’ān recitation, reminding his listeners of God and admonishing them (*aqra’u ‘alayhim al-Qur’ān wa-udhakkiruhum wa-‘iḏuhum*),³⁴ ‘Umar granted him permission though somewhat reticently, warning him, while running his finger across his throat: “This [*qaṣaṣ*] is slaughtering (*al-dhabḥ*).”³⁵ The warning uttered by ‘Umar appears to be predicated on his assumption that *qaṣaṣ* was basically a form of religious education, whence the “slaughtering” mentioned in the report appears not to be connected to any other danger, like one stemming from political opposition. Whether the danger affiliated with *qaṣaṣ* was primarily self-inflicted because of some existential risk in *qaṣaṣ* or was related to some likely negative public reaction to the instruction of the *qāṣṣ* is unclear from the report.³⁶ Another variant, however, indicates that this danger was mostly external to the *qāṣṣ*, and, furthermore, inflicted on the *qāṣṣ* from the political powers. In this instance, the “slaughtering” endured by Tamīm was

32 Some reports claim that *qaṣaṣ* began with Tamīm after ‘Umar’s reign, implying that it originated in the time of ‘Uthmān: “No one gave *qaṣaṣ* during the time of the Prophet, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.” See Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:9; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 2:1235. Another report postpones its beginnings until after ‘Uthmān; see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:291.

33 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:219; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 24:489–490; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11, 12–13; Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:647; Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, ed. Ḥamdī ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Beirut, 1996), 3:10; idem, *al-Muḥjam al-kabīr*, 7:149; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifā*, 1:448; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:80; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 5:169; idem, *Quṣṣās*, 22–23; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 2:447; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 1:368; Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr*, 223.

34 This variant is from Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 66. A variant in Ibn ‘Asākir says that he will recite Qur’ān, command them to do good and forbid them from doing evil (*aqra’u ‘alayhim al-Qur’ān wa-āmuruhum bi-l-khayr wa-anhāhum ‘an al-sharr*); see his *Dimashq*, 11:80.

35 See variants of this report in Ibn Wabḥ, *Jāmi‘*, 2:665; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10, 12–13; ‘Askarī, *Awā‘il*, 1:115; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:81. There is also a variant which replaces *al-dhabḥ* with the orthographically similar *al-ribḥ*; see Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 2:447. This, however, is certainly incorrect in light of the variants which include the hand gesture accompanying the statement and the variant in ‘Askarī which contains the alternate reading of *dhabīh*.

36 The attitude attributed to ‘Umar is not significantly different from the response of some early scholars to being assigned a judgeship. See Chapter Two, 126–131.

administered by ‘Umar himself, who, having found Tamīm giving *qaṣaṣ*, beat him and said: “Morning and evening (*bukratan wa-‘ashiyya*)!”³⁷ This report, however, alleges that Tamīm was reprimanded for conducting his sessions at the wrong time, not for having taught something inappropriate or for failing to obtain the required permission. It suggests, then, that opposition to *qaṣaṣ* stemmed from shortcomings lying, strictly speaking, outside of *qaṣaṣ* as such.

The need for permission and, hence, the importance of political sanction for the *qāṣṣ* are manifested in another variant of the Tamīm report; it claims that ‘Umar, in fact, commanded Tamīm to give *qaṣaṣ*. After coming across an unknown group in the mosque and learning that they met every Saturday around a *qāṣṣ*, the caliph commanded Tamīm to take over this task.³⁸ The report suggests that, while Tamīm was not the first *qāṣṣ*, he was the first to have been specifically appointed to the position. In fact, the report insinuates that the unnamed former *qāṣṣ* had already developed a routine of meeting every Saturday—an apparent sign of some degree of perpetuity of *qaṣaṣ*.

In addition, this account is an important witness to the ruling establishment’s claim to monitor and control *qaṣaṣ*, displayed in ‘Umar’s ordering of Tamīm to take over the practice. Thus, if its attribution to ‘Umar is reliable, this account constitutes the earliest attempt of the political authorities to actively control *qaṣaṣ*.

Finally, the report hints at the possibility of separate and independent *qaṣaṣ* forums, those enjoying the permission of the political elite and those not, existing simultaneously. While ‘Umar’s command is certainly couched in language that limits *qaṣaṣ* and thus reins it in under the umbrella of governmental control, the alleged prior existence of a Saturday circle suggests that *qaṣaṣ* was in some way spontaneous and unregulated.

Contrasting those variants asserting that Tamīm began giving *qaṣaṣ* during the caliphate of ‘Umar are those alleging he did not start doing so until the caliphate of ‘Uthmān. Like those connecting Tamīm to ‘Umar, these versions can also be found in multiple variants and often contain inconsistencies between them. According to one such variant, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī claimed that *qaṣaṣ* began in the caliphate of ‘Uthmān and that the first *qāṣṣ* was Tamīm.³⁹ Mālīk b. Anas offered an explanation for why it did not begin until ‘Uthmān’s reign. He maintained that ‘Umar initially rejected Tamīm’s request, accusing him of wanting to attract attention to himself, as we saw in Chapter Three: “You

37 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:81.

38 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11.

39 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:28; al-Najm, “Qīṣaṣ,” 168; idem, *Quṣṣās*, 29–30.

only want to say, “I am Tamīm, know me!” Then, later, ‘Uthmān appointed him *qāṣṣ* in the mosque.⁴⁰ A third variant recalls the danger the *qāṣṣ* faced from the political authorities such that, when ‘Uthmān discovered that Tamīm was giving *qaṣaṣ*, he beat him, just as ‘Umar allegedly did.⁴¹ Finally, and according to a variant that reconciled the ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān variants, al-Zuhrī claimed that Tamīm, after initially being refused permission by ‘Umar, asked the caliph a second time, at the end of his reign, to give *qaṣaṣ* and ‘Umar granted him permission to do so once a week; ‘Uthmān later granted him permission to expand this to twice a week.⁴²

Three aspects of the Tamīm report are particularly relevant to our study. First, by placing Tamīm’s request in the caliphate of ‘Umar or ‘Uthmān, the tradition seeks to set the *terminus ante quem* for the emergence of *qaṣaṣ*, implying that it did not exist at the time of the Prophet and Abū Bakr. Since we have already encountered a number of traditions proposing that *qaṣaṣ* began prior to the caliphate of ‘Umar, this claim is suspect and betrays an attempt to portray *qaṣaṣ* as a later development without precedence in the *sunna* of the Prophet. Secondly, the reports reveal the danger perceived to have accompanied *qaṣaṣ*, be it either innate to the practice itself or a product of public or official reaction to the instruction, as indicated by the statement that *qaṣaṣ* is “slaughtering” or in the meting out of corporal punishment by the ruling authorities on the *qāṣṣ* if he failed to meet their expectations. Thirdly, the tradition introduces a distinctly political aspect to the management of *qaṣaṣ*. The concern expressed here for approving and controlling *qaṣaṣ* under the auspices of government authorities through granting permission to its practitioners may help explain the spread of this tradition and that in spite of other reports connecting its existence to the Prophet, Ibn Rawāḥa, Abū Bakr and other unnamed *quṣṣāṣ* prior to ‘Umar’s reign. Certainly, a tradition claiming that *qaṣaṣ* had no precedent in the practice of the Prophet or Abū Bakr and that it was initially instituted with the permission of ‘Umar could benefit the governing authorities in restraining the wanton expansion of unmonitored meetings. This type of concern over *qaṣaṣ* sessions seems to only grow with the passage of time, as will be shown in Chapter Five.

While it is possible that the Tamīm reports are fabrications intended, at least in part, to strengthen governmental control over the *quṣṣāṣ*, the other reports alleging that ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr was the first *qāṣṣ* raise a second possibility for their existence, namely that of a local, civic orientation in the evolution

40 Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:664.

41 Tamīmī, *Miḥan*, 307.

42 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11.

of *qaṣaṣ*.⁴³ Two indicators hint at this possibility. First, ‘Askarī (d.c. 400/1010), in his *Awā’il*, specifies that the two Companions, Tamīm and ‘Ubayd, were the first *quṣṣāṣ* of their respective cities.⁴⁴ Even though Askarī’s methodology was simply to record the *awā’il* traditions available to him, the fact that he specified the city to which each Companion was connected indicated awareness that reports of “the-first-*qāṣṣ*” were *apropos* of specific locales. Secondly, third/ninth century *qaṣaṣ* works on the history of Mecca and Medina highlight the beginnings of *qaṣaṣ* in their respective cities, so that Fākihī’s (d.c. 275/889) *Akhbār Makka* and Ibn Abī Khaythama’s (d. 279/892) *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn* record the report that ‘Ubayd was the first *qāṣṣ*, while Ibn Shabba’s (d. 262/876) *Akhbār al-Madīna* emphasizes that Tamīm was the first, though not to the exclusion of all references to ‘Ubayd as *qāṣṣ*.⁴⁵ Since the intent of these works was to present the merits of each city, it is not surprising that they focus upon the *qāṣṣ* who was specifically associated with that city. It is for this reason that the inclusion of a report about the Meccan ‘Ubayd as a *qāṣṣ* in Medina in Ibn Shabba’s work is of particular interest.

After recording seven variants of the Tamīm report, Ibn Shabba related a report traced back to the Meccan scholar ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d.c. 115/733) stating: “‘Umar commanded ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr to remind the people after the morning and afternoon prayers in the mosque of the Prophet in Medina and that has continued until this day.”⁴⁶ This report does not specifically identify ‘Ubayd as the first *qāṣṣ*—an honor reserved for Tamīm—though it does locate him in Medina, not Mecca. Furthermore, ‘Ubayd was described as having been involved in establishing the practice of the *qaṣaṣ* and he was commanded to give *dhikr* after the morning and afternoon prayers. A similar description of *qaṣaṣ* can be found in Fākihī’s *Akhbār Makka*, where ‘Ubayd’s *qaṣaṣ* is claimed to have been composed of remembering God (*dhikr Allāh*) and supplication (*du‘ā’*) and that it took place in the Meccan mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*) after the morning prayer. Fākihī added that ‘Ubayd was the first to engage in it.⁴⁷ It may be, then, that what ‘Umar asked ‘Ubayd to do in Medina was later

43 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24; Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:338; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma’ārif*, 557; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 1:250; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 22. Goldziher (*Studies II*, 150–152), Pedersen (“Islamic Preacher,” 217), and Pellat (“*Qāṣṣ*,” 4:733) were aware of these traditions about ‘Ubayd but did not evaluate them.

44 ‘Askarī, *Awā’il*, 2:127–128.

45 It should be noted that Ibn Abī Khaythama’s *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn* edited by Ismā’il Ḥasan Ḥusayn (Riyadh, 1997) is actually a publication of the section on Mecca from Ibn Abī Khaythama larger *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* and is not a separate work of Ibn Abī Khaythama.

46 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:13.

47 Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:338.

transferred to Mecca or was attributed to the Meccan ‘Ubayd by later sources like Fākihī. Moreover, these traditions corroborate aspects of the *modus operandi* of the first *qāṣaṣ* sessions—*dhikr* and supplication to God.

In spite of certain factors indicating that the reports, including that about al-Aswad b. Sarīf in Basra, convey a regional orientation, it is not possible, at this juncture, to explain away the existence of these competing reports concerning the first *qāṣaṣ*.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy though that both sets of reports agree that *qāṣaṣ* existed during the caliphate of ‘Umar. Other reports seem to affirm this. Ibn ‘Abbās, for example, claimed to have witnessed Tamīm giving *qāṣaṣ* during ‘Umar’s caliphate and also alleged that he and the caliph himself personally attended Tamīm’s sessions.⁴⁹ In addition, variants of both the Tamīm and ‘Ubayd reports also maintain that the caliph ‘Umar ordered each of them to give *qāṣaṣ*, thereby suggesting that the administration attempted to control the *quṣṣāṣ* from the caliphate of ‘Umar.⁵⁰

‘Umar’s connection to *qāṣaṣ* was apparently more extensive than simply his affiliation with Tamīm. In one instance, he weighed in on the legitimacy of extra-Qur’ānic *qīṣaṣ*. When the caliph discovered that a man copied the book of Daniel from the Jewish scriptures, he beat him claiming that the copyist’s actions implied the existence of “*qīṣaṣ* which are better than the Book

48 The *isnāds*, for example, do not reveal any convincing common links suggesting a later provenance for the traditions. The *isnāds* are, in fact, quite diverse. The Tamīm reports are traced back to a number of Medinan sources. For those traced to al-Sā’ib b. Yazīd al-Madanī, see Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11–12; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 24:489; Abū Zur’a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:647; Ṭabarānī *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, 3:10; idem, *al-Mu’jam al-kabīr*, 7:149; Abū Nu’aym al-Isfahānī, *Ma’rifā*, 1:448; Bayhaqī, *Shu’ab*, 2:281; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:80. For those traced to Ḥumayd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Madanī, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:80–81. For those traced to Nāfi’, see Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:12. For those traced to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10. For those traced to Mālik b. Anas, see Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi’*, 2:664; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:81. The only common link in any of these variants is Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī in the versions from al-Sā’ib and Ḥumayd, and as an initial transmitter; see Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11. Additionally, the prevalence of Medinan sources for the Tamīm traditions may further highlight its connection to the city. Moreover, there are two initial sources for the ‘Ubayd reports: the Meccan ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24) and the Basran *qāṣṣ* Thābit al-Bunānī (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 250). Both chains then proceed with Basran transmitters. Unlike the Tamīm reports which come from Medinan sources, these reports do not draw only from Meccan sources.

49 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 215; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:12; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:290. Ibn ‘Abbās and the caliph’s son ‘Abd Allāh also sat with ‘Ubayd; see Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 253.

50 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11, 13.

of God,” a position ‘Umar refuted by citing verses from Sūrat Yūsuf (12):1–3.⁵¹ He responded in a similar manner upon hearing of a group involved in religious instruction that later compilers subsumed under the overarching rubric of *qaṣaṣ*. This group was allegedly “praying for the Muslims and the ruler (*yad’ūna li-l-muslimīn wa-li-l-amīr*).” ‘Umar ordered them brought to him and whipped their leader, who retorted: “O ‘Umar, we are not that group identified in the saying, ‘Those are they who come from the east.’”⁵² While their actions seem benign, ‘Umar’s harsh response confirms that he considered them to be illegitimate. His repudiation of their practice appears to be based on religious grounds though the apocalyptic language attributed to the group’s leader may also carry political undertones. In either case, the report corroborates ‘Umar’s warning to Tamīm that *qaṣaṣ* was “slaughtering,” for these types of sessions seem to have attracted the attention, as well as the criticism, of the rulers.

‘Umar was not always portrayed as actively monitoring and controlling the *quṣṣāṣ*, though. In one instance, he seems to consider *qaṣaṣ* to be neutral in terms of its influence on the community though potentially harmful for the *qāṣṣ* because of the possibility that it engender pride. Purportedly al-Ḥārith b. Mu‘āwiya al-Kindī (no known death date) traveled from Syria seeking the caliph’s ruling on three matters, one being the legitimacy of giving *qaṣaṣ*, since the people of Syria asked him to do so (*fa-innahum arādūnī ‘alā-l-qaṣaṣ*). ‘Umar was initially hesitant to forbid him from *qaṣaṣ*, saying: “Do as you like! As if he did not want to forbid him from it.” (*fa-qāla mā shī’ta, ka-annahū kariha an yamna’ahu*).” Unsatisfied with the caliph’s response, al-Ḥārith said: “I was hoping you would give the final word on the matter (*innamā aradtu an antahiya ilā qawlika*.)” To this, ‘Umar replied:

51 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1996), 5:431.

52 Ibn Abī Shayba included this report in his *Muṣannaf* (5:290) in a section on *qaṣaṣ*, and Ibn Waḍḍāḥ surrounded it with a number of reports repudiating *qaṣaṣ*, thus insinuating that he also connected the tradition to *qaṣaṣ*; see his *Bida’*, 167. The reference in the *ḥadīth* to those “who would come from the east” appears to be a quotation of part of a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet predicted the rising of a people from the east reciting the Qur’ān though they, in fact, had renounced the faith. They are described in apocalyptic terms as a horn of Satan. Each time one horn is struck down another will rise culminating in the coming of the Antichrist (*al-Dajjāl*); see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:470, 11:542, 18:158–159. A similar but possibly separate tradition also describes the rising of the horn of Satan from the east as a *fitna* on the community; see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 8:307; 9:36; 10:224–225. For a discussion of traditions connecting the *quṣṣāṣ* to apocalyptic events, see below, 225.

I fear that if you engage in *qaṣaṣ* you will exalt yourself above them (the people). As you give more *qaṣaṣ* you will continue to feel that you are better than they, until you think that you stand in the place of Pleiades in relation to them. Then God will humble you below their feet, to the same degree, on the day of Resurrection (*akhshā ‘alayka an taquṣṣa fa-tartafi‘a ‘alayhim fi nafsika, thumma taquṣṣa fa-tartafi‘a, hattā yukhayyala ilayka annaka fawqahum bi-manzilat al-thurayyā, fa-yaḍa‘uka Allāh taḥta aqdāmihim yawm al-qiyāma bi-qadri dhālika.*)⁵³

‘Umar’s trepidation concerning *qaṣaṣ* is here described in terms of the personal danger it brought on the *qāṣṣ* and also in terms of his concern for the eternal well-being of the *qāṣṣ*. He does not warn the would-be *qāṣṣ* that he will bring on himself judgment by temporal authorities, nor even that he incited some negative reaction from his listeners. Rather, his punishment is deferred to the hereafter.

The reports connecting ‘Umar to *qaṣaṣ* do not offer a distinct or cohesive position on the value of *qaṣaṣ*. Some, like those telling of the caliph granting permission to Tamīm to give *qaṣaṣ* and claiming that he personally attended *qaṣaṣ* sessions, affirm the utility of the sessions. Others describe the potentially destructive effects of the *qāṣṣ* on himself, the community and even the ruling authorities, hence the subsequent attempts to monitor and control the practice either by warnings about the harm *qaṣaṣ* can produce or by means of corporal punishment. In any case, the reason for this variety in perceptions of the *quṣṣās* is unclear. It is possible, even, that these reports are ahistorical and the product of later generations’ back-projections, seeking either to malign or to justify the controversial practice of the *quṣṣās*. It seems more likely, though, that this miscellany signifies that we have an authentic corpus of reports preserving the complex and evolving religious milieu of the early period.

Uthmān b. ‘Affān

Explicit references to *qaṣaṣ* during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān are few. Most come in the context of reports about Tamīm al-Dārī becoming the first *qāṣṣ* during his reign, though, as we saw above, it is more probable that Tamīm began his *qaṣaṣ* activities in the caliphate of ‘Umar and that ‘Uthmān’s reign

53 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:267; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:481. See also Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:441. Al-Ḥārith was Syrian and a close Companion of Abū al-Dardā’. The sources do not agree on whether he was a Companion or a Successor; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 1:600. Ibn al-Jawzī recorded the same report though replacing al-Ḥārith with his father Mu‘āwiya; see his *Quṣṣās*, 37–38.

witnessed a continuation—or perhaps expansion—of *qaṣaṣ*, and not its genesis. Surprisingly, though, I have been able to locate only one additional reference connecting ʿUthmān personally to *qaṣaṣ*. In this instance, the eminent *faqīh* of Medina Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab, reported that when ʿUthmān passed by a *qāṣṣ*, the *qāṣṣ* read a *sajda* verse in order to coerce ʿUthmān to bow with him. ʿUthmān then purportedly gave a judgment according with the position of ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ and ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr encountered in Chapter Three: “Prostration is required only of the one who was actively listening (*al-sujūd ʿalā man istamaʿa*).” He then continued on his way without prostrating.⁵⁴ ʿUthmān’s actions apparently provided a precedent for Ibn al-Musayyab who, likewise, refused to bow when a *qāṣṣ*, who was holding a session in the mosque, read a *sajda* verse.⁵⁵

Beyond the clear objective of the report to establish guidelines concerning the obligations on those who find themselves in ear-shot of a religious session, this account corroborates the reports encountered above suggesting that even during the reigns of the first four caliphs *qaṣaṣ* was practiced openly, legitimately and with at least the tacit approval of the political leadership. Indeed, the report gives no indication whether or not the *qāṣṣ* already received direct permission from the authorities to engage in *qaṣaṣ* and, if anything, his questionable conduct suggests that the authorities resigned themselves to the existence of sessions of this ilk. In addition to this, the report describes the *qāṣṣ* as manipulative in his attempt to compel the caliph to bow with him. While previous reports indicated that *qaṣaṣ* was harmful in a variety of ways, this is the first ascription of duplicity to the *quṣṣāṣ*—a character flaw later exemplifying *quṣṣāṣ*.

The attempt to control the *quṣṣāṣ* ostensibly continued in the reign of ʿUthmān by virtue of a widely spread and well-known report citing the restriction placed upon the legitimate purveyors of *qaṣaṣ*. Although this report is not directly connected to ʿUthmān, the historical markers in it suggest that it refers to events that took place during his caliphate. This restriction is allegedly based on a Prophetic tradition found in multiple variants and is expressed in two basic forms: “The only ones who may give *qaṣaṣ* to the people are rulers, those commanded by rulers or arrogant people (*lā yaquṣṣu ʿalā al-nās illā amīr^{un} aw maʾmūr^{un} aw mukhtāl*),”⁵⁶ and “The *quṣṣāṣ* are three [kinds]: rulers, those commanded by rulers or arrogant people (*al-quṣṣāṣ thalātha: amīr^{un} aw*

54 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:344. On the *sajda*, see A. Rippin, “Sadjda,” *Elz*, 8:740.

55 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:344.

56 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 29:587.

ma'mūr^{un} aw mukhtāl^{un}).⁵⁷ The term used for the last of the three groupings differs throughout the variants—others refer to them as *murā'ibīn* (“hypocrites”), *muhtāl* (“deceivers”) or *mutakkalif* (“affectatious”). In each case, the third category characterized the *qāṣṣ* who did not enjoy official approval as some kind of fraudulent or conceited person. The tradition unmistakably argues that legitimacy was granted exclusively by the governmental authorities, and not, for example, by religious scholars or public approval.

The tradition is strikingly similar to a statement attributed to Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān restricting the giving of legal rulings to three types of people: one who knows the abrogating from the abrogated verses, an *amīr* with no fear, or a foolish fraud (*innamā yuftī fī-l-nās aḥadu thalāthaⁱⁿ rajul^{un} 'alima nāsikh al-Qur'ān min mansūkhīhi . . . amīr^{un} lā yakhāf aw aḥmaq mutakallif*).⁵⁸ Ḥudhayfa then identified the one who knows the abrogating from the abrogated verses as 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, establishing a similar hierarchy to that found in the *qaṣaṣ* tradition—ruler of the community, one appointed by the ruler leader (in this case the *amīr*) and arrogant.⁵⁹ In some sources, this tradition became conflated with the *qaṣaṣ* tradition so that Hibat Allāh b. Salāma (d. 410/1019), in his *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, claimed that Ḥudhayfa said: “Only one of three people give *qaṣaṣ* to the people: an *amīr*, his appointee, a man who knows the abrogating verses from the abrogated verses; and the fourth is a foolish fraud.”⁶⁰ The insertion of the requirement for understanding the issue of abrogation forced Ibn Salāma to create a fourth category in spite of the opening statement only mentioning three. Makkī also conflated these traditions by stating that: “Only three people give legal rulings to the people: an *amīr*, his appointee and a fraud.” He then identified the fraud (*mutakallif*) as the *qāṣṣ*.⁶¹ While these confluations may suggest a degree of confusion (Ibn Salāma) or bias (Makkī), the similarities between the traditions raise questions about their provenance, though it is not possible at this time to determine conclusively whether they are related or are indeed separate traditions.

57 Ibid., 39:394.

58 Dārimī, *Sunan*, 1:73. See also Naḥḥās, *Nāsikh*, 51; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Faqīh*, 2:331.

59 Another variant implies that there were four categories but it still maintains the general emphasis on the hierarchy of power. It lists them as the imām, the one who was appointed (*wālīⁱⁿ*), a man who knows the abrogating verses from the abrogated, or a fool and fraud. In this tradition, the one who represents the third category is also identified as 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb; see Dārimī, *Sunan*, 1:73.

60 Ibn Salāma, *Nāsikh*, 19.

61 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:141.

The variants of the *qaṣaṣ* tradition under discussion can be divided into three distinct families—those transmitted by ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb (no known death date),⁶² by ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Khawlānī (no known death date),⁶³ and ‘Awf b. Mālik (d. 73/692)⁶⁴—along with four single-chain transmissions.⁶⁵ While the *isnāds* for these variants differ significantly, the majority suggests a

- 62 I have identified this family of variants with ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb since he is the first named source in the *isnād*; see Khalīfa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:725; Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:239; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:115–120; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:175; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 5:173. In fact, the variants claim that he received the tradition from his grandfather through his father (*‘an abīhi ‘an jaddihi*). This presented problems for later *ḥadīth* scholars since his grandfather, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh, was not a Companion of the Prophet. However, his great-grandfather, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (d.c. 63–77/682–696) had met the Prophet. As a result, some believed that *jaddihī* was a reference to his great-grandfather (Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 5:173; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:279), while others simply classified the report as *mursal*, i.e. missing the Companion link before the Prophet (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:278–280). If the initial transmitter was in fact ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr, then the geographical provenance of the tradition would be difficult to determine since he appears to have travelled extensively throughout the empire indicated in one way by the multiple traditions about his place of death—be it Ṭā‘if, Egypt, Palestine, or ‘Ajlūn in Syria.
- 63 He was allegedly from Damascus and transmitted *ḥadīth* from only two sources, Ka‘b al-Aḥbār and “a man of the Companions of the Prophet.” On him, see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 6:108; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 6:32; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:135; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38–39; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:471.
- 64 He is ‘Awf b. Mālik b. Abī ‘Awf al-Ashja‘ī. He was a Companion of the Prophet, “brother in faith” to Abū al-Dardā’, and settled in Damascus during the caliphate of Abū Bakr (11–13/632–634); see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:169, 9:404; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 22:443–444; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 4:742–743.
- 65 1. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 79. Al-Haythamī claims to have seen this tradition in Ṭabarānī’s *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr* but I was unable to locate it there; see his *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id wa-manba‘ al-fawā‘id* (Beirut, 1982), 1:190. This variant has the *isnād* of ‘Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit (d. 34/654–655) -> Abū ‘Imrān al-Anṣārī al-Shāmī (no known death date); see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:564–565.
 2. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 74–75; Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, 19:79; idem, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, 3:144. This variant has a completely Syrian *isnād* beginning with Ka‘b b. ‘Iyād al-Shāmī (no known death date); see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:418; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 3:1322; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:470.
 3. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 81; Ibn Manda, *al-Fawā‘id*, ed. Majdī al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm (Cairo, n.d.), 87. This variant is noteworthy since the first three transmitters were all *quṣṣāṣ*: Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678) -> Mujāhid b. Jabr (d.c. 100–104/718–722) -> ‘Umar b. Dharr (d. 153/770).
 4. Al-Shāshī, *Musnad*, ed. Maḥfūz al-Raḥmān Zayn Allāh (Medina, 1989), 1:147; al-Birtī, *Musnad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf*, ed. Ṣalāḥ b. ‘Āyid al-Shallāhī (Beirut, 1994), 95. This variant was transmitted by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (d. 32/652); on him, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*,

strong connection to Syria.⁶⁶ A number of variants, such as the ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb family as well as other individual chains, give only the statement restricting the *quṣṣāṣ* to three groups.⁶⁷ The remaining variants differ according to a number of factors, including the people identified in the tradition, the location of the mosque where the prohibition was given and the responses to the prohibition.

In the ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Khawlānī family of variants, the *qāṣṣ* is identified as Ka‘b al-Aḥbār. According to these traditions, when Ka‘b heard the prohibition, he stopped giving *qaṣaṣ* and indeed never resumed so doing.⁶⁸ The implication is obvious: Ka‘b, one of the preeminent *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam, engaged in *qaṣaṣ* illegitimately.⁶⁹ Furthermore, while these variants do not explicitly identify a location, the introduction of Ka‘b into the tradition immediately orients the event towards Syria.

The most numerous and diverse family of variants is that transmitted by ‘Awf b. Mālik. These variants describe ‘Awf as both the first transmitter of the

2:294, 3:115–118; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:540–541; M. Th. Houtsma and W. Montgomery Watt, “‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf,” *Elz*, 1:84.

66 See above nn. 62–64.

67 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 11:325–326; Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:410; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:9; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 2:33; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 74–75, 76–77, 79, 80; Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, 19:79; idem, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, 3:144; Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-usūl fi aḥādith al-rusūl*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Umayra (Beirut, 1992), 4:140; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 2:251.

68 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 29:587; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:8; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifat*, 6:3154; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba fi ma‘rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī (Beirut, 1996), 6:458; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīb*, 173–174.

69 This variant, however, suffers from some inconsistencies that contest its reliability. ‘Abd al-Jabbār purportedly transmitted two *ḥadīths*—our tradition and one on hell—both of which he took from an unidentified “man of the Companions of the Prophet.” However, the biographical works also allege that he transmitted *ḥadīth* from Ka‘b; see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 6:108; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 6:32; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:135; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38–39. Yet, I have not found any *ḥadīth* which connects ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Ka‘b as links in a transmission chain. Thus, it may be that Ka‘b is mentioned as a source for ‘Abd al-Jabbār simply because of his association with him in this tradition. Furthermore, the information on ‘Abd al-Jabbār in the biographical dictionaries seems to owe its existence only to these two *ḥadīths*—a possibility which should elicit at least a modicum of skepticism about his historicity. Lastly, one variant of the ‘Abd al-Jabbār family oriented the events to Damascus. This detail seems to be a conflation of the two traditions allegedly transmitted by ‘Abd al-Jabbār. The hell-fire tradition, for example, tells of a man entering the mosque in Damascus (Ibn Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh*, 4:387; Bayhaqī, *Istidrākāt al-ba‘ṭh wa-l-nushūr*, [Beirut, 1993], 497; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38–39, 68:98), and since Ka‘b is more commonly associated with Ḥimṣ, this element seems to have drifted into the tradition on the three types of *quṣṣāṣ* (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38–39).

Prophetic tradition and many claim that he personally observed Kaʿb giving *qaṣaṣ* in the mosque.⁷⁰ Moreover, they introduce a third person, a certain Ḥimyarī countryman of Kaʿb named Dhū al-Kalāʿ, who accompanied ʿAwf into

70 Nine different men transmitted this variant from Awf. Besides ʿAwf's own connection to Syria (discussed above in n. 64), five of these nine variants continued to circulate primarily in Syria.

1. The Syrian *qāṣṣ* ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Dimashqī (d. 121/738); see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:420, 422; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 69–71; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:78. On him, see the Appendix # 78.

2. The *faqīh* Sulaymān b. Yasār al-Madanī; see Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan Muḥammad Ḥasan Ismāʿīl al-Shāfiʿī (Beirut, 1999), 3:123. On him, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 12:100–105.

3. Bukayr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Madanī; see Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:666; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:394. On him, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 4:242–246.

4. Azhar b. Saʿd al-Ḥimṣī, who allegedly received the tradition from Dhū al-Kalāʿ; see Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:659–660; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:396, 428; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:266; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:62. It is unlikely, however, that Azhar heard this tradition from Dhū al-Kalāʿ since he died 92 years after Dhū al-Kalāʿ. It is more probable that Azhar, also from the clan of Dhū al-Kalāʿ, inserted his ancestor into the *isnād*; see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:464; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:62; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:105.

5. ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥimṣī (no known death date) who reportedly received the tradition from Yaḥyā b. Abī ʿAmr (d. 148/765); see Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3:323; Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, 1:59. Or ʿAwf transmitted it directly to Yaḥyā b. Abī ʿAmr; see Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 72; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:65. It is worthy of note that Yaḥyā was with Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik and, therefore, was also with ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd, another transmitter of this tradition (see # 1 above), who participated with him in the raid on Constantinople; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:380. It may be the case, then, that the tradition restricting *qaṣaṣ* to officially-sanctioned *quṣṣāṣ* was particularly relevant during campaign. In light of the use of *qaṣaṣ* in the military and the need of the military to control its inner-workings, it is not surprising that the tradition circulated in a martial context. On ʿAmr, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 22:117; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:287. At least two other *quṣṣāṣ*, Mujāhid b. Jabr and Tubayʿ, were involved in the military campaign against Constantinople; see the Appendix # 58 and # 56.

6. Kathīr b. Murra al-Ḥimṣī (d. 70–80/689–699); see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:431; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 67–68; Bazzār, *Musnad*, 7:193; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:55. On Kathīr, see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:450–451; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:466.

7. al-Azraq b. Qays al-Baṣrī (d. 105–120/723–737); see Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:76. On him, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 2:318–319; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:103–104.

8. Yazīd b. Khumayr al-Ḥimṣī (no known death date); see Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:61. On him, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:410.

9. ʿAmr b. Abī Khabīb; see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 6:327. I have not been able to identify him.

the mosque.⁷¹ While most of the variants including Dhū al-Kalāʿ identify him only as the Companion of ʿAwf and the one to whom ʿAwf first relates the prohibition, one variant reports that Dhū al-Kalāʿ defended Kaʿb, arguing that he was “the rabbi (*ḥabr*) of the community”⁷² or “among the most pious (*aṣlah*) of the people.”⁷³ In addition, besides those reports orienting the events of the tradition towards Syria during the lifetime of Kaʿb, other variants specify that it occurred while Muʿāwiya was governor of the province.⁷⁴ However, these variants also contain conflicting information about the location of the mosque, whether in Ḥims or Jerusalem.⁷⁵

Among the more important components of the variants of this tradition are those preserving the reaction to the restriction/prohibition of *qaṣaṣ*. Some variants allege that Kaʿb stopped giving *qaṣaṣ*, then resumed giving it at a later time—some claim a year later—and that he did so in obedience to an express command from Muʿāwiya.⁷⁶ This contrasts with a variant from the ʿAbd

71 Dhū al-Kalāʿ is well attested in the sources, though his exact identity is uncertain; see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:444; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb*, 2:471–474; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 2:428–430. First, he is referred to most often as simply Dhū al-Kalāʿ, the name of a South Arabian clan of Ḥimyar; see Ibn al-Kalbī, *Ġamharat an-Nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Hišām Ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī*, ed. Werner Caskel (Leiden, 1966), 11:236; Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:666. Secondly, the sources do not agree on Dhū al-Kalāʿ’ s name: Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr identified him as Abū Shuraḥbīl Ayfaʿ b. Nākūr (*Istīʿāb*, 2:471); Ibn Saʿd claimed he was Sumayfaʿ b. Ḥawshab (*Ṭabaqāt*, 9:444); and Ibn Ḥajar suggested that his name was either Asmayfaʿ or Sumayfaʿ (*Iṣāba*, 2:428–430). Lastly, in a number of the variants of this tradition, he is described as being a relative to Kaʿb al-Aḥbār—his brother (Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:65) or his cousin (Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:666; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:394)—relations which Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr apparently understood in the literal sense (*Istīʿāb*, 2:471). These designations are certainly not meant to be taken literally but are indications of a general tribal connection between Dhū al-Kalāʿ and Kaʿb since Kaʿb reportedly hailed from either Dhū Ruʿayn or Dhū al-Kalāʿ; see Ibn al-Kalbī, *Ġamharat an-Nasab*, 1:277, 11:365; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:449; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:471.

72 Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:666.

73 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:394. This sense of respect is evident in another variant which appended the traditional *duʿāʿ* formula of “may God be pleased with them” to Kaʿb as well as to ʿAwf and Dhū al-Kalāʿ; see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 6:327.

74 Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:659–660; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:266; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:76.

75 For Ḥims; see Ibn Wahb, *Jāmiʿ* 2:659–660, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:431; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:8. For Jerusalem=*bayt al-maqdis*; see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:394.

76 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:266; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:76. A separate transmission of the tradition from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf also contains Muʿāwiya’s command to Kaʿb to resume giving *qaṣaṣ*; see Shāshī, *Musnad*, 1:147; Birtī, *Musnad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf*, 95.

al-Jabbār al-Khawlānī family claiming that Kaʿb never resumed giving *qaṣaṣ*.⁷⁷ Lastly, in the most unusual variant of the tradition, Kaʿb challenged ʿAwf about the reliability of the tradition from the Prophet. When ʿAwf insisted that he actually heard it from the Prophet, Kaʿb defiantly justified his practice, saying: “I am neither an *amīr*, a *maʾmūr*, nor a *mukhtāl*!”⁷⁸

The multiple variants of the tradition are important for the information they supply regarding the location of the event, the objective of the tradition and the duration of the restriction. There can be little doubt, for instance, that the tradition occurred in Syria and continued to circulate there. This is attested both in the *matns* and the *isnāds* of the tradition. It appears that the re-location of the center of power in Damascus under Muʿāwiya and his Umayyad successors heightened the importance of a tradition calling for the subsumation of a religious practice—one which had already enjoyed an historical connection to political and martial developments in the region—under the control of political authorities.⁷⁹

Likewise, it is clear that the primary objective of the tradition was to restrict the activities of the *quṣṣāṣ* by insisting that only the political authorities possessed the right to authorize them. Evidently, the *quṣṣāṣ*, for reasons undisclosed in the tradition, attracted the attention of the political leaders and became a potential target for censorship. Indeed, if Kaʿb, one of the most famous and preeminent *quṣṣāṣ* of the region and possibly of his time, was forbidden to give *qaṣaṣ* because he had not been directly appointed by the appropriate political authority to do so, all other *quṣṣāṣ* likely followed suit. Yet Kaʿb, declaring openly that he believed the tradition to have been a fabrication, asserted that he did nothing wrong by giving *qaṣaṣ* without the authorities’ explicit permission.

Kaʿb’s refusal to be pigeonholed into one of the three categories of *quṣṣāṣ* shows that he believed that *qaṣaṣ* could be practiced independently, meaning without the permission of the ruling authorities, and yet remain legitimate, meaning without bearing the stigma of conceit or fraud. A similar sentiment can be found in traditions we encountered above. When the Prophet, for example, visited a *qāṣṣ*, the *qāṣṣ* halted his *qaṣaṣ* in deference to the Prophet and only

77 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 29:587; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:8; Abū Nuʿaym, *Maʾrifa*, 6:3154; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 6:458; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 173–174.

78 Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, 1:59.

79 As has already been discussed in Chapter One, *qaṣaṣ* was a tool of the Islamic armies in inciting the soldiers to fight. Many of the references to its use in this capacity focused on its role in the conquest of Syria. The attempt of Muʿāwiya to control *qaṣaṣ* will be discussed in Chapter Five.

resumed his *qaṣaṣ* upon the encouragement of the Prophet.⁸⁰ The existence of the session and the Prophet's affirmation of it seem to indicate that the *qāṣṣ* was acting spontaneously yet still legitimately. Similarly, Umar's initial refusal to make a value judgment about *qaṣaṣ*, despite a direct request for a ruling on its legitimacy, suggests that *qaṣaṣ* was done without official permission and without censure; the caliph told him: "Do as you like."⁸¹ His only warning was that the practice brought with it dangers for the practitioner. In tandem, these reports insinuated that Ka'b may have perceived of his involvement in *qaṣaṣ* as an extension of the independent yet legitimate practice of *qaṣaṣ* affirmed by the Prophet and continued under his successors. Later, as *qaṣaṣ* began to draw to itself the attention of the political authorities, a development that seems to have begun under 'Umar and to have expanded under subsequent caliphs, it was met with attempts by those authorities to curtail its spontaneity and to restrict the contexts of its legitimacy.

Lastly, the fact that some variants assert that the ban on *qaṣaṣ* was temporary may imply that the restriction was intended to achieve a certain short-term objective connected to the activities of the *quṣṣāṣ*. Indeed, after being told that he should stop giving *qaṣaṣ*, Ka'b was commanded, in some variants, by Mu'āwiya to resume *qaṣaṣ* in the following year—thereby conferring upon him the category of *ma'mūr*!

One must add that Ka'b seems to have enjoyed a longstanding and close relationship with both 'Uthmān b. 'Affān and his governor over Syria Mu'āwiya. This suggests that Ka'b himself was not the target of the restriction. He was a strong supporter of 'Uthmān, defending the Caliph in the face of rebukes from the influential Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and, in return, being defended by the Caliph when Abū Dharr allegedly struck him with his staff and said: "Son of the Jewess, what are you doing here? By God, you will learn from me, or I shall do violence to you!"⁸² And Ka'b extended his support for 'Uthmān to another Umayyad, Mu'āwiya. During the caliphate of 'Uthmān, Ka'b, in response to a poet who allegedly declared 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb the next caliph, asserted that Mu'āwiya would succeed him.⁸³ In addition, Mu'āwiya praised Ka'b, placing him among the *'ulamā'* of the community: "Is it not [the case] that Abū al-Dardā' is one of the *ḥukamā'*, and 'Amr b. al-'Aṣ is one of the *ḥukamā'*, and

80 See the discussion of this report above, 194.

81 See the discussion of this report above, 205.

82 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2860–2861 (translation taken from R. Stephen Humphreys, *The History of al-Ṭabarī XV: The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*, [Albany, NY, 1990] 15:67).

83 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2946–2947.

Ka'b al-Aḥbār one of the *'ulamā'*?⁸⁴ In fact, Mu'āwiya apparently harbored no principled opposition to the *quṣṣāṣ* in general since he allegedly visited them as part of his daily routine after praying the morning prayer (*fajr*).⁸⁵ These reports convey a strong and cordial relationship between Ka'b and at least two major ruling authorities, and it is this relationship that makes sense of the variant that depicts Ka'b as surprised by the restriction and hence willing to challenge the authenticity of the Prophetic tradition in the first place.

It may be noteworthy to recall at this juncture the famous story of the tension between Mu'āwiya and Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī discussed in Chapter One. If Abū Dharr's criticism of Mu'āwiya was expressed through *qaṣaṣ*, as the Shī'ite scholar al-Majlisī claimed, then were restrictions placed upon *qaṣaṣ*, through a (fabricated?) Prophetic tradition, meant to limit political dissent in Syria during that period of tension between the famous Companion and the governor? If so, this may explain those variants telling of restrictions on *qaṣaṣ* and then the permission to resume *qaṣaṣ*—once the political threat exemplified by Abū Dharr was removed, Mu'āwiya felt free to reinstate Ka'b, the leading *qāṣṣ* of the province, now as a *ma'mūr*, and thus a legitimate *qāṣṣ*, in compliance with the Prophetic tradition.

The tension that seems to have existed between the *quṣṣāṣ* and the political elite is evident even in Mu'āwiya's future relationship with Ka'b's countryman, Dhū al-Kalā', whom we have encountered above. At the battle of Ṣiffīn, Dhū al-Kalā' supported Mu'āwiya and allegedly even engaged in the *qaṣaṣ*-like practice of preaching to the people and inciting them to warfare in defense of his cause (*wa-huwa al-ladhī khaṭaba al-nās wa-ḥarraḍahum 'alā al-qitāl*).⁸⁶ Yet in spite of this support, Mu'āwiya did not trust Dhū al-Kalā' because of the latter's belief that 'Alī was innocent of the murder of 'Uthmān. Therefore, it is reported that the governor was pleased when he learned that Dhū al-Kalā' was killed at Ṣiffīn.⁸⁷

Each of these incidents suggests that by the governorship of Mu'āwiya over Syria (c. 25–40/646–661), *qaṣaṣ* sessions were becoming increasingly politicized. This development accounts for the expansion of reports seeking to restrict *qaṣaṣ*, as well as for the existence of another strain of reports justifying and supporting the independent, yet legitimate, practice of *qaṣaṣ* in the

84 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:471.

85 Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 3:220.

86 Ibn al-Imād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadhārāt al-dhahab fī khabar man dhahab*, eds. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā'ūt and Maḥmūd al-Arnā'ūt (Damascus, 1986–1993), 1:46. This tradition shows the overlap between *qaṣaṣ* and *khaṭaba* as mentioned in Chapter Three.

87 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 2:472.

community—a sentiment accounting for Ka‘b’s insistence that the restriction enjoyed no foundation in a Prophetic tradition in the first place.

‘Alī b. Abī Tālib

Even though attempts by the political authorities to rein in the *quṣṣās* were evident prior to the reign of ‘Alī, the politicization of *qaṣaṣ* may not have reached official status until the struggle between ‘Alī, the fourth caliph, and Mu‘āwiya. In a tradition transmitted by the ardently pro-‘Alid Egyptian scholar ‘Abd Allāh b. Lahī‘a (d. 174/790) from Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (53–128/672–746), recorded only in Maqrīzī’s *Khīṭaṭ*: “‘Alī invoked God and cursed those who were fighting him. Mu‘āwiya learned of this and commanded a man to give *qaṣaṣ* after the morning (*al-ṣubḥ*) and evening (*al-maghrib*) prayers, praying for him and for the Syrians. Yazīd said, ‘And this was the beginning of *qaṣaṣ*.’”⁸⁸ This report not only claims to tell of the beginnings of *qaṣaṣ*, it also clearly alleges that *qaṣaṣ* was a political activity from its inception.

According to Ibn Lahī‘a, *qaṣaṣ* was, first and foremost, an exercise in the political manipulation of religious rhetoric. In fact, Ibn Lahī‘a’s own interest in stories of the genre of *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, as indicated by his preservation of a papyrus copy of Wahb b. Munabbih’s *Ḥadīth Dāwūd*, suggests that he harbored no principled opposition to the religious stories occasionally associated with the *quṣṣās*.⁸⁹ As a result, it seems that, in this case, Ibn Lahī‘a may have associated *qaṣaṣ* more with political movements than with religious traditions. In fact, since we have already encountered a number of traditions tracing religious *qaṣaṣ* back to the Prophet, it is clear that this tradition must address only the use of *qaṣaṣ* as a political tool and, therefore, as ‘Athamina has correctly noted, “Mu‘āwiya, in fact, did not invent *qaṣaṣ*. . . . What he did do, though, was to utilize an existing phenomenon in order to promote his own political aims.”⁹⁰

Another famous Egyptian scholar Layth b. Sa‘d (d. 175/791) interpreted Mu‘āwiya’s use of *qaṣaṣ* in this way as a marked development in the nature of *qaṣaṣ*. He alleged that this new development indicated a partitioning of *qaṣaṣ* into two manifestations, what he calls *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma* and *qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa*. He identified *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma* as signifying a situation in which, “a group of

88 Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4/1:28; ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 66. A second report claims that ‘Alī would “mention” (*dhakara*) in his cursing Mu‘āwiya first, then ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, then Abū al-‘Awar al-Sulamī, then Abū Mūsā; see Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4/1:28.

89 R.G. Khoury noted that Ibn Lahī‘a preserved a papyrus copy of Wahb b. Munabbih’s *Ḥadīth Dāwūd* which is extant today and which he has called “the oldest of its kind in Islam,” see “Wahb b. Munabbih,” *EL*2, 34–35. Khoury published this in his *Wahb b. Munabbih*, 34–115.

90 ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 65.

people congregate around a *qāṣṣ* who admonishes them and reminds them [of God] (*fa-ammā qāṣṣ al-‘amma fa-huwa al-ladhī yajtami‘u ilayhi al-naḥar^u min al-nās ya‘izuhum wa-yudhakkiruhum*).” He surprisingly claims that these sessions were “reprehensible (*makrūh*)” for both the practitioner and the listener (*fa-dhālika makrūh li-man fa‘alahu wa-li-man istama‘ahu*). *Qāṣṣ al-khāṣṣa*, on the other hand, was:

That which Mu‘āwīya instituted and over which he appointed an agent. When this agent had completed the morning prayer, he sat and mentioned God, praised Him, glorified Him, prayed for the Prophet, supplicated for the Caliph, for the people who give him their allegiance, for his retinue and for his soldiers, and cursed the caliph’s opponents and the unbelievers, all without exception (*fa-huwa al-ladhī ja‘alahu Mu‘āwīya: wallā rajal^{an} ‘alā al-qāṣṣ, fa-idhā sallama min ṣalāt al-ṣubḥ, jalasa wa-dhakara Allāh-‘azza wa-jalla- wa-ḥamidahu wa-majjadahu, wa-ṣallā ‘alā al-nabī, wa-da‘ā li-l-khalīfa wa-li-ahli walāyatihī wa-li-ḥashamihi wa-junūdihi, wa-da‘ā ‘alā ahli ḥarbihi wa-‘alā al-mushrikīn kāffat^{an}*).⁹¹

Layth b. Sa‘d’s description of the two forums of *qāṣṣ* indicates, without doubt, that *qāṣṣ al-khāṣṣa* was politically oriented while *qāṣṣ al-‘amma* was religiously oriented. In fact, Layth’s report implies that *qāṣṣ al-khāṣṣa* was the newer phenomenon implemented by Mu‘āwīya, whose decision to politicize *qāṣṣ* made this expression of it “an official institution from all standpoints.”⁹² The original *qāṣṣ* appears to be that forum Layth described as *qāṣṣ al-‘amma*, emphasizing the religious practices of admonition and calling people to be cognizant of God. Those who practiced this form of *qāṣṣ* seem to engage in it of their own accord with no explicit involvement, either in support of the session or in opposition to it, from the political authorities. According to the report, then, the essential difference between the two forums was two-fold: content and authority.

Qāṣṣ al-khāṣṣa existed to advance the cause of the political authorities by praying for its members and cursing their enemies. While this *qāṣṣ* session utilized religious terminology, it served political objectives. In fact, even though this may have been the moment *qāṣṣ* was “institutionalized,” drawing from ‘Athamina’s observation, it may not have been the only time, nor the first time, *qāṣṣ* was used to advance a religio-political ideology if we accept the authenticity of the report of Abū Dharr using *qāṣṣ* against Mu‘āwīya and

91 Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4/1:28.

92 ‘Athamina, “Qāṣṣ,” 69.

‘Uthmān. Furthermore, we have already noted examples of *qashaṣ* based in martial contexts promoting the cause of the army. Consequently, *qashaṣ al-khāṣṣa*, here, is certainly meant to describe “political” or “official” *qashaṣ*.⁹³

Qashaṣ al-‘amma, on the other hand, describes that form of *qashaṣ* we encountered often in this chapter, and which appears to have been around since the time of the Prophet. It was a religious session. However, as we noted above, even these sessions apparently required sanction from the political authorities, as indicated in Tamīm al-Dārī seeking permission to give *qashaṣ* teaching Qur’ān and admonishing the people. Furthermore, as we saw above, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb commanded ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr “to remind the people after the morning and afternoon prayer in the Prophet’s mosque in Medina,” establishing a routine that met at the time of Layth’s *qashaṣ al-khāṣṣa* sessions yet corresponded in conduct more with the *qashaṣ al-‘amma* sessions.⁹⁴ Therefore, when Layth’s report is juxtaposed with other reports about *qashaṣ* the distinctions between *khāṣṣa* and *‘amma* posited by it seem out of place.

It must be emphasized, also, that Layth’s report does not describe two equally reputable sessions, one of which just happens to be more political in orientation. In fact, among the more surprising aspects of the report is the harsh judgment that *qashaṣ al-‘amma*, composed of admonition and remembering God, is “reprehensible” (*makrūh*). Since the statement in general is clearly political in tone and context, this depiction merits interpretation as an expression of the extent of political influence over the *qashaṣ* sessions. Thus, from a political standpoint, any teacher not co-opted by the authorities posed a threat to the administration and thus his sessions were classifiable as “reprehensible.”

The above reports suggest that *qashaṣ* became a controversial political tool during the struggle between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya. The controversy surrounding *qashaṣ*, however, was not a product of its political use alone. The caliph ‘Alī also purportedly evaluated the *quṣṣās* of his time based on religious merits. In one instance, ‘Alī is said to have tested the knowledge of a *qāṣṣ* by asking him about what promotes and destroys faith. When the *qāṣṣ* answered with “piety and greed,” respectively, ‘Alī lauded him, saying: “Give *qashaṣ*, for those like you should give *qashaṣ* (*quṣṣa fa-mithluka yaquṣṣu*).”⁹⁵ (Indeed, seven *quṣṣās*

93 ‘Athamina translated *khāṣṣa* with “official;” see his “Qashaṣ,” 69.

94 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:13.

95 Wakī‘, *Quḍāt*, 2:196; Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilya*, 4:148–149; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 25; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 193. Ibn Kathīr identified the *qāṣṣ* as Nawf al-Bakkālī (*Bidāya*, 9:24) while Makkī claimed it was al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, though he did not use the verb *qashaṣa* but, rather, *takallama* (*Qūt*, 2:339). Ibn Taymiyya, however, refuted the report that it was al-Ḥasan, claiming that ‘Alī never met al-Ḥasan; see his *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, 13:244.

were ostensibly either supporters of ‘Alī or at least transmitted from him: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Amra; ‘Uqba b. ‘Amr; Abū al-Aḥwaṣ; Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī; Sa‘īd b. Jubayr; Kurdūs; Abū Yahyā al-‘Araj.)⁹⁶ As we saw in Chapter Three, ‘Alī also insisted that a *qāṣṣ* know the difference between the abrogating and abrogated verses (*al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*) and reproved one *qāṣṣ* who did not by telling him that he harmed both himself and the community by his ignorance (*halakta wa-ahlakta*).⁹⁷ This *qāṣṣ* was one of those who gave *qaṣaṣ* only to be known; ‘Alī said of him: “This one is saying, “Know me!”⁹⁸

‘Alī not only censured specific *quṣṣās*, he also allegedly denounced them all outright. After he beat a man for giving *qaṣaṣ* in the mosque of Kufa, the *qāṣṣ* asked why he treated him so harshly when he was essentially raising supplications to God and recalling His majesty (*rajul^{un} yad’u ilā Allāh wa-yudhakkiruhu bi-‘azīm*). ‘Alī replied: “I heard my close friend (*khalīlī*) Abū al-Qāsim say: ‘There will come to my community a group called the *quṣṣās*. As long as they continue to conduct their sessions, their deeds will not be accepted by God (*lā yurfa‘u la-hum ‘amal^{un} ilā Allāh mā kānū fī majālisihim tilka*).’⁹⁹ This censure, allegedly based on a tradition from the Prophet (Abū al-Qāsim), was absolute and made no distinctions between types of *qaṣaṣ*. However, its influence in the community was minimal in light of the many *quṣṣās* of the early period, and, indeed, the report was located in a work on negative innovations, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ’s *Kitāb al-bida’*.

96 On them, see the Appendix: Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Amra (# 15), ‘Uqba b. ‘Amr (# 17), Abū al-Aḥwaṣ (# 26), Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (# 27), Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (# 40), Kurdūs (# 46) and Abū Yahyā al-‘Araj (# 49).

97 This tradition comes in many sources and variants; see Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi’*, 2:662–663; Ibn Sallām, *Nāsikh*, 4; Abū Khaythama al-Nasā‘ī, *al-‘Ilm*, 31; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290; Muḥāsibī, *Fahm al-Qur‘ān*, 327; al-Ḥarbī, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, ed. Sulaymān Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-‘Āyid (Mecca, 1985), 3:1044; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 82; Naḥḥās, *Nāsikh*, 49; Bayḥaqī, *Sunan*, 10:117; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Faqīh*, 1:244; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh*, 29. Some variants do not describe the man confronted by ‘Alī as a *qāṣṣ*. Al-Naḥḥās recorded variants that identify him as “a man scaring the people (*rajul^{un} yukhawwifu al-nās*),” or “a man admonishing the people (*rajul^{un} yudhakkiru al-nās*).” See his *Nāsikh*, 47–49. In Ibn Ḥazm and Bayḥaqī, the editors have opted for *qāḍī* rather than *qāṣṣ*—a reading which is suspect in light of the many sources which identify him as a *qāṣṣ*; see Ibn Ḥazm, *Nāsikh*, 5–6; Bayḥaqī, *Madkhal*, 177–179; idem, *Sunan*, 10:117. Furthermore, the same variant of the report which Ibn Ḥazm used to identify the man as a *qāḍī* was used by Ibn Bashkuwāl to identify him as a *qāṣṣ*; see his *Ghawāmiḍ*, 4:257–259. One variant which does identify him as a *qāṣṣ* also claims that he was relating *ḥadīth* (*rajul^{un} muḥaddith*) so that ‘Alī forbade him from relating *ḥadīth* (*lā tuḥaddith*); see Naḥḥās, *Nāsikh*, 52; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh*, 30.

98 Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi’*, 2:663. See the discussion in Chapter Three, 179–180.

99 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida’*, 165.

Qaṣaṣ and Religio-political Movements

The *quṣṣās*'s ever-increasing associations with the political movements of the time were expressed in other traditions connecting their rise to either the *fitna* or the Khawārij. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb alleged: "No one gave *qaṣaṣ* in the time of the Prophet, nor Abū Bakr, nor 'Umar, nor 'Uthmān. *Qaṣaṣ* came at the time of the *fitna*,"¹⁰⁰ or, more specifically, "[*Qaṣaṣ*] is something that appeared after the murder of 'Uthmān."¹⁰¹ A later report extends its beginnings beyond the caliphate of 'Alī.¹⁰² Another tradition, transmitted by Ibn 'Umar's famous *mawlā*, Nāfi', elaborated upon the association between *qaṣaṣ* and the *fitna* by specifically implicating Mu'āwiya, a lightning rod for sectarian and politically motivated traditions, as the impetus for its emergence: "*Qīṣaṣ* were not told in the time of the Prophet, nor Abū Bakr, nor 'Umar. Verily *qaṣaṣ* is a new phenomenon Mu'āwiya brought about at the time of the *fitna*."¹⁰³ These traditions clearly intend to describe an evolution in *qaṣaṣ* in the political sphere and therefore, like the strikingly similar reports that claim that *qaṣaṣ* began with Tamīm al-Dārī, are not to be understood as an attestation of the origins of *qaṣaṣ*.

Similar conclusions may be drawn about a report attributed to the famous Successor Muḥammad b. Sirīn (d. 110/728) who attributed the origins of *qaṣaṣ* to the rise of the Khawārij. When he was asked about the sessions of the *quṣṣās*, he replied: "I neither command you nor forbid you to join them. *Qaṣaṣ* is a new phenomenon (*al-qaṣaṣ amr muḥdath*). A group of the Khawārij began it."¹⁰⁴ Although Ibn Sirīn began with a rather neutral position toward the *quṣṣās*, his description of *qaṣaṣ* as a new development and, worse yet, as a creation of the Khawārij reveals a more critical attitude toward them. While this reference to the Khawārij is interpretable as an allusion to their political and sectarian history, Ibn al-Jawzī interpreted this report in distinctly religious terms saying: "The Ḥarūriyya [meaning the Khawārij] were so engrossed in *qaṣaṣ* that it

100 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290; Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Bida'*, 168; Ibn Hibbān, *Ṣaḥīh*, 14:156. For a similar version but without an *isnād*, see Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:196.

101 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *ʿIlal*, 2:326; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, 2:101.

102 Ibn Shihī, *Mustaṭraf*, 1:225.

103 It has the following *isnād*: Ishāq b. 'Abd Allāh from 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar from Nāfi' and others of the people of religious knowledge (*wa-ghayrihi min ahl al-'ilm*); see Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11; Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr*, 184.

104 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7:264; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 23, 127; Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr*, 196–197, 222–223. Ibn al-Jawzī's version uses an alternate name for the Khawārij, al-Ḥarūriyya, drawn from the name of the village, Ḥarūrā', to which the Khawārij withdrew after the battle of Ṣiffīn. See G. Levi Della Vida, "Khāridjites," *EL*, 4:1074b.

distracted them from the study of the Qurʾān and from attempting to understand it; they preferred, rather, their own personal opinions. It was for this reason that they were censured.”¹⁰⁵ Ibn al-Jawzī connects the Khawārij with the *quṣṣāṣ* on the basis that each purportedly neglected the study of Qurʾān. This accusation seems rather odd considering that both groups allegedly established themselves on devotion to the Qurʾān and its exposition; the Khawārij appealed to the Qurʾān as their only authority, indicated in their famous motto, “Judgment belongs to God alone” (*la ḥukma illā li-llāh*), while the *quṣṣāṣ* were affiliated with Qurʾān interpretation from at least the time of Tamīm al-Dārī who allegedly told the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb that his *qaṣaṣ* consisted of teaching the Qurʾān.¹⁰⁶ Clearly, therefore, the report is tendentious and intends to marginalize simultaneously the Khawārij and the *quṣṣāṣ*.

Qaṣaṣ as an Innovation

The traditions mentioned above associate *qaṣaṣ* with new divisions in the community (*fitna*) or with religio-political movements (the Khawārij), along with those reports alleging that *qaṣaṣ* did not begin until later in the period of the first four caliphs, particularly with Tamīm al-Dārī, all convey one clear message: *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣāṣ* were a new and suspect development in the community. This sentiment, in fact, appears to have been rather wide-spread such that the sources contain a number of reports depicting the emergence of the *quṣṣāṣ* as an innovation. These reports, which we will analyze currently, are almost unanimously critical of them and classify them as *bidʿa*, i.e. a new and essentially negative innovation, or as simply a new and dubious phenomenon that arose after the death of the Prophet.¹⁰⁷ On the one hand, these traditions seem to have significantly, if not inordinately, influenced the reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ* as untrustworthy and disreputable—an image at contrast with the biographical information on many individual *quṣṣāṣ* of the early period. On the

105 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 128 (translation taken from Swartz, 211).

106 For a discussion of the Khawārij appeal to and use of the Qurʾān in their ideology see W. Qāḍī, “The Limitations of Qurʾānic Usage in Early Arabic Poetry: The Example of a Khārijite Poem,” in *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. W. Heinrichs and G. Schoeler (Beirut/Stuttgart, 1994), 162–181; Watt, *Formative*, 14; G. Levi Della Vida, “Khārijites,” *EL* 2, 4:1074b. For the tradition about Tamīm al-Dārī teaching the Qurʾān in his *qaṣaṣ* session, see Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Mudhakkir*, 66; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashaq*, 11:80.

107 While *bidʿa* is generally interpreted as a negative innovation, at times it was used for beneficial developments in the community; see J. Robson, “Bidʿa,” *EL* 2, 1:1199.

other hand, these same traditions indicate that perceptions of the *quṣṣāṣ* were varied and that the negative image of the *quṣṣāṣ* was discernible even in the early period.

The possibility that new practices or beliefs (*bidaʿ*) were introduced in the sessions of the *quṣṣāṣ* was purportedly a concern of some of the earliest Companions of the Prophet. Ibn ʿAbbās, for example, counseled the reputable *qāṣṣ* and scholar ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr to compose his *qaṣaṣ* around the beneficial practices of recitation of the Qurʾān and recalling God (*utlu kitāb Allāh yā Ibn ʿUmayr wa-udhkur dhikr Allāh*), both appearing to have been core practices at the early *qaṣaṣ* sessions, and to avoid *bidaʿ*.¹⁰⁸ The report does not inform us, however, of what “*bidaʿ*” looked like.

According to a report about Ibn Masʿūd, the repetition of *dhikr* phrases (which we encountered above as a rather common criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ*), was one form of *bidʿa* allegedly practiced in *qaṣaṣ* sessions. He ostensibly reprimanded a certain Kufan *qāṣṣ* named ʿAmr b. Zurāra for encouraging such repetitions; he said: “Oh ʿAmr, you have either begun an innovation that will lead people astray or you are more correct than the Messenger of God and his Companions.”¹⁰⁹ While the message of the report is clear, the circumstances surrounding it suggest that its interpretation may be more complicated.

The earliest citations of the report were found in ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf* and Ibn Waḍḍāḥ’s *Bidaʿ*.¹¹⁰ Unlike Ṭabarānī, these both identified the *qāṣṣ* as the reputable Kufan scholar ʿAmr b. ʿUtba. They differ, however, with each other on a number of points. ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s variant alleges that after Ibn Masʿūd reprimanded them for *bidʿa*, one of the attendees challenged the distinguished Companion by claiming that they neither engaged in *bidʿa* nor did they consider themselves better than the Companions of Prophet. Then ʿAmr, in submission to Ibn Masʿūd, asked God’s forgiveness for his actions (*astaghfiru Allāh, yā Ibn Masʿūd, wa atūbu ilayhi*). Ibn Masʿūd appears to have then acquiesced by allowing the session to remain in the mosque although they were told to assemble with another group formed before them.¹¹¹ According to this variant, the group was defiant in the face of Ibn Masʿūd’s rebuke and the *qāṣṣ* turned the situation against the Companion.

108 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bidaʿ*, 175.

109 Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 9:128, 137. See other variants in ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:221–222; Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bidaʿ*, 160; Shāṭibī, *Iʿtiṣām*, 2:28; Ibn Ḥajar, *Maṭālib*, 12:518.

110 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:221–222; Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bidaʿ*, 160.

111 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:221. ʿAbd al-Razzāq lists another variant in which Ibn Masʿūd reprimanded a *qāṣṣ* repeating *dhikr* phrases while leading his congregation to the wilderness; see his *Muṣannaf*, 3:222.

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's variant paints a different picture and betrays the intent of his work to expose and disparage *bid'a*. It alleges that Ibn Mas'ūd had a history of antagonism with 'Amr and his followers; he purportedly ordered a mosque that they had built on the outskirts of Kufa torn down. He then came across the group gathered in the mosque of Kufa repeating *dhikr* phrases and rebuked them for that. In response, 'Amr asked God for forgiveness (*nastaghfiru Allāh thalāth marrāt*). Then, like in the 'Abd al-Razzāq variant, Ibn Mas'ūd was confronted by a member of the group who alleged that they were doing nothing wrong. Yet, unlike the 'Abd al-Razzāq variant, Ibn Mas'ūd stood firm on his accusation repeating it and insisting that what they were doing was leading them astray.

The Ibn Waḍḍāḥ variant consistently maintains that Ibn Mas'ūd was justified in his rebuke and that the group was engaged in incorrect practices. The 'Abd al-Razzāq variant, on the other hand, offers a more complex narrative suggesting that Ibn Mas'ūd was compelled to alter his initially harsh evaluation of the *qaṣaṣ* session and leaves the impression that the session was not so bad after all. It is clear that 'Abd al-Razzāq's variant did not serve the purposes of the subject of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's work, and, thus, the unforgiving image of the *quṣṣāṣ* found in his *Kitāb al-bida'* may be the product of the objective of his work.

Similar biases seem evident in transmissions of a tradition attributed to the *qāṣṣ* Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī. According to two late and predominantly anti-*qaṣaṣ* works, Ibn al-Ḥājj's *Madkhal* and Suyūṭī's *Tahdhīr al-khawāṣṣ*, Abū Idrīs said: "I would rather see in the mosque a fire raging than to see a *qāṣṣ* giving *qaṣaṣ* (*la-an arā fi-l-masjid nār^{an} ta'ajjaju aḥabbu ilayya min an arā fi nāḥiyatihi qāṣṣ^{an} yaquṣṣu*)."¹¹² Earlier citations, however, make no mention of *qaṣaṣ*, instead having the *qāṣṣ* Abū Idrīs say: "I would rather see in the mosque a fire raging than to see an innovation not being corrected (*la-an arā fi-l-masjid nār^{an} ta'ajjaju aḥabbu ilayya min an arā bid'a la tughayyar*)."¹¹³ By apparently substituting "innovation" for "*qāṣṣ*," Ibn al-Ḥājj and Suyūṭī equated *qaṣaṣ* with *bid'a*.

Not only do the variants of the Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī report call into question its relevance to the *quṣṣāṣ*, the fact that Abū Idrīs himself was a *qāṣṣ* and

112 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal* (Beirut, 1981), 2:145; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 200, 213.

113 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Sunna*, ed. Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Sālim al-Qaḥṭānī (al-Dammam, 1986), 1:339; al-Marwazī, *al-Sunna*, ed. Sālim b. Aḥmad al-Salafī (Beirut, 1988), 29; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:168, 66:120. It is noteworthy that one variant recorded in Ibn 'Asākir claims that Abū Idrīs's concern over *bid'a* was directed in particular towards the issue of *qadar*; see his *Dimashq*, 66:120.

is portrayed as censuring a practice he sometimes engaged in seems curious. A similar impression obtains from a report about the famous *qāṣṣ* Thābit al-Bunānī. While standing at the door of a mosque in Basra using his toothbrush, Thābit noticed a *qāṣṣ* holding a session inside. He rebuked the *qāṣṣ* telling him that the use of the toothbrush, a practice of the Prophet, was preferable to the *qāṣṣ*'s practice that he labeled as *bid'a*.¹¹⁴ The report is problematic both for having a known *qāṣṣ* challenge *qaṣaṣ* as *bid'a* as well as for a number of variants attributing the rebuke to other men.

In another instance, the Kufan scholar al-A'mash used the toothbrush and scolded the well-known, yet not-so-reputable *qāṣṣ*, Yazīd al-Raqāshī.¹¹⁵ According to a third example, Sufyān (b. 'Uyayna?) reported that: "A *qāṣṣ* entered the mosque of Sayyār b. Dinār/Wardān (d. 122/739) and began to give *qaṣaṣ*. Sayyār got up and stood in the doorway of the mosque using the toothbrush. The *qāṣṣ* was astonished by what he did, and Sayyār told him, "What I am doing is *sunna* and what you are doing is *bid'a*."¹¹⁶

The relative utility of *qaṣaṣ* in comparison to other practices, like using the toothbrush, is mirrored in the report attributed to the Basran *ḥadīth* scholar Mu'āwiya b. Qurra (d. 115/733) and mentioned in Chapter Three that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī preferred reciting Qur'ān, visiting the sick and participating in a funeral procession to *qaṣaṣ*.¹¹⁷ According to al-Ḥasan, these three pursuits offered religious and social value beyond what was attainable at a *qaṣaṣ* session. In a separate account, Mu'āwiya b. Qurra, in a judgment all his own, took the principle advocated by al-Ḥasan a step further alleging the *quṣṣāṣ* actively corrupted social cohesion by encouraging destructive, indeed anti-Qur'ānic behavior: "The merchant who brings me food is better than the *qāṣṣ*; God told women,

114 Baḥshal, *Tārīkh Wāsiṭ*, ed. Kūrkiṣ 'Awwād (Baghdad, 1967), 85–86; Ibn al-Ḥajj, *Madkhal*, 2:145. See also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 7:222–223; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 12:313–315; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 5:391–392.

115 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:98; al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, ed. 'Abd Allāh 'Umar al-Bārūdī (Beirut, 1998), 3:82.

116 Baḥshal, *Tārīkh Wāsiṭ*, 86. The identity of Sayyār's father is uncertain; see Baḥshal, *Tārīkh Wāsiṭ*, 85–86; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:142–143. The report in Baḥshal was transmitted by Tamīm b. al-Muntaṣar who allegedly heard it from his father who had transmitted it from Sufyān. Sufyān's identity is not specified in Baḥshal's *Tārīkh*, nor have I been able to locate information on al-Muntaṣar, the father of Tamīm. However, according to Ibn Ḥajar, Tamīm transmitted traditions from both his father and Sufyān b. 'Uyayna and therefore I have speculated that the Sufyān mentioned here is probably Ibn 'Uyayna; see his *Tahdhīb*, 1:260.

117 Sa'd b. Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 5:183; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 133; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīb*, 206. See above, Chapter Two, 144.

‘Stay in your houses (Sūrat al-Aḥzāb [33]:33)’ while the *quṣṣāṣ* command them to go out.”¹¹⁸ Indeed, he labeled the *quṣṣāṣ* in no uncertain terms as innovators; he said: “When we saw a man giving *qaṣaṣ*, we said, ‘This is a master of *bid’a* (*kunnā idhā ra’aynā al-rajul yaquṣṣu qulnā: hādhā ṣāhib bid’a*).’”¹¹⁹ Yet, in spite of his apparent antagonism toward the *quṣṣāṣ*, it is interesting to note he joined in *ḥadīth* circles with no less than three *quṣṣāṣ*: Thābit al-Bunānī, Qatāda and Maṭar al-Warrāq.¹²⁰

Other scholars of the Umayyad period maintained strong feelings against the *quṣṣāṣ*. The renowned *ḥadīth* scholar Sufyān al-Thawrī claimed that the *quṣṣāṣ* were a negative innovation and likened one *qāṣṣ* to Satan.¹²¹ In another report, Sufyān alleged that Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, an otherwise reputable scholar, was thrown out of his home by his father because he gave *qaṣaṣ*. His father reportedly rebuked him saying that his *qaṣaṣ* was a new phenomenon: “What is this that you have made up (*mā hādhā al-ladhī aḥdathta*)?!”¹²² Even when the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān threw his hat in with the *quṣṣāṣ* by establishing that they gave *qaṣaṣ* twice a day, Ghudayf b. al-Ḥarith al-Ḥimṣī, a Companion of the Prophet, reprimanded him for falling into *bid’a*.¹²³

Quṣṣāṣ and the Apocalypse

A few traditions expressed the sentiment that *qaṣaṣ* was a new and harmful development in the community, using prophetic/apocalyptic terminology. By portraying *qaṣaṣ* in these terms, these traditions not only convey the message that *qaṣaṣ* was a new phenomenon; they paint it as an ominous sign of the end of times. As a result, *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣāṣ* become more than simply a new development; they take on a devious and sinister image whose presence sparked fear in the minds of the faithful. Indeed, one *qāṣṣ*/religious teacher, whom we have already encountered above, understood the potential harm in being described in apocalyptic terms and seems to have attempted to preempt any negative associations by insisting that their sessions were not a sign of the apocalypse. When ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb beat him for holding his sessions, he replied: “O ‘Umar, we are not that group identified in the saying, ‘Those are

118 Sa’d b. Maṣūf, *Sunan*, 5:183.

119 Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Bida’*, 169.

120 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:112.

121 For the report claiming that the *quṣṣāṣ* were innovators, see Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Bida’*, 167. For the report comparing the *qāṣṣ* to Satan, see al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* (Beirut, 1985), 6:551.

122 Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Bida’*, 169.

123 See also above, 184.

they who come from the east.”¹²⁴ Three other traditions, however, warn in distinctly apocalyptic phraseology that the *quṣṣās* be shunned.

One of these warnings comes to us in a Prophetic tradition and censures the *quṣṣās* for seeking financial gain from their sessions. According to a widely-recorded tradition, the Companion of the Prophet ‘Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn (d. 53/673) claimed that he came across a *qāṣṣ* who recited the Qur’ān and then begged his listeners for alms. Upon seeing this, ‘Imrān said: “I heard the Messenger of God say, ‘He who recites the Qur’ān, let him ask God [for reward] for that, for there will come a group who will recite the Qur’ān and ask the people [for reward] for that (*man qara’a al-Qur’ān, fa-l-yas’al Allāh bihi, fa-innahu sa-yajī’u qawm^{un} yaqrū’ūna al-Qur’ān yas’alūna al-nās bihi*).”¹²⁵ This purports to be an early testament of the tendency of the *quṣṣās* toward charlatanism. The image portrayed here of the *quṣṣās* as duplicitous and seeking to line their own pockets became a common characterization of them in medieval literature; Ibn al-Jawzī records a number of such reports in his *Kitāb al-quṣṣās*.¹²⁶ For our purposes, the tradition clearly depicts, by use of the phrase, “for there is coming a group (*fa-innahu sa-yajī’u qawm^{un}*),” that the emergence of the *quṣṣās* was a fulfillment of prophecy and a sign of negative developments in the community.

A second tradition describes the *quṣṣās* as a negative phenomenon that “rose up” among the community. A second Companion of the Prophet, Ṣila b. al-Ḥārith al-Ghifārī, ostensibly told the Egyptian *qāṣṣ*/judge Sulaym b. ‘Itr al-Tujībī: “By God, we hardly left contact with our Prophet nor severed our familial relationships before you and your colleagues rose up among us (*mā taraknā ‘ahd nabīyyinā wa-lā qaṭa’nā arḥāmanā ḥattā qumta anta wa-aṣḥābuka bayna aẓhurinā*).”¹²⁷ Here, the emergence of the *quṣṣās* is described apocalyptically as a “rising up.” Furthermore, this emergence is depicted as having occurred after the passing of the Prophet, and therefore enjoyed no precedent

124 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290; Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida’*, 167. Also see above, 257–258.

125 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 6:124; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 33:167, 202; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 5:179, Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 18:167; Bayhaqī, *Shu’ab*, 2:533–534. Other variants identify the speaker as “a beggar (*sā’il*).” See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 33:146. Still other variants say he was a man reciting Sūrat Yūsuf, well-known for its association to *qaṣaṣ*; see Sa’d b. Mansūr, *Sunan*, 1:187; al-Rūyānī, *Musnad*, ed. Ayman ‘Alī Abū Yamānī (Cairo, 1995), 1:103; al-Ājurrī, *Akhlaq ahl al-Qur’ān*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Amr b. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf (Beirut, 1986), 106–107. See also ‘Uqaylī, *Du’afā’*, 2:29; Baghawī, *Sharḥ*, 4:441. Other sources indicate that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb used to say this or that the saying is to be attributed to him; see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 6:124; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās, 5:431.

126 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 121–126; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 155, 158–159.

127 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 4:125, 321; Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 232; Wakī’, *Quḍāt*, 3:221; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī’āb*, 2:739; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:277; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 3:446.

in his *sunna*, and after the establishment of new kinship ties in Islam came to be considered a serious sin in the community.¹²⁸

The third and most overtly apocalyptic tradition on the rise of the *quṣṣās* was attributed to Khabbāb b. al-Aratt, a famous early convert to Islam.¹²⁹ Upon finding his son ‘Abd Allāh visiting a *qāṣṣ*, Khabbāb beat him with a stick and said: “Has this horn risen up with the ‘Amāliqa (*a ma‘a al-‘amāliqa hadhā al-qarn qad ṭala‘a*)?”¹³⁰ Other variants elaborate on the nature of the *qāṣṣ* session by claiming that the participants were either reciting Sūrat al-Sajda (32) and weeping or were repeating *dhikr* phrases, such as “*sabbihū kadhā wa-kadhā, uḥmudū kadhā wa-kadhā, kabbirū kadhā wa-kadhā*,” as in other descriptions of *qāṣṣ* sessions encountered above.¹³¹

The apocalyptic character of this report is discernible at multiple levels. The description of the *quṣṣās* as a “horn” that has “risen up” elicits strong apocalyptic images.¹³² The ominous associations evoked by the image of the horn are amplified in one variant describing it as “the horn of Satan.”¹³³ Furthermore, the re-appropriation of an ancient people, i.e. the Amalekites, as a descriptive

128 On the sin of *qaṭ‘ al-raḥim*, “severing familial relations,” see Sūrat al-Baqara (2):27; Sūrat al-Ra‘d (13):25; Sūrat Muḥammad (47):22. The Shī‘ite scholar Muḥammad Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī devoted a chapter of his *Uṣūl min al-Kāfi* to the issue of *qaṭ‘a al-raḥim*; see the edition of ‘Alī Akbar al-Ghifārī (Beirut, 1985), 2:346–348. Ibn Qudāma records a Prophetic tradition which states that the greatest sin after *shirk* is *qaṭ‘ al-raḥim*; see his *al-Mughnī fi fiqh al-imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Beirut, 1984), 8:234.

129 On Khabbāb, see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 8:219–220; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:539; M.J. Kister, “Khabbāb b. al-Aratt,” *EL*, 4:896–897.

130 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:291. Another version in Ibn Abī Shayba’s *Muṣannaf* says: “a horn has risen from the ‘Amāliqa (*qarn qad ṭala‘a al-‘amāliqa*).” See his *Muṣannaf*, 5:290. See also Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm Ibrāhīm al-‘Azbāwī (Mecca, 1981), 2:295.

131 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida‘*, 35, 45.

132 A rising horn as an apocalyptic image is ubiquitous in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the Jewish tradition, it appears in the book of Daniel (chapters 7–8) while in the Christian tradition, it is found in the book of the Revelation (chapters 13 and 17). David Cook noted that the images found in Muslim apocalyptic writing were probably derived from the book of Revelation; see his *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 61. Cook also pointed out that the Muslims frequently called the Byzantines “horned ones” (*al-Rūm dhāt al-qurūn*) and that this image can be traced back to Jewish descriptions of their enemies; see *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 60. Wilfred Madelung has also shown that the “horn” as an Islamic apocalyptic image was used in reference to other entities, such as Rome and Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān; see his “Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ in the Umayyad Age,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* (1986), 146.

133 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida‘*, 45.

of forces at play in a contemporary event, i.e. that of the emergence of the *quṣṣāṣ*, is typical of apocalyptic literature.¹³⁴ By describing the *quṣṣāṣ* as Amalekites, the ancient enemies of the Banū Isrāʾīl, Khabbāb clearly sought to malign them as a discordant group threatening God's community.¹³⁵ In fact, he expressed criticism of *qaṣaṣ* in another tradition, alleging that the destruction of the Banū Isrāʾīl was the result of their having given *qaṣaṣ*: "The Banū Isrāʾīl perished when they gave *qaṣaṣ* (*innamā halakat Banū Isrāʾīl hīna qaṣṣū*)."¹³⁶

It is apparent, from the above analysis, that even though the *quṣṣāṣ* appear to have been active from the earliest periods of the community and to have enjoyed, at times, the support of both caliphs and respectable men of the community, like Ibn Masʿūd and Ibn ʿUmar, there was a equally strong reaction against them in some circles. Some traditions even claim to preserve critical opinions of the *quṣṣāṣ* from some of the same men who allegedly defended them. The scholar/*qāṣṣ* Ibn Masʿūd, for example, reportedly told a second and unidentified *qāṣṣ*, condescendingly: "Spread your merchandise in front of someone who wants it (*unshur sil'ataka 'alā man yurīduhā*)."¹³⁷ Ibn ʿUmar, who was known to have visited a *qāṣṣ*, namely ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr, is supposed to have called upon policemen (*al-shurṭa*) to remove a *qāṣṣ* from the mosque and beat him with a stick.¹³⁸ This incident proved valuable to later scholars who extracted from it a number of principles relevant to the *quṣṣāṣ* and to conduct

134 Cook noted the tendency in Muslim apocalyptic writings to describe Rome as Babylon and Constantinople as Tyre—a tendency drawn from earlier Christian influences; see his *Studies*, 61.

135 The term Amalekite is used in the Islamic tradition as a trope for any group of people who had opposed the people of Israel, such as the Egyptians, the Palestinians (Phillistines), and the tribes of Yemen, among others. The "Amalekites," however, were no mere mortals. They were giants who possessed adroitness for cunning and deceit. The Islamic portrayal of the "Amalekites" appears to be rooted in certain Jewish descriptions of them. According to the Jewish scriptures, the Amalekites attacked the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt (Numbers 13–14). They were noted especially for having attacked them from behind and having killed the weak stragglers. As a result, the Amalekites became the type of Israel's arch-enemy in rabbinic literature which described them as devious, treacherous and participating in witchcraft—descriptions which find parallels in the Islamic literature; compare "Amalek," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1351-amalek-amalekites>, with Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 'm-l-q. As a result, al-A'mash reportedly connected the two saying: "The Amalekites were the Khawārij (*ḥarūrīyya*) of the Banū Isrāʾīl." See Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 123; Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-lughā*, 3:190; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 6:230. See also G. Vajda, "Amālik," *Elz*, 1:429.

136 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bidaʿ*, 169; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 4:80; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 127.

137 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:291.

138 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:291; Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 314; Baghawī, *Sharḥ*, 1:304.

in the mosque. Makkī (d. 386/998), for instance, argued that Ibn ‘Umar’s expulsion of the *qāṣṣ* proves the illicitness of *qaṣaṣ* since removing someone from a session in the mosque was forbidden according to a Prophetic tradition; therefore, if *qaṣaṣ* were not incontrovertibly illegitimate, Ibn ‘Umar would never have contravened a Prophetic tradition by removing the *qāṣṣ* from the mosque.¹³⁹ Centuries later, ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Sanāmī (fl. 7–8th century/13–14th century), deduced from this tradition that complaining to the *muḥtasib*, “the promoter of public morals,” about one who creates disturbances in the mosque, beating a *qāṣṣ* with a stick, and removing a *qāṣṣ* from the mosque were all legal actions.¹⁴⁰ The distinguished scholar Maymūn b. Mihrān (d. 117/735–6) best summarized this denigration of the *quṣṣāṣ*, when he reportedly said: “The *qāṣṣ* awaits the wrath of God (*al-qāṣṣ yantaẓiru maqt Allāh*).”¹⁴¹

The Quṣṣāṣ as a Beneficial Innovation

Yet, in spite of the many critical portrayals of the *quṣṣāṣ* as a negative and destructive innovation, the Islamic community retained the *quṣṣāṣ*. Not only were they apparently around since the beginning of the community, many appear to have been reputable scholars and to have enjoyed the support of a number of leading figures in the community. Consequently, it is not surprising that, while the sources preserve a number of reports disparaging *qaṣaṣ* as a negative innovation, they also contain reports defending the efficacy of this innovation. In Basra, the *qāṣṣ* Ziyād al-Numayrī initially refused to engage in *qaṣaṣ* after having been commanded to do so by the eminent scholar Anas b. Mālīk (d.c. 91–93/709–711). He objected, saying: “How can I do that since the people insist that it is an innovation?” To this Anas replied: “If it were an innovation, I would not have commanded you to do it.” Ziyād then agreed to give *qaṣaṣ* since Anas had given him permission.¹⁴² Thus, a man who eventually developed a reputation as a less-than-reputable *qāṣṣ*, ostensibly had his own reservations about engaging in *qaṣaṣ*—an enterprise that may in fact have contributed to sully his name.¹⁴³

A later Basran scholar, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, best exemplified the difficulty of categorizing the *quṣṣāṣ*. As was mentioned above, a number of different opinions about the *quṣṣāṣ* have already been attributed to him. He responded to

139 Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:370–371.

140 Al-Sanāmī, *Niṣāb al-iḥtisāb*, ed. Mū‘il Yūsuf ‘Izz al-Dīn (Riyadh, 1982), 173.

141 Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida’*, 169. On Maymūn, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:198; F.M. Donner, “Maymūn b. Mihrān,” *EL*, 2:916–917.

142 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 17 (translation taken from Swartz, 103).

143 See his biography in the Appendix # 64.

Mu'āwiya b. Qurra's query about the *qaṣaṣ* sessions by criticizing them as less beneficial than other endeavors. However, he also purportedly praised *qaṣaṣ* even while still describing it as an innovation: "*Qaṣaṣ* is an innovation, but how wonderful is that innovation! How many a prayer is answered, request granted, companion won, and how great is the knowledge received, through it!"¹⁴⁴

Al-Ḥasan's mixed assessment of the *quṣṣāṣ* is amusingly expressed in an account of his interaction with another *qāṣṣ*, 'Abd Allāh b. Ghālib (d. 83/702), and was curiously transmitted by a third *qāṣṣ*, Qatāda. Upon finding 'Abd Allāh giving *qaṣaṣ*, al-Ḥasan said,

"Oh 'Abd Allāh, you were very hard on your colleagues." 'Abd Allāh replied, "I don't see their eyes having popped out or their backs broken. God has commanded us, Oh Ḥasan, to mention Him much and you have commanded us to mention Him little, "No, do not obey him, but prostrate and draw near (to God) (Sūrat al-'Alaq [96]:19)." Then 'Abd Allāh prostrated, and al-Ḥasan said, "I have never seen something like I saw today. I didn't know whether I should prostrate or not." (*yā 'Abd Allāh, la-qad shaqaqta 'alā aṣḥābika fa-qāla mā arā 'uyūnahum infaqa'at wa-lā arā zuhūrahūm indaqqat. Wa-Allāhu ya'murunā yā Ḥasan an nadhkarahu kathū^{an} wa-anta ta'marunā an nadhkarahu qalū^{an} "kallā lā tuṭi'hu wa-usjud wa-iqtarib" thumma sajada qāla al-Ḥasan wa-llāhi mā ra'aytu ka-l-yawm, mā adrī asjudu am lā*).¹⁴⁵

The *qāṣṣ* asserted that he upheld God's command more stringently than al-Ḥasan, leaving al-Ḥasan dumbfounded by his devotion.¹⁴⁶

The complex association between *bid'a* and the *quṣṣāṣ* as well as the opinion of the scholarly community towards each is highlighted in a conversation between 'Alī b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/849)¹⁴⁷ and Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd (d. 198/813).¹⁴⁸ After

144 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 17–18 (translation taken from Swartz, 103).

145 Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:291; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 15:420; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:118; Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawā li-l-fatāwī*, (Beirut, 2000), 1:254.

146 The sting of 'Abd Allāh's rebuke may be even more severe considering that many commentators claimed that the verse was originally revealed as a reproof of one of the arch enemies of the Prophet from the Quraysh, Abū Jahl. If this commentary of the verse was extant at the time of al-Ḥasan then the use of this verse would have connected him to Abū Jahl; see Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 3:502; Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya*, 2:153; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīh*, 4:2154; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 25:134.

147 He is 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:176–180.

148 He is Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd b. Farūkh al-Baṣrī; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:357–359.

Ibn al-Madīnī informed Yaḥyā that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī refused to transmit *ḥadīth* from anyone who was a leader in *bid‘a* (*ra’s fi-l-bid‘a*):

Yaḥyā laughed and said, “What are you going to do with Qatāda? And what are you going to do with ‘Umar b. Dharr? And what are you going to do with Ibn Abī Rawād?” Then Yaḥyā enumerated a group that I [‘Alī b. al-Madīnī] have refrained from mentioning and said, “If ‘Abd al-Raḥman leaves out people based upon this principle, then he will leave out many (*fa-ḍaḥika Yaḥyā wa-qāla kayfa taṣna‘u bi-Qatāda wa-kayfa taṣna‘u bi-‘Umar ibn Dharr wa-kayfa taṣna‘u bi-Ibn Abī Rawād? wa-‘adda Yaḥyā qaḥm^{an} amsaktu ‘an dhikrihim qāla Yaḥyā in taraka ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ḥādḥā-l-ḍarb, taraka kathū^{an}*).”¹⁴⁹

Regardless of the authenticity of this stylized statement, it suggests that innovations were common among the religious scholars; Ibn al-Madīnī’s deliberate refusal to list the names cited implies that he sought to save reputable scholars from the stigma of *bid‘a*. Of the scholars Yaḥyā did mention, Ibn al-Madīnī listed three, two of whom, Qatāda and ‘Umar, were numbered among the *quṣṣāṣ*. The report, therefore, connects *qaṣaṣ* and *bid‘a* incidentally, portraying the resignation of the scholarly community to the existence of new innovations in the faith, as well as to the presence of *quṣṣāṣ* who, indeed, were the source for some of these new developments.

The *Quṣṣāṣ* as Conformists or Innovators

The anxiety vis-à-vis the *quṣṣāṣ* was ubiquitous. On the one hand, they were perceived as innovators. This image was propagated through reports denying *qaṣaṣ* enjoyed any precedent in the practice of the Prophet or his closest Companions, equating their manifestation with the religio-political strife of the *fitna* and the Khawārij, depicting them as forerunners of the apocalypse and, thus, describing *qaṣaṣ* as a negative innovation (*bid‘a*) jeopardizing the well-being of the community. The *quṣṣāṣ* allegedly presented a threat to religious devotion in the community as well as to the rulers. It seems that it was for this reason that a tradition seeking to limit their practice to the *amīr* or his appointed representative (*ma’mūr*) was put into circulation.

149 Mizzī, *Tahdhib*, 21:336–337. See also Ibn al-Ja’d, *Musnad*, 164; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 45:20; Mizzī, *Tahdhib*, 23:509; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:278, 9:199.

Parallel to this strong anti-*qaṣaṣ* sentiment is another image of the *quṣṣāṣ*. This image suggested that the *quṣṣāṣ* were conformist religious scholars maintaining a tradition traceable to the Prophet himself. While it may be that the reports locating the origins of *qaṣaṣ* at the time of the Prophet simply sought to justify the practice of the *quṣṣāṣ*, the strong tie between the multiple variants of these reports and *qaṣaṣ* suggests that some type of religious education identified by the early community as *qaṣaṣ* existed at the time of the Prophet. Furthermore, positive representations of the *quṣṣāṣ* can be found throughout the reigns of the first four caliphs and beyond. Some reports, while conceding that *qaṣaṣ* indeed may have been an innovation, even assert that it was a beneficial one.

These contrasting images of the *quṣṣāṣ* as either innovators or conformists reflect their evolving and diverse influence on the community. Based on the above reports, neither image seems dominant. Indeed, both images are reflected in reports purportedly connected to the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, thus insinuating that the tension surrounding *qaṣaṣ* was quite early. Precisely why this tension developed is uncertain.

In the domain of religious education, *qaṣaṣ* carried with it a number of risks. Because *qaṣaṣ* included Qurʾān recitation and commentary, *ḥadīth* transmission, encouraging the right and forbidding the wrong, as well as other religious interests, any individual *qāṣṣ* could be either innovator or conformist. However, this possibility was by no means unique to the *quṣṣāṣ*; those reports seeming to conflate the giving of *qaṣaṣ* with the giving of legal judgments seem to support this. In addition, the *qāṣṣ* drew to him the watchful eyes of the political authorities. In fact, as we have seen thus far, though only in part, the *quṣṣāṣ* found themselves embroiled in the political movements of the community—an issue to be explored in greater detail in the coming chapter—and this seems to have had a negative effect on their reputation.

Consequently, the *quṣṣāṣ* seem to resist general categorization; some were innovators and others were conformists. However, even though the impression left by these reports is that both images are equally valid, the large number of reputable *quṣṣāṣ* encountered in Chapter Two seems to suggest that the *quṣṣāṣ* of the early period were largely conformist scholars working within an evolving religio-political environment that, at times, called into question their value in the community.

The *Quṣṣāṣ* during the Umayyad Period

By the end of the caliphal reign of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the *quṣṣāṣ* were established participants in the religious and political discourse of the community. As we have seen in Chapter Four, even those reports alleging that *qaṣaṣ* was a negative innovation, not traceable to the earliest times of the community, often ascribed its origins to the time of ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and the political divisions racking their reigns. Therefore, regardless of the issues of historicity calling into question aspects of many of those traditions, the Islamic sources are unified in admitting the existence of *qaṣaṣ* and the *quṣṣāṣ* by the end of this period. This is most notably true in the report from Layth b. Sa‘d who described the political use of *qaṣaṣ* by ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya as the very origins of the enterprise.¹

My interest in this chapter lies in tracing the evolution of *qaṣaṣ* beyond the period of the first four caliphs; in particular, I am concerned with the associations between the *quṣṣāṣ* of this period and both the Umayyad administration as well as the religio-political movements that opposed the Umayyads. At times these associations were directly related to the issue of *qaṣaṣ*; either the caliph, his representative or even opponents of the Umayyads appointed them, or they maintained a special relationship with political leaders of the time, both Umayyad and non-Umayyad, specifically in their capacity as *quṣṣāṣ*.

At other times, the *quṣṣāṣ* were connected to the politically-powerful incidentally; while many of them were not appointed to their positions as *quṣṣāṣ*, they still maintained strong ties with those in power and, at times, were appointed to other positions of influence. Therefore, the extent of the *quṣṣāṣ*'s influence during the Umayyad period was not simply a result of their involvement in *qaṣaṣ*, in fact it extended into a number of other areas, some we already encountered above (such as their participation in military campaigns and their work as judges). For example, some *quṣṣāṣ* who do not seem to have been appointed to the position of *qāṣṣ* held other official positions, sometimes even spanning multiple caliphates. While other *quṣṣāṣ* held no official position in the administration, their political leanings are evident from their close affiliations with certain caliphs or by their opposition to the Umayyads. Each of these components is instrumental for developing a more comprehensive and

1 See Chapter Four, 216–218.

nanced image of the *qāṣṣ* of the period, including both his religious positions and his political connections.²

The material on the *quṣṣāṣ* in the Umayyad period presents a particular problem in terms of organization. As I noted above, the *quṣṣāṣ* in this period span the religio-political spectrum. We find them among the Umayyad administration and among opponents of the Umayyads, namely the Khawārij and the early ‘Abbāsīd rebels. As a result, two potential approaches to a discussion of the *quṣṣāṣ* during the Umayyad period appeared immediately possible in this study, either following the political attitudes reflected in the various religio-political divisions of the time or a more straightforward chronological approach based on caliphal reign. I opted for the latter. While this organizational scheme is admittedly dependent on a rather artificial periodization, since religious/intellectual movements, including that embodied by the *quṣṣāṣ*, often bridge caliphal reigns, this approach also presents advantages to our understanding of the *quṣṣāṣ* during this period. Firstly, a chronological approach allows for the analysis of the relationship between specific Umayyad administrations and the *quṣṣāṣ*. As I will show below, at times *quṣṣāṣ* are connected to a specific caliph although without clear indications about the nature of that relationship. It can be unclear, for instance, if the *qāṣṣ* in question was a private religious advisor or if he held an official position in the administration. These issues are important for our understanding of the role of the *quṣṣāṣ* in the early period as well as for our understanding of the Umayyad administration in general. Secondly, a chronological approach also allows for analyses of political attitudes of the period and the role that the *quṣṣāṣ* played in advocating for specific political viewpoints. The current chapter will explore, in fact, the role of the *quṣṣāṣ* in both pro-Umayyad and anti-Umayyad movements shedding light on the importance of *qaṣaṣ* as a political tool.

2 This approach has already been used effectively by Wadād al-Qāḍī in her analysis of the *qāṣṣ* Ma‘bad al-Ṭuruq. She showed that prior to being known as a *qāṣṣ* he had been an Umayyad security official. Her approach is particularly beneficial for our purpose because it broadens our understanding of the type of people who became *quṣṣāṣ*, including their political affiliations. See Wadād al-Qāḍī, “Security Positions under the Umayyads: The Story of ‘Ma‘bad al-Ṭuruq’,” *Differenz und Dynamik im Islam. Festschrift für Heinz Halm zum 70. Geburtstag/Difference and Dynamism in Islam. Festschrift for Heinz Halm on his 70th Birthday*, eds. Hinrich Biesterfeld and Verena Klemm (Würtzburg, 2012), 253–283.

Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41–60/661–80)

As we noted in the previous chapter, Mu'āwiya's affiliation with the *quṣṣās* can be traced back at least to his time as governor of Syria beginning in 23/644, and perhaps extends back even further than that. If our sources are accurate about the use of martial *quṣṣās* in the conquest of Syria, then it is most likely that he was familiar with this expression of the practice from the time of the conquest since he participated as a commander of the army sent to the region by Abū Bakr in 13/634.³ His associations with the *quṣṣās* continued throughout the early settlement of the region, and it appears he was personally connected to a number of these *quṣṣās*.

Possibly the most famous *qāṣṣ* of Syria during Mu'āwiya's governorship there was Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who allegedly accompanied 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb on his famous trip to Jerusalem in 16/637 and, as was mentioned in Chapter Four, continued to enjoy a positive relationship with the ruling authorities of the community, especially 'Uthmān and Mu'āwiya.⁴ In fact, the only officially sanctioned position Ka'b seems to have held was that of *qāṣṣ*—a position purportedly given to him by Mu'āwiya according to a variant of the tradition restricting the telling of *qaṣaṣ* to three types of people.⁵

Along with Ka'b, three other famous and distinguished Companions of the Prophet, all of whom, including Ka'b, died in the year 32/653, practiced *qaṣaṣ* in Syria during the governorship of Mu'āwiya. Ibn Mas'ūd reportedly gave *qaṣaṣ* every Monday and Thursday in Damascus.⁶ Abū al-Dardā', an admirer of Ka'b, was also closely connected to Mu'āwiya.⁷ Like Ka'b, Abū al-Dardā' entered Syria early and was there before and during Mu'āwiya's time as governor. His first exposure to Syria was as a martial *qāṣṣ* at the battle of al-Yarmūk.⁸ He then apparently returned to the Ḥijāz and was later dispatched again to

3 Mu'āwiya was initially sent by Abū Bakr to Syria as a commander in 13/634, was appointed governor over certain regions of Syria by 'Umar and became governor of all of Syria early in 'Uthmān's reign, around 25–26/646–647; see M. Hinds, "Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān," *EL* 2, 7:263; R. Stephen Humphreys, *Mu'āwiya Ibn Abi Sufyan* (Oxford, 2006).

4 On Ka'b's trip to Jerusalem, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2409. On his relationship with 'Uthmān and Mu'āwiya, see Chapter Four, 212–213. In spite of the generally positive impression of Ka'b's relationship to the Umayyads, it is interesting that he was ostensibly the bearer of bad news for them; he prophesied their downfall and subsequent rise of the 'Abbāsids; see Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Fitan*, 120, 206.

5 See Chapter Four, 207–216.

6 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:180.

7 Abū al-Dardā' praised Ka'b's religious knowledge; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhib*, 3:471.

8 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:93.

Syria by ‘Umar upon the request of Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān, Mu‘āwiya’s brother, for teachers of Qur’ān and *fiqh*.⁹ During Mu‘āwiya’s governorship, Abū al-Dardā’ was appointed judge of Syria and acted as Mu‘āwiya’s deputy (*khalīfa*) when the governor was away from the region.¹⁰ Yet not all the *quṣṣās* of Syria were supportive of Mu‘āwiya. As was mentioned above, the governor was also vehemently opposed by a third influential Syrian *qāṣṣ*, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī.¹¹

Opposition to Mu‘āwiya from the *quṣṣās* did not cease with the passing of Abū Dharr. As we have seen above, Mu‘āwiya used *quṣṣās* to curse the caliph ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and Layth b. Sa’d interpreted that development as the creation of two different forms of *qaṣaṣ*: *qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa* and *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma*.¹² Yet, according to a separate, and somewhat surprising, report from Yaḥyā b. Abī ‘Amr al-Shaybānī, Mu‘āwiya was not interested solely in institutionalizing *qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa* for his own political advantage; he even exerted control over *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma*, having allegedly been the first to begin the practice (*awwal man aḥdatha qaṣaṣ al-‘amma Mu‘āwiya*).¹³

Obviously the attribution of the origins of both *qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa* and *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma* to Mu‘āwiya is problematic in light of the multiple traditions, already reviewed in Chapter Four, ascribing the beginnings of *qaṣaṣ* to other individuals or movements. It appears more likely that these reports are not to be read as exclusive statements on the origins of these two forms of *qaṣaṣ*; rather, as expressions of the political establishment’s attempt to control *qaṣaṣ* and harness it to its own advantage. The ending of Shaybānī’s report ascribing the beginnings of *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma* to Mu‘āwiya allows for this interpretation by noting that:

He (Mu‘āwiya) sent for a man that he wanted to appoint over *qaṣaṣ* and the man said to him, “Allow me to do this.” And he (Mu‘āwiya) told him,

9 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 3:1229. Two of these teachers were the martial *quṣṣās* Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and Abū al-Dardā’, both of whom were also described as the *fuqahā’* of the people of Syria; see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:124. For Abū al-Dardā’’s role as a *qāṣṣ*, see the Appendix # 10. It is worth noting that this report about the sending of teachers to Syria was initially transmitted by the *qāṣṣ* Muḥammad b. Ka’b al-Qurazī.

10 The sources are not clear whether Abū al-Dardā’ was appointed judge by ‘Umar or ‘Uthmān; see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 3:286; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 3:1230; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:341. On his role as Mu‘āwiya’s deputy, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 49:139.

11 See Chapter One, 71–74; Chapter Four, 214–215; and the Appendix # 12.

12 On this issue, see Chapter Four, 216–218.

13 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10. On al-Shaybānī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:379–380.

“Stay in your house” (*fa-arsala ilā rajulⁱⁿ yurīdu an yuwalliyahu al-qaṣaṣ fa-qāla la-hu: juz lī. fa-qāla: ijlis fī baytika*).¹⁴

Apparently, although Mu‘āwiya sought this man out for the position of *qāṣṣ*, he considered him, for some unspecified reason, unfit for the position and refused to grant him permission to engage in it. The report suggests, therefore, that Mu‘āwiya was in charge of the process at every stage—nomination, vetting and appointment.

A similar sentiment is conveyed in another report according to which Mu‘āwiya, while on the pilgrimage, came across a *qāṣṣ*, a *mawlā* of Banū Makhzūm, in Mecca and said to him:

“Were you commanded to give *qaṣaṣ*?” [The *qāṣṣ*] said, “No.” “So what came over you that you gave *qaṣaṣ* without permission?” He said, “We are spreading the knowledge that God has taught us.” He said, “If I came close to you, I would cut you down a size” (*umirta bi-l-qaṣaṣ? fa-qāla lā. qāla fa-mā ḥamalaka ‘alā an taquṣṣa bi-ghayr idhan? qāla innamā nanshuru ‘ilm^{an} ‘allamanāhu Allāh qāla law taqaddamtu ilayka la-qaṭa‘tu ṭābiq^{an} minka*).¹⁵

In this encounter, Mu‘āwiya affirmed the need for permission for a *qāṣṣ* to give *qaṣaṣ*, and regarded the *qāṣṣ*’s decision to engage in *qaṣaṣ* without proper authorization as an expression of self-exaltation that warranted he be taken down a peg.

Despite the ambiguity on whether these events occurred while Mu‘āwiya was governor or caliph, it appears that his supervision over the appointment of *quṣṣāṣ*, even outside of his region of Syria, extended back to his time as governor. Sulaym b. ‘Itr, for example, was the first *qāṣṣ* of Egypt. He was appointed *qāṣṣ* in the year 39/659 and then judge in the year 40/660. Both appointments seem to have come from Mu‘āwiya, or his representative in Egypt, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, even though at the time Sulaym was appointed *qāṣṣ*, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was still Caliph.

In the year 38/658, the ‘Alid governor of Egypt Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was deposed by ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, one of Mu‘āwiya’s closest supporters.¹⁶ Thus,

14 Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:10.

15 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf* ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Wiesbaden, 1979), 4/1:45.

16 A.J. Wensinck, “‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ,” *El*2, 1:451. On ‘Amr’s relationship to Mu‘āwiya, see G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty in Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate A.D. 661–750* (Carbondale, IL, 1987), 28–29.

at the time Sulaym was appointed to the positions of *qāṣṣ* and judge, Egypt, no longer under the control of the ‘Alids, was controlled by pro-Mu‘āwiya factions. Therefore, the appointment of Sulaym as *qāṣṣ*, the first appointment of a *qāṣṣ* in Egypt, seems to substantiate other reports indicating that Mu‘āwiya attempted to monitor and manage the *quṣṣāṣ*. In fact, Sulaym’s allegiance to Mu‘āwiya and his family continued after the caliph’s death as he worked to secure the allegiance of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, son of the great general and governor of Egypt ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, for the new caliph Yazīd, Mu‘āwiya’s son.¹⁷

The *quṣṣāṣ* were found throughout Mu‘āwiya’s armies. Yazīd b. Shajara (d. 58/678), whom we have encountered above, was a military commander and trusted colleague of Mu‘āwiya, who, when sent by the governor as the leader of the pilgrimage in 39/660, acted as a martial *qāṣṣ*, inciting his soldiers against ‘Alī’s governor of Mecca, Qutham b. al-‘Abbās.¹⁸ Other men, whom the sources identified as *quṣṣāṣ*, also participated in Mu‘āwiya’s military campaigns, though not expressly as martial *quṣṣāṣ*. Tubay‘ b. ‘Āmir al-Ḥimṣī and Mujāhid b. Jabr, both of whom were allegedly *quṣṣāṣ* of a religious kind, were also active fighters, participating in the conquest of Rhodes in the year 53/673 under the command of Mu‘āwiya’s general Junāda b. Abī Umayya.¹⁹ Furthermore, another Syrian *qāṣṣ* and Companion of the Prophet, a certain Sham‘ūn, or Abū Rayḥāna al-Azdī, allegedly participated in the conquest of Damascus, took up a house in the city and then eventually moved to Jerusalem. As mentioned in Chapter One, Sham‘ūn related a *qiṣṣa* of ten activities forbidden by the Prophet that may reflect his military background.²⁰ Sham‘ūn’s biography, in fact, reveals that he spent much of his life in the military and a portion of it stationed on the border of the Islamic lands (*murābit^m*), in the garrison town of Mayyāfāriqīn in the Jazīra near the Upper Tigris River.²¹ It seems clear that his participation in the conquests and the border raids with the Byzantines were the impetus for his relating *qaṣaṣ* of the conquests (*qaṣaṣ al-maghāzī*).²²

17 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 235; Wakī‘, *Quḍāt*, 3:224; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 72:278; Jūda, “Qaṣaṣ,” 117.

18 Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 119; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:3448; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1997), 2:726–727. For a discussion of Yazīd’s *qiṣṣa* and the confusion that seems to have accompanied its analysis in later sources, see Chapter One, 60–64.

19 On Tubay‘ at Rhodes, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:163; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 4:317. On Mujāhid at Rhodes, see Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 279.

20 See Chapter One, 41–42.

21 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:203.

22 Dhahabī, *al-Kāshif fī ma‘rifat man la-hu rawāya fī-l-kutub al-sitta*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Awāma (Jidda, 1992), 1:490.

Shamʿūn's experience mirrored that of many of his colleagues from the ranks of the *quṣṣāṣ*, such as Abū al-Dardā', Yazīd b. Shajara, Tubay' b. ʿĀmir and Mujāhid b. Jabr. While there is no indication that these men were explicitly assigned to a position as a *qāṣṣ* by Muʿāwīya, they clearly maintained a close relationship with his administration. Their connection to various official positions in Muʿāwīya's administration suggests that the *quṣṣāṣ* of this period were composed of men of diverse abilities who exerted their influence in the judiciary and the military of the empire.

Of equal, if not greater, importance is Muʿāwīya's effect on the *quṣṣāṣ*. While he was neither the first caliph to grant governmental permission to give *qaṣaṣ*, an honor which seems to have gone to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, he was allegedly the first to utilize the *quṣṣāṣ* for his own political advantage and thus presumably recognized the importance of using and controlling the *quṣṣāṣ*. One way he used the *quṣṣāṣ* to his advantage came in the wake of his conflict with ʿAlī. After the death of ʿAlī, Muʿāwīya traveled with his Syrian forces to Iraq where he confronted and eventually made peace with ʿAlī's son al-Ḥasan at Maskin.²³ There Muʿāwīya set up his *quṣṣāṣ* in al-Ukhnūniyya, an area that eventually became an administrative district of Baghdād, and instructed them incite the people of Syria to advocate for his cause.²⁴ His use of the *quṣṣāṣ* in this manner is clearly in line with reports that were analyzed in Chapter One of the use of martial *quṣṣāṣ*.

It is apparent that the *quṣṣāṣ* played a role in Muʿāwīya's political and military activities. He used them specifically as martial *quṣṣāṣ*, such as the *quṣṣāṣ* at al-Ukhnūniyya. He utilized them in important positions in his administration, such as Abū al-Dardā' as his judge and deputy as well as Yazīd b. Shajara as the one he selected to lead the pilgrimage. And finally, he even enjoyed the support of influential scholars-*quṣṣāṣ* within the ranks of his armies, such as Tubay' b. ʿĀmir, Mujāhid b. Jabr and Shamʿūn Abū Rayḥāna. Yet, while these reports suggest that Muʿāwīya utilized the *quṣṣāṣ* to his political and military advantage, this does not negate the possibility that he found real personal benefit from them. Indeed he allegedly profited from them enough to make visiting their sessions part of his daily routine: "It was the practice of Muʿāwīya that he pray morning and night, five times a day. After he prayed the morning prayer, he sat with a *qāṣṣ* until he completed his *qaṣaṣ*. Then he entered and read his portion

23 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:2–9.

24 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, 1:208; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 59:150; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 3:146. On al-Ukhnūniyya, see Yāqūt b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, (Beirut, 1955), 1:125.

[of the Qurʾān].”²⁵ It seems that even when he retreated in al-Jābiya, he visited with a *qāṣṣ*.²⁶ Thus, Muʿāwiya presents a model of the emerging and complex relationship between the *quṣṣāṣ* and Umayyads. It is perhaps for this reason, as has been mentioned above, that Muʿāwiya’s name became connected with the establishment of a form of *qaṣaṣ* whose express intent was presumably to serve the interests of the Umayyads (*qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa*), as well as with the beginning of a form of *qaṣaṣ* that appears to have emphasized the relatively politically innocuous practice of religious education (*qaṣaṣ al-ʿamma*), although these traditions attributing the origins of both types of *qaṣaṣ* to Muʿāwiya have certainly overstated his role in their emergence.

The Counter-caliphate of ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (c. 63–72/682–91)

By the end of Muʿāwiya’s caliphate, it was clear that *quṣṣāṣ* were being used as valuable resources in the internecine strife in the community and were also found in anti-Umayyad circles, such as in support of the counter caliph ʿAbd Allāh b. Zubayr. Within just a few years after the death of Muʿāwiya and towards the latter part of the caliphate of Muʿāwiya’s son, Yazīd (r. 60–4/680–3), ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr declared himself caliph and exerted his control over Mecca; he maintained his hegemony in the Ḥijāz until 72/691 when he was defeated and killed by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf.²⁷ During his counter-caliphate spanning the reigns of four Umayyad caliphs (Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya [r. 60–4/680–3], Muʿāwiya b. Yazīd [r. 64/683], Marwān b. al-Ḥakam [r. 64–5/684–5 and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān [r. 65–86/685–705]), Ibn al-Zubayr, like Muʿāwiya and ʿAlī before him, utilized *quṣṣāṣ*, in particular the famous ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr (d. 68/687). According to Mujāhid b. Jabr, a *qāṣṣ* in his own right, ʿUbayd was

25 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 3:220.

26 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dīmaṣḡ*, 68:128. It is unclear from the text whether Muʿāwiya brought the *qāṣṣ* with him or if he met him in al-Jābiya where he and his entourage listened to him. The text initially says that the *qāṣṣ* was in a delegation visiting Muʿāwiya (*wafada ʿalā Muʿāwiya*) which would suggest that he did not accompany the caliph to al-Jābiya. Then the transmitter of the report describes the connection to the *qāṣṣ* in a way which could be understood either that the *qāṣṣ* was part of their entourage or that he only met Muʿāwiya in al-Jābiya: *kunnā maʿa Muʿāwiya bi-l-Jābiya . . . wa-fīnā rajul^{un} yaquṣṣu ʿalaynā min ahl al-Urdunn*. In either case, the report indicates that even when vacationing Muʿāwiya would visit with *quṣṣāṣ*.

27 H.A.R. Gibb, “ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr,” *EI2*, 1:54–55.

“the *qāṣṣ* of Ibn al-Zubayr.”²⁸ Unfortunately, the sources are unclear as to when ‘Ubayd held this position. Since ‘Ubayd died in 68/687 and seems to have spent his whole life in Mecca, he must have been Ibn al-Zubayr’s *qāṣṣ* some time between 63/682 and 68/687, a time period that spans the reigns of all four Umayyad caliphs who ruled while Ibn al-Zubayr controlled the Ḥijāz.²⁹

‘Ubayd, however, was not the only *qāṣṣ* present in Ibn al-Zubayr’s Mecca. Mujāhid b. Jabr, whom we have already encountered as a soldier in Junāda b. Abī ‘Umayya’s campaign on Rhodes during the caliphate of Mu‘āwiya, returned to Mecca and was in the city in 64/683 when Ibn al-Zubayr razed the Ka‘ba.³⁰ Even though Mujāhid was in Mecca at that time, it is unclear whether or not he supported Ibn al-Zubayr, and hence whether his *qaṣaṣ* activities were somehow connected with Ibn al-Zubayr and his cause.

Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (r. 64–5/684–5)

The emergence of Ibn al-Zubayr in the Ḥijāz coincided with the death of Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd and the succession struggles that ensued. These developments contributed to what has commonly been referred to as the second *fitna* of the community. This struggle over succession culminated in the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (64/684), near Damascus, pitting the forces of the eventual victor and next caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam against those of the counter-caliph Ibn al-Zubayr, led in Syria by al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays (d. 64/684). According to the Syrian scholar Yaḥyā b. Abī ‘Amr al-Shaybanī (d. 148/765), cousin of the famous *ḥadīth* scholar al-Awzā‘ī (d. 157/774), these internecine conflicts left the members of the community three basic choices: alignment with the ruling authorities, alignment with the opposition, or neutrality.³¹ In this starkly divided

28 Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 253. Mujāhid numbered ‘Ubayd among the scholars that the Meccans were especially proud of: “We are proud of four people: our *faqīh* Ibn ‘Abbās, our *mu‘adhdhin* Abū Maḥdhūra, our Qur’ān reciter ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Sā‘ib and our *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr.” See Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:7; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:290; Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:340; Fasawī, *Ma‘rifa*, 2:14.

29 The nature of ‘Ubayd’s relationship with Ibn al-Zubayr is not entirely clear. One report expresses some form of doubt about his allegiance to the counter-caliph; Ibn al-Zubayr, apparently concerned about his support, asked ‘Ubayd: “What is your opinion of us, Oh ‘Ubayd (*ra‘aytanā yā ‘Ubayd*)?” See Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkīyyīn*, 248.

30 Mujāhid claimed to have seen inside the Ka‘ba when Ibn al-Zubayr demolished it; see Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 1:92. Ibn al-Zubayr demolished the Ka‘ba in 64/683; see Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 254, 261; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:537.

31 On Yaḥyā b. Abī ‘Amr al-Shaybanī/al-Saybānī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:379–380.

environment, the Syrian *qāṣṣ* and *faqīh* Rabīʿa b. ʿAmr exemplified those who sided with the opposition. Yaḥyā b. Abī ʿAmr al-Shaybānī said:

When the *fitna* occurred, the people said, “We shall look at this group: whatever they do, we shall imitate.” [They were] Yazīd b. al-Aswad al-Jurashī, Ibn Nimrān and Rabīʿa b. ʿAmr al-Jurashī. Yazīd headed to the coast. Rabīʿa b. ʿAmr joined al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Fihri and so he was killed.³² Ibn Nimrān joined Marwān and so he was unharmed³³ (*lammā waqaʿat al-fitna qāla al-nās, nanzuru ilā hāʾulāʾil-nafar, fa-mā šanaʿū iqtadaynā bihim: Yazīd b. al-Aswad al-Jurashī wa Ibn Nimrān wa Rabīʿa b. ʿAmr al-Jurashī. fa-laḥiqa Yazīd b. al-Aswad bi-l-sāḥil, wa kāna Rabīʿa b. ʿAmr maʿa al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Fihri fa-qutila wa kāna Ibn Nimrān maʿa Marwān fa-salima*).³⁴

According to Yaḥyā, Yazīd b. al-Aswad al-Jurashī represented the group that sought to avoid the conflict altogether; he did so by fleeing to the coast.³⁵ Yazīd b. Nimrān, alternatively, symbolized those who supported Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, the victors at Marj Rāhiṭ. Rabīʿa, as a result, exemplified those who, by opposing the Umayyads, chose the last option; they found themselves on the losing side and suffered the fatal consequences of their choice.

Rabīʿa was not the only *qāṣṣ*, however, who was associated with an opposition movement against the eponymous founder of the Marwānid Umayyads. Before Marwan’s death in the year 65/685, his forces confronted the rebellion

32 On Rabīʿa, see the Appendix # 21.

33 Ibn Nimrān is Yazīd b. Nimrān, though he is also known by the orthographically similar Yazīd b. Ghazwān; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:431.

34 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:281; Fasawī, *Maʿrifa*, 2:283–284; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:431.

35 The implication in the passage is that Yazīd took a third path of avoidance or neutrality in this conflict. His relationship with al-Ḍaḥḥāk, however, appears to have been complex. Fasawī recorded a report which states that when al-Ḍaḥḥāk was ruling over Damascus the region was struck with a drought and the pro-Zubayrid governor compelled Yazīd to pray for rain. After praying for rain for the ruler, Yazīd then offered a private, though apparently audible, prayer, saying, “O God, he has made me famous (drawn attention to me?), so free me from him (*allāhumma innahu qad shahharanī, fa-arihanī minhu*) and within a week al-Ḍaḥḥāk killed him.” See Fasawī, *Maʿrifa*, 2:380–381. While al-Shaybānī’s report implies that he avoided the struggle, this second report claims that he eventually found himself on al-Ḍaḥḥāk’s bad side and was executed. Even this account, however, is problematic since Ibn Saʿd records a similar account in which Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān, of whom al-Ḍaḥḥāk was a keen follower, was the one who called al-Ḍaḥḥāk to pray for rain and in which there is no mention of Yazīd being killed; see his *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:448.

of the pro-ʿAlid Sulaymān b. Ṣurad at the battle of ʿAyn al-Warda (65/685) in Iraq.³⁶ Among Sulaymān's forces were three *quṣṣāṣ*: Rifāʿa b. Shaddād, Sukhayr b. Ḥudhayfa and Abū al-Juwayriyya al-ʿAbdī.³⁷ As we saw in Chapter One, Sulaymān's *quṣṣāṣ* were martial *quṣṣāṣ*, and Ṭabarī even recorded a martial *qaṣaṣ* saying given by Sukhayr.³⁸ This does not mean, however, that their role in Sulaymān's rebellion was simply to incite the soldiers to fight. In fact, each was a leader in the cause and, moreover, a leader on the battlefield. Sukhayr applied the exhortation he delivered to his soldiers to fight by personally leading his soldiers in a charge to their deaths. Rifāʿa's involvement in the religio-politico-martial movements of the early community extended from his vigorous support of ʿAlī at Ṣiffīn, to his role as general and *qāṣṣ* in Sulaymān b. Ṣurad's rebellion, to his initial participation in al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī's rebellion and, finally, to his abandonment of al-Mukhtār and eventual death in the battle of Jabbānat al-Sabīʿ, fighting against al-Mukhtār.³⁹

ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705)

When Yaḥyā b. Abī ʿAmr al-Shaybānī described the potential responses to the second *fitna*, he offered three choices: pro-government, opposition, or neutrality. During the caliphate of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, *quṣṣāṣ* adopted various gradations of these positions; some supported the Umayyads, others supported various opposition groups to the Umayyads, one converted from an opposition supporter to an Umayyad supporter and one attempted to remain neutral in the strife plaguing the community.

36 On Sulaymān's rebellion, see E. Kohlberg, "Sulaymān b. Ṣurad," *El2*, 9:826.

37 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:559–560.

38 Ibid. Also see Chapter One, 64–65.

39 At Ṣiffīn, ʿAlī appointed Rifāʿa leader of his tribe of Bajila; see Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Ṣiffīn*, 205; Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 195; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akḥbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. ʿIṣām Muḥammad al-Ḥājj ʿAlī (Beirut, 2001), 252–253. In 51/671, he supported the ʿAlid Ḥujr b. ʿAdī against Ziyād b. Abīhi; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:127. When the issue of arbitration at Ṣiffīn arose, he defended ʿAlī's cause and exhorted the ʿAlids to not submit to arbitration; see Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Ṣiffīn*, 448. In the rebellion of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad, he was one of the four commanders of the rebel army and acted as a martial *qāṣṣ* and even led the retreat of the remainder of Sulaymān's defeated army; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:552, 559–560, 567–568. Upon hearing of Rifāʿa's valiant leadership at ʿAyn al-Warda, al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī recruited him to his cause; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 2:599–600. Rifāʿa eventually split from al-Mukhtār, joining the Kufans against him and dying in battle at Jabbānat al-Sabīʿ; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:654, 658–659; Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 263.

‘Abd al-Malik enjoyed the support of a handful of *qāṣṣ* spread throughout the empire with some of them having been appointed either to the position of *qāṣṣ* or to other official positions by the caliph and/or his governors. His use of the *qāṣṣ* began in his own region of Syria where he appointed Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī to the position of *qāṣṣ* in Damascus, though he eventually removed him from this position, appointing him judge, instead.⁴⁰

In Kufa, hotbed of anti-Umayyad sentiment, lived a *qāṣṣ* whose allegiance to the Umayyads was unquestioned—Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa. According to a report recorded by Ibn Abī Shayba, al-Ḥakam b. ‘Uṭayba (d. 112–15/730–3), a highly respected scholar of Kufa, informed the distinguished Basran scholar Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776) that during “the time (*zamān*)” of Bishr b. Marwān, presumably meaning his residency as governor in Kufa (72–3/691–2), Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa came to the city and acted as the *qāṣṣ al-‘amma*.⁴¹ While Rajā’ afterward became an important advisor and administrator for the Umayyads, this report may preserve a reference to his first public position. Rajā’ is, in fact, first encountered as a teacher of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān’s son and future caliph Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik, who, if born in approximately 55/675, suggests Rajā’ was his tutor, presumably sometime between the years 60–70/680–90, when Sulaymān was between 5 and 15 years old.⁴² Shortly thereafter, Rajā’ joined ‘Abd al-Malik’s brother, Bishr b. Marwān, in Kufa. The scenario presented by the report is important, as well as unusual, because of the reason for Rajā’’s presence in Kufa and the meaning behind his position as *qāṣṣ al-‘amma*.

First, it may be that Rajā’ was in Kufa on official business. As we noted above, Rajā’’s first appointment seems to have been as Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik’s

40 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:165. See also Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:151, 160, 162–163 and the Appendix # 31.

41 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 1:376. Bishr b. Marwān seems to have arrived in Kufa in 72/691, though he was initially appointed in 71/690. He did not arrive in the city until after the campaign which killed Muṣ‘ab b. al-Zubayr (d. 72/691). In 73/692 Basra was added to his governorship and he moved to that city sometime at the end of 73/692 or the beginning of 74/693. On Bishr, see L. Veccia Vaglieri, “Bishr b. Marwān,” *EL2*, 1:1242. On Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, see G.H.A. Juynboll, “Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥadjjādī,” *EL2*, 9:491–492. On al-Ḥakam b. ‘Uṭayba, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:466–467.

42 C.E. Bosworth, “Rajā’ ibn Ḥaywa al-Kindī and the Umayyad Caliphs,” *Islamic Quarterly* (1972), 39. Bosworth speculated that Rajā’ was born in the early years of Mu‘āwīya’s caliphate, allotting for a lifespan of seventy years—Rajā’ died in 112/730; see his “Rajā’ ibn Ḥaywa al-Kindī and the Umayyad Caliphs,” *Islamic Quarterly* (1972), 37. This would make Rajā’ less than twenty years old when he was a tutor for Sulaymān. It may be appropriate, therefore, to push his birth date back even more. On Sulaymān, see R. Eisner, “Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik,” *EL2*, 9:821–822.

tutor. This indicates that he was closely affiliated with the caliph's family in Syria. Furthermore, Rajā' seems to have spent much of his life in Syria with the Umayyad political establishment. It appears somewhat odd, therefore, for Rajā' to be identified in this report as the *qāṣṣ al-ʿamma*, "the *qāṣṣ* of the common folk," in Kufa. Moreover, his virtually simultaneous arrival in Kufa with Bishr b. Marwān, brother of the caliph and uncle of Rajā's student, seems more than coincidental. It is hard to imagine, for example, that Bishr was not aware that Rajā' was in Kufa. Why he moved from Syria to Kufa at a time when he enjoyed such access to the caliph's family is certainly unclear and perplexing, especially in light of his clear desire to advise and influence the Umayyad rulers, evident in his long history as a counselor to them. Perhaps Rajā' was sent to Kufa to join Bishr; acting, therefore, in some official capacity as the *qāṣṣ al-ʿamma*.

Secondly, this report raises more questions about the meaning of the phrase "*qāṣṣ al-ʿamma*." According to a previous report attributed to Layth b. Sa'd, Layth distinguished between *qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa* and *qaṣaṣ al-ʿamma* with the former being essentially political in focus and the latter being primarily religious in focus. Al-Ḥakam's report about Rajā' seems, then, to identify Rajā' as a non-political *qāṣṣ* who addressed the religious needs of the common folk. Yet, while Rajā' was certainly a man of much religious knowledge and piety, for, indeed, al-Ḥakam related the report about him in Kufa in order to inform Shu'ba that Rajā' recited Sūrat al-Sajda (32) after the afternoon prayer (*al-ʿaṣr*), a singularly religious topic, depicting him as primarily a religious scholar for the common people of Kufa does not seem entirely applicable in this instance. It seems incongruous that a pro-Umayyad Syrian scholar became *qāṣṣ* of the common folk in Kufa in a short time, since the designation "*qāṣṣ al-ʿamma*" carries with it the sense that the position was held by a local scholar who attracted a following to himself by a rather natural process of the growth of his reputation. I suspect, consequently, that Rajā's work as the *qāṣṣ al-ʿamma* in Kufa during the governorship of Bishr b. Marwān may have been more official, and thus political, than the definition of *qaṣaṣ al-ʿamma* given by Layth b. Sa'd permits. If so, it may be, therefore, that this report preserves mention of the first official position, aside from being the tutor of Sulaymān, held by Rajā' b. Ḥaywa in the Umayyad administration. If so, his subsequent rise in the administration to a level of trusted advisor appears to mirror that of other scholars, such as some judges who also first established their scholarly reputations as *quṣṣāṣ* before being appointed to other positions.⁴³

If Rajā' was, indeed, sent to Kufa with Bishr, it seems to have not been the only time 'Abd al-Malik assigned a *qāṣṣ* to a city in Iraq. In fact, a lesser known *qāṣṣ*,

43 See examples of this in Chapter Two, 126–131.

a certain ‘Ā’idh Allāh al-Mujāshī‘ī (n.d.) was expressly identified by the title of “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān” and seems to have held this position in Basra.⁴⁴ While the identification “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Abd al-Malik” is understandable as a description of a personal, meaning non-official, relationship between the *qāṣṣ* and the caliph, as may be the case in other *qāṣṣ*-caliph associations, this designation seems to indicate that ‘Ā’idh Allāh was an officially appointed *qāṣṣ* of ‘Abd al-Malik in the city of Basra. In actuality, it seems that ‘Ā’idh Allāh never lived in nor visited Syria. Ibn ‘Asākir, for example, who assembled a massive number of names of people who either lived in or merely traveled through Syria, does not include an entry for him in his work even though he knew of him; in his entry on the famous Syrian scholar and *qāṣṣ* Abū Idrīs ‘Ā’idh Allāh al-Khawlanī, Ibn ‘Asākir pointed out that ‘Ā’idh Allāh al-Mujāshī‘ī was a different person altogether.⁴⁵ Apparently, therefore, ‘Ā’idh Allāh al-Mujāshī‘ī never traveled to Syria and, as a result, his designation as “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Abd al-Malik” seems to suggest that he was appointed by the caliph to this position in his home town.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, even in his connections to Basra, we know little about ‘Ā’idh Allāh, except that he did not enjoy a good reputation as a scholar—his only source for *ḥadīth*, for example, was the disreputable *qāṣṣ* Abū Dāwūd Nufay‘ b. al-Ḥārith.⁴⁷ Comparing his bad reputation as a scholar to the stellar reputation of Rajā’, it may come as little surprise that ‘Ā’idh Allāh worked in the city, i.e. Basra, more supportive of the Umayyads and his home town, while Rajā’ ended up in Kufa, a cauldron of opposition to the rulers—perhaps Kufa, according to the assessment of the Umayyads, required a more capable scholar and defender of the administration. Furthermore, if ‘Ā’idh Allāh was indeed an Umayyad *qāṣṣ* in Basra who enjoyed no personal connection to the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, this indicates that, in this instance, the phrase “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Abd al-Malik” refers to an official, and not a private, relationship; when the phrase is used of other caliphs, however, it may carry other meanings.

‘Ā’idh Allāh, though, was not the only pro-Umayyad *qāṣṣ* in Basra during ‘Abd al-Malik’s reign. He joined the *qāṣṣ* Zurāra b. Awfā al-Ḥarashī (d. 93/713)

44 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277. Ibn Ḥajar claims that he read in Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Thiqāt* that ‘Ā’idh Allāh was the *qāṣṣ* of Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 96–99/715–717); see his *Tahdhīb*, 2:274; idem, *Taqrīb*, 1:289. I have chosen to follow Ibn Ḥibbān directly. On ‘Ā’idh Allāh, see the Appendix # 44. On his having held this position in Basra, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 2:192.

45 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 26:151.

46 Ibn Ḥibbān identified him as “from the people of Basra (*min ahl Basra*);” see his *Majrūhīn*, 2:192.

47 On Nufay‘, see the Appendix # 77.

who appears to have been an Umayyad leader in Baṣra.⁴⁸ We first hear of him when ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, Mu‘āwiya’s governor over Baṣra, appointed him judge of the city in 65/675, a position he held for less than one year.⁴⁹ He was also identified as the *imām* of the people of Basra, in particular at the mosque of the Banū Qushayr.⁵⁰ In addition to this, he purportedly gave *qaṣaṣ* in his home.⁵¹ This was a practice that he engaged in both before and after the arrival in Basra, in 75/694, of ‘Abd al-Malik’s famous general al-Ḥajjāj, who allegedly attended his sessions.⁵² According to a certain ‘Ā’isha bt. Ḍamra: “Zurāra b. Awfā prayed in his home the noon and evening prayers, then al-Ḥajjāj came to the meeting.”⁵³ This report suggests that one of the most staunchly pro-Umayyad leaders frequented *qaṣaṣ* sessions. It also, therefore, helps clarify al-Ḥajjāj’s position towards the *quṣṣāṣ* as expressed in a report mentioned in Chapter Two condemning the *quṣṣāṣ*, prompted by a sighting of the Egyptian *qāṣṣ* Sulaym b. ‘Itr, for corrupting the masses against Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.⁵⁴ Al-Ḥajjāj’s willingness to visit Zurāra’s *qaṣaṣ* sessions suggests that the governor was more concerned with the political affiliations of the *qāṣṣ* than with the practice itself.

In Egypt, far afield from the struggles of Iraq, the Umayyads seem to have maintained the control that was initially exerted by Mu‘āwiya over the *quṣṣāṣ* through the capable administration of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān, ‘Abd al-Malik’s brother and the long-time governor of the region practically throughout ‘Abd al-Malik’s reign (65–85/685–704). During his tenure as governor, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz appointed at least two men to the position of *qāṣṣ*.⁵⁵ Indeed, he appointed one of the more interesting *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period, the reputable scholar ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥujayra al-Khawlānī (d. 85/704) and even personally attended his sessions.⁵⁶ Aside from the honor of having the governor of the region attend his sessions, Ibn Ḥujayra was distinguished from the other *quṣṣāṣ* of the period because of the salary that he received for giving *qaṣaṣ*. In fact, Ibn Ḥujayra appears to have been a valuable asset to the government

48 Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, 9:150; Dhahabī, *Kāshif*, 1:402; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:628.

49 Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, 9:150; Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 227; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:172; Pellat, *Milieu*, 289.

50 Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, 9:150; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:247; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:516.

51 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:293; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfat*, 3:230; Dhahabī, *Kāshif*, 1:402; idem, *Sīyar*, 4:516.

52 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:293; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfat*, 3:230.

53 Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, 9:150–151.

54 See Chapter Two, 128–129.

55 On the appointment of *quṣṣāṣ* in Egypt, see Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4/1:30–33.

56 On him, see the Appendix # 35. On ‘Abd al-‘Azīz attending his sessions, see Dūlābī, *Kunā*, 1:314.

in many fields and fared quite well financially from it. He allegedly received an annual income of 1,000 *dīnārs*: 200 as a judge, 200 as a *qāṣṣ*, 200 as treasurer (*‘alā bayt al-māl*), 200 as a stipend (*‘aṭā’uhu*) and 200 as an award (*jā’izatuhu*).⁵⁷ In actuality, he is the first known *qāṣṣ* to receive payment from the ruling authorities for holding the position of *qāṣṣ*—an area about which we have practically no information.

Ibn Ḥujayra’s successor as *qāṣṣ*, Marthad b. ‘Abd Allāh, was also a reputable scholar and likewise appears to have held multiple positions in Egypt, although it is unclear how much, if any, compensation he received for his work. He replaced Ibn Ḥujayra as *qāṣṣ* after previously having served as judge in Alexandria.⁵⁸ Ibn Yūnus, in fact, claimed that he was the *muftī* of Egypt and that ‘Abd al-‘Azīz attended his sessions on legal rulings, like he had done with Ibn Ḥujayra’s sessions.⁵⁹

While it appears undeniable that the Umayyads controlled the appointment of the *quṣṣāṣ* in Egypt, even paying them, it is noteworthy that the sources provide no information on *qaṣaṣ* in Egypt between the year 39/659 when Sulaym was removed as *qāṣṣ* and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s appointment of Ibn Ḥujayra more than two decades later. However, regardless of such gaps, it still seems that ‘Abd al-Malik monitored the *quṣṣāṣ* across the empire by appointing them in various regions and by utilizing them in other administrative positions in the empire. He was, though, not the only one who saw political value in the *quṣṣāṣ*. As we have already seen, the cause of Ibn al-Zubayr, whose counter-caliphate in the Ḥijāz extended into the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik, enjoyed the support of at least one *qāṣṣ*, ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr. And his was not the only opposition movement to use the *quṣṣāṣ* to advance its causes; pro-‘Alid movements, the Khawārij and Ibn al-Ash’ath, in his rebellion, all did likewise.

The activities of pro-‘Alid movements in Iraq continued during ‘Abd al-Malik’s caliphate and at least two *quṣṣāṣ* were known at this time for their sympathies for the *ahl al-bayt*. One of these, Kurdūs, was a faithful supporter of the ‘Alid cause since at least the battle of Ṣiffin, where he, like the *qāṣṣ* Rifā’a b. Shaddād, fought for ‘Alī.⁶⁰ In fact, both Kurdūs and Rifā’a opposed the decision to cease hostilities for arbitration when the Syrians raised copies of the Qur’ān on their swords, and Kurdūs challenged his colleagues to continue to

57 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 1:235; Wakī’, *Quḍāt*, 3:229, 325; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 17:55; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:501; Qāḍī, “Salaries,” 22, 28. See also the Appendix # 35.

58 Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:31.

59 See the Appendix # 37.

60 The sources are unsure about Kurdūs’s identity. See the Appendix # 46.

defend ‘Alī.⁶¹ Kurdūs’s support appears to have been rewarded by ‘Alī, who granted him an *iqṭā’* property in the fertile Sawād.⁶² Thus, he enjoyed a long historical connection with Iraq and therefore the report from ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn (d. 150/767) that he was “the *qāṣṣ* of the common folk (*qāṣṣ al-‘amma*)” of Kufa comes as little surprise, unlike the case of the Syrian Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa who had the same designation applied to him.⁶³ In addition, Kurdūs appears to have given *qaṣaṣ* in Kufa while al-Ḥajjāj was governor of the city.⁶⁴ This indicates that a decidedly pro-‘Alid *qāṣṣ* enjoyed enough influence in Kufa during the time of al-Ḥajjāj that he became known as “the *qāṣṣ* of the common folk.” It is unclear why al-Ḥajjāj did not attempt to quiet Kurdūs, for the governor certainly was not averse to meting out harsh punishment on other opposition *quṣṣās*. In fact, a certain *qāṣṣ* named Abū Yaḥyā al-Mu‘arqab (“the hamstring”), an alleged Kufan colleague of Kurdūs, was purportedly made lame by the Umayyads—either al-Ḥajjāj or Bishr b. Marwān—who severed his Achilles tendons as punishment for his love of ‘Alī.⁶⁵

Along with Kurdūs and Abū Yaḥyā, Kufa contained a third pro-‘Alid *qāṣṣ* named ‘Adī b. Thābit. While it is unclear whether or not he actively opposed al-Ḥajjāj his Shī‘ism was unequivocal as indicated in his designation as the imām of the Shī‘ī mosque.⁶⁶ Al-Mas‘ūdī also characterized him as “the most accomplished [scholar] in the traditions of the Shī‘ī.”⁶⁷ Despite being criticized for his excessive Shī‘ism, he was still widely accepted as a sound transmitter of *ḥadīth*.⁶⁸

61 In a *khuṭba* to ‘Alī’s supporters, Kurdūs b. Hānī said, “O people, we did not commit ourselves to Mu‘āwīya after we rid ourselves of him, nor did we rid ourselves of ‘Alī after we committed ourselves to him. If we die, then we are martyrs, and if we live, then our cause has been justified. ‘Alī is a clear proof from God. Justice will prevail regardless, so he who submits to him [‘Alī] will have success (*fa-man sallama lahu najā*) and he who goes against him will perish.” See Naṣr b. Muzāhim, *Ṣiffīn*, 484. See also Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 281; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, 2:130. For Rifā‘a b. Shaddād’s support of ‘Alī, see Naṣr b. Muzāhim, *Ṣiffīn*, 488.

62 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2376; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 5:639.

63 See the Appendix # 46. On ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 15:394–402.

64 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfa*, 3:72.

65 See the Appendix # 49.

66 Dhahabī, *Kāshif*, 2:15; idem, *al-Mughnī fi-l-ḍu‘afā’*, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Itir (Aleppo, 1971), 2:431; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:75.

67 Dhahabī, *Mughnī*, 2:431.

68 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:75. The Shī‘ī biographical dictionaries of al-Najāshī (*Kitāb al-rijāl*) and al-Ṭūsī (*Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*) have no information on him.

A second threat to the Umayyads in Iraq came from the Khawārij, who were supported by three *quṣṣās*. Two of these, Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ and Shabīb b. Yazīd, have already been encountered in Chapter One through their use of *qaṣaṣ* in their rebellions.⁶⁹ The third Khārijī *qāṣṣ* of Irāq, Shaqīq al-Ḍabbī, appears never to have been directly involved with military expeditions against the Umayyads, although he was definitely censured by his contemporaries because of his defense of the Khawārij. Shaqīq apparently was not simply a Khārijī; he was allegedly among the first Khawārij (*min qudamā' al-Khawārij*)⁷⁰ and one of their leaders (*ra's al-ḍalāl al-ḥarūrī*).⁷¹ He was also a *qāṣṣ* in Kufa who was vilified for his affiliations with the Khawārij as well as for being unable to manage his involvement with *qaṣaṣ*; giving *qaṣaṣ* occupied most of his time (*wa-l-ghālib 'alayhi al-qaṣaṣ*).⁷² A contemporary and opponent of his, the *qāṣṣ* Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī warned his listeners to not sit with Shaqīq, even though both he and Shaqīq were allegedly *quṣṣās* who, at one time, shared a common devotion to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁷³

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī's life, in fact, sheds more light on the complexity of the religio-political milieu of Kufa. He was a *qāṣṣ* and *qārī'* who recited the Qur'ān in the mosque in Kufa for forty years.⁷⁴ He allegedly fought alongside 'Alī at Ṣiffīn, then abandoned him. However, unlike Shaqīq who, when he abandoned 'Alī's cause became a Khārijī, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī became an extreme supporter of 'Uthmān and the Umayyads (an '*Uthmānī*'); in principle, according to Dhahabī, this was no small feat in Kufa.⁷⁵ Apparently he spent the rest of his life in the city, and while there he admonished his listeners to not sit with the Khawārij or the *quṣṣās*, such as Shaqīq, unless the *qāṣṣ* was Abū al-Aḥwās, whom he endorsed.⁷⁶

In light of his own history of changing alliances, it seems hypocritical of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān to have based his condemnation of Shaqīq as a Khārijī on the traditional *cause célèbre* of the Khawārij, i.e. abandoning the cause of 'Alī. More seems to have been at stake. Furthermore, his support and praise of Abū

69 See Chapter One, 65–70.

70 Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 3:182–183.

71 'Uqaylī, *Ḍu'āfā'*, 2:186.

72 Ibn 'Adī, *Kāmil*, 4:45.

73 On Shaqīq, see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:292–293 and the Appendix # 47. On 'Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:320 and the Appendix # 27.

74 See the Appendix # 27.

75 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:320. Dhahabī in his biography of 'Uthmān b. 'ṣim noted that it was a rare thing for a Kufan to be a 'Uthmānī (*Abū Ḥuṣayn 'Uthmānī wa-hādihā nādīr fī rajul Kūfī*); see his *Sīyar*, 5:415.

76 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. Ya'lāwī, 7/2:232.

al-Aḥwaṣ, a fellow *qāṣṣ*, may betray his sympathy for a colleague who walked a similar path toward support of the Umayyads. Abū al-Aḥwaṣ, after all, also supported ‘Alī and fought with him against the Khawārij at Nahrawān (38/658). He then turned to the Umayyads and was sent in the year 75/694 as the leader of the *qurrā’* against the Khawārij by none other than al-Ḥajjāj.⁷⁷ Ironically, both Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī and Abū al-Aḥwaṣ began as ‘Alids and then became supporters of the Umayyads as well as opponents of the Khawārij. Their similar journeys contributed to a feeling of mutual respect for not only did Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān praise Abū al-Aḥwaṣ as a *qāṣṣ*, Abū al-Aḥwaṣ praised Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān as a *faqīh*.⁷⁸

Clearly, the *qaṣaṣ* situation in Iraq, and especially in Kufa, was quite complicated. Two *quṣṣāṣ*, Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa, who was decidedly pro-Umayyad and a transplant from Syria, and Kurdūs, who was decidedly pro-‘Alid and native to Kufa, were both identified as a “*qāṣṣ al-‘amma*” in Kufa. At the same time, the city housed two other pro-‘Alid *quṣṣāṣ*, ‘Adī b. Thābit and Abū Yaḥyā, with the latter having been made lame by the Umayyads due to his love for ‘Alī. Finally, other formerly pro-‘Alid *quṣṣāṣ* abandoned the cause adopting instead Khārijī positions, as in the case of Shaqīq al-Ḍabbī, or extreme Umayyad positions, as in the case of Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī. Kufa stands out, therefore, as a microcosm of the associations of the *quṣṣāṣ* with the religio-political movements of the day and one other Iraqi opposition movement, the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath exacerbated this tension.

The rebellion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath brought a completely separate group of scholars-*quṣṣāṣ* into the religio-political mix of Iraq and Kufa. Indeed, more *quṣṣāṣ* (nine in total) were involved in this rebellion than in any other anti-Umayyad opposition movement; they are ‘Abd Allāh b. Ghālīb (d. 83/702), Māhān al-Ḥanafī (d. 83/702), ‘Imrān b. ‘Iṣām (d. 83/702), Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (d. 93/712), Muṭarrif b. ‘Abd Allāh (d.c. 95/714), Dharr b. ‘Abd Allāh (n.d.), Muḥāhid b. Jabr (d. 100–4/718–22), ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 110–20/728–38), and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728). Of these nine *quṣṣāṣ*, only Dharr b. ‘Abd Allāh was identified specifically as a *qāṣṣ* from his association with the rebellion. According to Khalifa b. Khayyāt, Dharr was one of allegedly 500 *qurrā’* who supported Ibn al-Ash‘ath.⁷⁹ Ibn al-Ash‘ath commanded Dharr to incite his soldiers

77 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:876.

78 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:292–293.

79 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 286–287. For an analysis of the *qurrā’* of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion including biographies of the fifty-four *qurrā’* named in Khalifa’s *Tārīkh*, see Sayed, *Die Revolte*, 340–369.

to battle and so “he gave *qaṣaṣ* every day and spoke against al-Ḥajjāj.”⁸⁰ In spite of having taken an active role in Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion, Dharr appears to have survived the rebellion and died at a later date. Other rebel-*quṣṣāṣ* were not as fortunate.

Among the more famous of the *quṣṣāṣ* who supported Ibn al-Ash‘ath was Sa‘īd b. Jubayr. His influence in Kufa was ubiquitous. He was a respected Qur’ān reciter, *ḥadīth* transmitter and pious believer, who displayed his piety by living, at times, in the mosque, where he allegedly gave *qaṣaṣ* twice a day.⁸¹ He was not only an important religious figure, however. At the time of the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath, Sa‘īd was appointed by Maṭar b. Nājiya, a Kufan ally of Ibn al-Ash‘ath, over the *ma‘ṣiray al-Kūfa*—cables stretched across the Euphrates, presumably at two separate locations (*ma‘ṣiray*), as barriers in order to prevent ships from passing without paying taxes, identified here as *ṣadaqa* and *‘ushūr* (*inna Sa‘īd b. Jubayr ista‘malahu Maṭar b. Nājiya fī fitnat Ibn al-Ash‘ath ‘alā ma‘ṣiray al-Kūfa ‘alā al-ṣadaqa wa-l-‘ushūr*).⁸² He was also listed among the famous *qurrā’* of Ibn al-Ash‘ath.⁸³ After the defeat at Dayr al-Jamājim (83/702), Sa‘īd fled to Mecca; eventually seized by Khālīd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasrī, he was extradited back to al-Ḥajjāj in Kufa who executed him.⁸⁴ Since the sources indicate that Sa‘īd gave *qaṣaṣ* in Kufa, this must have occurred before or at the same time as Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion; Sa‘īd was away in the Ḥijāz from the end of the rebellion until his extradition back to the city. It appears, then, that he established himself as a respected scholar-*qāṣṣ* in the city prior to having been appointed over the *ma‘ṣir* of the city and probably only obtained the position because of his trustworthy reputation.

80 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 280.

81 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:377, 379.

82 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:381. Maṭar b. Nājiya al-Rihāhī was a man of influence in Kufa during the period of al-Ḥajjāj’s governorship and Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion. During Shabīb b. Yazīd’s rebellion, he led Kufan forces in support of al-Ḥajjāj; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:966–968. He then changed allegiances. During the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath, in 82/701, he seized Kufa from al-Ḥajjāj’s governor ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir al-Ḥaḍramī and summoned Ibn al-Ash‘ath to the city; see Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 178, 186; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1069–1070. It seems that during this time Maṭar, who was himself a fiscal officer (*al-ma‘ūna*; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1070; P. Crone, “al-Ma‘ūna,” *EL2*, 6:848), assigned Sa‘d to the two *ma‘ṣir* in Kufa in order to collect *ṣadaqa* and *‘ushūr* (“land tax”). On the *ma‘ṣir*, see C.E. Bosworth, “Ma‘ṣir,” *EL2*, 6:728. On *ṣadaqa* as a designation for both obligatory, which may explain its use in this report, and voluntary alms giving, see T.H. Weir and A. Zysow, “Ṣadaqa,” *EL2*, 8:708–716. On the *‘ushūr*, see T. Sato, “‘Ushr,” *EL2*, 10:917–919.

83 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:381.

84 See the Appendix # 40.

Of the nine *quṣṣāṣ* who joined Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion, four died because of it. 'Abd Allāh b. Ghālib was killed in battle at Dayr al-Jamājim.⁸⁵ Māhān al-Ḥanafī, an ascetic and *qāṣṣ* of Persian descent, was captured and brutally executed, his feet and hands cut off and then crucified; a number of hagiographical traditions describe light emanating from his cross, thus portraying his own personal saintliness and, perhaps, also implying the rightness of his cause.⁸⁶ While the two others, 'Imrān b. 'Iṣām and Sa'īd b. Jubayr, were also eventually executed, their relationship to al-Ḥajjāj as well as the complexities of the traditions surrounding their deaths deserve a closer look.

It seems significant, indeed, that the sources preserve a few reports telling of al-Ḥajjāj personally confronting men who joined Ibn al-Ash'ath. Three of those whom he allegedly interrogated were *quṣṣāṣ*: 'Imrān b. 'Iṣām, Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Muṭarrif b. 'Abd Allāh.⁸⁷ Each man was brought before al-Ḥajjāj, who received orders from the caliph 'Abd al-Malik to spare any rebel who confessed that by opposing the caliph he became an infidel.⁸⁸ According to Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's account, they were brought before the governor one after another so that each was aware of the defense of the other.⁸⁹

When al-Ḥajjāj informed 'Imrān of 'Abd al-Malik's proposition, he responded: "Since the time I believed in God, I never denied Him (*mā kafartu bi-llāh mundhu āmantu*)." So al-Ḥajjāj killed him.⁹⁰ Then Muṭarrif, who, according to Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, "believed in dissimulation of one's religious belief under duress (*al-tawriya*)," was brought before the governor.⁹¹ When he was asked to confess to *kufīr*, he responded: "May God prosper the commander, whoever disobeys, recants the oath of allegiance, separates from the community and frightens the Muslims is worthy of being [called] an infidel (*aṣḥaḥa Allāh al-amīr, inna man shaqqa al-'aṣā wa-nakatha al-bay'a wa-fāraqa al-jamā'a wa-akhāfa al-muslimīna la-jadīr^{un} bi-l-kufīr*)," for this confession, his

85 See the Appendix # 33.

86 See the Appendix # 34.

87 For Sa'īd b. Jubayr, see Ibn Sa'īd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:383; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1261–1264; Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, eds. Aḥmad Amin, Aḥmad al-Zayn and Aḥmad al-Abyārī (Cairo, 1940–1953), 5:55. For 'Imrān, see Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 282. For Muṭarrif, see Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Iqd*, 5:55.

88 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 282; Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Iqd*, 5:54; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 43:516.

89 Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Iqd*, 5:54.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid. The editors noted that another manuscript tradition had *al-taqīyya* here.

life was spared.⁹² Finally, Sa'īd was questioned. He adopted 'Imrān's defense and, therefore, suffered 'Imrān's fate.⁹³

Before turning to the role of 'Imrān b. 'Iṣām and Sa'īd b. Jubayr in Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion, a brief look at the enigmatic Muṭarrif b. 'Abd Allāh may help elucidate the complex relationship between the Umayyad administration and the *quṣṣās*. Muṭarrif, although he was a *qāṣṣ*, was known primarily for his asceticism; he lived a hermetic life in the desert and reportedly withdrew from society at the time of the great plague.⁹⁴ He lived in Basra during the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj and therefore took a position on the rebellions and divisions in the region. Muṭarrif, however, attempted to steer clear of alliances with any politically active group. Ibn Sa'd records a handful of traditions stating that he was against *fitna*; and when problems arose he retreated into isolation.⁹⁵ Two students of his, both well-known *quṣṣās*, noted that he sought to avoid *fitna*. Qatāda b. Ḍi'āma said that Muṭarrif avoided *fitna* and fled when it appeared.⁹⁶ Thābit al-Bunānī confirmed Muṭarrif's views on *fitna* when he quoted his teacher as having said: "Verily *fitna* does not come in order to lead one to the right path but to cause the believer to fight against himself."⁹⁷ His approach to sectarian strife in the community was reflected in other aspects of his personality. His worldview may best be summed up by his words: "The best of all issues is the middle [road] (*khayr al-umūr awṣātuhā*)."⁹⁸

With such an attitude to life in general, it comes as no surprise that Muṭarrif approached three of the most important sectarian problems of the community, the counter-caliphate of Ibn al-Zubayr, the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash'ath and the Khawārij, in a similar way. On the counter-caliph Ibn al-Zubayr, he said: "I lived during the *fitna* of Ibn al-Zubayr nine or seven [years?] without hearing anything about it or asking about it."⁹⁹ When Ibn al-Ash'ath's supporters pressured him to join them against al-Ḥajjāj, he purportedly replied:

"Do you understand what you are calling for? Does this action add to *jihād* in the path of God?" They said, "No." He said, "So therefore I will not

92 Ibid. Muṭarrif was joined in his dissimulation by 'Āmir al-Sha'bī who thus also avoided execution; see Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi, *Iqd*, 5:55.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:145; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifa*, 3:222.

95 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:143.

96 Ibid., 9:142.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:142; Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi, *Iqd*, 2:370–371.

99 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:143.

put myself in jeopardy risking either falling into some disaster or even gaining some blessing (*fa-innī lā ukhāṭir bayna halakatⁱⁿ aqa'u fihā wa-bayna faḍlⁱⁿ uṣībuhu*).¹⁰⁰

His response indicates that he was not willing to put himself at risk; the possibility of disaster, presumably from the consequences of a failed rebellion, kept him from joining them and even the potential of reward, from a successful rebellion, was not attractive enough to entice him into the rebellion. Furthermore, the only type of military involvement he seems to have supported was that against non-Muslims, *jihād^{an} fi sabīl Allāh*. Finally, he allegedly rebuffed a delegation of Khawārij, who tried to draw him into their struggle. From his determination to avoid harm rather than any opposition to their ideology, he said:

If I had two souls I would follow you with one and hold onto the other. For, if what you are advocating is the right way, then I would cast in the second to follow you, and if it was wrong then [only] one soul would perish, leaving me with another. But I have only one soul, and I would hate to imperil it.¹⁰¹

Muṭarrif apparently strove to walk a middle path, though the effectiveness of his position is unclear. As was mentioned above, other reports indicate that he joined Ibn al-Ash'ath in opposition to al-Ḥajjāj, preserving his life by engaging in pious dissimulation. While his initial engagement in rebellion against al-Ḥajjāj does not accord with his pursuit of neutrality, his pious dissimulation concurs with his approach to life and reflects the position that was attributed to him in his response to the Khawārij. Muṭarrif's history sheds light on the difficulties that the *quṣṣāṣ*, as well as other scholars, faced in navigating the religio-political movements of their day. His experience indicates that, no matter how hard one tried to remain outside political circles, its centrifugal force still drew him.

As for 'Imrān b. 'Iṣām and Sa'īd b. Jubayr, their opposition to al-Ḥajjāj was clear. In fact, the sources portray their opposition in strikingly similar, and therefore somewhat suspicious, terms. Each was allegedly reprimanded by al-Ḥajjāj for their perfidy having snubbed the governor's previous overtures of kindness to them. Al-Ḥajjāj reminded 'Imrān, for example, that he honored

100 Ibid. 'Ijli also claimed that he, along with Ibn Sirīn, were the only two Basrans who did not join the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash'ath; see his *Ma'rifa*, 2:282.

101 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:144.

him by personally selecting him to travel to ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān in order to encourage the caliph to appoint his son Walīd as the next caliph and not his brother ‘Abd al-‘Azīz; and ‘Imrān’s execution of this job garnered him the respect of the Caliph.¹⁰² Al-Ḥajjāj also reminded him that he arranged his marriage to Māwiyya bt. Misma‘. After ‘Imrān acknowledged the governor’s previous kindnesses toward him, al-Ḥajjāj responded by asking, “What then caused you to join the enemy of God, Ibn al-Ash‘ath?” ‘Imrān asserted that he was compelled to do so by a certain Bādhān (*akhrājānī Bādhān*), a man obviously of Persian descent.¹⁰³ However, when ‘Imrān’s turban was removed, his shaved head was exposed and this fact, apparently signifying his readiness for battle (in rebellion), caused al-Ḥajjāj to exclaim, “And shaved also! God will not hold it against me for killing you.” Al-Ḥajjāj then ordered him beheaded.¹⁰⁴

A similar account describes Sa‘īd b. Jubayr’s hearing before the governor. Here, al-Ḥajjāj recalled that he placed Sa‘īd in a position of authority among Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s army when it was sent to Khurasān—a fact acknowledged by Sa‘īd. Then the governor asked a question not too unlike that posed to ‘Imrān: “What then caused you to go against me?” Sa‘īd, like ‘Imrān, claimed that he was somehow forced into it, saying: “It was made incumbent upon me (*‘uzīma ‘alayya*).” Hearing this, al-Ḥajjāj flew into a rage and said: “You found it incumbent upon you to join the enemy of God, but did not consider it incumbent to uphold a duty to God, the commander of the faithful and to me! Behead him!”¹⁰⁵

The commonalities suggest that we may be dealing with a motif and not real history. First, both men were allegedly, or at least presented themselves as, close supporters of al-Ḥajjāj and benefited from his good graces. Secondly, they both then rebuffed his kindness to them by their treacherous support of Ibn al-Ash‘ath. Thirdly, they both attempted to deflect blame from themselves by suggesting that they were in some way compelled to go with Ibn al-Ash‘ath. Lastly, their excuses are dismissed by al-Ḥajjāj, who executes them anyway.

One final factor also suggests that this latter account is simply a motif. Other sources indicate that Sa‘īd, along with other leaders of the rebellion, two of them being fellow *quṣṣāṣ* Mujāhid b. Jabr and Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd, fled Iraq to the Ḥijāz. These men were to be extradited back to Iraq following a complaint raised by al-Ḥajjāj to ‘Abd al-Malik against ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the

102 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 283; Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *‘Iqd*, 5:54.

103 I have followed the reading of Khalifa b. Khayyāt (*Tārīkh*, 283) and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi (*‘Iqd*, 5:54) though I am not sure who this Bādhān is. In Ibn ‘Asākir the text reads *akhrājānī bi-adhān*; see his *Dimashq*, 43:517.

104 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 283; Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *‘Iqd*, 5:54; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 43:517.

105 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:264.

governor of Mecca, who provided sanctuary for them and was subsequently recalled as governor in part for the assistance he granted to them.¹⁰⁶ Certainly this procedure of complaining to ‘Abd al-Malik, of recalling ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and of extraditing the offenders—technically undertaken by ‘Umar’s replacement Khālīd al-Qasrī—required time and, for this reason, the sources indicate that Sa‘īd was executed sometime between 93/712 and 95/714, eleven years after the end of the rebellion, seven years after ‘Abd al-Malik’s death and close to the time of al-Ḥajjāj’s death in 95/714.¹⁰⁷ This meant that Sa‘īd was not present when ‘Imrān and Muṭarrif were interrogated before al-Ḥajjāj after the battle of Dayr al-Jamājim in 83/702, a fact that calls into question the reliability of those accounts placing them together in front of the Umayyad governor.

As for Sa‘īd’s two *quṣṣāṣ* colleagues who were extradited with him, they experienced different fates. Mujāhid, languished in prison until he was eventually released when al-Ḥajjāj died.¹⁰⁸ Ibrāhīm, an ascetic to whom many unusual happenings were attributed, was not as fortunate.¹⁰⁹ According to a tradition in Ibn Sa‘d, Ibrāhīm was, in fact, mistakenly extradited back to Iraq. Al-Ḥajjāj’s emissary was told to bring Ibrāhīm, by whom he meant Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī. When he entered Mecca, he asked for Ibrāhīm, and Ibrāhīm al-Taymī responded. After being brought to Iraq, he allegedly died in prison in Wāsiṭ. On the night of his death, al-Ḥajjāj ostensibly dreamt that someone said: “A man from the people of paradise has died in this land tonight.” When he inquired and discovered that it was Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, he, in an alleged response indicative of the conventional view of al-Ḥajjāj as a harsh and unforgiving ruler, said: “This was a dream of satanic inspiration,” and ordered that the body be thrown in the garbage.¹¹⁰

Not all *quṣṣāṣ* of the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath suffered the unfortunate fates of Ibrāhīm. Some *quṣṣāṣ* survived the rebellion scot-free. ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, for example, realizing the rebellion was failing, abandoned Ibn al-Ash‘ath and sought refuge first with the Umayyad Muḥammad b. Marwān in Naṣībīn and then with ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Unlike Sa‘īd, Mujāhid and

106 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1262. According to Ṭabarī, ‘Aṭā’ b. Abi Rabāh, Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb and ‘Amr b. Dīnār were also named for extradition but ‘Amr was not extradited because he was Meccan. Ibn Khaldūn, however, names only three men: Sa‘d, Mujāhid and Ṭalq, see his *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1984), 3:82.

107 See the Appendix # 40.

108 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1262–1264.

109 See the Appendix # 38.

110 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:402.

Ibrāhīm, he was somehow able to avoid extradition and continued a long relationship with ‘Umar.¹¹¹

Another survivor of the rebellion was the famous al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. He joined the rebellion unwillingly and lived through it (*ukhrija karh^{an} lam yuqṭal*).¹¹² He tried to maintain similar neutrality towards Yazīd b. Muḥallab’s rebellion against the Umayyads. He excoriated both Yazīd and the Umayyads and laid the blame for the *fitna* on “orators (*khuṭabā*’), poets, fools, drifters and conceited men.”¹¹³

The number and diversity of the *quṣṣās* who were active during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik is quite astounding. As is evident from the above analysis, the *quṣṣās* were found among both the pro-Umayyad and the anti-Umayyad camps, as well as within the subdivisions of the latter. Not only was this evident in the city of Kufa, it was also the case in the largely pro-Umayyad city of Basra. Zurāra b. Awfā, for example, was a pro-Umayyad *qāṣṣ* who was already giving *qaṣaṣ* in the city when al-Ḥajjāj arrived (c. 75/694) and who was known as one of the *imāms* of the people of Basra, in particular, at the mosque of the Banū Qushayr.¹¹⁴ Conversely, anti-Umayyad contemporaries of Zurāra were also giving *qaṣaṣ* in Basra prior to Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion; ‘Imrān b. ‘Iṣām (d. 83/702) gave *qaṣaṣ* in the mosque of the Banū Ḍubay‘a while his colleague, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ghālib (d. 83/702), gave *qaṣaṣ* in “the congregational mosque” of Basra.¹¹⁵ Since both of these men were killed near or at the end of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion, it seems probable that these three *quṣṣās* lived contemporaneously in Basra. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine whether they held their positions as *quṣṣās* in their various mosques simultaneously or separately. However, it is clear, from the number of men who gave *qaṣaṣ* in the region, who were then killed in battle against al-Ḥajjāj, who were reprimanded by him and who were executed by him, that they carried enough influence to have attracted the attention of the governor. Considering that Khalifa b. Khayyāṭ alleges that there were more than 500 *qurrā*’ in Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion and identifies fifty-four of them by name, it is noteworthy that the reports

111 See the Appendix # 65. Why ‘Awn was not killed like other of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s supporters is uncertain. It was possibly of some advantage to him that he was an important legislator and that his brother, ‘Ubayd Allāh, was not only one of the famous seven *fuqahā*’ of Medina but was also a teacher of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. On ‘Ubayd Allāh’s relationship to ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, see C. Pellat, “Fuḳahā’ al-Madīna al-Sab‘a,” *El2 Supplement* 12:311.

112 Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 287.

113 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1391–1392, 1401–1402.

114 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:150; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:247; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:516.

115 On ‘Imrān, see Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:159. On ‘Abd Allāh, see Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:291; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:118.

describing the fallout of the rebellion and the punishments handed down for involvement contain traditions about the fate of those *qurrā'* who were also known to have been *quṣṣāṣ* and seems to suggest that these *qurrā'-quṣṣāṣ* were considered particularly culpable in the rebellion.

Nevertheless, these assessments must remain purely speculation at this time since it is still unclear precisely what role many of these *qurrā'-quṣṣāṣ* played in the rebellion. We do know, however, that Dharr b. 'Abd Allāh was the only *qārī'-qāṣṣ* who was explicitly identified as having given *qaṣaṣ* against al-Ḥajjāj and yet he, as we noted above, surprisingly survived both the rebellion and the post-rebellion executions. We also know, for example, that other men, such as 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Layla and a certain al-Ḥarīsh ("the instigator"), who were not identified as *quṣṣāṣ* engaged in the *qaṣaṣ*-like activity of inciting the soldiers to battle in the rebellion.¹¹⁶ Consequently, the precise reason why the term *qāṣṣ* was applied to only one man when others seem to have performed a similar function or why certain men, a not insignificant number of whom were known to have been *quṣṣāṣ*, were treated harshly while others seem to have avoided punishment remains elusive.

Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96–9/715–7)

Quṣṣāṣ continued to enjoy access to caliphs, as counselors and advisors, during the reigns of the next two Umayyad caliphs, al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15) and Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96–9/715–7). In spite of the relatively long reign of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, the only *qāṣṣ* connected to him was Rajā' b. Ḥaywa, who acted as an advisor to the caliph.¹¹⁷ In the reign of Sulaymān, Rajā' continued his advisory role and, when the caliph was on his death bed, he famously swayed him to name 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz his successor.¹¹⁸ Two other *quṣṣāṣ* also counseled the caliph: Qatāda b. Dī'āma, whom Sulaymān summoned to answer a question of legal relevance,¹¹⁹ and

116 On 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Layla, see Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 287. On al-Ḥarīsh, see Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 285–286.

117 Ṭabarī recorded that Rajā' was part of al-Walīd's entourage and preserved a report in which Rajā' disagreed with the caliph's practice of delivering two *khutba's*, one seated and another standing, although he apparently resigned himself to overlooking it since the caliphs claimed to have taken it from their predecessors dating back to Mu'āwiya; see his *Tārīkh*, 2:1234.

118 R. Eisner, "Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik," *El2*, 9:821–822.

119 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:243.

Salama b. Dīnār, whose advice on religious matters was sought after by the caliph.¹²⁰ While these men may not have held their advisory positions in their capacity as *quṣṣās*, their access to the caliph shows that scholars who were known to have been *quṣṣās* maintained close connections to the Umayyad caliphs.

Ironically, in light of the access that these three eminent scholars-*quṣṣās* enjoyed to Sulaymān, the only person to have been directly connected to this caliph as a *qaṣṣ* was a certain Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna. He is mentioned only by Ṭabarī who reported that in the year 99/717: “Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna used to give *qaṣaṣ* in his [Sulaymān’s] presence (*kāna Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna yaquṣṣu ‘indahū*).”¹²¹ Even though the identity of this Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna is uncertain, it is clear from the report that a *qāṣṣ* visited Sulaymān, and he seems to have been either a personal *qāṣṣ* or the *qāṣṣ* of his court.¹²²

Two other *quṣṣās* who can be traced to Sulaymān’s reign were involved in the caliph’s military campaigns, in particular during the historic siege of Constantinople in 98–9/716–8 by the famous general Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik. One of these, ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd (d. 121/738), was identified specifically as the *qāṣṣ* of Maslama’s army, and thus shows that *qaṣaṣ* continued to

120 In a report recorded by Jāhīz, Salama, on one occasion, discussed with the caliph the issue of God’s punishment of the unbelievers and his mercy towards the beneficent; see his *Bayān*, 3:142. On another occasion, Sulaymān sent the distinguished al-Zuhri to Salama, and the *qāṣṣ* snubbed the famous emissary saying: “I have no need of him [Sulayman], so if he has a need, let him come to me.” See Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:316; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 15:320.

121 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1338. It is also worth noting, considering the many places in which the term “*qāṣṣ*” has been confused with the term “*qāḍī*,” that here the term cannot be read as *qāḍī* since the sentence immediately preceding the statement about Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna as *qāṣṣ*, says: “The *qāḍī* of Sulaymān was Sulaymān b. Ḥabīb al-Muḥārībī.” See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1338.

122 It is possible that he is Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Uyayna al-Muḥallabī, who was the governor of Rayy under the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) and the father of two ‘Abbāsīd era poets: Abū ‘Uyayna (known also by the *kunya* of Abū al-Minhāl) and ‘Abd Allāh. As Ghédira and Pellat have noted, there has been much confusion about the identity of these three because each is referred to in the sources as Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna; see C. Pellat, “Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Uyayna,” *EL*, 7:395; Ameer Ghédira, “Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna,” *EL*, 3:694; idem, “Deux poètes contemporains de Baššār, les frères Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna,” *Arabica*, x, 154–187. As Pellat mentioned, Ghédira has done much in clarifying the identity of each; see his “Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna,” *EL*, 3:694; idem, “Deux poètes,” 154–187. However, it is still not possible to connect this *qāṣṣ* directly to Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Uyayna. If he was indeed the same, he would provide an interesting example of an Umayyad *qāṣṣ* who approximately forty years later became an ‘Abbāsīd governor and, furthermore, would seem to confirm the connection between *qaṣaṣ* and *bayān* due to the fame of his family as poets.

be used in martial contexts.¹²³ While little is known about him, he appears to have carried significant enough clout in Syrian political affairs to have confidently offered protection to the Syrian *ḥadīth* scholar Makḥūl from the influential advisor and *qāṣṣ* Rajā' b. Ḥaywa who reprimanded the scholar for comments made in his sessions.¹²⁴ This was no small feat, since Rajā' enjoyed influence at the highest levels of the administration, in particular as the one in charge of the official seal for Sulaymān.¹²⁵ While 'Abd Allāh appears to have been the official *qāṣṣ* of Maslama's army, he was not the only *qāṣṣ* in the campaign in Constantinople. He was joined there by the famous scholar and *qāṣṣ* Mujāhid b. Jabr who, though often associated with scholarly pursuits, apparently also excelled as a military tactician, indicated by his appointment as one of Maslama's commanders.¹²⁶

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20)

While many *quṣṣāṣ* were clearly active during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik, no other Umayyad leader was personally connected to so many *quṣṣāṣ* in some way, than 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz. His affiliation with *quṣṣāṣ* appears to have extended throughout his lifetime, from his training in the religious sciences as a youth, to his position as governor of Medina and finally to his reign as caliph. As a result of his extensive associations with the *quṣṣāṣ*, it is often unclear precisely when a certain *qāṣṣ* was connected with him. In the following discussion, I will analyze 'Umar's relationship with *quṣṣāṣ*, and also attempt to establish, when possible, a more accurate periodization.¹²⁷

Even though 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz came in contact with a large number of *quṣṣāṣ* during his lifetime, only two of them seem to have enjoyed an official, or at least, distinctive, connection to him in their capacity as *quṣṣāṣ*. The first was

123 See the Appendix # 78.

124 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:314–315.

125 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:838.

126 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1315.

127 The temptation to simply ascribe all *quṣṣāṣ* associated with 'Umar to the time of his reign as caliph is appealing but may not be entirely accurate. Michael Lecker, for example, noted that a number of *quṣṣāṣ* were affiliated with 'Umar; he listed five Muḥammad b. Ka'b, Mujāhid b. Jabr, Muḥammad b. Qays, Muslim b. Jundab and Mūsā b. Wardān; see his "King Ubayy and the *Quṣṣāṣ*," *Methods and Theories in the Study of Islamic Origins*, ed. H. Berg (Leiden, 2003), republished in *People, Tribes and Society in Arabia Around the Time of Muḥammad* (Aldershot, UK, 2005), 11:69–70. He also incorrectly assumed that they all "operated during 'Umar's short reign." See Lecker, "Ubayy," 11:68.

Muslim b. Jundab who was ‘Umar’s tutor.¹²⁸ Muslim was a respected scholar and was praised by ‘Umar himself for the eloquence of his Qur’ān recitation.¹²⁹ ‘Umar, in fact, went beyond verbal praise and honored Muslim financially by giving him two *dīnārs* each month for giving *qaṣaṣ*; prior to that, Muslim gave *qaṣaṣ* for free.¹³⁰ Indeed, of the *quṣṣās* who were associated with ‘Umar, only Muslim received payment for *qaṣaṣ*. Exactly what this payment indicates is open for debate. Arguably, this was a salary, therefore conferring upon Muslim the position of an official, state-sponsored *qāṣṣ*, or it may simply be an honorarium. In either case, it seems clear that this payment reflects a unique relationship between ‘Umar and Muslim.

The precise meaning of ‘Umar’s payment of Muslim is also obscured by the lack of information available to us about the payment of *quṣṣās* in general. Indeed, ‘Umar’s payment of Muslim as a *qāṣṣ* is only the second, and, in actuality, the last, example of a *qāṣṣ* receiving payment during the Umayyad period. We have already encountered the report of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān of Egypt paying Ibn Ḥujayra a yearly salary of 200 *dīnārs*, or 16.6 *dīnārs* per month for giving *qaṣaṣ*. Clearly the two *dīnārs* Muslim received seem incongruous with Ibn Ḥujayra’s monthly wage of 16.6 *dīnārs*. The reason for the difference is unclear.¹³¹ It certainly cannot be a result of their scholarly abilities since both men were respected and trustworthy. Thus, since we have only two examples of payments for *quṣṣās* and since there is such a stark disparity between the amounts of these payments, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about the pay scale for the *quṣṣās* of the Umayyad period from this information.¹³²

A second *qāṣṣ*, the Medinan Muḥammad b. Qays, maintained a particularly close relationship to ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Indeed, of all the *quṣṣās* affiliated

128 Dhahabī, *Ṭabaqāt al-qurrā’*, ed. Aḥmad Khān (Riyadh, 2006), 93; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66.

129 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:367–368; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66.

130 Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:257. Ibn Sa’d, followed by Ibn Ḥajar, says that he received two *dīnārs* a month for judging but this is most likely a corruption since all other sources identify Muslim as a *qāṣṣ* and not as a *qāḍī*; see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:422; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66. For those sources which identify him as a *qāṣṣ*, see the Appendix # 61.

131 Wadād al-Qāḍī noted the discrepancy between Muslim’s and Ibn Ḥujayra’s payment as a judge, in particular, and disregarded the small amount attributed to Muslim because of his connection to the pious ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz; “the excessive modesty of their reported salaries make the information about them suspect.” See her “Salaries,” 24, n. 84.

132 A third *qāṣṣ*, the Kufan Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, was offered compensation for teaching Qur’ān as a tutor but he refused to accept it; see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:291. Similarly, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī purportedly refused to receive payment as a judge; see Qāḍī, “Salaries,” 24, n. 85.

with the caliph, he was the only one identified as “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz” and to have been so while ‘Umar was still governor of Medina.¹³³ As we have noted above, the meaning of the identification of a *qāṣṣ* as “the *qāṣṣ*” of an Umayyad ruler is elusive. In the case of Muḥammad b. Qays, it meant either he was the official *qāṣṣ* of ‘Umar while he was in Medina, or that he was simply ‘Umar’s personal *qāṣṣ*. In any case, when taken in tandem with Muslim b. Jundab, the sources seem to suggest that there were two *quṣṣāṣ* in the city of Medina sanctioned by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Nevertheless, it is still unclear whether Muḥammad and Muslim held their positions as *quṣṣāṣ* at different times, in different capacities or simultaneously, although in different locations. However, it appears that Muḥammad was ‘Umar’s personal *qāṣṣ* for he was with ‘Umar in Syria when the governor became caliph; apparently he followed ‘Umar to Syria, and, thus, was perhaps part of his entourage.¹³⁴

Across the empire, ‘Umar used *quṣṣāṣ* in a number of official and advisory capacities. He appointed a certain Byzantine, Christian convert, al-Julā Abū Kathīr al-Rūmī (d. 120/737), who, in fact, may have been his *mawlā*, as the *qāṣṣ* of Alexandria.¹³⁵ In Iraq, ‘Umar used the Kufan *qāṣṣ* ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh as his representative and emissary to the Khawārij.¹³⁶ In Basra, he and his governor of Basra, ‘Adī b. Arṭāt, wanted to place two *quṣṣāṣ* in the judiciary, though both appointees refused to accept the position. While ‘Adī initially appointed the renowned al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Ḥasan asked that his appointment be rescinded.¹³⁷ ‘Umar then ordered ‘Adī to appoint either Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh or Iyās b. Mu‘āwiya, both of whom were from the tribe of Muzayna.¹³⁸ ‘Adī selected Bakr, who, like his teacher al-Ḥasan, refused the appointment, leaving the judgeship to Iyās.¹³⁹

In addition to Muslim b. Jundab and Muḥammad b. Qays, as well as to the *quṣṣāṣ* appointed by ‘Umar to various positions around the empire, ‘Umar also confided in a number of men who were known to be *quṣṣāṣ*, among other

133 Yahyā b. Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh*, 3:196; Khalīfa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1:212; Fasawī, *Ma‘rifā*, 1:324, 3:170; Dulābī, *Kunā*, 1:313; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 8:63; Ibn Manjawayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:203; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 26:323; Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, 4:428–430; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:681; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 4:60; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:226. For his connection to ‘Umar in Medina, see Yahyā b. Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh*, 3:196; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1:212.

134 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 55:108.

135 Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 5:178; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:339; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 11:137. On the possibility that he was ‘Umar’s *mawlā*, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:321.

136 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:350.

137 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1346–1347.

138 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:100–101.

139 Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:100–101; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1346–1347.

things, as advisors. Two of his closest counselors were Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓī and Rajā' b. Ḥaywa.¹⁴⁰ Rajā', of course, was most famous for his role in bringing 'Umar to the caliphate and allegedly maintained a close connection to the caliph, even monitoring the caliph's rulings to determine their reliability.¹⁴¹ Rajā's influence on the caliph was so comprehensive that al-Ya'qūbī claimed that he ran rough-shod over 'Umar (*kāna al-ghālib 'alay-hi Rajā' b. Ḥaywa al-Kindī*).¹⁴² Even in 'Umar's most difficult moments, as in the death of his son, he sought out Rajā's council and comfort.¹⁴³

Another *qāṣṣ* who offered words of comfort to 'Umar upon the death of his son was 'Awn b. 'Abd Allāh.¹⁴⁴ 'Awn first came in contact with 'Umar after fleeing Iraq in the wake of having participated in Ibn al-Ash'ath's failed rebellion; 'Umar granted 'Awn refuge with him in the Ḥijāz.¹⁴⁵ 'Awn also met with 'Umar in Syria after the governor became the caliph. 'Awn and two of his colleagues, all of whom were murji'ites, apparently defended their position before the caliph and even allegedly convinced him of its correctness, although 'Awn later renounced his stance on the issue.¹⁴⁶

While 'Umar kept a number of *quṣṣāṣ* as confidants, Mūsā b. Wardān (d. 117/735) claimed to have benefitted from the privilege of unrestricted access to the caliph, enjoying an open-door policy allowing him to visit whenever he pleased and to stay as long as he wanted. There seem to have been limits, however, on this privilege. Mūsā recounted that one day he asked 'Umar for a letter

140 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-'Aẓm, 7:80. Muḥammad advised 'Umar on Qur'ān interpretation (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:298–299, 484–485) and admonished him about the imminence of death (Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-'Aẓm, 7:81, 146; Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 3:143). Likewise, Rajā' advised 'Umar about the imminence of death as well as about the “Golden Rule” of treating others as one would want to be treated; see Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-'Aẓm, 7:80. It is noteworthy, though, that the same admonition given by Rajā' to 'Umar was also ostensibly said by the *qāṣṣ* Yazīd b. Abān al-Raqāshī; see Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 32:76.

141 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1344–1345.

142 Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2:308.

143 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 18:112.

144 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:71.

145 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:65; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:104; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:338–339.

146 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:430. Both Ibn 'Asākir (*Dimashq*, 47:63) and Dhahabī (*Sīyar*, 5:104) claim that Ibn Sa'd identified one of the other two companions as 'Umar b. Dharr. Ibn Sa'd, however, identified him as 'Umar b. Ḥamza; see his *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:430. However, 'Umar b. Dharr was identified in the sources as a *murji'ī* and so could still be the 'Umar who accompanied 'Awn; see 'Ijlī, *Ma'rifa*, 2:165; the Appendix # 65. On the Murji'ī, see W. Madelung, “Murjī'a,” *El2*, 7:605–607. On 'Awn's abandonment of *murji'a*, see Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:104; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:339.

requesting that a debt of 20,000 *dīnārs* be paid him by Ḥayyān b. Shurayḥ, the well-known scholar and finance director of Egypt, for the price of peppers.

‘Umar said, “For whom is the 20,000 *dīnārs*?” I [Mūsā] said, “For me.” He said, “Wherefrom (*min ayna*)?” I said, “I was a merchant (*tājir*).” And ‘Umar hit his hand with his scepter and said, “The merchant is insolent, and the insolent are in hell-fire (*al-tājir fajir, wa-l-fajir ft-l-nār*).” Then he said, “Write to Ḥayyān on his behalf (*iktubū lahu ilā Ḥayyān*).” And I never visited him after that. He commanded his chamberlain to not allow me to enter.¹⁴⁷

Even though ‘Umar complied with Mūsā’s request, it was apparently the last time he allowed Mūsā such unrestricted access to his court since he appears to have overstepped his bounds as an advisor by using his connection to the caliph to his advantage.

In addition to having *quṣṣāṣ* as his instructors and advisors, ‘Umar also led three *quṣṣāṣ* as his students in *ḥadīth* transmission: Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa, Muḥammad b. Qays and Hilāl Abū Ṭu’ma.¹⁴⁸ We have already encountered Rajā’ as both a political and religious advisor to ‘Umar and Muḥammad as “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Umar.” As for Hilāl, he appears to have been purely a man of religious interests. He was a *mawlā* of ‘Umar who resided in Egypt where he was known for being a *qāṣṣ* and for his excellence in Qur’ān recitation.¹⁴⁹

While it appears that ‘Umar was generally supportive of the *quṣṣāṣ*, he did bring an end to a controversial practice allegedly begun by them. According to Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, the *quṣṣāṣ* maintained the practice of praying for the caliph and the governors. Indeed, this seems to have been a remnant of the practice implemented by Mu’āwiya of praying for the caliph and his administration and cursing the opponents of the caliph, although Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam does not mention the aspect of cursing the caliph’s opponents.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, ‘Umar commanded his military leaders to stop devoting so much attention to praying

147 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 61:226.

148 Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 21:434–436.

149 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 74:98–99; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:541–542.

150 The cursing of the opponents of the caliph at the end of the Friday prayer had also continued from the time of Mu’āwiya, who utilized the *quṣṣāṣ* to this end, until ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz who replaced the curse with a passage from the Qur’ān. We are probably dealing with the same practice here; see Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, 4:56–59; ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 68.

for the caliph and his colleagues, that he claimed was begun by the *quṣṣāṣ*, and to focus instead on praying for the Prophet and the believers.¹⁵¹

Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 101–5/720–4)

After reaching the zenith of their access to the Umayyad administration under the rule of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the influence of the *quṣṣāṣ* under ‘Umar’s immediate successors appears to have waned. In fact, from the reigns of Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 101–5/720–4) through Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd (r. 126/744)—a period of approximately a quarter century—there are very few references to *quṣṣāṣ* holding their positions by virtue of governmental appointment. As a result, we are left with a spotty picture of *qaṣaṣ* in its official capacity during this period. Indeed, the only *qāṣṣ* definitively connected to the Umayyad leadership during this period was Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa whose affiliations with the administration were extensive though not directly connected to *qaṣaṣ*.¹⁵²

Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 105–25/724–43)

As was mentioned above, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz attempted to rein in the overt politicization of the *qaṣaṣ* sessions by calling them to divert their attention from praising the caliph and cursing his enemies—a practice allegedly implemented during the struggle between Mu‘āwiya and ‘Alī—to praising God and His Prophet.¹⁵³ However, he does not appear to have been entirely successful since the practice continued in the caliphate of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, indicating that the *quṣṣāṣ*, in spite of the boundaries to which the caliphs encouraged them to adhere, still used their influence to promote political agendas, even in the heartland of Umayyad power, Syria.¹⁵⁴

In the southern Syrian region of Ḥawrān, a certain Abū Shayba was giving *qaṣaṣ* cursing ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Purportedly al-Junayd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, initially appointed by Hishām to be the governor-general in India in 105/724 and then reassigned to Khurasān in 111/729–30, was traveling through the region on his way to visit the caliph in Damascus when he prayed the Friday prayer

151 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz*, ed. Aḥmad ‘Ubayd (Beirut, 1984), 80–81. See also Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 5:372–373.

152 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 18:109.

153 See above, 216–220.

154 ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 68–69.

in the mosque where Abū Shayba gave *qaṣaṣ*. After the prayer service, Abū Shayba told the congregation that he closed by cursing “Abū Turāb.” Al-Junayd asked his neighbor about the identity of Abū Turāb and was told that this was ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Incensed by this comment, al-Junayd began to beat the *qāṣṣ* until men of the mosque restrained him. Both al-Junayd and Abū Shayba were then brought to Hishām where they recounted the story before the caliph. Al-Junayd defended his action by telling the caliph that, if the *qāṣṣ* said such things about a relative of Hishām’s, he would have responded in the same way. Hishām, agreeing with al-Junayd, said that Abū Shayba was the type of person that they not keep in their midst for he was destroying their land (*fa-yufsidu ‘alaynā al-balad*); so Hishām exiled him to India.¹⁵⁵

The account is important for three reasons. First, it indicates that some *quṣṣāṣ* continued to integrate political rhetoric, specifically the cursing of political opponents, into their sessions, in spite of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s attempt to restrain this practice by advocating that the *quṣṣāṣ* focus on matters of religious importance, like praising God and His Prophet. Secondly, the response of both al-Junayd and Hishām conveys the impression that the Umayyads were trying to distance themselves from this type of inflammatory speech. At the very least, the caliph saw it as a destructive element in the country. Thirdly, the ability of the *qāṣṣ* to maintain this apparent routine during the Friday prayer with the support of his congregation seems to show the inability of the central government to exert sufficient control over the discourse given in the mosques, even in their own region of Syria.

The above report emphasizes the continuing involvement of the *quṣṣāṣ* in controversial religio-political issues and suggests that loyal *quṣṣāṣ* were valuable resources. Such seems to be the case with the *qāṣṣ* al-Naḍr b. ‘Amr al-Ḥimyārī who was placed in charge of prayer in Damascus in the year 110/728. His importance to the Umayyads, in fact, continued to be felt into the reign of Yazīd b. al-Walīd (r. 126/744) when he was put in charge of the *kharāj*, the *jund* (i.e. the *dīwān* of the soldiery of the region), one of the two official seals (*al-khātīm al-saghīr*) and the guard (*al-ḥaras*).¹⁵⁶

Even in Kufa, the hotbed of anti-Umayyad opposition, the Umayyads benefitted from a sympathetic *qāṣṣ*. Ma‘bad b. Khālid was a Kufan *qāṣṣ* at the court of Khālid al-Qasrī (105–118/723–36).¹⁵⁷ Wadād al-Qāḍī has shown that prior to adopting a life of religious pursuits identifying him as a *qāṣṣ*, he was a security

155 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:290–291.

156 See the Appendix # 92. Al-Naḍr joined Ma‘bad al-Ṭuruq as one of the *quṣṣāṣ* who also held a security position with the Umayyads.

157 Al-Qāḍī, “Security Positions,” 277–279.

official of the Umayyads who was in charge of blockading the Kufa-Mecca road during al-Ḥajjāj's siege on Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca.¹⁵⁸ His journey from a security official to *qāṣṣ* is the opposite path taken by Sa'īd b. Jubayr, who, as we encountered above, appears to have first established his reputation as a man of religion and then to have been placed in a position of monitoring the nautical thoroughfares through the city of Kufa.¹⁵⁹

In Egypt, only one man was appointed to the position of *qāṣṣ* during the caliphate of Hishām. Ḥanzala b. Ṣafwān, who was appointed by Hishām as governor of Egypt from 118/736 to 124/742, placed Khayr b. Nu'aym, in 120/738, over both *qaṣaṣ* and judgeship.¹⁶⁰ Even though Khayr was the only *qāṣṣ* appointed to that position during this time, at least one other *qāṣṣ*, Tawba b. Namir, was considered a valuable resource for the Umayyads of Egypt; Hishām's first governor of Egypt, al-Walīd b. Rifā'a (109–17/727–35) gave him a judgeship.¹⁶¹

At least three *quṣṣāṣ* seem to have been active in Mecca during Hishām's reign: Sa'īd b. Ḥassān al-Makhzūmī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim and 'Abd Allāh b. Kathīr. Sa'īd b. Ḥassān al-Makhzūmī was identified as the "the *qāṣṣ* of the people of Mecca (*qāṣṣ ahl Makka*)" and appears to have held this position during the second quarter of the second/eighth century, in other words, towards the end of Hishām's reign.¹⁶² 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim was a *qāṣṣ* and *faqīh* who wielded enough influence with Hishām that when the caliph learned of 'Abd al-Raḥmān's intention to visit him in order to personally lodge a complaint against the Umayyad governor of Medina, Khālid b. 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Ḥārith, he preempted the scholar's visit by dismissing the governor without ever hearing the charges against him.¹⁶³ This same respect for 'Abd al-Raḥmān was displayed by Hishām's successor al-Walīd II who sought out the scholar's advice on questions of religious law.¹⁶⁴

According to Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, 'Abd Allāh b. Kathīr, a third Meccan *qāṣṣ*, gave *qaṣaṣ* to the public (*al-jamā'a*) in the year 122/740, toward the end of Hishām's reign.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, 'Abd Allāh's precise identity is unsure,

158 Ibid., 273–277. See also the Appendix # 73.

159 See above, 252.

160 Kindī, *Quḍāt*, 41. During the caliphate of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 101–105/720–724), Ḥanzala served his first tenure as governor of Egypt. In 103/722, he appointed the *qāṣṣ* and scholar 'Uqba b. Muslim as his deputy; see Kindī, *Quḍāt*, 41.

161 Kindī, *Quḍāt*, 36.

162 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:11–12. Also see the Appendix # 106.

163 Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 35:329.

164 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:452.

165 Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, ed. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Luḥaydān (Beirut, 1998), 1:448; Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:339. The reports in Fākihī indicate that a certain "Sufyān" transmitted

therefore making any definitive analysis of the report difficult. However, a second report, transmitted by Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī ‘Umar (d. 243/857)¹⁶⁶ and ostensibly connected with ‘Abd Allāh, offers an interesting statement on the status of *qaṣaṣ* in Mecca. Ibn Abī ‘Umar stated that giving *qaṣaṣ* to the public was a custom in Mecca (*huwa alladhī kāna ‘alayhi al-‘amal bi-baladinā*). Furthermore, he claimed: “*qaṣaṣ* had been such [i.e. *qaṣaṣ ‘alā al-jamā‘a*] in Mecca for a long time. Then they resumed it recently, and then they abandoned it after that (*fa-kāna al-qaṣaṣ ‘dhālika bi-Makka zamān^{an} ṭawīl^{an} thumma ‘awadūhu mundhu qarīb thumma tarakūhu ba‘da dhālika*).¹⁶⁷ Regrettably, it is unclear to what series of events this report points. While it is possible that the report refers to events occurring during ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr’s time as *qāṣṣ* in Mecca, and, therefore, during the caliphate of Hishām, it seems more probable, since the report appears to preserve the first-hand testimony of Ibn Abī ‘Umar, who died in 243/857, that this stopping and re-starting of *qaṣaṣ* in Mecca occurred during the ‘Abbāsīd period. Moreover, I have not been able to identify any time period during the reigns of the Umayyads when *qaṣaṣ* stopped in Mecca; even during the counter-caliphate of Ibn al-Zubayr, *qaṣaṣ* continued, as we saw above, with ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr.¹⁶⁸

Marwān b. Muḥammad (r. 127–32/744–50) and the Fall of the Umayyads

Because the black banners of the ‘Abbāsīds fluttered first in the east, it is not surprising that the earliest opposition between pro-Umayyad and pro-‘Abbāsīd *quṣṣāṣ* occurred in Khurasān. The sources mention four *quṣṣāṣ* in this region, al-Qāsim b. Mujāshī‘, Jahm b. Ṣafwān, Muqātil b. Sulaymān and Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, each of whom played a role in the conflict between the two powers.

The ‘Abbāsīds used *qaṣaṣ* to their advantage from the beginning of their underground movement, their *da‘wa*. Indeed, one of the initial twelve leaders of Abū Muslim’s movement (his *nuqabā‘*) named al-Qāsim b. Mujāshī‘

this report to ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. al-‘Alā’. A second report in Fākihī connects the unidentified “Sufyān” to Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umar. According to Mizzī, the only “Sufyān” from whom ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Muḥammad transmitted reports was Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna. On ‘Abd al-Jabbār, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 16:391. On Muḥammad, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 26:639.

166 He is Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī ‘Umar al-‘Adanī, and thus from Yemen; see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 26:639–642.

167 Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:339.

168 See above, 240–241.

(d. 169/785) engaged in *qaṣaṣ* in support of the ‘Abbāsīd cause. Al-Qāsim was, by all accounts, a major player in Abū Muslim’s movement, having acted on multiple occasions as prayer leader and judge of his forces. He thus seems to have been particularly astute as a religious authority. In addition to this, he was active as a soldier in Abū Muslim’s military campaigns in 129–30/747–8. His involvement in *qaṣaṣ* was undoubtedly political in nature; it is reported that, in his *qaṣaṣ* after evening prayers, he recounted the virtues and rights to the leadership of the Banū Hāshim and the vices and tyranny of the Banū Umayya. Yet in spite of al-Qāsim’s open support for the rebellion at its outset, the ‘Abbāsīd leadership eventually shunned him because of his support for the ‘Alids’, instead of the ‘Abbāsīds’, right to the leadership of the community.¹⁶⁹

In light of the history of Umayyad use of *qaṣaṣ* and the ‘Abbāsīds’ new found introduction to its value, it is not surprising that the two sides eventually utilized *quṣṣāṣ* face-to-face against each other; furthermore, it is not surprising that this occurred first in Khurasān. The two *quṣṣāṣ* who were most active in this struggle were Muqātil b. Sulaymān, in support of the Umayyads, and Jahm b. Ṣafwān, advocating for the ‘Abbāsīds. While each man became known to posterity through their other interests and associations, Muqātil as a Qur’ān commentator and Jahm as the ostensible eponym of the sect of the Jahmiyya, their interaction in Khurasān during the rise of the ‘Abbāsīds appears to have been largely politically driven.¹⁷⁰

While the biographical dictionaries focusing on *ḥadīth* transmitters and other religious scholars only state that Muqātil and Jahm were antagonists and that they wrote works against each other, none of them offers any explicit reason for their mutual animosity, although they seem to imply that it was grounded in religious differences. They relate that Muqātil moved to Marw and held *qaṣaṣ* sessions in the city.¹⁷¹ Jahm came in contact with Muqātil through these sessions in Marw, and the two wrote treatises against each other, based, presumably, on opposing religious ideologies—Muqātil espousing anthropomorphism and Jahm denying all divine attributes.¹⁷² In other words, this

169 See the Appendix # 100.

170 On Muqātil as a Qur’ān commentator, see Chapter Two, 119–136. On Jahm as the alleged namesake of the Jahmiyya, see W.M. Watt, “Djahm b. Ṣafwān,” and “Djahmiyya,” *El2*, 11:388. See also their biographies in the Appendix: Muqātil # 97 and Jahm # 84.

171 Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 6:437; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dīmashq*, 60:123; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:641; idem, *Mizān*, 6:505.

172 Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:15–16; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:641. As Watt pointed out, there is no way of knowing if Jahm actually held the positions of the sect that came to be called by his name; see his “Djahm b. Ṣafwān,” *El2*, 2:388; “Djahmiyya,” *El2*, 2:388. See also J. van Ess, *TG*, 2:507–508.

account suggests that the conflict between them was purely religious in nature. Other reports, however, hint at the possibility that the antagonism between them was strongly political.

Ṭabarī's account of the two men's interaction in Khurasān offers an alternative reason for the opposition between them. He recorded that they were allied with competing political forces within Khurasān. Though it is not possible at present to trace, in definitive terms, their animosity towards each other wholly to the political tensions in the region, Ṭabarī's account certainly suggests that this was a major factor.

The only source, for instance, identifying Jahm as a *qāṣṣ* was Ṭabarī who reported that he was the *qāṣṣ* for the 'Abbāsīd rebel al-Ḥārith b. Surayj (d. 128/746) who opposed the last Umayyad governor of Khurasān Naṣr b. Sayyār (d. 131/748).¹⁷³ On the other hand, Muqātil, as we have seen above, was identified as a *qāṣṣ* by virtue of his sessions in the mosque in Marw—implying that his *qaṣaṣ* were of a religious nature. Yet, Muqātil, like Jahm, was a major player in the hostility between Naṣr and al-Ḥārith with the two squaring off against each other in support of their respective leaders. Furthermore, it is at this juncture that the third *qāṣṣ* of Khurasān, Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, emerges into the foreground. Even though he, like his namesake, seems to have been identified as giving *qaṣaṣ* in his capacity as a religious scholar, he was also heavily involved in the strife between Naṣr and al-Ḥārith.¹⁷⁴

All of these men found themselves embroiled in the political movements of the time. The two Muqātils sided with the Umayyad governor Naṣr b. Sayyār, while Jahm supported the pro-'Abbāsīd al-Ḥārith b. Surayj. When the two sides decided to open negotiations in order to stave off bloodshed, these men were selected as the representatives of their respective sides. In the first round of negotiations, the two Muqātils met al-Ḥārith's representatives, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba al-Jahḍamī and Mu'ādh b. Jabala.¹⁷⁵ When this summit failed to

173 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1918. On al-Ḥārith, see M.J. Kister, "al-Ḥārith b. Suraydj," *EL* 2, 3:223–234. On Naṣr, see C.E. Bosworth, "Naṣr b. Sayyār," *EL* 2, 7:1015–1016.

174 On Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, see the Appendix # 88.

175 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1918. While Jahm was clearly a major player in al-Ḥārith's rebellion, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba and Mu'ādh b. Jabala seem to have enjoyed comparable influence in al-Ḥārith's eye, since they were selected first to be his spokespersons. Consequently, Watt's claim that Jahm was the "intellectual protagonist" of the rebellion—a claim that John Alden Williams echoes—may be somewhat overstated; see Watt, "Djahm," *EL* 2, 2:338; Williams, *The History of al-Ṭabarī Vol. XXVII: The 'Abbāsīd Revolution* (Albany, 1985), 29:68. It should be noted that al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba al-Jahḍamī is not the same as the famous Companion of the Prophet al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba al-Thaqafī; on the latter, see H. Lammens, "al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba," *EL* 2, 7:347.

reach a solution, Naşr sent Muqātil b. Ḥayyan once again, while al-Ḥārith selected Jahm.¹⁷⁶

According to Ṭabarī's account, Jahm proved to be a formidable negotiator, securing a judgment that Naşr relinquish power and that the government be agreed upon by a council; Naşr rejected this decision. Jahm then returned to al-Ḥārith's camp where he "gave *qaṣaṣ* in his tent . . . while al-Ḥārith continued to oppose Naşr."¹⁷⁷ Obviously, Jahm's *qaṣaṣ* was part of al-Ḥārith's propaganda war against Naşr, and, as we have seen, this utilization of *qaṣaṣ* for martial purposes enjoyed a long history. Stiff consequences for a *qāṣṣ* who gave politically inflammatory statements also had a long history. Needless to say, then, when al-Ḥārith's rebellion was eventually quelled, Jahm was executed, as had been *quṣṣāṣ* of previous rebellions, most notably those of Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion in Iraq.

The developments in the eastern regions of Khurasān paralleled those in Iraq. In 132/750, the *qāṣṣ* and *murji'ī* 'Umar b. Dharr performed the same function for Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra, the last Umayyad governor of Wāsiṭ, that his Khurasānī counterparts did for their leaders: he gave *qaṣaṣ* in order to incite the people in Wāsiṭ against the rising 'Abbāsids.¹⁷⁸ As a result, when Ibn Hubayra was killed and the region fell into 'Abbāsīd hands, 'Umar b. Dharr was one of three opponents of the 'Abbāsids to be singled out for execution.¹⁷⁹ Only through the intercession of Ziyād b. 'Ubayd Allāh, a governor of Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr in Iraq, was 'Umar's life spared.¹⁸⁰ A fellow pro-Umayyad *murji'ī*, Khālīd b. Salama, did not fare as well and was executed. While his role was comparable to that of 'Umar b. Dharr's, his alleged hatred of 'Alī, a position hinting at the diversity of opinions encapsulated in *irjā'*, may not have helped him.¹⁸¹

Elsewhere in Iraq, pro-'Alid *quṣṣāṣ* appear to have been emboldened by the political changes. A virulent Kufan opponent of the Umayyads was Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa (d.c. 140/757), a staunch supporter of 'Alī who disparaged 'Uthmān, Abū Bakr, and 'Umar.¹⁸² The pro-Umayyad *qāṣṣ* 'Umar b. Dharr told Sālim that his

176 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1919.

177 Ibid.

178 Ibn 'Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 16:94; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:405.

179 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:405. Ṭabarī's and Dhahabī's lists of the three who were not granted safety by the 'Abbasids differ. Ṭabarī lists 'Umar b. Dharr, Khālīd b. Salama and al-Ḥakam b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Bishr; Dhahabī replaces al-Ḥakam with al-'Awwām b. Ḥawshab.

180 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69; Ibn 'Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 16:94.

181 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69–70; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:405.

182 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:675; 'Uqaylī, *Du'afā'*, 2:153.

support for the killing of ‘Uthmān made him complicit in his murder.¹⁸³ When Kufa was still under Umayyad control, Sālim slyly integrated his dislike for the first caliphs in his *qaṣaṣ*. He began his *qaṣaṣ* by recounting the admirable traits (*faḍā’il*) of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and then segued to his topic of primary interest—the virtues (*manāqib*) of ‘Alī. When he arrived at this transition point, Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna warned those around him of Sālim’s sinister (even if camouflaged) intentions saying, “Be wary of him because he is heading towards what he really wants (*aḥḍharūhu fa-innahu yurīd mā yurīd*).”¹⁸⁴ His anti-Umayyad passions were released fully during the pilgrimage in the year 132/750, when he allegedly entered Mecca gloatingly exclaiming: “Here I am, here I am, the destroyer of the Banū Umayya! Here I am (*labbayka, labbayka, muhlik Banī Umayya, labbayka*)!”¹⁸⁵

Not surprisingly, Kufa was home to other pro-‘Alid *quṣṣāṣ*, such as Yūnus b. Khabbāb (d.c. first half of 2nd century/8th century), who likewise vilified ‘Uthmān.¹⁸⁶ Even in his *ḥadīth* transmission, he did not suppress his anti-‘Uthmānī sentiments. The Basran ‘Abbād b. ‘Abbād al-Muhallabī (d. 181/797)¹⁸⁷ stated:

I went to Yūnus b. Khabbāb and asked him about the *ḥadīth* of the torments of the grave. So he related it to me saying, “Here is a word that the al-Nāṣibiyya hide.” I said, “What is it?” He said, “He will be asked in his grave: “Who is your protector?” If he says, “Alī,” then he is saved.” I said, “By God, I never heard this.” He said, “Where are you from?” I said, “From the people of Baṣra.” He said, “You are a vile ‘Uthmānī!”¹⁸⁸

One of the last Syrian *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period was ‘Uthmān b. Abī al-‘Ātika (d.c. 155/772).¹⁸⁹ In spite of having a reputation as a weak *ḥadīth* transmitter, ‘Uthmān was generally considered a reputable scholar and was identified as a teacher (*mu‘allim*), Qur’ān reciter and *qāṣṣ* in Damascus. He also

183 Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:136.

184 Ibid.

185 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:455. See also Ibn Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh*, 3:469; ‘Uqaylī, *Du‘afā’*, 2:152–153; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:136; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:675.

186 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:468–469. ‘Uqaylī said he was a Rāfiḍī; see his *Du‘afā’*, 4:458.

187 Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:291, 329.

188 Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:469. The Nāṣibiyya were those who denied the legitimacy of ‘Alī’s caliphate; see Ibn Taymiyya, *Manhāj al-sunna al-nabawīyya*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (Riyadh, 1986), 2:607–609. The term was also used more generally for the Sunnīs in some Shī‘ī polemical literature.

189 See the Appendix # 102.

appears to have maintained the general trend among the Syrian *quṣṣāṣ* of support for the Umayyads, having held an official position as the *qāṣṣ* of the *jund* (administrative/military district) of Damascus. Although it is unclear precisely what such a position entailed, it is nonetheless safe to assume that a position of this type was only granted to a supporter of the administration.

The last Umayyad *qāṣṣ* of Egypt was Sulaymān b. ‘Amr.¹⁹⁰ While originally from Medina, he traveled to Egypt in search of a livelihood (*al-rizq wa-l-ma‘āsh*).¹⁹¹ While there, he became known as “the *qāṣṣ* of the community (*qāṣṣ al-jamā‘a*)” which, considering his intention of securing financial compensation, suggested the position of *qāṣṣ al-jamā‘a* was a salaried position in Umayyad Egypt, though this can only be speculation at this time.¹⁹² When the ‘Abbāsids entered Egypt, they removed Sulaymān from the position of *qāṣṣ*—a decision that weighed heavily on him (*‘azalūhu ‘an al-qaṣaṣ, fa-ashtadda dhalika ‘alayhi*) and reveals the ‘Abbāsids’ awareness of the political influence wielded by the *quṣṣāṣ*.¹⁹³

Sulaymān, however, attempted to downplay the ‘Abbāsids’ clear concern about his allegiance. When they removed him, he pled his case, saying:

Why is that you have removed me since I am [only] a *qāṣṣ*? If you had told me, “Add this to your *qaṣaṣ*,” I would have added it. If you told me, “Shorten [them],” I would have shortened [them]. So you did not need to remove me. (*mā la-kum ta‘zilūnī inna-mā anā qāṣṣ, fa-in qultum lī zidd fī qaṣaṣika ziddtu. wa-in qultum qaṣṣar qaṣṣartu fa-mā la-kum ta‘zilūnanī*).¹⁹⁴

This “tongue-in-cheek” response to his dismissal shows that he understood *qaṣaṣ* to be politically sensitive. Furthermore, the ‘Abbāsids’ insistence on removing him reveals that the anxiety surrounding *qaṣaṣ* was not assuageable by simply “adding” to it or “shortening” it; their use of *quṣṣāṣ* and experience with *quṣṣāṣ* in the east appears to have solidified that lesson.

The *Quṣṣāṣ* under the Umayyads

Clearly, the *quṣṣāṣ* played an important role religiously and politically throughout the Umayyad period, among both the Umayyads themselves as well as their

190 See the Appendix # 99.

191 Fasawī, *Ma‘rifa*, 2:436.

192 Ibid.

193 Fasawī, *Ma‘rifa*, 2:436.

194 Ibid. ‘Athamina, “Qaṣaṣ,” 73–74.

opponents. The sources show both the variety of roles and the diversity of allegiances in a number of ways, though the most distinct is certainly by describing a particular man as “the *qāṣṣ* of” a certain group of people, i.e. “the common folk (*al-āmma*)” or “the community (*al-jamā‘a*),” or a certain leader, i.e. “Ibn al-Zubayr” or “Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.” Even here, however, precise meanings are elusive. When the sources identify a *qāṣṣ* with a particular leader, using the phrase “the *qāṣṣ* of so-and so,” the type of relationship expressed by the designation can only be determined based upon the associations between the two. Some appear to have been martial and/or ideological spokespeople for certain leaders, as in the case of a number of martial *quṣṣāṣ* and, specifically, as in the case ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd, “the *qāṣṣ* of Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik,” while others seem to have been the personal *qāṣṣ* of the ruler or *qāṣṣ* of the court, as Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna appears to have been for Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik or Muḥammad b. Qays for ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. For others like ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr who was “the *qāṣṣ* of Ibn al-Zubayr” and ‘Ā’idh Allāh al-Mujāshī‘ī who was “the *qāṣṣ* of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān,” exactly what position they held or why they were described in this way is unclear.

Even the identification of a *qāṣṣ* as “the *qāṣṣ* of the common folk (*al-āmma*)” or “the *qāṣṣ* of the community (*al-jamā‘a*)” may not be uniform. The two expressions appear to be synonymous with both conveying the impression that the *qāṣṣ* was a man who garnered the support and following of the people of a specific area. Moreover, according to the tradition by Layth b. Sa‘d concerning the separation of *qaṣaṣ* into *qaṣaṣ al-khāṣṣa* (“the *qaṣaṣ* of the rulers”) and *qaṣaṣ al-āmma* (“the *qaṣaṣ* of the common folk”), the latter was primarily a religious exercise. Thus, these phrases seem to portray the image of a local religious scholar who taught the people of a particular region.

Most of those who are designated in this fashion seem to have been primarily men of religion and not to have been used directly by the political powers. For example, the sources describe the Kufan *qāṣṣ* Kurdūs as the “*qāṣṣ al-āmma*” in his city, Sa‘īd b. Ḥassān as the “*qāṣṣ* of the people of Mecca (*qāṣṣ ahl Makka*),” the Meccan ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr as one who gave *qaṣaṣ* to the community (*‘alā al-jamā‘a*), and Sulaymān b. ‘Amr as the “*qāṣṣ* of the community (*qāṣṣ al-jamā‘a*)” in Egypt. This is not to imply, however, that these men were completely politically neutral for Kurdūs was allegedly an ‘Alid supporter. Moreover, precisely what the sources mean by identifying ‘Uthmān b. Abī al-Ātika as the *qāṣṣ* of the *jund* (administrative/military district) of Damascus is also uncertain; his connection to a specific region, i.e. Damascus, mirrors other *quṣṣāṣ* except for use of the term “*jund*,” a more official designation, instead of “*qāṣṣ al-jamā‘a*” or “*qāṣṣ ahl Dimashq*,” suggesting that his position was official. Finally, the odd designation of the Syrian scholar Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa as the “*qāṣṣ al-āmma*” in Kufa indicated that even this phrase was not entirely

devoid of political associations. Therefore, while the phrases “*qāṣṣ al-‘amma* (or *qaṣaṣ al-‘amma*) and “*qāṣṣ al-jamā‘a*” usually refer to a religious *qāṣṣ* in a specific locale, it remains possible that even these expressions carried with them political undertones.

Undoubtedly, the *quṣṣāṣ*'s influence as both official appointees and as spiritual/religious advisors to the caliphs was be felt across the empire, most notably in the caliphates of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. A caveat, however, is necessary here. Even though many *quṣṣāṣ* of the Umayyad period held various positions in both the Umayyad administration and in opposition circles, some, well-known *quṣṣāṣ*, such as Bilāl b. Sa‘d in Syria, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim in Mecca, Ya‘qūb b. Mujāhid in Medina, Thābit al-Bunānī, Maṭar al-Warrāq, al-Faḍl b. ‘Isā and Mūsā b. Sayyār in Basra, as well as other lesser-known *quṣṣāṣ*, appear to have remained essentially free from any close ties to the political movements of the day.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, while this chapter has shown that the *quṣṣāṣ* were indeed valuable resources for the Umayyad caliphates and to their opponents, it must be remembered that many of them were primarily men of religion who, when acting specifically as *quṣṣāṣ*, were engaged, more often than not, solely in religious education.

195 This is just a representative list. I have tried to include in the biographies of the *quṣṣāṣ* in the Appendix the various affiliations that each *qāṣṣ* maintained, both with other religious disciplines and with the Umayyad administration. Therefore, by reviewing the Appendix, the reader should be able to find which of the *quṣṣāṣ* seem to have had political ties, even if those ties were minimal.

Conclusion

The *quṣṣās* of early Islam were a diverse group with varied interests; this has been known in modern scholarship since the research of Ignaz Goldziher who noted their role in both religious and military domains. Furthermore, while the *qāṣṣ* who engaged in religious instruction was generally portrayed by Goldziher, and later writers on the *quṣṣās*, in a negative light, it was still acknowledged that not all *quṣṣās* were disreputable—a sentiment drawn directly from the Islamic sources, particularly Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb al-quṣṣās wa-l-mudhakkirīn*. However, heretofore, the exact nature of this diversity and the precise themes of their discourses were unclear.

The foregoing analysis has refined many points proposed by earlier scholarship, although it has admittedly not resolved all problems of the topic. Among the most salient of these problems is the fluidity of the meaning of the term *qaṣṣa* and the existence in the Islamic sources of a number of synonyms for religious statements, such as *waʿz*, *dhikr*, and *ḥadīth*. In many cases, it is still unclear how the authors of the Islamic sources distinguished between these terms. As a result, firm categorizations remain, at times, elusive. This is not to suggest, however, that the identification and classification of *quṣṣās* is categorically impossible. To a large extent, the challenges noted above are unavoidable in the first systematic and thorough study of the topic. I hope that this research has laid the groundwork for further scholarship on the topic. Most importantly the current study has made a broad contribution that clarifies a number of aspects of this very important and tricky subject of early Islamic history and thought.

First, the Islamic sources reveal, rather definitively, that the early Islamic *qāṣṣ* was not simply a “storyteller,” at least not according to the meaning of the term as one who relates a narrative. The *quṣṣās*, in fact, addressed a number of topics of religious importance and used various methods when doing so. They made statements about Qurʾān recitation and commentary, issued legal rulings, transmitted *ḥadīth*, and engaged in other forms of religious education, including the telling of narratives on religious topics. Some of this has certainly been long established. However, until now, the textual sources for the sayings of the early *quṣṣās* were limited. These sources have revealed a degree of diversity in the themes of the *quṣṣās* hitherto unknown.

Moreover, it is evident that the Islamic *qāṣṣ* was not primarily a “storyteller” since other scholars of early Islam, who themselves were known for having

related narratives, such as Salmān al-Fārisī (d.c. 36/656),¹ ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām (d. 43/663–4)² and Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī (d. 127/745),³ to name only a few, are never identified by the sources as *quṣṣās*, in spite of the fact that their religious interests and those of the *quṣṣās* overlap, especially in the area of Qur’ān commentary and the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*. If a *qāṣṣ* was someone who told stories, we expect to find these men listed among their ranks. Conversely, we also expect to find others, possibly the martial *quṣṣās*, to have not been identified as *quṣṣās*. However, while a *qāṣṣ* may not have always told stories for religious education, this does not imply that narratives, often in the form of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, were not a major component of the religious disciplines, such as *ḥadīth* and, particularly, Qur’ān commentary. It does suggest, though, that the narrative framework of much of the commentary tradition, for example, is a product of the scholarly community in general and, therefore, is not to be placed uncritically or uniformly on the shoulders of the *quṣṣās*.

Furthermore, the use of the term *qaṣṣa* and *qāṣṣ* for a military man who exhorts the soldiers in battles also indicates that the *qāṣṣ* was not purely a “storyteller.” While this exhortation was often achieved through the use of religious terminology, it was also the case that *qaṣaṣ* meant instruction in military tactics alone, and therefore did not have to have religious connotations.

Secondly, the *quṣṣās* were apparently not unreliable fabricators of traditions. This is not to imply that their traditions are all historical; the determination of historicity can only be established with more work on the individual traditions. They do not seem, however, to have been more prone to fabrications than other scholars of the early period. This deduction stems from the overwhelmingly positive reputation of the *quṣṣās* in the early period. If the *quṣṣās* were viewed by and large as fabricators then we expect this to be reflected in the biographical information on them. As I have shown in Chapter Two, the biographical information suggests the opposite. It seems then that the pervasive notion that the *quṣṣās* were second-rate scholars—a notion found in medieval Islamic sources and modern studies alike—be attributed to other factors. My impression is that the progressive categorization of the disciplines of Islamic thought, meaning the grouping of scholars into categories such as of *ḥadīth* scholars, Qur’ān interpreters, legal scholars, etc., contributed to the growing criticism of the *quṣṣās* as a class. The evolving restrictions placed on laxity in *ḥadīth* transmission, or in the transmission of stories of the prophets, also played a role in the developing reputation of the *quṣṣās*. For example, as

1 G. Levi Della Vida, “Salmān al-Fārisī,” *EL*2, 12:701–702.

2 J. Horowitz, “‘Abd Allāh b. Salām,” *EL*2, 1:52.

3 G.H.A. Juynboll, “al-Suddī,” *EL*2, 9:762.

the doctrine of the infallibility of the prophets continued to develop, traditions and stories that impugn the reputation of the prophets, even slightly, were rejected and those who transmitted them were marginalized. This process influenced the reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ*. It is not without purpose, in my opinion, that Ibn al-Jawzī used the potentially scandalous story of David and Uriah to criticize the *quṣṣāṣ*.

Indeed, the Islamic sources, in spite of a number of traditions criticizing the *quṣṣāṣ*, indicate that a significant majority of the *quṣṣāṣ* through the end of the Umayyad period, more than 70% of them, were respectable religious scholars with over two-thirds of them praised for their Qurʾān recitation, Qurʾān commentary, *ḥadīth*-transmission and/or legal knowledge (*fiqh*). Moreover, despite reports claiming that *qaṣaṣ* was a negative innovation (*bidʿa*), it was a practice that seemingly originated at the very beginning of the emergence of the community, if not with the Prophet himself. Regardless of the questions of authenticity surrounding these reports alleging the Prophet gave *qaṣaṣ*, their existence indicates that there was a competing narrative challenging the idea that the *quṣṣāṣ* were purveyors of *bidʿa* and were, thus, suspect as scholars. In addition, the involvement of a number of *quṣṣāṣ* in the theological debates of the period, specifically on the issue of *qadar* (see Chapter One), may have exacerbated the acrimony leveled against them; given that a number of scholars in the community also engaged in this debate so the extent of its influence in challenging the reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ* as a whole must be evaluated cautiously.

Thirdly, in spite of the generally solid reputation of the majority of the early *quṣṣāṣ*, the seeds for the eventual repudiation of the *quṣṣāṣ* as a class sprouted during the Umayyad period. We have already encountered some of these trends, specifically those describing *qaṣaṣ* as an innovation and the possibility of theological issues having impacted their reputations. However, the criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ* was not based solely on the perception that they were innovators and second-rate scholars; it seems to have been a product of a number of other factors including, while not exclusive to, dubious practices exercised in their sessions, the public nature of their pronouncements and their divisive political affiliations.

According to some reports, the *quṣṣāṣ* were censured for what was perceived to be their negative influence on Islamic society, exemplified in their personal conduct as well as the lack of proper comportment in their sessions. This was indicated by the pride *qaṣaṣ* fostered in the *qāṣṣ*, the unruliness, especially in terms of volume, of *qaṣaṣ* sessions and the breaking down of gender barriers by allowing men and women to participate in the same sessions. Nevertheless, it was precisely the public nature of *qaṣaṣ* that made it such an important, and

controversial, phenomenon in the community. The public nature of *qaṣaṣ* presumed that the *qāṣṣ* possess certain public speaking skills. He, therefore, was not only expected to possess religious knowledge (*ilm*), he was also supposed to be an eloquent speaker, characterized by his vocal mechanics (*lisān*) and oratorical skills (*bayān*).

It must be noted here that while the *qāṣṣ* was certainly a “public” figure, he was not necessarily a “popular” figure. In modern research, the *qāṣṣ* has often been identified as a “popular preacher” or as a “free preacher.” This description intends to convey the idea that the *quṣṣāṣ* were untrained, if not illegitimate, religious scholars who purportedly flitted around beyond the domain of some apparently established circle of official or orthodox scholars. In this way, the *quṣṣāṣ* have often been placed in opposition to the “scholars” of the community and, in later eras, in opposition to the *ḥadīth* scholars, more specifically. Eventually they became the foil for the high culture of *ḥadīth* study; the *qāṣṣ* was portrayed as the antithesis of those who came to be known as *ḥadīth* scholars. This low-level reputation contributed to the eventual denigration of the *qāṣṣ* as a mere “popular” preacher or teacher whose words were nothing more than fabrications and fancies.

Yet, the description of the early Islamic *qāṣṣ* as a “popular preacher” seems untenable when applied to the *quṣṣāṣ* who lived through the end of the Umayyad period. The sound reputation of many of them confirms that they were in fact part of the orthodox religious establishment. Therefore, if the terms “popular” or “free” are meant to carry a negative image, as they most often do in modern studies on the *quṣṣāṣ*, even if slightly, then they do not seem to apply to the *quṣṣāṣ* of early Islam.

In addition, the *quṣṣāṣ* have often been identified as “popular preachers” because it was believed that their target audience was the uneducated populace, “the masses.” This perception is also not entirely accurate, in part, because the early Islamic *quṣṣāṣ* held their sessions for a variety of audiences in an assortment of venues. They held sessions for the public outside of the mosque, as in the case of Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī entertaining questions from the audience while seated on the steps of the mosque in Damascus;⁴ for smaller groups in sessions inside a mosque, apparently the most common practice of the Umayyad period;⁵ for groups in homes, as did Zurāra b. Awfā and suggests that the audience was even smaller than the audience in the mosque;⁶ and, finally, even for individuals, as in the case of ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr giving *qaṣaṣ*

4 See the Appendix # 31.

5 See the discussion in Chapter Three.

6 See the Appendix # 39.

to Ibn ‘Umar.⁷ This variety of locations and range in the number of listeners who attended their sessions shows that the early *qāṣṣ* did not target solely the “masses.”

Furthermore, the biographical sketches of the *quṣṣāṣ* suggest that they did not provide religious instruction to only the uneducated populace. Since more than two-thirds of the *quṣṣāṣ* were considered trustworthy *ḥadīth* transmitters, the sources suggest that part of their pedagogy was learning *ḥadīth* from their teachers and transmitting in sessions *ḥadīth* to their students.⁸ Even though these sessions were conducted in a number of formats, they were not necessarily open to the uneducated masses. And while it may be true that *ḥadīth* sessions differed from *qaṣaṣ* sessions, it must be remembered that we do have examples of the transmission of Prophetic *ḥadīth* in *qaṣaṣ* sessions, as noted in Chapter One. Also, even though the type of instruction insinuated in the biographical dictionaries is that of *ḥadīth* transmission and not of *qaṣaṣ*, the trustworthy scholarly circles with which many of the early Islamic *quṣṣāṣ* affiliated themselves suggests that they not be viewed pejoratively as “popular preachers;” in so doing one may unintentionally denigrate an otherwise reputable scholar listed among the *quṣṣāṣ* of the early period.

Moreover, the mixed view of the early Islamic *qāṣṣ* stemmed from an assortment of criticisms of his religious instructions, as well as from the role he played in religio-political struggles of the early period; *quṣṣāṣ* supported both rebel factions as well as the government. Ṭabarī’s *History*, for instance, records a number of examples of *quṣṣāṣ* who were active in martial contexts or in the internecine strife that plagued the community, most notably Abū Sufyān, the three *quṣṣāṣ* of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad’s rebellion, Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ, Shabīb b. Yazīd, Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna and Jahm b. Ṣafwān.⁹ Certainly the involvement of *quṣṣāṣ* in the ranks of the Khawārij, for example, contributed to the tensions that surrounded them. In light of this long history of *quṣṣāṣ* involvement in the martial and religio-political affairs of the community, dating from the conquests of Syria to the fall of the Umayyad empire, it is noteworthy that this use of *qaṣaṣ* appears to have waned with the coming of the ‘Abbāsids. Indeed, I was able to locate only one instance recorded by Ṭabarī in his *History* whereby *qaṣaṣ* was used by a political movement in the ‘Abbāsīd period.¹⁰ Upon initial

7 See the Appendix # 25.

8 See the biographical sketches in the Appendix.

9 See their biographies in the Appendix.

10 A blind *qāṣṣ* exhorted the supporters of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī’s (*ṣāhib Fakhkh*) revolt against the caliph al-Ḥādī in 169/785 and was killed in battle; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:560. Even though this is the only explicit example of the use of *qaṣaṣ* in political opposition movements

evaluation, it appears, therefore, that the term *qaṣaṣ* eventually fell out of use for both martial and religio-political contexts, though this point warrants further investigation.

Fourthly, it is the public nature of *qaṣaṣ* that seems to set it apart from other teaching sessions. Even though some early *quṣṣāṣ* related *qaṣaṣ* to small numbers, the *qāṣṣ* was still essentially a public figure and, therefore, should possess the public speaking skills mentioned above. The use of the term *qaṣṣa* in a military context is particularly relevant in this regard. Since both religious exhortation (in many forms) and military exhortation are described as *qaṣaṣ*, it appears that the ascription of the term *qaṣṣa* to an act of public speech depended as much, if not more so, on oratorical factors than on the content of the statements made. In this regard, *qaṣaṣ* was similar to *khaṭāba* (“oration”) though *qaṣaṣ* was less formal, as we have mentioned above, and therefore, the *qāṣṣ* preached his message in a number of environments.

In this regard, *qaṣaṣ* was also comparable to two other forms of public religious instruction, *waʿz* and *dhikr*, both enjoying the same flexibility in terms of their application, yet they seem to have differed from *qaṣaṣ* in content and objective. Once again, the use of the term *qaṣaṣ* in a martial context may help in distinguishing between these forms of instruction, at least as they apply to the early period. *Waʿz* and *dhikr*, for example, appear to have been essentially religious in their content and objective. The *wāʿiẓ* admonished his listeners on religious topics, such as death and the afterlife, among many others, as did the *mudhakkir*, “the reminder.” These terms, like *qaṣaṣ*, were used to describe the action of encouraging greater piety in the listener by conveying religious truth. Yet they do not seem to have been used for pronouncements in martial contexts, unlike *qaṣaṣ*. Therefore, while *qaṣaṣ* was similar in many and sundry ways to *khaṭāba*, *waʿz* and *dhikr*, the Islamic sources still distinguish between the four, though at times, as in the example of Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*, the distinction appears minimal.

Indeed, the feature that seems to distinguish *qaṣaṣ* from other public pronouncements and that connected all of its varied expressions, be they religious, martial or religio-political, was exhortation. The objective of the early Islamic *qāṣṣ* was not simply to educate, it was to motivate; the early Islamic *qāṣṣ* was, therefore, what today is described as a “preacher,” a term incorporating a broad

during the ‘Abbāsīd period, the ‘Abbāsīds certainly recognized the potential political danger when a *qāṣṣ*, or others, gathered people around them. Thus, we read on two other occasions that they forbade people from congregating with the *quṣṣāṣ* or other public figures in fear that anti-government opposition would arise out of these meetings; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:2131, 2165.

array of subject material—one can “preach” a religious sermon, “preach” political ideology and “preach” support for the military—and can be exercised in a variety of situations.

The largely public role of the *quṣṣāṣ*, therefore, seems to have been an important factor in the growing tension between the spoken and written word in early Islam. It appears that the *quṣṣāṣ* were especially adept at the spoken word and that their skills in this regard extended into the medieval period, for even when they were rebuked for their content their effectiveness on their hearers was beyond doubt. Indeed, it was the impact of the spoken word compounded by the seemingly endless pool of potential source-material for the *qāṣṣ* that appears to have contributed to their eventual repudiation. This does not mean that public pronouncements became less important with the passage of time. This is certainly not the case as can be attested by traditions claiming that Ibn al-Jawzī’s sermons were attended by tens of thousands of people. It may indicate, however, that the parameters for the source material for these later public pronouncements, be they identified as *khaṭāba*, *wa’z* or *qaṣaṣ* was more restricted than in the Umayyad period. It seems likely that the growing influence of the *ḥadīth* scholars was an important impetus in this transition. Indeed, the *quṣṣāṣ* were eventually pitted by many scholars—both medieval Islamic scholars and their modern successors—as the anti-thesis of these orthodox *ḥadīth* scholars, consigning an often honorable past to a mere distant memory.

Biographical Sketches of the *Quṣṣāṣ* of Early Islam

The following is an appendix of *quṣṣāṣ* who either died before or were engaged in *qaṣaṣ* before the year 132/750. They have been arranged generally according to their death dates, except in the event that the precise time when they engaged in *qaṣaṣ* was determined. The latter condition dictated, for example, that the *quṣṣāṣ* during the conquest of Syria, like Abū Sufyān (d. 32/653), number 7, and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (d.c. 42/663), number 8, be listed according to the conquests and not their death dates. Likewise, those cases for which death dates were unknown have been listed based upon information within their biographies. For some, death dates correspond to a range determined by the reign of a caliph or governmental official, such as Ibn Abī ‘Uyayna (no known death date), number 45, who was allegedly the *qāṣṣ* of the caliph Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 96–9/715–7). In the case of Nawf b. Faḍāla, number 36, who died 90–100/708–18, or Bilāl b. Sa‘d, number 60, who reportedly died in the caliphate of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 105–25/724–43), I have listed them at the *terminus a quo*. Some *quṣṣāṣ* are included even if they died after 132/750 since their involvement in *qaṣaṣ* was verified as having occurred prior to 132/750, as is the case of al-Qāsim b. Muĵāshī‘, number 100, who died in 169/785 after having been a pro-‘Abāssid *qāṣṣ* in Khurāsān at the time of the downfall of the Umayyads. For the *quṣṣāṣ* whose death dates are unknown and for whom there are no definitive historical markers to date them, I have placed them according to an approximate median between the dates of those from whom they transmitted *ḥadīth* and those who transmitted *ḥadīth* from them. The region with which the *qāṣṣ* was affiliated follows each entry. When I was able to identify the region where the person gave *qaṣaṣ*, he was connected to that area even if he was more generally affiliated with another region. This was the case for ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, for example, while most often associated with Egypt, was identified as giving *qaṣaṣ* in Syria. The names with a star (*) after the death date are those who were considered by the sources to have been reputable *ḥadīth* transmitters. Those with an (a) were identified as having ascetic tendencies.

1. The Prophet Muḥammad (d. 11/632). The Prophet reportedly “gave *qaṣaṣ*” while standing at the pulpit in the mosque (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 14:311–2, 45:483; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Sunna*, 2:472; Nasā‘ī, *Sunan*, 6:478; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 27:146–7; Tabarānī, *al-Muĵam al-kabīr*, 3:241; Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ*, 10:167; al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Mishkāṭ*, 2:734; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 4:280) and while seated and surrounded by listeners (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:289; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 26:86–8; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*,

- 2:1295). Ya‘qūbī gives a report according to which al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib identified the Prophet as a *qāṣṣ* (*Tārīkh*, 2:227–8). Other traditions indicate that he “gave *qaṣaṣ*” of the earlier prophets (Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:1260; 6:2485; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:1344; Nasā’ī, *Sunan*, 3:472–3; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 2:48).
2. ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa (d. 8/629) *—Medinan. He was an early and highly-respected Companion of the Prophet who died at the battle of Mu‘ta in 8/629. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī gave a report stating that he summoned the Companions of the Prophet to his teaching sessions where he reminded them of the nature of God, His unity, and the hereafter (*Qūt*, 2:204). Makkī also alleged that when the Prophet stopped teaching and left a session, Ibn Rawāḥa assumed the Prophet’s position and pick up from where the Prophet had left off (*Qūt*, 2:204). Al-Makkī identified these sessions as *dhikr* sessions, while Ibn al-Jawzī described them as *qaṣaṣ* (*Quṣṣās*, 22). The Prophet also praised him for his abilities as a poet (A. Schaade, “‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa,” *EL2*, 1:50).
 3. Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 13/634) *—Medinan. He gave *qaṣaṣ* in which he related “the wisdom of the Arabs” from the semi-legendary pre-Islamic poet/orator Quss b. Sā‘ida al-Iyādī (Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 1:61). See also W. Montgomery Watt, “Abū Bakr,” *EL2*, 1:109–11.
 4. Sa‘īd b. Zayd (d. 15/636)—Syrian. He participated in the conquests of Syria where he gave *qaṣaṣ* to the soldiers in battle (Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 181).
 5. Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 18/639) *—Syrian. His full name is ‘Āmir b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Jarrāḥ. He was a distinguished Companion of the Prophet who gave *qaṣaṣ* at the battle of al-Yarmūk (Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 221). ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb later appointed him governor over Syria (H.A.R. Gibb, “Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ,” *EL2*, 1:58–9).
 6. Mu‘ādh b. Jabal (d. 18/639) *—Syrian. He was one of the most renowned figures of early Islam. Identified by Ibn ‘Umar as one of the two wisest men of the Islamic community (the other being Abū al-Dardā), Mu‘ādh was respected as a Qur’ān reciter, judge, and fighter. During the lifetime of the Prophet, he passed down legal rulings in Medina and was sent to Yemen as a judge. After the death of the Prophet, he returned to Mecca and was eventually sent to Syria where he taught in the mosques of Damascus and Ḥimṣ. He died there of the great plague of Emmaus (*‘Amwās*); (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:299–302; 3:541–4; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 3:1404–6; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:97). In spite of the many teaching positions he held, he was identified as a *qāṣṣ* only by virtue of his *qaṣaṣ* on the battlefield during the conquest of Syria (Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 323–4; Kalā‘ī, *Iktifā’*, 3:203).
 7. Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb b. Umayya (d. 32/653) *—Syrian. He was the notorious Qurashī opponent of the Prophet and father of the first Umayyad caliph, Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. After accepting Islam, he participated in the conquest of Syria where he gave *qaṣaṣ* at the battle of al-Yarmūk (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2095; Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 325). See also, W. Montgomery Watt, “Abū Sufyān,” *EL2*, 1:151.

8. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ—(d.c. 42/663) *—Syrian. This famous Muslim general and governor of Egypt was instrumental in leading the conquests of Syria and Egypt. During the conquests of Syria, he acted as a *qāṣṣ* on the battlefield (Azdi, *Futūḥ*, 324). See also A.J. Wensinck, “‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ,” *EL2*, 1:451.
9. Ka‘b al-Aḥḅar (d. 32/653)—Syrian. He was a Yemeni Jew who converted to Islam during the caliphate of either Abū Bakr or ‘Umar. He joined the conquests, fighting alongside Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Abū al-Dardā’ in Cyprus (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 154). He settled in Syria and is mostly connected to Ḥimṣ. His name is most often associated, correctly or not, with the introduction of Jewish traditions, *isrā’īliyyāt*, into Islam, and he can be found throughout the *tafsīr* and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* literature. He may be the most recognized *qāṣṣ* of the first centuries of Islam, and references to him as a *qāṣṣ* are legion. One of the most widely known reports identifying him as a *qāṣṣ* is that restricting *qāṣṣ* to one of three types of people, the *amīr*, the one appointed by the *amīr* (*ma’mūr*) or the hypocrite (*murā’*); see Chapter Four. See also Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 29:587; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, 1:10; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifā*, 6:3154; Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab*, 6:223; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 34:38; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 28–9; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, 6:458; Ibshīhī, *Mustatraf*, 1:225; Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 173–4.
10. Abū al-Dardā’ (d. 32/653) *^a—Syrian. His name is ‘Uwaymir b. Zayd/Mālik. He accepted Islam after ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, his eventual “brother (in the faith)” and fellow *qāṣṣ*, destroyed his idols (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:396). He became one of the most important and well-known Companions of the Prophet. He participated in many battles, having fought alongside the Prophet (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:396), alongside Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Ka‘b al-Aḥḅar in the conquest of Cyprus (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 154) and in the conquest of Syria where he gave *qāṣṣ* to the soldiery during the battle of al-Yarmūk (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 47:93). His abilities as a scholar and leader in the community are reflected in his alleged participation in the compilation of the Qur’ān and in his being selected by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to teach Qur’ān in Syria in response to the request of Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān. While in Syria, he acted as Mu‘āwiya’s judge and, when the governor was absent from the region, as his *khalīfa* (“deputy”); (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 49:139). His fame as a religious and military figure was complemented by his renown as an ascetic. On him, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:395–7; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 7:257; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:340–1; A. Jeffrey, “Abū al-Dardā’,” *EL2*, 1:113–4.
11. ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/653) *—Syrian. He was a revered Companion of the Prophet, was one of the first to accept Islam and was renowned for his Qur’ān recitation. He served as ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb’s governor in Kufa where he was also in charge of judging and the treasury. He gave *qāṣṣ* in Damascus on the steps of the mosque (Umayyad mosque) every Monday and Thursday (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 33:180; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya* 1:188). See also, J.C. Vadet, “Ibn Mas‘ūd,” *EL2*, 3:873–5.

12. Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 32/653) *^a—Syrian. An early convert, Abū Dharr was one of the leading and most beloved Companions of the Prophet (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:210; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 4:1653; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 33:294–7). The only reference to him giving *qaṣaṣ* is in the late medieval source *Bihār al-anwār* by al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1698); (*Bihār al-anwār*, 22:395). According to this text, Abū Dharr delivered his *qiṣṣa* in Syria. In it, he allegedly challenged the legitimacy of the leadership of Mu'āwiya and 'Uthmān arguing that they had done wicked deeds known to all. The report claims that it was for this reason that 'Uthmān banished him to al-Rabadha where he died in 32/653. According to other reports, Abū Dharr rebuked Mu'āwiya specifically for seizing public funds (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:212; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2858). In response, Mu'āwiya forbade people from sitting in his sessions (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:215) and wrote to 'Uthmān accusing Abū Dharr of corrupting the people of Syria (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:212). 'Uthmān then exiled him to al-Rabadha (Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 253; Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 97; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4:212–3, 219–21; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 4:1656; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 33:298; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:519). See also, J. Robson, "Abū Dharr," *El2*, 1:114; A.J. Cameron, *Abū Dharr al-Ghifari*.
13. 'Amr b. Zurāra/'Utba b. Farqad al-Sulamī (n.d.)—Kufan. A certain 'Amr is identified as the *qāṣṣ* who advocated the repetition of *dhikr* and whom Ibn Mas'ūd rebuked for doing so, accusing him of engaging in a negative innovation (*bid'a*). Ṭabarānī identified the *qāṣṣ* as 'Amr b. Zurāra (*al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 9:128, 137), whereas 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī and Ibn Waḍḍāh identified him as 'Amr b. 'Utba ('Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:221–2; Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Bida'*, 160). 'Amr b. Zurāra is unknown; Ibn Ḥajar mentions two who lived in the 'Abbāsīd period (*Tahdhīb*, 3:271–2). 'Amr b. 'Utba, however, was a reputable *ḥadīth* transmitter, renowned ascetic and was numbered among the first *ṭabaqqa* of Kufa, having died in the caliphate of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:326; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:173; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:290–1).
14. Al-Aswad b. Sarī' (d. 36 or 42/657 or 663)—Basran. He was a fighter, a poet and the first *qāṣṣ* in Basra (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:41, Abū Nu'aym, *Ma'rifa*, 1:270; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, 1:89; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 1:338; Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:367) where he allegedly laid out the dimensions of the first mosque (Balādhurī, *Futūh*, 346). After 'Uthmān was killed, he boarded a ship with his family and was purportedly never seen again (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:171). Mujāhid b. Mas'ūd said that when al-Aswad gave *qaṣaṣ* he was involved in *bid'a* (Ibn Sallām, *Gharīb*, 4:304). Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728) reportedly entered the mosque while al-Aswad was giving *qaṣaṣ* in one corner and in the other corner was a group involved in *dhikr* (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm*, 1:51). This report, however, is suspect since Ibn Sīrīn was eight (or younger) when al-Aswad died.

15. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ‘Amra al-Najjārī al-Anṣārī (n.d.) *—Medinan. He was a scholar and trustworthy *ḥadīth* transmitter (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:85; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 5:273; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqat*, 5:91; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 17:318–21; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:539–40). His father, Abū ‘Amra, was a devoted supporter of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib allegedly donating 100,000 dirhams to the caliph and fighting for him at Ṣiffīn (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:85; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqat*, 3:48; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:539–40). ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s political sympathies are uncertain, however. Iṣḥāq b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Ṭalḥa (d. 132/749–50) identified him as a *qāṣṣ* in Medina (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:2113; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 5:335; Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā*, 1:503).
16. Tamīm al-Dārī (d. 40/661) *^a—Medinan. He became a Muslim in the year 9/630–1. He went to Syria after ‘Uthmān was killed (35/656) and allegedly received *iqṭā‘* land in Hebron—land ostensibly previously owned by his Christian ancestors. He was respected as one of the scholars of the *ahl al-kitāb* (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:259), as an ascetic (Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifā*, 1:448) and as a *wā‘iẓ* (“admonisher”); (Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifā*, 1:448; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:81). Reports identifying him as a *qāṣṣ*, even possibly the first *qāṣṣ* of Islam, are numerous (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:11; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 215; Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi‘*, 2:664; Tamīmī, *Miḥan*, 307; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 22–23, 32–3; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:80–1; Ibn al-Ḥajjī, *Madkhal*, 2:145; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 1:368). See also, M. Lecker, “Tamīm al-Dārī,” *EL2*, 10:176; al-Najm, “Tamīm al-Dārī: Awwal qāṣṣ fi-l-Islām?!” 293–314.
17. ‘Uqba b. ‘Amr b. Jarwa, Abū Mas‘ūd al-Anṣārī (d. 40/661) *—Kufan. He fought at the battle of Uḥud and later, during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, moved to Egypt where he acted as the representative of the governor ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘d (d.c. 36/657) during the latter’s absence from Egypt (Kindī, *Wulāt*, 37). He became a supporter of ‘Alī who appointed him deputy over Kufa when he was away from the city (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:3317, 3390), though he was actually feigning support for ‘Alī’s cause (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:138; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:3390). Among those who related *ḥadīth* from him was the *qāṣṣ* Abū al-Aḥwaṣ. On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 1:12; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 7:392; idem, *Tahdhīb*, 3:126–7.
18. Zayd b. Thābit (d. 42–51/662–76) *—Medinan. He was taken in by the Prophet when he was 11 years old. He was one of the leading religious figures of early Islam known widely for his role in collecting the Qur’ān. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him a salaried judge. Ṭabarānī identified him as *qāṣṣ* while he discussed *wuḍū’* requirements after sexual intercourse (Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, 5:42; Chapter One, 50). See Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:308–15; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:659–60. See also, M. Lecker, “Zayd b. Thābit,” *EL2*, 11:476.
19. Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678) *^a—Medinan. He was a paragon of the faith who is well-known as one of the most prolific *ḥadīth* transmitters of the Companions of

- the Prophet. In addition, he was identified as one of the pious ascetics of early Islam (Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilya*, 1:461–71). He allegedly gave *qaṣaṣ* about the Prophet (Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:387; idem, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 1:23) on Fridays (al-Maḥqdisī, *Aḥādīth al-shī‘r*, 53). See also, J. Robson, “Abū Hurayra,” *El2*, 1:129.
20. Yazīd b. Shajara al-Rahāwī (d. 58/678) *^a—Syrian. He was a military leader and close confidant of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 119; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 6:3448; Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, 4:112–3; Ibn al-Athīr *Kāmil*, 3:246) who dispatched him to lead the pilgrimage in 39/659 when he came into conflict with the governor of Mecca and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s cousin, Qutham b. ‘Abbās al-Hāshimī (d. 57/677), over the administration of the pilgrimage rites (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 198; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-‘Azḡ, 2:332–4; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:3448; Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, 2:209). He was a martial *qāṣṣ* (Sa‘īd b. Mansūr, *Sunan*, 2:219; Ibn al-Mubārak, *Jihād*, 38; idem, *Zuhd*, 1:43; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḡ*, 4:207). During Mu‘āwiya’s caliphate, he commanded at least three attacks against Constantinople where he eventually died at sea (Khalīfa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 75, 148; idem, *Tārīkh*, 223, 225; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 1:120; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 448; Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2:240; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:86, 173, 181). For another report identifying him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḡ*, 5:290.
21. Rabī‘a b. ‘Amr al-Jurashī (d. 64/684) *^a—Syrian. He was a respected religious scholar (*faqīh*) (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb* 2:493; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 9:139), ascetic (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:230) and a *qāṣṣ* during the caliphate of Mu‘āwiya (Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 234; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:230; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 9:139). He died at the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (64/684) while fighting for al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays (d. 64/684), the leader of the counter-caliph Ibn al-Zubayr’s forces (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:281; Fasawī, *Ma‘rifat*, 2:283–4; Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 234; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:230; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:431). See also Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:441; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:230; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 2:493; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:600.
22. Ṣukhayr b. Ḥudhayfa b. Hilāl b. Mālik al-Muzanī (d. 65/685)—Kufan. He was one of three *quṣṣās* who participated in Sulaymān b. Ṣurad’s rebellion against the Umayyads. He is the only one of those three *quṣṣās* to have a *qaṣaṣ* statement preserved in the sources (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:559).
23. Rifā‘a b. Shaddād al-Bajalī (d. 66/686) *^a—Kufan. He not only participated in Sulaymān b. Ṣurad’s rebellion as a *qāṣṣ*, he was also a leader in the rebellion (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:559). Because of his valor in Sulaymān’s rebellion, al-Mukhtār sought him out to join in his rebellion (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:569–70).
24. Abū al-Juwayriya al-‘Abdī (n.d.)—Kufan. He was one of the three *quṣṣās* of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad, the anti-Umayyad rebel (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:559).

25. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr b. Qatāda (d. 68/688) * ^a—Meccan. He gave *qaṣaṣ* at the time of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Mecca (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24). He was a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter and one of the best of the “Successors.” Ibn ‘Abbās and the caliph ‘Umar both attended his *qaṣaṣ* sessions (Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkiyyīn*, 251; Ibn Shabba, *Madīna*, 1:12). Ibn ‘Umar, son of the caliph ‘Umar, was brought to tears when attending his sessions. According to one report, he was also the *qāṣṣ* of Ibn al-Zubayr (Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkiyyīn*, 253). See also Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:24–5; Fākihī, *Akhbār Mecca*, 2:338; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma‘ārif*, 557; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkiyyīn*, 250; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ*, 22; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:38–9.
26. Abū al-Aḥwaṣ, ‘Awf b. Mālik b. Naḍla al-Jushamī (d. 70–80/689–99) *—Kufan. He sided with ‘Alī at Ṣiffīn, later becoming a strong supporter of the Umayyads (lit. “an Uthmānī”). He related *ḥadīth* from the leading Companions of the Prophet. He recited Qur’ān in the mosque for forty years. He was killed by the Khawārij. The *qāṣṣ* Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (# 27) said of him: “Do not sit with the *quṣṣāṣ* except for Abū al-Aḥwaṣ.” See Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:302; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:289; Abū Dāwūd, *Su‘ālāt*, 1:292; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:337.
27. Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 72–75/692–4) *—Kufan. His name is ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥabīb (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:291). He was a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter, Qur’ān reciter and commentator and judge who learned *fiqh* from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and who held teaching sessions in the Great Mosque of Kūfa for 40 years (Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-Ya‘lāwī, 7/2:232). In a session in which he was said to have been either giving *qaṣaṣ* (‘Uqaylī, *Du‘afā’*, 2:186) or reciting Qur’ān (Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-Ya‘lāwī, 7/2:233), he said that those who sit with the Khawārij or with Shaqīq al-Ḍabbī cannot sit with him and warned his students to avoid the *quṣṣāṣ* except for Abū al-Aḥwaṣ (Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-Ya‘lāwī, 7/2:233). His involvement in *qaṣaṣ* is attested only by ‘Uqaylī; see his *Du‘afā’*, 2:186. Ibn Ḥajar reported from Wāqidī that he fought with ‘Alī at Ṣiffīn, later becoming an ‘Uthmānī (*Tahdhīb*, 2:320).
28. Sulaym b. ‘Itr (d. 75/694) * ^a—Egyptian. He participated in the conquest of Egypt and his first appointed position there was over the *kharāj* (Kindī, *Wulāt*, 37). He was also the first to give *qaṣaṣ* in Egypt in 39/659 and was then appointed *qādī* in 40/661 (Kindī, *Quḍāt*, 5, 11). He was purportedly the first to record his legal judgments after a ruling on inheritance was not implemented. He was also known for his asceticism. See Wakī‘, *Quḍāt*, 3:221–2; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh*, 72:268–79; Ibn Ḥajar, *Raf‘ al-īsr*, 166.
29. Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ al-Tamīmī (d. 76/695) ^a—Kufan. He was a Khārijī rebel from Mosul in the region of al-Jazīra and the putative head of the Khawārij in the

- region for 20 years. He led a failed rebellion against the Umayyads in 76/695. He was only identified as *qāṣṣ* because of a religio-political *qiṣṣa* he delivered to his rebel forces. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:880–92; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:148.
30. Shabīb b. Yazīd (d. 77/697)—Iraqī (Kufan). He was a Khārījī and a member of Ṣāliḥ b. Musarriḥ's rebellion who continued the rebellion after Ṣāliḥ's death. He was killed in 77/697 when his own rebellion was put down. Like Ṣāliḥ, he gave martial *qaṣaṣ*. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:949–51, 991, 1032.
31. Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī (d. 80/700) *^a—Syrian. His name is ʿĀ'idh Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh (Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 391; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:162). He was a distinguished scholar of Syria known to be trustworthy in his *ḥadīth* transmissions (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:139, 148) and ascetic in conduct (Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 585; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277). He was the *qāṣṣ* of Damascus during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 200; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:151, 160, 162) who then removed him from that position and appointed him judge (Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 200, 585; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 26:137, 151, 160, 165, 168), though he complained about the change saying: “You removed me from that which I like and left me in that which I hate;” (Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 200; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 5:544). In one of his *qiṣaṣ*, he praised the asceticism of John the Baptist (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 7:74; Fasawī, *Maʿrifā*, 2:185; Abū Nuʿaym, *Hilya*, 5:141). He was considered one of the great scholars of Syria during his lifetime (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:274). See also Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 2:47; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 7:74; Fasawī, *Maʿrifā*, 2:185; Abū Zurʿa al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 200; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:274.
32. ʿImrān b. ʿIṣām al-Ḍubayʿī (d. 83/702)—Basran. He was the *imām* of the mosque of the Banū Ḍubayʿa in Basra. Some sources identify him as a *qāṣṣ* in Basra, while others claim he was a judge, *qāḍī*, there (Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb*, 2:1209; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb al-asmāʾ*, 2:492). He was numbered among the *qurrāʾ* who fought with Ibn al-Ashʿath and was executed by al-Ḥajjāj (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 177–80). On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:159; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:320. See also, Caskel, *Ġamharat*, 1:172, 2:357.
33. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ghālib al-Jahḍamī (d. 83/702) *^a—Basran. He was an ascetic and *qāṣṣ* who gave *qaṣaṣ* in the congregational mosque of Basra. He was one of the *qurrāʾ* who fought with Ibn al-Ashʿath and was killed in battle at Dayr Jamājim (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 180; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:223–4; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247–8; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:401–2). On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Abū Nuʿaym, *Hilya*, 2:291; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:117–9.
34. Māhān al-Ḥanafī (d. 83/702) *^a—Kufan. He was pious believer (*ʿābid*) and reputable *ḥadīth* transmitter from Persian descent. He fought against al-Ḥajjāj and was brutally executed, first having his feet and hands cut off and then crucified.

- See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:347; Ibn Hibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:458; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:16. Only Dhahabī identified him as a *qāṣṣ* (Dhahabī, *Tārikh*, 6:17).
35. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥujayra al-Khawlānī (d. 83/702) *—Egyptian. He was a reputable scholar of Egypt who was paid an annual wage of 1000 *dīnārs*: 200 for serving as a judge, 200 as a *qāṣṣ*, 200 as treasurer, 200 as a stipend, and 200 as an award (Kindī, *Quḍāt*, 15; Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 3:324–5; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 17:55; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:501). On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Kindī, *Quḍāt*, 15; Wakī', *Quḍāt*, 1:44, 3:324–5; Dūlābī, *Kunā*, 1:314.
36. Nawf b. Faḍāla al-Bakkālī (d.c. 90–100/708–18) *—Syrian. He was the step-son of Ka'b al-Aḥbār and learned much from him (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:455). He was an *imām* of the people of Damascus (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:249–50) and gave *qaṣaṣ* there (Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi'*, 2:661; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 176; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 6:51). Like his step-father, he allegedly knew the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians (Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 6:48–9, 53–4). Even though he is generally considered reputable, Ibn 'Abbās reprimanded him in Kufa for claiming that the Moses named in the story of the prophet al-Khiḍr was not the Moses of the Banū Isrā'īl (Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:3:123; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:1847). Umm al-Dardā' challenged him and another *qāṣṣ* "to let their sermons to the people be [also] to themselves;" (Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi'*, 2:661; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilya*, 6:51). He died while fighting in the summer raids with Muḥammad b. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (d. 101/719–20). See also Ibn Hibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:483; Dhahabī, *Tārikh*, 6:271.
37. Marthad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Yazanī, Abū al-Khayr (d. 90/708) *^a—Egyptian. He was a reputable scholar who transmitted from well-known Companions of the Prophet, like Zayd b. Thābit, 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ and Ka'b al-Aḥbār (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:517; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 149; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 27:357–9; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:45). Ibn Yūnus said he was the *muftī* of Egypt and that the Umayyad governor of Egypt 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān allegedly attended his sessions on legal rulings (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 27:357–9; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:45). He was also known for his piety (*ibāda*); (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:517). Only al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) identified him as a *qāṣṣ* stating that he was appointed *qāṣṣ* after 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥujayra and that he had previously been the judge of Alexandria (*Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:31).
38. Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Taymī (d. 92 or 94/711 or 713) *^a—Kufan. He was a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter and pious *qāṣṣ* who brought his listeners to tears with his *qiṣaṣ* (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 358; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:171). His piety was exemplified by the fact that birds alighted on his back because he remained so long in prostration (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:92). Ibn Qutayba names him first in his list of *Murji'a* (*Ma'ārif*, 1:625). He died while imprisoned by al-Ḥajjāj (Khalīfa, *Tārikh*, 195; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-'Azīm, 6:494–5; Ibn Hibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:7). Ibn Sa'd gives a report that al-Ḥajjāj, while intending to imprison Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Nakha'ī, accidentally incarcerated Ibrāhīm al-Taymī (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* 8:402).

- Ibn al-Jawzī listed him among the most outstanding preachers of Kufa (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 65–6). On him, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:7; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:92. On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:403; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:289–90; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:358; Jāhiz, *Bayān*, 1:367; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:228; Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 23:171.
39. Zurāra b. Awfā (d. 93/712) *^a—Basran. He was judge of Basra under ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād during the caliphate of Mu‘āwiya (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:150–1; Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 140–41). He held *qaṣaṣ* sessions in his house before and after al-Ḥajjāj’s arrival in Basra (c. 75/694), and the governor allegedly even attended some of his sessions (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:150–1; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 247; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:293; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfa*, 3:230; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:516; idem, *Kāshif*, 1:402). He was a reputable *ḥadīth* scholar who transmitted from a number of respected Companions of the Prophet (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:628).
40. Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (d. 93/712) *^a—Kufan. He was a highly respected religious scholar who used to give *qaṣaṣ* in Kufa every day after the morning and evening prayers (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:377; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:290; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 215; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 4:336). He was among the *qurrā’* who fought alongside Ibn al-Ash‘ath (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:381; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1087f). He fled to Mecca and was later extradited to al-Ḥajjāj, who executed him (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:382–3; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1261–4; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, 3:82). He transmitted extensively from Ibn ‘Abbās and was himself an influential Qur’ān commentator (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:91). See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:9–11.
41. Muṭarrif b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Shikhhīr (d.c. 95/714) *^a—Basran. He was an ascetic, a reliable transmitter of *ḥadīth* and a reputable scholar known for his religious knowledge (*‘ilm*). He appears to have been politically neutral and so avoided being drawn into the *fitna* (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:143–4; ‘Ijlī, *Ma’rifā*, 2:282). Only Jāhiz identified him as a *qāṣṣ*; he also implies that his father was a *qāṣṣ* though I have not been able to confirm this (*Bayān*, 1:367). Among those who transmitted reports from him, as well as about him, were three distinguished scholars and *quṣṣās* of Iraq: Qatāda b. Dī‘āma, Thābit al-Bunānī and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:143–4). On him, see also Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 185; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 2:227–41; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfa*, 3:222–6; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:90–1.
42. Ṭarīf b. Mujālid, Abū Tamīma al-Hujaymī (d.c. 95/713) *—Basran. Ṭarīf’s role as a *qāṣṣ* can be deduced from two reports recorded by Ibn Abī Shayba. The first, from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Miqṣam, says: “There was a *qāṣṣ* who used to recite [Sūrat] al-Sajda after the morning prayer (*al-fajr*) and bowed when doing so. When Ibn ‘Umar forbade him from doing this, he refused, so Ibn ‘Umar threw stones at him and said, “These people have no understanding!”” (*Muṣannaḥ*, 1:376). The second report has Abū Tamīma say: “I was reciting [Sūrat] al-Sajda after the morning prayer and bowing in it and Ibn ‘Umar sent to me and forbade me from doing

- it," (*Muṣannaḥ*, 1:377). It is noteworthy that the only two scholars mentioned in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr as transmitters from him were well-known *quṣṣās*: Qatāda b. Di'āma and Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh (*Istī'āb*, 4:1616). He was considered a reputable *ḥadīth* scholar (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:152; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:237).
43. Umm al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. before the end of the first/seventh century) *—Medinan. Her name was allegedly Khayra (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:672). She is the only woman mentioned by name as a *qāṣṣ*; she reportedly gave *qasaṣ* to the women (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:442). She was also a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter, relating traditions on the authority of the wives of the Prophet (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:672).
44. 'Ā'idh Allāh al-Mujāshī'ī (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century)—Basran. He was said to have been the *qāṣṣ* of either 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705) or Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96–99/715–7); (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:274). He was considered a weak *ḥadīth* transmitter (Bukhārī, *al-Ḍu'afā' al-ṣaghīr*, 91; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 7:38; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:274). The only person on whose authority he transmitted *ḥadīth* was the *qāṣṣ* Abū Dā'ūd Nufay' al-A'mā (# 74); (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:277; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:274).
45. Ibn Abī 'Uyayna (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century)—Syrian. His identity is uncertain. According to a report recorded by Ṭabarī, he used to give *qasaṣ* to Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96–9/715–7); (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:1338). The name Ibn Abī 'Uyayna is most often connected to the 'Abbāsīd era poets of the al-Muhallabī family; Abū'l-Faraj al-Iṣfāhānī (d. 356/966) said that "everyone who is named Abū 'Uyayna comes from the Ahl al-Muhallab" (*Aghānī*, 20:75). Sulaymān's *qāṣṣ*, therefore, was Muḥammad b. Abī 'Uyayna al-Muhallabī, father of two 'Abbāsīd era poets: Abū 'Uyayna (known also by the *kunya* of Abū'l-Minhāl) and 'Abd Allāh. On the various identities of Ibn Abī 'Uyayna, see C. Pellat, "Muḥammad b. Abī 'Uyayna," *EL2*, 7:395; A. Ghédira, "Ibn Abī 'Uyayna," *EL2*, 3:694; idem, "Deux poètes contemporains de Baṣṣār, les frères Ibn Abī 'Uyayna," *Arabica*, x, 154–87.
46. Kurdūs b. Hānī/Amr/Qays/al-'Abbās al-Taghlabī/al-Tha'labī (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century) *^a—Kufan. The sources disagree on his father's name and his *nisba*; Ibn Ḥajar summarized the possibilities listing them under Kurdūs b. al-'Abbās (Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 5:639). He was the *qāṣṣ* of Kufa (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 5:290; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7:242; Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 2:68; Abū Nu'aym, *Hilya*, 4:200), probably at the time of al-Ḥajjāj (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifa*, 3:72). Ṭabarī reported that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib gave an *iqṭā'* in the Sawād of Irāq to Kurdūs and Ibn Ḥajar identified that Kurdūs as Ibn Hānī (*Tārīkh*, 1:2376; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 5:639). This may confirm other Shī'ite sources identifying Kurdūs b. Hānī as a supporter of 'Alī (Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Ṣiffīn*, 484; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 2:130). According to Abū Nu'aym, Kurdūs b. Hānī claimed to have read the Gospels (*Hilya*, 4:200). Bukhārī (*al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7:242) and Ibn Ḥibbān

- (*Thiqāt*, 5:342) reported, however, that Kurdūs b. ‘Amr read “the Scriptures,” meaning the Torah and Gospels. Bukhārī also claimed that Kurdūs al-Taghlibī, with no father’s name, was the *qāṣṣ* of Kufa (*al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7:242). Lastly, Ibn Ḥanbal recorded that a Kurdūs b. Qays was “the *qāṣṣ* of the common folk (*qāṣṣ al-‘amma*)” in Kufa (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 25:236–7; see also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣās*, 16; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:81), though other works identified him as “the judge of the common folk (*qāḍī al-‘amma*)” of Kufa (Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab*, 6:73; idem, *Sunan*, 10:88; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 5:497). He apparently gave *qaṣaṣ* when al-Ḥajjāj was governor of Kufa (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifa*, 3:72).
47. Shaqīq al-Ḍabbī (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century)—Kufan. Only Ibn ‘Adī included him among the *quṣṣās* of Kufa (*Kāmil*, 4:45). He was allegedly a Khārijī. While a report, from Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (# 27) lists him among those to be avoided, it is not entirely clear if the reason for his censure was because of his Khārijism, his being a *qāṣṣ* or a combination of the two (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:292–3; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-Ya‘lāwī, 7/2:233; ‘Uqaylī, *Ḍu‘afā’*, 2:186; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 4:45; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 3:183).
48. Dharr b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Zurāra (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century) *^a—Kufan. He was an ascetic, a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter and was accused of being a *Murji‘ī* (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:410; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:295; Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, 5:266; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 6:60; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:579). Ibn Sa’d said that he was among the most eloquent *quṣṣās* (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:410; on his affiliation with *qaṣaṣ*, see also Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:295; Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, 5:266). He was also one of the *qurrā’* of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:140; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:579) and was used by Ibn al-Ash‘ath to give *qaṣaṣ* criticizing al-Ḥajjāj (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 176).
49. Abū Yahyā al-A‘raj (Miṣda‘) al-Mu‘arqab (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century)—Kufan. He was an ‘Alid sympathizer whose Achilles tendons were cut by either al-Ḥajjāj or Bishr b. Marwān because he refused to curse ‘Alī—thus his *nisba* al-A‘raj al-Mu‘arqab (‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifa*, 2:280; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ghawāmiḍ*, 4:259–60; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:82). In fact, ‘Alī reportedly observed him while he was giving *qaṣaṣ* and asked him if he knew *al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh* (Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ghawāmiḍ*, 4:259–60; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh*, 31; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:82). His reputation in *ḥadīth* transmission was generally suspect (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:39; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh*, 31; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:82–3; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 6:433), even though he transmitted *ḥadīth* from well-respected sources such as ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, ‘Ā’isha and Ibn ‘Abbās, and was considered an authority on traditions from Ibn ‘Abbās (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 28:14–5). See also Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:38; Yahyā b. Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh*, 3:164, 298; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 1:196; *ibid*, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 8:65; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 8:429.

50. Abū Rayḥāna (Sham‘ūn) al-Azdī (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century) *—Syrian. His name was Sham‘ūn, suggesting he was a Jewish convert. He was a Companion of the Prophet and participated in the conquest of Damascus. Even though he ultimately settled in Jerusalem, he was stationed for a certain period in the garrison town of Mayyāfāriqīn, in the region of the upper Tigris. It may be his involvement in the conquests and the wars with the Byzantines that led him to give *qaṣaṣ* of the conquests (*kāna yaquṣṣu al-maghāzī*); (Dhababī, *Kāshif*, 1:490). He was also identified as a *qāṣṣ* in Jerusalem (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:194). He lived an ascetic life; miraculous acts were attributed to him, like stilling a raging sea and recouping a needle fallen into the sea by appealing to God to return it to him (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 23:204). See also Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:237, 428; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, 2:711–2; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:180.
51. Salmān al-Agharr, Abū ‘Abd Allāh (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century) *—Medinan. He was originally from Iṣfahān. He was a reliable transmitter of *ḥadīth* from the Companions of the Prophet. Only Ibn Sa‘d and Ibn Ḥajar report that he was a *qāṣṣ* (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:280; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:69). See also Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 4:137; ‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 1:422.
52. Ibn Abī al-Sā‘ib (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century)—Medinan. His identity is uncertain. He is referred to as “the *qāṣṣ* of Medina” in one variant of a report about *qaṣaṣ* transmitted from ‘Ā’isha (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 43:19–20; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:258). Other variants of the report fail to identify him as a *qāṣṣ* and name him simply as al-Sā‘ib (Abū Ya‘lā, *Musnad*, 7:448; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *‘Ilal*, 2:248; Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā’*, 37). Another variant, this one from Ibn ‘Abbās, does not mention him at all (Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5:2334).
53. Abū Ruhm (d.c. turn of the first/seventh century) *—Syrian. His identity is uncertain. Ibn Ḥajar mentions three Abū Ruhms, of whom this may be Aḥzāb b. Asīd al-Samā‘ī. It is unclear whether he was a Companion of the Prophet or a Successor. Ibn Ḥanbal is the only source to identify him as a *qāṣṣ*, calling him “the *qāṣṣ* of the people of Shām;” (*Musnad*, 38:491). On him, see Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:441; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:60, 5:585; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:99.
54. Marthad b. Wadā’a (d.c. the turn of the first/seventh century) *—Syrian. Only Fasawī reported that he gave *qaṣaṣ* and noted that he did so while standing (*Ma‘rifā*, 2:248). He supposedly attended the Prophet’s farewell sermon (Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifā*, 5:2566; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba*, 5:146). He narrated one report from the Prophet describing the fate of the believers and unbelievers on the Day of Resurrection (Zamaksharī, *Kashshāf*, 4:223; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi‘*, 19:234).
55. Ḥumayd b. ‘Atā’ al-‘Araj (d.c. first quarter of second/eighth century)—Kufan. He was a *qāṣṣ* in Kūfa (Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh*, 3:448, 4:27; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 3:226; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 15:297; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 7:387; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:501) and

- was considered untrustworthy in *ḥadīth* (Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 3:353; ‘Uqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 1:268; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 3:226; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:501). He worked as a scribe for ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥārith al-Zubaydī (Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 4:27; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3:380) and transmitted *ḥadīth* from him (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, 1:262, 276–7; idem, *Muṣannaḥ*, 6:17, 7:45; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 2:108; idem, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 2:354; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Zuhd*, 93). See also Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 3:371, 4:32; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 1:262; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 2:272; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 7:409–10.
56. Saʿīd b. Abī al-Ḥasan (d. 100 or 108/718 or 726) *—Basran. He was the brother of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and, like his brother, a respected scholar and reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:12). Jāḥiẓ identified him and al-Ḥasan as *quṣṣāṣ* (*Bayān*, 1:367).
57. Tubay‘ b. ‘Amir al-Ḥimyarī (d. 101/719) *—Syrian. He was the step-son of Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and transmitted *ḥadīth* from him as well as from the Companion-*qāṣṣ* Abū al-Dardā’ (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:313). Even though he met the Prophet, he did not convert to Islam until the caliphate of Abū Bakr (Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 1:377). He purportedly gave *qaṣaṣ* to the Companions of the Prophet (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 11:29; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:314; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:257). He was a reputable scholar by all accounts, who transmitted much from Kaʿb and, like his step-father, was accomplished in the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:455; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:314; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:257). He allegedly possessed the ability to prophesy, like his step-father Kaʿb who foretold the death of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:2722–3); he prophesied the execution of ‘Amr b. Saʿīd al-Ashdaq who was killed by ‘Abd al-Malik after a failed rebellion against the caliph (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:786–7) and the accessions of various Umayyad caliphs as well as their eventual downfall (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 279; Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Fitan*, 132, 193, 194), though this may simply be a motif applied to him as a relative of Kaʿb, who allegedly possessed a similar gift of prophecy. Not only was he a scholar, he was also a warrior who participated in the naval battle against Rhodes, where he purportedly predicted the death of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:786–7; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:317). According to Ibn Yūnus, he died in Alexandria (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:257).
58. Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 100–4/718–22) *^a—Meccan. He was a scholar, ascetic and fighter. He was known for his knowledge of the Qurʾān (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:28; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:419; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:91; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:243; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:26; he is cited throughout ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Tafsīr* as a source for his commentary) and allegedly was knowledgeable about the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:28; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:26). He also related *qaṣaṣ* (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:419; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:243). In addition to his scholarly pursuits, he participated in a number of military and

- political actions. He fought with Junāda b. Abī Umayya at Rhodes and was present when Tubay' b. 'Āmir (# 57) prophesied the death of Mu'āwiyān b. Abī Sufyān (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 279). He joined Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion and was extradited with Sa'īd b. Jubayr and his colleagues from the Ḥijāz back to al-Ḥajjāj in Iraq where he remained incarcerated until al-Ḥajjāj's death (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1262). He apparently continued his military career as a commander in Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik's campaign against Constantinople in 98/716 (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1315).
59. 'Aṭā' b. Yasār al-Madanī (d. 103/721) *^a—Syrian. He was a reputable scholar and *qāṣṣ* who transmitted from a number of Companions of the Prophet (Mālik, *Muwatṭā'*, passim; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:172; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:110–11). 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, however, used his reputation as a *qāṣṣ* against him while criticizing his opinion on an issue related to divorce, telling him: "You are [merely] a *qāṣṣ*!" (Mālik, *Muwatṭā'*, 2:570). (On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1:173; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:103; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:199; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 40:438, 440, 447–9; Dhahabī, *Ibar*, 1:125; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:110–1). He traveled to Alexandria with the intention of fighting in the navy and died there (Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:103; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 40:442, 451).
60. Bilāl b. Sa'd al-Ash'arī (d. 105–25/724–43) *^a—Syrian. He was one of the leading scholars of Syria, an ascetic, reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter, Qur'ān reciter and prayer-*imām* (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:465; Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:250, 607; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr*, 1:115; idem, *Thiqāt*, 4:66; Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 1:166; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 10:482ff; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:292; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:254). He was a *qāṣṣ* who told "polished *qaṣaṣ*," *ḥasan al-qaṣaṣ* (See sources above, especially Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:607). Al-Awzā'ī said he was the most eloquent preacher (*wā'iz*) he ever heard (Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 10:485, also 10:483, where he is called the *wā'iz* of Damascus; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:293). He was thus called "the al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī of Syria" (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 1:166; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 10:485; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:254). He died during the caliphate of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105–25/724–43); (Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, 1:250, 607; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr*, 1:115; idem, *Thiqāt*, 4:66; Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 1:166; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:254).
61. Muslim b. Jundab al-Hudhalī (d. 106/724) *—Medinan. He was a respected Qur'ān reciter (Ibn Mujaḥid, *Ṣab'a*, 59–60; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:256; idem, *Ma'rīfat al-qurrā'*, 1:80–82; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66), judge (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:422; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:393; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:66) and *qāṣṣ* in Medina (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Ilal*, 1:464; Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 1:367–8; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr*, 1:75; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:256–7; idem, *Ma'rīfat al-qurrā'*, 1:80–82). There is some confusion in the sources about him being a judge or *qāṣṣ*; this is typified in the two works of Ibn Ḥibbān, one claims he was the judge of Medina (*Thiqāt*, 5:393) while the other that he was the *qāṣṣ* of Medina (*Mashāhīr*, 1:75).

62. Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr al-Muzanī (d. 108/726) *^a—Basran. He was a reputable scholar of Basra (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:208; Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:101, 242; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:244–5). Jāḥiẓ lists him among both the orators (*al-khuṭabā’*) and ascetics of Baṣra (*Bayān*, 1:353, 363; see also Ibn Ḥanbal, *Zuhd*, 1:304), though he was a wealthy man whose asceticism apparently did not include shunning his riches (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:209). The only source identifying him as a *qāṣṣ* is Ibn Ḥanbal’s *al-Zuhd*, specifying that Bakr gave *qaṣaṣ* on the day of the standing at Mount ‘Arafat after the afternoon (*‘aṣr*) prayer (*Zuhd*, 1:304).
63. Yazīd b. Abān al-Raqāshī (d. 110–20/728–738) ^a—Basran. While he was a *qāṣṣ* and ascetic, he was considered a *Qadarī* and untrustworthy in *ḥadīth*, prompting Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776) to exclaim: “Committing adultery is preferable to me to relating *ḥadīth* from Yazīd;” (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:403; see also Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:204, 262, 308, 353–4, 364; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 3:98; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 4:17; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 3:58–64; Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, 3:81–2). Al-‘A‘mash accused him of engaging in *bid‘a*, innovation, by giving *qaṣaṣ*. His political alignments are unclear. Pellat believed that he participated in the ‘Abbāsīd *da‘wa* because Mas‘ūdī said he was a companion of al-Ṣaffāḥ (*Le Milieu basrien*, 101). Mas‘ūdī, however, reported that after al-Ṣaffāḥ listened to an entertaining story from Yazīd lampooning numerous tribes, including the caliph’s own Banū Hāshim, the caliph called him “the master of liars (*ṣayyid al-kadhḥābīn*);” (Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, 4:117–27). Nevertheless, Mizzī alleged that the Umayyad caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz commanded Yazīd to admonish him (*‘iẓnī*); (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 32:76).
64. Ziyād b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Numayrī (n.d.) ^a—Basran. A contemporary of Yazīd b. Abān al-Raqāshī (Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:259), he was numbered among the ascetics of Basra though was considered weak in *ḥadīth* transmission (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:255–6; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 3:132–3; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:650). He is identified as a *qāṣṣ* in a report from Anas b. Mālīk (Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:259).
65. ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Utba b. Mas‘ūd (d. 110–20/728–738) *^a—Kufan. He was a trustworthy scholar who transmitted *ḥadīth* on the authority of well-known Companions like Abū Hurayra, Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbās and the uncle of his father, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and was known for his asceticism (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:430; Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 47:60; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:103–5; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:338–9). After initially joining Ibn al-Ash‘ath, he fled and sought refuge with the Umayyad general Muḥammad b. Marwān in Naṣībīn and then ultimately with ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 47:65; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:338–9). He subsequently enjoyed a close relationship with the caliph, who was impressed by his position on *irjā’* (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:430), sent him as his emissary to the Khawārīj (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:350) and sought solace from him upon the death of his son (Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Dimashq*, 47:71). He is identified as a *qāṣṣ* only in later sources and in connection with a controversy surrounding his woman servant

- whom he allowed to give *qaṣaṣ* and even to recite the Qurʾān in intonation (*alḥān*); (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 47:89; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs*, 1:297; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 5:105). A much earlier source, Ibn al-Mubārak’s (d. 181/797) *Zuhd*, tells of him sitting and delivering a sermon (*mawʿiẓa*) in the mosque and seems to corroborate his image as a *qāṣṣ* (*Zuhd*, 1:505).
66. Al-Ḥasan b. Abī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) *^a—Basran. He was one of the most famous scholars of Basra and early Islamic thought. According to Ṭabarī, he held teaching sessions in the governor’s mosque (*masjid al-amīr*); (*Tārīkh*, 2:455). While he was appointed by Basra’s governor ʿAdī b. Arṭāt over the judiciary, he declined (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1346–7). Both Ibn Abī Shayba and Jāḥiẓ claim he gave *qaṣaṣ* (*Muṣannaḥ*, 5:290 and *Bayān*, 1:367, respectively). Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ numbered him among the *qurrāʾ* who supported Ibn al-Ashʿath, saying he did so “unwillingly (*karḥan*);” (*Tārīkh*, 181). On him, see H. Ritter, “al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,” *EL*, 3:247; Iḥsān ʿAbbās, *al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* (Cairo, 1952).
67. Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728) *^a—Yemeni. Wahb is considered one of the most important sources for reports of the pre-Islamic prophets, having allegedly read 72 Scriptures of the people of the Book (Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ al-Yemen*, 57; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:332). He was a judge in Ṣanʿāʾ and was also known for his asceticism (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:332). Despite his wide association with the *quṣṣāṣ* in modern studies, he is surprisingly connected to the term *qaṣaṣ* in only two late sources. Ibn Samura al-Jaʿdī (d. 585/1190) reported that “*qaṣaṣ* was his major scholarly occupation (*kāna al-ghālib ʿalayhi al-qaṣaṣ*);” (*Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ al-Yaman*, 57). Yāqūt al-Hamawī (d. 626/1229) identified him as “Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Yamānī the transmitter of historical reports (*al-akhbārī*) and the master of *qaṣaṣ* (*ṣāhib al-qaṣaṣ*);” (*Irshād*, 7:232). See also Sezgin, *GAS*, 1:305–7; Houry, “Wahb b. Munabbih,” *EL*, 11:34–6; idem, *Wahb b. Munabbih* (Wiesbaden, 1972).
68. Rajāʾ b. Ḥaywa al-Kindī (d. 112/730) *^a—Syrian. He was the famous advisor to Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik who played a pivotal role in the ascension of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to the caliphate (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1340–45; Dhahabī calls him “the just minister (*al-wazīr al-ʿādil*),” *Siyar*, 4:557). He was praised by the esteemed Umayyad general Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik as one of the great leaders and warriors of the Kinda tribe (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 18:103). Not only was he a major political force, he was also an ascetic, *faqīh*, and *ḥadīth* scholar (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:457; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3:498; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:237–8; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 18:100, 104; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:602). Maṭar al-Warrāq, a fellow *qāṣṣ*, even claimed: “I never saw a Syrian better in *fiqh* than he;” (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 18:104). For all his official connections, it is noteworthy that Ibn Abī Shayba identified him as “the *qāṣṣ* of the common folk (*qāṣṣ al-ʿamma*)” in Kufa (*Muṣannaḥ*, 1:376). On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see also Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:312; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 9:153. Ibn ʿAsākir, citing Bukhārī, identified him as a judge, not a *qāṣṣ* (*Dimashq*

- 18:101). This appears to be a mistake of orthography since his role as *qāṣṣ* can be confirmed in other sources. Like the *qāṣṣ* ‘Awn b. ‘Abd Allāh, he comforted ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz upon the death of his son (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 18:112).
69. ‘Adī b. Thābit al-Anṣārī (d. 116/734) *—Kufan. He was a Shī‘ite *qāṣṣ*, *imām* of the Shī‘ite mosque in Kufa and the most accomplished person in the sayings of the Shī‘a (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 7:2; Dhahabī, *Mughnī*, 2:431; idem, *Kāshif*, 2:15; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:85). In spite of his “excessive” Shī‘ism (Dhahabī, *Mughnī*, 2:431), he was considered a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:85).
70. Mūsā b. Wardān al-Qurashī al-‘Amirī (d. 117/735) *—Egyptian. He was a *qāṣṣ* in Egypt (Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, *Tārikh*, 4:438, 440; Ibn Shāhīn, *Tārikh asmā’ al-thiqāt*, 223; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 61:227; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 6:568), who replaced ‘Uqba b. Muslim as *qāṣṣ* there (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 61:227; see # 75). He was generally considered sound in his *ḥadīth* transmissions (‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 2:305; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:191). He was a friend of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and enjoyed direct access to him until an altercation over Mūsā’s involvement in commerce prompted ‘Umar to restrict Mūsā’s access to him (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 61:225–7).
71. Qatāda b. Dī‘āma al-Sudūsī (d. 117/735) *—Basran. He was a highly respected scholar known for his knowledge of Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh’s recitation of the Qur’ān (*ṣaḥīfa*), for his extensive commentary on the Qur’ān (‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī, for example, cites him more than any other commentator), and for his reliability as a *ḥadīth* transmitter possessed of an outstanding memory and, in fact, did not attach *isnāds* to his transmissions until challenged to do so by Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 120/738); (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:228, 230; Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:242). He allegedly forbade the repetition of *ḥadīth* by claiming that the Torah also forbade it (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:104). He was listed with al-Zuhri, al-‘A‘mash and al-Kalbī as one of the four greatest scholars of that era (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:242). Moreover, when the caliph Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik pitted him against al-Zuhri in a contest of religious knowledge, Qatāda won the day (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:243). He was allegedly an ardent supporter of the Umayyads (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:243). He “gave *qaṣaṣ*” transmitting a Prophetic tradition on the efficacy of the last ten verses of Sūrat al-Kahf (18) in warding off the anti-Christ (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 45:527–8; Nasā‘ī, *Sunan*, 6:236) and describing the closeness of the day of resurrection (Ṭabarī, *Tārikh*, 1:10). For other references to him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:262. See also C. Pellat, “Qatāda b. Dī‘āma,” *EL*, 4:748.
72. Muḥammad b. Ka‘b al-Qurayzī (d. 118/736) *^a—Medinan. His father was a captive from the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayza (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:684). His learning and piety were praised extensively with some even claiming that he was the fulfillment of a prophecy by the Prophet concerning the coming of a descendant of the Jews who will set a new standard for understanding the Qur’ān (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:420; ‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 2:251; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:351; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*,

- 3:685). The pious caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz sought his commentary on the Qur’ān, in particular asking about the identity of the son that Abraham was commanded to sacrifice (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:298–9, 484–5) and also asked him to admonish him (Jāhīz, *Bayān*, 3:143). He died while giving *qaṣaṣ*, when the mosque of Medina fell on him and his colleagues (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:420; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:351; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Muslim*, 2:204; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq* 55:150). On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see also Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:420; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5:290. See also Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 3:247–56; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifa*, 2:132–4; Sezgin, *GAS*, 1:32.
73. Ma‘bad b. Khālid al-‘Adwānī al-Bajalī (d. 118/736) *^a—Kufan. He was a reputable *ḥadīth* transmitter, eloquent speaker, ascetic and *qāṣṣ* to the governor of Iraq Khālid al-Qaṣrī (d. 126/743); (Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 2:185; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:205). Before pursuing a life of religious worship and *qaṣaṣ*, he was a security official of the Umayyads. On him, see al-Qādī, “Security Positions.”
74. Nufay‘ (Nāfi‘) b. al-Ḥārith (d. 120–30/738–47)—Kufan. He is Abū Dā‘ūd al-A‘mā al-Hamdānī al-Sabī‘ī. As a Rāfiḍī, he was deemed a weak *ḥadīth* transmitter; a Basran contemporary of his, the *qāṣṣ* Qatāda, called him a liar in *ḥadīth* (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabūr*, 1:267; ‘Uqaylī, *Du‘afā’*, 4:306–7; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 7:59–60; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 6:173–4; idem, *Tahdhīb*, 4:239–40). On him as a *qāṣṣ*, see Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabūr*, 1:267; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 7:59–60; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:239–40. He is not to be confused with Nāfi‘ b. al-Ḥārith b. Kalada, the uterine brother of Ziyād b. Abihi (on him, see Khalīfa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 54; G.R. Hawting, *Ṭabarī: Civil War*, 17:166, n. 670.).
75. ‘Uqba b. Muslim al-Tujībī (d.c. 120/738) *—Egyptian. The earliest source to identify him as a *qāṣṣ* is the historian of Egypt Ibn Yūnus (d. 347/958), who, cited by Ibn ‘Asākir, said that ‘Uqba was appointed over *al-qaṣaṣ* (Ibn ‘Asākir, 61:227; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 20:222). Later sources refer to him as *qāṣṣ* and the *imām* of the “old mosque,” *al-masjid al-‘atīq*, meaning almost certainly that of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in al-Fuṣṭāṭ (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 20:222; Dhahabī, *Kāshif*, 2:30; idem, *Tārīkh*, 7:425; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:127). However, Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938), who predates Ibn Yūnus, and is thus the earliest source to connect ‘Uqba to any official position, identified him as the judge, *qāḍī*, of Egypt (*Jarḥ*, 6:316). This is clearly an orthographic mix-up, and the Egyptian tradition of Ibn Yūnus is to be preferred. ‘Uqba apparently enjoyed enough respect in Egypt that when the governor Ḥanzala b. Ṣafwān left al-Fuṣṭāṭ in 103/721, he appointed him as his acting governor (Kindī, *Wulāt*, 93). He was a trustworthy *ḥadīth* transmitter (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabūr*, 6:437; ‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 2:142; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:228; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 20:222; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:127).
76. Al-Julāḥ, Abū Kathir al-Rūmī (d. 120/738) *—Egyptian (Alexandrian). He was a *mawlā* of an Umayyad: either ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz or

- ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 2:254; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 1:275; Nasā’ī, *Sunan*, 1:526; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:158; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 5:293; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 5:177; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:339; Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 11:137; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:321). Ibn Yūnus said he was appointed over *al-qashaş* in Alexandria by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 5:178). *Ḥadīths* he transmitted were compiled by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā’ī and Tirmidhī (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 5:178).
77. Tawba b. Namir al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 120/738) *^a—Egyptian. He became judge of Egypt in 115/733 (Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūh*, 1:399; Wakī’, *Quḍāt*, 3:230; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:446; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:331; Ibn Ḥajar, *Raf’*, 109; idem, *Ta’jīl al-Manfa’a*, 1:61). He was a pious man (Ibn Ḥajar, *Raf’*, 109; idem, *Ta’jīl*, 1:61) and was also the *qāşş* of Egypt (Ibn Nāşir al-Dīn, *Tawḍīḥ al-mushtabih*, 5:8; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:331; Ibn Hajar, *Ta’jīl al-Manfa’a*, 1:61).
78. ‘Abd Allāh b. Zayd (d. 121/738)—Syrian. He was the *qāşş* of Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik’s army during his siege of Constantinople in 98/716 (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 5:93; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 5:88; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:315). Little is known about him, and most sources are even uncertain about his name (for an overview, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:71–75). He is listed variously as ‘Abd Allāh b. Zayd (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 5:93; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 5:88; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:312, 315), Khālid b. Zayd (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:312; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:71–75), Khālid b. Yazīd (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:71–75; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 7:136) and ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 39:420; Ibn Abī ‘Āşim, *Mudhakkir*, 69–71; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muĵam al-kabīr*, 18:78). He appears, however, to have enjoyed significant influence in Syria for he promised to protect the Syrian *ḥadīth* scholar Makḥūl from the powerful Umayyad advisor Rajā’ b. Ḥaywa, after the latter criticized the former during one of his teaching sessions (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 28:314–5).
79. ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr (d. 122/739) *—Meccan. There is much confusion about his identity. Ibn Ḥajar notes that there are two men by this name: ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr b. al-Muṭṭalib and ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr al-Dārī al-Makkī (*Tahdhīb*, 2:407–8). Ibn Abī Ḥātim, however, lists a certain ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr b. al-Muṭṭalib from the Banū ‘Abd al-Dār who seems to combine aspects of the two (*Jarḥ*, 5:144). Ibn Sa’d lists only al-Dārī al-Makkī and mentions that he was trustworthy in *ḥadīth*. Ibn Ḥibbān lists only Ibn al-Muṭṭalib and claims that he died in 120/737. Meanwhile, other reports claim that Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 196/811) saw a certain ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr, the “*qāşş al-‘amma*,” in Mecca in the year 122/739 (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 1:305; Fākihī, *Akhbār*, 2:339).
80. Muḥammad b. Qays (d.c. 125–6/743–4) *—Medinan. He was the *mawlā* of either Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān or Ya‘qūb the Copt (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:511; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 55:108, 113; though this may be the result of confusion with another Muḥammad b. Qays [al-Zayyāt]; see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 55:110; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*,

- 26:323, 326), a distinguished scholar of Medina (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:511) and the *qāṣṣ* of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn, *Tārīkh*, 3:195; Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 1:324, 3:170; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 8:63; Dūlābī, *Kunā*, 1:313; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 55:108–14; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:226; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 4:60; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:455, 681). While Bukhārī identified him as the judge, *qāḍī*, of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (*al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1:212), al-Nawawī said that this was incorrect (*Sharḥ*, 17:64). Not only was he a reputable *ḥadīth* scholar, so were his father and mother (see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:455 and 4:704, respectively). He was a prolific commentator on the Qur'ān (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, passim; *Tārīkh*, 3:195). He was also a colleague of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and was allegedly with him when he was designated caliph (Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 55:109). See also, Khalifa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 259.
81. Darrāj b. Sim'an (d. 126/744)—Egyptian. A *mawlā* of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, he was a scholar of mixed reputation (Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn, *Tārīkh*, 4:413; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 3:441; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 17:224; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:478–9; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 3:41; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:574). He related *ḥadīth* and gave Qur'ān commentary on a number of issues including punishment in hell-fire (al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *Mustadrak*, 2:269; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:378, 15:239, 265, 16:228; 29:155; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 17:218–9) and *dhikr* (Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn, *Tārīkh*, 4:413; Ibn 'Adī, *Kāmīl*, 3:113; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 17:220; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:479). Ibn Yūnus reported that he was a *qāṣṣ* (Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 3:259; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 3:441; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 17:225; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:477; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:90; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:574). See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 239.
82. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. 126/744)*^a—Meccan. He was the great-grandson of the first caliph and the son of one of the seven *fuqahā'* of Medina. His reputation as a scholar was impeccable (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:452; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 5:339; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:62; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 35:329). Such was his reputation that, when the caliph Hishām learned that 'Abd al-Raḥman was on his way to Syria to complain about the governor in Medina Khālīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, Hishām removed Khālīd before even meeting with 'Abd al-Raḥman (Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 35:329). He died in Syria in 126/744 while on a separate delegation to the caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd, who requested the advice of a few Medinan legal scholars on the issue of divorce before consummation (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:452; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:62; Ibn 'Asākir, *Dimashq*, 35:227; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:545). Only Fākihī mentions him as a *qāṣṣ*, although here his identity is uncertain. In his section on *al-qaṣaṣ* in Mecca, Fākihī recorded that 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim was "a *qāṣṣ* who delivered *qaṣaṣ* in Mecca," (*Akhbār*, 2:338). While a report found earlier in the same work says that a certain 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim *b. Ḥasan* was a *qāṣṣ* in Mecca (*Akhbār*, 2:308), this person is unidentifiable and may be a mistake for

- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim *b. Muḥammad*. While Ibn Sa‘d (*Ṭabaqāt*, 7:452) identified him as a judge, orthographical similarities further complicate our ability to identify him with any degree of certainty.
83. Thābit b. Aslam al-Bunānī (d. 127/744) *^a—Basran. He was a leading scholar in Basra who was praised as a *muḥaddith* and was noted as being one of the three best transmitters from Anas b. Malik, along with al-Zuhrī and Qatāda (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:449; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:347; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:262–3; Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāz*, 1:57) and as an ascetic (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:231–2; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 2:159; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr*, 1:89; idem, *Thiqāt*, 4:89). He was also a respected *qāṣṣ* (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:449; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 2:100; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:346–7; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 5:221; Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāz*, 1:57). His most prolific student, Ḥammād b. Salama, put him to the test as a *qāṣṣ* in an attempt to see whether he was a poor *ḥadīth* scholar, as was generally thought of the *quṣṣāṣ*, and he passed the test with flying colors (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:449; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 2:100; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:347; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:263). He apparently enjoyed such distinction in Basra that the mosque where he taught became known as “the mosque of Thābit al-Bunānī” (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:92). On him, see also Khalifa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 214.
84. Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746)—Khurāsānī. He was the *qāṣṣ* for al-Ḥārith b. Surayj’s “Black Banners” revolution against the Umayyads (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1919–20), though Ibn Ḥajar recorded that he was the “judge” for the army (*Lisān al-mizān*, 2:179). He was selected by al-Ḥārith to represent him as an arbitrator, opposite Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, who represented the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār. He was able to secure a decision that Naṣr abdicate and that the governor be selected by a council (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1919–20). When Naṣr rejected the decision, Jahm continued to give *qaṣaṣ* in his tent in al-Ḥārith’s camp (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1919) and was later executed by the governor’s forces (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1924; ‘Askarī, *Awā’il*, 115; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 2:179). The politically and militarily charged context for his *qaṣaṣ* indicates that the intention of his sessions was to foment opposition against his enemies and was not simply to provide religious education or entertaining anecdotes. Furthermore, he was immortalized as the namesake of a heresy named al-Jahmiyya, holding that the Qur’ān was created and denied that God possessed eternal knowledge (‘Askarī, *Awā’il*, 115; see also W.M. Watt, “Djahm b. Ṣafwān” and “Djahmiyya,” *EL*, 2:388; van Ess, *TC*, 2:507–8).
85. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd (d. 128/746) ^a—Basran. Even though he was a popular ascetic (Jāḥiẓ, *Bursān*, 282) and *qāṣṣ* (Juzjānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 116; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 37:223) in Basra, he was considered a weak *ḥadīth* transmitter (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 6:61; idem, *al-Ḍu‘afā’ al-ṣaghīr*, 1:76; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 37:22–4). In addition to transmitting many sayings of an ascetic nature, there are a number of anecdotes of miraculous occurrences befalling him. In one account,

- paralysis struck him in old age, leaving him supine. Then, when he wanted to perform *wuḍūʿ*, either possibly for prayer (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 7:268) or after defecating (Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 283), God released him temporarily from the paralysis until he completed his washing.
86. Maṭar b. Ṭahmān al-Warrāq (d. 129/747)—Basran. Originally from Khurāsān, he then moved to Basra. Opinions on his status as a *ḥadīth* scholar are mixed (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:253; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:452–3; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:87–8). He was known primarily for his asceticism (Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya*, 3:89–92; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:452) and made his living by making copies of the Qurʾān (Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:452). A certain Shayba bt. al-Aswad reported that she saw him giving *qaṣaṣ* (Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya*, 3:90; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 5:453; idem, *Tārīkh*, 8:269). See also Abbott, *Studies II*, 229–30.
87. Salama b. Dīnār (d. 130–40/748–57) * a—Medinan. He is often identified as Abū Ḥāzim al-Aʿraj (“the lame”). Considered a reputable *ḥadīth* scholar, he was best known as an ascetic (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:515; Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:364; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāḥir*, 1:79; idem, *Thiqāt*, 4:316; Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya*, 3:266–97; Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 1:188; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:198). He gave *qaṣaṣ* after the morning (*fajr*) and afternoon (*ʿaṣr*) prayers in the mosque in Medina (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:515; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 479; Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 1:188; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 22:20; Mizzi, *Tahdhīb*, 11:272, 278; Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 6:101; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:199). Once, while giving *qaṣaṣ*, he began weeping and wiping his face with his tears. When asked why he was doing this, he said: “Hell-fire does not hit the spots that tears of fear of God have touched;” (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 22:26; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:199). While the Caliph Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik (or possibly his nephew Sulaymān b. Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik), attended his sessions (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:515) and once sent the distinguished al-Zuhrī to bring Abū Ḥāzim to him, the *qāṣṣ* refused to go, saying: “I have no need of him, so if he has a need, let him come to me;” (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:316). It seems, nevertheless, that the two men did meet (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 3:142).
88. Muqātil b. Ḥayyān (d. 135/753) * a—Khurasanan. He is identified as having given *qaṣaṣ* and weeping only in the 6th/13th century Persian work of Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. Dāvūd Balkhī’s *Faṣaʿil-i Balkh* (154) citing Wasīm b. Jamīl al-Thaqafī (d. 182/798); (see also van Ess, *TC*, 2:513). Muqātil, like his namesake, Muqātil b. Sulaymān, was a supporter of the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār. The two first acted together as representatives of Naṣr in his negotiations with the anti-Umayyad rebel al-Ḥārith b. Surayj (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1918). Later, Naṣr chose Muqātil b. Ḥayyān and al-Ḥārith selected Jahm b. Ṣafwān to arbitrate their differences. Muqātil proved to be a poor negotiator and it was decided that Naṣr abdicate and allow the government to be decided by a council (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1919). Muqātil was considered a sound *ḥadīth* scholar (Ibn

- Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:142), Qurʾān commentator (van Ess, *TG*, 2:514–6) and ascetic (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:142). While Van Ess alleged that he was also a judge, Crone challenged this and other conclusions van Ess drew from *Faḍaʾil-i Balkh* (van Ess, *TG*, 2:514–6; Crone, “Note,” 243–5). According to van Ess, his *tafsīr* displayed *qashaṣ* tendencies because of its alleged midrashic forms (*TG*, 2:514). He spent the latter years of his life as a missionary in Kābul (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:142).
89. Khayr b. Nuʿaym al-Ḥaḍramī, Abū Ismāʿīl (d. 137/754) *^a—Egyptian. He was the scribe of the judge and *qāṣṣ* Tawba b. Namir, who recommended him for the judiciary (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 1:399). His first judgeship was in Barqa (modern day Libya); (Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 1:88; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:372; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:408; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:560). He held the position of judge in Egypt from 121–128/738–745 (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 1:400; Kindī, *Wulāt*, 25–7; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 3:404; Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 1:88; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:560; Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Maḥādāra*, 260). He was a sound scholar and was considered one of the most respected *fuqahāʾ* of Egypt (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 3:229; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 3:404; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:277; Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 1:88; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 8:373; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:408; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:560). After judgeship, he was appointed by ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān b. Mūsā al-Nusayrī (on him see Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr*, 116) over the *dīwān* of letters (Ibn Ḥajar, *Rafʿ al-īṣr*, 156). He was also a *qāṣṣ* (Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, 1:88; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 8:17; Ibn Mākūla, *Ikmāl*, 2:18). In early ʿAbbāsīd times and upon the insistence of the people of Egypt, he was reinstated as judge from 133–135/750–52 (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Miṣr*, 1:400; Ibn Ḥajar, *Rafʿ al-īṣr*, 1:217).
90. Al-Faḍl b. ʿĪsā al-Raḡāshī (d.c. mid-second/eighth century)—Basran. He was the nephew of the Basran *qāṣṣ* Yazīd b. Abān (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:290; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 2:67; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:394). He related rejected *ḥadīth* from well-known sources such as his uncle and the famous Basran scholar al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (Abū Dāʿūd, *Suʾālāt*, 1:277; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:394). Not only was he accused of being a *Qadarī*, he was said also to have been a missionary for the cause (*dāʿiya ilā al-qadar*); (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 2:211; see also Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:290; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, 2:67; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:394). Ibn Abī Khaythama is reported as having said that “he was a *qāṣṣ* and he was a bad man (*rajuḥ sūʾ*);” (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:394). According to Jāḥiẓ, he recited verses mentioning heaven and hell, death and resurrection, and similar topics, and when he was challenged about his Qurʾān *tafsīr*, he retorted: “Do you perceive that I am forbidding the allowable and allowing the forbidden?” (*Bayān*, 1:291). Jāḥiẓ also included him among the *quṣṣāṣ* of Basra whom he said were more eloquent than the orators (*khutabāʾ*) of the city and claimed that he used to deliver his *qashaṣ* in rhymed prose (*ṣajʿ*); (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1:291, 306). Ibn

- Ḥajar identified him as “the admonisher” (*al-wāʿiẓ*); (*Tahdhīb*, 3:394). His knowledge of religion was allegedly so keen that the *fuqahāʾ* of Basra sat in his sessions (*Bayān*, 1:291, 306). Ibn Qutayba erroneously listed him among the judges (*Maʿārif*, 476).
91. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yazīd (n.d.) *—Yemenī. Ibn Ḥajar lists him with the *nisba* al-Ṣanʿānī al-Qāṣṣ al-Abnāwī, indicating that he was a Yemenī *qāṣṣ* from the *abnāʾ* who originally were of Persian descent (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 5:115; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:567). It is uncertain if he remained in Yemen or traveled to other areas of the empire. He transmitted *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayra and Ibn ʿUmar. Among those who transmitted upon his authority is a *qāṣṣ* named ʿAbd Allāh b. Baḥīr b. Raysān who lived most of his life under the ʿAbbāsids (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:305–6). He was allegedly more knowledgeable than Wahb b. Munabbih in *al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām* (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:567).
92. Al-Naḍr b. ʿAmr al-Ḥimyārī (n.d.)—Syrian. He was a Qurʾān reciter (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 358) and one of the *quṣṣās* of the people of Syria (Marwazī, *Taʿzīm qadr al-ṣalāt*, 2:675–7). He was briefly in charge of prayer in 110/728, during the reign of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105–25/724–743), and was, during the caliphate of Yazīd b. al-Walīd (r. 126/744), in charge of the *kharāj*, the *jund* (i.e. the stipends register), the “small” seal (*al-khātīm al-ṣaghīr*) and the guard (*al-ḥaras*); (Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 371; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:839).
93. Hilāl, Abū Tuʿma (n.d.)—Egyptian. Originally from Syria, he was a *mawlā* of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. He moved to Egypt where he gave *qaṣaṣ* (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 74:98), recited Qurʾān and transmitted *ḥadīth* (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *ʿIlal*, 2:35; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 74:98–100; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:541–2). See also Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2:184; idem, *Musnad*, 8:405–6, 9:288–90; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 6:12.
94. Sumayr (Samīr?) b. ʿAbd al-Raḥman (n.d.)—Basran. The only source identifying him as a *qāṣṣ* is al-Dārimī (*Sunan*, 1:110).
95. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khālid (n.d.) *^a—Kufan. He is Abū ʿAmr al-Malāʾī (Muslim, *Kunā*, 2:782), so called because he sold linens (*malāʾ*) at the door of the mosque in Kufa (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Mūḍih*, 2:393; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:625, 4:564). He gave *qaṣaṣ*, and is often referred to as Abū ʿAmr al-*qāṣṣ* (Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 3:478; Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 1:154; Muslim, *Kunā*, 2:782; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 7:320; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Mūḍih*, 2:391–4; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:564).
96. Yaʿqūb b. Mujāhid, Abū Ḥazra (d. 149/766) *—Medinan. A *mawlā* of the Banū Makhzūm (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:555; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:446), he was considered a trustworthy *ḥadīth* transmitter, though with few *ḥadīths*, and was widely identified as a *qāṣṣ* in Medina (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:555; Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 3:182; Ibn Abī Shayba *Suʿalāt*, 91; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 1:491; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*,

- 2:103, 9:215; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:640; Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl*, 1:380; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 4:118; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 31:228, 32:236; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 32:361). Ibn ‘Asākir identified him as a *qādī*, although this seems to be an error in the manuscript edition (Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 31:228).
97. Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767)^a—Khurasanan. Originally from Balkh, he moved to Marw and became known as a Qur’ān commentator whose *tafsīr* is extant. He was widely criticized for his weakness in *ḥadīth* (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:14–15; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 6:437; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 60:123; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:640–1; idem, *Mizān*, 6:505). He gave *qaṣaṣ* in the mosque in Marw (Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 6:437; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 60:123; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:641; idem, *Mizān*, 6:505), and it was there that he encountered Jahm b. Ṣafwān. Opposition arose between the two and they allegedly wrote refutations of each other (Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 6:497; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 60:123; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:641; idem, *Mizān*, 6:505; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:143). Both men were later criticized for their theological positions—Muqātil for anthropomorphism and Jahm for denying God’s attributes (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 3:15–6; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 9:641). According to Ṭabarī’s account of events in Khurāsān, the opposition between them may have been political: in 128/746 Jahm supported al-Ḥārith b. Surayj’s rebellion against the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār, whom Muqātil b. Sulaymān supported (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1917–21). Thus, it may be that Muqātil’s *qaṣaṣ* were not merely religious. Indeed, Jahm was identified as a *qāṣṣ* only because he supported al-Ḥārith b. Surayj’s forces against Naṣr b. Sayyār and not for any of his religious instructions (see # 84).
98. ‘Umar b. Dharr b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Zurāra (d. 156/773)^{*a}—Kufan. He was a respected ascetic (Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilya*, 5:125–37), a *qāṣṣ* (‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 2:165; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:168) and a trustworthy scholar in *ḥadīth* (‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 2:165; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 6:107; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 21:335–6). While listed among the *Murjī’a*, he was said to have not been militant in his advocacy of Murjī’ism (‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifā*, 2:165; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:168; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 21:336). The type of *qaṣaṣ* that ‘Umar engaged in is unclear. He was connected as a *qāṣṣ* to the political upheavals in Khurāsān at the time of the ‘Abbāsīd revolution and “gave *qaṣaṣ* and incited [the people]” in Wāsiṭ in 132/750 against Abū Muslim’s forces (Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:405). When the region was conquered by the ‘Abbāsīds, he was singled out, along with other supporters of the local Umayyad governor, Yūsuf b. Hubayra, as one who would not be granted amnesty. However, upon the intercession of Ziyād b. ‘Ubayd Allāh, he was pardoned and died almost a quarter of a century later (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:69; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Dimashq*, 16:93–4; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 8:404–5). The sources intimate that ‘Umar engaged in both religious and martial *qaṣaṣ*. The *rijāl*-books of ‘Ijlī and Ibn Ḥibbān offer no indication that his *qaṣaṣ* was

connected to the political events of the day and lead us to believe that he was purely religious. The history works, on the other hand, clearly associate his *qaṣaṣ* to his advocacy of the Umayyad cause. It is possible that ʿIjlī and Ibn Ḥibbān were aware that his position as *qāṣṣ* carried with it political affiliations, for they both identify him as a Murjiʿī at a time when the Murjiʿa was a politico-religious movement (W. Madelung, “Murđjiʿa,” *EI*2, 7:605–7). ʿUmar, therefore, presents an important example of the confluence of both aspects of *qaṣaṣ*.

99. Sulaymān b. ʿAmr, Abū al-Haytham (n.d.) *—Egyptian. He was an orphan who was cared for by Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, the distinguished Companion of the Prophet (Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 4:27; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 4:708). Moving from Medina to Egypt in search of income and a livelihood (Fasawī, *Maʿrifā*, 2:254), he became the *qāṣṣ* of the community (*qāṣṣ al-jamāʿa*) in Egypt at the end of Umayyad rule. When he was later removed by the ʿAbbāsids, he complained, seemingly feigning ignorance of the political sensitivities of *qaṣaṣ*, saying: “You did not have to remove me, I am a [mere] *qāṣṣ*. If you told me, “Add to your stories,” I would have added, and if you said, “Shorten [them],” then I would have shortened them. So you did not have to remove me;” (Fasawī, *Maʿrifā*, 2:254). While his response seems conciliatory, it may in fact be sarcastic and indicative of an awareness of how *qaṣaṣ* adapted to the religio-political needs of the moment. See also Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:519; Yahyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 4:424; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 12:50–1; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:104–5.
100. Al-Qāsim b. Mujāshīʿ (d. 169/785)—Khurasanan. He was one of the twelve leaders (*nuqabāʾ*, sg. *naqīb*) of Abū Muslim (*Akhbār al-dawla al-ʿabbāsiyya*, 217, 291; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 3:115; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1358). An Arab from the tribe of Kinda (Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 1:80, 11:466; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 3:135; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, 1:214), he appears to have been the religious man of Abū Muslim’s forces, for he was the usual choice for leading the people in prayer (in the village of Fanīn [see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1953]; in Marw [2:1964]; in al-Mākhuwān [2:1968]; in the village of Alīn [2:1969–70]). He was appointed judge in al-Mākhuwān (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1968) and gave *qaṣaṣ* after the evening prayers recounting the virtues and rights to leadership of the Banū Ḥāshim and the vices and tyranny of the Banū ʿUmayya (*Akhbār al-dawla*, 280; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1968; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 7:272; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, 3:150). This is the only forum in which he gave *qaṣaṣ*, for the biographical dictionaries, *ḥadīth* works, and commentaries fail to mention him. Al-Qāsim was an active fighter who played leading roles in some of Abū Muslim’s campaigns in 129–30/747–8 (*Akhbār al-dawla*, 323, 327; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 3:135; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1986–8, 2000–2). He died in Marw in relative isolation from the ʿAbbāsid leaders due to his support of the ʿAlid right to the leadership of the community (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3:532).

101. Sālim b. Abī Ḥaḥṣa—(d.c. 140/757) *—Kufan. He was staunchly pro-ʿAlid, supported the assassination of ʿUthmān, and gloated at the fall the Umayyads, saying, when he entered Mecca on the *ḥajj* that he was “the destroyer of the Umayyads;” (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:454–5; Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 3:469; Ṭabarī, *Muntakhab*, 150; ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 2:152–3; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:134–8; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:675). In spite of his alleged excessive Shīʿism, some (like Ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn) considered by to be trustworthy in *ḥadīth* transmission (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:135; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:675). However, other scholars, like Nasāʾī and Dūlābī, considered him weak (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:135; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:675). His *qaṣaṣ* was politically-based: he began by recalling the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, then moved to those of ʿAlī in order to set up *qaṣaṣ* in praise of ʿAlī (ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 2:153; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:136).
102. ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀtika (d.c. 155/772)—Syrian. He was a teacher (*muʿallim*), Qurʾān reciter and *qāṣṣ* of Damascus. Most sources identify him as a *qāṣṣ* (Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 4:420; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2:473; Fasawī, *Maʿrifa*, 1:132, 2:433; Dūlābī, *Kunā*, 2:473; ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 3:221; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 6:163; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6:164–5; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 38:391–7; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 5:53; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:65). According to one report, he was a weak *ḥadīth* transmitter because he was a *qaṣṣ*: “He was a *qāṣṣ*; if there was any problem [in the *ḥadīth*] then it was from that;” (ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 3:221; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 38:394; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 3:65). In some reports, he is identified specifically as “the *qāṣṣ* of the *jund* (administrative region) of Damascus;” (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 6:163; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, 38:396).
103. Al-Nahhās b. Qahm (d. mid-second/eighth century)—Basran. He was rejected by the *ḥadīth*-folk as untrustworthy (ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 4:312; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 8:511; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 3:56; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 7:58; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:243), although some of his transmissions are included in Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 30:31). Ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn identified him as a *qāṣṣ* (Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2:497; Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 4:148, 252; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 30:29–30; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:243). Ibn al-Jawzī recorded a Prophetic tradition by al-Nahhās, believed to have been fabricated, concerning the multiple blessings that the believer would receive in paradise by praying at ʿArafāt (*Mawḍūʿāt*, 2:54).
104. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Abī Sulaymān al-Hudhālī (d. mid-second/eighth century) * ^a—Medinan. He was a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter, pious ascetic, admonisher and *mudhakkir* (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:577; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 5:384; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:586). Ibn Ḥajar identified him as the *qāṣṣ* of the people of Medina (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:586). He transmitted *ḥadīth* from the scholars of the Ḥijāz, such as Muḥammad b. Kaʿb al-Qurazī (# 72); (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 5:384; Ibn

- Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:114). Though his death date is uncertain, he is said to have died at a very old age (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:577).
105. Yūnus b. Khabbāb (d. mid-second/eighth century)—Kufan. Only 'Uqaylī identified him as a *qāṣṣ* (*Du'afā'*, 4:458). He was a staunch Shī'ī, a Rāfiḍī, who openly vilified 'Uthmān (Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 3:98, 191; 'Uqaylī, *Du'afā'*, 4:458; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 32:506–7; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:468–9). He was widely disparaged as a *ḥadīth* transmitter, although Abū Dāwūd claimed that the *ḥadīth* that Shu'ba transmitted on his authority were acceptable (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 32:506; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:469).
106. Sa'īd b. Ḥassān al-Makhzūmī (d. mid-second/eighth century) *—Meccan. He enjoyed a good reputation as a *ḥadīth* transmitter (Yaḥyā b. Ma'in, *Tārikh*, 3:62; Fasawī, *Ma'rifa*, 3:240; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 4:12; al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *Mustadrak*, 2:557; Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 4:428–30; Dhahabī, *Tārikh*, 9:149, 398; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:130; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 2:11–12). The earliest source that associates him with any governmentally appointed position states that he was a judge (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 4:12), while the earliest source that identifies him as a *qāṣṣ* is al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's *Mustadrak* (2:557) citing the Meccan scholar Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Khunays (d. latter half of second/eighth century), who said: "He was the *qāṣṣ* of our congregation and used to stand before us during the month of Ramaḍān (*kāna qāṣṣ jamā'atinā wa-kāna yaqūmu binā fi shahr Ramaḍān*)." Dhahabī's *Tārikh* lists him twice: once as a judge who died between 140–50 and once as a *qāṣṣ* who died between 150–60 (*Tārikh*, 9:149 and 9:398). Ṣafadī merges aspects of the two statements by claiming that he was a judge who died around 160 (*Wāfi*, 15:130). Ibn Ḥajar's works unanimously identify him as a *qāṣṣ* (*Taqrib*, 1:234; *Tahdhīb*, 2:11; *Lisān*, 7:234).
107. Ḥawshab b. Muslim (d. mid-second/eighth century) *—Basran. He was one of the most important students of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (Abū Dāwūd, *Su'ālāt*, 277; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:507). He was an ascetic and gave *qaṣaṣ* (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:243). He was also considered trustworthy in *ḥadīth* (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:270; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:243). He made his living as a merchant of cloaks (*tayālisa*); (Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:270).
108. Mūsā b. Sayyār al-Uswārī (d. mid-second/eighth century)—Basran. According to Jāḥiz, he was one of the wonders of the world because he was equally fluent in Arabic and Persian. In his *tafsīr* sessions, he explained verses for the Arabs sitting on his right and then for the Persians sitting on his left and he was ostensibly one of the best Qur'ān reciters of his era (Jāḥiz, *Bayān*, 1:368). In spite of these commendable traits, he was accused of being a Rāfiḍī and a Qadarī (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 4:177; idem, *Lisān*, 6:140). He transmitted *ḥadīth* from some reputable *quṣṣāṣ* of Basra, such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatāda and Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh, although he himself was considered a weak transmitter (Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 6:140).

109. Al-Haytham b. Jammāz (d. mid-second/eighth century) ^a—Basran. He was a *qāṣṣ* in Basra (Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Tārīkh*, 4:133; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 7:101; Jūzjānī, *Aḥwāl*, 120; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 6:26–7). He related *ḥadīth* from Thābit al-Bunānī and Yazīd al-Raqāshī, two reputable transmitters and *quṣṣāṣ*, although he himself was considered weak in *ḥadīth* (Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 6:246–7). He was also numbered among “the weepers (*al-bakkāʿūn*);” (Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 7:101; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 6:246).

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