

Islam on the Margins

Islamic History and Civilization

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Islam on the Margins

Studies in Memory of Michael Bonner

Edited by

Robert Haug
Steven Judd



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Cover illustration: World Map from a manuscript of al-Iṣṭakhṛī's *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* dated 589/1193. Leiden University Library, manuscript Or.3101 (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1577846>) (CC BY 4.0)

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Preface

I concentrate mainly on the early period of Islam, and it is there that my own contributions and ideas stand the best chance of being considered original, and perhaps even right.¹



As the editors of this memorial volume, it is our duty to summarize Michael Bonner's contributions to the field of early Islamic history. Considering the breadth and diversity of his work, this was no easy task. Michael's work covered a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, the Arab-Byzantine frontier or Thughūr, the theory and practice of jihad, poverty and charity in the early Islamic world, the markets of pre-Islamic Arabia, the economy of the early caliphate, geography, and numismatics. In each of these fields, Michael made many important contributions that helped shape the field of early Islamic history and our understanding of this world. This collection of scholarship from Michael's students and others whom he influenced reflects the breadth of his interests as well as his determination to instill in us a willingness and eagerness to pursue our own diverse trajectories. While the array of topics addressed herein presented certain organizational challenges for us as editors, the contributions gathered here underscore the impact that Michael's scholarship, mentorship, and meticulous attention to detail had on the broader field. As such, we believe that this volume is a fitting tribute to a scholar of immense knowledge, varied interests, and infinite curiosity.

1 The Scholarship of Michael Bonner

In the broadest strokes, Michael's research can be divided into three fields: the history of the Arab-Byzantine frontier or Thughūr and the conduct of jihad, the history of poverty and charity in early Islamic society, and the economic history of pre-Islamic Arabia and the early Islamic caliphate. Through a deep reading

¹ Bonner, *Jihad* xvii. For all references, please see "Bibliography of Michael Bonner's Publications" on page xxix.

and close analysis of a wide variety of sources that included—but was not limited to—chronicles, legal treatises, geographies, biographies, and numismatics, Michael was able to uncover the experiences of groups whose voices were often left out of the literary sources that dominate the study of early Islamic history. These voices stretched the gambit from those at the geographic fringes of the Islamic world while simultaneously at the ideological center, such as frontier warriors and the jurists who supported them, to those at the geographic center but on the social and economic fringes, such as the urban poor. In the process, Michael bridged the gap between the idealized and theoretical manner by which religious and legal scholars believed the world should operate and the way in which events unfolded practically on the ground as people experienced them. It is through his emphasis on practice over theory—though always informed by the theoretical and intellectual traditions underlying the sources—that Michael was able to bring these distinct and disparate fields together. He was able to see, for example, the ways reciprocity, gift exchange, recompense, and reward were threads that connected the practices of both warfare and charitable giving in the early Islamic tradition. In Michael's writing, an economy of Muslim piety and generosity came to light that included the expenditures of the frontier warrior, the pious donor, and the hospitable tribal shaykh, all flowing from a shared tradition of investment and return.

2 The Arab-Byzantine Thughūr

Michael's earliest work focused specifically on the Arab-Byzantine frontier, also known as al-Thughūr or 'The Frontier', a title that denotes its pre-eminence among the many frontiers of the early Islamic caliphate. Beginning with his dissertation—"The emergence of the "Thughūr": The Arab-Byzantine frontier in the early 'Abbāsīd age" (1987), written under the supervision of Michael Cook and Roy Mottahedeh at Princeton University—Michael used the Thughūr as a venue to examine not only the longstanding conflicts between the Byzantine Empire and the caliphate, but also to highlight specific issues, most importantly the changing and contested role of the caliph in Islamic society. In his work, the frontier became an arena in which the growing community of religious scholars could compete with the caliph and the state for authority over the jihad and, therefore, the frontier itself. Themes highlighted in his dissertation were elaborated in articles and books published in the decade following its completion. Michael skillfully used the history of minting and the coinage struck in the territories along the frontier to highlight the role of frontier fighting and the support for frontier warriors during the reign of the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r.

170–193/786–809).² Demonstrating his interest in economics, he showed how Muslim jurists used questions of substitution and wages in warfare to shift military matters from the purview of the state into the realm of law, therefore placing these issues under the authority of the religious jurists.³ He also explored the ‘Abbasids’ response as they designated the Arab-Byzantine frontier a discrete administrative unit of the empire, thereby pulling the frontier back under their authority.⁴ Through these various projects, Michael examined the Thughūr through a combination of economic, numismatic, juridical, geographic, and administrative sources, painting a picture of the frontier as a complex space entangled in all aspects of early Islamic politics and society, not just warfare.

These studies of the frontier and jihad were brought together in two books. First, *Aristocratic violence and Holy War: Studies in the jihad and the Arab-Byzantine frontier* (1996) combined Michael’s previous work into a single study of the jihad in a historical and geographic context. Here Michael explored the jihad not as a purely juridical or theological and, therefore, hypothetical experience, but instead situated the experience of the frontier in a concrete historical setting, the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr during the early ‘Abbasid period. By tracing the political development of the frontier in tandem with the legal development of the jihad, Michael was able to successfully contextualize both within a competition between caliphs and jurists for legitimate authority over the Islamic world. The development of the jihad and the rise of the jurists as the guardians of the jihad then became the answer to the central question found in the title of the book, why did a warrior aristocracy fail to materialize on and politically dominate the Muslim side of the Thughūr as it did along European borderlands?

This approach, bringing both theory and practice together in dialogue, remained apparent in the title for the English edition of Michael’s book, *Jihad in Islamic history: Doctrine and practice* (2006). In this work, originally published in French as *Le Jihad: Origines, interpretations, combats* (2004), Michael condensed his most important theses on the history and development of jihad into a book targeted towards the non-specialist reader. His arguments here include the importance of the theme of reciprocity/gift and recompence/reward in the Quranic message and its application to military recruitment and payment, the slow evolution of the doctrines of jihad in the early centuries of Islamic history, and the important place of frontiers and frontier fighting in the rise and

2 Bonner, *Al-Khalifa al-Marḍī*; Bonner, *The mint of Hārūnābād and al-Hārūniyya*.

3 Bonner, *Ja‘ā’il and Holy War*; Bonner, *Some observations*.

4 Bonner, *The naming of the frontier*.

ideological program of many Islamic dynastic states. The last of these themes was the subject of a case study focused on the place of frontier warfare, jihad, and the validation of the jurists in the rise of the independent governor of Egypt and, briefly, Palestine and Syria, Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (r. 254–270/868–883) in which Michael intertwined the doctrinal with the practical in a specific historical context.⁵

3 Poverty and Charity

Michael took a similar approach in his scholarship on poverty and charity in the early Islamic world. He identified the development of doctrines during the 'Abbasid era alongside and within a historical context. In his earliest work on the subject, Michael proposed the development of two views of society's obligation to the poor. This included a 'radical' view in which a dominant warrior elite were obligated to care for society, including the poor, and a 'conservative' view in which the wealthy and powerful were to maintain the poor just enough to keep an unequal society balanced and functioning. The critical moment in the competition between these two views came with the Fourth Fitna (195–198/810–813) and the destruction of Baghdad, after which the 'conservative' merchant community won out.⁶ Michael followed this with a closer examination of these themes in the *Kitāb al-kasb* or *The book of acquisition* attributed to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/905). In this work, al-Shaybānī argued that the poor have a claim or right (*ḥaqq*) to the surplus of the wealthy and that almsgiving is an important aspect of economic circulation as benefits accrue for both the poor who receive the necessities of life and the wealthy who receive blessings.⁷

The volume *Poverty and charity in Middle Eastern contexts*, co-edited with Mine Ener and Amy Singer, developed out of a conference held in Ann Arbor during the summer of 2000, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Both the conference and the subsequent volume attempted to shed light on the often overlooked and under documented subjects of poverty and the poor in the history of the Middle East, taking a broad historical approach from the rise of Islam to the 20th century. Michael's contribution to the volume examined an 'economy of poverty' focused on a Quranic principle of return and sought to situate it in pre-Islamic Arabian traditions of

⁵ Bonner, Ibn Ṭūlūn's jihad.

⁶ Bonner, Definitions of poverty.

⁷ Bonner, The *Kitāb al-kasb*.

generosity and wastefulness through which tribal shaykhs proved their valor by giving away or destroying their own wealth.⁸ Michael saw these practices as a response to growing poverty and economic inequality in the Arabian Peninsula in the century leading up to the advent of Islam. These same challenges were apparent in the Quran, hadith, and biographies of the Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic response became the focus of Michael's next article.⁹ In this article, Michael argued for an 'economy of poverty' rooted in a Quranic economy that emphasized the circulation and purification of wealth through the process of charitable giving. The Quranic approach to the poor, in Michael's argument, was one of the appeals that helped attract followers to the new religion of Islam.

4 The Markets of the Arabs and Economic History

In his work on the Markets of the Arabs (*aswāq al-'Arab*), Michael reconstructed certain aspects of pre-Islamic trade in the Arabian Peninsula based on a long and complicated literary tradition known as the *ḥadīth al-aswāq* or 'discourse of the markets'. At the same time, Michael sought to understand the role this discourse played in the Islamic sources. These sources recount narratives of the often strange and unusual practices of buying and selling alongside competitions among local petty 'kings', tribal shaykhs, and Arab nobles that involved, among other modes of sport, displays of generosity. Across three articles, he identified a general pattern of the market tradition with an eye towards understanding the role the discourse of the markets played in shaping Islamic commercial codes. In the article "Time Has Come Full Circle," Michael focused on the calendar of pre-Islamic Arabia and the spiraling cycle of markets that traveled around the Arabian Peninsula annually, culminating at the market of 'Ukāz. Here Michael identifies a competition between the Markets of the Arabs and the pilgrimage to Mecca, both vying to be the center point of the annual migration around the peninsula, reflecting a competition between the Banū Tamīm and Quraysh who controlled the two cycles. In Michael's view, the competition between these two cycles and the world views they represented is highlighted by the shift from the intercalated lunar calendar of pre-Islamic Arabia—which fixed the passing of months to the solar seasons, thereby allowing for fairs and markets to follow agricultural seasons and the travels of Indian Ocean merchants who traded at Oman and Yemen—to the

8 Bonner, Poverty and charity.

9 Bonner, Poverty and economics in the Qur'an.

purely lunar Muslim calendar—that shifted the time of pilgrimage to Mecca between the seasons so that the patterns of markets became less viable.¹⁰ A similar struggle between pre-Islamic and Muslim traditions in regard to trade is found in “The Arabian Silent Trade.” Here Michael outlines a series of unusual practices associated with the Markets of the Arabs which, in his analysis, allowed local rulers to maintain control over foreign trade within Arabia and protected Arab nobles from shaming themselves in the competitions that played out between them at the markets and fairs.¹¹ The imposition of certain market regulations in the Islamic era—most notable being the mode of fixing prices, changing from one dominated by local lords to something closer to a liberal market economy—diminished the nobles’ control over the marketplace while simultaneously transforming the market into a Muslim space, similar in effect to the changes to the calendar system. A third article, “Commerce and Migration in Arabia Before Islam,” brought these concepts together to propose a model for how the market tradition and competition between Mecca and ‘Ukāz came to be remembered and reflected in the literature of the Islamic era. By examining the Markets of the Arabs in this manner, Michael was able to come to important conclusions about the economic, political, and social life of the Arabian Peninsula on the eve of Islam and outline some of the important points of transition into the Islamic era. These findings challenged certain dominant scholarly assumptions about the pre and early Islamic economy, particularly those regarding the place of Mecca and the tribe of Quraysh in the pre-Islamic economy. Before his passing, Michael was preparing a monograph on the economic history of the caliphate, a synopsis of which was published posthumously in the article, “In Search of the Early Islamic Economy.” Here Michael discussed his inspiration from the growing work on comparative empire and particularly the research on tributary empires, and his interest in seeing the Umayyads and ‘Abbasids integrated into these discussions as part of a continuum of Eurasian empire. Michael called for the integration of localized, on the ground economic data recovered through numismatics, papyrology, and archaeology with the narrative of the early Islamic empire found in our often problematic and contradictory literary sources to build a fuller story. This holistic approach could help contest current accounts of and debates about the early Islamic economy, most importantly the status of Meccan trade before the rise of the Islam and the conflicting image of “boom” and “bust” economic cycles under the early caliphate. This integration of documentary and literary

10 Bonner, “Time has come full circle”.

11 Bonner, *The Arabian silent trade*.

sources in order to get beyond the imagined and idealized early Islamic society follows the methodology Michael had employed in his studies of both the jihad and poverty. In his economic history, Michael employed the concept of institutional matrices to understand the dynamic and changing nature of the early Islamic economy and market while searching for a way around the impasse created by contradicting literary sources. In doing so, Michael called for scholars to see the economy not as a separate part of society as we do the modern economy, but as fully integrated within religious and political life and thought. Much like the practice of jihad, the Islamic economy did not come fully formed out of the Arabian Peninsula. Rather, Michael argues, it evolved over time with significant influence from the conquests, the incredible wealth that was obtained through these ventures, and the movement of warriors and merchants along the highways of the expanding empire.

5 Bringing Jihad, Poverty, and Economy Together

Another article published posthumously, “Asceticism and Poverty in the Qur’an,” combined many elements of Michael’s thoughts on jihad, poverty, and the economics of pre-Islamic Arabia, the latter of which shaped the Quranic environment. Here, Michael argued that training for and conduct of warfare (jihad) and generosity towards the poor and needy came together with practices of exile and separation that he included under the title *hijra* to form an ascetic “training program” for the early Muslim community. In this context, a virtuous, moral, or even Quranic economy involved both a cycle of exchange in which God’s gifts of life and sustenance as well as surplus were reciprocated through generosity towards the needy and then individual achievements in the path of the ascetic were likewise rewarded by God. These two cycles help fit the spiritual athletes of Late Antique monotheisms—which would have been familiar in an Arabia that was much more Christianized than the early Islamic sources report—into the milieu of the semi-nomadic Arabs for whom communal warfare, migration, and economies of generosity were already the cultural norm. The ascetic performed these roles at a higher level. Michael’s scholarly gift here lies in connecting the themes of warfare, charity, and economy, finding ways to read historical experiences and developments across them, and then using that new reading to interpret the behaviors and attitudes of the early Islamic community with a fresh light. While Michael’s work seems to have crossed many intellectual lines and topics, in the end, each of these threads came together into a singular view of the moral economy of the early Islamic community.

In another posthumously published article, Michael used his research into the Markets of the Arabs and the economy of pre-Islamic Arabia to help address the issues of debt and debt bondage in early Islam.¹² In “Debt, debt bondage, and the early Islamic economy,” Michael examined the problems inherent in understanding the place of debt and debt bondage in the economy—including the moral economy—of the early Islamic community, critiquing earlier studies that had focused too heavily on criticism of individual *ḥadīth* over historical inquiry. Here, Michael uses the image of the pre-Islamic Arabian economy, including traditions of generosity, that he had developed in his previous work to act as a balance to the sources for early Islamic history. The combination of the two helps Michael map out potential avenues for the development of practices and ideas about debt and debt bondage within the early Islamic community in dialogue with both Arabian and other Late Antique Near Eastern traditions. Again, a study of economy reveals more about the social, cultural, and religious life of the early Islamic community.

In addition to his extensive, wide-ranging original scholarship, Michael also applied his linguistic passion to translation, producing valuable English editions of the German works of Albrecht Noth and Heinz Halm and more recently a translation of Ibn Ḥawqal’s *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*. He also translated a number of important shorter works originally in French and Russian. Like his other works, these translations will have a lasting impact on the field, introducing important sources and theories to those less linguistically gifted than Michael.

6 Studies in Honor of Michael Bonner

This volume collects studies written in memory and in honor of Michael Bonner. The contributors include students, colleagues, and friends of Michael whose own thoughts and research have been in part shaped by Michael’s work. As such, the following essays share many of the same themes and threads as Michael’s own research. It should be noted that the contributions to this volume cover a wide geographic and chronological range, a testament to Michael’s own mastery of a wide range of subjects. The essays are therefore organized thematically and then roughly chronologically within each section. Following a brief biographical essay from Michael’s wife, Daniela Gobetti, the first set of contributions focus on questions of frontiers and jihad. The second section turns towards discussions of Islamic theological and legal matters. The

12 Bonner, Debt, debt bondage, and the early Islamic economy.

third section draws from Michael's interest in geography and the related field of ethnography. The fourth section includes studies focused on numismatics, titles, and manuscript archives.

The first set of essays harken back to Michael's earliest research, focusing on the topic of jihad and frontier warfare from both a theoretical or doctrinal and practical perspective. Steven Judd examines legal *ṣiyar* works, upon which Michael relied heavily for his research on the Thughūr, considering whether or not these works constitute a distinct literary genre and why the term *ṣiyar* fell out of use as a legal category. In her contribution, Alison M. Vacca uses topography and toponymy, invoking Michael's interest in historical geography, to untangle reports of the conquest of Armenia, Georgia, and Caucasian Albania found in al-Balādhurī's (d. ca. 279/892) *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*. This is not an exercise in uncovering what "really happened," but rather an attempt to understand al-Balādhurī's sources, particularly those of Armenian and Albanian provenance, and the politically charged arguments the author conveyed to his readers. Robert Haug uses a comparison Michael made in his book *Aristocratic violence and Holy War* between the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr and the Central Asian frontier as a starting point to analyze the Sāmānid frontier in Transoxiana. His analysis focuses largely on the construction of *ribāṭs* in Transoxiana, their relationship to the *dihqāns* or landed gentry and older, pre-Islamic forms of communal defense in the region, and the role the Sāmānids played in centralizing the defense of the frontier while also imbuing it with a religious, Islamic meaning in a manner that pushed out the traditional local elites.

The second section takes inspiration from Michael's approach to Islamic doctrine both as discussed among jurists and as applied to lived experiences. While Michael's work in these regards focused primarily on the doctrines of the jihad and charity, the contributions in this section look at a wider variety of topics including the reception and historical context of the Quran and the formation of Sufi practices. Karim Samji borrows from Biblical genre criticism to examine the *musabbiḥāt*, a set of suras in the Quran that glorify God. In his study, he explores how the scriptural canon of the Quran developed alongside and as a part of a communal liturgical practice and considers how these texts, each opening with a liturgical note and closing with words of wisdom, were performed as hymns and sermons in ritual settings comparable to the Judaic Psalms. Guillaume Dye investigates the function of demonology in the Quran and places it within the larger context of Late Antique religious practice, a context in which the presence of demons and spirits were a crucial concern for most people. His analysis focuses on the figures of Iblīs/Shayṭān, demons, and jinn and explores the ways demonological narratives and concepts made their way from Late Antique Christian contexts into Arabia in the sixth and seventh

centuries, became de-christianized, and were later reconstructed as part of a Quranic cosmography. David S. Powers shifts the conversation to the ninth/15th century and the response to Sufism in the Maghrib by closely examining a text that explores the tension between Sufism and Islamic law in a particular social and historical context, following Michael's practice of situating religious and legal doctrines in a particular context. In this case, Powers studies a request an unnamed group of people made to the jurist Abū al-Faḍl al-'Uqbānī (d. 851/1450) regarding the *shar'ī* or legal status of *dhikr* ceremonies that were regularly performed at the Great Mosque of Tlemcen (in modern Algeria). The text includes a summary of one such gathering and then al-'Uqbānī's judgement on 17 elements of the ceremony, offering an important window on to the process by which jurists could legitimize Sufi practices in the late medieval Islamic West.

The third section focuses on geographies and ethnographies. John P. Turner's contribution explores al-Jāḥiẓ's (159–255/775–868) epistle *Manāqib al-Turk* (The Virtues of the Turk) to examine the meaning of identity categories such as "Arab" or "Turk" in the 'Abbasid era. He invites us to put away modern conceptions of the nation and national group belonging in order to think in a nuanced way about the meaning of these identifiers in a third/ninth century 'Abbasid context and how these meanings were constructed through networks of social interactions and fluid markers of identity such as language rather than innate, inherited attributes. Kristina Richardson offers a similar discussion focused on the representation of "blackness" in medieval texts, also working closely but not exclusively with the work and life of al-Jāḥiẓ. Here, Richardson invites us to think about terminology carefully and through the thought processes of the medieval authorities we are reading, in much the same way Michael approached the topic of jihad. As a result, she argues for an expanded definition and geography of blackness in the medieval Islamic world that reaches beyond a simple marker of African descent and further calls for a reinterpretation of the Zutt, Zanj, and Qarmaṭī rebellions and the broader history of early Islamic Baṣra as a city at the confluence of the "black nations" in which the majority of the population were of an African, South Asian, and Southeast Asian underclass. Gottfried Hagen addresses the impact of spatial or geographic knowledge, mathematical cartography, and the Ptolemaic tradition on the Ottoman court. Hagen identifies two distinct periods in which the Ottomans as patrons and producers of maps and geographic texts encountered Ptolemy (ca. 100–ca. 170CE), centuries apart and with very different results. Between the 15th and 17th centuries, transformations in the form of Ottoman patronage from one focused on the entertainment and edification of the sultan or other individual patrons to one steered by the state as an institution helped drive a shift

from literary towards scientific production and Hagen shows this transformation occurring within the production of Ottoman geographic knowledge as descriptive literary geographies were replaced by Ptolemaic style maps based on a mathematical grid with defined boundaries.

The fourth set of essays delves into methods by which medieval Islamic states communicated with the populace, the granting of official titles or *laqabs* and the minting of coins, as well as private and public efforts to collect and preserve communal knowledge in libraries. Paul E. Walker presents a detailed study of *laqabs*, honorific titles, bestowed by the Fatimid Caliphate. Beyond providing a detailed, comprehensive list of titles used under the Fatimids, the author explores the evolution of the practice which was rare at the beginning of Fatimid rule and a point of derision towards the 'Abbasids and Būyids in the east but became increasingly common over the course of the fifth/elevventh century. Eric J. Hanne discusses changes in Būyid coinage in the wake of al-Qādir's installation as caliph in 381/991. He demonstrates that symbolic affirmation of the new caliph on Būyid coins was not immediate and connects delayed recognition to regional competition between Būyid elites. Rudi Paul Lindner presents us with a study in how small things can signal big changes. In his study of coins struck by the Seljuq Kılıc Arslan IV at the mint of Sivas in 646/1248–1249, Lindner questions the light weight of known specimens of this coin in comparison to other Rum Seljuq issues. By looking beyond Anatolia, he is able to make a connection to Mongol minting standards and thereby uses this small silver coin to help elaborate on the political conditions within Seljuq Anatolia and between the Seljuqs and Mongols in the mid seventh/13th century. Paul M. Love, Jr demonstrates private efforts to preserve manuscripts in the Ibadi tradition by reconstructing the private library of the al-Ba'tūrī family of Djerba, Tunisia which was lost in a fire in the 1980s. Djerba is home to many important Ibadi manuscript libraries, many of which were formed in the 16th through 19th centuries, and through the reconstruction of a single, lost library, Love is able to uncover some of the history of the Ibadi community on the island. This history includes movement of both people and manuscripts and the interconnected nature of private libraries and the families that preserve them.

Over the course of the 13 essays included in this volume, our contributors have demonstrated the breadth and depth of Michael Bonner's influence on the field of early Islamic history. While these contributions seem disparate and diverse in their content, bringing together studies of such topics as the Arab conquests, genre criticism in Quranic studies, Ottoman patronage of maps, Rum Seljuq coins, and private libraries among the Ibadi community of Tunisia—none of which were topics Michael himself engaged directly—upon

reading these essays, we believe you will see Michael's influence in the types of questions asked and approaches taken. There is an attention to the details in which the authors attempt to get beyond what the sources say and reveal how they reflect a lived, historical experience. The essays collected here ask us to look at our sources with new eyes and read across them to find the connections that uncover histories that have often been paved over.

Robert Haug and Steven Judd

Acknowledgements

Preparing a memorial volume for a teacher, colleague, and friend like Michael Bonner is a challenge in and of itself, but the completion of this volume was further complicated by the global COVID-19 pandemic which broke out just as we began. For the most part, the contributors to this volume wrote and revised their chapters in an environment of closed libraries and restricted travel, hampering their access to research materials, while facing new and daunting challenges in their professional and personal lives. We, the editors, appreciate the extra effort it took from each of our contributors to complete their incredible articles and make this volume a fitting tribute to Michael. The work and dedication shows on the page and we appreciate it.

Many of the articles included in this volume were first presented at a symposium held in Michael's honor at the University of Michigan in November 2019. We thank everyone from the Department of Middle East Studies involved in organizing that event as well as several participants in the symposium who could not contribute to the present volume. These include Michael's friend and colleague Kathryn Babayan, mentor Michael Cook, and co-author Jacob Lassner. The reflections these three gave in Ann Arbor on Michael and his work and comments made in response to the presentations given by our contributors helped shape the present volume immensely. We would also like to thank everyone who agreed to participate in a memorial panel scheduled to be held at the Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society in March 2020. While the conference was canceled due to the pandemic, some of the scheduled participants also contributed to this volume.

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Michael Bonner, 1952–2019

In the summer of 1964, the Bonner family, Francis, Evelyn, and their three young children, Michael, Alisa, and Rachel, sailed from New York to Paris, where Francis, a Professor of Chemistry at SUNY Stony Brook, would spend a sabbatical year. Michael, who turned 13 during that year, attended the École Internationale Bilingue. He understood that, if he could have remained in France, the following year he would have enrolled at the Lycée Henri IV where he would have received a classical humanistic *formation*, in preparation for becoming a student of history, which was already his strongest intellectual interest.

That could not happen, of course. Estranged from his fellow students at the suburban high school on Long Island to which he had to return, where being bullied was a quotidian experience, Michael took shelter in his love for the humanities. At 15, he decided that no one who did not know Italian could call himself a humanist. He picked up a grammar book and taught it to himself. When I met him, he spoke a correct but somewhat outdated language, shaped by his knowledge of opera. “T’amo, cor mio ...”—he would say, to which I would gently counter, “Maybe we do not say it that way, any more ... Perhaps, ‘ti amo, amore mio,’ and ‘cor’ is ‘cuore’.” By the end of his life he spoke Italian fluently, helped by our yearly visits to Torino and to the Italian Alps. Michael could read many languages—including some dead ones, as we say—and spoke an unspecified number, but French always remained his main ‘second’ language.

Besides history, Michael loved astronomy and music. He would flee from the suburbs to the Mannes School of Music in Manhattan, where he took lessons in composition and in violin playing. Music was the creative form in which he felt at home, at ease, and confident. When playing a piece with his beloved string quartet, or bantering with a musicologist friend about Josquin’s *Missa Pangi-lingua*, he never felt something was amiss in himself, as he did as a historian of the formative period of Islam, where the ghost of the never-attended Lycée Henry IV hovered, to a degree incomprehensible to observers.

As is well known to scholars of classical Islam, philological rigor is the indispensable bedrock upon which they can build their historical interpretations. However, this was a necessary but not sufficient tool for Michael, who shared neither the 19th-century belief in the self-sufficiency of philological analysis, nor the deconstructionist impulse of the late 20th century. In his work, he combined a vast array of sources and mastered the methodologies necessary to employ them: pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur’an, the hadith liter-

ature and other religious texts, legal treatises, prosopographical studies, biographies, travelogues, administrative records (as few as there are), numismatics, medieval maps, market routes and practices, reconstructed in part through the tools of geographic information systems, and any other source of material culture he could lay his hands on. According to Michael, the intertwining of all these source materials and methodological approaches could yield a Braudelian social history of pre-Islamic Arabia and of classical Islam.

Such breadth and depth are apparent both in the array of Michael's publications and in his translations not only from Arabic, but also to and from German, French, and Russian, and in the itinerary of the places and institutions he frequented.

There are three salient clusters in Michael's work. The first one is the frontier, as both the location and the topos of the *jihad*, that is, the internal struggle and the military endeavors which led to the articulation of the Muslim *umma* and of its institutions. The frontier is the theme of his first book, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies on the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (1996); and jihad is the focus of his later book, *Jihad in Islamic History, Doctrines and Practices* (2008), which appeared first in French as *Le Jihad—Origines, interprétations, débats*, subsequently translated into Italian, *La jihad* (2008). The second theme addresses poverty, debt, and institutions of charity in the formation of the classical Islamic economy, through the edited volume, *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Context* (2003). And, pervading it all through the years, the attempt to reconstruct the trading economy of pre-Islamic Arabia and its transition to the mercantile capitalism of the expanding Muslim Empire. It was the last of these clusters on which he wrote the most in later years, and the one that received the most attention from the scholarly community. At the time of his death, Michael was finally putting together a book, *Markets and Trade in the Rise of Islam*, or, perhaps, more appropriately, "In Search of the Early Islamic Economy," the title of his last article, published posthumously in the journal *al-'Uşūr al-Wuṣṭā* in late 2019. I will devote my organizational energy and skills to collecting Michael's writings on this topic and try to bring it to completion and publication with the help of Islamic scholars.

Michael spent his academic career at the University of Michigan, serving as Director of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the International Institute from 1997 to 2003, and as Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Studies in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts from 2010 to 2014. As often happens with scholars, the most gratifying part of his service was working with graduate students and mentoring the next generation. One of his former students put it so beautifully, saying, "He took me on,

nourished my intellect, and opened scholarly doors I never knew existed. He never ‘held my hand,’ as I explored the pre-modern Islamic world, but I knew he always had his hand on my back.”

Zichrono Livracha, May his memory be a blessing.

Daniela Gobetti

Ann Arbor, 25 August 2021



FIGURE 0.1 Michael David Bonner, 1952–2019
PHOTO BY DANIELA GOBETTI

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PART 1

Holy War and Frontiers



Siyar: An Ephemeral Genre of Islamic Legal Literature?

Steven Judd

Some genres of Arabic texts are clearly defined and easily categorized, while others are not. For instance, in poetry, the structure, meter, rhyme scheme, and to some extent even the thematic content of the *qaṣīda* are strictly-delineated. The *ghazal* is equally well-defined, as are the distinctions between the two poetic genres. Similarly, a prophetic hadith text has a distinct form and can easily be recognized as such. While there is certainly room for disagreement about the authenticity and/or meaning of a hadith text's content, the characteristics and structure of the genre itself are rigid. Likewise, the *ṭabaqāt* works have a consistent format, regardless of their focus. Other genres defy such clear definition. For instance, a *taʾrīkh* text can take many forms, cover myriad topics, and be organized according to any number of paradigms. Among legal texts, *ikhtilāf* works tend to adhere to similar organizational structures, but the arrangement of material within individual chapters is less consistent.

The legal *siyar* texts present curious challenges, both for understanding concepts of genre and for reconstructing *siyar* as a legal category. As a genre, these texts are structurally and topically uniform. Unfortunately, they are also small in number and were written over a very short period. The use of the term *siyar* as a legal category also appears to have been short-lived, but the term was not neatly replaced with another. Instead, questions that were once considered to be *siyar*-related were dispersed throughout the legal literature. Put more simply, a well-defined category of law quickly disappeared as a category. Complicating matters further is the existence of two additional genres of texts identified as *siyar* which have no clear relationship to the early legal *siyar* texts. The discussion that follows will begin with the legal *siyar*, its nature and its diffusion into other legal categories. It will then touch on the other genres of texts labeled as *siyar*, and will conclude with some, perhaps speculative, conclusions about the implications of the application of the term *siyar* to radically different textual traditions.

While modern scholars have long been aware of the legal *siyar* texts despite their limited number and short-lived circulation, Michael Bonner's work drew greater attention to these texts and treated them with greater sophistic-

ation. In addition to describing the legal minutia of military campaigns and jihad, Bonner also used these texts to reconstruct the cultural milieu that the scholars, ascetics, and fighters at the Muslim-Byzantine frontier created. Jihad has long attracted attention as both a rhetorical and legal phenomenon, and more recently as a controversial topic that can sell books of varying erudition to the general public. Bonner's focus was not on the spectacle of jihad, but on those who actually lived at the frontier and participated in, or at least supported, military campaigns. Bonner deftly described the scholars who went to the frontier to encourage jihad and to articulate its rules of conduct, the networks they formed, and the complexity of the fluid environment in which they lived and worked.¹

The legal *siyar* literature was a crucial part of this endeavor. Broadly defined, these works catalogue the sometimes peculiar legal issues encountered on the vacillating frontlines of Muslim expansion and the solutions frontier scholars offered. These works also offer insights into the religio-socio-political milieu at the frontier and reveal the agendas and attitudes of their authors. Bonner relied heavily on Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī's (d. ca 185/802) *Kitāb al-siyar* as a repository for both the legal and social history of the frontier. To my knowledge, he was the first to recognize the richness of this text and to use it in a sophisticated fashion.² Despite its importance, the text remains an underutilized resource.

Rather than delving into the nuances of al-Fazārī's text, this article will consider the small collection of *siyar* works to which it belongs and contemplate *siyar* as both a legal category and a literary genre. This discussion of the legal *siyar* texts begins with a focus on the corpus of surviving and rumored *siyar* works, then turns to the treatment of *siyar* as a legal category in other established genres, namely the hadith collections and the *ikhtilāf* works, and concludes with a discussion of the *siyar* texts' relationship to each other. After this, additional non-legal texts labeled as *siyar* will be examined and the question of *siyar* texts' status as a distinct genre will be addressed.

The corpus of legal works specifically labeled as *siyar* is quite small, comprising only four extant works. In addition to al-Fazārī's work, these include the *Kitāb al-siyar al-kabīr* of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/804), al-Awzā'ī's (d. 157/774) *Kitāb al-siyar*, which is preserved only in long fragments embedded in later sources, and Abū Yūsuf's (d. 182/798) *Radd 'ala siyar al-*

1 Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War*.

2 Miklos Murayni published a discussion of the text's manuscript tradition but did not use it to elucidate the social history of the frontier. Muranyi, *Das Kitāb al-Siyar von Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī* 63–97.

Awzāʿī, which as the title implies was a response to al-Awzāʿī's work.³ There are also allusions to a *siyar* work by Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/768) to which al-Awzāʿī's *siyar* reportedly responded. In his *fihris*t, Ibn al-Nadīm mentions three additional *siyar* works, none of which is extant. The first is ascribed to Daʿūd b. ʿAlī al-Ḥaḥārī (d. 270/883), the eponym of the short-lived Ḥaḥārī *madhhab*. His *siyar* work appears in a long list of works ascribed to him and it is unclear whether this is a discrete work or merely a chapter in a larger legal text.⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm also lists a *siyar* text by the Zaydī Imām al-Nāṣir li-l-ḥaqq al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (d. 304/917). Like the Ḥaḥārī text, this title appears in a long list of titles which may actually have been chapters in a single, longer and more comprehensive legal manual.⁵ Finally, Ibn al-Nadīm reports that al-Shafīʿī included a *siyar* work by al-Wāqidi (d. 207/823) in his *Kitāb al-Umm*.⁶ However, extant editions of the *Kitāb al-Umm* include only excerpts from al-Awzāʿī's *siyar* and not al-Wāqidi's. Nor is al-Wāqidi's *siyar* mentioned elsewhere. It is possible that this is actually a reference to his *maghāzī* instead, but barring additional evidence any such suggestion is purely speculative. We are left then with only four legal *siyar* works, each of which is relatively brief, and mention of three others, which may or may not have existed either as discrete works or chapters in larger legal tomes.

Because of its ambiguity, the term *siyar* itself merits some discussion. It is generally associated with travel, or more narrowly with military campaigning. Morphologically, it derives from the same root as *sīra*, which is typically loosely translated as biography. The term is used in this sense in Ibadi writings and eventually, though rarely, in Sunni works, a point to which I will return later. While one might expect the term to refer to stories of military campaigns, akin to *maghāzī*, in legal literature, *siyar* is used more narrowly to refer to the proper conduct of campaigns, including especially technical details of the laws of war. Some modern scholars have gone further, stretching the term *siyar* to include the entirety of international law and diplomacy. For instance, Majid Khadduri published his translation of al-Shaybānī's *siyar* under the expansive title of *The Islamic Law of Nations*.⁷ More recently, Muhammad Hamidullah has published

3 al-Fazārī, *Kitāb al-siyar*; al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-siyar al-kabīr*; Abū Yūsuf, *al-Radd ʿala siyar al-Awzāʿī*; al-Awzāʿī's *siyar* is preserved in fragments in al-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb ikhtilāf al-fuqaha* and al-Shafīʿī, *Kitāb al-Umm* VII: 303–336.

4 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 363.

5 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 332; regarding al-Nāṣir li-l-ḥaqq, see Madelung, *The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran* 208–210.

6 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 354.

7 Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations*.

a French translation with a similarly ambitious title: *Le grand livre de la conduit de l'etat*.⁸ Al-Shaybānī is also the only Muslim scholar profiled in the *Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law*, wherein he is described as a precursor to Hugo Grotius and other international legal luminaries.⁹ Similarly, the editor of al-Fazārī's *siyar* describes it as a work on international relations and diplomacy.¹⁰

Conceptually, *siyar* overlaps with, but remains distinct from other terms related to military campaigning, particularly jihad and *maghāzi*. Despite their obvious similarities, some early scholars clearly saw these as distinct categories. For instance, in his *Muṣannaf*, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/827) includes separate but adjacent chapters for jihad and *maghāzi*, indicating that he saw each as a discrete, albeit related, subject.¹¹ As will be discussed below, other works mix these three concepts in sometimes confusing ways or subsume them all under the heading of jihad. It is important to note that the topics included under the umbrella of the *siyar* heading could easily have been classified differently. For instance, one could argue that the division of spoils (*muqasim*) is a topic distinct from the actual conduct of battle (perhaps *qitāl*?), or that the imposition of *ḥadd* punishments at the frontier or in the *dar al-ḥarb* should be a subdivision of the *kitāb al-ḥadd* rather than of the *kitāb al-siyar* where it routinely appears. Early Muslim legal scholars agreed, at least implicitly, that *siyar* included these subcategories, but there was less consensus regarding the relationship between *siyar* and jihad or about the topics jihad encompassed. A closer examination of how the term *siyar* is used in more enduring genres of Islamic legal works offers some clarification of the parameters of the category and its evolution, or devolution as the case may be.

The canonical hadith collections treat *siyar* inconsistently. Only al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892) includes a separate chapter titled as *siyar*.¹² Muslim's (d. 261/874) *Ṣaḥīḥ* includes a *kitāb al-jihād wa-l-siyar*.¹³ The others subsume elements of *siyar* under the rubric of jihad. Al-Tirmidhī's work also stands out for the fact that he subdivides jihad into two books, one on the virtues of jihad and the other on jihad generally. His *siyar* chapter includes topics found in the works specifically dedicated to *siyar*, including spoils division, treatment of captives, truces, the treatment of female captives of various sorts, and theft from

8 Hamidullah, *Le grand livre de la conduit de l'etat*.

9 Baderin, Muhammad al-Shaybānī, 1081–1085.

10 Al-Fazārī, *Kitāb al-siyar*, ed. Farūq Hammāda 14–31.

11 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Muṣannaf* 5: 118 ff.

12 al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* 3: 320–451.

13 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 12: 397–518.

spoils.¹⁴ However, his general jihad chapter also includes elements of *siyar*, such as questions about permission to fight, obedience to commanders, burial of the dead, and tactical rules. Interestingly, he also includes reports about horse racing, a topic whose relationship to jihad is a bit puzzling.¹⁵ Muslim's chapter on *al-jihād wa-l-siyar* includes most of these expected topics as well (though without any reference to horse racing), but adds sections describing the Prophet's military expeditions, even though some of these offer little in terms of legal content and guidance.¹⁶ Other works more often categorize such historical (or perhaps legendary) accounts as *maghāzī* instead.

Al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Ibn Maja (d. 273/886), Abū Da'ūd (d. 275/889), and al-Nasa'ī (d. 303/915) forego a *kitāb al-siyar*. Instead, they include elements of *siyar* in their *kitāb al-jihād* sections. These books share a similar pattern of organization. Each begins with a number of hadith reports extolling the virtues of jihad and eventually shifts to legal topics traditionally considered as *siyar*. Their legal focus is not, however, consistent. For instance, al-Nasa'ī skews toward praise for jihad and includes less *siyar* material.¹⁷ On the other hand, Abū Da'ūd devotes more attention to rules of combat, focusing heavily on issues related to horses, spies, and spoils.¹⁸ Ibn Maja also devotes more attention to combat rules and spoils division after shorter introductory praise for jihad.¹⁹ Al-Bukhārī's *kitāb al-jihād* is more evenly mixed, though admonitions and praise for jihad are interspersed with *siyar* topics rather than segregated into an introductory section.²⁰ As for 'Abd al-Razzaq's work, his chapter on jihad consists almost entirely of statements regarding rules of war with very few admonitions to join the jihad or affirmations of the virtues of doing so. He follows his chapter on jihad with a chronological account of *maghāzī*, concluding with the battle of Qādisiyya.²¹

This perusal of the standard hadith collections suggests that the boundary between jihad and *siyar* was unclear in the eyes of the *muḥaddiths*. All include elements of *siyar* in their chapters on jihad, though they have different emphases and the proportion of *siyar* material varies significantly. In their treatment of *siyar*, the hadith collections, with the partial exception of 'Abd

14 al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* 3: 320–376.

15 al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* 3: 415–451.

16 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 12: 397–518.

17 al-Nasa'ī, *Sunan al-Nisa'ī* 4: 15–78.

18 Abū Da'ūd, *Kitāb al-sunan* 3: 191–372.

19 Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah* 4: 41–114.

20 al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* 4: 44–198.

21 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf* 5: 118–335.

al-Razzaq's work, rarely address the narrow, technical legal issues that are the focus of the small collection of works specifically devoted to *ṣīyar*. To an extent, this is simply a product of the nature of hadith collections, which provide a repository of evidence and anecdotes without necessarily offering explicit answers to legal questions. It is interesting, however, that the hadith works, despite their similarity in general structure, differ in the aspects of *ṣīyar* upon which they focus. Some offer more hadith reports about horses and pack animals, others give more details about spoils, some focus on the status of Christians and captives, along with other topics. Moreover, the hadith collections do not present the material within their jihad chapters in anything resembling a standard progression of topics. Internally, their jihad chapters each have their own organizational schema, though in some cases it is difficult to discern what that structure is.

All of this suggests that there was not a consensus among the hadith collectors about what *ṣīyar* entailed, about the relationship between *ṣīyar* and jihad, and about what topics deserved more intensive attention. In addition, even a cursory perusal of the hadith works demonstrates that their compilers are not engaging in any kind of dialogue with each other about these topics. Instead, each compiler seems to be setting the parameters of the category on his own, drawing (or not drawing, as the case may be) distinctions between *ṣīyar* and jihad and choosing his own method of organizing the material. The hadith compilers' treatment of *ṣīyar* and jihad strikes one as a bit more ad hoc than their approach to other topics, where organizational rubrics were more established. The significance of this is not easily determined and is perhaps best left to hadith specialists.

While the hadith collections compile evidence without necessarily providing definitive judgments, the *ikhtilāf* works attempt to offer answers to legal questions, some of which are extremely narrow or even obviously hypothetical. These works, as their name indicates, are dedicated to documenting disagreements between legal scholars about a wide variety of issues. Some *ikhtilāf* texts defend the views of particular scholars or *madhhabs* by describing the errors of their rivals' ways, either explicitly or more subtly. Others are less polemical compilations describing what a variety of scholars said about particular questions without showing obvious preferences for particular answers. Over time, these works tended to grow in both complexity and volume. Early works, such as those of Muḥammad al-Marwazī (d. 294/907) and al-Ṭabarī, both likely fragments, comprise a single volume.²² Later texts, such as Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's

22 al-Marwazī, *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*; al-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*.

(d. 390/1071) *Istidhkār al-jāmiʿ lil-madhāhib fuqahāʾ al-amṣār* and Ibn Qudāma's (d. 620/1223) *Mugnī* extend to dozens of volumes focusing on ever-narrowing minutia.²³

Most of these works subsume questions of the laws of war under the heading of jihad rather than elevating them to a separate chapter on *siyar*. The partial exception is al-Jaṣṣāṣ' (d. 370/982) *Sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-Taḥāwī* (d. 321/933) who labels this chapter "*kitāb al-siyar wa-l-jihād*."²⁴ The content and organization of the *ikhtilāf* works vary less than in the hadith collections. They typically cover roughly the same topics in a similar progression, beginning with praise for jihad, then moving to permission to fight, to division of spoils, and eventually to more obscure issues. There are still, however, subtle but important differences. Al-Ṭabarī's work focuses more attention on the status of non-Muslim subjects, safe passage for travelers in foreign lands, and related topics. Despite labeling his chapter *kitāb al-jihād*, he includes few exhortations to participate in jihad and little by way of praise for those who do so. Instead, most of his jihad chapter addresses rules of warfare that could be classified as *siyar*. Al-Ṭabarī's work is also curious because he includes extensive citations from the excerpts of al-Awzāʿī's *Kitāb al-siyar* preserved by al-Shafiʿī in his *Kitāb al-umm*. Al-Ṭabarī surely knew that he was citing material from a book specifically devoted to *siyar* (and labeled as such) in his chapter on jihad.²⁵ This may suggest that he saw the two terms as synonymous, a defensible possibility given how much of al-Ṭabarī's content on jihad could be characterized as *siyar*. It is also possible that he considered *siyar* to be a subdivision under the broader umbrella of jihad. Although the paucity of other elements of jihad, particularly encouragement to engage in jihad, in al-Ṭabarī's work could suggest that he limited his conception of jihad to include only *siyar*. Either way, it is clear that al-Ṭabarī was aware of the term *siyar* and its use by other scholars and chose to use the jihad label instead.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ makes this link explicit, labeling his chapter "*kitāb al-siyar wa-l-jihād*." He begins with an assortment of praise for the virtues of jihad and those who partake in it, then turns to aspects of the laws of war, including rules of engagement, spoils and their division, the status and proper behavior of Muslims in the *dār al-ḥarb*, and other topics.²⁶ Later *ikhtilāf* works largely follow the same pattern, though to my knowledge al-Jaṣṣāṣ is the last to include

23 Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istidhkār al-jāmiʿ lil-madhāhib fuqahāʾ al-amṣār* 5: 1–163; Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī* 13: 5–201.

24 al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-Taḥāwī* 7: 5–222.

25 Al-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb ikhtilāf al-fuqahāʾ* 1–198.

26 Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-Taḥāwī* 7: 5–222.

ṣīyar in his title. There are, however, still variations in topics and their arrangement. For instance, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr organizes his material essentially the same way al-Jaṣṣāṣ did, but late in the chapter he deviates from al-Jaṣṣāṣ’ structure and offers more exhortations to participate in jihad, a topic he had begun the chapter with. He follows these words of encouragement with a series of questions about horse racing.²⁷ Whether or not Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s inclusion of horse racing as an element of jihad derives from al-Tirmidhī’s hadith collection from a century earlier is impossible to know for certain. Two centuries later, Ibn Qudama follows a similar organization but includes a lengthy discussion of whether jihad is a *farḍ kifāya* or a *farḍ al-‘ayn*. He also offers more details about defensive postings on *ribāṭ* duty, naval battles, and fighting Zoroastrians.²⁸ Ibn Qudama’s attention to these concerns may illustrate the changing nature of jihad in later times. Despite these differences in emphasis, Ibn Qudama’s work essentially follows the same organizational pattern as earlier works.

Looking at the *ikhtilāf* genre as a whole, or more precisely looking at a small but hopefully representative sample of this voluminous literature, suggests that the authors of these works considered *ṣīyar* to be an element of jihad and not a separate, discrete legal category. Only al-Jaṣṣāṣ explicitly acknowledges the merger of the two categories, though al-Ṭabarī and others were clearly aware of what they were doing. Despite *ṣīyar* being given an organizationally subordinate status, the content of the *ikhtilāf* authors’ *kitāb al-jihād* chapters remains predominately *ṣīyar*. The term *ṣīyar*, however, seems to have disappeared from such works by the sixth/twelfth century. This suggests that a change in terminology and in organizational standards occurred. In short, the term *ṣīyar* became passé and its content was subsumed under the broader heading of jihad. At the same time, however, the exact parameters of jihad as a general topic and a specific legal category were not yet defined. The changes in emphasis and in topics meriting attention underscores the conceptual fluidity of jihad. Arguably, the persistence of discussions about greater and lesser jihad suggests that its boundaries as a category of knowledge remain malleable even in modern times.

The disappearance of the term *ṣīyar* from titles of works and chapters in later Islamic legal literature makes the survival of a small corpus of early texts explicitly described as *ṣīyar* stand out as somewhat peculiar. As discussed above, these texts are all quite early, dating from the second/eighth century with some possibly composed during the Umayyad period, or at least shortly

27 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istidhkār al-jāmi’* 5: 135–149.

28 Ibn Qudama, *al-Mughnī* 13: 6–10, 17–25, 29–33.

after the 'Abbasid revolution (132/750). As such, these are some of our earliest Islamic legal texts. Perhaps more interestingly, they all originate within a very small scholarly community, or more properly two rival communities, revolving around al-Awzā'ī and Abū Ḥanīfa respectively. The surviving texts, in contrast to the hadith and *ikhtilāf* texts, are also clearly engaged in dialogue with each other.

The relationship between al-Awzā'ī's *siyar* and Abū Yūsuf's *Radd 'ala siyar al-Awzā'ī*, is obvious even in their titles. Abū Yūsuf's text was intended explicitly to refute the views of al-Awzā'ī, who had the audacity to challenge Abū Ḥanīfa's interpretations. Abū Yūsuf explicitly mentions al-Awzā'ī's views on every question. In a consistent pattern, Abū Yūsuf begins with a legal query, offers Abū Ḥanīfa's solution, records al-Awzā'ī's contrasting viewpoint, then offers his own refutation of al-Awzā'ī. The single exception involved the collection of interest from transactions in the *dār al-ḥarb*, a rather obscure legal question. Abū Yūsuf agreed with al-Awzā'ī's prohibition of such practices as *ribbā*. He explained that Abū Ḥanīfa relied on a questionable hadith and ended his entry with "*allāhu a'lam*," an acknowledgement of his own uncertainty.²⁹ Abū Yūsuf's *Radd* creates the impression that he is providing a line-by-line refutation of al-Awzā'ī's attempted refutation of Abū Ḥanīfa. Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain whether or not Abū Yūsuf emulated al-Awzā'ī's organizational structure, much less whether or not al-Awzā'ī followed the sequence of Abū Ḥanīfa's lost work.

Abū Yūsuf's descriptions of al-Awzā'ī's views are sometimes cryptic and often appear without explanation, unless of course Abū Yūsuf needed to detail al-Awzā'ī's reasoning in order to criticize it. In the vast majority of cases, the views Abū Yūsuf ascribes to al-Awzā'ī are consistent with those offered in other sources, such as al-Ṭabarī's and al-Fazārī's works. This suggests that, despite his rejection of al-Awzā'ī's views, Abū Yūsuf reported them accurately. Whether this is evidence of Abū Yūsuf's intellectual integrity or an indication that al-Awzā'ī's views were so widely known and agreed upon that they could not be distorted for polemical purposes is hard to determine. In rare instances, Abū Yūsuf ascribes aberrant views to al-Awzā'ī that are not recorded elsewhere, such as his assertion that al-Awzā'ī held that a man who purchased his own mother as a slave was allowed to have sexual relations with her.³⁰ Clearly, the dialogue between these two texts was not entirely objective.

The relationship between al-Shaybānī's and al-Fazārī's works is more subtle. A parallel reading of the two works makes it clear that they were in dia-

29 Abū Yūsuf, *Radd 'ala siyar al-Awzā'ī* 97.

30 Abū Yūsuf, *Radd 'ala siyar al-Awzā'ī* 126.

logue with each other, despite the fact that neither author mentions the other explicitly. Al-Shaybānī's text consists exclusively of responsa from Abū Ḥanīfa regarding various questions relating to the laws of war and other topics. With very few exceptions, he does not mention other scholars at all. By contrast, al-Fazārī includes opinions from al-Awzā'ī and a variety of other *muḥaddiths* and legal scholars. He does not, however, mention al-Shaybānī, Abū Ḥanīfa, or Abū Yūsuf explicitly. In fact, no Ḥanafis appear in al-Fazārī's text, not as authorities or even as examples of error. Contrary to Majid Khadduri's assertion in the introduction to his translation of al-Shaybānī's work, al-Fazārī was not a Ḥanafī. It is unclear how Khadduri came to this conclusion, given that there is ample evidence of al-Fazārī's enmity toward the Ḥanafis.³¹

Despite apparently ignoring each other, these scholars are clearly engaged in some sort of legal dialogue. The arrangement of material in some sections of al-Shaybānī's and al-Fazārī's respective *ṣiyars* makes this clear. For instance, their lengthy discussions on the division of spoils present the same questions about who qualifies for what shares in the same order.³² Each discusses the various permutations of shares for horsemen and their mounts, followed by the distinction between horses, nags, mules and other beasts. They then turn to questions of shares for non-Muslim allies, slaves, hired fighters and others and move on to those who play supporting roles or stay behind in the camps. The same is true in other sections as well. These parallels do not represent a natural progression of topics and do not match the arrangement of material found in the *ikhtilāf* works, which is far less consistent. Abu Yūsuf's *Radd* also follows the same pattern. Unfortunately, the fragmentary preservation of al-Awzā'ī's work makes it harder to ascertain its original arrangement or to determine whether or not later compilers reorganized his material to fit the paradigm followed by other writers. These parallels present strong evidence that the *ṣiyar* texts are in dialogue with each other, despite some of their authors' refusal to acknowledge their opponents by name. It cannot be coincidental that they address the same topics in the same general order.

A second, more complicated possibility is that the texts' similar structure indicates that there was already a standard organizational rubric in *ṣiyar* texts and that al-Fazārī, al-Shaybānī, and Abū Yūsuf all simply followed existing conventions. This would suggest that the *ṣiyar* texts constituted a distinct genre of works with established structures and that this genre was well-established

31 Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations*, 26. For further detail regarding al-Fazārī's rejection of the Ḥanafis, see Judd, *Al-Awzā'ī and Sufyān al-Thawrī: The Umayyad Madhhab* 16–20; Muranyi, *Das Kitāb al-Siyar von Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī* 85.

32 Al-Fazārī, *Kitāb al-ṣiyar* 178–200; al-Shaybānī, (Khadduri trans.) 106–129.

even earlier than the extant texts suggest. It is important to emphasize that these texts are clearly distinct from the hadith collections. In addition to their different organization, they seldom invoke hadith at all. Moreover, the hadith collections do not appear to have a strict organizational scheme for presenting material on the laws of war. The *siyar* texts are also distinct from the *ikhtilāf* works, whose organizational scheme, at least related to these topics, is less rigid and does not mirror that in the *siyar* works.

If we consider the *siyar* works to be a small but distinct genre of texts, regardless of whether it originated in al-Awzā'ī and Abū Ḥanīfa's generation or earlier, we must also ask why this genre disappeared so quickly. Issues surrounding the rules of warfare as areas of inquiry were ultimately subsumed under the broader rubric of jihad in both the hadith and *ikhtilāf* works. However, in this process, *siyar* was not simply made a subcategory of jihad, as one might expect. This was not simply a process of turning chapters or books on *siyar* into subchapters in books or chapters on jihad while retaining their organizational schemes. Instead, the structural features of the genre were disrupted and elements of *siyar* were intermingled with other jihad-related topics without any discernable organizational pattern. Indeed, the chapters on jihad in the hadith and *ikhtilāf* works in general lack clear structural regimens. The fact that the label *siyar* persists in both al-Jaṣṣāṣ' *ikhtilāf* and al-Tirmidhī's hadith collection suggests an awareness of the shift in paradigm but does not explain it. It seems unlikely that interest in *siyar*-related questions dissipated by the third/ninth century. Complicated frontiers and the legal questions arising from their fluidity were enduring features of the Islamic polity. Yet somehow, the genre of works dedicated to these issues and even the term to label the topic faded from Islamic legal literature within a few decades.

The story of the waning of the *siyar* as a legal genre is further muddled by the appearance of a number of works identified as *siyar* but belonging to completely different literary genres. The first of these alternative *siyar* genres includes a variety of Omani texts, attributed largely to Ibāḍī authors. The oldest of these purport to date to the time of the Prophet, but they were not collected together until the late fourth/tenth century at the earliest.³³ Even these collections remain largely in unpublished manuscript form. Abdulrahman S. al-Salimi has helpfully collected and analyzed 140 of these texts, which span several centuries. These *siyar*, often labeled with the singular *sīra*, are in epistolary form and frequently address doctrinal questions or disputes over Ibāḍī succession. A few of them have attracted broader attention as early theological documents,

33 al-Salimi, Identifying the (Ibāḍī/Omani) *Siyar* 119.

but they have not been studied extensively, likely in part because of their limited publication.³⁴ These Ibāḍī works contrast with the legal *ṣīyar* works in two important ways. First, their format is completely different. The legal *ṣīyar* are arranged as responsa to legal queries in which the scholarly authority answers questions from his acolytes or other interlocutors. Whether or not they represent actual oral exchanges, they are presented as such. The Ibāḍī works, on the other hand, are clearly in the form of letters and argue specific positions at length without interruptions for clarification from interlocutors. Second, the legal *ṣīyar* are dedicated, with very few exceptions, to questions of law, and more narrowly to questions arising in the context of warfare. The Ibāḍī texts cover a broader array of topics, most of which are political and/or theological rather than legal. Indeed, only one of the *ṣīyar* described by al-Salimi includes any reference to jihad. This letter, written by Abū Mawdūd Ḥājjib b. Mawdūd al-Ṭā'ī (d. between 136/753 and 148/764) is an admonishment to engage in jihad rather than an explication of the rules of war.³⁵ Despite the fact that these two collections of texts are described as *ṣīyar*, they differ dramatically in both style and content, suggesting that they cannot be considered to belong to the same genre of works, despite the *ṣīyar* label.

The second alternative *ṣīyar* genre is more familiar to modern scholars. The term *sīra* has long been attached to biographies of significant figures in Islamic history. Perhaps the earliest, or at least the earliest extant example is Ibn Ishāq's (d. 150/ 767) *Sīrat rasūl Allāh* preserved in a later recension by Ibn Ḥishām (d. 218/833).³⁶ Biographies of later religious and political leaders, such as 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz also appeared as *sīras*.³⁷ However, the plural *ṣīyar* does not appear as a title for biographical works until much later. A curious exception is found in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's biography of Muḥammad, *al-Durar fī ikhtisār al-maghāzī wa-l-ṣīyar*. The work is largely a narrative of the Prophet's military campaigns. While, as noted above, *ṣīyar* and jihad are sometimes coupled as one category in legal and hadith texts, this combination of *maghāzī* and *ṣīyar* is unique. The work includes no legal discussions, making clear that the term *ṣīyar* in the title does not refer to legal issues surrounding campaigns. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's *al-Durar* is essentially a *sīra* of Muḥammad, albeit focused somewhat narrowly on military campaigns, but the plural term *ṣīyar* in the title does not refer to biography. Instead, it appears to be a superfluous synonym for *maghāzī*

34 For examples of epistles that have been analyzed, see Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* 21ff.; Crone and Zimmerman, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*.

35 Al-Salimi, Identifying the (Ibāḍī/Omani) *Ṣīyar* 128.

36 Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya*.

37 Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz*.

included for aesthetic purposes.³⁸ Early collections of biographies were typically labeled as *ṭabaqāt* works, organized by generations. The most prominent early examples were Ibn Sa'd's (d. 230/844) *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubra* and Khalīfa b. Khayyāt's (d. ca. 241/855) *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*.³⁹ It is not until al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1374) Mamluk-era *Ṣiyar a'lām al-nubalā'* that the term *ṣiyar* is used to refer to a collection of biographies in the Sunni literary tradition. Despite al-Dhahabī's prestige, prominence, and proliferate output, for a variety of reasons, the *ṣiyar* label for biographies did not catch on in Sunni literature.

North African Ibādī scholars deployed the term *ṣiyar* as a label for collections of biographies somewhat earlier than al-Dhahabī did. The earliest of these was Abū Zakariyā al-Warjalānī's (d. ca. 471/1078) *al-Ṣiyar wa-akhbār al-a'imma*.⁴⁰ Other notable examples include Abū al-Rabī' Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Wisyanī, who wrote a *Kitāb al-ṣiyar* in the sixth/twelfth century, which had not been published, and Abū al-'Abbās al-Shammākhī (d. 928/1522) who produced a book of the same title.⁴¹ These and related North African Ibādī works with similar titles are not legal texts. Nor are they doctrinal epistles akin to the Ibādī texts from Oman. Instead, these are prosopographical texts compiling *sīras* of important Ibādī leaders and scholars, generally arranged in the *ṭabaqāt* format. While it is perfectly reasonable to use the term *ṣiyar* in this manner, it underscores the complete abandonment of its previous meanings. The Omani Ibādīs eventually began to apply the term *sīra* to biographical works, but only in the eleventh/16th century.⁴² Prior to this, the two Ibādī communities apparently used the term *ṣiyar* to describe two entirely different genres of literature. Later North African Ibādīs were surely aware of previous Omani Ibādī scholars and their usage of the term *ṣiyar*. For instance, al-Shammākhī's *Kitāb al-ṣiyar* includes biographies of several of the Omani epistolists, including Sālim b. Dhakwān al-Hilālī (fl. late first/seventh or early second/eighth cent.) whose *sīra* refuting the early Murjī'a has attracted much attention as an early example of Islamic theological discourse.⁴³ Al-Shammākhī's biography of Sālim is a mere four lines long and does not mention his writings or theological views. Some of al-Shammākhī's entries on Omani Ibādīs mention theological issues, often obliquely. For example, he notes that Muslim b. Abī Karīma (d. c. 158/775)

38 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Durar fī ikhtisār al-maghāzī wa-l-ṣiyar*.

39 Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubra*; Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*.

40 al-Warjalānī, *al-Ṣiyar wa-akhbār al-a'imma*.

41 al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-ṣiyar*.

42 Al-Salimi, Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Ṣiyar* 120.

43 Al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-ṣiyar* 1: 235–236. Regarding Ibn Dhakwān, see Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* 3–5, 23–32; Crone and Zimmerman, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*; Adam Gaiser, "Ibn Dhakwān, Sālim," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, three.

shunned someone for his unspecified statements about *qadar* (*li-qālihi bi-sha'i min al-qadar*) but does not mention the epistles on other topics ascribed to him in Omani sources.⁴⁴ Similarly, al-Shammākhī mentions disputes between Muslim's contemporary Wā'il b. Ayyūb al-Ḥadramī and the *mu'tazila*, but does not describe the Omani scholar's *sīra* on theological issues related to mu'tazilism.⁴⁵ Al-Shammākhī does describe some Omani scholars answering legal questions, such as Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl's (d. ca 210/825) responses to queries about prayer rituals, but these responses never offer hints of the epistolary format the Omanis used.⁴⁶ Based on these few examples, it appears that the North African *siyar* scholars were either unaware of the epistolary tradition of their Omani co-sectarians or simply chose to ignore this material while crafting their biographies of eminent Ibādī scholars. Neither of these possibilities is especially satisfying and underscore the need for a more comprehensive study of the interactions between the Omani and North African Ibādī communities.

While it is possible that North African scholars were unaware of the Omani use of the term *siyar* to describe a completely different genre of texts, it is less likely that later generations could have been unfamiliar with the use of *siyar* as a legal genre. The ubiquity of al-Shafi'ī's *Kitāb al-umm*, in which portions of al-Awzā'ī's *siyar* are preserved, ensures that scholars throughout the later Muslim world would have encountered the term in its legal context. In addition, current editions of al-Fazārī's *Kitāb al-siyar* derive from a North African manuscript held in the Qarawiyyīn library in Fez that has North Africans and Qurtubis sprinkled throughout its earlier transmission history.⁴⁷ Hence, it was entirely possible for a seventh/13th century scholar in North Africa to encounter two or more works titled *kitāb al-siyar* but addressing completely different topics as representatives of two or perhaps even three entirely separate literary genres. It is also possible that North African scholars would have encountered another anomalous *siyar* text in the form of Ibn Ḥazm's (d.456/1064) *Kitāb al-akhlāq wa-l-siyar*. This work, a lengthy essay on proper moral behavior which includes no discussion of warfare or legal matters, also appears under the title *Kitāb al-akhlāq al-naḥs*. Here, the term *siyar* is used in the broadest possible terms, simply to connote conduct in general.⁴⁸

44 Al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-siyar* 1: 196–199; Salimi, Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Siyar* 127–129.

45 Al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-siyar* 1: 220–221; Salimi, Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Siyar* 128.

46 Al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-siyar* 1: 234–235; Salimi, Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Siyar* 135.

47 Muranyi, Das *Kitāb al-Siyar* von Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī 66 ff.

48 Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-akhlāq wa-l-siyar* xlix.

The varied use of the term *ṣiyar* in Arabic works raises a number of perplexing questions. It appears that the same term was used as a label for three entirely distinct types of literature that are only tangentially related. The earliest and narrowest of these genres included the legal *ṣiyar* texts written by Abū Ḥanīfa, al-Awzā'ī, and their respective acolytes. This was a very discrete genre of works, structured in almost formulaic fashion, with the works in dialogue with each other. It was also short-lived. Within a century of al-Fazārī and al-Shaybānī's deaths, the term had mostly vanished from use in its legal context and the content of this once cohesive genre of text was dispersed into a variety of other legal categories, without any coherent pattern. Scholars still asked the same legal questions but did not assume the same relationship between topics that the legal *ṣiyar* writers had constructed.

The second distinct genre, which includes doctrinal epistles addressing wide ranging topics, appears to be limited to the Omani Ibādī community. While the earliest Omani *ṣiyar* texts may overlap chronologically with the legal *ṣiyar*, they belong to an entirely different genre. They share nothing in terms of form or content with the texts of the Ḥanafī and al-Awzā'ī circles. While some address legal issues, these are rarely even tangentially related to jihad and never address the kinds of narrow legal questions presented in the legal *ṣiyar* texts. The production of these doctrinal epistolary *ṣiyar* appears to have stopped around the eleventh/seventeenth century, though they continued to be collected and transmitted for some time.⁴⁹ While it is possible that the term *ṣiyar* was used in a similar manner by non-Omani, non-Ibādī authors, no examples are extant. Instead, works of this nature were more likely labeled as *risālas*, or in some doctrinal formulations, perhaps as *aqīdas*. This genre of *ṣiyar* endured longer than the legal *ṣiyar* but had a much narrower circulation.

The third genre, *ṣiyar* as a collection of biographies, appears to return to the simple, literal meaning of *sīra*. While individual biographies have often been titled as *sīras*, the use of the plural *ṣiyar* to refer to collected biographies is less common. Only the North African Ibādīs fully embraced this use of the term *ṣiyar*. The exception is, of course al-Dhahabī. However, despite his prestige, other authors did not follow suit in adopting this use of the term *ṣiyar*. Like the other *ṣiyar* genres, this biographical use of the term appears to have been short-lived.

The reasons for the demise of the legal *ṣiyar* as a genre and the relabeling of the other *ṣiyar* genres remain elusive. Adding to the peculiarity of the various uses of the term *ṣiyar* is the fact that examples of texts in all three genres sur-

49 Al-Salimi, Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Ṣiyar* 120.

vived and continued to circulate, despite the term becoming archaic in all of its applications. Hence, it is entirely possible that later scholars might encounter texts called *siyar* covering entirely different subjects. A thorough examination of library and manuscript catalogues would be necessary to provide a definitive answer to this question. However, it remains an intriguing possibility.

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The Armenian Sources of al-Balādhurī's *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*: A Study of the Islamic Incursions into Armenia, Georgia, and Albania (22–24 AH/642–645 CE)

Alison M. Vacca

In 23/643–644, two armies of the caliph ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān stood poised to battle one another in Armenia.¹ One army was led by Ḥabīb b. Maslama al-Fihri, a celebrated Companion of the Prophet who gathered his forces in Syria and campaigned against the Byzantines in western Armenia on the caliph's order under the authority of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān, who was then governor of Syria. Muʿāwiya wrote to the caliph to ask for reinforcements and ʿUthmān contacted al-Walid b. ʿUqba, the governor of Kufa.² The second army departed from Iraq led by Salmān b. Rabīʿa al-Bāhili. He brought his army north via Azerbaijan and joined forces with Ḥabīb b. Maslama. The two generals disagreed about whether Syria or Kufa deserved the spoils of the campaign. On the brink of conflict between two Muslim armies, a poet recited: “Should you kill Salmān, we will kill your Ḥabīb | should you travel for Ibn ʿAffān, we will, too” (ان تقتلوا سلمان | وان ترحلوا نحو ابن عفان نرحل).³ The two generals deescalated the conflict as the written appeal made its way to the caliph. Ḥabīb b. Maslama moved against Armenia and Georgia, while Salmān b. Rabīʿa invaded Albania.⁴ Various

1 I provide the Arabic then the Georgian or Armenian toponym to allow for easy access for both Islamicists and Caucasiologists. I use “Georgia” here because I am basing this narrative on al-Balādhurī, who uses the term Jurzān, though this term is an exonym that does not make much sense in the first/seventh century. Jurzān is better translated as Kʿartʿli. In Georgian, the toponym “Georgia” (Sakʿartʿvelo) does appear in one reference to the Umayyad period, but its meaning did not stabilize until unification under the Bagrationi dynasty; Rapp, *The Sasanian world through Georgian eyes*, 9 n. 3 and 21 n. 73. Arrān in Arabic or Aḥuankʿ in Armenian is usually rendered “Albania” in English, from the Greek Ἀλβανία. In ʿAbbasid-era Arabic texts, it refers to modern Azerbaijan and eastern Georgia, including Tiflis/Tpʿilisi.

2 In some versions, the governor of Kufa appears as Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀs; see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* i, 2808.

3 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 198. Ḥabīb's name literally means “beloved,” so *Ḥabībā-kum* could be translated either as “your beloved” or “your Ḥabīb.”

4 Even though the Arabic conquest narratives report Islamic control over Armenia and Albania

accounts about these campaigns circulated, each attempting to scaffold support for one side over the other by inserting direct caliphal orders to one of the two generals. Due to the interpretive and monetary value of the outcome, the campaigns morph into a power play between Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān and al-Walīd b. 'Uqba, Syria versus Iraq. With the exception of the narrative provided in al-Balādhurī's third/ninth-century *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, details about the incursions against Armenia, Georgia, and Albania are relegated to the sideline behind the dramatic potential of conflict between Muslim forces.

Arabic sources about the Islamic conquests are famously problematic. Reports circulated orally first and were put to the page late, several centuries after the events they purport to relate. They are replete with tired tropes and far-fetched tales, frequently designed to entertain or to bolster the claims of 'Abbasid-era elites. It is all too easy to dismiss the many pages of Ibn A'tham's narrative of Ḥabīb and Salmān's campaigns as the later ramblings of a historian determined to acclaim Kufa's role during the conquests and to celebrate the deeds of the Companions of the Prophet. We might also read al-Balādhurī's account with some skepticism, acknowledging its pro-Syrian vindication of Ḥabīb b. Maslama's valorous deeds. A close comparison of the conflicting details about the incursions into Armenia and Albania in fact suggests that al-Balādhurī compresses a number of events that happened between 23/643–644 and 32/652–653, conflating them into few recognizable campaigns.⁵ However troublesome Arabic-Islamic sources on the conquest might be, though, the Armenian, Georgian, and Albanian sources do not provide any easy solutions.⁶ The source-critical approach demanded of the Arabic texts about the con-

from the first/seventh century on, the Sufyānids did not post governors. The Marwānid Reforms in fact serve as a more effective "conquest"; the earlier campaigns were transitory and aimed at collecting spoils rather than expanding an empire. As a result, I refer to these campaigns as the "Islamic incursions" or "campaigns" rather than "Islamic conquests." I maintain the use of "Islamic" rather than "Arab" because the conquerors identified themselves in religious terms as *mu'minūn* rather than as Arabs.

- 5 Ps. Sebeōs places the incursions against the Caspian area in in the 30s/650s; although he does not specify Salmān's name, these are the same regions. The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, 145 (in English) and *Chronique de Denys de Tell Mahré*, 8 (in Syriac) also explains that "Ḥabīb invaded the Jazīra" (ܠܚܒܐ ܕܝܒܪܐܝܢ) in 964AG, which is 652–653CE; cf. later dating in bar Šināyā, *La Chronographie*, 85–86. A thorough study of this question would also address the relationship between the Greek generals Prokopios and Maurianos, which seems rooted in the same problem. This question deserves its own study and cannot be answered adequately here.
- 6 On Syriac and Greek sources as "corroboration" of al-Balādhurī, cf. Posner, Whence the Muslim conquest of northern Mesopotamia.

quests must be equally applied to the non-Arabic accounts, as well. Armenian-language sources also insert politicized perspectives, omit significant details, conflate multiple events, and include conflicting information.

One way to address some of these concerns is by close analysis of the topography of conquered regions as it informs the received narratives. Topography adds another dimension to the ongoing conversations about the reliability of conquest narratives by moving past the comparison of texts to address whether the reports make any sense of the specificities of the regions that saw these campaigns.⁷ The study of toponymy has similarly yielded interesting results, most notably W. al-Qāḍī's identification of the Middle Persian context for the place names in Basra as found in al-Balādhurī's *K. futūḥ al-buldān*.⁸ Along these veins, this chapter traces al-Balādhurī's account of Ḥabīb and Salmān's clashing campaigns in the North. It does not seek a "right answer" about what really happened, and indeed relaying a true narrative of events hardly seems to have been al-Balādhurī's goal.⁹ Untangling and appraising the various versions implies that our job as historians is to decipher "what really happened." However, the "truth" remains elusive and, furthermore, it is of questionable value in this case. Instead, this chapter takes al-Balādhurī's *K. futūḥ al-buldān* as a baseline to study topography and toponymy, weaving in threads found in other texts in Arabic and Armenian. In the process, it reveals what makes al-Balādhurī's history so incredibly unique. His information on these campaigns is unparalleled, full of details that appear nowhere else in 'Abbasid-era Arabic literature. Al-Balādhurī preserves information from local sources in a number of chapters,¹⁰ so it is perhaps not surprising that his sources for this material were either Armenian or Albanian (the latter possibly in the Armenian language). Several toponyms only make sense through recourse to first/seventh-

7 Stark, *The Arab conquest of Bukhārā*.

8 Al-Qāḍī, *The Names of estates in state registers*.

9 On the "right answer" to the conflicting messages on the incursions into Armenia, see Manandyan, *Les invasions arabes en Arménie*, which meticulously organizes extant evidence into trustworthy and "confused" categories. Other useful studies of conquest-era Armenia include Ter-Levondyan, *L'Arménie et la conquête arabe*; Kaegi, *Al-Balādhurī and the Armeniak theme*. On al-Balādhurī's goals, see Lynch, *Arab conquests and early Islamic historiography*, 105–109.

10 I'd like to thank Hugh Kennedy for pointing out al-Balādhurī's use of local sources in other chapters and for sharing the introduction of his forthcoming English translation of al-Balādhurī, which lays out three types of sources visible in *K. Futūḥ al-buldān*. The references about Armenian sources, as listed below, use the term *ḥaddathānī*, which is al-Balādhurī's marker for reliance on local sources.

century Armenian-language texts. These details may suggest that al-Balādhurī's account preserves earlier traditions about the conquests, but such an argument remains largely speculative.

Al-Balādhurī opens his chapter on Armenia with a list of informants who are from Armenia or Albania: Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who lived in Bardha'a/Partaw, on the authority of Abū Barā' 'Anbasa b. Baḥr al-Armanī; Muḥammad b. Bishr al-Qālī, from the city Qālīqalā/Karin; Barmak b. 'Abdallāh al-Dabīlī, from Dabīl/Duin, the caliphal capital of Armenia; Muḥammad b. al-Mukhayyis al-Khilāṭī, from Khilāt/Xlat' on the shores of Lake Van.¹¹ When he includes more than one account, he defers to authorities from the regions to assert preference between them: "The first report is more sound. A number of *shaykhs* from the people of Qālīqalā [Karin] informed me about it and its *qādī* al-'Aṭṭāf b. Sufyān Abū al-Aṣḡagh wrote to me about it" (والخبر الأول أثبت حديثي به عدة من مشايخ أهل قاليقلا).¹² Later, al-Balādhurī also claims to report information about Ḥabīb from "the *shaykhs* from Dabīl [Duin]" (مشايخ) (من أهل ديبيل), including Barmak b. 'Abdallāh.¹³ Al-Balādhurī's local informers filter details about Armenian and Albanian topography and historical reports from Armenian into Arabic. His unparalleled knowledge of Armenian, Georgian, and Albanian toponymy suggests that we cannot situate his information solely in an Arabic-Islamic milieu.

1 Ḥabīb's Campaign in Armenia

The broad strokes of Ḥabīb's campaign through Armenian territory are clear, though al-Balādhurī does include a number of toponyms that have not yet been adequately identified. Ḥabīb faced the Greek patrician Mawriyān al-Rūmī in a location that was subsequently contested by historians.¹⁴ The three possible sites include Qālīqalā/Karin, Dabīl/Duin, and Shimshāt.¹⁵ According

11 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 193.

12 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 198.

13 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 201.

14 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 345; Ps. Sebeos, *Patmut'wn*, 174; Mawrianos (Μαυριανός) in Armenian, whom Theophanes calls Maurianos (Μαυριανόν, τὸν τῶν Ρωμαίων στρατηγόν). Ibn A'tham's المرزبان is clearly a scribal error for الموريان.

15 While al-Balādhurī includes reference to a variant reading placing Ḥabīb against Mawriyān in Dabīl/Duin, this would make little sense of the campaign's trajectory. More of a challenge is Ibn A'tham's account, which claims that Ḥabīb met Mawriyān in Shimshāt; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* 1/11, 342. On this possibility, see the conclusion.

to al-Balādhurī's various informants, Salmān arrived only after Ḥabīb's success against the Greeks. Then, the two generals left the battleground and Ḥabīb's campaign swept through Armenia into Georgia.

If we base our inquiry on al-Balādhurī, we should assume that Ḥabīb's confrontation against Mawriyān occurred at Qālīqalā/Karin due to his subsequent path. Ḥabīb went to Marbālā (مربالا) or Mariyyālā (مريالا) and thence to Hark and Dasht al-Wark. Marbālā (مربالا) should likely be read as مردالی* to render Mardali (Մարդալի).¹⁶ Mardali was a district of Turuberan, immediately to the southeast of Qālīqalā/Karin. It appears in Širakac'ī's first/seventh-century geography alongside the other districts mentioned in al-Balādhurī's text: Hark (الهرك) is Hark' (Հարկ) and Dasht al-Wark (دشت الورك) is undoubtedly Dasnawork' (Դսնաւորք); both are districts of Turuberan, immediately to the southeast of Qālīqalā/Karin.¹⁷

Al-Balādhurī then has Ḥabīb "settle in Khilāt [Xlat'], whence he then travelled to al-Ṣ..ā.a, where he met the lord of Muks [Mokk'], which is a region in al-Basfurrajān [Vasपुरakan]" (نزل خلاط ثم سار منها الى الصصاه فلقيه بها صاحب مكس) (وهي ناحية من نواحي البسفرجان).¹⁸ Once there, Ḥabīb sent envoys to Arjīsh/Arčēš and Bājūnays/Apahunik'. Al-Ṣ..ā.a (الصصاه), and even more so the variant al-Ṣ..ā.a (الصصاه), could be read as the Kurdish Sîpanê, which appears in Širakac'ī's first/seventh-century Armenian geography as Cipan (Շիպան, as opposed to the more modern spelling Սիփան).¹⁹ Alternatively, the Armenian sources about this campaign may offer another suggested reading. They do not refer to Cipan, but they do devote significant space to the conquest of the fortress Arcap'k' (Արծափք). Sebēos claims that this campaign moved through Sephakan gund, a toponym that seems rather outdated even when Sebēos was writing in the first/seventh century, but likely refers to Turuberan:²⁰

16 Laurent and Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, 572 n. 34; Hübschmann, *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen*. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-buldān* v, 97 places مربالا near Akhlāt/Xlat', citing al-Balādhurī, though he includes information that al-Balādhurī does not about the earlier forays of 'Iyād b. Ghanm.

17 NB: the spelling of دشت الورك could be a scribal error for an unpointed or partially pointed *دسنورك, where the scribe saw the first three letters of *d-s-n* and corrected it to *d-sh-t* to render the Persian/Armenian *dasht*.

18 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 199. The subject of the second clause is the lord of Muks/Mokk', not Ḥabīb. On the definition of Basfurrajān/Vasपुरakan in Arabic texts, see Vacca, Al-Basfurrağān and Banū l-Dayrānī.

19 Markwart, *Südarmerien und die Tigrisquellen*, 458. This toponym appears pointed as الصيبنانة in Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-buldān* v, 180 in his entry on Muks/Mokk', which is based on Balādhurī and adds nothing new.

20 Hübschmann, *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen*, 253–254.

Now those in Sephakan gund spread raids over that entire region with the sword, and took plunder and captives. They gathered in Herewan and attacked the fortress, but were unable to take it. They came to Ordspu, and it too they were unable to take. They left there and camped in Arcap'k', facing the fortress beside the water.²¹

Արդ՝ որք ի կողմանս Սեպհական գնդին՝ արշաւեալ սփռեցան եւ հարեալ զամենայն կողմանս զայնոսիկ սրով տուսերի, առին զաւար եւ զգերութիւն: Եւ եկին ժողովեցան ի Հերեւան, եւ մարտեան ընդ բերդին, եւ ոչ կարացին առնուլ: Եկին ի յՈրդսպու, եւ ոչ նմա ինչ կարացին առնել: Գնացին անտի եւ բանակեցան յԱրծափս, հանդէպ բերդին առ ջրովն:²²

This fortress along the water, Arcap'k', fell to Muslim forces on Sunday 23 of the month of Hoṛi in the second year of Constans's reign, i.e., 10 August 643.²³ Łewond similarly describes the dramatic capture of the fortress Arcap'k', specifying that it is in Kogovit.²⁴ Given the fortress's significance in Armenian accounts of the conquest, it is tempting to read al-Balādhurī's الصاه as ارساب. Later Arabic texts will reportedly render Arcruni as الصرونى, such that the Armenian *Arc-* becomes *Alṣ-* in Arabic in much the same way suggested here for Arcap'k'.²⁵ Both Cipan and Arcap'k' lie between Akhlāt/Xlat' and Ardashāt/Artašat, and so are directly along Ḥabīb's route. Neither makes sense of the lord of Muks/Mokk's visit to negotiate with Ḥabīb, since Muks/Mokk' is on the southern shores of Lake Van.

From the region of Lake Van, al-Balādhurī has Ḥabīb move to the northeast to Ardashāt/Artašat, incorrectly pointed as اردشاط instead of اردشاط,²⁶ which he identifies as the village of red dye (قرمز). Ḥabīb crossed the "River of the Kurds," and arrived at Dabīl/Duin. "His cavalry roamed and settled Jurnā. They reached Ashūsh, Dhāt al-lujum, the mountain Kū.ta, and Wādī l-Aḥrār. They conquered all of the villages of Dabīl, then moved against Sirāj Tayr and Baghrawand" (وجالت خيوله فزت جرنى وبلغت اشوش وذات اللجم والجبل).

21 Ps. Sebēos, *History* I, 110.

22 Ps. Sebēos, *Patmut'awn*, 145.

23 Ps. Sebēos, *History* II, 257.

24 Łewond, 9v–10v. References to Łewond are based on the forthcoming volume La Porta & Vacca, *An Armenian futūḥ narrative*. Foliation is based on the oldest extant manuscript, Matenadaran 1902.

25 Ter-Levondyan, The Arabic inscription of Zak'aria and Ivan at Anberd.

26 This appears correctly in Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muḥjam al-buldān* I, 146 in his entry on Ardashāt, which also mentions Nahr al-Akrād and Dabīl, citing al-Balādhurī.

27. Some of these toponyms are unproblematic. The first, *Jurnā* in de Goeje's edition following the vocalization of *Yāqūt*,²⁸ is *Gārnī* (Գառնի). *Wādī l-Aḥrār*, "River of the Freeman," is a direct translation of the Armenian River Azat. The final three toponyms of this list are similarly clear. *Sirāj Ṭayr* (سراج طير) is a conglomeration of *Širak* (Շիրակ) and *Tayk'* (Տայք), where the corruption from *ṭayq* to *طير* had to have happened in Arabic, on the written page. These two regions are very frequently collapsed into a single province in 'Abbasid-era Arabic geographies, where *Sirājṭayr* has become a frozen form. Finally, al-Balādhurī's *Baghrawand* (بغروند) faithfully renders the Armenian *Bagrewand* (Բաղրեւանդ).

However, some of the villages around *Dabīl/Duin* in Balādhurī's text present a number of difficulties. First, there is no river between *Ardashāt/Artašat* and *Dabīl/Duin*, nor is the "River of the Kurds" identified elsewhere. Second, some of the toponyms listed here have tentative readings, but continue to evade interpretation. M. Canard has suggested that *Ashūsh* might render *Ašoc'* (Աշոց), a district of *Ayrarat*, but this region is far to the west, near *Ani*, and so could hardly have qualified as a region near *Dabīl/Duin*.²⁹ He also suggested that the name *Kū.ta* could render *Kogovit* or *Kotayk'* (maybe as *كوتيق*). Here again, *Širakac'i* offers an interesting point of comparison:

To the east [of *Valaršapat* and the nearby cathedrals] rise the sources of the River *Aspāhen*, i. e., the *Xozmor*, which flows into the *Mecamor*. Then, east of the latter, is the River *Azat*, which is justly "noble." Its sources rise on Mount *Geoḷ* at the place [called] *Saxurak*. This [river] flows through *Duin* watering the entire capital district of Armenia, and, flowing south, enters into the *Arax*. Here was built the city of *Artašat* where was formerly [located] the confluence of the *Mecamor* [with the *Arax*] but today the *Mecamor* has changed its course and it enters to the west. East of *Duin* are the districts of *Urcajor* and the region of *Arac*, *Vayoc'jor*, and the plain of *Šarur* between them, through which flows the River *Artonkn* by the city of *Marwan*, turning south to join the *Arax*. A worm is found here which is the source of a red dye.³⁰

27 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 200.

28 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān* 11, 129.

29 Laurent and Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, 573 n. 47.

30 Širakac'i, *Geography*, 70. NB: I have changed the spelling and made a few minor changes to Hewsens's translation.

Յորոց յելից բղխեն աղբիւրք Ասպահեն գետոյ որ է Խօզմօր, եւ խառնի ի Մեծամօր. եւ ապա յելից նորա գետն Ազատ, եւ արդարեւ ազատ. որոյ ակունքն բխեն ի Գեօղ լեառնէ, ի Սախուրակ տեղոյ, որ իջանելով ընդ Դուին, արբուցանէ զամենայն Ոստանն Հայոց, եւ անցեալ ընդ հարաւ անկանի յԵրասխ. յորոց ի մէջ շինեալ է Արտաշատ քաղաք, ուր յառաջին ժամանակսն խառնուրդք Մեծամօրի. իսկ այժմն փոխեալ զգնացսն Մեծամօրայ՝ խառնի ի մտից կուսէ: Իսկ յելից կուսէ Դունայ եւն գաւառք Ուրծաձոր եւ Արածոյ կողմն, ընդ մէջ կալով Վայոց Ձորոյ եւ Շարուր դաշտի, ընդ որ հոսի գետն Արտօնկն, առ Մարունայ քաղաքով, անցանելով ի հարաւ՝ խառնի յԵրասխ: Լինի որդն սիզաբերեալ յարմատոյ՝ առ ի զարդ կարմրութեան:³¹

This passage offers tantalizing but unprovable suggestions for interpreting al-Balādhurī's perplexing information about Dabīl/Duin. The red dye appears in both Širakac'i and al-Balādhurī, in the same passage as some of the other toponyms like Dabīl/Duin, Wādī al-Aḥrār/getn Azat, and Ardashāt/Artaşat. Al-Balādhurī specifies that Kū.ta is a mountain, so he may be referring to Širakac'i's Mount Geol (Գեօղ), which also appears elsewhere with the variants Geł (Գեղ) and Geot (Գեօտ); this last might give كيوث in Arabic.³² Even more speculative, it is possible that al-Balādhurī's Ashūsh (اشوش) could render Urc (*اورس), should we take the example of Ways/Vayoc'jor as a pattern to suggest that the word "valley" (ձոր) was elided in its transmission into Arabic. Also, based on Širakac'i, we might speculate that al-Balādhurī's nonexistent river reflects the memories of the changing path of the Mecamor.

Similar to the River of the Kurds, Dhāt al-lujum is a specifically Arabic toponym. It evades identification and seems to have confounded even medieval geographers.³³ Al-Balādhurī describes how Dhāt al-Lujum, one of the villages of Dabīl/Duin (قرى ديبيل), received its unique name. It relates to a (presumably Armenian) raid against Ḥabīb b. Maslama's forces as they went back through

31 Širakac'i, *Ašxarhac'oyc'*, 34.

32 Usually, the Arabic *jīm* renders the Armenian *gim*. The Persian *gāf* is also possible, though. cf. Muqaddasī, *Kitāb Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-aqālīm*, 382, where قلعة الكندمان (قلعة*) renders Ծառածածո, which appears in Armenian as Գարդման.

33 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-buldān* v, 13. He recounts the entire passage from al-Balādhurī, citing him explicitly, but he concludes that Dhāt al-lujum is in Georgia. This conclusion is not borne out in al-Balādhurī's text, which merely states that Dhāt al-lujum was on Ḥabīb's route between Sīsajān/Siunik' and Georgia. In another part of al-Balādhurī's text, he specifies that Dhāt al-lujum is in the vicinity of Dabīl/Duin (which is, in fact, between Sīsajān/Siunik' and Georgia). Yāqūt builds on his assumption that it is in Georgia, adding that it is in the vicinity of Tiflis/Tp'ilisi.

Dabīl/Duin on their way to Georgia. When Ḥabīb's forces were letting their animals graze, a raid took them by surprise and carried off their goods, including the reins for their horses. Ḥabīb's men mounted a counterattack to retrieve the reins, leading them to remember this place as Dhāt al-Lujum, meaning "place of the reins."³⁴ In this discussion, al-Balādhurī calls on the authority of "the *shaykhs* from among the people of Dabīl" (مشايخ من اهل ديبيل).³⁵ This is a useful reminder about al-Balādhurī's sources: they may indeed be from Armenia, but this does not mean that they always overlapped with Armenian traditions. Armenian sources recognize Dabīl/Duin as a caliphal capital and Arab center in Armenia, so it is perhaps not surprising to find stories about the villages of Dabīl/Duin that do not surface in the Armenian historical record.

From Dabīl/Duin, Ḥabīb's incursion into Armenia next took him into territories that are easier to identify. First, he went to Nashawā/Naxčawan, where he met with the patrician of Basfurrajān/Vaspurakan. Then, he circled southward to Sīsajān/Siunik' and Wayṣ/Vayoc'jor on the way back to Dabīl/Duin.

Al-Balādhurī's account is full of toponyms familiar to Armenians, along with a few that are not. He has Ḥabīb embark on a meandering campaign through Armenia, moving first southward, then northward again, only to continue back to the south and then north again. However, his account of the campaign is certainly logical. Ḥabīb, according to al-Balādhurī, proceeded eastward relentlessly. We should bear in mind that no single Armenian authority could speak on behalf of all Armenians. As al-Balādhurī envisions it, Ḥabīb's route started in the capital of Byzantine Armenia, then moved south where he would have encountered the main Armenian houses, whether by crossing through their territories or when they came to make treaties with him. This itinerary allows for several of the major houses to come to terms with the invading forces individually—the Muslim army crossed Kamsarakan and Mamikonean territory, then met with patricians of other families while ensconced in Akhlāt/Xlat'. Ḥabīb then moved across the defunct border to the capital of Sasanian Armenia before turning south to the largely independent region of Sīsajān/Siunik'. In other words, al-Balādhurī's account locates Ḥabīb not only geographically, but also in a particularly complex political landscape. Such a route demonstrates the negotiation between Byzantine, Sasanian, Armenian, and Siunec'i centers of power.

34 Noth, *The early Arabic historical tradition*, 191 uses this as an example of the etiology of naming practices, adding on 194 that "all etiologies are by definition secondary formulations."

35 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 201.

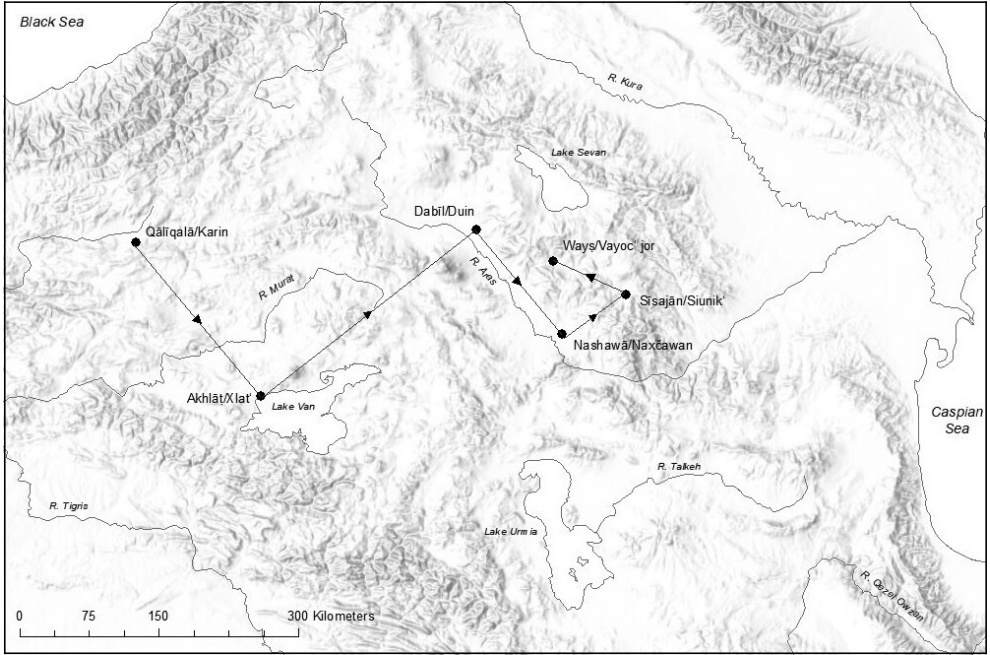


FIGURE 2.1 Ḥabīb's Campaign in Armenia: 1: Qālīqalā/Karin; 2: Akhlāt/Xlat; 3: Dabīl/Duin; 4: Nashawā/Naxčawan; 5: Sisajān/Siunik; 6: Ways/Vayoc'jor

2 Ḥabīb's Campaign in Georgia

The next leg of Ḥabīb's campaign brought him northward into Georgia. Al-Balādhurī first copies the treaties of Ḥabīb b. Maslama with Tiflīs/Tp'ilisi, then adds the renewal of that treaty with Jarrāḥ b. 'Abdallāh al-Ḥakamī in the Umayyad period. The treaties seem out of place, inserted at the start of Ḥabīb's incursions into Georgia, after which al-Balādhurī backtracks to explain how Ḥabīb arrived there from Armenia. This passage describes the terms of the treaty arranged with Ḥabīb, including a number of toponyms that are exceedingly rare in 'Abbasid-era Arabic texts. In al-Balādhurī, it reads as follows:

وفتح حبيب حوارح وكسفرييس وكسال وخنان وسمسخي والجردمان وكستسجي
وشوشت وبازليت صلحا على حقن دماء اهلها واقرار مصلياتهم وحيطانهم وعلى ان يؤدوا
اتاوة عن ارضهم ورؤسهم وصالح اهل قلرجيت وأهل ثرياليت وخابيط وخابيط وارطهال
وباب اللال وصالح الصنارية والدودانية على اتاوة.³⁶

36 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 202–203.

This passage is striking in the specificity of geographical knowledge that al-Balādhurī displays, unparalleled in other Arabic texts with the exception of Ibn al-Faqīh, who includes a very similar passage, likely drawing on the same source:³⁷

ففتح حبيب بن مسلمة لعثمان بن عفان من ارمينية: جراح، وكسفر، وكسال، وخنان،
وسمسخي، والجردمان، وكسفي ييس، وشوشيت، وبازليت صلحا على ان يؤدوا اتاوة عن
رؤوسهم وارااضيهم، وصالح الصنارية، واهل قلرجيت والدودانية على اتاوة.³⁸

The first part of this passage is a list of places conquered by Ḥabīb b. Maslama, most of which are easily identified. Ibn al-Faqīh's Jarākh (جراح) and al-Balādhurī's Ḥawāriḥ (حواريح) should read Jawākh (جواخ*) to render Javaxet'i (ჯავახეთი, ჯაქალჴი). Kisāl (كسال) is well-attested in Arabic literature about the Arab-Khazar wars. M. Canard suggests that Kisāl is K'sani (კისანი), a fortress on the homonymous river, northwest of Tiflīs/Tp'īlisi.³⁹ However, the fortress itself is late medieval and the name K'sani does not appear in the earlier books of *K'art'lis C'xovreba*. Besides, al-Balādhurī locates Kisāl 40 parasangs from Bardha'a/Partaw and 20 parasangs from Tiflīs/Tp'īlisi and, furthermore, claims that it was not built until the time of Marwān b. Muḥammad.⁴⁰ R. Hewsen instead identifies Kisāl as K'asax (ქასახი), southeast of Tiflīs/Tp'īlisi, which makes sense of al-Balādhurī's information—with the exception, of course, of his claim that Ḥabīb b. Maslama conquered a city that was founded by Marwān b. Muḥammad.⁴¹ Most of the other places listed here offer no such concerns. Khunān (خنان) is Xunani (ხუნანი, ღუნანსკერთ, "the city of the Huns"); it appears in Arabic geographies and Armenian histories as the border of Albania.⁴² Al-Balādhurī's Simskhā (سمسخي) is Samc'xe (სამცხე, სამცხის). Jardmān (الجردمان) should read Jardabān (الجرديان*) to render Gardabani (გარდაბანი), in Armenian Gugark' (Գուգարք), rather than the well-known Albanian city. Al-Balādhurī's Shūshit (شوشت) is Šavšet'i (შავშეთი, ჯაუჯეთი) and Bāzalit (بازليت) is Bazalet'i (ბაზალეთი, ზაქალეთი).

37 On the relationship between al-Balādhurī and Ibn al-Faqīh, see Lynch, *Arab conquests and early Islamic historiography*, 193–195, 214–215.

38 Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 292.

39 Laurent and Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, 574 n. 56.

40 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 207.

41 Hewsen and Salvatico, *Armenia: a Historical Atlas*, 104 map 78.

42 See Vacca, *Buldān al-Rān*, which locates Khunān/Hnanakert/Xunani and also explains the confusion between Jardmān/Gardabani in Georgia and Jardmān/Gardman in Albania.

Only two toponyms in this list of places conquered by Ḥabīb are problematic. First, al-Balādhurī's second toponym, Kasfribīs (كسفر بیس), appears in Ibn al-Faqīh as Kasfr (كسفر). Second, al-Balādhurī includes a place called Kastsijā (کستسجی) towards the end of his list; Ibn al-Faqīh has replaced this with Kasfā bis (کسفی بیس), which is quite similar to al-Balādhurī's first corrupted name. Ibn al-Faqīh's Kasfr should likely read Kasfī (کسفی*) to render the Georgian Kaspi (კასპი), which appears in Armenian as Kosx (Կոսխ). J. Marquart reads the extended form as کسفی شین* to render Kaspišēn (a village in Kaspi).⁴³ Al-Balādhurī seems closer than Ibn al-Faqīh for the second toponym, though, since the -tsikhī (تسخی) ending renders the Georgian word for fortress, c'ixe (ციხე), which commonly appears as a toponymic suffix. Markwart reads this as Kasic'ixe, though he adds "(?)" and gives no hint to where such a place might be found.⁴⁴ The most likely answer is that Kastsijī (کستسجی) should be read as Wilistsikhī (ولستسخی*) to render Velisc'ixe (ველისციხე, վելիսցիխէ).

Given these readings, al-Balādhurī's first sentence might be rendered comprehensible to historians of Georgia as "Ḥabīb conquered Javaxet'i, Kaspi, K'asaḥ, Xunani, Samc'xe, Gardabani, Velisc'ixe, Šavšet'i, and Bazalet'i by treaty, on the condition that their people would retain their lives and an affirmation for their places of worship and their walls, and on the condition that they would provide tribute for their land and per capita" (وفتح حبيب حوارح وكسفر بیس وكسال) وخنان وسمسخی والجر دمان وكستسجی وشوشت وبازلیت صلحا علی حقن دماء أهلها وإقرار (مصلیاتهم وحیطانهم وعلی أن یؤدوا إتاوة عن أرضهم ورؤسهم). Two conclusions emerge immediately. First, the transmitters were very familiar with the names of the districts of Georgia, as several of these toponyms do not appear in contemporary Greek or Arabic geographies. Second, these reports do not indicate that al-Balādhurī or his informants actually knew where any of these districts were. At best, this is a list of places conquered, rather than a viable itinerary for Ḥabīb's campaign unless he marauded back and forth across the breadth of Georgia. Even leaving out the two uncertain words—Kaspi and Velisc'ixe—there is no rhyme or reason to such an agenda. This could simply be a list of conquered districts and provinces, not intended to indicate an actual campaign itinerary. However, even allowing for variable identifications of certain toponyms, since some change over time, this path does not make sense.

The second part of al-Balādhurī's description of Ḥabīb's campaign into Georgia is a list of regions that came to terms with Ḥabīb. Al-Balādhurī implies that he did not in fact conquer these regions, but that he made arrange-

43 Laurent and Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, 574 n. 55.

44 Markwart, *Skizzen zur historischen Topographie und Geschichte von Kaukasien*, 52.

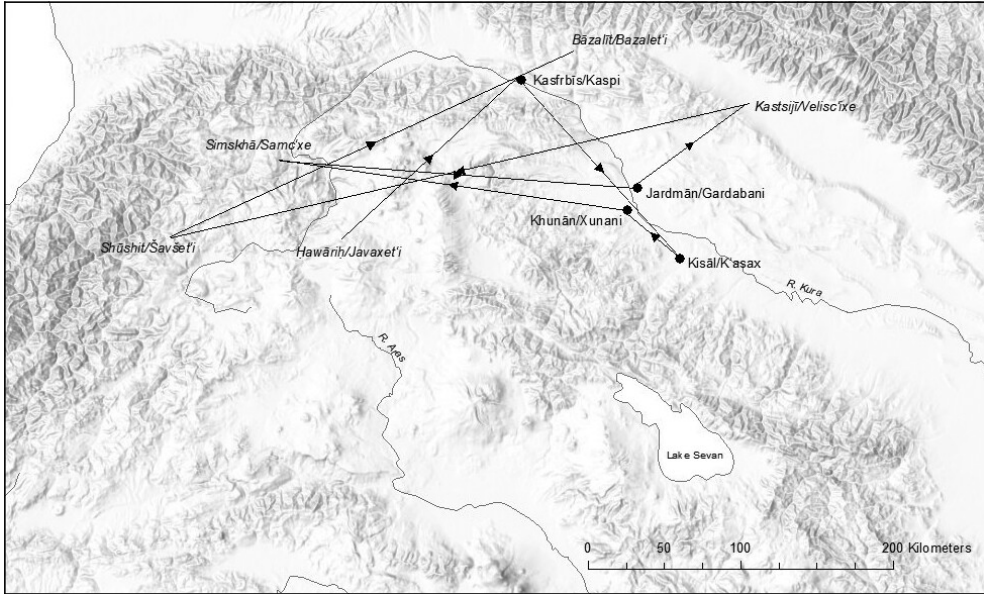


FIGURE 2.2 Ḥabīb's Campaign in Georgia: 1. Javaxet'i; 2. Kaspi; 3. K'sani; 4. Xunani; 5. Samc'xe; 6. Gardabani; 7. Velisc'ixe; 8. Šavšet'i; 9. Bazalet'i

ments with the leaders, along the pattern of what he explained for the Lake Van region above. These provinces and districts of Georgia are all easy to identify. Al-Balādhurī's Qlarjīt (قَلْرِجِيْت) is Klarjet'i (კლარჯეთი, სიყარვე); Thriyālīt (ثِرْيَالِيْت) is T'rialet'i (თრიალეთი, ტონიქ); Khākhīt (خَاخِيْط) is Kaxet'i (კახეთი); and Khūkhīt (خُوخِيْط) is Kuxet'i (კუხეთი; სიხეთი, სიხეთი). We might therefore translate the rest of al-Balādhurī's passage as "And he made peace with the people of Klarjet'i, T'rialet'i, Kaxet'i, Kuxet'i, Artaani, and the Alan Gate" (وصالح أهل قَلْرِجِيْت وأهل ثِرْيَالِيْت وخَاخِيْط وخُوخِيْط وأرطهال وباب اللال).

Given the toponyms in al-Balādhurī's description of Ḥabīb's campaign in Georgia, the obvious conclusion is that he did indeed have access to Armenian informants, as he himself claimed multiple times. There is no other explanation for this geographical precision, particularly in conjunction with the fact that remarkably little of this information appears in the 'Abbasid-era geographical texts in Arabic. The spelling of Arṭahāl, for example, clearly harkens back to an Armenian informant. The final *lām* is a scribal error for *nūn*.⁴⁵ Only the Armenian Ardahan (Արդահան) could give that spelling in Arabic, since

45 This is true for both Arṭahāl and Bāb al-Lāl. Hewsen reads Bāb al-Lāl as a separate place name, near Kisāl (which he places south of Tiflis).

the Georgian Artaani (არტაანი) would appear without the *hā'* as ارطان.⁴⁶ Another possible indication of a Georgian underlying text is the spelling Bāb al-Lān, the Alan Gate. In al-Balādhurī's text, it appears as Bāb al-Lāl, which Markwart correctly derives from Dariali (დარიალი).⁴⁷ However, this spelling cannot substantiate a claim to Georgian sources because the spelling of Arṭahān as Arṭahāl indicates that the scribe shifted *lām* to *nūn*. The text may have read Bāb al-Lān, thus conforming to all other Arabic references to the pass.

A number of other toponyms could potentially suggest a Georgian informant, rather than Armenian. Al-Balādhurī maintains the Georgian toponymic suffix *-et'i* when he refers to T'rialet'i, while this form drops from the Armenian. The Georgian Xunani is rendered faithfully in Arabic, though the city acquires the toponymic suffix *-kert* in Armenian. Kaspi similarly had to have derived from Georgian, as the Armenian equivalent is entirely dissimilar. While these names might indicate al-Balādhurī's reliance on a Georgian informant, such a suggestion would be difficult to reconcile with the sheer geographical chaos of the outlined itinerary. Perhaps more likely, these examples demonstrate that multiple forms of these toponyms were current in the early Islamic period. One good example is al-Balādhurī's spelling of Šavšet'i as شوست. The usual Armenian rendering of this toponym is Šušḱ' (Շուշք), which drops the Georgian *-et'i* ending. This might lead us to suspect that al-Balādhurī had a Georgian informant, except for the fact that we also find Šawšet' (Շաւշէթ) in Širakac'i's first/seventh-century geography, which indicates that the Georgian toponymic endings appeared also in Armenian texts. Place names moved with people and so changed through use, over time, among different populations, and across space. Al-Balādhurī's account of Ḥabīb's incursion likely indicates that his Armenian informants were familiar with Georgian toponyms, rather than any direct access to Georgian traditions.

We should surmise that al-Balādhurī's information reflects 'Abbasid-era concerns, as many have argued for the conquest literature as a whole. Al-Balādhurī inserts traditions designed to support Ḥabīb's claim against Salmān, which could potentially reflect the conflict contemporary to the conquest, but admittedly have the ring of a long-argued dispute. However, even if we accept al-

46 While the Arabic ارطان in fact appears in al-Balādhurī's text and could render the Georgian არტაანი, by context it is clear that al-Balādhurī understands the term to refer to Arameans, instead rendering the Syriac ܐܪܬܐܢܝܐ; see Vacca, *Conflict and community in the medieval Caucasus*, 74.

47 Markwart, *Skizzen zur historischen Topographie und Geschichte von Kaukasien*, 53 n. 105 and 54.

Balādhurī's interest in vaunting Ḥabīb's claim over Salmān as an 'Abbasid-era concern, the actual description of Ḥabīb's campaigns have no political or intellectual value for an 'Abbasid audience. The vast majority of these toponyms do not appear in 'Abbasid-era geographies. Readers in Baghdad or across the Caliphate likely had no way to conceptualize what these passages conveyed and so could only have concluded that Ḥabīb captured numerous regions. These regions—particularly those in western Georgia—were firmly outside of caliphal control in the third/ninth century, so this information could not have served 'Abbasid bureaucrats hopeful to shore up flagging tax revenues. While al-Balādhurī's information reflects 'Abbasid-era traditions circulating in Armenia, we should also acknowledge that most of these Georgian toponyms also do not appear in contemporary Armenian sources. The absence of these toponyms from early 'Abbasid-era Armenian histories likely reflects the authors' interests and cannot suggest that these toponyms were not current at the time al-Balādhurī was writing. No Armenian geographies have survived from the early 'Abbasid period. However, the usefulness of Ps. Sebēos's first/seventh-century history and Širakac'i's first/seventh-century geography in deciphering al-Balādhurī's text leaves open the possibility that al-Balādhurī preserves some older layer of local traditions. There remains little that we can say on this topic. Even if we hypothesize an early date for these traditions, they still filtered through a third/ninth century gaze. Al-Balādhurī's informants all have Muslim names or professions, so they may be Armenian converts to Islam or Arabs and Persians living in Armenia at the time when he was writing.

3 Salmān's Campaign into Albania

Having completed his reports about Ḥabīb's campaigns in Armenia and Georgia, al-Balādhurī next describes Salmān b. Rabī'a's simultaneous conquests in Albania. Salmān first appears in Baylaqān, then he moves to Bardha'a/Partaw camped on the shores of the river Terter (الثرثر; Spunni). He then sends campaigns against the various districts of Albania:

ووجه خيله ففتحت شفشين والمسفوان واوذ والمصريان والهرجليان وتباروهى رساتيق وفتح
غيرها من اران.⁴⁸

48 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 203.

This passage also appears in Ibn al-Faqīh with slightly different spellings:

ووجه خيله ففتحت سيسر والمسقوان وأوذ والمصران والمهرجليان وهي رساتيق عامرة وفتح
غيرها من أران.⁴⁹

As I have explained elsewhere, several of these toponyms have been pointed incorrectly in de Goeje's edition. Ūdh (اوذ) here is Utik' (Ուտիք). Al-Balādhurī's Shafashayn (شفشين) should be pointed as Shaqashayn (شقشين) to render Šakašēn (Շակաշէն); al-Misfawān (المسفوان) should be al-Misqawān (المسقوان) to render Meckuank' (Մեծկուսանք); al-Miṣr.ān (المصران) should read al-Miṣirān (المصيران) to render Mecirank' (Մեծիրանք) or Mecaṛank' (Մեծառանք); al-Harhiliyān (الهرجليان) should be pointed as al-Harjiliyān (الهرجليان) to render Harčlank' (Հարճլանք) or Harjłank' (Հարջլանք). This leaves only one of al-Balādhurī's districts of Albania unidentified: Tabār (تبار), which M. Canard suggested may be Tři (Տըի).⁵⁰ This last is not a particularly good fit, but it is the most likely of the known districts. We might therefore translate al-Balādhurī's sentence as: "he sent his cavalry and they conquered Šakašēn, Meckuank', Utik', Mecirank', Harčlank', and Tři, which are districts. He also conquered other [districts] in Albania." The geographical precision demonstrated here reveals remarkable knowledge about Albanian geography, particularly since (like the Georgian examples discussed above) several toponyms listed here do not appear in Greek or other Arabic sources. They do, however, appear in Širakac'i's first/seventh-century geography.⁵¹

That said, just because Armenian-language sources best help us decipher al-Balādhurī's text, it does not necessarily follow that his sources were Armenian. After all, al-Balādhurī also lists informants from Bardha'a/Partaw. Al-Balādhurī next has Salmān send forces to Shamkūr/Šamk'or, then he moved on from Bardha'a/Partaw: "Salmān went to the confluence of the Araxes and the Kurr past Bardij. He crossed the Kurr and conquered Qabala and the lord of Shakkin and al-Qamībarān made peace with him on the condition of tribute" (سار سلمان الى مجمع الرس والكر خلف برديج فعبر الكر ففتح قبلة وصاحبه صاحب سكن والقميبران على اتاوة).⁵² In terms of toponyms, this passage is not difficult to decipher: Qabala (قبلة) is Kapałak (Կաթաղակ); Shakkin (شكن) should read Shakkī (شكي)

49 Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 293.

50 Laurent and Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, 554; Hübschmann, *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen*, 353.

51 Vacca, *Buldān al-Rān*, 56 for Balādhurī and 58 for Ibn al-Faqīh.

52 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 203.

to render Šak'ē (Շաքէ); and al-Qamībarān (القَمِيرَان) should be read as al-Qambayjān or al-Qambijān (القَمَبِيجَان) to render Kambečan (Կամբէճան) or K'ambēčan (Բամբէճան), found in Greek as Καμβύση. Rather than turning to Armenian sources, though, we must read this passage against Dasxuranc'i's *Patmut'wn Atuanic' ašxarhi*. Although this history was composed in Armenian in the fourth/tenth century, Dasxuranc'i preserves an underlying first/seventh-century elegy to the Prince of the Albanians Ĵuanšir.⁵³ Dasxuranc'i also reveals a pointedly Albanian perspective on contested moments of history, offering a counter-narrative to what appears in other Armenian-language texts. As a result, we might consider whether al-Balādhurī's material in this case derives from Albanian sources, even if we can make sense of them only through Armenian-language texts.

Al-Balādhurī's "lord of Shakkin and Qamībarān" is none other than the famous Ĵuanšir, one of the most celebrated Albanian princes, whose rule is exalted in Dasxuranc'i's history. Ĵuanšir was the second son of the Albanian king Varaz-Grigor. Young enough to barely claim a new beard at the time when the sons of Hagar first encroached on the territory of Yazdegerd, Ĵuanšir was brave and so joined with the sparapet of Armenia and the prince of Sisajān/Siunik' to rally behind the Sasanians. Yazdegerd himself named Ĵuanšir as sparapet of the Albanians. With the battle of Nihāwand in 21/642, "the command came from on high and destroyed their kingdom" (վերնառաք հրամանն երթայր կործանէր զթագաւորութիւնն ւնցաւ),⁵⁴ so Ĵuanšir retreated to Azerbaijan and thence to Albania.

The most illustrious Ĵuanšir returned with great renown from the Persian wars and assumed the leadership of the entire house of Albania in accordance with the king's command. Taking his army and his father with him, he retreated above the city of Perozapat [note the MP Pērōzabād for Bardha'a/Partaw], and the Persian warriors marched upon our country on account of Ĵuanšir's revolt.⁵⁵

Եկեալ մեծապանծ անուամբ ամենապայծառն Զուանշիր ի Պարսկաստանացն մարտից՝ հանդիսացուցանէ ընդ ինքն զբովանդակ տունն Աղուանից ըստ թագաւորական հրամանին: Եւ առեալ զգունդն իւր հանդերձ հարբն՝ ի վերկոյս Պերոզապատ քաղաքին ելանէր: Եւ

53 Zuckerman, *The Khazars and Byzantium*.

54 Dasxuranc'i, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, 112; *Patmut'wn Atuanic' ašxarhi*, 176.

55 Dasxuranc'i, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, 113.

քաջքն Պարսից շարժեալ գային ի վերայ աշխարհիս սակս ապստամբ-
մանն Զուանշիրի:⁵⁶

Based on the timing and trajectory, it is clear that the “Persian” foes of Ĵuanšir are not Sasanian or even Persians, but in fact the caliphal army led by Salmān b. Rabīʿa. First, if Ĵuanšir defected from the Sasanian army after Nihāwand, then it is exceedingly difficult to believe that the Persians chased him back to Albania in order to punish him for defecting. Logically, the Sasanians had other things to worry about after Nihāwand. Second, Dasxurancʿi claims that Ĵuanšir's foes came from Persia to take control of Bardhaʿa/Partaw. Armenian-language sources identify Azerbaijan as Persian territory. The Persians forced Ĵuanšir to retreat “to the other side of the river Kur, to the province of Kapičan. There he gave battle, not rashly, but cautiously” (յայնկոյս գետոյն Կուրայ ի Կապիճանն գաւառ եւ անդ դնէր ընդ նոսա ոչ վարկպարագի, այլ խոհականապէս դէմ առ դէմ ռազմ պատերազմ).⁵⁷ Dasxurancʿi then has him return to battle first in Ūdh/Uti, and then twice in Shaqashayn/Šakašēn. In other words, Dasxurancʿi locates the battles in three districts—precisely those noted in al-Balādhurī's account of the “lord of Shakkin and Qamībarān.” According to Dasxurancʿi, the Albanians roundly defeated the Persians on all fronts. When the Persian general heard of Ĵuanšir's remarkable feats, he “became converted to a love of peace” (շրջեալ ի սէր խաղաղութան) and asked the prince of Sīsajān/Siunikʿ to mediate between the two sides. Ĵuanšir agreed to their terms of peace, since they had recognized his military superiority.

The timing and trajectory of the attack on Ĵuanšir thus indicate that Dasxurancʿi's Persian foes were in fact al-Balādhurī's army of Salmān b. Rabīʿa. Casting Salmān as a Persian general fighting for the Sasanians may sit uncomfortably in the context of *futūḥ* narratives, but it makes perfect sense in Armenian and Albanian geographical and political setting of the early Islamic period. Armenian-language sources frequently interpret the Caliphate and caliphal forces as just another iteration or incarnation of Sasanian might.⁵⁸ Dasxurancʿi's contortion of Salmān into a Persian who wanted to punish the Albanians for defecting after Nihāwand makes sense in this broader context. Indeed, at least one Armenian source even make the Prophet Muḥammad into a Persian.⁵⁹ More importantly for our purposes here, Dasxurancʿi's understanding of the timing and trajectory of the campaign underpin al-Balādhurī's. These are

56 Dasxurancʿi, *Patmutʿiwn Atuanicʿ ašxarhi*, 177.

57 Dasxurancʿi, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, 113; *Patmutʿiwn Atuanicʿ ašxarhi*, 178.

58 Vacca, *Non-Muslim provinces under early Islam*.

59 See, for example, Bagratuni, *The Anonymous Storyteller*, 182; *Patmutʿiwn*, 41.

not corroborating one another, as such an interpretation would assume independent production of texts. Al-Balādhurī employs names for several Albanian districts that are otherwise unknown in Arabic or Greek, indicating that he had to have received this information from Albania or Armenia—just as he himself claims. While al-Balādhurī's and Dasxuranc'i's texts claim no direct connections, they both draw on Albanian traditions and so we cannot assume that they are wholly independent because people did not live in hermetically-sealed communities.

With the defeat of ʿJuanšir, al-Balādhurī then has Salmān continue his incursions along the Caspian coast. Both Armenian and Arabic geographies traditionally locate these regions as part of Albania, but they were no longer ruled by Albanians.⁶⁰ Rather, the Khazars controlled these regions from the late Sasanian period. Al-Balādhurī claims that Salmān made peace with Ḥayzān (which usually appears in Arabic sources as حيزان as per al-Balādhurī, but should read خيداق*),⁶¹ Sharwān, "the mountains,"⁶² Masqaṭ, Shābirān, and Bāb al-Abwāb. Salmān crossed the Balanjar river, where he met the khagan and fell in battle, thus ending his campaign.

The wording here offers some flexibility in interpretation. Al-Balādhurī only claims that he made peace with these regions, not that he conquered them. However, the order of the cities along the Caspian here is replicated nearly perfectly in Ibn A'tham, who explicitly claims that Salmān went in person to each of these places. Ibn A'tham did switch the order of Shābirān and Masqaṭ, which makes more sense as an itinerary; he describes Salmān's route from Baylaqān/P'aytakaran, Bardha'a/Partaw, Georgia (by which, he means Khayzān; a scribe mistook حيزان for جرزان), Sharwān, Shābirān, then Masqaṭ. While in Masqaṭ, he wrote to the kings of "the mountains," whom he identifies as the Laks, Filān, Ṭabaristān (by which he means Ṭabarsarān; a scribe mistook طبرستان for طبرسران). Ibn A'tham next has Salmān march against Bāb al-Abwāb and onwards towards Balanjar.⁶³ Al-Ya'qūbī's account is quite similar; he traces Salmān's path from Baylaqān/P'aytakaran, Bardha'a/Partaw, then east to Shar-

60 On the relationship between the Caspian coast and Albania, see Vacca, *Buldān al-Rān*.

61 Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* 1/11 344 here has Jurzān, which is clearly a scribal error: جرزان where it should read حيزان. The form حيزان appears in most Arabic texts about the Caspian region, but Minorsky, *A History of Sharvān and Darband*, 97 points out that it should read خيداق*.

62 Al-Balādhurī identifies the "kings of the Caucasian mountains" during the reign of Anu-shirwān as Sarir, Wakrārzan, Filān, Ṭabarsarān, Laks, Masqaṭ, Lirān, Sharwān, and Ziriki-rān. He also discusses the "kings of the mountains" as Sharwān, Lirān, Ṭabarsarān, and Filān during the time of the Arab-Khazar wars in the context of the campaigns of Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik.

63 Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* 1/11, 344–345.

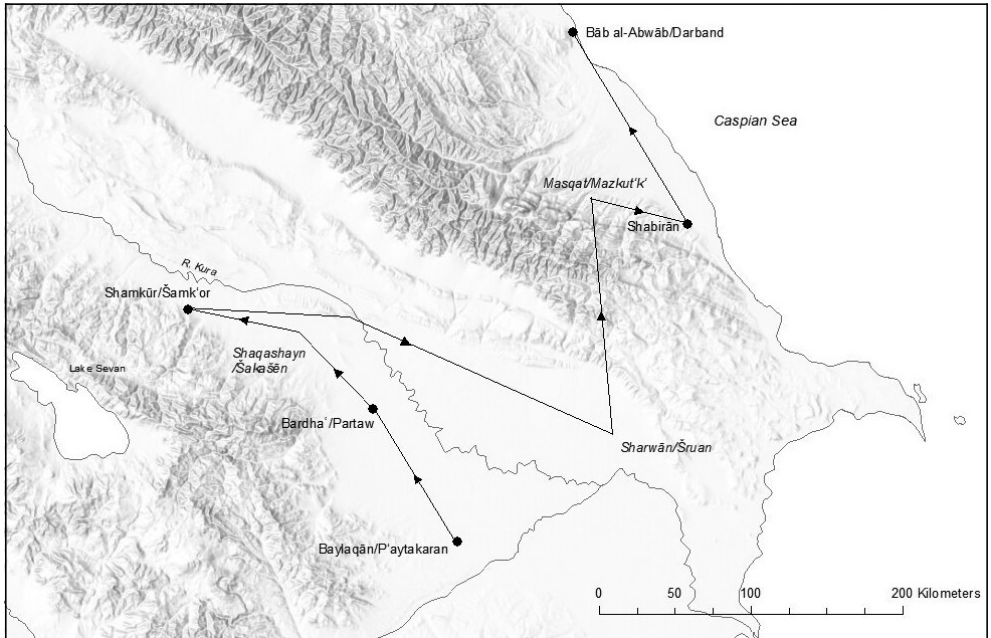


FIGURE 2.3 Salmān's Campaign into Albania: [1. Baylaqān; 2. Bardha'a; 3. Shaqashayn; 4. Shamkūr; 5. Sharwān; 6. Masqat; 7. Shabirān; 8. Bāb al-Abwāb]

wān, then north to Masqat, then to Balanjar. On this path, the lords of Laks, Shābirān, and Filān agreed to his peace, but al-Ya'qūbī does not put Salmān in their territories.⁶⁴

Salmān's trek northward stands out as different from the rest of the incursions discussed above. First, some of these place names do not appear in Armenian-language sources at all. Second, even in the general outline, Armenian-language sources offer little help deciphering al-Balādhurī's account. Armenian and Albanian authors are not particularly concerned with the regions along the Caspian. Ps. Sebēos places Muslim troops in this region only later, in the early 30s/650s, when a Muslim army pushed as far as Šul/Čolay, near or in Bāb al-Abwāb/Darband, before being defeated by the T'etalk' (!), presumably referring to the Khazars, and returning to their own homes in Ctesiphon. He does not describe their route.⁶⁵ Conversely, al-Balādhurī's report fits neatly into the contours of 'Abbasid-era Arabic histories, as al-Ya'qūbī and Ibn A'tham mirror al-Balādhurī where they offered little or no information about Ḥabīb

64 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*.

65 Ps. Sebēos, *Patmut'īwn*, 173.

and Salmān's campaigns before the fateful trip to Balanjar. Additionally, all of the toponyms listed in al-Balādhurī's, al-Ya'qūbī's, and Ibn A'tham's descriptions of Salmān's campaign against Balanjar are familiar in 'Abbasid-era Arabic literature. They fill the pages of descriptions about the Arab-Khazar wars, forming the main thoroughfare of Jarrāḥ b. 'Abdallāh, Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik, and Marwān b. Muḥammad. In short, al-Balādhurī did not receive his information about Salmān's final foray from his Armenian or Albanian informants.

4 Conclusions

After tracing through al-Balādhurī's painstakingly detailed description of the campaigns, five main conclusions emerge. First, it is entirely possible that al-Balādhurī's account of these campaigns amounts to nothing more than an imaginative display of geographical knowledge, cobbled together from pro-Syrian informants in Armenia and Albania. In several ways, Ibn A'tham's account makes more sense: Mu'āwiya sent Ḥabīb from Syria to face off with Mawriyān al-Rūmī in Shimshāt. He travelled via al-Jazīra through Arzān/Aḥnik' (darb banī Zurāra) to Akhlāt/Xlat', and then on to Sirāj/Sirak.⁶⁶ He then remained there and wrote to the patricians of Georgia to secure their agreement to his treaty. Ibn A'tham thus offers a very plausible scenario, one that also explains both the lack of reference to Ḥabīb's campaign in Georgian sources and the bizarre itinerary in Georgia. It would explain the reservations we might read into other Arabic texts, such as al-Ya'qūbī's non-committal comment that "it is said that Ḥabīb b. Maslama conquered Georgia" (وقيل ان حبيب بن مسلمة افتح جرجان), with no additional information.⁶⁷ It would further explain why al-Balādhurī's reference to the treaty of Tiflis/Tp'ilisi appears entirely divorced from the rest of his account of Ḥabīb's trawling through Georgia. However, there is no way to confirm Ibn A'tham's account as more trustworthy than al-Balādhurī's.⁶⁸ Perhaps they both claim elements of "truth." We are caught yet again in the nature of our sources about the conquest: Ibn A'tham was from Kufa and his per-

66 The only hesitancy here is that Ibn A'tham also says that Ḥabīb went to Miṭāmīr. This name is unidentified but would make sense as Mecamor—which is not on the route described in Ibn A'tham but would be on al-Balādhurī's longer itinerary.

67 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* 11, 194.

68 This may also make sense of the passage in Ps. Sebēos about how the Muslims in Dabīl/Duin decided to attack Georgia but aborted the mission when the weather did not cooperate. Ps. Sebēos places this significantly later, after the Battle of the Masts (34/654), but his chronology is problematic anyway (see, for example, the reference to Constans's twelfth year where he likely meant second year); Ps. Sebēos, *Patmut'awn*, 171.

spective is driven by his own access to sources and, possibly, his own efforts to support the Kufan claim in the arguments about Ḥabīb and Salmān. Ibn A'tham devotes just over four pages to Salmān and the heroics of the Iraqi army, while contributing only eight lines to Ḥabīb's campaigns with the Syrian army. He simply did not include much information about the Syrian hero. The understanding of the campaigns is invariably filtered through the gaze of a third/ninth-century observer (or fourth/tenth century, depending on when we date Ibn A'tham).⁶⁹ This much is easily demonstrated by Ibn A'tham's use of a toponym in Arzan/Aljnik' with reference to banū Zurāra when the eponymous Zurāra lived in the third/ninth century. In the end, though, it does little good to insist on telling history as it actually happened or to try to force an argument about whether Ḥabīb b. Maslama ever actually set foot in Georgia. We should acknowledge that we can learn a remarkable amount about historical geography from al-Balādhurī's account whether or not it faithfully records the actual deeds of Ḥabīb b. Maslama or Salmān b. Rabī'a.

This does not mean that we can learn nothing about the incursions into Armenia and Albania in the first/seventh century. Al-Balādhurī tracks the movements of the two generals; their armies, which do not always maraud with their generals; and the local lords who come to negotiate. These details suggest that the campaigns were highly piecemeal: Ḥabīb encounters the Greeks at the very start of his campaign and Salmān faces off with the Khazars at the very end of his, but these examples represent the extent of imperial power in the region. The vast majority of the reports assume no central Armenian, Georgian, or Albanian authority who could speak on behalf of their province. Ibn A'tham states this concept very succinctly when he claims that "Salmān b. Rabī'a, along with the Iraqi army that was with him, went to the lands of Armenia. The kings of Armenia heard talk of the Arabs' entry into their land, so they fled in their own ways until they were fortified in their mountains, castles, valleys, and forests" (فسار سلمان بن ربيعة ومن معه من اهل العراق نحو بلاد ارمنية، قال: وتسامعت ملوك ارمينية بدخول العرب الى بلدهم فهربوا على وجوههم حتى تحصنوا في الجبال والقللاع والاودية والغياض).⁷⁰ Such a statement makes perfect sense of al-Balādhurī's account of Ḥabīb and Salmān roaming across Armenia, Albania, and Georgia, meeting various patricians and lords along the way. These details reflect the divisive family lines and power structure in the North during the first/seventh-century incursions and during the lifetime of our third/ninth-century authors. Armenian sources suggest the opposite, viz. that the presiding

69 On the date of Ibn A'tham, see Conrad, Ibn A'tham and his history. On historiographical filters, see Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*.

70 Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* 1/11, 344.

princes directed the responses to the Islamic incursions; however, even a cursory comparison of more than one Armenian source will indicate that such claims to unity reflected ideals that never quite lived up to expectations.⁷¹

Third, even if they do not share his view on the centralized response to the incursions, al-Balādhurī's sources were Armenian and Albanian. All of the informants whom he lists by name were from or in Armenia and Albania. His account of the incursions into Armenia and Albania makes perfect sense and displays very detailed knowledge about Armenian and Albanian districts. He then sends Ḥabīb on an absurd and unrealistic itinerary through Georgia. Sal-mān's trek through Khazar territory along the Caspian Sea is similarly problematic, but not as non-sensible as the Georgian material. Al-Balādhurī's informants have heard of Georgian cities and districts, but they do not demonstrate even basic knowledge about which one is next to the other. While we cannot expect that the campaigns should have unfurled in a straight-forward manner without detours, they jump dramatically back and forth across the provinces. Rather than building a contorted story to explain why Ḥabīb would campaign erratically, doubling back and retracing his steps, it makes far more sense that al-Balādhurī's informants were listing districts that they knew by name only but could not locate accurately on a map.

Fourth, acknowledging al-Balādhurī's informants rekindles the question of whether his information preserves earlier traditions about the incursions. After all, the Ṣanāriyya/Canark' had repeatedly forced the 'Abbasids to send troops into Kaxet'i/Khākhiṭ within al-Balādhurī's lifetime, so it makes sense that he would preserve toponyms from eastern Georgia. However, there would have been no particular reason for him to know the districts in western Georgia. It therefore remains possible that al-Balādhurī's informants had access to an earlier Armenian-Albanian thread of information about the incursions. As a point of comparison, W. al-Qāḍī argues that al-Balādhurī's use of Middle Persian toponyms resulted from his reliance on local records that predated the Arabization of the *dīwān*.⁷² Such an argument may be relevant here, suggesting that perhaps the Armenian and Georgian toponyms similarly reflect al-Balādhurī's access to early administrative documents. However, this conclusion is untenable due to the specificities of provincial governance and patterns of

71 For an easy example related to the conquests, compare Ps. Sebēos and Lewond's accounts of T'ēodoros Rštuni's treaty with Mu'āwiya.

72 Al-Qāḍī, *The Names of estates in state registers*. Note, though, that she also separates the types of al-Balādhurī's sources: the conquest material, she claims, comes from earlier authorities, but the accounts of land use derive from local informants. The Armenian and Albanian material in al-Balādhurī's text does not allow for such a distinction.

Arabicization that make Armenia, Georgia, and Albania different from Iraq. We have no evidence for the maintenance of an Umayyad *dīwān* in Armenia or Albania before 'Abd al-Malik. The Sufyānids did not maintain a standing military presence or tax collectors in Armenia or Albania, so there were no local records to draw upon except those kept by the noble houses or the churches. There were, however, literary sources from the first/seventh-century, without which we would not be able to decipher several of al-Balādhurī's reports. While the specific forms of Armenian and Georgian toponyms and the content of the conquest narratives may in fact reflect an earlier layer of traditions, any suggestion that al-Balādhurī or his informants had direct access to first/seventh-century sources remains firmly in the realm of the hypothetical.

This brings us back, finally, to the broader problems afflicting the *futūḥ* genre. No ink has been spared on the relationship between Arabic-Islamic *futūḥ* traditions and the non-Muslim literatures in the various languages of the Near East. Scholarship here can be divided into two main groups. First, we have the entangled traditions, where we can trace reports across Greek, Syriac, and Arabic. The various accounts associated with Theophilus of Edessa are the perfect example, as they demonstrate that language was in no way a barrier to the transmission of historical reports.⁷³ Such examples, as L. Conrad in particular has shown in relation to the conquests, demonstrate that a rigid separation between the Arabic-Islamic and the non-Islamic is untenable.⁷⁴ The second thread is whether Syriac or Greek texts might offer independent corroboration of the Arabic-Islamic accounts of the conquest, if we can show that they were composed without any Arabisms.⁷⁵ The example offered in al-Balādhurī's account of the incursions into Armenia, Albania, and Georgia is a third type, an inversion of the second. The Arabic-Islamic tradition absorbs and recasts the "local." We cannot find evidence of the transmission of whole reports verbatim, as in the Theophilus circuit; however, neither can we generalize about separate traditions that confirm one another. Instead, this example resonates with recent discussions about whether the phrase "inter-cultural transmission" is itself problematic, since it assumes the existence of different cultures that must be bridged rather than a shared culture that finds its expressions in multiple languages.⁷⁶ This logic discourages the assumption that Armenian-language sources could corroborate or complicate the

73 Conterno, *La "Descrizione dei tempi."*

74 Conrad, *The Conquest of Arwād.*

75 Robinson, *The Conquest of Khūzistan.*

76 Debié, *Theophanes' "Oriental Source"* 367–368.

accounts of the conquests as found in the problematic Arabic-Islamic sources. Rather, al-Balādhurī drew on informants familiar with Armenian and Albanian history to describe Ḥabīb and Salmān's incursions in the first/seventh century.

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Aristocratic Violence and *ribāt* in Sāmānid Central Asia

Robert Haug

In the introduction to his book *Aristocratic violence and Holy War: Studies in the jihad and the Arab-Byzantine frontier*, Michael Bonner explained his approach to the study of the Arab-Byzantine frontier, or the Thughūr, the jihad, and the importance of studying the two in tandem.

The study of the Arab-Byzantine frontier acquires meaning when it includes the study of the jihad ... [and] the study of the jihad becomes historically relevant, not when it is discussed as it usually is, in a mainly juridical or theological context, but rather when it is placed in a concrete setting such as that of the frontier.¹

The following article takes inspiration from Bonner and his combined approach to the Arab-Byzantine frontier and the jihad and applies such methods to a related practice, *ribāt* (pl. *ribātāt*)—typically small frontier forts or outposts, often with a combined military and religious connotation, from which warriors could make *ghawz* (raids)—along another frontier, the eastern or Central Asian frontier of Transoxiana, at a specific historical moment, during the rule of the Sāmānid dynasty (204–389/819–999).²

1 Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* xi.

2 In writing this, I am not only taking inspiration from my mentor and PhD advisor Michael Bonner, but also encouragement. The *ribāṭs* of Khurāsān and Transoxiana were a topic I briefly explored in my dissertation (Haug, *The gate of iron* 133–144, 276–284). Michael wanted me to publish a separate article on the subject. As other obligations kept me from directing sufficient attention to the project, it languished for several years and I am now taking the opportunity to address it directly, hopefully with more insight and a better understanding of the questions underlying the topic than I had a decade ago (along with access to more archaeological research from the region than was available in the 2000s). I am thankful not only for Michael's support, comments, and criticisms of my initial foray into the subject. I am also grateful for the feedback I received from participants in the symposium held in Michael's honor at the University of Michigan in November 2019 as well as from my colleagues in the Department of History at the University of Cincinnati who read an early draft of this article as part of our faculty research brownbag.

Although the focus of Bonner's study was the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr during the early 'Abbasid period, he often made comparisons to the frontiers of Khurāsān and Central Asia. I would like to use these points of comparison to structure the following discussion of the Sāmānid frontier. In his conclusions, Bonner framed these comparisons around three characteristics he saw as key to the Thughūr, characteristics that showed great contrast with the eastern frontier.

Three characteristics therefore stand out for the Thughūr: the absence or weak presence of a landed warrior aristocracy, severe limits on expansion, and a high ideological temperature. Here another comparison may be made, with the great Islamic frontier of Khurāsān and Central Asia, where much expansion did occur in these same years, while a landed gentry remained in place. Furthermore, while the eastern frontier was also important ideologically, we have seen that many Khurāsānī men of law and religion who wished to perform jihad, or to occupy themselves with scholarship in a frontier environment, moved to the Thughūr rather than stay at home; one reason for this may have been dislike for the landowning class which figured prominently in the conduct of war in Khurāsān and Central Asia.³

I have chosen to examine these characteristics through the Sāmānid period due to the perceived connection between the Sāmānids and frontier warfare in the work of both medieval and modern historians and commentators and the importance the Sāmānid dynasty itself placed on the jihad against the Turks. In this context, the Sāmānid amir Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad (r. 279–295/892–907)—the first in the dynasty to rule a truly independent state that stretched across both banks of the Amu Darya (Oxus River)—could be compared to the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809) whose reign formed a critical part of Bonner's analysis of the Thughūr. Ismā'īl presented himself as “the *ghāzī* king who kept the Turks at bay,” while Hārūn is remembered as the first “*ghāzī*-caliph.”⁴ Through these three characteristics attributed to the eastern frontier—active expansion, a landed gentry (called the *dihqāns* (pl. *dahāqīn*) in this context)

3 Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* 139.

4 On Ismā'īl, see Treadwell, *The political history* 103. For evidence of this attitude in descriptions of Ismā'īl and his reign, see Tor, *The Islamization* 282–284. On al-Rashīd, see Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* 99–106. The title “*ghāzī*-caliph” was first attributed to al-Rashīd by C.E. Bosworth in the introduction to volume 30 of the translation of al-Ṭabarī, *The Abbāsīd Caliphate in equilibrium* xvii.

who engaged in frontier warfare, and a questionable ideological motivation—this article will examine the nature of the Sāmānid frontier with the Turks and the *ribāṭs* of Sāmānid Transoxiana, the status of the *dihqāns* as a landed warrior class and their relationship to the frontier and *ribāṭs*, and the role of the jihad and *ribāṭs* in the Sāmānid's attempts to centralize authority in Transoxiana. Before exploring these questions, let us first take a brief look at *ribāṭ* as an institution and practice and their emergence in Transoxiana.

1 The Emergence of *ribāṭs* in Transoxiana

The definition of *ribāṭ* as a practice and a place has long been debated.⁵ Most often, *ribāṭs* are defined as “guard posts” or “frontier outposts,” but there are also instances in which *ribāṭ* can and has been translated as “guest house,” “caravanserai,” or “postal relay” among many other terms. For example, in his translation of al-Muqaddasī's (d. 380/991) *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma'rifa al-aqālim* (*The best divisions for the knowledge of the climes*), Basil Collins translated the word *ribāṭ* as both “guard house” and “stalls for animals” in just the passage on Isfijāb alone.⁶ With this wide variety of potential definitions in mind, Jacqueline Chabbi has warned that “The word needs to be constantly related to a context and a chronology since the sense has been very evolutive.”⁷ Instead of a single architectural form with a single purpose, *ribāṭs* appeared in a variety of forms with a variety of functions and a great deal of regional variation. Following Albrecht Noth, Chabbi also argued that naming a space a *ribāṭ* “involved the simple imposition of a noun, probably denoting the existence of danger and the need to take precautions against it, upon various pre-existing constructions, without any suggestion that there is, at the outset, such a thing as a unique type of edifice which could be called *ribāṭ*.”⁸ Étienne de la Vaissière has taken this a step further by suggesting that, based on a mix of literary and archaeological evidence, *ribāṭ* could mean both the building but also the individual cell for someone performing *rābaṭa*.⁹ Using the example of Paykand, allegedly

5 Noth, *Heiliger Krieg* 66–87; Chabbi, *Ribāṭ*; Picard and Borrut, *Rābata*; Rhonè, *Les ribāṭ-s*; Eger, *Ḥiṣn*. On the *ribāṭs* of Central Asia specifically see de la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ*.

6 Al-Muqaddasī, *The best divisions* 244.

7 Chabbi, *Ribāṭ* viii, 493. Such an approach is reminiscent of Bonner's careful analysis of jihad in its lived, historical context rather than focusing only on juridical and theological definitions. Bonner *Jihad*.

8 Chabbi, *Ribāṭ* viii, 494; following Noth, *Heiliger Krieg* 66–87.

9 De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 78. The verb *rābaṭa* from which *ribāṭ* derives describes the mustering of cavalry in preparation for a *ghawz*.

home to 1,000 *ribāṭs*,¹⁰ he argued that instead there were approximately 30 *ribāṭs* with the capacity to house 1,000 *murābiṭūn* total at any given time. In short, *ribāṭs* have no uniform shape or structure defining them and instead are characterized by the activities that took place within them.

Fred Donner has associated the application of *ribāṭ* to a variety of frontier fortifications with a general “Qur’ānicization” of the vocabulary of religious-political discourse during the Umayyad period, a process of imbuing the activities of the state with specifically Islamic and more specifically Quranic religious meaning.¹¹ As such, the earliest usage of the term *ribāṭ* drew on Q 8:60, “Prepare whatever forces you [believers] can muster, including warhorses (*min ribāṭi al-khayli turhibūna bihi*), to frighten off God’s enemies and yours, and warn others unknown to you but known to God.”¹² Donner’s thesis fits well with the evidence from Transoxiana. The earliest reports of *ribāṭ* or *rābaṭa* in the region come from the year 109/727–728 when it is reported that the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān Ashras b. ‘Abdallāh al-Sulāmī (r. 109–111/727–730) established a series of *rābiṭa* along the frontier with the Türgesh Turks who had entered Sogdiana in support of a local uprising against Umayyad rule.¹³ These *rābiṭa* were “mobile frontier forces”—following Khalid Yahya Blankinship’s translation¹⁴—etymologically related to but distinct from *ribāṭ*, associated with the gathering of horses in preparation for war.¹⁵ By the early ‘Abbasid era—at the latest—the term was applied to a variety of fortified edifices ranging from observation towers to small fortresses located in positions of danger.

Of course, this does not mean that *rābaṭa* was the only activity that could take place in a *ribāṭ*. We have, for example, evidence of people gathering in Transoxianan *ribāṭs* to transmit hadith.¹⁶ As buildings were transformed into *ribāṭs*, they often maintained aspects of their previous occupations. Excavations of *ribāṭs* across the Islamic world have uncovered buildings that were closely related structurally to both caravanserais and palaces, emphasizing the variety of architectural forms they may take on. As Camille Rhoné has argued, because of their positions on frontiers, *ribāṭs* were often “situated along axes of communication and exchange of which they are sometimes vital anchor

10 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rīkh-i Bukhārā* 25; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 489; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm* 282; Sütüdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 106; al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb* i, 434.

11 Donner, Qur’ānicization 89.

12 Quran translations from Abdel-Haleem, *The Qur’an*.

13 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* ii, 1504.

14 Al-Ṭabarī, *The end of expansion* 42–43.

15 Regardless, they were not very effective and their leaders were soon captured or killed by the Khāqān Suluk. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* ii, 1514.

16 Al-Nasafī, *al-Qand* 122, 150, 628.

points” that encouraged combined military and commercial roles.¹⁷ In combining these diverse commercial and military enterprises along an active frontier, the *ribāṭs* of the Islamic era were following precedents set by the frontier fortifications of the Romans, Parthians, and Sasanians.¹⁸ In Transoxiana more specifically, de la Vaissière has shown that many *ribāṭs* developed from Buddhist practices of establishing rest stops for weary travelers.¹⁹

The expansion of *ribāṭs* into Khurāsān and then Transoxiana may have been part of a centralized imperial policy, what de la Vaissière called “a global caliphal initiative,” led by Hārūn al-Rashīd.²⁰ When al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī (d. 192/808) became governor of Khurāsān in 178/794–795, he built mosques and *ribāṭs* and led raids into Transoxiana.²¹ We know that some of al-Faḍl’s building activities made their way across the Amu Darya with al-Narshakhī (d. 348/959) attributing the congregational mosque of Bukhārā to the governor.²² Some of our geographical sources associated al-Faḍl with the construction of a large gate near Rāsht, along the Surkhāb River in Chaghāniyān, which prevented Turkic raiding down the valley.²³ Even though no connections exist in our literary sources between al-Faḍl and any specific *ribāṭs* in Transoxiana, archaeologists have dated a *ribāṭ* excavated at Paykand to the end of the second/eighth or beginning of the third/ninth century, in proximity to al-Faḍl’s governorship and therefore possibly built by him or, at the very least, influenced by his initiative.²⁴ Generally speaking, this period saw a great deal of defensive minded construction projects around Bukhārā. Construction of the large wall around Bukhārā and its dependent villages, known as the Kanpirak or Old Lady, was begun in 176/782 during the caliphate of al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785) but

17 Rhonè, *Les ribāṭ-s* 65.

18 Rhonè, *Les ribāṭ-s* 71.

19 De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 87–90. Similar prescriptions are found in the Quran as in Q 9:60, “Alms are meant only for the poor, the needy, those who administer them, those whose hearts need winning over, to free slaves and help those in debt, for God’s cause, and for travelers in need (*abni al-sabīl*). This is ordained by God; God is all knowing and wise.” According to al-Muqaddasī, the Sāmānid amir Naṣr 11 b. Aḥmad 11 built a *ribāṭ* at Farabr—located one *farsakh* north of the Amu Darya between Āmul and Paykand—to accommodate the *abnā’ al-sabīl*. Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm* 291.

20 This assessment is based on the synchronicity of *ribāṭ* construction led by imperial governors in far flung parts of the caliphate, from Ifrīqiya to Khurāsān. De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 72–75.

21 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* iii, 631.

22 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rīkh-i Bukhārā* 68.

23 Haug, *The eastern frontier* 17–18; Ibn Khuradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik* 33–34; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān* 324–325; Yāqūt, *Mu’jam al-buldān* iv, 380–381.

24 De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 74.

not completed until 215/830 and constantly expanded upon and improved until the reign of Ismā'il b. Aḥmad—who dubbed himself the wall of Bukhārā and allowed the Kanpirak to fall into disrepair.²⁵ This wall was a reported 72 km in diameter, 250 km in circumference, and all the land within it was inhabited and cultivated.²⁶ A smaller inner wall was constructed later under Ṭāhirid supervision in 235/849–850.²⁷

Many of the Transoxianan *ribāṭ*s that are associated with individual patrons in our literary sources come from this era as well. According to Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 378/988), the city of Dīzak in the region of Ustrūshana, at the western edge of the Farghāna Valley, was where the people of Samarqand gathered to perform *ribāṭ*. The *ribāṭ*s found in the villages of Dīzak, among the best known (*ashhar*) in Transoxiana, were built by al-Afshīn (d. 226/841).²⁸ Al-Sam'ānī (506–562) credited the ascetic Abū Aḥmad al-Zāhid al-Samarqandī (late second/late eighth to early ninth century) with building a *ribāṭ* at Qaṭwān, seven *farsakhs* from Samarqand.²⁹ He was also described by al-Sam'ānī as a dedicated frontier warrior who died while engaged in *ghawz* at Khāwas in the region of Ustrūshana and, in a later entry, was given the *nisba* al-Muṭawwa'ī or the volunteer fighter of the jihad.³⁰ The ascetic Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman Mu'ādh b. Ya'qūb al-Kāsānī (active early third/ninth century) was likewise credited with building a *ribāṭ* and a congregational mosque in the path of the ascetics (*sikka al-zuhhād*) in the village of Kāsān in the district of Nakhshab (Nasaf) in the year 219/834.³¹

If we look at the descriptions of Transoxiana in the geographical sources written during the Sāmānid era, we get the impression that the majority of *ribāṭ* construction occurred later, in the fourth/tenth century. The earliest geograph-

25 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* 47–48.

26 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 165; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 482–483; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm* 266–267; Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Hudūd al-'ālam* 106. Archaeological excavations have identified remains of the wall, confirming its massive size. Frye, *Bukhara* 10.

27 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* 48–49.

28 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 504–505. Afshīn was the hereditary title of the ruler of Ustrūshana though, in the Islamic literary tradition, al-Afshīn typically refers to the famous 'Abbāsīd military commander al-Afshīn Ḥaydar b. Kāwus (d. 226/841) and we may presume this is whom Ibn Ḥawqal was referencing.

29 Al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb* ii, 315, iii, 316. We do not have precise information about Abū Aḥmad al-Zāhid's birth or death, but al-Sam'ānī tells us that he transmitted hadith from Abū al-Muqātil b. Muslim al-Fazārī (who al-Ṭabarī tells us was present in Baghdad for al-Faḍl al-Barmakī's return from Khurāsān (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* iii, 637)) and was a companion of the early Sufi Shaqīq b. Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī (d. 194/809).

30 Al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb* ii, 315, iii, 316.

31 Al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb* v, 16.

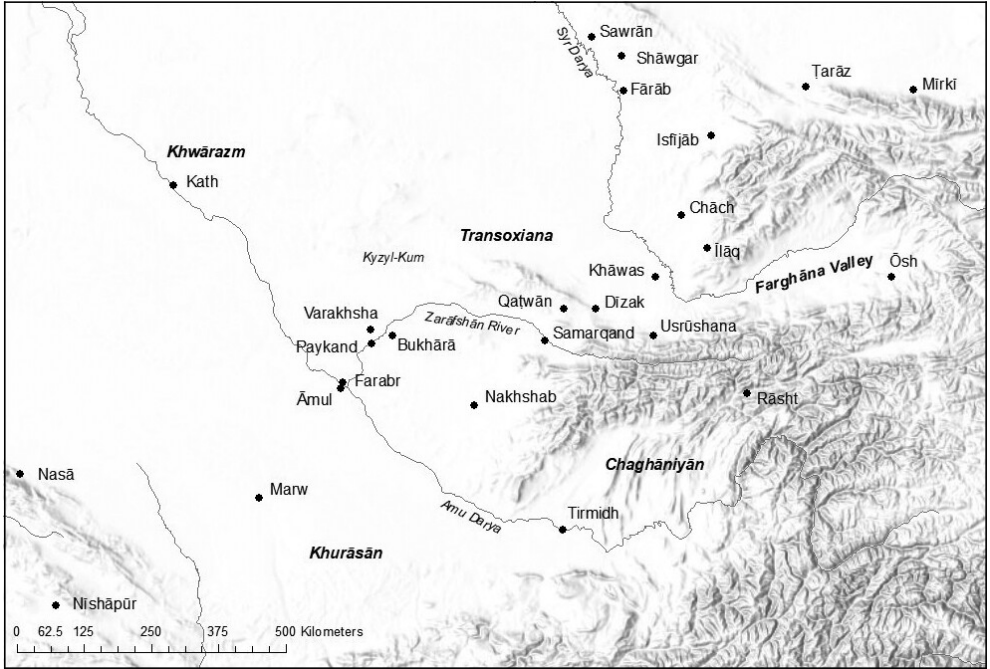


FIGURE 3.1 Map of Sāmānīd Transoxiana

ers, including Ibn Khurradādhbih (d. 299/911–912), al-Ya‘qūbī (d. ca. 295/908), Ibn al-Faḳīh (fl. 290/903), and Qudāma (d. before 337/948), do not list any *ribāṭs* in Khurāsān or Transoxiana. This is not a total absence as both Ibn Khurradādhbih and Qudāma do identify *ribāṭs* in other regions, including areas as nearby as Kirmān and Sistān.³² When later geographers such as al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. after 340/951–952), Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Muqaddasī, and the anonymous *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam*³³ include large numbers of *ribāṭs* in their descriptions of Transoxiana and Khurāsān, we must decide if this was simply a choice in terminology made by the authors or if it reflected changes on the ground. With that in mind, let us now consider the first of Bonner’s characteristics: a frontier open for expansion. To do this, we will turn to the *ribāṭs* of Sāmānīd Transoxiana, focusing on two sites where great concentrations are reported, Isfijāb and Paykand.

32 Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik* 49; Qudāma, *Kitāb al-kharāj* 90.

33 Despite the anonymity of its author, we know that the text itself was written in 372/982–983 and was dedicated to the Farīghūnīd ruler of Gūzgān in Ṭukhāristān Abū ‘I-Ḥārith Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 7.

2 The *ribāṭ*s of Isfijāb and Commerce on the Frontier of the Turks

As frontier outposts, we would expect to find a large number if not the majority of *ribāṭ*s along or near the physical frontier between the Sāmānid domains and the land of the Turks. In some instances, this is the case. Isfijāb, for example, was described by al-Muqaddasī as “a great frontier and the abode of jihad” and, therefore, home to 2,700 *ribāṭ*s.³⁴ Beyond this general description, al-Muqaddasī also identified four specific *ribāṭ*s or assemblies of *ribāṭ*s associated with the four gates of the city. These were the *ribāṭ*s of the Nakshabīs, the Bukhārāns, and the Samarqandīs—presumably where the people from the three principal cities of early Islamic Transoxiana gathered to perform *rābaṭa*—and the *ribāṭ* of Qarātigin (d. 317/929), the Turkish general who served the Sāmānids and who was also buried in the *ribāṭ*.³⁵ This last *ribāṭ* included a market Qarātigin dedicated to *waqf* (pious endowment) that raised 7,000 dirhams per month for bread and food for the feeble. A series of *karaultobe* (sentry towers) have been uncovered in the area around Isfijāb, but it is unclear if any of the *ribāṭ*s of Isfijāb are included among them.³⁶

For al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal, Isfijāb—modern Sayram, located along the Ares River, a tributary of the Syr Darya—was the center of the Sāmānid frontier. From Isfijāb west to Khwārazm was the frontier with the Ghuzz Turks and from Isfijāb east to the furthest extent (*aqṣā*) of Farghāna was the frontier with the Qarluq (Kharlajiyya) Turks.³⁷ The Sāmānids advanced this frontier early in their history. In 224/839, the Sāmānid ruler of Samarqand, Nūḥ b. Asad (r. 204–227/819–842), led two successful campaigns across the Syr Darya that conquered Ūrast and Kāsān in Farghāna and Isfijāb.³⁸ Upon conquering Isfijāb,

34 al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 273.

35 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 273. In comparison to the other *ribāṭ*s mentioned here, it may be the case that the *ribāṭ* of Qarātigin is where the Turks in the service of the Sāmānid army mustered for campaigns in the *bilād al-Turk*.

36 Baitaneyev, et. al. Sentry ‘towers’ of Ispidjab; Baitaneyev, Yergeshbayev, and Shayakhmetov, ‘Watchtowers’ of Ispidzhab.

37 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 163; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 467.

38 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān* 420, 422; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vi, 237. There is some debate about the date of these campaigns as al-Balādhurī references them separately without providing a date, assigning them to the reigns of two different ‘Abbāsīd caliphs, al-Mu’taṣim (r. 218–227/833–842) for the campaign against Isfijāb and then al-Muntaṣir (r. 247–248/861–862) for the campaign in Farghāna. Given all other context, it is most certain that al-Mu’taṣim is correct for both and Ibn al-Athīr’s dating of them to the year 224/839 stands. It should also be noted that, initially, Sāmānid authority in Transoxiana was divided among Nūḥ in Samarqand and his brothers Aḥmad in Farghāna and Yaḥyā in Chāch (Tashkent) and Uṣrūshana while a fourth brother, Ilyās, was given a position

Nūḥ had an encircling wall built that enclosed the city, its vineyards, and its cultivated fields, implying a plan to permanently occupy and perhaps garrison the city.³⁹ This wall was noted by Ibn Ḥawqal who also described the city as having a *quhandiz* (citadel) that was in ruins.⁴⁰ It is clear though that this conquest did not bring Isfijāb under direct Sāmānid rule. Instead, local Turkic authorities became vassals of the Sāmānids, providing military support and paying a token tribute. In 272/885, when Naṣr b. Aḥmad (r. 250–279/864–892) found himself in conflict with his brother Ismāʿīl, who was then the governor of Bukhārā, he recruited a group of Turks from Isfijāb to fight on his side.⁴¹ Al-Iṣṭakhri reported that Isfijāb did not pay the *kharāj*, stating it was the only place in Mā warāʾ al-nahr (the province of Transoxiana) free from the burden of the land tax, a sign that it was a tributary or vassal territory.⁴² At one point, al-Muqaddasī agreed, stating that Isfijāb “knows no drought nor any *kharāj*,”⁴³ but in another passage he instead specified that Isfijāb paid what appears to be a token amount for the *kharāj* including four *dawānīq* or about two thirds of a dirham and a broom (*miknasa*) that was sent every year as an offering (*hadāyā*).⁴⁴

While some authors saw Isfijāb as a source of danger, such as al-Yaʿqūbī who knew it as a point from which the Turks attacked,⁴⁵ by the fourth/tenth century Isfijāb was more often portrayed as a place of commerce than warfare by contemporary geographers. It was a place where trade took place with Turks who had converted to Islam and established peace with their neighbors.⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥawqal wrote that the city was bound together with the Ghuzz Turks by peace treaties and trade (*ṣabarān madīna yajtamaʿa bi-hā al-ghuzzīyya liʾl-ṣulḥ waʾl-*

south of the Amu Darya, in Herat (though the reality of these individual appointments, especially those of Yahyā and Ilyās, is questionable). It was not until the reign of Naṣr b. Aḥmad that Transoxiana was united under a single Sāmānid amir.

39 Al-Balādhuri, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān* 422; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vi, 237.

40 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 510. As does al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 273.

41 Al-Narshakhi, *Taʾrīkh-i Bukhārā* 113. It is worth noting that Naṣr led at least one raid (*ghazāʾ*) across the Syr Darya. This campaign, reported only briefly in the geographical texts, focused on Shāwgar. Al-Iṣṭakhri, *al-Masālik* 163; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 467.

42 Al-Iṣṭakhri, *al-Masālik* 186–187.

43 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 273.

44 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 340.

45 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān* 295.

46 Even though the precise dating for the large-scale conversion of the Turks to Islam is difficult to uncover, as is the method and means by which this occurred, it is clear that it had happened among the groups who bordered the Sāmānid domains by the mid-fourth/tenth century. A discussion of the narratives surrounding the conversion of the Turks, the relevant sources, and the problems with both the narratives and the sources may be found in Paul, *Nouvelles pistes* 19–22; Tor, *The Islamization* 287–289.

hudna wa'l-tajārat).⁴⁷ According to Ibn Ḥawqal, the Turks in the region, both Ghuzz and Qarluq, were Muslims by the time he was writing and in one of the towns of Isfijāb named S.t.kand, noted as the meeting place of the Turks, there was a minbar.⁴⁸ Alongside his description of thousands of *ribāṭs*, al-Muqaddasī also described Isfijāb as a place of trade, saying that it was “an important metropole with suburbs and an inhabited inner city having caravanserais (*tīmāt*) and a cotton market (*sūq al-karābīs*).”⁴⁹ Despite being centers of commerce, the reality of frontier warfare did emerge in some descriptions of Isfijāb’s markets as in al-Muqaddasī’s inclusion of enslaved Turks (*raqīq*) among the trade goods that came from both Isfijāb and Farghāna.⁵⁰ *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* emphasized the city’s role in trade over fighting even though it described Isfijāb as the border between the Muslims and the infidels (*bar sar-i ḥadd miyān muslimān va kāfirān*). “Whatever is produced in any place of Turkistān is brought here ... merchants from all over the world abound in it.”⁵¹

Similar descriptions are found of the area around Isfijāb. The towns of Bālāj and Barūkat in the region of Isfijāb were on the frontier facing the Turkmen who were converts to Islam.⁵² Likewise, *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* depicted the larger region around Isfijāb as a Turkic sphere identifying the area between Isfijāb and the Syr Darya as the grazing ground—following Vladimir Minorsky’s translation of *giyā-khwār*—for the territory between the river and the Chatkal Range of the Western Tian Shan Mountains including both Isfijāb and Chāch (Tashkent).⁵³ The area was inhabited by peaceful Turks—*turkān āshtī* which Minorsky translated as “trucial Turks”—who had converted to Islam and lived in 1,000 felt tents. The town of Šahrān was the place of the Ghuzz merchants.⁵⁴ Such mixed populations persisted beyond the Syr Darya with *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* listing several towns reaching out as far as Ṭarāz with mixed Muslim/Turkish populations, also described as places of merchants.⁵⁵

47 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 511.

48 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 511.

49 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 272.

50 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 325.

51 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 117; Minorsky (trans.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 118.

52 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 274.

53 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 117–118; Minorsky (trans.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 119.

54 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 118.

55 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* 118. It has been speculated that these towns were in fact merchant colonies, established in the manner of earlier Sogdian colonies, within Turkic domains and without the direct support and beyond the reach of Muslim authorities, namely the Sāmānids, in order to expand trade to the east. Bartold, *Histoire des Turcs* 49; de la Vaissière, *Sogdian traders* 314; Tor, *The Islamization* 281.

Still, al-Muqaddasī continued to describe the area around Isfijāb as especially fortified. Sawrān, on the frontier of the Ghuzz and Kīmāk Turks, had seven fortifications (*ḥiṣūn*), perhaps walls, one after the other, and the suburbs were within them.⁵⁶ The small rural town (*madīna li-rustāq*) of Turār Zarākh was in the region of the Turks and was fortified, while the town of Shaghlaḡān was the frontier facing the Kīmāk and had many fortifications.⁵⁷ Yakānkath was home to the *ribāṭ* of Kharākharāf, an otherwise unknown figure likely of Turkic background, who was also buried there.⁵⁸

One of the furthest points the Sāmānids attempted to assert their authority was Ṭarāz, approximately 175 km east of Isfijāb. In 280/893, Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad led a successful campaign against the city which was then the capital of the Qarluq Turks.⁵⁹ In al-Narshakhī's account, Ismāʿīl's opponent is presented as the amir of Ṭarāz and his *dihqāns* who surrendered and converted to Islam. A large church (*kalisiyā buzurg*) was turned into a mosque where the *khuṭbah* was read in the name of the caliph.⁶⁰ Al-Ṭabarī reported that word had reached Baghdad of Ismāʿīl's conquest of the city of the king of the Turks, capturing the king and his queen who were among an exaggerated 10,000 prisoners—many of whom were killed—and innumerable horses. The spoils were such that each horseman among the Muslims received 1,000 dirhams.⁶¹ Our earliest geographical sources are roughly contemporaneous with Ismāʿīl's reign and they present Ṭarāz as being part of the frontier with the Turks including the Kīmāk who pasture their animals nearby.⁶² Al-Iṣṭakhri and Ibn Ḥawqal gave Ṭarāz a position similar to that of Isfijab, as the fulcrum between two frontiers, with the frontier from Ṭarāz west to Khwārazm until the Aral Sea being

56 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 274.

57 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 274.

58 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 274.

59 It is worth noting that this campaign came seven years before Ismāʿīl's victory over the Ṣaf-fārid 'Amr b. al-Layth and its primary purpose may have been to reinforce his *jihādī bona fides* before this confrontation. Tor, *The Islamization* 282–283. Ṭarāz was, of course, the site of a famous battle in 133/751 that set the 'Abbasid Caliphate against the T'ang Empire of China (or their Turkish and Tibetan proxies, at least), but despite an 'Abbasid victory, 150 years later it remained outside the control of the caliphate, its successors, or its vassals and had become the center of a growing Turkic confederacy. On the Battle of Ṭarāz and, particularly, the problems of the (lack of) Muslim sources, see Karev, *Samarqand et le Sughd* 62–78.

60 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* 118–119. According to al-Muqaddasī, the congregational mosque of Ṭarāz was in the markets. Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 274.

61 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* iii, 2138.

62 Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik* 31; Qudāma, *Kitāb al-kharāj* 209; Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Hudūd al-'ālam* 86.

the border with the Ghuzz and Qarluq while to the north, along a straight line (*khaṭṭ mustaqīm*) from the farthest point of Farghāna to Ṭarāz was the border with the Qarluq alone.⁶³ Al-Muqaddasī used Ṭarāz as a bookend for his Greater Khurāsān which stretched from Qūmis to Ṭarāz.⁶⁴ According to *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam*, Ṭarāz formed the border between Mā warāʾ al-nahr and Turkistān.⁶⁵ Still, it was not a space that was particularly militarized with al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal both explicitly pointing out the lack of *ribāṭs* (or any buildings for that matter (*lā ribāṭ baynahumā wa lā'imāra*)) along the road to Ṭarāz.⁶⁶ At the same time, the role of trade comes up multiple times. Ibn Rustah (d. after 290/903), writing at approximately the time of Ismāʿīl's campaign, called Ṭarāz a city of merchants.⁶⁷ Ṭarāz was also included by *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* among the cities where Muslims and Turks lived together and was an abode of merchants.⁶⁸

Isfijāb and its immediate environs did not have a monopoly on *ribāṭs* along the frontier. Dhakhkath in the region of Īlāq—between Chāch and the western entrance to the Farghāna Valley—was home to many *ribāṭs*.⁶⁹ This may include the *ribāṭs* of Sa'd and Abī Aḥmad cataloged by al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal in roughly the same region.⁷⁰ The city of Ōsh in the Farghāna Valley was home to a great *ribāṭ* (*ribāṭ ʿaẓīm*) where *muṭṭawwiʿa* (volunteer fighters) gathered from every direction.⁷¹ One hundred and fifty kilometers east of Ṭarāz, in the town of Mīrkī, there was a late Sāmānid example of a *ribāṭ*. This *ribāṭ* stood outside the fortress (*ḥiṣn*) and was built by the *mamlūk*, eunuch, general, kingmaker at the Sāmānid court and, finally, rebel Fāʿiq al-Khāṣṣa (d. 389/999).⁷²

Isfijāb and other locations directly along the frontier with the Turks were places where people gathered from across Transoxiana to both fight the Turks—including Turks who had entered military service under the Sāmānids as represented by the *ribāṭ* of Qarātigin—and trade with the same Turks.

63 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 161; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 459.

64 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 260.

65 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* 26.

66 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 188; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 516.

67 Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-aʿqlāq* 98.

68 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* 118.

69 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 274.

70 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 188; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 515–516.

71 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 272.

72 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 275. In the context of our discussion here, it is important to note that while most *mamlūks* at the Sāmānid court were Turkic, Fāʿiq may have been a Greek or Spaniard, being given the *nisba* al-Rūmī and al-Andalusī by various sources. Treadwell, *The political history* 316.

This dual image of Isfijāb and its neighbors illustrates the intertwined nature of frontier outposts. These were points where one could engage the enemy in violence, but they were also the entrepôts from which trade goods entered and left the region, an important avenue for commercial contact and a crucial revenue stream for the Sāmānids. The lucrative trade in enslaved Turks makes it clear that the two were sometimes combined. As such, the *ribāṭs* of Isfijāb and neighboring regions certainly played a dual role as both frontier fortresses but also caravanserais where merchants and other travelers could find shelter and security. The movement of both fighters and merchants also imply the opportunity for expansion but it is unclear to what extent opportunity became reality as sites of supposed conquest regularly remained outside of direct Sāmānīd authority. The reality of expansion becomes even muddier when we consider the center of Sāmānīd Transoxiana.

3 Paykand, Bukhārā, and *ribāṭs* Far from the Frontier

Outside of Isfijāb, the largest concentrations of *ribāṭs* in Sāmānīd Transoxiana, as described by contemporary geographical sources, were found in and near the Bukhārā oasis—within the walls of Bukhārā and around the city of Paykand—placing them much closer to the Amu Darya than the Syr Darya. Numūjkath—the city of Bukhārā itself—was home to many *murābiṭūn* whom al-Muqaddasī contrasted favorably with the city's lack of ignorant people (*jāhilūn*).⁷³ Looking at the Bukhārā oasis more broadly, Ribāṭ al-Nūr was situated behind Bukhārā and was home to an annual fair (*mawsim*).⁷⁴ This may be the place al-Narshakhī simply called Nūr, a place with many *ribāṭs* but more important to the local historian of Bukhārā for its religious standing. Nūr was the site of an annual pilgrimage (*ziyārat*) to the tombs of the *tābiʿīn*, a pilgrimage locals considered equal in merit to the Hajj.⁷⁵ Two stages to the east of Bukhārā on the road to Tirmidh was Ribāṭ ʿAtīq; Ribāṭ Khwārān was three stages further.⁷⁶ Heading towards Nakhshab to the southeast of Bukhārā, al-Muqaddasī says that one encounters many unnamed *ribāṭs*.⁷⁷ Traveling in the other direction from

73 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 281.

74 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 334.

75 Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* 17. *Tābiʿīn* is usually defined as the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. This is the designation for the second generation of Muslims, those who were not themselves companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*) but knew one of the companions personally.

76 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 343.

77 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 344.

Bukhārā on the road to Kāth, the capital of Khwārazm, one passed Ribāṭ Tāsh after three stages, Ribāṭ Ṭughān after six stages, followed by Ribāṭ Jikarband and Ribāṭ Ḥasan each one stage apart, Ribāṭ Māsh after eleven stages, and finally Ribāṭ Sanda after twelve.⁷⁸ *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* described Bukhārā as the home of the king of the East whose people were archers (*tīr-andāzand*) and *ghāzīs*. All the *ribāṭs* and villages of the city were within its walls.⁷⁹

As mentioned above, Paykand was often described as a great concentration of *ribāṭs*. According to al-Muqaddasī, Paykand was home to 1,000 *ribāṭs*, some inhabited and some in ruins, many located among the markets in the suburbs.⁸⁰ Al-Narshakhī provided a more detailed description of these *ribāṭs*, dividing them into two parts. The first included those around the gate of Paykand, but he claimed without explanation that these were destroyed around the year 240/854–855.⁸¹ This predated Sāmānid control over Bukhārā which remained instead under Ṭāhirid authority until 261/874–875 when the Ṣaffārid victory over the Ṭāhirids gave the Sāmānids an opportunity to consolidate control over Transoxiana. The second group consisted of 1,000 *ribāṭs* which al-Narshakhī said corresponded to the 1,000 villages of Bukhārā. Because Paykand was such a beautiful place, the occupants of every village built a *ribāṭ* there, settled some people, and provisioned them using village proceeds. Then, when the infidels (*kāfirān*) raided, the people of every village gathered to their respective *ribāṭs*.⁸² Al-Samʿānī reported personally seeing 3,000 *ribāṭs* for *ghazāh* there in the sixth/twelfth century.⁸³

Some of the *ribāṭs* of Paykand have been excavated. These consist primarily of a set of buildings in the northern portion of the eastern *rabaḍ* (suburb), the largest occupied area of the city uncovered thus far, measuring approximately 61ha.⁸⁴ The excavated structures date to the late second/eighth and early third/ninth centuries based on numismatic and ceramic evidence, therefore pre-dating Sāmānid authority, though they continued to be used across the Sāmānid era.⁸⁵ Construction of these *ribāṭs* followed a regular plan, much more so than other *ribāṭs* in the region.⁸⁶ The largest of them, designated Ribāṭ No. 1,

78 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 343.

79 Sutūdiḥ (ed.), *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* 106.

80 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 282.

81 Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾriḫ-i Bukhārā* 25.

82 Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾriḫ-i Bukhārā* 25–26.

83 Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb* i, 434.

84 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 195.

85 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 204; de la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 74.

86 De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 74.

was built in a square with 75m sides “oriented almost exactly to the cardinal points” and large enough to accommodate 40–50 persons (while other *ribāṭs* excavated in the area could host up to 30).⁸⁷ A central courtyard was surrounded by a series of one or three room compartments that could be individually locked.⁸⁸ As mentioned above, de la Vaissière has suggested that the 1,000 *ribāṭs* of Paykand may actually reference the 1,000 compartments or cells, meaning there was capacity for 1,000 *murābiṭūn* rather than 1,000 edifices acting as *ribāṭs*.⁸⁹ *Ribāṭ* No. 4, also under excavation, was built in the mid-third/ninth century and was in use until the late fourth/tenth century, demonstrating continued *ribāṭ* activity at Paykand throughout the Sāmānid period.⁹⁰ The proximity of the *ribāṭs* to an artisanal quarter—showing evidence of both pottery and glass production—and residential zones has led archaeologists to posit “a social life around these structures,” connecting them to the commercial activities central to “the City of Merchants.”⁹¹ The *ribāṭs* also featured open spaces likely to host caravans visiting Paykand and its markets and had easy access to pasturage for merchants’ animals. Again, the *ribāṭs* likely had a dual purpose as both a gathering point for warriors and secure sites for travelling caravans. Beyond the large number of *ribāṭs*, it is worth noting that archaeological surveys of Paykand show that the third/ninth to fourth/tenth centuries, covering the whole of the Sāmānid period, “presented the maximal extension of its urban layout.”⁹²

A curious aspect of this concentration of *ribāṭs* around Bukhārā and Paykand is that they were far from the frontier with the Turks as our geographical writers might have understood it. Paykand, for example, was the closest point of the oasis towards the Amu Darya. In a sense, when the villagers of Bukhārā travelled to their *ribāṭs* in Paykand, they were retreating away from the frontier and, presumably, from the invading “infidels.” But that might only be the case if we think of the frontier between the Sāmānids and the Turks as a single line somewhere near the Syr Darya rather than a zone. To understand why it was necessary to have so many *ribāṭs* so far from the supposed frontier in a place like Paykand, it is important to think about how the frontier between the Sāmānids and the Turks functioned and how people interacted with it. The Sāmānid frontier—as a political, economic, cultural, and

87 Mirzaakhmedov, *The ribāṭ-caravanserais* 112; de la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 78.

88 Mirzaakhmedov *The ribāṭ-caravanserais* 112.

89 De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 78.

90 Mirzaakhmedov *The ribāṭ-caravanserais* 113.

91 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 204.

92 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 207.

even military boundary—was not a line on the map but a zone that encompassed most of Transoxiana; it also extended into the *bilād al-Turk* (land of the Turks) and sometimes even south of the Amu Darya into Khurāsān. We have already seen elements of this on multiple levels with the territory beyond the Syr Darya. There we noted the establishment of vassal relationships with local Turkic powers at places like Isfījāb, trading centers far beyond the reach of effective Muslim authority as at Ṭarāz, and the extension of Islam through the conversion of the Turks—much of this done without the formal backing or protection of the Sāmānids or other Muslim authorities. Whereas some of the descriptions of merchant colonies beyond Sāmānid authority appear to signal peaceful cohabitation along the frontiers, these communities could find themselves in danger as relationships between the Turks and Sāmānids shifted. For example, leading up to a large Turkic invasion of Transoxiana in 297/909–910, one of the first steps the invading forces took was to arrest and enslave the Muslim merchants trading in the lands of the Turks to stop information about their gathering reaching the Sāmānids.⁹³ There was similar movement into Sāmānid Transoxiana from the *bilād al-Turk*, including the large-scale importation of enslaved Turks to serve in the Sāmānid military.⁹⁴ From these positions, Turkic generals soon came to dominate the politics of both Transoxiana and Khurāsān in the fourth/tenth century. Other forms of movement across the frontier followed seasonal migratory patterns that allowed for easier penetration deep into Sāmānid Transoxiana and even Khurāsān.

Turkic raids in places like Paykand were most likely seasonal, occurring in the fall and winter thanks to a series of push and pull factors dictated largely by the environment. Al-Narshakhī confirms this, reporting that the infidels would attack Paykand and the people of Bukhārā would take to their *ribāṭs* in the winter.⁹⁵ The migratory cycles of nomads and pastoralists brought them south in the winter to escape the cold and snow on the steppe while those engaged in vertical transhumance likewise moved from the highlands down into the river valleys in the winter. This was also the time of the year when the pastoralists' horses were strongest after a summer grazing and the need for labor was lightest following the spring and summer birthing seasons, allowing them to dedicate more labor to raiding.⁹⁶ Additionally, fall and winter was when the

93 Treadwell, *The account of the Samanid dynasty* 139, 154, 164.

94 On slave soldiers in the Sāmānid military see Paul, *The state* 24–33; Tor, *The mamluks*.

95 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* 25.

96 Stark, *Nomaden* 371.

harvests of sedentary agriculturalists were ripe for the plundering, gathered and stored for the raiders' convenience. Furthermore, the deserts surrounding Sogdiana were more easily traversable during the winter months. Beyond the cooler temperatures, the rainy season (which begins in October) filled *takyr* (salt flat depressions) across the Kyzyl-Kum with water and left a solid salt crust over the sand that made it easier for horses to cross the terrain.⁹⁷ Many of the *ribāṭs* identified in the geographic sources sat along major routes. These were spaces designed to provide security for caravans travelling between urban centers. The presence of frequent *ribāṭs* and other fortifications that could shelter travelers made it difficult for the Turks to raid them. The changing seasonal geography of the Kyzyl-Kum provided the Turks with alternative routes through the desert that were less heavily monitored and defended, allowing them safer conduct deep into Sāmānid territory. At the same time, the area around Paykand provided ideal pasturage, especially to the south and southwest of the city where a chain of lakes called Pārgīn-i Firākh or Qarā-Kul stretched, according to al-Narshakhī, for almost 20 *farsakhs* (approximately 120 km).⁹⁸ The shores of the Pārgīn-i Firākh featured extensive Tugay forests that were home to plentiful game and fish, an attractive location for hunting and fishing and therefore an ideal winter destination for Turkic pastoralists.⁹⁹

These seasonal migrations help us make sense of statements discussed above, that the villages of Bukhārā, mostly protected by the great wall of Kanpirak, would send representatives to the *ribāṭs* of Paykand because it was such an attractive place. These *ribāṭs* were constructed around the completion of the great wall, providing security for the villages and agricultural communities within it, but not Paykand which remained outside the wall. This was not always the case and the geographical sources show that the Bukhārā oasis—especially the territory within the wall—was littered with fortified estates (*quṣūr*) or fortifications (*ḥuṣūn*) more generally.¹⁰⁰ Archaeological evidence for these fortified estates is apparent from the “countless small mounds dotting the plain.”¹⁰¹ These fortifications may have predated the wall and may have become

97 Mirzaakhmedov The *ribāṭ*-caravanserais 111.

98 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* 26.

99 Mirzaakhmedov The *ribāṭ*-caravanserais 111. In one of the passages added to al-Narshakhī's *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* from al-Nishāpūrī's *Khazā'in al-'ulūm*, the first settlers in Bukhārā were attracted to the oasis by the abundant wetland game. Al-Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh-i Bukhārā* 8.

100 Al-Iṣṭakhri, *al-Masālik* 171–173; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 485.

101 See Richard Frye's notes in his translation of al-Narshakhī in which he cites the work of Soviet archaeologists. Al-Narshakhī, *The history of Bukhara* 126.

redundant after its completion, thus a shift towards the defense of Paykand. We will return to these intramural fortifications shortly. As the Turks moved south, free of pastoral labor as summer turned to fall and then winter, so did representatives of the villages of Bukhārā, following the end of the harvest, to defend the estates of Paykand that were situated outside the protection of Bukhārā's walls.

The migration of pastoralists south was not always a source of conflict. Recent studies based on archaeological evidence of mixed agricultural and pastoral occupations around Bukhārā have suggested that the line between farmers and herders was neither so rigid nor defined. Instead areas around the Bukhārā oasis saw a mixture of the two at certain times, a practice that could be called agro-pastoralism.¹⁰² An extended period of severe drought in Mongolia and across the Inner Asian steppe from the late second/eighth to early third/ninth century may have forced nomadic peoples, most notably those attached to the Uyghur Empire (744–840), to trade Chinese silk for agricultural necessities and such trade, conducted by Sogdians from within the Uighur domains, may have reached as far west as Transoxiana.¹⁰³ The same environmental pressures may have likewise driven some Turkic pastoralists farther south into Sogdiana, bringing them into closer community with the people of the Zarāfshān Valley. In some situations, we may think of the movement of peoples into the *ribāṭs* in terms of managing migrating pastoralists rather than fighting or defending against them. These groups also worked in collaboration. Trade to the north and east, across the Inner Asian steppe on the way to China, was historically conducted by the people of Sogdiana but protected and secured by the Turks, making the two commercial partners.¹⁰⁴ In the pre-Islamic period, Turks had similarly served in a mercenary capacity as private bodyguards for the Sogdian elites.¹⁰⁵ There was a long history of collaboration between the settled agrarians and merchants of Sogdiana and the migrating, pastoralist Turks.

The defense of the region between Bukhārā and the Amu Darya went beyond the *ribāṭs* of Paykand. According to al-Ya'qūbī, the city of Farabr—located one *farsakh* north of the Amu Darya between the crossing at Āmul and Paykand—was the frontier of the people of Marw where they gathered to fight the Turks.¹⁰⁶ This gave the Marwazīs a responsibility similar to the Bukhārāns at

102 Kidd and Stark, *Urbanism* 177–178.

103 Di Cosmo et al., *Environmental stress* 455.

104 Payne, *The Silk Road* 229; de la Vaissière, *Sogdian traders* 199–210.

105 Stark, *Mercenaries*.

106 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān* 292.

Paykand. Later, the Sāmānid amir Naṣr II b. Aḥmad II (r. 301–331/914–943) would build a *ribāṭ* at Farabr to accommodate the *abnāʾ al-sabīl*, “the sons of the road” or travelers in need, one of the groups specifically identified as worthy recipients of alms in Quran 9:60.¹⁰⁷ This was not the only *ribāṭ* at Farabr with al-Muqaddasī attaching multiple fine *ribāṭs* to its *quhandiz*.¹⁰⁸ Turkic migrations and their accompanying raids did not necessarily stop at the Amu Darya either. Locations south of the river in Khurāsān were described as sitting on the frontier with the Ghuzz Turks. Abū al-Qasīm ʿAlī al-Mikālī (d. 376/986–987)—a jurist and *mutaṭawwiʿ* from a prominent family in Nishāpūr who claimed descent from the king of Panjikant Dīwāshṭīch (d. 104/722)—founded two *ribāṭs* near Farāwa, in the region of Nasā in Khurāsān towards Dihistān and Khwārazm.¹⁰⁹ Ibn Ḥawqal called this place “a city of the frontier in the face of the steppe of the Ghuzz.”¹¹⁰ The connection to the steppe of the Ghuzz may indicate that this was, like the areas around Paykand, a place where raids happened seasonally as the Turks migrated south, despite being almost 500 km south of the Amu Darya.

As highlighted above, the Sāmānid frontier was very clearly a zone with a great amount of depth. While expansion of the frontier into the *bilād al-Turk* was certainly an idealized goal, it does not seem to have been a reality. Still, the Turks were able to make their presence felt very far into the Sāmānid domains resulting in the need to build, maintain, and supply fortifications throughout Transoxiana and even Khurāsān in preparation for Turkic raids. Rarely was movement in either direction part of a large, organized campaign on par with the annual raids along the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr. It was a smaller affair. With this image of the Sāmānid frontier and its *ribāṭs* in mind, let us now turn to the *dihqāns*, the landed gentry, and their relationship to the *ribāṭs* and the frontier and consider Bonner’s second criteria, the presence of a landed gentry engaged in frontier warfare.

107 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 291.

108 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 291. According to Yāqūt one of these *ribāṭs* was built by Ṭāhir b. ʿAlī. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* vi, 422. This may be Ṭāhir b. ʿAlī b. Wazīr who had been sent by the Caliph al-Muktafi (r. 289–295/902–908) in 295/908 with the insignia of office for Aḥmad II b. Ismāʿīl following his father’s death. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* iii, 2279.

109 al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 333–334. Despite his origins in Khurāsān al-Mikālī traveled to Cilicia to fight the Byzantines. Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb* v, 435.

110 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 445.

4 The Sāmānids, the *dihqāns*, and the *ribāṭs*

For contemporary geographers, frontier warfare, jihad, and *ribāṭs* were defining characteristics of Sāmānid Transoxiana. As Ibn Ḥawqal wrote in his overall description of the region,

As for their strength and their bravery, there is not in Islam a region with a greater share in jihad than they and this is because the majority of the borders of Mā warā' al-nahr neighbor Abodes of War (*dūr al-ḥarb*) ... It is well known that there is not for Islam an Abode of War that is greater in valor than the Turks. They are the frontier of the Muslims in the face of the Turks, holding them back from the Abode of Islam and preventing them from violating it. The majority of Mā warā' al-nahr is frontier and the Turks raid and their warbands (*al-naḡīr*) and warnings (*al-indhār*) come to them in the morning and evening.¹¹¹

These geographers describe the construction and maintenance of *ribāṭs* as something of a communal obligation upon the landed gentry, most likely pointing to the *dihqāns* without explicitly using the term.

You see that the majority of the people of wealth in Mā warā' al-nahr direct their fortunes (*naḡaqātahum*) to the *ribāṭāt* and the way stations (*imāra al-ṭuruq*) and the stopping places (*al-wuqūf*) along the path of jihad except for a few of them. There is not a country (*balad*) nor a watering place (*manhal*) nor a well-trodden desert path (*maḡāza maṭrūq*) nor a populated village (*qarya ahla*) except there is in it from the *ribāṭāt* what is preferred for going down His path. And it has come to me that in Mā warā' al-nahr there are greater than 10,000 *ribāṭ*. In many of them, when the guest takes up lodging, fodder for his mount and food for himself are set up if he wants it.¹¹²

Key to this description is the role the wealthy people, whom we presume to include the *dihqāns*. If we conceptualize the Sāmānid frontier as a zone with great depth that required a network of defenses sprawling across both the highways connecting urban centers and the agricultural villages that fed the

111 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 467. A briefer version of this same passage appears in al-Iṣṭakhrī. Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 163.

112 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 163. Ibn Ḥawqal included a similar but expanded passage. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 466–467.

cities and their markets, we should think about this connection between rural estates, fortifications, and, eventually, *ribāṭs*.

To do this, we should look at what kinds of edifices would have become *ribāṭs* in Transoxiana. As stated above, *ribāṭs* took many forms, resisting a single answer here. For example, we highlighted de la Vaissière's connection between *ribāṭs* found along highways in which travelers could rest and older Buddhist practices in the region that encouraged the construction of secure rest houses for travelers. Later, we considered the commercial role such *ribāṭs* could play, tying them more closely to caravanserais. This role was similar to those *ribāṭs* excavated in Paykand, situated near markets and centers of commercial production with sufficient room for animals. Other *ribāṭs* in the agricultural hinterland of cities, such as those surrounding Bukhārā or Paykand, likely had different histories following different precedents.

As mentioned in passing above, *ribāṭs* were largely absent from the earlier geographic descriptions of Khurāsān and Transoxiana and only appear in the works of al-Iṣṭakhri, Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Muqaddasī, and *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam*. With that in mind, it may be useful to take a closer look at how earlier geographic texts described places that our later sources indicate were home to many *ribāṭs*, such as Bukhārā, and then think about the evolution of these sites. The earliest geographers, including Ibn Khurradādhbih, al-Yaʿqūbī, and Ibn al-Faqīh provided very limited information about Bukhārā and its fortifications. They focused either on specific defensive edifices such as the concentric walls that surround the city and its villages and estates or the *quhandiz* or give the reader only a general description—as al-Yaʿqūbī does with his statement that the region is generally well defended.¹¹³ It was only with al-Iṣṭakhri that we get a detailed description of what could be found inside the large walls surrounding Bukhārā and its dependent villages. One of the most noticeable aspects of this description is thousands of *quṣūr*, palaces or fortified estates.¹¹⁴ When al-Iṣṭakhri detailed what was found along the rivers and irrigation canals inside the wall, he made clear a connection between these *quṣūr* and thousands of agricultural estates (*ḍayāʿa*) and gardens (*basātīn*).¹¹⁵ This is a description al-Iṣṭakhri elsewhere applied to the entirety of Transoxiana, stating that the owners of agricultural estates built forts or fortified manors specifying that they were used for the

113 Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-masālik* 25; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān* 292; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān* 325.

114 Al-Iṣṭakhri, *al-Masālik* 171. On the definition of *quṣūr*, see Conrad, The *quṣūr*.

115 Al-Iṣṭakhri, *al-Masālik* 172–173. Ibn Ḥawqal also mentions these fortifications, but sometimes uses the term *ḥuṣūn* instead of *quṣūr*. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 485.

protection of travelers.¹¹⁶ Most likely these *quṣūr* were the residences of the *dihqāns* who owned the estates. These are also the closest comparison we find to the descriptions of *ribāṭs* inside the walls of Bukhārā found later in texts like *Hudūd al-ʿālam*. Now, we should ask whether it was possible for the fortified estates of the *dihqāns* to transform into *ribāṭs* at some point during the fourth/tenth century, when we see the transformation occur in our geographical sources.

One way to approach this question is to examine the relationship between the Sāmānids, the *dihqāns* and other local notables, and land tenure. There are signs across Bukhārā of the Sāmānids pushing out other local elites and consolidating landholding under their own family and their clients. One sign of this was the collapse of property values, especially in the cities. According to al-Narshakhī, property values began to decline sharply around Bukhārā during the Sāmānid era and by the reign of Nūḥ b. Naṣr (r. 331–343/943–954) land was worth one third what it previously had been.¹¹⁷ Excavations around Bukhārā support this assessment, showing that in the early Sāmānid period, houses had become smaller and less decorated while also taking up more land with more open space between buildings, an indication that land had become cheap, inviting a poorer class of residents into the cities who then built smaller homes on larger lots.¹¹⁸ One possible explanation for these declining property values would be connected to an extended dry period across the fourth/tenth century as identified through tree ring samples taken in the Pamir-Alay highlands of eastern Sogdiana, a localized part of the larger Medieval Warm Period.¹¹⁹ Excavations at Panjikant have shown that this dry period—compounded not only by political events such as the destruction wrought by the Arab conquests but also the impact of over cultivation, deforestation, and soil loss related to extensive mudbrick construction—led to the abandonment of the once thriving city.¹²⁰

116 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 162. See also Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 465–466.

117 Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bukhārā* 43–44. Al-Narshakhī's later editors and embellishers add that by the sixth/twelfth century, the land had basically become worthless. A similar note from the later editors showed a similar fate for Paykand, which had fallen into ruin by the end of the fifth/eleventh century. Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bukhārā* 26.

118 Naymark, *The size of Samanid Bukhara* 49–50.

119 Opała-Owczarek and Owczarek, *Dry and humid periods* 204. A special thank you to Henry Misa who introduced me to this valuable paleoclimatic research during a recent presentation on the environmental history of the Qarākhānids at the annual meeting of the Ohio Academy of History in March 2021.

120 Owczarek, et. al, *Relationships between loess and the Silk Road* 698. On the destruction of Panjikant during the Umayyad era, see Grenet and de la Vaissière, *The last days of Panjikent*.

It is possible that such ecological challenges contributed to the decline of the class of local notables who relied on agricultural properties for their wealth and status as the productivity of their properties declined. Such environmental phenomenon may have contributed to the southerly migrations of pastoralists as well. We also have evidence that the Sāmānids sought to limit the power and status of the local elites and that one method of achieving this was through the widescale purchase and confiscation of their lands.

Thanks to al-Narshakhī, we have the most detailed information about the fates of the Bukhārkhudās, the hereditary lords of Bukhārā who had ruled the oasis before the Arab conquests, and their properties. Following the Arab conquest of Bukhārā and its integration into the caliphate, the Bukhārkhudās continued to reside in their palace at Varakhsha—about 45 km west of Bukhārā—until the Sāmānid period.¹²¹ According to Aleksandr Naymark, excavations show that the palace had seen major renovations in the early Islamic era, including the addition of the Blue or Eastern Hall in the 80s/700s and the Red Hall in the 100s/720s, shortly after the conquest of the city by Qutayba b. Muslim (d. 96/715). Following evidence of a fire during the reign of the Bukhārkhudā Qutayba b. Ṭughshāda (d. before 137/755), his brother Bunyāt (d. 166/782–783) made major renovations that reflected ‘Abbasid architectural tastes in the mid-second/mid-eighth century, demonstrating the spread of an imperial architectural culture into Bukhārā.¹²² Inhabitation continued into the third/ninth century when the palace was confiscated by Ismā‘īl b. Aḥmad. According to al-Narshakhī, the palace of Varakhsha was confiscated following a complaint from Ismā‘īl’s chief of police who wondered why the Bukhārkhudā Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Khālid b. Bunyāt (d. 301/913–914) held such fine and prosperous lands without providing sufficient service in return—perhaps related to the raising of communal levies, a topic we will return to shortly. Therefore, Ismā‘īl confiscated the lord’s property, but also made an arrangement with Abū Ishāq to pay him 20,000 dirhams annually from the state treasury, the amount he had earned previously from the confiscated properties, indicating that it was the properties that mattered to Ismā‘īl—and perhaps the status that was conferred with the ownership of land—and not their financial return.¹²³

121 This happened despite great tensions between the Umayyads, ‘Abbasids, and the Bukhārkhudās that resulted in the execution of several of the local lords including Qutayba b. Ṭughshāda, executed by Abū Muslim over accusations of apostasy, and his brother Bunyāt, who was decapitated for his support of the rebel Muqanna’ (d. ca. 166/783). Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rīkh-i Bukhārā* 15.

122 Naymark, *Returning to Varakhsha*; Lo Muzio, *An archaeological outline* 49.

123 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rīkh-i Bukhārā* 15–16. Aleksandr Naymark made a convincing argument

The removal of the Bukhārkhudās as a symbolic local elite from their palace at Varakhsha signals a shift in the relationship between the pre-Islamic, local elites and Muslim authorities under the Sāmānids that played out in conflicts over property.¹²⁴

It was not only in Varakhsha where we see a decline in such royal spaces. Rāmītīn had been the residence of the rulers of Bukhārā in antiquity, predating the foundation of Bukhārā itself, and was later used as the winter residence for the Bukhārkhudās, a position it held into the Islamic era with the ‘Abbasid revolutionary general and later governor of Khurāsān Abū Muslim (ca. 100–137/ca. 718–755) making the village his residence when he came to Bukhārā.¹²⁵ By the time al-Muqaddasī visited, Rāmītīn had fallen into ruin and its outskirts were abandoned.¹²⁶ Recent excavations show that the palace complex had been destroyed much earlier, in the mid-sixth century CE, but it is the third/ninth through seventh/13th centuries, covering the Sāmānid and Qarākhānid eras, for which there is no evidence of any inhabitation on the palace grounds.¹²⁷ Excavations of the suburbs likewise show little sign of occupation for the period from the third/ninth through seventh/13th centuries as well, with the few inhabitants reusing older buildings.¹²⁸ Instead, the population may have shifted towards a newer Muslim community built on the outskirts of Rāmītīn.

Ismā‘īl b. Aḥmad also targeted Muslim landowners for the confiscation of property. The story of Iskijkat—which al-Narshakhī referred to as royal property (*khāṣa mumallaka* or *khāṣa sulṭānī* in different manuscripts) implying ownership by the Sāmānid state¹²⁹—is illustrative. According to al-Narshakhī, during the reign of the Caliph al-Mu‘tamid (r. 256–279/870–892), his brother and regent al-Muwaffaq (d. 278/891) gave Iskijkat over to the Ṭāhirid governor of Khurāsān Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir (r. 248–259/862–873) specifically as a tax farm (*muqāṭa‘a*). Muḥammad then sold the rights to an otherwise unknown

that Varakhsha remained the center of a local New Year festival that focused on the Bukhārkhudās and this may be what Ismā‘īl was hoping to end. Naymark, *Isma‘il Samani* 536–537.

124 Elsewhere, al-Narshakhī reports that Ismā‘īl offered 20,000 dirhams and wood so that the people of Varakhsha could rebuild the palace as a congregational mosque, thereby Islamicizing a space connected to pre-Islamic authority in the oasis, but the Varakhshans declined the offer. Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 24–25.

125 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 23.

126 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 282.

127 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 171–173.

128 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 192.

129 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 18.

man named Sahl b. Aḥmad al-Dāghūnī al-Bukhārī (late third/ninth century).¹³⁰ Al-Dāghūnī built a palace (*kākh-i ‘aẓīm*) on the banks of the Zarāfshān River—so close to the river in fact that this palace had fallen into the river close to al-Narshakhī’s lifetime. According to the sale, the people of Iskijkat owed al-Dāghūnī 10,000 dirhams annually but, at some point, they refused to pay, contesting his position over the village. This may have happened around the time of al-Dāghūnī’s death as it was his heirs who brought the issue before Ismā‘īl. After a drawn-out legal battle that lasted two or three years, it was agreed that the people of Iskijkat could buy their independence for 170,000 dirhams.¹³¹ Within a century, the al-Dāghūnī family’s palace was in ruins, indicating that the loss of tax revenues led to a reduction in their status. It is important to note that Iskijkat was not a center of agricultural production. al-Narshakhī reported that there was less than 1,000 *jufts*¹³² of both arable land and wasteland available for agriculture. Instead, the inhabitants were merchants best known for their trade in cotton cloth.¹³³ In this case, the end of al-Dāghūnī’s tax farm did not mean a decline in the status of Iskijkat, but likely a change in their tax liability in the merchants’ favor with the destination of those payments shifting more directly to the Sāmānid amirs—also to their benefit.¹³⁴ Excavations shows a reorganization of the space around Iskijkat during the Sāmānid period with a growing concentration around the citadel and urban center.¹³⁵

Al-Narshakhī also tells us of the estates of Jūy-i Mūliyān. The Bukhārkhudā Ṭughshāda (d. before 137/755) had divided these estates among his children and sons-in-law. At some undetermined point, they had passed into the hands of Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ṭālūt (mid-third/ninth century)—a general who had served under the Caliph al-Musta‘īn (r. 248–251/862–865). Ismā‘īl b. Aḥmad then purchased these estates from Ḥasan and distributed them to his *mawlā* (clients).¹³⁶ Ismā‘īl also bought from Ḥasan a property called Dashtak, a plain filled with cane-breaks from which Ismā‘īl earned 10,000 dirhams a year. He dedicated these profits as *waqf* to the congregational mosque of Bukhārā.¹³⁷ In the instance of Jūy-i Mūliyān—which al-Narshakhī tells us developed the nickname Jūy-i Mawāliyān or the Stream of the Clients—Ismā‘īl used the pur-

130 Dāghūn is located in Quhistān in southern Khurāsān.

131 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 18–19.

132 A *juft* is the area that a pair of oxen can plow in one day.

133 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 18.

134 Naymark, Isma‘īl Samani 531–532.

135 Rante and Mirzaakhmedov, *The oasis of Bukhara* 239.

136 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 39.

137 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 39–40.

chased lands to reward and solidify bonds with those who served the Sāmānid state while the properties at Dashtak helped reinforce the centrality of Islamic religious observation to Bukhārā. Despite moving from the control of a caliphal elite, in this case a general who had served the ‘Abbasids, the purchase of these lands still helped consolidate Sāmānid authority over the Bukhārā oasis. At some point, the Sāmānid crown reappropriated some of the estates of Jūy-i Mūliyān. After a fire burned the court down following the death of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Nūḥ (r. 343–350/954–961), his brother Manṣūr (r. 350–365/961–976) built a new court along Jūy-i Mūliyān and he resided in that palace.¹³⁸ This is likely the palace known as Kārak-i ‘Alawiyān.¹³⁹

We can connect these dislocations of local elites and changes in property ownership to the *ribāṭs* directly by crossing the Zarāfshān River from Iskiĵkat to the village of Chargh, known for its weekly market. According to al-Narshakhī, Ismā‘īl b. Aḥmad bought the village and all its fields and estates (*ẓīyā‘ūt va ‘aqārāt*) and gave it as a *waqf* for the benefit of a *ribāṭ* that sat at the Samarqand Gate of Bukhārā.¹⁴⁰ Ismā‘īl also bought the town of Barkand and gave it over to *waqf*, but not for the support of *ribāṭs*. Instead, one third of the proceeds from Barkand went to the support of the descendants of the Shi‘ite Imams ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and Ja‘far al-Šādiq (d. 148/764), one third to support the poor or the mendicants/dervishes (*darvīshān*), and one third to his own heirs (*varatha*).¹⁴¹ The abovementioned *waqf* that applied the revenues of Dashtak to the congregational mosque belongs in this conversation as well. Sometimes the land itself could be used to advance the Sāmānid cause without the use of *waqf*. For example, Ismā‘īl purchased many houses around the congregational mosque of Bukhārā so he could enlarge the mosque by a third.¹⁴² Overall, this demonstrates a shift from local authority to direct ownership of property by the Sāmānids themselves.¹⁴³ As we will explore next, this could potentially shift an older dynamic of military recruitment that relied on communal levies towards one that focused on the state.

138 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 37. The fire occurred after ‘Abd al-Malik died suddenly, falling from a horse. People began to loot the palace and the nobles (or amir’s favorites) and female slaves (*khāṣaḡān va kanīzān*) began to quarrel, starting a fire in the process.

139 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 40.

140 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 20–21.

141 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 22.

142 Al-Narshakhī, *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā* 69.

143 It may be worth comparing such developments to those around the construction of Sāmānid Masoleum in Bukhārā. Dīlraĥo Tosheva has recently completed a dissertation on the masoleum including extensive discussions of its patronage and the properties on which it stands. Tosheva, *Making the Islamic façade*.

Of interest, Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad was the amir behind most purchases and confiscations of elite properties detailed above. Given our focus on Bukhārā, it is important to reiterate that Ismāʿīl was the first Sāmānid to rule Bukhārā. When he first arrived in the city in 260/874—acting as governor for his brother Naṣr—Ismāʿīl had a group of nobles including the Bukhārkhudā Abū Muḥammad (perhaps the brother or father of the last Bukhārkhudā Abū Ishāq) sent to Naṣr in Samarqand with a request that they be held captive until he could establish his authority.¹⁴⁴ In other words, these tensions go back to the outset of Sāmānid rule in the oasis.

When we find *ribāṭ*s in our sources that are attributed to a single benefactor, that benefactor is most often someone within the Sāmānid state, either an amir, a military commander, or a religious leader with close ties to the state. Jürgen Paul has described the situation as “typical that the ruler (Herrscher) acts as a founder [of a *ribāṭ*], whereby the foundations come from his legally acquired private assets (i.e. not from the state treasury, which is never exactly known whether it contains unjustly acquired goods).”¹⁴⁵ It is not surprising to see that Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad was tied to the patronage of *ribāṭ*s. Besides dedicating the village of Chargh to a *waqf* to maintain a *ribāṭ* at the Samarqand gate of Bukhārā, we have generalized testimony tying him to such patronage. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), for example, states that Ismāʿīl built many *ribāṭ*s in the desert, each with the capacity for 1,000 mounts, implying these were large edifices, especially for desert outposts.¹⁴⁶ As mentioned above, Naṣr 11 b. Aḥmad 11 built a *ribāṭ* at Farabr, about one *farsakh* north of the Amu Darya towards Bukhārā. Generals including Qarāṭigin and Fāʿiq also patronized *ribāṭ*s at Isfijāb and Mīrkī respectively, as described above. We likewise have references to religious figures close to the Sāmānid court patronizing *ribāṭ*s. According to al-Samʿānī, the *ʿālim* Abū Ibrāhīm Ishāq b. Ismāʿīl al-Bābkissī (d. 259/873) founded a Ribāṭ al-Murabbaʿa in his native Samarqand.¹⁴⁷ Al-Bābkissī was close to Sāmānid power with al-Samʿānī further noting that Ismāʿīl personally prayed over him after his death. Ibn Ḥawqal lists a Ribāṭ Ḥasan in Chaghāniyān which he attributes to a Abū al-Ḥasan b. Ḥasan.¹⁴⁸ While it is not certain, this may

144 Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾrikh-i Bukhārā* 112–113.

145 Paul goes on to note that it is mainly the Sāmānid amirs and dignitaries (*Würdenträger*) who are mentioned as the founders of the *ribāṭ*s and that “the sources emphasize that the foundation came from the private coffers of the persons concerned.” Paul, *Herrscher* 110–111.

146 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiii, 74.

147 Perhaps this *ribāṭ* was found in the Bāb Kiss neighborhood (*murabbaʿa*) of Samarqand with which Abū Ibrāhīm was associated. Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb* i, 242.

148 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 518.

be Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Laḥḥām who was appointed to the office for castrating war horses (*‘amal al-ikhṣā’*) sometime between the reigns of Nūḥ b. Naṣr and Mansūr b. Nūḥ and was also affiliated for a time with the *barīd* (office of the post and intelligence) for Tirmidh in Chāghāniyān.¹⁴⁹ *Ribāṭs* could certainly play an important role in the functioning of the *barīd* as places where fresh mounts and other supplies could be obtained but both of these titles are associated with the gathering and maintaining of horses for official purposes.

The images of the Bukhārā oasis speckled with fortified estates supports the idea that Transoxiana was home to a landed warrior aristocracy. The relationship between these estates and the landed gentry, the *dihqāns*, and the *ribāṭs* found in later texts is unclear. We see signs in our sources that at the time *ribāṭs* made their appearance—at least in the texts—it corresponded with an apparent decline in the local nobility as the Sāmānids attempted to consolidate power—including the ownership of land—to themselves. Furthermore, where we do have specific information about the foundation or maintenance of the *ribāṭs*, it often leads us to someone directly associated with the Sāmānid state.¹⁵⁰ Let us now compare such a dynamic to the changing relationship between the nobility and the state when it comes to questions of military recruitment and the organization of frontier fighting.

5 Communal Levies and *ribāṭ*

Descriptions of Bukhārāns maintaining the *ribāṭs* of Paykand, the Marwazīs staffing the *ribāṭs* of Farabr and the Nakhshabīs, Bukhārāns and Samarqandīs at the *ribāṭs* of Isfijāb, give us the impression that maintaining and provisioning *ribāṭs* was a collective responsibility. This is also clear from the passages from al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal (discussed above) that pointed towards “the majority of the people of wealth” as the major patrons of *ribāṭs*. Many more instances appear in our sources of a certain frontier or frontier outpost associating regularly with the people of another region. Dīzak in the region of Usrūshana was where the people of Samarqand gathered to perform *ribāṭ*.¹⁵¹ The town of Jamshalāghū, in the region of Isfijāb, was where many retinues (*al-*

149 Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr* iv, 117. He was also appointed over the *barīd* of Khwārazm. Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr* iv, 127.

150 One contrasting example would be the *ribāṭs* of Abū al-Qasīm al-Mikālī noted above.

151 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 504–505.

hasham) gathered, presumably to fight the Turks.¹⁵² Such communal responsibilities went beyond the staffing of *ribāṭs*. A well-known passage found in both al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal demonstrates how the Sāmānids, from their very beginning, relied on communal levies—sometimes described as peasant levies—when campaigning against the Turks. This report begins with a notice of a campaign against Shāwgar (Türkistān), nearly 200 km northwest of Isfijāb, during which Naṣr b. Aḥmad led an army of—reportedly, but certainly exaggerated—over 300,000 troops. It then moves to an exchange of letters between the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218–227/833–842) and the Ṭāhirid governor of Khurāsān ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir (r. 213–230/828–845)—placing the exchange at least 20 years before Naṣr came to power—in which the caliph asked about the mobilization of troops in Khurāsān and Mā warāʾ al-nahr. ʿAbdallāh forwarded the inquiry onto the Sāmānid governor of Samarqand, Nūḥ b. Asad, who replied that there were 300,000 villages in Khurāsān and Mā warāʾ al-nahr and each one provided a horseman and an infantryman when needed.¹⁵³ Al-Muqaddasī reported a similar account about Chaghāniyān which is home to 16,000 villages and provided approximately 10,000 warriors with provisions and mounts whenever an outsider attacks.¹⁵⁴ The local headmen, the *dihqāns*, supplied and provisioned these soldiers, just as the villages of Bukhārā staffed and provisioned the *ribāṭs* of Paykand, and likely also led them in battle.

Such descriptions seem to disappear after the reign of Ismāʿīl, the last Sāmānid amir to be clearly associated with anything like a communal levy. Instead, by the fourth/tenth century, we see similar levies led by “professional military figures coming from a background of military slavery”—and, therefore, likely of Turkic background to boot.¹⁵⁵ This was part of a slow process and by the mid-fourth/mid-tenth century, the armies of the Sāmānids had come to rely more heavily on *ghulām* or *mamlūk*—Turkic slave forces. As Peter Golden highlighted, a key element of this transformation came when *ghulām* commanders who initially formed only a palace guard and then led existing branches of the Sāmānid military began to purchase their own *ghulām* bodyguards and therefore insulated themselves from their supposed overlords, allowing

152 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 273.

153 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik* 163; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 467–468. Importantly, Nūḥ did not have total control over Mā warāʾ al-nahr. Nor did he have any authority in Khurāsān. His authority only covered Samarqand with ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir being the authority over both Khurāsān and Mā warāʾ al-nahr who would, presumably, be responsible for raising such a levy.

154 al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-taqāsīm* 283.

155 Paul, Where did the *dihqāns* go? 7.

them to achieve ever more prominent positions.¹⁵⁶ Whereas earlier levies had relied upon the *dihqāns* for recruitment and leadership, the professionalization of military leadership and the expansion of *ghulām* forces paralleled the transformations in property ownership discussed above. The formation of a standing Sāmānid military under a more centralized amirate further limited the status of the *dihqāns*, thus diminishing the landed warrior aristocracy of Transoxiana.

6 The Sāmānid Jihad

Thus far we have addressed the potential for expansion and the realities of the Sāmānid frontier and the changing status of the landowning aristocratic warriors who defended the frontier under the Sāmānids. Now we will turn to the final characteristic Bonner listed in his comparison of the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr and the eastern frontier, the ideological intensity of frontier warfare. This is a point of significance because it is often understood that the eastern frontier held less ideological weight, especially in comparison to the Thughūr and, as a result, many people from Khurāsān and Transoxiana left the east to fight against the Byzantines or along the South Asian frontier, a situation Richard Frye called an “exodus of the *ghazis* from the Samanid domains.”¹⁵⁷ This was a phenomenon that predated the Sāmānids. C.E. Bosworth demonstrated that *mutaṭawwiʿūn*—volunteer fighters of the jihad—had been coming to Ṭarsūs from places such as Balkh, Khwārazm, Herat, Samarqand, Farghāna, and Isfijāb to fight the Byzantines since the caliphate of al-Mahdī.¹⁵⁸ One of the major subjects of Bonner’s *Aristocratic violence and Holy War* was ‘Abdallāh b. al-Mubārak al-Marwazī (d. 181/797) who, despite his origins in Khurāsān, traveled to the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr to fight the Byzantines and make his fame as a frontier warrior and scholar in the second/eighth century.¹⁵⁹ We have already encountered one individual of the Sāmānid era who left Khurāsān to fight in Cilicia, Abū al-Qasīm ‘Alī al-Mikālī, the founder of two *ribāṭs* near Farāwa. Accounts exist of tens of thousands of *ghuzāh* leaving the Sāmānid domains to fight the Byzantines, as in the report preserved by Ibn al-Athīr (555–630/1160–

156 Golden, *The Karakhanids* 358. Many scholars see the shift towards a *ghulām* or *mamlūk* slave military as a harbinger of Sāmānid decline, as it is similarly seen in the ‘Abbāsīd realm too. Frye, *The Sāmānids* 149; Tor, *The mamluks* 216–217.

157 Frye, *Bukhara* 150.

158 Bosworth, *The city of Tarsus* 271–272.

159 Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* 119–125.

1233) in which such a group arrived at Rayy in 355/966 and demanded the entire *kharāj* (land tax) from the Būyīd amir Rukn al-Dawla (r. 335–366/947–977) to support their campaign.¹⁶⁰ Bonner suggested that the rationale for abandoning the eastern frontier lay in influence of the *dihqāns* whose role in the eastern jihad perhaps diminished its religious merit.¹⁶¹ In the case of Ibn al-Mubārak, this was reflected in the idea that the war against the Byzantines was over faith while the war against the Turks was about worldly matters.¹⁶² While these are certainly factors, I would like to instead look at the influence of the Sāmānīd state on the jihad.

Early in the Sāmānīd era, volunteer fighters often appeared as part of the Sāmānīd military alongside communal levies.¹⁶³ During the struggles between the brothers Naṣr and Ismāʿīl over control of Bukhārā, the two could call upon *ghāziyyān* of their respective centers of power, Samarqand and Bukhārā.¹⁶⁴ In 291/904, the Sāmānīds were attacked by a great army of Turks whose chiefs alone took up 700 Turkish tents. In the army Ismāʿīl rallied to successfully defend Transoxiana was a company of *mutaṭawwiʿūn*.¹⁶⁵ This latter example better illustrates the role of such volunteer fighters on the frontier, defending against a Turkish invasion. It is interesting to note that such forces were not included in the description of a reprisal raid led by Ismāʿīl a couple years later, perhaps an indication that such groups were used in defensive situations but not offensive campaigns.¹⁶⁶ Much like the communal levies, over time, pious volunteer fighters were replaced with state organized urban militias and fighting the jihad became subsumed within state operations.¹⁶⁷

Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad made frontier fighting against the Turks a key part of his propaganda program. He sent extravagant gifts to the caliph and had proclamations read in the congregational mosque of Baghdad celebrating his victories over the Turks and his prowess in defending the frontiers of Islam.¹⁶⁸ These acts must be seen in the context of Ismāʿīl's rivalry with the Ṣaffārid ʿAmr b. al-Layth (r. 265–287/879–900) and as the two came closer to battle in 287/900, Ismāʿīl

160 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* viii, 268–269.

161 Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* 139.

162 Tor, *The Islamization* 284.

163 Frye, *The Sāmānids* 150; Paul, *The state* 13–16; Tor, *The Islamization* 286–287.

164 Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bukhārā* 114, 116.

165 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* iii, 2249; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 247. Ibn Ḍāfir al-Azdī marks these *mutaṭawwiʿūn* as separate from the *ʿaskariyya* (standing army). Treadwell, *The account of the Samanid dynasty* 138, 153.

166 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 254.

167 De la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 79–80.

168 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* iii, 2249; al-Qāḍī al-Rashīd b. Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhāʾir*, 42.

deployed this propaganda directly at his opponent. Ismāʿīl wrote a letter to ʿAmr stating that he was “a border man, drawn up in battle array against the Turk;” he wore coarse clothing and his supporters were “rabble without pay” asking that ʿAmr leave him to his “pious occupation.”¹⁶⁹ Ismāʿīl likewise called on ʿAmr’s supporters to defect and join his side before the decisive battle outside Balkh. “We are *ghāzis* who do not possess wealth. This man [ʿAmr] continues to seek the governorship of this world, whereas our concern is with the demands of the Next. Why does he not leave us alone?”¹⁷⁰ According to al-Narshakhī, even ʿAmr recognized Ismāʿīl’s importance as a guardian of the frontier against the Turks, asking him to become his vassal in Transoxiana so that he may continue to defend “the frontier of the enemy” (*ki sar ḥadd-i dushman*) but as an agent of the Ṣaffārids.¹⁷¹ This image is nicely summarized in Luke Treadwell’s description of Ismāʿīl: “He was the *ghāzī* king who kept the Turks at bay.”¹⁷²

One place we see the connection between fighters of the jihad and the state is in the use of official titles for the leaders of these fighters and this practice continued from the beginning of the Sāmānid enterprise until the end. We have notices of figures with the official title *raʾīs al-muṭṭawwiʿa* (head of the volunteer fighters) such as Aḥmad b. Ishāq b. al-Ḥuṣayn al-Surmārī (d. 242/856–857)—though his tenure would predate the consolidation of Sāmānid authority across Transoxiana—and Aḥīd b. Zādhijah (late third/ninth century).¹⁷³ According to traditions transmitted by al-Surmārī, the *ʿushr*—a tenth of all agricultural profits—should be given to the leader of the raids (*qāʾid al-ghuzāh*), perhaps indicating the existence of another title related to the marshalling of volunteers for frontier warfare who could lay claim to a portion of the state revenues.¹⁷⁴ Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d. 264/877) held the title *al-sālār al-muṭṭawwiʿa*, presumably in Samarqand.¹⁷⁵ According to Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī (d. 613/1216), when a massive army of—a reported but certainly

169 Al-Dhahabī, *Siḡar aʿlām* xii, 517; quoted and translated by Tor, *The Islamization* 283. Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī attributed a similar line to Ismāʿīl, “You are the lord of a great domain, while I control (only) Transoxiana, which forms the eastern frontier region. Rest content with what you have, and leave me be to protect this frontier for you.” Treadwell, *The account of the Samanid dynasty* 137, 152.

170 Ṣādiqī (ed.), *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* 134; Gold (trans.), *The tārikh-e Sīstān* 203.

171 Al-Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bukhārā* 120.

172 Treadwell, *The political history* 103.

173 Al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* xviii, 33; Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl* i, 21. Al-Surmārī’s biography includes tales of his battles against the Yabghu of the Turks in Farghāna during which he killed many by his own hands.

174 Al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* xviii, 34.

175 Al-Nasafī, *al-Qand* 329.

exaggerated—400,000 Turks assaulted Transoxiana in 297/909–910 with separate contingents headed to Bukhārā, Khwārazm, Samarqand, Isfijāb, Chāch, and Fārāb, Aḥmad 11 b. Ismāʿīl (r. 295–301/907–914) called upon the otherwise unknown ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUbayd al-Ḍabbī, the master of the volunteer army (*ṣāhib jaysh al-muṭṭawwiʿa*), who was but one of the chiefs of the standing army and volunteers (*al-mashāyikh al-ʿaskariyya wa al-muṭṭawwiʿa*).¹⁷⁶ In this account, Aḥmad provided the *mutaṭawwiʿa* with money, horses, and equipment. A unique report recounted by al-Qāḍī al-Rashīd b. al-Zubayr (fifth/elev-enth century) details an embassy from the Emperor of China to Naṣr 11 b. Aḥmad 11 in 327/939 demanding payment of tribute for 27 years and a public acknowledgement of fealty.¹⁷⁷ As news of the embassy reached Naṣr, he ordered the local rulers and governors of Farghāna, Usrūshana, and Samarqand to gather the regular troops and the *mutaṭawwiʿa* in a show of strength against the Chinese threats. Further, he furnished the commander of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* of Bukhārā, named Abū Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, with all the arms and mounts he needed.¹⁷⁸ The title *sālār-i ghāziyān* was in use in both Bukhārā (applied to one Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥaḥṣ) and Ṭūs during the reign of Nūḥ 11 b. Maṣṣūr (r. 365–387/976–997), demonstrating the longevity of the position across the Sāmānid era.¹⁷⁹

These titles were assigned by the Sāmānid state, but, in order to be effective, the titleholders needed the consent of the volunteer fighters they were meant to lead as well as the blessing of the amir.¹⁸⁰ The individuals we find in our sources with such titles tend to appear in biographical dictionaries and other texts not necessarily because they hold these titles related to frontier warfare and jihad but because they were also transmitters of hadith and religious traditions. This means that we get a perhaps skewed view of who held such titles that would imply these are, in a sense, religious titles. What we miss is where other local notables including the *dihqāns* might sit in a hierarchy of state sanctioned jihadists.¹⁸¹

176 Treadwell, The account of the Samanid dynasty 139, 154.

177 On the unlikely historicity of the embassy but value of the information on the Sāmānid military, see Bosworth, An alleged embassy 7–11.

178 Al-Qāḍī al-Rashīd b. al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhāʾir*, 141–142; Bosworth, An alleged embassy 3–4.

179 Gardīzī, *Tārīkh-i Gardīzī* 361; Ibn Funduq, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq* 51. The Bukhārān *sālār-i ghāziyān* was named Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥaḥṣ and appears in Gardīzī's text as an envoy sent to the governor of Khurāsān Abū al-Ḥasan Sīmjūrī (d. 378/989).

180 Paul *Herrscher* 108.

181 Some religious scholars and fighters of the jihad did come from the *dihqān* class such as Ibrāhīm b. Shammās al-Ghāzī al-Samarqandī who owned an estate near Samarqand.

Similar to the transfer of property from local elites to the Sāmānids and their clients, we also see the changing nature of military recruitment and command as it moved from the same local elites to Sāmānid clients—their *ghulāms*—and state sanctioned and appointed fighters of the jihad. The shift after Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad from communal levies towards large numbers of organized *mutaṭawwiʿa* feels like a similar turn from the fortified estates of the *dihqāns* to *ribāṭs*. The defense of Transoxiana transformed from the shared obligation of a local elite, most of whom had pre-Islamic roots and claimed their authority based on hereditary land holdings, to a religiously charged activity orchestrated by the Sāmānid amirs and their clients.¹⁸² The expansion of the *ghulām* slave soldiers further limited the power of the *dihqāns* as their military positions disappeared.¹⁸³ Although we do not have any sources that clearly lay out such a transformation, that a similar pattern is seen in both the descriptions of fortifications and the recruitment of fighters strongly implies a change in the way the Sāmānids thought about the defense of the frontier. What we may be seeing here in the transformation of *quṣūr* into *ribāṭs* and communal levies into organized *mutaṭawwiʿa* bands is something akin to Donner's much earlier "Qur'ānification" of the Umayyad period but now with the Sāmānids using a religiously charged language to appropriate the authority and status of the *dihqāns* and other local elites during a period of extensive Islamization not only among the Turks but also the people of Transoxiana. It is interesting to note that this transformation would have occurred around the same time as a distancing between the Sāmānid amirs and the 'ulamā'. As Jürgen Paul has noted, up to Ismāʿīl, the Sāmānid amirs "read the funeral prayers for prominent religious dignitaries" and "were accepted as transmitters of traditions from the Prophet."¹⁸⁴ This process of Islamization was designed to centralize authority under the Sāmānids, not necessarily under Islamic religious authorities.

Ibrāhīm used his wealth to ransom prisoners from the Turks and died in battle against them in 221 or 222/836 or 837. Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* 109, n. 8.

182 As de la Vaissière has highlighted, many of the *dihqāns* were likely still not committed Muslims and their villages remained centers of Zoroastrian festivities and notably lacked mosques. de la Vaissière, *Le ribāṭ* 80.

183 Paul, *Herrscher* 237–240.

184 Paul, *The state* 20–21.

7 Conclusions

At the outset of this article, I highlighted Michael Bonner's call to focus on historical and geographical context when studying topics of ideological import such as jihad. Such an approach helps us understand the—to borrow Chabbi's phrase—evolutive nature of such concepts. In contrast to Bonner's examination of jihad along the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr in the early 'Abbasid era, this article explored *ribāṭ* along the Central Asian frontier of Sāmānīd Transoxiana, focusing on three factors that Bonner used to compare the two frontiers in his own work: limits of expansion, presence of a landed gentry engaged in warfare, and the ideological temperature of the frontier.

On the image of the Transoxianan frontier as a space open to expansion, our sources do identify a frontier that is meant to be a limit of Sāmānīd authority opposite the Turks similar to the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr. This frontier, as described by contemporary geographers, stretched from Khwārazm to Isfijāb and then to the end of the Farghāna Valley roughly following the Syr Darya, but these same sources also discuss moments and contexts in which this authority was stretched further to places like Ṭarāz and instances when even this frontier was outside direct Sāmānīd control as in their indirect rule over Isfijāb itself. These were areas where the Sāmānīds laid claim to conquest, but those conquests appear ephemeral and rarely stuck. In no instances was this a line that truly represented a barrier between the Sāmānīd realm and the *bilād al-Turk* and movement occurred frequently in both directions. Merchants traveled between the two realms and some even established colonies and trading centers beyond the frontier.¹⁸⁵ Muslim proselytizers likewise entered the lands of the Turks seeking converts. Both trade and conversion across the frontier often happened without direct government support. In the other direction, pastoralists and nomads migrated into and out of the Zarāfshān Valley seasonally, sometimes to raid but also sometimes to trade and engage in a form of agro-pastoralism in cooperation with the people of Sogdiana. This meant that places far from the supposed frontier still existed within a zone where interactions with the other occurred on a regular basis. It also meant that the frontier was not the only place one need look for evidence of frontier conflicts and fighting. Instead, frontier warfare was a reality for people across Sāmānīd Transoxiana and even Khurāsān and networks of fortifications, be they fortified agricultural estates or *ribāṭs*, were necessary throughout the realm. Rather than asking

¹⁸⁵ Here might be another point of contrast with the Arab-Byzantine *thughūr* where commercial interests appear much more local and little evidence exists for trade across the frontier. Bonner, *Aristocratic violence* 153.

where the Sāmānid frontier was, it may be easier to ask where it was not. Unlike the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr, the Sāmānid frontier was not a defined space and while the opportunity for expansion existed, the reality was much more amorphous.¹⁸⁶

The existence of a landed warrior aristocracy is likewise undoubted, but their status was tied to a pre-Islamic past and therefore their position appears to have changed during the Sāmānid era, especially as frontier warfare took on a more Islamic characteristic. The support and maintenance of the *ribāṭs* of Sāmānid Transoxiana appear to have been part of a communal obligation that had pre-Islamic parallels—and therefore predated the advent of *ribāṭs* in the region. Earlier forms of communal defense were focused on the *dihqāns* who built and maintained fortifications on their properties and recruited warriors for communal levies in times of need. Over the course of the Sāmānid period, we see a decline in the status of local notables that is visible in the way the Sāmānids consolidated control over properties that had belonged to these elites. Alongside environmental factors, this may have contributed to a decline in property values that may have driven some landowners away from Transoxiana entirely and therefore contributed to their shift towards the Arab-Byzantine and South Asian frontiers. This decline was also visible in the way the Sāmānids centralized control over the military, most noticeable in the rise of *ghulām* commanders and the decline of communal levies. To some extent, this military energy can be seen shifting to the *ribāṭs* and frontier fighting. Communal levies may have been replaced in part by groups of *mutaṭawwiʿa*, but even here the state established leaders over various aspects of the jihad and the majority of *ribāṭs* for which we have any detailed information seem to be founded and maintained by the Sāmānid amirs and their clients directly.

Finally, this brings us to the question of the ideological drive of the frontier. What made the eastern frontier less appealing than the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr? Perhaps the presence of a landed gentry whose authority drew on pre-Islamic precedence (and whose commitment to Islam continued to be suspect) and the continuity of the frontier itself from the pre-Islamic to Islamic eras made it difficult for the eastern frontier to take on the ideological heft of the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr, but these dynamics shifted under the Sāmānids and the amirs worked to infuse frontier fighting with religious meaning. At the same time though, this was part of a propaganda program that was meant to build up Sāmānid authority, often in a way that pushed out local elites and

186 On the construction of the Arab-Byzantine frontier as a defined administrative space, see Bonner, *The naming of the frontier*.

may have created rifts between them. Finally, transformations happening along the frontier in the fourth/tenth century, most importantly the conversion of the Turks, undercut the significance of the frontier and cooled the ideological nature of fighting in Transoxiana.¹⁸⁷ In the end, each of these characteristics impacted the other to shape the nature of frontier fighting in Sāmānid Transoxiana.

Undoubtedly, the nature of frontier fighting along the eastern frontier of Transoxiana was significantly different from what appeared on the Arab-Byzantine Thughūr. By taking a close look at the frontier in a particular historical context, we can see these differences building from the pre-Islamic legacies of Transoxiana. The Sāmānid era then represents a break with the pre-Islamic precedents during which the frontier is imbued with greater ideological weight. This may be the result of expanded conversion among the people of Transoxiana, but it may also be a form of propaganda in support of a centralized Sāmānid state. In the end though, the conversion of the Turks would undercut these ideological components and lead towards a breakdown of the frontier and, eventually, the conquest of Sāmānid Transoxiana by the Muslim Qarākhānid Turks.

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¹⁸⁷ Tor, *The Islamization*.

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PART 2

The Quran and Law: Doctrine and Practice



Genre Boundaries and Sura Structure in the Quran

Karim Samji

1 Introduction

Biblical genre criticism offers a first glimpse into the framework of the *musabbiḥāt*, a traditional set of suras in the Quran that glorify God. On the surface, the formulae of liturgical praise that open these suras (Q 57, 59, 61, 62, and 64) might reasonably be thought to provide a final and definitive judgment as to their genre classification. The presence of these liturgical features leaves no doubt that this cluster of suras preserves multiple hymnic pericopae, not to mention a doxology. The problem emerges when we consider the genre boundaries at the end of these suras. The exact same sermon formula, belonging to the wisdom genre, concludes Sūrat al-Ḥadīd, Sūrat al-Ḥashr, Sūrat aṣ-Ṣaff, Sūrat al-Jumu'a, and Sūrat at-Taghābun. Since suras—as extended compositions—are not without rhyme or reason, it is evident from their formulaic complexity that the liturgical genre alone cannot account for the sura structure of the *musabbiḥāt* as a whole. When examined more closely, it becomes apparent that there are as many genres in the group as there are suras. Based on these findings, genre criticism affords a rare insight into the function of the *musabbiḥāt* as communal texts performed in a ritual setting, each opening on a liturgical note and closing with words of wisdom.

In the annals of 19th-century Biblical scholarship, and in the leading ranks of the history of religion school (*religionsgeschichtliche Schule*), stands the towering figure of Hermann Gunkel (d. 1932), a pioneer in the field of genre theory.¹ The methodological premise of genre studies (*Gattungsforschung*) is deceptively simple: to properly read, interpret, and understand any oral or written text, it has to be classified first and foremost by its appropriate literary genre (*Gattung*).² Gunkel develops in detail how this unfolds in practice. He holds

1 Gunkel, Psalmen 1609–1627; Gerstenberger, Albert Eichhorn and Hermann Gunkel 454–471.

2 On his comprehensive conception of genre studies and the limits of New Testament form criticism, Gunkel rather prefers to speak of literary history—ordered according to genres—instead of form history or stylistics, let alone literary theory (*Besonders unangenehm ist mir*

that genres are determined on the basis of (I) formulary and form, (II) context or life setting (*Sitz im Leben*), and (III) theme and tone.³ As a matter of fact, both the history of religion school and the Bakhtin circle share similar concerns.⁴ According to Mikhail Bakhtin (d. 1975), “Any utterance has, so to speak, an absolute beginning and an absolute end.”⁵ Take, for example, the straightforward English formula, “Once upon a time.” This signals the commencement of the fairytale form and, in corresponding fashion, its end is clearly identifiable with the formulaic phrase, “Happily ever after.” That is to say, formula criticism (*Formelgeschichte*) locates opening and closing markers that delimit the boundaries of a text.⁶ Richard Bauman elaborates, “Such formulae are, in effect, markers of specific genres, and insofar as these genres are conventionally performed in a community, the formulae may serve as keys to performance.”⁷ It is then the task of form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) to establish the literary forms, which bear the stamp of genre. These forms are distinguished on the basis of their literary structure. In other words, fairy tales belong to a larger class of narrative texts that also feature a setting, plot, and characters.⁸ In the case of the narrative genre, other forms (*Formen*) aside from fairytales include sagas, legends, and so forth.⁹ Naturally, the discussion has turned full circle and returned to the significance of genre criticism. Simply stated, the misidentification of a text means the misreading of a text. For instance, if the above

das Wort ‘formgeschichtlich’ oder gar ‘stilkritisch’; ich rede vielmehr von ‘Literaturgeschichte,’ die nach ‘Gattungen’ den Stoff ordnet ... Es handelt sich dabei also nicht vorwiegend, geschweige denn allein um ‘Formen’ (und gar nicht um ‘Kritik’)) (Rollmann, Zwei Briefe 283–284; Noth, *Developing lines* 8).

3 Rollmann, Zwei Briefe 284; Gunkel and Begrich, *Einleitung* 22–24; Buss, *Biblical form criticism* 260.

4 Mandolfo, *Dialogic form criticism* 69; Flowers, *Reconsidering* 19–46.

5 Bakhtin, *Problem* 71; Tucker, *Form criticism* 2 and 13. In addition to formulae, Bakhtin astutely observes, “The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a *change of speaking subjects*, that is, a change of speakers” (Bakhtin, *Problem* 71 and 75).

6 Watters, *Formula criticism* 2–38; Stuart, *Old Testament exegesis* 113.

7 Bauman, *Verbal art* 21. Originally published as Bauman, *Verbal art* 290–311.

8 Tucker, *Form criticism* 46. For an elaboration on the elements that constitute narrative, including setting, see Powell, *Narrative criticism* 244–248. On characterization, Powell writes, “Narrative critics are interested not only in what we know about the characters in a story but also in *how* we know this” (Powell, *Narrative criticism* 245; emphasis added).

9 In turn, these are further differentiated in terms of tone, theme, and motif (*Motiv* meaning “complex theme”), as well as their performative settings and functions (Coats, *Genres* 11–13; Talmon, *The “desert motif”* 39; Talmon, *Literary motifs passim*; Ben-Amos, *Concept of motif* 17–36; Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah* 19; Krohn, *Folklore methodology passim*).

fairytale form is misclassified as belonging to the law genre, then problems abound. For this reason, genre criticism is foundational, as are its auxiliary disciplines of formula, form, and motif criticism.¹⁰ This is especially true for the interpretation of historical documents, such as the late antique Quran, where “the precise limits of the text units” have long proved elusive.¹¹ In light of this, Marianna Klar recognizes the pressing need for a “precise catalogue of Quranic genres.”¹²

This brings us to the *musabbiḥāt*, whose formulaic features are especially pronounced: Sura 61 leads the group as “the most formulaic sura in the Quran,” while Sura 64 ranks a close second (see Tables 4.1–4.5).¹³ In this traditional group of suras (Q 57, 59, 61, 62, and 64),¹⁴ there are indeed as many genre formulas as there are suras. Consider, for example, Sura 59, whose formulae alone span prayer, liturgy, narrative, and wisdom, to say nothing of other genres (see

10 Sparks, Genre criticism 66.

11 Klar, Re-examining 215–217 and 228.

12 Klar, Re-examining 238.

13 “Sura 61 had the highest formulaic density at 77.88% ... [T]he sura displays a consistently high formulaic density, with the verse-level formulaic density never dropping below 54.5%. In oral-formulaic terms, this figure is extremely high” (Bannister, *Oral-formulaic study* 164–167 and 188–189; Paret, *Der Koran* 469–472 (Q 57), 473–475 (Q 59), 476–477 (Q 61), 477–478 (Q 62), and 479–480 (Q 64)). According to Theodor Nöldeke (d. 1930) and Friedrich Schwally (d. 1919), “The opinion that the entire sura might be Medinan has something to be said for it. This probably applies generally to all the *musabbiḥāt*, i.e., the suras 57, 59, 61, 62, and 64, beginning with *sabbāḥa* and *yusabbiḥu* respectively” (*Die Ansicht, daß die ganze Sūra medīnisch sei, hat einiges für sich. Wahrscheinlich gilt das überhaupt für alle Musabbiḥāt, d.h. die mit sabbāḥa bzw. yusabbiḥu anfangenden Sūren 57, 59, 61, 62, 64*) (Nöldeke, *Geschichte* i, 186; Nöldeke et al., *History* 151). Alan Jones notes regarding Sura 64, “Some Muslim commentators treat this as a Meccan sura, but its present form appears to be Medinan, reworked to a large extent from Meccan material” (Jones, *Qurʾān* 917). However, *pace* Nöldeke and Schwally, Nicolai Sinai concludes, on the basis of its “low mean verse length,” that Q 64 (as well as Q 61 and Q 62) “is at most a very early post-hijra proclamation in which some key doctrinal traits of the Medinan Quran first begin to come into view” (Sinai, *Qurʾān* 27–28, 195–196, 200, and 207). N.b. “[W]ord frequency could correlate with time” (Sadeghi, *Chronology* 230, fn. 27, and 233–235). Here, however, we may note in passing the critical distinction between genre formulae and oral formulae. On the latter, see Jousse, *Oral style passim*; Parry, *Epithet* 37–117; Lord, *Formula* 30–67. Whereas the former function as specific literary markers of genre and life setting, the latter tend to be non-specific stock phrases, whose function is that of an oral-delivery mechanism. For instance, the dual oral-formulaic epithets, “And He is the Mighty and the Wise” (*wa-huwa l-ʾazīzu l-ḥakīmu*) (Q 57:1; Q 59:1, 24; Q 61:1; Q 62:3) are stylistic verse-end closures (*clausulae* or *cadenze*), not categorical markers (Stewart, *Divine epithets* 22–64; Neuwirth, *Structural* 103–104 and 107).

14 Juynboll, *Ḥadīth* 394.

Table 4.2).¹⁵ For good reason, Gunkel cautions against beginning the task of genre criticism with such compound texts:¹⁶

Even this relatively frequent appearance of mixed witnesses in the Psalter has greatly hindered genre research to this point since, to the casual observer to whom this first jumps out, it can easily appear as if Hebrew poetry possesses no genres at all.

Auch dies nicht seltene Auftreten von Mischerzeugnissen im Psalter hat die Gattungsforschung bisher sehr gehemmt, da es dem oberflächlichen Betrachter, dem diese zunächst in die Augen stechen, leicht so scheint, als ob die hebräische Poesie überhaupt keine Gattungen besäße.

From this, Gunkel draws the sound conclusion that “one may counsel anyone interested in becoming immersed in genre research, not to begin with those mixed Psalms ...” (*darf man demjenigen, der sich in die Gattungsforschung vertiefen will, raten, nicht mit jenen gemischten Psalmen zu beginnen ...*).¹⁷ However, since the genres of the Quran have already been catalogued, we no longer run this particular risk.¹⁸ All the same, similar formulas shared across the *musabbiḥāt* must be grouped and considered together, before an analysis of individual suras can even begin.¹⁹ For instance, this cluster of chapters contains multiple hymnic pericopae (Q 57:1–6; Q 59:1, 22–24; Q 59:2–4; Q 62:1–4; Q 64:1–4, 13), not to mention a doxology (Q 61:1).²⁰ But even in the case of these so-called praise chapters, although they share a similar formulaic beginning, their uniformity is

15 For the definition of these Quranic genres, see Samji, *Qurʾān* 36 (Prayer Genre), 84 (Liturgy Genre), 130–131 (Wisdom Genre), and 175–177 (Narrative Genre).

16 Gunkel and Begrich, *Einleitung* 29; Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction* 20.

17 Gunkel and Begrich, *Einleitung* 29; Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction* 20; cf. Mowinckel, *Psalms* 31–32.

18 Samji, *Qurʾān* *passim*.

19 The conventional analysis of sura structure assumes a top-down orientation rather than a horizontal reading (cf. Noth, *Der Charakter* 198).

20 Even though all of them belong to the liturgy genre, there exists a further roadblock to research on sura structure. This is the tacit *patternist* assumption that suras are of a single sort, and so share the same function, when in actuality different classes of suras within the corpus serve different functions (cf. Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 192 and 214–216; Childs, *Introduction* 510). Turning to liturgy, Angelika Neuwirth observes that “several suras even point to the practice of recitation—exercised in the framework of a vigil—as the locus of the receiving of new texts” (Neuwirth, *Two views* 2). As it happens, Hartwig Hirschfeld notes, “their poetic element is almost entirely confined to the superscription mentioned, the rest being prose ...” (Hirschfeld, *New researches* 116).

not thereby established. In the specific case of Sura 57, the core of the chapter consists of a couple of narrative episodes, several eschatological forms, and so on (see Table 4.1).²¹ This is fairly representative across the cluster. As such, this brings us to the formulaic conclusion of the *musabbiḥāt*. For example, Q 59:18–21 that exhibits a uniform end-rhyme pattern (-ūC) concludes the sura with the sermon form, belonging to the wisdom genre.²² The vocative formula reads, “O you^P who believe!” (yā-ʾayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū). In point of fact, the exact same formula also concludes Q 57:28–29, Q 61:14, Q 62:9–11, and Q 64:14–18. Since the *musabbiḥāt* commence on a liturgical note and conclude with words of wisdom, both the hymn and sermon forms merit further investigation.

2 Hymn Form

With special reference to the *musabbiḥāt*, Hartwig Hirschfeld (d. 1934) writes, “Muḥammad himself was so rejoiced, that he composed a series of hallelujah Psalms,” which brings us to the next point.²³ In a general description of hymns in the Psalter, Gunkel states, “The basic form of the earliest hymn, as well as the primitive core of the singing of the hymn, is the word, hallelujah” (*Als Grundform des ältesten Hymnus und Urzelle des Hymnengesanges wird das Wort Halleluja zu betrachten sein*).²⁴ In terms of the Quran, let us begin with Sura 57, which preserves a liturgical pericope. It suitably opens with the doxological *subḥāna*, in this case, the perfect praise formula: *sabbaḥa li-* (Praise ...).²⁵ Anton Baumstark (d. 1948) defines doxologies as “introductory and concluding formulae in acts of worship ... which accompany the different liturgical actions” (*les formules d'introduction et de conclusion des fonctions cultuelles ...*

21 Jones comments, “Much of the sura stands as a creed, though there is some exhortation and some polemical material” (Jones, *Qurʾān* 885).

22 According to Devin Stewart, “A middle ground, in my view, would be the analogy with the sermon form” (Stewart, Wansbrough 45). He continues, “Suras of the type that include the punishment stories resemble the form of a sermon. They adopt a tripartite structure, with an introduction, a series of *exempla* from salvation history, and a conclusion” (Stewart, Wansbrough 45).

23 Hirschfeld, *New researches* 116. According to Neuwirth, “Regarding their literary shape and their function, the early Quranic texts are much more closely related to the Psalms ...” (Neuwirth, Two views 2). For intratextual Quranic references in the *musabbiḥāt*, see Paret, *Der Koran* 469–480. For “microstructural” intertextual references to the Psalter, see Neuwirth, Qurʾānic readings 733 and 752; Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen* 498.

24 Gunkel, Psalmen 1613; Gunkel, *Psalms* 11.

25 al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān* ii, 476.

celles qui accompagnent les différents actes liturgiques).²⁶ In the case of verses 1–6, Richard Bell (d. 1952) considers it “an introduction extolling the glory of God.”²⁷ On these grounds, *subḥāna* constitutes a liturgical formula for praise (*Lobformel*).²⁸ The hymn in Q 57:1–6 reads,²⁹

- 1 All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify God.
He is the Mighty and the Wise.

sabbaha li-llāhi mā fī s-samāwāti wa-l-ʿarḍi wa-huwa l-ʿazīzu l-ḥakīmu

- 2 His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth.
He brings life and He brings death.
He has power over everything.

lahū mulku s-samāwāti wa-l-ʿarḍi yuḥyī wa-yumītu wa-huwa ʿalā kulli shayʿin qadīrun

- 3 He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward.
He has knowledge of everything.

huwa l-ʾawwalu wa-l-ʾākhīru wa-ẓ-ẓāhiru wa-l-bāṭinu wa-huwa bi-kulli shayʿin ʿalīmun

- 4 [It is] He who created the heavens and the earth in six days
and then settled on the Throne.
He knows what penetrates into the earth
and what comes forth from it
and what comes down from heaven
and what ascends to it.
He is with you^P wherever you are.
God is observer of what you^P do.

²⁶ Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée* 90; Baumstark, *Comparative liturgy* 80.

²⁷ Bell, *Commentary* ii, 349.

²⁸ Baumstark, *Jüdischer und christlicher Gebetstypus* 236–237. According to Richard Bell, “The phrase may have been derived from Christian liturgy; the sense of ‘glorify’ attached to the root *sbḥ* is at any rate Aramaic, but seems to have been found in Arabic before Islam” (Bell, *Commentary* ii, 527 (Q 87)).

²⁹ The English translation of Quranic verses referenced primarily follows Jones, *Qurʾān*; the transliteration principally follows Zirker, *Koran-Transliteration*.

*huwa lladhī khalaqa s-samāwāti wa-l-'arḍa fī sittati 'ayyāmin thum-
ma stawā 'alā l-'arshi ya'lamu mā yaliju fī l-'arḍi wa-mā yakhruju
minhā wa-mā yanzilu minā s-samā'i wa-mā ya'ruju fihā wa-huwa
ma'akum 'ayna mā kuntum wa-llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna baṣīrun*

- 5 His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth.
[All] things are brought back to God.

lahū mulku s-samāwāti wa-l-'arḍi wa-'ilā llāhi turja'u l-'umūru

- 6 He makes the night enter into the day
and the day into the night.
He knows the thoughts in the breasts [of men].

*yūliju l-layla fī n-nahāri wa-yūliju n-nahāra fī l-layli wa-
huwa 'alīmun bi-dhāti ṣ-ṣudūri*

Since the end-rhyme pattern is complex (-īC/-ūC), the cohesion of this hymn is structural.³⁰ The predominant motif is God the creator of the world, and so, an elated tone of descriptive (*beschreibend*) praise permeates throughout.³¹ In addition to uniformity in theme and tone, the structural integrity of the hymn form is further assured by the presence of additional formulae.³² Lastly, the imperative sermon on charity in Sura 57, beginning with verse 7, marks the limits of this particular hymn.

Sura 59 is similar in many respects because it too commences with a nearly identical perfect praise formula (v. 1). However, verses 2 to 4 constitute a distinct pericope and represent a stereotypically short hymn to victory, which shares a common rhyme (-āC). Beginning with the liturgical formula for relative predication, victory motifs (e.g., “hands”) prevail:³³

30 For supplementary criteria, see Flowers, Reconsidering 30. For instance, “an utterance must display syntactic coherence; this is, the utterance must *make sense*. Verbs must have stated antecedents, complex structures such as conditionals must have a protasis and apodosis, and the like. Again, arguments for syntactic changes or variance within a single utterance can be made, but it must be demonstrated how the entire utterance remains intelligible to the audience” (Flowers, Reconsidering 30).

31 Westermann, *Der Psalter* 26.

32 Characteristic of the liturgy genre, these markers include essential (*huwa*: He is ...) as well as relative predication (*huwa lladhī*: He, who ...).

33 Q 48, vv. 20 and 24.

- 2 [It is] He who has driven those of the people of the Scripture who have disbelieved from their dwellings for the first rounding up. You^P did not think that they would leave, and they thought that their strongholds would defend them against God. But God reached them from a place they did not reckon on and cast terror into their hearts, and they destroyed their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers. Reflect, those of you who have eyes.

huwa lladhī 'akhrāja lladhīna kafarū min 'ahli l-kitābi min diyārihim li-'awwali l-ḥashri mā ḡanantum 'an yakhrujū wa-ḡannū 'annahum māni'atuhum ḥuṣūnuhum mina llāhi fa-'atāhumu llāhu min ḥaythu lam yaḥtasibū wa-qadhafa fī qulūbihimu r-ru'ba yukhribūna buyū-tahum bi-'aydihim wa-'aydī l-mu'minīna fa-'tabirū yā-'ulī l-'abṣāri

- 3 But for the fact that God had decreed exile for them, He would have punished them in this world. In the next world they will have the torment of the Fire.

wa-law-lā 'an kataba llāhu 'alayhimu l-jalā'a la-'adhdhabahum fī d-dunyā wa-lahum fī l-'ākhirati 'adhābu n-nāri

- 4 That is because they opposed God and His messenger. Those who oppose God —God is severe in His punishment.

dhālika bi-'annahum shāqqū llāha wa-rasūlahū wa-man yushāqqi llāha fa-'inna llāha shadīdu l-'iqābi

So rather than proceeding directly to the subsequent verse, Bell reasonably suggests that the “hymn of praise to Allāh (vv. 22–24) ... may have been the original continuation of verse 1.”³⁴ Moreover, Alan Jones insists not only that the first verse stands apart from the subsequent one, he also specifies that “verses 22–

34 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 368.

24 are a paean to God.”³⁵ In this case, the hymn to God (vv. 1, 22–24) evidences an “exalted tone” and a complex end-rhyme (-īC/-ūC):³⁶

- 1 All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify God.
He is the Mighty and the Wise.

*sabbaḥa li-llāhi mā fī s-samāwāti wa-mā fī l-ʿarḍi wa-huwa l-ʿazīzu
l-ḥakīmu*

- 22 He is God.
There is no god but Him,
Knower of the Invisible and the Witnessed.
He is the Merciful and the Compassionate.

*huwa llāhu lladhī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa ʿālimu l-ghaybi wa-sh-shahādati
huwa r-raḥmānu r-raḥīmu*

- 23 He is God.
There is no god but Him,
the King, the Holy, the Peace, the Faithful,
the Watcher, the Mighty, the Compelling.
Glory be to God, far above what they associate [with Him].

*huwa llāhu lladhī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa l-maliku l-quddūsu s-salāmu
l-muʾminu l-muḥayminu l-ʿazīzu l-jabbāru l-mutakabbiru subḥāna
llāhi ʿammā yushrikūna*

- 24 He is God,
the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper.
To Him belong the fairest names.
All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him.
He is the Mighty and the Wise.

*huwa llāhu l-khāliqu l-bārīʾu l-muṣawwiru lahu l-ʾasmāʾu l-ḥusnā yu-
sabbihū lahū mā fī s-samāwāti wa-l-ʿarḍi wa-huwa l-ʿazīzu l-ḥakīmu*

35 Jones, *Qurʾān* 897. Here again, Bell contends, “The use of certain epithets (*al-quddūs*, *as-salām*, *al-muḥaymin*, *al-bārīʾ*) would suggest Jewish or Christian hymns as model” (Bell, *Commentary* ii, 368).

36 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* xxii, 550–556; Bell, *Commentary* ii, 368.

That the structural integrity of this unit is twofold is clearly visible in the literary markers. First of all, the opening refrain-like predication, “He is God” (*huwa llāhu*), secures the unity of the shorter liturgical piece (vv. 22–24). Secondly, exactly the same oral-formulaic divine epithets at the close of verses 1 and 24 form an *inclusio* or “envelope structure” around the longer hymn.³⁷ Sura 61, verse 1 (-īC), includes a doxology:

- 1 All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify God.
He is the Mighty and the Wise.

*sabbaḥa li-llāhi mā fī s-samāwāti wa-mā fī l-ʿarḍi wa-huwa l-ʿazīzu
l-ḥakīmu*

According to Bell, “verse 1 evidently stands alone, and the presumption is that it was added as a sort of introduction”³⁸ This generally corresponds to the function of doxologies, including the *ḥamdala* (*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi*: Praise belongs to God).³⁹ In this regard, Baumstark states, “we find, put in the form of prayers of praise, words that introduce and conclude whole suras as well as individual text passages mostly of a more or less clear hymnic character” (*treten die Form eines Preisgebets tragende Einleitungs- und Schlußworte sowohl ganzer Suren, als auch einzelner, vor allem inhaltlich mehr oder weniger deutlich hymnischen Charakter tragender Textabschnitte*).⁴⁰ What is more, Jones also treats the first verse apart from those that immediately follow it.⁴¹ In reference to several *musabbiḥāt* (Q 59, Q 61, Q 62, Q 64), Angelika Neuwirth notes in her typology of sermon suras that these tend to be “stereotypically introduced by initial hymnal formulas strongly reminiscent of the Biblical Psalms.”⁴² This is supported by the fact that the vocative formula for Q 61:2–4 (-ūC), “O you^P who believe!” (*yā-ʾayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū*), announces a proclamation regulating the front ranks.⁴³

In terms of Q 62:1–4, the imperfect praise formula, *yusabbiḥu li-* (Praises ...), begins a hymn dedicated to the lord of salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*), whose complex theme or governing motif is one in which “God shows His lord-

37 McCann, Jr., Shape and shaping 356.

38 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 377.

39 Hirschfeld, *New researches* 71.

40 Baumstark, Jüdischer und christlicher Gebetstypus 229–230; Baumstark, Jewish and Christian prayer type 265.

41 Jones, *Qurʾān* 908.

42 Neuwirth, Form and structure ii, 264.

43 Neuwirth, Form and structure ii, 264; Sinai, *Qurʾān* 191.

ship and majesty" (*Gott erweist sein Herrsein, seine Majestät*).⁴⁴ In addition, these hymnic verses, which "dwell on God's power," also incorporate the liturgical formula (*huwa lladhī*: He, who ...) for relative predication.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it is a cohesive unit (vv. 1–4) on the basis of its end-rhyme pattern (–īC):

- 1 All that is in the heavens and on earth glorifies God,
the Holy King, the Mighty and the Wise.

*yusabbiḥu li-llāhi mā fī s-samāwāti wa-mā fī l-'arḍi l-maliki l-quddūsi
l-'azīzi l-ḥakīmi*

- 2 [It is] He who has sent among the common people a messenger from
among themselves,
to recite His signs to them and to purify them
and to teach them the Scripture and the Wisdom
—previously they were in manifest error—

*huwa lladhī ba'atha fī l-'ummiyyīna rasūlan minhum yatlu 'alayhim
'āyātihī wa-yuzakkīhim wa-yu'allimuhumu l-kitāba wa-l-ḥikmata wa-
'in kānū min qablu la-fī ḍalālin mubīnin*

- 3 And others of them who have not yet joined them.
He is the Mighty and the Wise.

*wa-'ākharīna minhum lammā yalḥaqū bihim wa-huwa l-'azīzu l-ḥakī-
mu*

- 4 That is God's bounty,
which He gives to those whom He wishes.
God is possessed of mighty bounty.

dḥālika faḍlu llāhi yu'tihī man yashā'u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-'azīmi

Although both share the same rhyme (–īC), the double substitution formula (v. 5) that introduces paradigms marks off the above hymn (vv. 1–4) from the subsequent literary unit. Similar in many respects to Sura 62, the last of the

44 Westermann, *Der Psalter*, 26 and 75; Westermann, *Psalms* 90.

45 Jones, *Qur'ān* 911.

musabbihāt (Q 64) opens with the imperfect formulation and includes relative predication as well. As with Sura 59, the structure of Q 64:1–4 exhibits a complex end-rhyme (-īC/-ūC) and, according to Bell, “go together.”⁴⁶ Assuming, for the moment, that suras as extended compositions are not without rhyme or reason, the hymn evidently resumes—in verse 13—with the liturgical formula proper, namely, *Allāh* (God):⁴⁷

- 1 All that is in the heavens and on earth glorifies God.
To Him belongs sovereignty.
To Him belongs praise.
He has power over everything.

yusabbihū li-llāhi mā fī s-samāwāti wa-mā fī l-ʿarḍi lahu l-mulku wa-lahu l-ḥamdu wa-huwa ʿalā kulli shayʾin qadīrun

- 2 [It is] He who created you^P.
Some of you are unbelievers,
and some of you are believers.
God is observer of what you do.

huwa lladhī khalaqakum fa-minkum kāfirun wa-minkum muʾminun wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿmalūna baṣīrun

- 3 He created the heavens and the earth with the truth
and formed you and made fair your form;
and to Him is the journeying.

khalaqa s-samāwāti wa-l-ʿarḍa bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-ṣawwarakum fa-aḥsana ṣuwarakum wa-ʾilayhi l-maṣīru

- 4 He knows what is in the heavens and the earth.
He knows what you^P keep secret
and what you make public.
God is aware of what [thoughts are] in [men's] breasts.

⁴⁶ Bell, *Commentary* ii, 389.

⁴⁷ On the other hand, Bell claims that “vv. 11–13 are certainly Medinan, and probably continue v. 8” (Bell, *Commentary* ii, 390).

*ya'lamu mā fī s-samāwāti wa-l-'arḍi wa-ya'lamu mā tusirrūna wa-mā
tu'linūna wa-llāhu 'alīmun bi-dhāti ṣ-ṣudūri*

13 God.

There is no god but Him.

Let all the believers put their trust in God.

allāhu lā 'ilāha 'illā huwa wa-'alā llāhi fa-l-yatawakkali l-mu'minūna

With respect to motif, this hymn addresses none other than the lord who fashioned humans (*Menschenschöpfer*).⁴⁸ Having surveyed the genre boundaries of the hymns at the head of the *musabbiḥāt*, let us now carefully examine the structure of the sermons that hem them in.

3 Sermon Form

"In the beginning was the sermon" (*Im Anfang war die Predigt*), declares Martin Dibelius (d. 1947).⁴⁹ Likewise, John Wansbrough (d. 2002), in his *Quranic Studies*, writes, "To the long and many-faceted process of *Gemeindebildung* which culminated in the canonical text of Muslim scripture, the sermon (*khutba*) must have been central, as the instrument of both transmission and explication of the prophetic *logia*."⁵⁰ In view of this, Wansbrough's wholesale acceptance of the temporal priority of preaching should give pause for thought. As Martin Buss cogently explains,

Specifically, Dibelius believed that materials used for preaching and teaching (i.e., for seeking and instructing converts, respectively) were the oldest and the most reliable, while those showing joy in narration (espe-

48 Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit* 37–38; Balentine, *Prayer* 212.

49 Dibelius, *Die alttestamentlichen Motive* 146. N.b. "The statement of Martin Dibelius, 'In the beginning was the sermon,' is not only famous; it has also been enormously influential in New Testament studies. Perhaps, indeed, it is this very statement which lies ultimately behind the wide agreement today that 'the Fourth Gospel began life as separate homilies.' The question is whether we can determine which of the recoverable homilies are likely to be the earliest" (Martyn, *History* 147). "[I]t actually reads: 'At the beginning of all early Christian creativity there stands the sermon: missionary and hortatory preaching, narrative and parenesis, prophecy and the interpretation of scripture'" (Perrin, *What is redaction criticism?* 15).

50 Wansbrough, *Quranic studies* 148.

cially, miracle stories) were secondary ... A ground for this developmental scheme lay in the assumption, resembling that of Adolf von Harnack, that faith (believed to lie at the heart of the gospel) is not worldly.⁵¹

That is to say, as long as “we are not really engaged with the *prolegomena* of our discipline any more,” the theological assumptions underpinning German Biblical criticism remain buried, “while masking the ideological preferences that they support.”⁵² With this caveat in mind let us consider the sermon form in the *musabbihāt*. Sura 57 contains several extended sermon fragments. For the moment, Q 57:28–29 is of particular interest since it closes the unit. The sermon in this case is simple in construction because it is uniform in both end-rhyme (-īC) and genre, that is, wisdom. As is to be expected, the literary form begins with the vocative sermon formula, *yā-ʾayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū* (O you^P who believe!):

28 O you^P who believe,
fear God and believe in His messenger,⁵³
and He will give you a double portion of His mercy
and make for you a light,
by which you can walk;
and He will forgive you.
God is Forgiving and Merciful,

*yā-ʾayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū ttaqū llāha wa-ʾāminū bi-rasūlihī yuʾti-
kum kiflayni min raḥmatihī wa-yajʿal lakum nūran tamshūna bihī
wa-yaghfir lakum wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīmūn*

51 Buss, *Biblical form criticism* 289. According to Martin Buss, “Bultmann expressed reservation about the thesis of Dibelius that preaching stood at the beginning point of all early Christian expressions. In his *Theology* (1948–1953), however, the *kērygma* (God’s word) dominates, with little attention to other structures, including Biblical ‘wisdom’” (Buss, *Biblical form criticism* 300, fn. 101).

52 White, *Remembering Paul* xiii. Taken as axiomatic in his liberal dogmatic theology, Adolf von Harnack (d. 1930)—*contra* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (d. 1832) and Friedrich Max Müller (d. 1900)—drew the line at non-Christian scripture: To know this one is to know all others (*Wer diese Religion nicht kennt, kennt keine, und wer sie samt ihrer Geschichte kennt, kennt alle. Zunächst—sie besitzt die Bibel ... Was bedeutet Homer, was die Veden, was der Koran neben der Bibel!*) (von Harnack, *Reden und Aufsätze* ii, 168; cf. Rollmann, *Theologie und Religionsgeschichte* 70–71; Pascal, “Sturm und Drang” movement 147).

53 Compare with “the *topos* of obedience” (Q 64:12) (Sinai, *Qurʾān* 207).

- 29 That the people of the Scripture may know
that they have no power over any of God's bounty
but that the bounty is in the hand of God,
to give to those whom He wishes.
God is endowed with the great bounty.

*li-'allā ya'lama 'ahlu l-kitābi 'allā yaqdirūna 'alā shay'in min faḍli llāhi
wa-'anna l-faḍla bi-yadi llāhi yu'tihi man yashā'u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli
l-'aẓīmi*

In his commentary, Bell holds that “verses 28–29 seem to belong to the early Medinan stratum of the surah. The break with the People of the Book has begun, but is not necessarily quite complete.”⁵⁴ The character and shape of Surah 57 is certainly in line with that of the simple sermon in Q 59:18–21 (-ūC):

- 18 O you^P who believe,
fear God;
and let every soul observe what it has sent on for the morrow;
and fear God.
God is informed of what you do.

*yā-'ayyuhā l-ladhīna 'āmanū ttaqū llāha wa-l-tanzur nafsūn mā qad-
damat li-ghadin wa-ttaqū llāha 'inna llāha khabīrun bi-mā ta'malūna*

- 19 Do not be like those who forgot God,
with the result that He caused them to forget themselves.
Those are the reprobates.

*wa-lā takūnū ka-l-ladhīna nasū llāha fa-'ansāhum 'anfusahum 'ulā'ika
humu l-fāsiqūna*

- 20 The companions of the Garden and the companions of the Fire are
not equal.
The companions of the Garden are the winners.

*lā yastawī 'aṣḥābu n-nāri wa-'aṣḥābu l-jannati 'aṣḥābu l-jannati hu-
mu l-fā'izūna*

54 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 354.

- 21 Had We sent this Recitation down on a mountain,
 you^s would have seen it humbled and split asunder through
 fear of God.
 These parallels are coined by us for the people
 so that they may reflect.

*law 'anzalnā hādhā l-qur'āna 'alā jabalin la-ra'aytahū khāshī'an mu-
 taṣaddī'an min khashyati llāhi wa-tilka l-'amthālu naḍribuhā li-n-
 nāsi la'allahum yatafakkarūna*

Here as well, Jones recognizes that “the later parts of the sura change theme: verses 18–21 are an admonition to the believers.”⁵⁵ To continue, Sura 61 employs a pair of sermon formulae. Through an *inclusio* structuring of formula and phrase, Q 61:10–13 forms an independent sermon with a complex end-rhyme (–īC/–ūC): “O you^P who believe! ... And give^s good tidings to the believers!” (yā-ʾayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū ... wa-bashshiri l-muʾminīna), whose “main sense evidently is to recommend fighting”⁵⁶ For this reason, the proclamation turned simple sermon in Q 61:14 (–īC) structurally stands apart from the preceding wisdom unit.⁵⁷ And yet, at the same time, verse 14 thematically stands with the previous complex sermon on *casus fœderis*:

- 14 O you^P who believe,
 be God's helpers,
 just as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the Disciples,
 ‘Who are my helpers towards God?’

55 Jones, *Qurʾān* 897.

56 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 379; Robinson, *Discovering* 236. It would be appropriate to note here that a similar pronominal shift from plural to imperative singular is also evidenced in Q 2:223, as elsewhere in the corpus.

57 According to Rudolf Bultmann (d. 1976), “It is no objection to the form-critical approach, but rather a demonstration of its fruitfulness, to find that one piece of the tradition is seldom to be classified unambiguously in a single category. For just as in real life we are able to convey a number of different ideas in a single saying, so it is with literary forms” (*Daß ein Überlieferungsstück nicht selten einer bestimmten Gattung nicht eindeutig zugeordnet werden kann, ist kein Einwand gegen die formgeschichtliche Fragestellung, sondern zeigt vielmehr ihre Fruchtbarkeit. Denn wie im Leben selbst sich in einzelnen Äußerungen verschiedene Motive verbinden können, so auch in seinen literarischen Formungen*) (Bultmann, *Die Geschichte* 5; Bultmann, *History* 4). Buss elaborates, “Bultmann’s nominalism had the consequence that he rejected essentialism, specifically the idea that a given unit is classified properly under only one heading ... and thus accepted the validity of multiple classification according to different considerations” (Buss, *Biblical form criticism* 297).

The disciples said, 'We are God's helpers.'
 And a party of the Children of Israel believed
 and another party did not believe.
 So We strengthened those who believed,
 and they prevailed.

*yā-ʿayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū kūnū ʾanṣāra llāhi ka-mā qāla ʾisā bnu
 maryama li-l-ḥawāriyyīna man ʾanṣārī ʾilā llāhi qāla l-ḥawāriyyūna
 naḥnu ʾanṣāru llāhi fa-ʾāmanat ṭāʾifatun min banī ʾisrāʾīla wa-kafarat
 ṭāʾifatun fa-ʾayyadnā lladhīna ʾāmanū ʾalā ʾaduwwihim fa-ʾaṣbaḥū
 ṣāḥirīna*

Accordingly, Bell relates that this passage "also hints at the assistance of his followers to be rendered to Allāh"⁵⁸

Next in order of investigation is the proclamation found in Q 62:9–11. Its cohesion is structural (-ūC/-īC), as it opens with a vocative formulation, continuing with a trebled non-eschatological ʾidhā-cluster. Assuming for the moment the existence of a patterned framework within the traditional *musab-bihāt*, Q 62:9–11 functions as a complex sermon, which overlaps with and incorporates multiple genres, including that of proclamation, as well as multiple forms and formulas such as *qul* (see Table 4.4). In fact, verse 11a replaces the standard vocative particle, belonging to the proclamation genre, with the imperative *qul* formula, as happens in Q 17:110. On this particular point, Bell suggests that "verse 11 may deal with the same situation ... It may have preceded the public delivery of verses 9–10."⁵⁹ On the whole, Jones says verses 9 to 11 preserve "a brief section on the believers and prayer".⁶⁰

- 9 O you^P who believe,
 when proclamation is made for prayer on the day of assembly,
 hasten to remembrance of God and leave [your] trading.
 That is better for you, did you but know.

*yā-ʿayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū ʾidhā nūdiya li-ṣ-ṣalāti min yawmi l-ju-
 muʿati fa-sʾaw ʾilā dhikri llāhi wa-dharū l-bayʿa dhālikum khayrun
 lakum ʾin kuntum taʾlamūna*

58 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 380.

59 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 383.

60 Jones, *Qurʾān* 911.

- 10 And when prayer is ended,
disperse in the land and seek some of God's bounty,
and remember God much,
so that you may prosper.

*fa-ʿidhā quḍiyati ṣ-ṣalātu fa-ntashirū fī l-ʿarḍi wa-btaghū min faḍli
llāhi wa-dhkurū llāha kathīran laʿallakum tufliḥūna*

- 11 When they see merchandise or some diversion,
they scatter to it and leave you^s standing.
Say^s, 'What is with God is better than diversion and merchandise.
God is the best of providers.'

*wa-ʿidhā raʾaw tijāratān ʾaw laḥwan-i nfaḍḍū ʾilayhā wa-tarakūka
qāʾiman qul mā ʿinda llāhi khayrun mina l-laḥwi wa-mina t-tijāratī
wa-llāhu khayru r-rāziqīna*

As is evident, this pericope “documents that the Quranic Believers observed a congregational prayer” and introduces rules of order pertaining to the congregation.⁶¹

Let us now turn to the fifth and final complex sermon of the *musabbihāt* cluster. At the head of Q 64:14–18, whose cohesion is structural (-ūC/-īC) and which “probably belong to about the same time,” sits a proclamation (vv. 14–15) with a conditional construction (v. 14a), followed by a pair of wisdom pericopae; the first, an apodictic saying with an imperative formulation (v. 16), the other, a casuistic saying in the conditional again (v. 17–18).⁶² Addressing rules regarding exclusion, verses 14 to 15 announce:

- 14 O you^p who believe,
among your wives and your children there are enemies for you. So
beware of them.

61 According to Sinai, “V. 9 instructs the Believers to ‘leave off their trading affairs’ when ‘the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation (*yawm al-jumuʿa*),’ which indicates that Friday was a market day in Medina” (Sinai, *Qurʾān* 198).

62 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 390. Compare with “legal sayings” (Harrington, *Interpreting* 74; Bultmann, *Die Geschichte* 138–161) and “legal maxims” (Cuypers, *Composition* 130). According to Roland Murphy (d. 2002), “Saying is not a form-critical term in itself, but it can describe such form-critical genres as wisdom saying and proverb” (Murphy, *Wisdom Literature* xiii, 4–6 and 181).

If you^P pardon and overlook and forgive
—God is Forgiving and Compassionate.

*yā-ʿayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū ʾinna min ʾazwājikum wa-ʾawlādikum
ʿadūwwan lakum fa-ḥdharūhum wa-ʾin taʿfū wa-taṣṣafū wa-taghfirū
fa-ʾinna llāha ghafūrun raḥīmūn*

- 15 Your^P possessions and your children are a temptation,
and God—with Him is a mighty wage.

*ʾinnamā ʾamwālukum wa-ʾawlādukum fitnatun wa-llāhu ʾindahū ʾaj-
run ʾazīmūn*

In terms of verse 14, Bell offers the following commentary:⁶³

The sense is not quite clear. Is *ʿadūw* to be taken in a concrete sense, i.e., are there definite enemies among the Muslims' wives and [adult] children, or is it to be taken abstractly as al-Bayḍāwī suggests, i.e., is preoccupation with them inimical to the Muslims' wholehearted obedience? The word would naturally be concrete and the end of the verse seems also to imply that sense.

Immediately after the resumptive particle (*fa-*) comes the apodictic saying (v. 16):

- 16 Fear^P God to the best of your ability,
and hear, and obey, and spend.
[That is] better for your souls.
Those who are saved from their own greed
—those are the ones who prosper.

*fa-ttaqū llāha mā staṭaʿtum wa-smaʿū wa-ʾaṭīʾū wa-ʾanfiqū khayran li-
ʾanfusikum wa-man yūqa shuhḥa nafsihī fa-ʾulāʾika humu l-muflīḥū-
na*

Lastly, the complex sermon (vv. 14–18) draws to a close with the casuistic saying (vv. 17–18):

63 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 390.

- 17 If you^P make a fair loan to God,⁶⁴
He will multiply it for you and will forgive you.
God is Grateful and Prudent,

*'in tuqriḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan yuḍā'ifhu lakum wa-yaghfir lakum
wa-llāhu shakūrun ḥalīmūn*

- 18 Knower of the Invisible and the Witnessed,
the Mighty and the Wise.

'ālimu l-ghaybi wa-sh-shahādati l-'azīzu l-ḥakīmu

For good reason, Jones treats this sura-unit in the main as a sermonette.⁶⁵

Presently, let us turn our attention from complex constructions to headless ones, namely, imperative sermons.⁶⁶ As previously noted, sermons standard to the *musabbihāt* begin with the vocative formula: *yā-ʾayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū* (O you^P who believe!). In this case, the structure of Q 61:14 (-īC) cited above is particularly instructive, since it not only features this specific formula, but also follows with the imperative statement, “Be^P God’s helpers ...!” (*kūnū ʾanṣāra llāhi*). With this in mind, let us now consider the three remaining sermon fragments in Sura 57. As in Q 22:78 (*wa-jāhidū fī*: And strive^P for ...!),⁶⁷ the first simple sermon on charity commences with an imperative formulation, “Believe^P in ...!” (*āminū bi-*). As such, it stands as a headless construction with the omission of the optional vocative address. As a matter of fact, al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 310/923) commentary on verse 7 simply extrapolates a formulaic analogue (*ayyuhā n-nās*: O people!), which is closely related to both the formula for admonition (e.g., Q 2:21–22) and messenger speech (i.e., Q 7:158).⁶⁸ Q 57:7–11 (-īC) reads,

64 Prov 19:17 (Sinai, *Qurʾān* 191).

65 Jones, *Qurʾān* 917.

66 For the “imperative mood,” cf. Bailey and Broek, Sermon 191–195, esp. 194.

67 Norden, *Agnostos Theos* 143–308; Pernot, Rhetoric 332. “Norden also identified a number of syntactical patterns in divine predication: by nouns, adjectives, participles, and by relative clauses (‘God, who ...’)” (Lightfoot, *Sibylline oracles* 32). N.b. “*Agnostos Theos* is a formal analysis of the syntactic patterns that are characteristic of religious language, especially predications of the deity. Its starting-point is St. Paul’s speech on the Areopagus (Acts 17:22–31), which led Norden to identify a type of proselytising address he called *Propagandarede* or *Missionspredigt* ...” (Lightfoot, *Sibylline oracles* 25 and 33). Cf. Q 22:78: *huwa mawlākum fa-niʿma l-mawlā wa-niʿma n-naṣīru* (He is your Protector: how excellent a Protector; how excellent a Helper).

68 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* xxii, 389.

- 7 Believe^P in God and His messenger;
and spend some of that to which He has made you^P successors. For
those of you who believe and spend
there will be a great reward.

*'āminū bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihī wa-'anfiqū mim mā ja'alakum mustakh-
lafīna fīhi fa-lladhīna 'āmanū minkum wa-'anfaqu lahum 'ajrun kabī-
run*

- 8 Why do you^P not believe in God,
when the messenger calls you to believe in your Lord,
and when God has taken your covenant,
if you are believers?

*wa-mā lakum lā tu'minūna bi-llāhi wa-r-rasūlu yad'ukum li-tu'minū
bi-rabbikum wa-qad 'akhadha mīthāqakum 'in kuntum mu'minīna*

- 9 [It is] He who sends down clear signs to His slave,
that He may bring you^P forth from darkness into light.
God is Gentle to you and Compassionate.

*huwa lladhī yunazzilu 'alā 'abdihi 'āyātīn bayyinātīn li-yukhrijakum
mina ḡ-ḡulumāti 'ilā n-nūri wa-'inna llāha bikum la-ra'ūfun raḥīmūn*

- 10 Why do you^P not spend in the way of God,
when the inheritance of the heavens and the earth belongs to God?
Those of you who spent and fought before the victory
are not on the same level:
Those are greater in rank than those who spent and fought after-
wards.
God has promised each the fairest reward.
God is informed of what you^P do.

*wa-mā lakum 'allā tunfiqū fī sabīli llāhi wa-li-llāhi mīrāthu s-samā-
wāti wa-l-'arḍi lā yastawī minkum man 'anfaqa min qabli l-faṭhi wa-
qātala 'ulā'ika 'a'ḡamu darajatan mina lladhīna 'anfaqu min ba'du
wa-qātālū wa-kullan wa'ada llāhu l-ḡusnā wa-llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna
khabīrun*

- 11 Who is the one who will make God a fair loan,
that He may multiply it for him,
and he will have a generous reward?

*man dhā lladhī yuqriḍu llāha qarḍan ḥasanan fa-yuḍāʾifahū lahū wa-
lahū ʾajrun karīmun*

As with vocative sermons featuring *spatial deixis* (*hā-antum*: Here you^P are) (e.g., Q 3:118–119), the shift in *person deixis* (*man dhā lladhī*: Who is the one who ...?) from the second-person plural (vv. 7–10) to the interrogative singular demonstrative (v. 11) signals real-time discourse.⁶⁹

Sura 57 preserves a second sermonette (vv. 17 and 20) with a simple end-rhyme pattern (-ūC). Q 57:17, 20 reads,

- 17 Know^P that God revives the earth after it has died off.
We have made Our signs clear for you
so that you^P may understand.

*iʾlamū ʾanna llāha yuḥyi l-ʾarḍa baʿda mawtiḥā qad bayyannā lakumu
l-ʾāyāti laʾallakum taʿqilūna*

- 20 Know^P that the life of this world is only play and idleness
and ornament and mutual boasting among you
and rivalry in wealth and children.
[It is] like rain,
the vegetation produced by which pleases the unbelievers; then it
witheres,
and you^S see it turning yellow,⁷⁰
and then it becomes chaff.
In the world to come there is severe torment
but also forgiveness and satisfaction from God,
whilst the life of this world is only the enjoyment of delusion.

69 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 349 (vv. 7–12). Moreover, note the pronominal shift from plural (vv. 7–10) to singular (v. 12). According to George Yule, “The distance associated with third person forms is also used to make potential accusations less direct, or to make a potentially personal issue seem like an impersonal one, based on a general rule ...” (Yule, *Pragmatics* 11). *Temporal deixis* constitutes a third type (Yule, *Pragmatics* 9–15).

70 As noted above, similar pronominal shifts are also evidenced elsewhere in the corpus.

i'lamū 'annamā l-ḥayātu d-dunyā la'ibun wa-lahwun wa-zīnatun wa-tafākhurun baynakum wa-takāthurun fī l-'amwālī wa-l-'awlādī kamathali ghaythin 'ajaba l-kuffāra nabātuhū thumma yahīju fa-tarāhu muṣfarran thumma yakūnu ḥuṭāman wa-fī l-'ākhirati 'adhābun shadīdun wa-maghfiratun minā llāhi wa-riḍwānun wa-mā l-ḥayātu d-dunyā 'illā matā'u l-ghurūrī

There are three distinct features present in this simple imperative sermon. The first is the doubled imperative formulation (*i'lamū anna*: Know^P that ...!). The second subtly is the theonym God (*allāh*) in this moral discourse, while the third is the simile (*mathal*) that constitutes a “narrative fragment” characteristic of preaching.⁷¹ Finally, Sura 57 contains yet a third imperative sermon in verses 21–24.⁷² This pericope exhibits a complex end-rhyme (–iC/–ūC). For this reason, the cohesion of this sermonette is structural. Q 57:21–24 reads,

- 21 Race^P to forgiveness from your Lord
and to a garden whose breadth is like that of heaven and earth.
It has been prepared for those who believe in God and His messengers.
That is the bounty of God.
He gives it to those whom He wishes.
God is endowed with the great bounty.

sābiqū 'ilā maghfiratin min rabbikum wa-jannatin 'arḍuhā ka-'arḍi s-samā'i wa-l-'arḍi 'u'iddat li-lladhīna 'āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihī dhālika faḍlu llāhi yu'tīhi man yashā'u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-'aẓīmī

- 22 No disaster strikes in the land or among yourselves
unless it is in a record,
before We bring it into being.⁷³
That is easy for God—

71 Blomberg, *Interpreting* 84–85 and 92; Hirschfeld, *New researches* 59. According to Charles H. Dodd (d. 1973), “It cannot be pretended that the line can be drawn with any precision between these three classes of parable: figurative sayings (*Bildwörter*), similitudes (*Gleichnisse*), and parables proper (*Parabeln*) ... But one class melts into another ...” (Dodd, *Parables* 7, fn. 1; Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* 16–17; cf. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte* 179–222, esp. 188 (*Gleichnisse u. Verwandtes*)).

72 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* xxii, 417.

73 There are precedents for the shift in pronouns from ‘He’ to ‘We’ in the corpus (e.g., Q 27:60).

mā 'aṣāba min muṣibatin fī l-'arḍi wa-lā fī 'anfusikum 'illā fī kitābin min qabli 'an nabra'ahā 'inna dhālika 'alā llāhi yasīrun

- 23 That you do not grieve for what has escaped you
or are filled with joy at what He has given you.
God does not love any of those who are proud and boastful,

li-kay-lā ta'saw 'alā mā fātakum wa-lā tafraḥū bi-mā 'ātākum wa-llāhu lā yuḥibbu kulla mukhtālin fakhūrin-i

- 24 Who are niggardly and tell the people to be niggardly.
And those who turn away
—God is the All-sufficient and the Laudable.

alladhīna yabkhalūna wa-ya'murūna n-nāsa bi-l-bukhli wa-man yat-awalla fa-'inna llāha huwa l-ghaniyyu l-ḥamīdu

Here again, three features stand out. An imperative formulation opens the complex sermon: “Race^P to ...!” (*sābiqū 'ilā ...*). Similar to the preceding piece, this moral discourse also includes a *mathal*, in this case, a simile. Lastly, and significantly, dual theonyms, Lord (*rabb*) and God (*allāh*), occur in this preaching.

4 Conclusion

Revisiting the analogy of the *musabbiḥāt* to the mixed Psalms, Brevard Childs (d. 2007) acknowledges that “it has long been noticed that certain Psalms are actually only compilations of other Psalms.”⁷⁴ In effect, the compound Psalms are “made up of a catena of Psalms,” as are the *musabbiḥāt*.⁷⁵ This is evident in the *anthological style* and formulaic density of the *musabbiḥāt* cluster.⁷⁶ For this reason, Albert Gelin has recourse to the “method of reinterpretation,” otherwise known as *relecture* (re-reading).⁷⁷ Childs further elaborates,⁷⁸

74 Childs, *Introduction* 514.

75 Childs, *Introduction* 515.

76 Childs, *Introduction* 514.

77 Childs, *Introduction* 514; Clines, *On the way* ii, 680–682; Gelin, *La question* i, 304.

78 Childs, *Introduction* 515; emphasis added.

[T]he Psalms have been loosened from a given cultic context and the words assigned a significance in themselves as sacred scripture. These words of promise could be used in a variety of new contexts. They could be reworked and rearranged in a different situation without losing their meaning ... to articulate new praise to God *through the mediation of older forms*.

Be that as it may, Nicolai Sinai has convincingly posited “a synoptic interpretive habitus on the part of Muḥammad’s followers.”⁷⁹ With this being the case, what may initially appear to be an isolated, fragmentary formulation on the surface may actually go much deeper and serve as an indexical, metonymic marker standing in for a much larger performative text in communal, ritual practice; that is to say, it “functions as a *pars pro toto*.”⁸⁰ Neuwirth rightly draws attention to the fact that “ritual coherence has thus given way to scriptural coherence ... dependent on the mnemonic-technicalities of writing”⁸¹ So, on the one hand, the historian of religion discerns in the *musabbiḥāt* the formation of the community and, on the other hand, the formation of the canon. That being said, the key points for the literary historian of the Quran are their formulaic complexity and generic density. This, however, is a far cry from simply dismissing them as nothing more than mixed compositions. It turns out that the interpretative keys to unlocking the genres of the Quran have all along been safely tucked away deep inside this pocket of self-styled suras. Indeed, as Muslim tradition insists, the *musabbiḥāt* reveal themselves to be far richer and more complex than first thought.⁸² In conclusion, genre, form, and canon criticism combined offer a rare glimpse into the framework of this traditional group of suras, each opening on a liturgical note and closing with words of wisdom. Evidently, the structural similarities begin and end here.⁸³

79 Sinai, Qurʾān 435–436. James Muilenburg (d. 1974) advances a third, conceivable hypothesis: “Yet the literary formulation of these pericopes shows great variety, few of them are in any way a complete reproduction ... What we have here, for the most part, are excerpts or extracts, each complete in itself, to be sure, but refashioned ... But what is more, precisely because the forms and styles are so diverse and are composed with such consummate skill, it is clear that we are dealing with *imitations* of a *Gattung* ... But there are many other passages where the literary genres are being *imitated* ... Let me repeat: in numerous contexts old literary types and forms are *imitated*, and, precisely because they are *imitated*, they are employed with considerable fluidity, versatility, and, if one may venture the term, artistry” (Muilenburg, Form criticism 5–7; emphases added).

80 Sinai, Qurʾān 435.

81 Neuwirth, Sūra(s) v, 172.

82 al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān* iv, 412; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* viii, 5; Juynboll, Ḥadīth 394.

83 In a summative statement on the diachronic development of sura structure, Neuwirth

TABLE 4.1 Genre Boundaries of Q 57: Sūrat al-Ḥadīd (Iron)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 57:1–6	Structural (-īC / -ūC)	<i>sabbaḥa li-</i> (Praise ...)	Perfect Praise Formula Liturgical Formulae: Essential and Relative Predication	Hymn to the Creator of the World	Liturgy
Q 57:7–11	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>‘āminū bi-</i> (Believe ^P in ...!)	Imperative Formulation	Sermon on Char- ity	Wisdom
Q 57:12	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>yawma</i> (On the Day)	Eschatological Formula*	Eschatology*	Debate*
Q 57:13–14	Structural (-āC / -ūC)	<i>yawma</i> (On the Day)	Eschatological Formula*	Eschatology- cum-Counter- discourse*	Debate*
Q 57:15	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>fa-l-yawma</i> (So today)	Eschatological Formula*	Eschatology*	Debate*
Q 57:16	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>‘a-lam ... fa-</i> (Has not ... So ...)	Negative Interrogative Formula*	Polemic*	Debate*
Q 57:17, 20	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>‘ilamū ‘anna</i> (Know ^P that ...!)	Doubled Imperative Formulation	Sermon-cum- <i>mathal</i>	Wisdom
Q 57:18–19	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>‘inna l- ... wa-lladhīna</i> ... (Indeed, the ... And those who ...)	Contrastive Formula*	Polemic*	Debate*
Q 57:21–24	Structural (-īC / -ūC)	<i>sābiqū ‘ilā</i> (Race ^P to ...!)	Imperative Formulation	Sermon-cum- simile	Wisdom
Q 57:25	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>la-qad ‘arsalnā</i> (We sent ...)	Variant Narrative For- mula	Episode	Narrative
Q 57:26–27	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>wa-la-qad ‘arsalnā</i> (And we sent ...)	Variant Narrative For- mula	Episode	Narrative
Q 57:28–29	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>yā-‘ayyuhā lladhīna</i> <i>‘āmanū</i> (O you ^P who believe!)	Vocative Sermon For- mula	Sermon	Wisdom

*Tentative

concludes on the basis of the *seriatim* Weil–Nöldeke chronology, “It is true that, already in later Meccan suras, the distinct tripartite composition often becomes blurred, with narratives gradually being replaced by discursive sections. Some compositions also display secondary expansions—a phenomenon that still needs further investigation. Yet, for the bulk of the middle and late Meccan suras, the claim to a tripartite composition can be sustained. In Medina, however, suras have not only given up their tripartite scheme, but they display much less sophistication in the patterns of their composition” (Neuwirth, *Form and structure* ii, 264; Neuwirth, *Studien* 235–237; Neuwirth, *Sūra(s)* v, 172–174; Neuwirth, *Structural* 110–111; Sinai, *Qur’ān* 416; Stewart, *Wansbrough* 45).

TABLE 4.2 Genre Boundaries of Q 59: Sūrat al-Ḥaṣhr (Exile)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 59:1, 22–24	Structural (-īC / -ūC)	<i>sabbaḥa li-</i> (Praise ...)	Perfect Praise Formula Liturgical Formula: Essential Predication	Hymn to God	Liturgy
Q 59:2–4	Rhyme (-āC)	<i>huwa lladhī</i> (He, who ...)	Liturgical Formula: Relative Predication	Hymn to Victory	Liturgy
Q 59:5–7	Structural (-īC / -āC)	<i>mā</i> (Whatever ...)	<i>mā</i> -cluster*	Law of War: Division of Spoils*	Law*
Q 59:8–10	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>li-l-fuqarā'i</i> (For the poor ...)	Allocation Formula (<i>li-</i>)*	Welfare Law*	Law*
Q 59:10a	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>rabbānā</i> (Our Lord)	Cultic Formula	Collective Prayer	Prayer
Q 59:11–14	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>'a-lam tara 'ilā lladhīna</i> (Have you not considered those who ...)	Counterclaim Formula*	Counter-discourse*	Debate*
Q 59:15–17	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>ka-mathali lladhīna ...</i> <i>ka-mathali ...</i> (Like the paradigm of those who ... is like the paradigm of ...)	Variant Double Substitution Formula	Paradigm	Narrative
Q 59:18–21	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>yā-'ayyuhā lladhīna 'āmanū</i> (O you ^P who believe!)	Vocative Sermon Formula	Sermon	Wisdom

*Tentative

TABLE 4.3 Genre Boundaries of Q 61: Sūrat aṣ-Ṣaff (Ranks)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 61:1	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>sabbaḥa li-</i> (Praise ...)	Perfect Praise Formula	Doxology	Liturgy
Q 61:2–4	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>yā-'ayyuhā lladhīna 'āmanū</i> (O you who believe!)	Vocative Proclamation Formula	Regulatory: Rules of War	Proclamation
Q 61:5	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>wa-'idh</i> (And when)	Narrative Formula	Prophet Report	Narrative
Q 61:6	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>wa-'idh</i> (And when)	Narrative Formula	Prophet Report	Narrative
Q 61:7	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>wa-man 'aḏlamu mīm-mani</i> (And who is more unjust than one who ...)	Interrogative Formula* Minimal pair: Q 2:114 etc.	Worse-than Saying*	Debate*

TABLE 4.3 Genre Boundaries of Q 61: Sūrat aş-Şaff (Ranks) (cont.)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 61:8–9	Rhyme (–ūC)	<i>yurīdūna ... huwa lladhī ...</i> (They want to ... It is He who ...)	Variant Ascriptive Formulation*	Ascription of Ill Intention*	Debate*
Q 61:10–13	Structural (–īC / –ūC): <i>Inclusio</i>	<i>yā-’ayyuhā lladhīna ’āmanū ... wa-bashshiri l-mu’minīna</i> (O you ^P who believe! ... And give ^S good tidings to the believers!)	Minimal pair: Q 9:32–33 Vocative Sermon Formula Minimal pair: pronominal shift from plural to imperative singular: Q 2:223	Sermon on <i>casus fæderis</i>	Wisdom
Q 61:14	Rhyme (–īC)	<i>yā-’ayyuhā lladhīna ’āmanū</i> (O you ^P who believe!)	Vocative Sermon Formula	Sermon	Wisdom

*Tentative

TABLE 4.4 Genre Boundaries of Q 62: Sūrat al-Jumu’a (Congregation)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 62:1–4	Rhyme (–īC)	<i>yusabbiḥu li-</i> (Praises ...)	Imperfect Praise Formula Liturgical Formula (<i>huwa lladhī</i> : He, who ...): Relative Predication	Hymn to the God of Salvation History	Liturgy
Q 62:5	Rhyme (–īC)	<i>mathalu lladhīna ...</i> <i>ka-mathali ...</i> (the paradigm of those who ... is like the paradigm of ...)	Double Substitution Formula	Paradigm	Narrative
Q 62:6–7	Rhyme (–īC)	<i>qul yā-’ayyuhā lladhīna hādū</i> (Say ^S : O you ^P who are Jews)	Isolate Vocative Formulation with <i>qul</i> *	Polemic*	Debate*
Q 62:8	Rhyme (–ūC)	<i>qul ’inna</i> (Say ^S : Indeed ...)	Imperative <i>qul</i> Formula*	Polemical Rejoinder*	Debate*

TABLE 4.4 Genre Boundaries of Q 62: Sūrat al-Jumu'a (Congregation) (*cont.*)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 62:9–11	Structural (-ūC / -īC)	<i>yā-'ayyuhā lladhīna 'āmanū</i> (O you ^P who believe!) with trebled non-eschatological ' <i>idhā</i> -cluster and <i>qul</i> (Say ^S)	Vocative Proclamation Formula Replacement of Voc- ative Particle of Pro- clamation Formula with Imperative <i>qul</i> Formula Minimal pair: Q 17:110	Regulatory: Rules of Order	Proclam- ation
*Tentative					

TABLE 4.5 Genre Boundaries of Q 64: Sūrat at-Taghābun (Mutual Fraud)

Pericope	Cohesion	Formula	Formulation	Form	Genre
Q 64:1–4, 13	Structural (-īC / -ūC)	<i>yusabbiḥu li-</i> (Praises ...)	Imperfect Praise For- mula Liturgical Formula (<i>huwa lladhī</i> : He, who ...): Relative Predication Liturgical Formula (<i>Allāh</i> : God)	Hymn to the Creator of Humanity	Liturgy
Q 64:5–8	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>'a-lam ... fa-</i> (Has not ... So ...)	Negative Interrogative Formula*	Polemic*	Debate*
Q 64:9–12	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>yawma</i> (On the day)	Eschatological Formula*	Eschatology*	Debate*
Q 64:14–15	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>yā-'ayyuhā lladhīna 'āmanū</i> (O you ^P who believe!)	Vocative Proclamation Formula	Regulatory: Rules of Exclu- sion	Proclam- ation
Q 64:16	Rhyme (-ūC)	<i>fa-ttaqū</i> (So fear ^P !)	Imperative Formula- tion*	Apodictic Say- ing*	Wisdom*
Q 64:17–18	Rhyme (-īC)	<i>'in</i> (If ...)	Conditional Formula- tion*	Casuistic Say- ing*	Wisdom*
*Tentative					

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Demons, Jinn and Figures of Evil in the Qurʾān

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For an historian of religions, especially of late antique religions, it is hard to overestimate the importance of demonology and its role in the human imagination. In Late Antiquity (and not only then), everyone believed in “demons” or in “spirits,” and the control of—and the protection from—such beings (at least the malevolent ones, especially in some specific contexts, like wandering in liminal places, eating, having sexual intercourse, childbirth, etc.), was without any doubt a crucial concern for most people. Demons were indeed “the stars of the religious drama of late antiquity.”¹ In various ways, demonology brings us as close as possible to the daily religious practices, and the most shared worldviews, of such ancient communities.

My goal in this paper is to give an overview of Qurʾanic demonology and determine its most salient characteristics. In doing so, I hope to shed some light, not only on Late Antique demonology, but also on the context and genesis of the Qurʾān itself.²

There are three kinds of “figures of evil” in the Qurʾān.³

- 1) Iblīs/Shayṭān
- 2) The demons (*shayāṭīn*)
- 3) The jinn (*jinn*)

Iblīs and Shayṭān are one and the same character (see below); demons and jinn are, in a way, the same beings, and in another way, they are not (how this is possible will be shown later); finally, jinn are ambivalent—there are, so to speak, Muslim jinn and non-Muslim ones.

¹ Brown, *World of Late Antiquity* 54.

² On this topic, see more generally Dye, *Le corpus coranique*.

³ For reasons of space, I leave aside the story of Hārūt and Mārūt (Q 2:102), which appears only once in the Qurʾān (even if the topic of illicit instruction is implicitly present elsewhere). See especially Reeves, *Some Explorations*; idem, *Resurgent Myth*; idem, *Some Parascriptural*; Crone, *Book of Watchers*; Reed, *Fallen Angels*.

1 Iblīs/Shayṭān

The name Iblīs,⁴ except in two occurrences (Q 26:95; 34:20, featuring the formula *junūd iblīs*, “the soldiers of Iblīs”), always appears in connection with only one specific story, the prostration of the angels: see Q 2:34; 7:10–18; 15:26–43; 17:61–63; 18:50; 20:116; 38:71–85.

The story is well-known and has been studied by various scholars:⁵ God orders the angels to prostrate before Adam, but one of them, Iblīs, refuses, because he was made of fire (*nār*), i.e. a noble stuff, and not of clay (*ṭīn*) or mud (*ṣalṣāl*, *ḥama'*), like Adam (Q 7:12; 15:32; 17:61; 38:76). Therefore, he is higher than Adam, and should not prostrate before him. Because of Iblīs' refusal, God curses him and banishes him from heaven. Sometimes a dialogue between the devil and God is added: once Iblīs is cursed, and the decision of his banishment is taken, he (successfully) negotiates with God the possibility of becoming a tempter for humans, until the day of Judgment (Q 7:14–17; 15:36–40; 17:62–63; 38:79–83).

The story of the prostration of the angels and the devil's refusal has undoubtedly Christian origins.⁶ It first appears in a first-second century CE text (the *Life of Adam and Eve*, see §§ 11–17 of the Latin, Armenian and Georgian versions),⁷ and is found in a series of later texts, like (among others) the *Questions of Bartholomew* (Greek, second-third century), the *Apocalypse of Sedrach* (Greek, probably third-fourth century), the Coptic *Encomium on Saint Michael the Archangel* (attributed to Theodosius of Alexandria, sixth century), and the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (sixth century). Here is an excerpt from the Armenian version:

4 On the complex origin of this name, see Reynolds, A Reflection 680–682. The term most probably comes from Greek *diabolos*, through an Aramaic intermediary, and was later submitted to the well-known Qur'anic process of assimilating proper names to one another (Mūsā/ʿIsā/Yahyā, Ismāʿīl/Ibrāhīm, Iblīs/Idrīs).

5 See e.g. Reynolds, *Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext* 39–54; Pohlmann, *Entstehung des Korans* 85–152; Azaiez et al. (ed.), *Qur'an Seminar* 58–67; Tesei, Fall of Iblīs; Segovia, Encrypted Adamic Christology; Dye, Problème synoptique, 252–261. See also the commentaries of the relevant Qur'anic passages in Amir-Moezzi & Dye (ed.), *Coran des historiens*, vol. 2a & 2b.

6 On the history of this narrative, see Minov, Satan's Refusal. On the links with Enochic traditions, see Tesei, Fall of Iblīs.

7 The Greek version of the *Life* does not feature the episode of the prostration of the angels, but there are reasons to think that the text was originally written in Greek and that the Greek *Vorlage* of the *Life* mentioned this episode. See Stone, Fall of Satan 153–156.

Satan also wept loudly and said to Adam. "All my arrogance and sorrow came to pass because of you; for, because of you I went forth from my dwelling; and because of you I was alienated from the throne of the cherubs who, having spread out a shelter, used to enclose me; because of you my feet have trodden the earth." Adam replied and said to him, "What are our sins against you, that you did all this to us?" Satan replied and said, "You did nothing to me, but I came to this measure because of you, on the day on which you were created, for I went forth on that day. When God breathed his spirit into you, you received the likeness of his image. Thereupon, Michael came and made you bow down before God. God said to Michael, "Behold I have made Adam in the likeness of my image." Then Michael summoned all the angels and God said to them, "Come, bow down to god whom I made." Michael bowed first. He called me and said, "You too, bow down to Adam." I said, "Go away, Michael! I shall not bow down to him who is posterior to me, for I am former. Why is it proper for me to bow down to him?" The other angels, too, who were with me, heard this, and my words seemed pleasing to them and they did not prostrate themselves to you, Adam. Thereupon, God became angry with me and commanded to expel us from our dwelling and to cast me and my angels, who were in agreement with me, to the earth; and you were at the same time in the Garden."⁸

Determining if the *Life of Adam and Eve* is originally Jewish or Christian does not matter much here, but it seems that the prostration of the angels was originally a Jewish motif which was specifically appropriated by Christian traditions, whereas Late Antique Rabbinic sources reversed the story. For example, according to *Genesis Rabbah* 8:10 (on Gen 1:26–27), when God created Adam in His image, the angels wanted to worship him by telling "Holy" before him, but God made Adam fall asleep: the angels understood that Adam was a mortal and refrained from an erroneous act of worship. The Qurʾān, on this point (and many others as well), has thus decidedly a Christian background, but the way the story is appropriated is very significant.

We can disregard some details and focus on the *roles* the stories are supposed to play. In this regard, the Qurʾān is particularly close to its Christian subtexts. This story is, above all, an etiological myth, about the existence of evil in the world. Once evil is considered as the consequence of the action of Satan—because of him, men diverge from the right path (troubles began early, with

8 The Life of Adam and Eve, Armenian version 12.1–16.1, in Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* 10–12.

Adam's Fall)—, it is necessary to explain how and why Satan, who was created originally as good (as everything is supposed to be in God's creation), behaves the way he does. In other words: *how* is it possible for the devil to tempt humans, and *why* does he display such an enmity to humans?

Christian versions of the story explain why the devil wants to tempt humans and makes them err, recording, for example, a dialog wherein Satan explains to Adam that his enmity towards humanity is simply the consequence of the fact that, because of him, he was expelled from heaven (see e.g. the *Life of Adam and Eve* 12–13, quoted above). More generally, Syriac homiletic literature, even when it does not mention the episode of the prostration of the angels, insists on Satan's envy towards Adam as the driving force in his behaviour.⁹ The Qur'ān, on the other hand, is much more allusive: it only tells that Iblīs “prided himself” (*istakbara*, Q 2:34; 7:13; 38:75), and blamed God for misleading him (Q 7:16).

The Qur'ān does not contain any dialogue about the “why,” but it has a dialogue about the “how,” which, as far as I know, is absent from the Christian versions of the story¹⁰ (but an exhaustive examination of the Late Antique homiletic literature would be welcome). Once cursed and expelled, Satan asks God's permission to be a tempter for humans, until the Day of Judgment (Q 7:14–17; 15:36–40; 17:62–63; 38:79–83). Here the Qur'ān makes an explicit theological point: if Satan tests and tempts humans, it is only because God grants him this possibility—until, of course, God fills hell with Satan, the demons, and the humans who followed them.

Another crucial dimension of the story pertains to the problem of the hierarchy between men and angels: angels should be superior to men, since they were created earlier, from a nobler stuff, and are closer to God's throne. The episode of the prostration of the angels reverses this hierarchy. Christian versions are all based on the idea that Adam was created as God's image, and that he is an antetype (not an antitype) of Christ: the angelic prostration before Adam anticipates the angelic worship of Christ (Heb 1:6). The debates about the prominence of this “Adamic Christology” in the Qur'ān, and the various

9 See Narsai, *On the Making of Creatures* 1:221–240 and *On the Making of Adam and Eve, and on the Transgression of the Commandment* 4:101–125, in Gignoux, *Homélies de Narsai sur la création*, 540–541, 616–617; Jacob of Serugh, *Hymn on the Creation of Man* 126–128, in Boulos Sony, *Hymne sur la création* 196–198.

10 There are parallels, however, in other Biblical and parabiblical narratives: e.g. Job 1:6–27, where God allows Satan to tempt Job (see Q 38:41); *Jubilees* 10:1–14 and the negotiation between Mastema, the head of demonic entities, and God. See Tesei, *Fall of Iblīs* 71–73.

subtexts involved, do not concern us here.¹¹ The way the Qur'ān modifies the story, however, is very relevant.

Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann has provided excellent arguments for the following intra-Qur'anic chronology: Q 38:71–85 > 15:26–43 > 7:11–24 > 20:115–123 > 2:30–38.¹² There is one story, rewritten or alluded to several times, and slightly modified. For example, the idea that God had breathed His spirit into Adam is present only in the two earliest versions (Q 38:72; 15:29) but vanishes in the later ones. This is highly significant, since in the Christian narratives, the angels bow down *because* Adam was created in God's image. Strikingly enough, however, the Qur'ān does not mention the reason behind God's command. Should we suppose that the absence of such a reason is simply derived from the very allusive character of the Qur'anic corpus, and that it was unnecessary to tell the audience what they already knew perfectly well about Adam as *imago dei*? That would make sense for the narratives in suras 15 and 38. However, the idea that Adam was created in God's image (and so deserved to see the angels bow down to him) arguably became, at some point, so sensitive for the author(s) of the corpus that it was better to remain silent about it.¹³

In fact, only the latest version of the story, namely Q 2:30–33 (a narrative partly based on Jewish traditions,¹⁴ which is unparalleled in the Qur'ān), implicitly gives some rationale behind the angels' prostration: since the angels do not know how to answer the question raised by God (about the names of the animals), while Adam was given the answer, the angels appear inferior to Adam. This is done, however, at the expense of Adam too: in the Bible, it was he who named the animals (Gen 2:19–20), whereas in the Qur'anic version, it is God who teaches him the names of animals. The text insists therefore on a gap between God and Adam, who receives all his knowledge from God only.

In other words, there is a story of Christian origins, which is progressively "de-christianized" *inside* the Qur'anic corpus itself. This leads to some contradictions: for example, in suras 15 and 38, God orders the angel to prostrate just

11 See Reynolds, *Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext* 51–54; Segovia, *Encrypted Adamic Christology* 916–922.

12 See Pohlmann, *Entstehung des Korans* 114–153, and also Witztum, *Variant Traditions*. Two words of cautions are in order here. First, the chronology of the pericopes does not necessarily mirror the chronology of the whole suras. Second, it is a relative chronology. Like Pohlmann, I do not endorse the usual Meccan/Medinan partition, which presupposes that all the Qur'anic texts record Muḥammad's preaching.

13 For a vindication of a non-harmonizing reading of Qur'anic parallel passages, see Dye, *Problème synoptique* 245–252.

14 See Reynolds, *Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext* 46–48.

after Adam is created (following the narrative of the *Life of Adam and Eve*), whereas in sura 2, the prostration takes place after the exchanges between God, Adam and the angels. This latter version reminds one of the *Cave of Treasures* 2:10–24, where God creates Adam in his likeness, but does not yet command the angels to bow down. It is only once several creatures bow down to Adam when they hear him pronouncing their names and once the angels hear God proclaim that he has made Adam king and ruler of the creation (in Q 2:30, he is made *khalīfā*, “vice-regent”), that the angels bow down.¹⁵

Another interesting feature in the Qur'anic appropriation of this story concerns the nature of Iblīs, who is, of course, an angel (*malāk*) (Q 2:34; 7:11; 15:30–31; 17:61; 20:116; 38:74). However, in Q 18:50–51, Iblīs is identified as “one of the jinn” (*min al-jinn*).¹⁶ This statement (which looks like a later addition) is strange, and one wonders if it should imply that the jinn are a subgroup among the angels. However, since the angels are supposed to be good, their core activity being praying and glorifying God (Q 7:206; 39:75; 40:7; 42:5; this is a Biblical motif, see e.g. Isa 6:3), this passage might try to neutralize a theologically delicate idea (an angel who does not glorify God) by making Iblīs a jinn.¹⁷

Another shared point between the Qur'ān and Christian traditions pertains to the name of the devil. Clearly, Iblīs and Shayṭān are one and the same character—Iblīs while he is still in paradise, Shayṭān after his fall (Q 2:36–38; 7:20–23; 17:64–65; 20:117–123).¹⁸ A change of name is also present in some Syriac traditions (see *Cave of Treasures* 3:6), which explain that the devil took other names (Saṭanā, Shēdā, Daywā) after he disobeyed God and was expelled from Paradise.

The general Qur'anic image of the devil (al-Shayṭān), in line with his deleterious behavior in the fall of Adam, is no surprise: he is the clear enemy (of

15 See Segovia, *Encrypted Adamic Christology* 918.

16 See also Q 15:27, which mentions the creation of the jinn and is immediately followed by the episode of the prostration of the angels.

17 See Bjerregaard Mortensen, *Commentaire de la sourate 18 (al-Kahf)* 712–713.

18 About the name Shayṭān: there is an Arabic root, SH-Ṭ-N, which means “fetching water from a well by means of a bucket and a rope,” and Arabic *shayṭān* means “rope” and, metaphorically, “serpent, snake.” This *shayṭān* has etymologically nothing to do with the *shayṭān* of the Qur'ān, even if the homonymy is a good device for equating Satan and the snake in the Garden. The word *shayṭān* for “devil” certainly comes from Geez *säyṭan* (“devil, demon, adversary,” pl. *säyṭan*, *säyṭanat*, itself coming from Aramaic *sātānā* and Hebrew *śāṭān*). In Geez and Arabic, this is a common name, not a proper name like Iblīs. Note also Geez *rəgum*, “cursed” (*säyṭanä rägimo*, “by cursing Satan”): it makes sense to understand *al-Shayṭān al-rağüm* not as “the stoned Satan,” but as “the cursed Satan.” On these issues, see Kropp, *The Ethiopic Satan*.

man), the “manifest foe” (Q 2:168; 6:142; 7:22; 12:5; 17:53; 43:62); a tempter (Q 2:36; 7:20, 27); someone who leads astray (Q 4:60, 120; 47:25), making bad things for humans enticing in their eyes (Q 16:63; 27:24), or making humans forget the signs and the remembrance of God (Q 6:68; 58:19). He is an ungrateful and rebellious being (Q 17:27; 19:44), someone who provokes strife between men (Q 17:53). There is also a reminder which is often repeated: “do not follow the steps of Satan” (Q 2:168, 208), “do not be friends or followers of Satan and his comrades” (Q 4:38, 76, 83, 119), and of course, “seek refuge and protection—from Satan—in God only” (Q 3:36; 15:17; 16:98).

Very significantly, the Qurʾān follows the standard Christian conceptualisation of the devil, where the *satan* is not only, like in the Old Testament, the opponent, the adversary—referring almost always to a human being, not a supernatural one (except in 1 Chr 21:1; Jb 1–2; Zac 3:1–2), but above all the *enemy* of God, of the believers, and more generally of man, the “homicide right from the beginning,” since, by leading Adam to disobey, he introduced death into the human race (e.g. Jn 8:44; Rm 5:12), the *tempter par excellence* (e.g. Mc 1:12–13; Mt 4:1–11; Lk 4:1–13; 1 Jn 3:8; 1 Cor 7:5), the *liar* (e.g. Jn 8:44), and the *instigator* of evil deed, and also of evil knowledge.¹⁹

19 It is a *topos* from the heresiographical literature that the devil and the demons are the beings who teach heresies. This *topos* is based, among other texts, on Tim 4:1: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.” Two examples in the Christian literature, among many. First, Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 40.1–2: “The question will arise: by whom is to be interpreted the sense of the passages which make for heresies? By the devil, of course, to whom pertain those wiles which pervert the truth, and who, by the mystic rites of his idols, vies even with the essential portions of the sacraments of God.” Second, Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV.41.2: “Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy sons of the devil and angels of the wicked one (*maligni*). For [the word] son, as one before me has observed, has a twofold meaning: one [is a son] in the order of nature, because he was born a son; the other, in that he was made so, is reputed a son, although there be a difference between being born so and being made so. For the first is indeed born from the person referred to; but the second is made so by him, whether as respects his creation or by the teaching of his doctrine. For when any person has been taught from the mouth of another, he is termed the son of him who instructs him, and the latter [is called] his father. According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God. But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in Him and do His will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil.” On the long story of demonology and illicit instruction, see Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History* 160–189.

2 The *shayāṭīn*

Besides the character of al-Shayṭān, there is the demon “in general,” *shayṭān*, or the demons, the *shayāṭīn*. This is the same word—either in a collective/indefinite use, or in the plural. The Qur’anic demons pursue the same agenda as the devil and behave like him. A few ideas come up regularly:

First, the demons (like Satan) are liars (Q 26:221–223). They lure and deceive the unbelievers:²⁰

Say: “Shall we call on what does not benefit us nor harm us, instead of God (alone), and turn back on our heels after God has guided us?—Like the one who the demons have lured on the earth, (and he is) confused, though he has companions who call him to the guidance ...” (Q 6:71)

Don’t you see that We have set the demons on the unbelievers to confound them with confusion? (Q 19:83)

Second, the unbelievers have a close relationship with demons:

And when they fall in with those who believe, they say: We believe; but when they go apart to their demons they declare: Lo! we are with you. (Q 2:14).

In other words, the demons are the *allies* (or, according to another possible translation, the *patrons*) of the unbelievers, as if the demons and the unbelievers had concluded a pact:

Surely We have made demons allies (*awliyā*) of those who do not believe (Q 7:27; see also 7:30; 41:25; 43:36).

According to the dualistic (and deeply eschatological) worldview of the Qur’ān, the believers, therefore, should fight the unbelievers, who are the allies of the demons (Q 4:76). Of course, both the unbelievers and the demons will end up together in hell (Q 19:68).²¹

20 I follow Droge’s translations, with minor modifications at times.

21 In late antique Christianity, fighting the demons, their seduction and temptation, involved various devices, including unceasing prayer (see e.g. Bitton-Ashkelony, *Demons and Prayers*; idem, ‘Neither Beginning nor End’). It is significant that prayer is used for fighting demons in the Qur’ān (Q 3:36; see also Q 113 and 114, which might be understood as referring to demonic beings of some sort), and that the Qur’ān refers to unceasing prayer: see

In addition to these basic and recurrent ideas about demons, some verses introduce other points, like the idea that demons can enter the body while one is eating illicit food:

Do not eat that over which the name of God has not been mentioned. Surely it is wickedness indeed! Surely the demons inspire their allies, so that they may dispute with you. If you obey them, surely you will be associators (*mushrikūn*) indeed! (Q 6:121)

The presence, in the same verse, of such a dietary rule, immediately followed by a remark about demons and associators, suggests that eating illicit food means associating oneself with (having commerce with, or submitting to) the demons. This evokes a famous passage from the New Testament, namely 1 Cor 10:19–21:

Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

Of course, Paul takes issue here with eating food consecrated to idols (that is, banqueting in temples), rather than eating food not consecrated to God (there should theoretically be a third category, namely food neither consecrated to God nor to the idols). However, this kind of concern does not remain marginal in the Christian tradition. For example, some decades after the beginning of the Arab conquests, Athanasius of Balad, patriarch of Antioch between 683 and 687, writes:

For a terrible report about dissipated Christians has come to the hearing of our humble self. Greedy men, who are slaves of the belly, are heedlessly and senselessly taking part with the pagans in feasts together, wretched

Q 20:33–34 and especially Q 108, a sura which, according to some interpretations, means that the prayer has the power to defeat the devil. This is in any case the reading of Luxenberg, *Syro-Aramaic* 292–295, and Kropp, *Commentary of Q 108*. Martin Baasten, who convincingly argues for a similar reading of Q 108, denies, however, that *šāniʿaka* (“your adversary,” v. 3) refers specifically to the devil (see Baasten, *Syriac Reading* 378). My own impression is that even if the term could have a broader meaning, the devil remains the adversary *par excellence*, and it is therefore tempting to think that he is targeted (or at least is among the targets) in this sura.

women mingle anyhow with the pagans unlawfully and indecently, and all at times eat without distinction from their sacrifices. They are going astray in their neglect of the commandments and rules of the apostles who often would cry out about this to those who believe in Christ, that they should distance themselves from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood, and from the food of pagan sacrifices, lest they be by this associates of the demons and of their unclean table.²²

Three points at least are particularly noteworthy about this text. First, it associates eating illicit food with having commerce with demons and pagans, exactly like 1 Cor 10:19–21 and Q 6:121. Second, its commandments and rules come from Acts 15:29, a verse which is also found behind the Qur'anic commandments themselves (e.g. Q 5:5). Third, it condemns Christians who share meals (and have sex) with those who might be called, somewhat anachronistically, the “Muslims.” This text, therefore, aims at building, or strengthening, community boundaries. This is precisely what Q 6:121 is doing, with similar arguments. There is an additional ambiguity in the Qur'ān since the term *mushrikūn* (associators) remains quite vague and open to reinterpretation. The Qur'ān and Athanasius, anyway, share here the same worldview, and use similar rhetoric.

Two further aspects of Qur'anic demonology, to which we shall return in the next section, deserve a special mention. One pertains to the character of Solomon. Like Jewish and Christian traditions, the Qur'ān describes him as a master of demons:²³

And to Solomon (We subjected) the wind, blowing strongly at his command to the land which We have blessed (...). And among the demons, (there were) those who dived for him, and did other work besides; and We were watching over them. (Q 21:81–82, see also Q 38:36–38)

It is often thought that the Qur'ān alludes here to the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, where Solomon subdues the demons and makes them build the Temple. The earliest attestation of this story is found in the *Testament of Solomon*, a first or second (maybe early third) century CE Christian text, com-

22 Athanasius of Balad, *Lettre du bienheureux patriarche Athanase: qu'aucun chrétien ne doit manger (une partie) des sacrifices des Arabes qui dominent maintenant*, in Nau, *Littérature canonique* 128–129.

23 On the figure of Solomon, see. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King*; Verheyden (ed.), *The Figure of Solomon*.

posed in Greek, which uses material from first century Palestinian Judaism.²⁴ However, other Biblical texts allude to Solomon's building activity:

So Solomon rebuilt Gezer and lower Bethhoron and Baalath and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah. (1 Kg 9:18)

[Solomon] built Tadmor in the wilderness. (2 Chr 8:4)

Initially, the Biblical text probably referred to Tamar, in southern Judah, but the popular imagination identified the Tadmor/Tamar with Palmyra, in the Syrian desert.²⁵ It is therefore not impossible that the Qur'ān might refer here to the building of Palmyra.

The other story is cosmological. According to the Qur'ān, the sky is protected from demons:

Certainly We have made constellations (*burūj*) in the sky and made them appear enticing for the onlookers, and We have protected them from every accursed demon (*shayṭān rajīm*), except any who listen surreptitiously, then a clear flame (*shihāb*, i.e. a comet) pursues him (*fa-'atba'ahū shihābun mubīn*). (Q 15:16–18, see also Q 37:6–7; 41:12; 67:5)

The idea that heaven, more precisely the lower heaven (since there are seven heavens (Q 2:29; 17:44; 23:86; 41:12; 65:12; 67:3; 71:15)), is decorated with the stars is found elsewhere in the Qur'ān (Q 21:32; 25:61; 37:6). One passage explains why heaven should be protected from demons:

Certainly We have made the lower heaven appear enticing by means of the splendor of the stars (*kawākib*), and We have made them a means of protection from every rebellious demon (*shayṭān mārid*), (so) they do not listen to the Exalted Assembly, but they are pelted from every side, driven off—for them is a perpetual chastisement—, except for the one who snatches a word, then a piercing flame pursues him (*fa-'atba'ahū shihābun thāqīb*). (Q 37:6–10)

This passage has been examined in detail in a recent study by Patricia Crone, so I will not delve too much into it²⁶ and will only highlight a few elements.

24 See Duling, Testament of Solomon, especially 939–943 on the language and the dating.

25 See Pinckney Stetkevych, Solomon and Mythic Kingship 9–10.

26 Crone, Commentary of Q 37:6–11 (QS 32).

The idea that demons try to penetrate the heavens and are then repelled by the stars or the divine beings is Zoroastrian (*Dādestāni dēnīg* 36:15 ff.). There are, however, notable differences between the Zoroastrian cosmological myths and the Qur'ān. For example, the Zoroastrian cosmology divides the sky into three parts: the bottom third is connected to darkness and Ahriman, the middle third is where stands the human race—and where it has to fight demons—the top third is where Ohrmazd resides, and where demons are not allowed to enter. More significantly, there is a substantial difference concerning the fixed and the mobile heavenly bodies: the fixed stars represent Ohrmazd, whereas the mobile comets and planets are part of the evil forces of Ahriman. In the Qur'ān, the comets are, on the contrary, the weapons used by God to chase demons away.

The possible Zoroastrian origin of this cosmological picture has therefore been mediated by other traditions. The demons' attempt to listen to the council of God, on the other hand, recalls the *Testament of Solomon* (20:11–13):

Then I [Solomon] ordered Ornias to be brought to me again and I asked him: "Tell me how you know that the young man will die in three days." He responded: "We demons go up to the firmament of heaven, fly around among the stars, and hear the decisions which issue from God concerning the lives of men. The rest of the time we come and, being transformed, cause destruction, whether by domination, or by fire, or by sword, or by chance."²⁷

Here again, there are significant differences: in the Qur'ān, demons are not celestial or astral beings, whereas, in the *Testament of Solomon*, demons reside in stars, or are heavenly bodies (*Test. Sol.* 18:1–5). Moreover, in the *Testament of Solomon*, demons are not chased away: they are simply unable to ascend, and they fall down "like leaves from a tree" (*Test. Sol.* 20:14–17).

Given the nature of the evidence, and the fact that stories about demons are liable to circulate and be transformed in a wide variety of contexts (confessional and popular), it would be unwise to look for a specific textual source for such Qur'ānic ideas, at least as our investigations stand at present.

27 Duling, *Testament of Solomon* 983. A similar idea (demons try to know or guess the future) is found elsewhere, for example in the *Babylonian Talmud*, Gittin 68a.

3 The Jinn

Let us now have a look at the jinn. Jinn are well-known characters from pre-Islamic Arab mythology.²⁸ Numerous studies have described the pre-Islamic beliefs about these beings, which can be summarized as follows.²⁹

Jinn are spirits. They are not made from flesh and blood, but they are physical: they can eat and drink, and they can be wounded or killed. They are normally invisible, yet they are said to take various shapes (generally a wild animal, sometimes a domestic one).³⁰ They can be male or female and have human sexual partners (and even marry them); they also can have offspring. Like humans, they are divided into clans and tribes: in a word, their society mirrors the human society. They can be of various types (*‘ifrīt, ghūl, mārid ...*). Their abode is often the desert, and more generally liminal places (old ruins, graveyards, dark places, places of filth like latrines). However, they can be found too in areas rich in water and vegetation (trees, thickets, springs and wells, though the association of spirits with springs and wells seems more common in Syria and Palestine than in Arabia), and in wasteland. They might be present in human habitations, where they would generally appear as snakes.

Jinn can interfere in many ways in human life. They are responsible for mysterious phenomena (noises in the night or the desert, mirages), they cause illness or madness—a *majnūn* (madman) is someone possessed by a jinn. They disturb sexual functions (impotence, sterility), and can even abduct people. On the other hand, jinn possess secret knowledge and can inspire soothsayers,

28 Arabic *jinn* (as a collective), *jinnī* (as a singular), *jānn* (as a collective and singular). Much ink has been spilled on the etymology of the word. Medieval lexicographers, followed by some modern scholars, give it a purely Arabic origin and derive it from *janna*, “to cover, hide, veil,” the *jinn* being therefore a “hidden, mysterious being.” Other scholars see it as a loanword, related to Geez *gānen*, “demon,” or rather, according to what is perhaps the most widespread hypothesis, to Aramaic *genyā*, feminine *genītā*, “demon” (also Aramaic *genyātā*, “pagan shrines,” and “female divinities” as well): see Albright, Review 318–321; idem., Islam 292–293. Relying on his etymological analysis, Albright also argues that “the *jinn* themselves were probably introduced into the Arabic folklore in the Late pre-Islamic period” (Islam 292). It is possible (but not certain) that the word *jinn* is a late pre-Islamic loan from the Aramaic linguistic and cultural area, but it is hard to believe that the notion of “(benevolent or malevolent) spirit” was unknown in Arabia before that time.

29 The following paragraphs take up Dye & Reynolds, Commentaire de la sourate 72 (*al-Jinn*) 1856–1858. For more references on the topic, see Wellhausen, *Reste* 147–159, 211–214; Eichler, *Dschinne, Teufel und Engel*; Tritton, *Demons and Spirits*; Henninger, *Beliefs in Spirits*; Tengour, *L’Arabie des djinn*. I closely follow Henninger, *Beliefs in Spirits* 26–38.

30 Can they also take a human form? It is the case in present-day Islam, but it is hard to know if it was so for pre-Islamic jinn. See Henninger, *Beliefs in Spirits* 29.

poets, and musicians. In short, jinn appear as mysterious and powerful beings, quite unpredictable, which can be harmful (if hostile) but sometimes helpful (if friendly), and against whom protection would be highly desirable. In many ways, they are similar to the demons and spirits of many other folklores—for example the demons of Late Antique Judaism.³¹

Some of these characteristics of the jinn can be found in the Qur'ān, like the ideas that poets, magicians, or soothsayers are possessed (*majnūn*) and inspired (see the polemics against God's messengers: Q 15:6; 26:27; 37:36; 44:14; 51:39, 52; 52:29; 54:9; 68:2, 51; 81:22; and the so-called *taḥaddī* verses: Q 10:38; 11:13; 17:88–89; 52:34), or that jinn can be involved in sexual assault (Q 55:56, 74; possibly Q 19:18)—all these passages display an unambiguous negative attitude towards the jinn. However, the Qur'anic pericopes about the jinn do not even try to reflect the intended audience's conception of the jinn: their aim is simply to *implement* a certain number of new or different beliefs and attitudes about the jinn. The Qur'ān displays a very consistent and monolithic rhetorical purpose, which amounts to a systematic demonization of the jinn: from dangerous but, from a moral point of view, rather neutral beings, they become *almost* always amoral and bad creatures, powerless in comparison to God—in short, they simply look like the demons, *as viewed by Christianity*.

In other words, the way the Qur'ān treats jinn perfectly mirrors a well-known fact in the history of religions, namely how Christianity reinterpreted a whole category of beings (sometimes called the *Zwischenwesen*³² or *Mittelwesen*,³³ the “interstitial” or “intermediary” beings which occupy a space between men and God, like *daimones*, spirits, monsters and, in some cases, the deities of polytheism) as belonging specifically to the realm of evil. The existence of such beings was an accepted and widespread cultural fact in Antiquity. What the Qur'ān is doing about the jinn—following what mainstream Christian discourse did about *Zwischenwesen* or *Mittelwesen*—is to *demonize* them, to acknowledge their existence, and at the same time provide a new description and characterization, which partly follows the traditional understanding of the jinn, but partly replaces it with new ideas and assessments: the jinn are now the actors of new stories, they are integrated into a new cosmology and a new image of the world; they are located inside a new hierarchical framework.³⁴ Listing what

31 See Bohak, *Conceptualizing Demons*.

32 On this concept, see e.g. Sonik, *Mesopotamian Conceptions*.

33 See Eichler, *Dschinne, Teufel und Engel* 30–32.

34 My claim about such a process of demonization/infernalization of the jinn is not original. See Crone, *Commentary of Q 37:6–11 (QS 32)* 310, and O'Meara, *From Space to Place*. My discussion differs from theirs in various respects, however.

the Qur'ān tells about the jinn, and comparing it to what it tells about Shayṭān or the demons, will make that clear.

First, according to the Qur'ān, unbelievers ascribe associates (*shurakā'*)—the jinn—to God (Q 6:100). They are also said to worship the jinn (Q 34:41) or to assert a parenthood (*nasab*) between God and the jinn (Q 37:158). Yet there is absolutely no evidence that it was an Arabian practice to worship jinn, or that jinn were put on a similar level as the deities of the Arabian pantheon(s). The Qur'ān performs here a re-description, a reinterpretation, of practices, in order to condemn them. In this case, the rhetorical strategy is limp— and it fits the typical Christian (especially missionary) *topos*: (real or imaginary) polytheist practices are assimilated to idol worship, idol worship is then described as demon worship (see Dt 32:17; 1 Cor 10:20; Ps 106:37; Ba 4:7), which is designated here as jinn worship.

Second, jinn, like humans (and like any creature with reason and choice), are answerable for their sins and will be judged at the end of times (Q 6:128, 130; 7:38; 41:25, 29; 55:39). This puts them on a par with demons since demons will be judged too (Q 19:68). Like demons, unbeliever jinn are doomed to Gehenna (Q 7:179). Such passages highlight the power of God on the creation (Q 51:56), and stress that all creatures, including demons or jinn, are powerless before God.

Third, men are wrong in seeking refuge with jinn:

True, there were persons among mankind who took shelter with persons among the jinn, but they increased their foolishness (*rahaq*), and they thought, like you, that God will not raise up anyone. (Q 72:6)

In short, the jinn are not only bad allies, since they provide no help, but they do even worse: they drive people into error by denying resurrection. It is exactly the same with demons: the demons are the allies of the unbelievers (Q 2:14; 7:27, 30; 41:25; 43:36), and they are liars (Q 26:221–223) who lure the unbelievers (Q 6:71; 19:83).

Fourth: there are two different stories, which are narrated several times in the Qur'ān, sometimes involving the demons and sometimes the jinn. These stories are not indigenous to Western Arabia, and in principle, they should involve demons only. The first one concerns Solomon and his building activities. As we saw in various passages (Q 21:81–82; 38:36–38), the Qur'ān explains that Solomon subdues the demons and makes them erect a building. The same story is mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān, this time with the jinn in the starring role:

And to Solomon (We subjected) the wind, its morning was a month's (journey), and its evening was a month's (journey), and We made a spring of molten brass to follow for him. And among the jinn, (there were) those who worked for him by the permission of his Lord. Whoever of them turns aside from Our command—We shall make him taste the punishment of the blazing (Fire). (Q 34:12)

Solomon's command over the jinn is also referred to in verses 22–25 of a famous pre-Islamic poem by al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī (active 570–600 CE)—a panegyric to the king of al-Hirāh, al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mundhir (r. 580–602). Al-Nābighah praises his patron and claims that no one compares to him

(22) Except for Sulaymān, when God said to him: "Take charge of my creatures and restrain them from sin.

(23) And subdue the jinn, for I have allowed them to build Tadmur with stone slabs and [lofty] columns.

(24) Then whoever obeys you, reward his obedience in due measure and guide him on righteousness' path.

(25) And whoever defies you, chastise him with a chastisement that will deter the evil-doer."³⁵

There was, therefore (at least if we consider that the gist of the poem is authentic), a pre-Qur'anic Arabian legend featuring Solomon and the jinn building Palmyra. It is thus possible (but not necessary) that the Qur'anic passages speaking of the demons working for Solomon refer to the same event (and not the building of the Temple). Moreover, Jewish and Christian traditions describe Solomon as a master of the demons, and he is also described, in the Qur'ān (like in al-Nābighah's poem), as a master of the jinn:

Gathered before Solomon were his forces—jinn, and men, and birds—and they were arranged (in rows). (Q 27:17, see also 27:39)

The second example pertains to the issue of demons trying to listen to the divine council, or the Exalted Assembly (*al-mala' al-'ālā*) (Q 15:16–18; 37:6–7; 41:12; 67:5). The jinn try to do the same:

35 Arabic text and English translation in Pinckney Stetkevych, *Solomon and Mythic Kingship* 7–8. On the whole poem, see idem, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy* 1–47.

And that we touched the sky and found it filled with harsh guards and piercing flames. And that we used to sit there on seats to listen (in), but whoever listens now finds a piercing flame (*shihāb*) lying in wait for him. (Q 72:8–9)

Demons and jinn are thus used interchangeably. Jinn behave like demons—even in stories, like the one on the divine council, where they are not supposed to have anything to do.

The formula “we used to sit there on seats to listen (in)” (*wa-‘annā kunnā naq‘udu minhā maqā‘ida li-s-sam‘i*) is certainly significant. It means that the jinn, *before*, had the opportunity to listen to the divine council. The most obvious implication is that the jinn *were* angels and are now *fallen angels* of some kind. It does not imply that the Qur’ān relies here on specific traditions from the Book of Enoch—this could only imply that the demons are the offspring of the fallen angels or are conflated with the fallen angels (and so are the jinn, who are assimilated to demons). This might make sense, since Satan (a fallen angel, for sure) is also described as a jinn in the Qur’ān.³⁶ It seems therefore that demons, jinn, and fallen angels are not always clearly distinguishable,³⁷ and in a way, they need not be, since the point of the Qur’ān is not to provide a consistent and comprehensive demonology, angelology or cosmology: it is rather to reinterpret and demonize the *Zwischenwesen* or *Mittelwesen*.

This demonization, however, knows a significant exception. In two places (Q 46:29–34; 72:1–15), the Qur’ān mentions jinn who are believers.³⁸ In sura 46, some jinn, who had listened to the Qur’ān, or the predication (*yastamī‘ūna l-qur’ān*), come back to their people (the other jinn), warn them about the Last

36 See Tesei, *The Fall of Iblis* 73–76, and especially p. 75 on the conflation between demons and fallen angels in the Christian post-Enochic traditions. On the debates concerning the identification of jinn and fallen angels, see Commentary of Q 72 (QS 41), in Azaiez et al. (ed.), *Qur’an Seminar* 385–398.

37 Hawting, in Azaiez et al. (ed.), *Qur’an Seminar* 391. The stuff the angels and jinn are made of is a good example. According to the Qur’ān, angels are made of fire, *nār* (Q 7:12; 38:76). This is perfectly consistent with the Biblical and para-Biblical conception of the angels: see e.g. Ps 104:4; Exod 3:2; Ezek 1:4. Jinn are also made of fire: “and He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire (*wa-ḥalaqa l-jānna min mārijin min nār*)” (Q 55:15). In Q 15:27, in a passage which refers to Iblis—an angel, but described also as a jinni—, the Qur’ān states: “and We created the jinn before from a scorching fire (*wa-l-jānna ḥalaqnāhu min qablu min nāri s-samūm*).” We should recall that the idea that jinn are made of fire (*nār*) and angels of light (*nūr*) is not Qur’anic: it is a later exegetical development.

38 The two passages are interdependent. I leave for another occasion a detailed examination of their relationships.

Judgment, and enjoin to follow the call of God. In sura 72,³⁹ some jinn say they had listened to an “amazing preaching/recitation” (*innā sami'nā qur'ānan 'ajaban*): they become believers, give up any kind of association to God (Q 72:2–3) and express faith in the resurrection (Q 72:7). They thus testify against their fellow jinn, who remain on the evil—demonic—side, and also against their past selves, when they still were unbelievers. In other words, jinn—like humans—are divided into different sects (Q 72:11): there are good jinn, who answered the call of God and submitted to Him, and bad ones, who are doomed to Gehenna (Q 72:13–15).

This is a significant difference between jinn and demons: there are no believers among demons, and none of them will be saved. In another passage, the Qur'ān endorses such a distinction between demons and jinn, making demons the bad counsellors of humans and jinn alike:

In this way We have assigned to every prophet an enemy—demons of the humans and jinn (*shayāṭīn al-'īnsi wa-l-jinn*)—some of them inspiring others with decorative speech as a deception. (Q 6:112)

4 Conclusion

This overview of the Qur'anic figures of evil reveals some significant elements concerning the context and genesis of the Qur'ān. It is often difficult, not to say pointless, to look for precise written sources for many of the passages which have been studied here. But some things are clear: first, Hārūt and Mārūt evoke the story of the fallen angels according to Enochic traditions (Jewish, Christian or Manichaeen origins are theoretically possible), while the names of the angels are derived from Iranian names (Haurvatāt, Ameretāt): this suggests, somewhere in the process of transmission and appropriation, an influence from the Iranian area; second, the story of Iblis and the prostration of the angels, in Late Antiquity, is *specifically* Christian, and it is progressively and partly de-christianized in its latest Qur'anic versions; third, the Qur'anic image of Satan and the demons follows the standard Christian conceptualisation of the devil, with some elements possibly related to the Iranian world: this would point to the Church of the East; fourth, the resolute process of demonization of *Mittelwesen* like the jinn fits well with Christian (especially missionary) rhetoric.

39 On this surah, see Dye & Reynolds, *Commentaire de la sourate 72 (al-Jinn)*.

Even if the Qur'ān should be situated at a crossroad of multiple Late Antique traditions, one cannot fail to notice here the significance of a substantial Christian background.⁴⁰ How should we account for this? Should we understand the Qur'anic demonological discourse as the discourse of a charismatic leader from a non-Christian (and also non-Jewish and non-Manichaean) background, who, once he gained knowledge on such topics, for example through informants disseminating oral narratives, or through his travels, would decide to preach this kind of demonology and “reform” his polytheist community? It is one thing, however, to be acquainted by hearsay with various traditions; it is another one to design a reform project which is so consistent and so similar to the well-oiled Christian missionary rhetoric. Is it then the discourse of someone living in a setting where are found various religious communities, like Christians, Jews, and polytheists, and who planned to reform and convert the polytheists to a “monotheistic” worldview? The problem of this hypothesis, though, is well-known: since the basis of this demonological discourse is massively Christian, this reformer should logically be a (literate) Christian—but we have no evidence of a substantial Christian presence in Mecca.⁴¹

I would be tempted, therefore, to sketch a different scenario. We should think outside the box and stop seeing the *production* and *reception* of the Qur'anic texts as a phenomenon circumscribed to Mecca and Medina in Muḥammad's time. We should rather conceive the development of the Qur'anic corpus—in the production of the initial texts, their reception, their rewriting(s), the reception of their rewriting(s)—as most probably involving more diverse actors. In other words, this development might be described as a process of interaction—more precisely a process of appropriation (including subversion) of a *non-autochthonous* discourse by the community responsible for the production of the Qur'anic codex.⁴²

Already before the seventh century, some stories—for example those of Solomon and the jinn—had begun to be acclimatized and adapted to Arabian folklore. However, following the previous analyses, we should posit, at an initial stage, a Christian proselyte, or missionary, discourse (possibly coming from al-Ḥīra or the Beth Qaṭrayē?)—something quite plausible in the context of late sixth and early seventh century Arabia. It accounts for the core of the Qur'anic discourse on the figures of evil, which is, in its contents, mainly Christian, in its form, deeply shaped by the usual *topoi* of missionaries addressing their targets

40 See more generally Dye, *Le corpus coranique* 764–771.

41 See Dye, *Le corpus coranique* 772–776.

42 See Dye, *Le corpus coranique* 777–785.

(in what it tells, and what it does not tell), and which reinterprets and translates the beliefs and attitudes of the targeted community into a new idiom. But these (non-autochthonous) texts were subjected to a process of appropriation, rewriting and reinterpretation by (what would ultimately become) the Qur'anic community. This can lead to a modification of the initial message like, for example, the progressive de-christianization of the story of Iblīs and the prostration of the angels.⁴³ But perhaps the most striking example concerns the rescue of the jinn, these prevalent figures of Arabian folklore. We saw a significant reversal, and a remarkable ambivalence. If, as seems to be the case, the demonization of the jinn belongs to a Christian proselytising discourse, which is largely endorsed by the Qur'ān, then the salvation of *some* jinn, who express their new faith with a formula which displays anti-Christian overtones (Q 72:3: "He has not taken a consort or son," *mā ttakhadha ṣāhibatan wa-lā waladan*), should be seen as a *subversion* of the discourse demonizing the jinn.

The Qur'anic texts, as we know them, are the final product of this kind of process, which should sound quite familiar to anyone versed in anthropology.⁴⁴ Most significantly, the indigenous interpretations of the originally non-autochthonous texts are not given by the mission, but "are *made* by converts themselves in a process of appropriation (often against the meanings missionaries intended to evoke)."⁴⁵ The term "convert" would certainly not fit the context of the Qur'ān, but the general process described could. I suggest we should investigate more closely the prehistory and the history of the formation of the Qur'anic corpus with this kind of model in mind.

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43 There are other examples of this kind of phenomenon in the Qur'anic corpus. One concerns ascetic passages which have been partly rewritten to produce a more lenient meaning. See Dye, *Ascetic and Nonascetic Layers*.

44 I have in mind, for example, the work of Africanists who have studied the reception of Christian missions in Africa. See e.g. Peel, *Syncretism*; Meyer, *Beyond Syncretism*.

45 Meyer, *Beyond Syncretism* 57.

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Law and Sufism in the Maghrib, ca. 829/1425

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1 Introduction¹

Taṣawwuf or Sufism appeared in the Islamic West in the fourth/tenth century and over the course of the next 500 years Sufi doctrines, practices, and institutions took firm root in the towns and countryside of the Maghrib and al-Andalus. Sufi saints (*awliyāʾ*) who claimed to possess *maʿrifa* or ‘knowledge of God’ reportedly saw God and spoke to Him, performed miracles, exhibited special moral qualities, and came to be regarded as models of spiritual perfection. Some Sufis went so far as to claim exemption from standard religious duties. The centerpiece of Sufi ritual was the performance of *dhikr* or ‘remembrance of God,’ a practice that included melodic chanting (*samāʾ*) and ecstatic dance (*raqṣ*). Sufi lodges and convents catered to the spiritual needs of pious Muslims and also served an important social function by providing food and shelter for the poor and homeless. On the levels of doctrine, practice, and economy, Sufism challenged the authoritative status of Muslim jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) as the spokesmen and guardians of Islamic orthopraxis.²

The juristic response to this challenge was bitter and intense. Opponents of Sufism claimed that ‘ilm or juristic knowledge is superior to *maʿrifa*, denounced prominent Sufis as ‘hypocrites’ and ‘ignoramus,’ and contended that Sufis who turn their backs on worldly pursuits are a burden on society. In the

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- 1 A shorter version of this essay was presented at the Harvard University Middle East Center in October 2003; and at the conference, “Construcciones de una devoción: Religiosidad en la Granada Nazari,” organized by Cynthia Robinson and Amalia Zomeño, Madrid 3–4 November 2011. I am grateful to Matthew Ingalls, Michael Laffan, Basheer Nafi, Pavel Pavlovitch, and Rachel Uqeles for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. All mistakes are mine. N.B. Unless otherwise indicated, references to the six major ḥadith collections—those of Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāʿūd, Nasāʾī, Ibn Mājah, and Mālik b. Anas—have been accessed using the CD Rom Computer file, *Jamʿ jawāmiʿ al-aḥādīth waʾl-asānīd wa-maknaz al-ṣiḥāḥ waʾl-sunan waʾl-masānīd*. Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Jamʿiyat al-Maknaz al-Islāmī, 2000–2001). Whenever possible, I identify the author, book title, chapter title, bāb number, and ḥadith number, e.g., Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn, bāb 34, no. 1883.
 - 2 On Sufism in the Islamic West, see Masud, *Shatibi’s Philosophy of Islamic law*; Fierro, *Opposition to Sufism in Al-Andalus 174–206*. On Sufism in general, see Knysch, *Islamic Mysticism* 245 ff.

words of one jurist, Sufis are “like a gangrenous sore in the side of religion.”³ Opponents of Sufism were swimming upstream, however. Slowly but surely, the boundaries between law and Sufism became increasingly blurred. It was not uncommon to find jurists teaching law (*fiqh*) in Sufi convents or Sufi masters teaching *taṣawwuf* in *madrasas*. Scholars who identified as Sufis included such well-known figures as al-Sabtī (d. 721/1321), Muḥammad al-Jazūlī (d. 749/1348), Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1375), al-Maqqarī (d. 795/1392), and Muḥammad b. Ghāzī al-Miknāsī (fl. 896/1491).⁴ According to one estimate, at the end of the 9th/15th century 20 percent of all jurists in the Maghrib were Sufis.⁵

The gains made by Sufism forced the jurists to sharpen the tools of their trade, which came largely in the form of *fatwās* or expert legal opinions.⁶ Toward the end of the 8th/14th century, for example, al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388) was asked if *dhikr* qualifies as a religious duty. He responded as follows:

[The] gathering [of Sufis] for the purpose of *dhikr* in unison is one of [several] recent innovations (*bidaʿ*) that did not exist at the time of the Prophet (pbuh), the Companions, or those who followed them, and it is unknown in the *sharʿa* of Muhammad (pbuh). Indeed, this is one of the innovations that Muḥammad (pbuh) called ‘deviation’ (*ḍalāla*), and it should be rejected.⁷

Al-Shāṭibī’s characterization of *dhikr* as an innovation posed a serious challenge to anyone who wished to argue that the practices associated with *taṣawwuf* are legitimate. There was perhaps no better way to make a case for the legitimacy of Sufism than to use the language of law (*fiqh*) and the tools and methods of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) to demonstrate that *dhikr* practices are grounded in the Qurʾān, the *sunna* of the Prophet and juristic consensus. That is to say, to be persuasive, the argument had to be formulated in terms acceptable to the jurists themselves.

3 al-Wansharīsī, *al-Miʿyār al-Muʿrib waʾl-jāmiʿ al-mughrib ʿan fatāwī ʿulamāʾ Ifrīqiyā waʾl-Andalus waʾl-Maghrib* xi, 42 (*fatwā* of al-Ḥaffār, d. 811/1408); cited in Fierro, *Opposition to Sufism in Al-Andalus* 204.

4 Cornell, *Faqīh versus Faqīr in Marinid Morocco* 207–224, at 216.

5 Cornell, *Realm of the Saint* 106–107; Urvoy, *Le monde des ulémas andalous du v/xi^e au vii/xiii^e siècle*.

6 See, for example, al-Wansharīsī, *al-Miʿyār* xi, 29 ff.

7 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 40.

2 The *Istiftā'*

Circa 829/1425, approximately 50 years after the death of al-Shāṭibī, one or more members of the Muslim community approached the jurist Abū al-Faḍl Qāsim b. Sa'īd b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-'Uqbānī (d. 851/1450),⁸ and asked him to issue a *fatwā* on the *shar'ī* status of *dhikr* ceremonies that were regularly performed in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen. We do not know if the people who approached al-'Uqbānī were supporters or opponents of the practice—or perhaps a combination of both. Be that as it may, the muftī apparently instructed an unidentified colleague to attend one of the ceremonies and to prepare a written account of the event, which was then submitted to him in the form of an *istiftā'* or request for a *fatwā*. What follows is my summary of the anonymous observer's narrative summary:

Immediately following the conclusion of Friday prayers, a large number of worshippers remained in the mosque to engage in supplementary spiritual exercises. The group included a cross-section of the residents of Tlemcen, young and old, rich and poor, although the majority were *fūqarā'* or 'poor men of God.' The group also may have included would-be Sufis, curiosity-seekers or mere passers-by. Our anonymous observer describes these spiritual exercises as customs (*'awā'id*) and well-known 'ways' (*ṭarā'iq*). The group was led by a Shaykh or spiritual director known for both the power and intensity of his *dhikr* exercises and for his understanding of the rules for sufi novices (*ādāb al-murīdīn*) and ability to derive those rules. The Shaykh was assisted by a servant (*khādīm*), by several men trained in the recitation of Qur'ān and Arabic poetry, and by a *mudhakkir* or repeater. The group gathered in the presence of their leader and formed a circle around him. The circle took shape as follows: Proximity to the Shaykh was determined by each participant's order of arrival, irrespective of social, religious, or ethnic status. After the Shaykh had taken his seat, the first person to enter the room shook his hand and took a seat to his right. As each subsequent participant entered the room, he too shook the Shaykh's hand and took a seat to the right of whomever had preceded him. When the circle was complete, an Arab might find himself sitting next to a Berber, a *sharīf* next to a non-*sharīf*, a rich man next to a pauper, or an old man next to a youth. Our observer notes that the servant of the Shaykh had a *ṣubḥa* or rosary, i.e., a string on which beads had been

8 The *fatwā* analyzed here may be found in al-Wansharīsī, *al-Mi'yār* xi, 48–73.

strung, used to count the exact number of times that the *dhikr* formula to be selected by the Shaykh (e.g., ‘Praise be to God’ and ‘There is no god but God’) would be pronounced during the ensuing exercise.⁹ The ceremony opened with preliminary spiritual exercises: The group uttered the phrase, “Prayers and blessings for the Prophet,” followed by blessings for the other prophets sent by God to mankind, followed by “Praise be to God, Master of the Worlds.” Then a professional chanter (*munshid*) chanted selections from the Qur’ān; when he was done, he said, “Prayer for the Messenger of God—May God bless him and grant him peace,” which was repeated by the members of the group in unison (*fī marra*). Then a reciter (*qārī*) stood up and chanted additional selections from the Qur’ān. Next it was the turn of the spiritual director and a handful of other participants, who stood up and recited several verses of the Qur’ān that emphasize forgiveness, e.g., “O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall certainly be lost” (Q. 7:23); and “O my Lord, forgive and have mercy, for you are the best of the Merciful ones” (Q. 23:118). Next, the Shaykh instructed the members of the group regarding the specific *dhikr* formulas, supererogatory prayers and appeals for forgiveness that would be uttered during the soon-to-be performed *dhikr* exercise. First, however, the *munshid* recited a *qaṣīda* poem in which the poet praised the Prophet Muḥammad, urged the performance of good deeds, and cautioned against falling into error. The experience of listening to the poem had a powerful effect on members of the group, many of whom began to weep and cry, after which an aura of peace and tranquility appeared on their faces. Then another chanter stood up and recited selections from the well-known treatise of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149),¹⁰ *Kitāb al-Shifā bi-ta’rīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*; the purpose of this recitation was to instruct celebrants regarding the proper manner in which to ascribe glory and honor to the Prophet. Only now was it time for the *dhikr* ceremony itself to commence. The Shaykh announced the forms of remembrance (*tadhkiras*) and beautiful utterances that he had selected for the day’s performance and dictated the formula to one of his assistants, a *mudhakkir* or repeater, who began to utter the formula. Presumably, the repeater began by uttering the formula slowly and in a low voice, gradually increasing its speed, intensity, and volume—although our observer says nothing more

9 See *ET*², s.v. Ṣubḥa (A.J. Wensinck).

10 ‘Iyāḍ, who was the outstanding hadith scholar of the late Almoravid period, served as chief *qāḍī* of Granada and Ceuta. See *ET*², s.v., ‘Iyāḍ b. Mūsā (M. Talbi); Makhḷūf, *Shajara* i, 140–141, no. 411.

about the exercise itself, except to note that as it was taking place the participants clapped their hands, asked God for forgiveness and expressed their intention to perform good works. When the *dhikr* ceremony was complete, the Shaykh provided a meal to all of the participants, at his own expense, using his personal financial resources. The Shaykh instructed his servant to serve the food to all of the participants, except for anyone who might be fasting. The meal was offered free of charge and was served to and consumed by all of the participants in the gathering, rich and poor, young and old, Arab and Berber, *sharīf* and non-*sharīf*. The Shaykh made sure that wealthy participants received a generous helping of food and had their needs satisfied and that poor participants received a generous helping of food and had their needs satisfied. At the conclusion of the meal, the participants praised God, thanked Him, and magnified Him for the blessings that He had bestowed upon them. Any leftover food was removed by the Shaykh's servant—aided by an assistant—presumably for their personal consumption or for distribution to others. By providing the meal, our observer notes, the Shaykh hoped to receive atonement for any sins that he may have committed. Following the meal, the servant brought in a vessel containing perfume. The first person to perfume himself was the Shaykh, followed by the person to his right, and so on, until all of the people who had participated in the *dhikr* exercise and consumed the meal had perfumed themselves. At this time, members of the group uttered additional blessings for the Prophet. The session concluded with group recitation of a short chapter of the Qur'ān, followed by the *Fātiḥa*, and then by certain unspecified compositions devoted to praise of God. Finally, the Shaykh invoked the name of God, whereupon the participants said 'Amen'; as they were doing so, they raised their hands imploring God's assistance, spit in their hands and wiped their faces, shook the hand of the Shaykh, and departed. Here ends the narrative description.¹¹

The *mustaftī* now poses the following question:

Are the actions [described] in this narrative—may God be pleased with you—[acts] of obedience (*tā'a*) for which it is hoped that God will grant a reward with the result that they may continue to perform them, or [acts of] disobedience (*ma'siya*) for which they should fear God's punishment by repenting from them? Clarify for us the opinions of the Imāms whose

11 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 48–50.

[example] is to be followed in this matter and the scholars (*‘ulamā’*) upon whom [we are] to rely and their Shaykhs, may God compound your blessings and theirs and, in His mercy, raise [you and them] to all of the levels of Paradise. Peace be upon you and the mercy of the exalted God and His blessings.¹²

The recipient of this question, Abū al-Faḍl Qāsim al-‘Uqbānī, was a distinguished scholar who had mastered both the rational and transmitted sciences. Al-‘Uqbānī was one of a handful of jurists in the Maghrib who possessed the ability to engage in independent legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) (a point to which we will return); and he reportedly was not averse to transcending the boundaries of the Mālikī *madhhab* or doctrinal law school in his search for the solution to a legal problem. Born in 768/1367, al-‘Uqbānī was appointed chief qāḍī of Tlemcen at a young age, and he served in this post until his death in 851/1450. His funeral reportedly was an occasion for mourning by the entire Muslim community of Tlemcen, including the sultān and his court.¹³

The selection of al-‘Uqbānī was surely no random act: Abū al-Faḍl Qāsim had studied *taṣawwuf* as part of his legal training; he was the author of a poem in *rajaz* metre that was recited by Sufis at assemblies such as the one in question; and he taught Ibn ‘Abbād’s commentary on the *Ḥikam* of Ibn Aṭā’ Allāh, a famous Suhrawardī mystic. Indeed, if there were any questions about al-‘Uqbānī’s attitude to Sufi practices, he dispels them at the outset of his response by noting that he himself had participated in the exercises led by this Shaykh on two occasions, at which time he had seen nothing objectionable taking place. He was also careful to inform the *mustaftī* that his own master, his father of blessed memory, Sa‘īd b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-‘Uqbānī (d. 811/1408), had received several inquiries during his lifetime regarding similar practices and had pronounced them to be ‘appropriate and correct’ practices that constitute ‘obedience to the Tradition and the Book.’¹⁴

It surely came as no surprise that al-‘Uqbānī began his response with the following declaration:

Praise be to God. [Every] utterance or action that you mentioned above is ‘good’ (*ḥasan*); and most of them are ‘praiseworthy’ and in accord-

12 Ibid., 50.

13 On al-‘Uqbānī, see al-Wansharīsī, *Wafayāt* 144; Ibn al-Qāḍī al-Miknāsī, *Laqaṭ al-farā’id* 253; Qarāfi, *Tawshih* 99, note 3; Ibn Maryam, *El Bostan* 161–163; Tunbuktī, *Nayl* 223–224; Makhlūf, *Shajara* i, 255, no. 925.

14 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 50.

ance with the *sharī'a*. And there is not a single thing among them—if God wills—that is subject to prohibition. Indeed, the [assessment of the actions] oscillates between [the categories] of 'desirable' (*muraghghab fīhi*) and 'recommended' (*mandūb*).¹⁵

This is a concise summary of al-'Uqbānī's position on the *dhikr* ceremony. And here the matter might have ended. But equally as important as the assessment itself was the method by which the muftī reached his conclusion. For a jurist of al-'Uqbānī's stature, no answer would have been satisfactory unless it were the product of a thorough and comprehensive examination of all of the relevant sources.

The formulation of the question was critical. Suppose, for example, that al-'Uqbānī had been asked: Is there any textual evidence in the Qur'ān or the Sunna which indicates that Muḥammad and his Companions gathered in a mosque in Mecca or Medina to perform a ritual ceremony similar to the ceremony performed by the Sufis of Tlemcen in the 15th century C.E.? The answer to this question would have been a resounding 'No'. But this was not the question to which al-'Uqbānī responded. Rather, like a Qur'ān commentator who analyzes a chapter or pericope of the Qur'ān verse-by-verse, the muftī divided the narrative summary into its component parts, identifying 17 individual elements, each one of equal normative value. He then proceeded to determine the *sharī* status of each element of the ceremony, *seriatim*. In the course of this exercise, he took the opportunity to compose two excurses dealing with jurisprudence, one on the status of a 'weak' hadith, the other, at the very end of his response, on the relationship between legal dynamism (*ijtihād*) and legal stability (*taqlīd*).

Al-'Uqbānī does not provide a list of these 17 elements nor does he enumerate them. Had he done so, his list might have looked as follows [N.B. for the sake of clarity, I have grouped these 17 elements into five general themes or topics]:

- 1.0. The etiquette of forming the circle:
 - 1.1. taking a seat to the right of the Shaykh, according to the order of arrival, irrespective of social or religious status;
 - 1.2. shaking the hand of the Shaykh;
- [Excursus: acting on the basis of a 'weak' hadith];

15 Ibid.

- 2.0. *Dhikr* or Remembrance of God:
 - 2.1. its special qualities;
 - 2.2. the use of a rosary;
 - 2.3. the timing and location of the ceremony;
 - 2.4. devotion to the Prophet;
 - 2.5. supererogatory prayer (*duʿā*);
 - 2.6. the *sharʿī* status of *dhikr* gatherings;
 - 3.0. Melodic chanting (*samāʿ*):
 - 3.1. of the Qurʾān;
 - 3.2. of poetry in praise of the Prophet;
 - 3.3. of ʿIyād’s *Shifā*;
 - 4.0. The communal meal and associated activities:
 - 4.1. the Shaykh’s asking for forgiveness;
 - 4.2. the provision of the meal;
 - 4.3. praising God after feeding the hungry;
 - 4.4. the use of perfume—and the order in which it is distributed;
 - 5.0. The conclusion of the ceremony:
 - 5.1. the three-fold recitation of the *Fātiḥa*;
 - 5.2. spitting in the hands and wiping the face prior to departure;
- [Excursus: the relation between *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*]

3 Method

The printed version of al-ʿUqbānī’s response is a short treatise, 25 pages in length, well-organized, and, to my mind, persuasive.

The muftī begins by stating that he will adduce textual indicators and rational arguments that support the continued performance of the *dhikr* ceremony. He does not disappoint. His objective is to establish that each and every element of the *dhikr* ceremony is an act of obedience to God. He does this by drawing upon his extensive knowledge of the Qurʾān, Sunna, and Islamic legal doctrine. He is able to cite textual support for each of the 17 elements of the *dhikr* ceremony. In most cases, this support comes in the form of Qurʾān or hadith. Over the course of his response, he cites the Qurʾān as a proof-text 28 times and the Sunna 75 times, drawing not only on the six canonical collections but also on the *Musnad* of Abū Yaʿlā, *Sunan* of al-Bayhaqī, *Mustadrak* of al-Nisābūrī, *Muṣannaḥ* of Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān, and *Muwaṭṭaʿ* of Mālik b. Anas. Taken as a group, the Companions who transmitted these hadiths constitute a *Who’s Who?* of early Islam from “A”—ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās to “Z”—Zayd b. Ḥāritha al-Kalbī. In addition to proph-

etic hadith, al-ʿUqbānī cites statements attributed to juristic authorities of the first and second centuries AH, including, in chronological order, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (d. ca. 96/717), al-Ḍaḥḥāq [b. Muzāhim] (d. 105/723), al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), Sufyān b. ʿUyayna (d. 196/811), Ashhab [b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz] (d. 204/820—or 196/725), and Saḥnūn (d. 240/854). He also cites texts, finding juristic authority in treatises written by (again in chronological order): al-ʿUtībī (d. 254/868), al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Ibn Rushd (d. 520/1126), al-Māzarī (d. 536/1141), Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148), Qāḍī Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149), al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), and ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660/1262).

In every instance, al-ʿUqbānī concludes that the *sharʿī* status of a particular element of the *dhikr* ceremony is either ‘good,’ ‘approved,’ or ‘recommended.’ Let us now examine each argument.

1.0. *The etiquette of forming the circle*

1.1. *Beginning with the right* (al-tayāmūn)

The first person to enter the room took a seat to the right of the Shaykh. As each subsequent participant entered the room, he took a seat to the right of whomever had preceded him.

To assess the *sharʿī* status of this action, al-ʿUqbānī had to determine if there is any textual evidence in one or both of the revealed sources, i.e., Qurʾān and Sunna, for beginning with the right side instead of the left. Indeed, there is. He cites a hadith in which it is stated that the Prophet “loved to begin with the right in all things.”¹⁶ From this one reasonably may conclude that it is desirable and in accordance with the *sharʿī* to begin all actions with the right hand, foot, or side. Al-ʿUqbānī provides a list of such actions, beginning with two examples relating to the mosque and prayer: One should position oneself to the right of the Imām; and the pulpit should be placed to the right of the prayer-niche, as you are facing it. He then enumerates a long list of examples relating to personal behavior: One begins with the right—viz., the right hand, right foot, or right side—when putting on clothes, shoes, or pants, applying kohl, using a toothpick, clipping nails, trimming a moustache, plucking the armpits, shaving the head, saying ‘*al-salām*’ in prayer, entering a mosque, emerging from a place of seclusion, performing a minor or major ritual ablution, eating, drinking, shaking hands, touching or saluting the Black Stone, and, finally, taking an object from another person or giving an object to another person. In each case,

16 Ibid. (citing Ibn Rushd).

the act of beginning with the right hand, foot, or side falls into the category of 'recommended' (*mustaḥabba*).¹⁷

As further support for this practice, the muftī cites a hadith in which the Prophet indicates that he liked to begin with the right hand when performing three specific actions: ritual ablutions, dismounting an animal, and putting on sandals.¹⁸ According to another hadith, the Prophet liked to begin with the right hand or side in all matters.¹⁹ One reasonably may conclude from this evidence that one begins with the right hand or side because of the honor, blessing, and goodness that are associated with it. Al-ʿUqbānī notes that additional hadiths on this subject are found in the collections of Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Bayhaqī, and Ibn Māja.²⁰

The evidence of the Qurʾān is less specific but nevertheless relevant. Al-ʿUqbānī cites verses of the Qurʾān that refer to the happiness of "those of the right hand" (*aṣḥāb al-yamīn*; Q. 56:8, 27, and 90–91); another verse in which God specifies that he summoned Muḥammad from "the right side of the mount and brought him close for communion" (Q. 19:52); and a verse that refers approvingly to "he who is given his ledger in his right hand" (Q. 69:19). The muftī concludes from all of this evidence that the *sharʿī* status of beginning with the right hand, the person who does so, and the direction itself are so well-known that the act has nearly acquired the status of apodictic knowledge (*yuʿlam biʾl-ḍarūra*), i.e., knowledge that cannot be denied or refuted.²¹

1.2. Shaking the hand of the Shaykh

As each participant in the *dhikr* ceremony entered the room, he shook the hand of the Shaykh before taking a seat to his right.

The practice of shaking hands (*al-muṣāfaḥa*) is an issue over which the early jurists disagreed. The practice was classified as 'good' (*ḥasana*) by Sufyān b. ʿUyayna (d. 196/811)²² and as either 'permissible' (*jāʾiza*) or 'recommended' (*mustaḥabba*) by Ibn Rushd (d. 520/1126). In support of this practice, al-ʿUqbānī cites the following statement of the Prophet, as reported in the *Muwattaʿa* of Mālik (d. 179/795), "Shake hands in order to remove hatred, exchange greetings, and express affection for one another in order to remove a grudge."²³ In

17 Ibid., 50–51.

18 Ibid., 51. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ṭahāra, bāb 19, no. 639; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Wuḍūʾ, bāb 32, no. 168.

19 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 51. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ṭahāra, bāb 19, no. 640.

20 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 51. Cf. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, bāb 42, no. 434; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, bāb 316, no. 611; Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, bāb 90, nos. 112, 424, 5257.

21 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 51.

22 See *ET*², s.v. Sufyān b. ʿUyayna (S. Spector).

23 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 51. Cf. Mālik, *Muwattaʿa*, Ḥasan al-khalq, bāb 4, no. 1651.

fact, the exact position attributed to Mālik on this issue was a matter of dispute: According to Ashhab (d. 196/725), Mālik disliked (*kariha*) the shaking of hands; but what came to be the well-known opinion attributed to Mālik is that he regarded the shaking of hands as permissible and recommended, as evidenced by his inclusion of the above-mentioned hadith in the *Muwattaʿa*.²⁴

Al-ʿUqbānī observes that there are numerous hadiths about shaking hands and that they all indicate that shaking hands is a good action for which the believer will be rewarded. Thus, the Prophet is reported to have said, "There are no two Muslims who meet one another and shake hands but that God forgives them before they separate."²⁵ Asked if the Messenger of God shook hands with the Companions when they met him, Abū Dharr (d. 31–32/652–653) responded, "I have not yet met him [viz., the Prophet] without his shaking my hand."²⁶ To the Prophet is attributed the statement, "The completion of a greeting between you is the shaking of hands."²⁷ And to Anas b. Mālik (d. 91–93/709–711) is attributed a statement that it was customary for the Companions of the Prophet to shake hands with one another.²⁸

As noted, al-ʿUqbānī was prepared to transcend the boundaries of the Mālikī law school in his search for authority statements. He now refers to the position of an unnamed Shāfiʿī jurist who held that the practice of two people's shaking hands when they meet is a *sunna* upon which there is consensus. He quotes this jurist as saying that when two people shake hands, it is 'recommended' (*tustaḥabb*) that each one has a cheerful expression on his face and that he pray for forgiveness. As additional support, al-ʿUqbānī cites a statement attributed to the Prophet, on the authority of Abū Dharr: "Do not express derision for anything that is 'good' (*maʿrūf*), even if it means greeting your brother with a happy face."²⁹ A similar statement is attributed to the Prophet in a long hadith transmitted on the authority of Jābir b. Sulaym.³⁰ And the muftī cites a hadith from the *Kitāb* of Ibn al-Sunnī,³¹ on the authority of al-Barā' b. ʿĀzib (d. 72/691–692): The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: "If, when two Muslims

24 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 51.

25 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, al-Adab, bāb 154, no. 5214. On the authority of al-Barā' b. ʿĀzib (d. 72/691).

26 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, al-Adab, bāb 155, no. 5216.

27 Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, al-Istiḍhān, bāb 31, no. 2950.

28 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 51–52. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Istiḍhān, bāb 27, no. 6336.

29 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 52. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Birr wa'l-Ṣila wa'l-ādāb, bāb 43, no. 6857; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Libās, no. 4086.

30 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 52. Cf. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Libās, no. 4086; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Libās, bāb 9, no. 5580.

31 Ibn al-Sunnī was a disciple of al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915).

meet, they shake hands, express affection for one another, and are friendly to one another, [gap] is scattered between them.”³²

Al-‘Uqbānī notes that several of the preceding hadiths are not ‘sound’ (*laysa fī al-ṣaḥīḥ*).³³ As a *mujtahid*, it was his responsibility to address the general methodological or jurisprudential question raised by the use of this form of evidence, to wit: Is it permissible for a Muslim to base his or her behavior upon a hadith that is classified as ‘weak’? In order to answer this question, al-‘Uqbānī turns aside from the subject at hand and engages in a methodological discussion of the status of actions performed on the basis of a weak hadith.

Excursus 1. Acting on the basis of a weak hadith

Al-‘Uqbānī begins his first methodological excursus by citing a statement attributed to Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) according to which it is permissible, indeed recommended, to act on the basis of a ‘weak’ hadith in three areas: (1) meritorious actions (*faḍā’il*); (2) encouragement to do a good deed; and (3) dissuasion from doing an evil deed.³⁴ Al-‘Uqbānī characterizes this position as a rule (*qā’ida*), adherence to which increases the number of actions in which a believer may engage. In the present instance, shaking hands falls within the category of a meritorious action, and it is therefore permissible to perform such an action, despite the fact that certain indicators of its permissibility are not derived on the basis of what is ‘sound’ (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and ‘good’ (*ḥasan*). However, this concession is offset by the requirement to cite an authoritative text (*naṣṣ*) attributed to a well-known and respected scholar in which it is reported that the scholar himself performed the action (*fī’l*) in question.³⁵

As a demonstration of this point, al-‘Uqbānī now cites the following report attributed to ‘Alī b. Yūnis al-Laythī (death date unknown):

I was sitting in the presence of Mālik when, suddenly, Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna appeared at the door, asking for permission to enter. Mālik said: “A man who is a master of the *sunna*. Show him in.” Sufyān entered and said: “Peace be upon you, and the blessings of God.” [Sufyān] said: “Our peace

32 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 52.

33 Perhaps: “not in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*”?

34 Text: *Tarḥīb wa-targhīb*, i.e., enticing people with the pleasures of paradise and frightening them with the horrors of hell.

35 Ibid., 52–53.

is both specific and general. Peace be upon you [singular], O Abū ‘Abdal-lāh, and the mercy and blessings of God [on Muslims in general].” [Mālik] replied: “And upon you [plural] peace, O Abū Muḥammad, and the mercy and blessings of God.” Then Mālik *shook hands* with him [emphasis mine—DSP] and said, “O Abū Muḥammad, were it not for the fact that it [viz., hugging] is an innovation (*bid‘a*), I would have hugged you.” To which Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna responded: “Hugging [was done] by one who is better than you and [better] than us: the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace.” Then Mālik stood up and said, “[Consider the hadith about] Ja‘far”: We were informed by ‘Abdallāh b. Tāwūs, on the authority of his father, on the authority of ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās (d. 68/687), who said: When Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib returned from Abyssinia, the Prophet (pbuh) hugged him, kissed him between his eyes, and said, “Ja‘far is the person who most resembles me in appearance and temperament. O Ja‘far, what is the best thing that you saw in Abyssinia?” He said, “O Messenger of God, while I was walking on one of its streets, I saw a black woman who had a palm basket on her head filled with wheat. When a man bumped into her with his riding animal, her basket fell and the wheat scattered. As she was gathering it up from the ground, she said, ‘Woe to the wrongdoer [who will suffer] the heat of the Fire on the Day of Resurrection; and woe to the wrongdoer [who will be requited by] the one against whom the wrong was committed on the Day of Resurrection; and woe to the wrongdoer when the Chair is put in place to distinguish [between those who will go to Heaven and those who will go to Hell] on the Day of Resurrection.’” Whereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said, “God does not confer sanctity upon a religious community (*umma*) whose weak [members] do not demand their right (*ḥaqq*) from its strong [members]...”³⁶

Now Sufyān said: “I have come so that I might pray in the mosque of the Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—and so that I might give you good tidings of a dream that I had.” Mālik said: “That your eyes should sleep (*nāmat ‘aynāka*) is better, if God wills.”³⁷ Sufyān said: “I saw—it was as if the grave of the Prophet—may God bless him and grant him peace—was split open, and the people approached hurry-

36 See the end of the hadith in Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, al-Fitan, bāb 20, no. 4146; cf. al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, Ma‘rifat al-ṣaḥāba, bāb 31, no. 4941.

37 Sufyān’s reference to the dream that he had triggers a reference to ritual purity. Muslims are required to perform *wuḍū’* after awakening from sleep. An exception is made for the Prophet, on the basis of his statement, “My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.” Shay-bānī, *Kitāb al-Āthār* i, 434–436, no. 165; cf. Bukhārī *Ṣaḥīḥ*, i, 234.

ing from every direction, and the Prophet (pbuh) was responding with the most pleasant response.” Sufyān continued: “Then you were brought forward and by God I knew you in my dream in the same way that I know you when I am awake. Then you greeted him, and he greeted you in response. Then he placed on your breast (*ḥajr*) a ring that he removed from his finger. So fear God with regard to that which he gave you, peace be upon him.” At that, Mālīk began to sob. Sufyān said: “Peace be upon you.” He asked: “Are you leaving now” ([*anta*] *khārijūn al-sā‘ah*). He said: “Yes”. Then he left him and departed.³⁸

The reader will recall that al-‘Uqbānī cited this lengthy report because it contains evidence of a well-known and respected scholar—here, Mālīk, performing an action for which the *sunnaic* evidence is found only in a weak hadith. As the report indicates: “Then Mālīk shook hands with [Sufyān].” In addition, this same report provides textual evidence for other actions that are related to the shaking of hands: hugging and kissing. Embedded within this report is (1) Sufyān’s assertion that it is permissible for one Muslim to hug another, and (2) a hadith in which the Prophet hugs his cousin, Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib, and kisses him on the forehead.³⁹

Al-‘Uqbānī now shifts his attention to the status of kissing. He cites a hadith related by ‘Ā’isha (d. 57/678), who reports that one day, when the Prophet (pbuh) was in her apartment, Zayd b. Ḥāritha returned to the city of Medina from an unidentified location and knocked on the door. At that moment, the Prophet (pbuh) was naked. But when he realized that it was Zayd at the door, he pulled on his garment and went to greet the Beloved of the Messenger of God. ‘Ā’isha specifies that the Prophet (pbuh) hugged Zayd and kissed him (*wa-*

38 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 52–53. N.B. This is the only tradition known to have been transmitted by ‘Alī b. Yūnis al-Laythī al-Madīnī. According to al-Dhahabī the transmission is void (*riwāya bāṭila*) and the *isnād* is problematic (*muḥḍim*). See al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-ī‘tidāl* v, 198.

39 Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib was ‘Alī’s older brother—by ten years—and the Prophet’s paternal cousin. He was one of the first men to join the new community of believers and he was an adult at the time of his conversion. *Circa* 615 C.E. Ja‘far participated in the hijra to Abyssinia, where he served as the leader of the disaporic community of believers for approximately 13 years. He returned to Medina in 7/628, just after the capture of Khaybar, at which time the Prophet is said to have embraced him, kissed him between the eyes, and announced, “I do not know what gives me greater pleasure, my conquest [of Khaybar] or the return of my brother Ja‘far.” On another occasion, Muḥammad reportedly told Ja‘far, “You look like me and you act like I do.” See Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf* i, 198; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif* 120, 161, 203–204, 205; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa’l-nihāya* iv, 255–257; *ET*², s.v. Dja‘far b. Abi Ṭālib (L. Veccia Vaglieri).

qabbalahu). She added, “By God, I had never seen him naked before that nor [did I ever see him naked] after that.”⁴⁰

The expression “he kissed him” (*wa-qabbalahu*) in this last hadith was problematic. Did the Prophet (pbuh) kiss Zayd between the eyes, as he did to Ja‘far in the preceding report, or did he kiss him on another part of his body? Al-‘Uqbānī explains that the verb *qabbala*, without further qualification, generally signifies to kiss someone on the *mouth*, as in a statement attributed to ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar (d. 73/693), regarding someone who returns from a journey and greets another person, “Shaykh kisses (*yuqabbilu*) Shaykh.”⁴¹ Some jurists, however, interpreted the verb *qabbala* here as referring to a kiss on the head, cheeks, or forehead. Others understood it in its plain or apparent meaning, i.e., to kiss someone on the lips, like a man who kisses his adult son on the lips or like a close relative (*dhū al-maḥārim*) who kisses an infant. The latter are examples of forms of kissing that are permissible. These permissible forms of kissing are to be distinguished from other forms of kissing that are not permissible, e.g., a man who greets his patron by kissing him on the hand. A greeting of this type, the muftī explains, should be reserved exclusively for the Prophet, who is the Master of the Worlds and the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds. Textual evidence for kissing the hand of the Prophet may be found in a hadith attributed to the Companion Rābiḥ [or Zāri’], who was a member of the delegation of ‘Abd al-Qays.⁴² He said: “[When we approached Medina], we rushed from our camels and began to kiss the hand and foot of the Messenger of God (pbuh).”⁴³ One finds no textual support in the Sunna, however, for kissing the hand of a patron. For this reason, the Imām (?) said, “The abandonment of that [viz., kissing the hand of a patron] is preferable to me” (*aḥabbu ilayya*).⁴⁴

40 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 54. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, al-Isti’dhān, bāb 32, no. 2951. *Isnād*: al-Zuhri, on the authority of ‘Urwa, on the authority of ‘Ā’isha. Zayd was the Prophet Muḥammad’s adopted son and heir from ca. 605 until 626–627 C.E. He was either the first person or the first adult male to become a believer, and the two men were connected by a special bond. Zayd was known as *Ḥibb Rasūl Allāh* or the Beloved of the Messenger of God and he is the only Muslim—apart from Muḥammad—who is identified by name in the Qur’ān, where he is characterized as “the one who was favored by God and favored by you [viz., Muḥammad]” (Q. 33:37). See Powers, *Zayd*.

41 This may be another reference to ritual purity. According to a report cited by Mālik b. Anas on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās, it is permissible for old men to kiss one another, but reprehensible for young men to do so. See Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatta* (trans. Bewley) 18.6, no. 19; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-mujtahid* iii, 173–175.

42 In 10/631 a delegation from the clan of ‘Abd al-Qays came to Medina to pledge allegiance to the Prophet Muḥammad and join the new community of believers. See al-Ṭabarī iii, 136.

43 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, al-Adab, bāb 162, no. 5227.

44 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 54.

It was common practice, however, for one Muslim to kiss another for other reasons, e.g., out of respect for the asceticism, piety, knowledge, nobility or modesty of the recipient of the kiss. Is this permissible? The answer depends on the social context and underlying motivation. Al-ʿUqbānī cites another unidentified Shāfiʿī jurist who held that if the kiss is motivated by pious considerations, then it should be categorized as ‘recommended’; but if it is motivated by considerations of wealth, status, or lucre, then it falls into the category of ‘extremely disapproved’ or ‘forbidden.’⁴⁵

2.0. *Dhikr or Remembrance of God*

2.1. *Its special qualities*

Once the circle had been formed, the participants began to praise God and glorify Him, to pray for the Prophet, and to utter certain *dhikr* formulas, in preparation for the upcoming *dhikr* exercise. Is this permissible?

Yes, it is, the muftī opined. Indeed, he added, it is not only permissible but also ‘desirable’ (*muraghghab fīhi*) and a matter of consensus. As the Sufi master Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī⁴⁶ (d. 465/1072) is reported to have said, “[*Dhikr*] is the foundation of this path and no one shall reach God except through constant remembrance.”⁴⁷

There are certain special qualities associated with the remembrance of God. For one, it is not limited in time. Indeed, there is no single moment in time in which a believer is *not* commanded to remember God, either in obligatory prayer or as a supererogatory act. According to a common saying, “*Dhikr* is the announcement of closeness to God; thus, he who is suitable for *dhikr* will be given the announcement; and he who is deprived of *dhikr* will be removed.”⁴⁸

Another special quality associated with remembrance is that its performance by man is juxtaposed to its performance by God, who instructs mankind: “So, therefore, remember me, and I shall remember you” (Q. 2:152). Indeed, *dhikr* is a special gift bestowed by God upon the Muslim community. The Angel Gabriel (pbuh) is reported to have said to the Prophet (pbuh), “Verily God says, ‘I gave your religious community (*umma*) something that I have not given to any of the other religious communities.’” “And what is that, O Gabriel?”, the

45 Ibid., 54. On physical contact between Muslim men, see al-Nābulusī, *Ghāyat al-maṭlūb fī maḥabbat al-maḥbūb*.

46 See *ET*², s.v. al-Ḳushayrī.

47 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 54–55.

48 Ibid., 55.

Prophet (pbuh) inquired. He said, "His word, 'So, therefore, remember me, and I will remember you.' For He did not say this to any other religious community."⁴⁹

Al-'Uqbānī identifies several verses of the Qur'ān in which *dhikr* is characterized as a highly meritorious act. In the Qur'ān God says, "O you who believe, remember God a great deal. And sing His praises morning and evening ..." (Q. 33:41). God also promises to forgive and reward the men and women who remember him: "... and those men and women who remember God a great deal, for them God has forgiveness and a great reward" (Q. 33:35). And God states that 'the wise' are "... those who honor God in meditation, standing, or sitting, or lying on their sides" (Q. 3:190–191).⁵⁰

Turning to the Sunna, al-'Uqbānī cites a report on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693):

I asked the Messenger of God (pbuh), "Which of the servants possesses the highest rank in the eyes of God—praised be He—on the Day of Judgment?" He replied, "Those who remember God frequently." Someone asked, "O Messenger of God, [what about the person who] fights in the path of God?" He said, "Were he to thrust his sword until it breaks and is tinged with blood, those who remember God would [nevertheless] occupy a higher rank than he does."⁵¹

Similarly, it is reported on the authority of Abū al-Dardā' (d. 32/652) that the Prophet (pbuh) asked: "Shall I not tell you which of your actions is the best and the most exalted in rank and the purest in the eyes of your Lord; and better for you than a gift of gold and silver; and better for you than that you should meet your enemy and that you should strike their heads and they should strike your heads?" They replied, "Yes, indeed. [Tell us]." He said, "Remembrance of God."⁵² The Prophet (pbuh) is also reported to have said, "Whoever says, 'Glory be to God' and 'Praised be He', a date palm will be planted for him in the Garden."⁵³ And he said (pbuh), "Two words are light on the tongue but heavy on the scales [of justice], beloved by the Merciful: 'Glory be to the exalted God' and 'Glory be to God and praised be He.'"⁵⁴ And he said (pbuh), "That I should say 'Glory be to God' and 'Praised be He' and 'There is no God but God' and 'God is great' is

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, al-Da'wāt, bāb 5, no. 3703.

52 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 56. Cf. Mālik, *Muwatta'*, al-Qur'ān, bāb 7, no. 496.

53 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 56. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Da'wāt, bāb 61, nos. 3800–3801.

54 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 56. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Da'wāt, bāb 65, no. 6481.

dearer to me than the earth [lit.: that over which the sun rises].”⁵⁵ And he said (pbuh), “I met Ibrāhīm the friend [of God] on the night of my ascension, and he said, ‘Give greetings to your religious community (*umma*) and inform them that the earth in the Garden is fertile, the water sweet, and that it [is made up of] lowlands and that its produce is ‘Glory be to God’ and ‘Praise be to God’ and ‘There is no God but God’ and ‘God is great.’”⁵⁶

Al-‘Uqbānī notes that there are additional ‘sound’ and widely disseminated reports on this topic. Together, these reports constitute an apodictic indicator and clear proof of the special qualities of *dhikr*. Thus, the believers who gather in the Friday mosque of Tlemcen to engage in remembrance of God are performing “the noblest and most exalted of actions” and they are “the most deserving of reward.” The Sacred Law bears witness to the greatness and high standing of *dhikr* and the magnitude of its reward. Indeed, it would be absurd to criticize them for doing this, and anyone who does so deviates from the straight path and demonstrates his ignorance.⁵⁷

2.2. *The use of a rosary*

The Shaykh’s servant used a rosary to count the repetitions of the *dhikr* formula and to make sure that a specific number of formulas were pronounced. Is this permissible? Is there any basis for this practice in the *sunna* of the Prophet?

The use of the rosary is ‘permissible’ (*sā’igh*), declares al-‘Uqbānī, who begins his justification for its use by drawing attention to the practice of counting in connection with prayer (*al-ṣalāt*). During the lifetime of Mālik, it was customary for a person who was performing a supererogatory prayer (*muntaḥil*) to count the number of verses with his hand. Asked about this practice, Mālik is reported to have said, “There is nothing wrong with that.” Mālik also approved of the practice of using a ring on one’s finger to count the number of prostrations during prayer. From this evidence al-‘Uqbānī concludes that the practice of counting is permissible in other matters as well, including *dhikr*.⁵⁸

There is no specific reference to the use of a rosary in either the Qur’ān or the Sunna. For this reason, al-‘Uqbānī was compelled to turn to the practice of early Mālikī jurists, as documented in the doctrinal law books of the *madhhab*. Thus, he found a text in the *Madārik* of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ in which an unidentified companion of Saḥnūn (d. 240/854) reports that he entered a room in which Saḥnūn was praying, wearing a rosary on his neck and using it to count the number of

55 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 56. Citing the *Muwatta’a* of Mālik b. Anas.

56 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 56. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, bāb 60, no. 3798.

57 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 56.

58 Ibid., 56.

'*subhāna Allāhs*' that he was pronouncing. About this al-'Uqbānī exclaims, "Do you know who Saḥnūn is with respect to religious knowledge and piety? Could he have done that in the absence of an indicator?"⁵⁹

Having identified juristic authority for the use of a rosary, al-'Uqbānī turns to the sanctity (*ḥurma*) of this religious instrument. He explains that Saḥnūn wore the rosary on his neck in order to protect it from defilement, e.g., being stepped on. He did this out of honor and respect for the rosary, for any object that is fashioned for the sake of remembering God merits protection from pollution and impurity. In this sense, a rosary may be compared to a mosque, which, because it is a place for the remembrance of God and prayer, has a special status as a sanctuary; and it also may be compared to the letters of the alphabet, which serve as signs of the remembrance of God. By contrast, a dunghill, slaughterhouse, water closet, bathhouse, or other place associated with dirt and pollution is devoid of the greatness and honor to which the sacred law bears witness and, for this reason, one should not recite the Qur'ān, utter a *dhikr* formula, or pray for the Prophet while standing near, on, or inside one of these physical objects or places. Indeed, one should not perform any of these actions in or near a structure that merely resembles a water closet or other physical space associated with filth.⁶⁰

The Sunna does contain textual evidence for the practice of counting religious utterances, even if it does not refer specifically to the use of a rosary. Yūsayra, one of the first female emigrants to Medina, is reported to have said: The Messenger of God (pbuh) said to us, "You are required to say '*Subhāna Allāh*' and 'There is no god but God' and to sanctify God. Reckon with your fingernails (*wa'qidna bi'l-anāmīl*), for verily they [viz., the fingernails] will be questioned and interrogated [on the Day of Judgment]. Thus, do not be neglectful, lest you despair of the mercy [of God]."⁶¹ Similarly, according to 'Abdal-lāh b. 'Amr (d. 65/684), the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Two customs (*khaṣṣatānī*), if observed by a Muslim, guarantee entry into the Garden. They are easy [to do] and the [effort required to] perform them is small: [He should] say '*Subhāna Allāh*' at the end of every prayer 10 times, '*al-ḥamdu lillāh*' 10 times, and '*Allāhu akbar*' 10 times; and when he lies down to sleep, [he should] say '*Allāhu akbar*' 34 times, '*al-ḥamdu lillāh*' 33 times, and '*subhāna Allāh*' 33 times. These 100 utterances with the tongue count for 1000 [utterances] on the scales of justice."

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., 57.

61 Ibid. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Da'wāt, bāb 137, no. 3932. (I read Yūsayra, following Tirmidhī). On the interrogation of parts of the body, cf. Q. 36:65: "... their hands will speak, their feet will testify."

To this ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Amr added that he saw the Prophet (pbuh) using his hand to count these utterances.⁶² Finally, the Prophet (pbuh) is also reported to have used his fingers to count the months of the year.⁶³ On the strength of these three prophetic hadiths, al-‘Uqbānī concludes that it is permissible to use one’s fingers to count the number of *dhikrs*, and, by extension, to use a rosary to do so as well.

The use of a rosary to count the *dhikr* formulas was already a well-established practice in the 6th/12th century. At that time, a report was circulated in which the use of the rosary was traced back to the 1st century AH. Al-‘Uqbānī cites this report from the *Ghunya* of Qāḍī ‘Iyād (d. 544/1149):

I was informed by ‘Alī b. al-Mushrif b. al-Muslim b. Ḥamīd al-Anbātī al-Iskandarānī, on the authority of a Shaykh who relates the transmission, and he was the oldest of those who were still alive in the provinces of Egypt, and the most capacious of them with respect to transmission, according to that which he [viz., ‘Alī b. al-Mushrif?] wrote to me. He [viz., the unnamed Shaykh] said: I heard Abū Ishāq al-Ḥabbāl saying: I heard Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Murtafiq al-Ṣūfī saying: I was listening to Abū ‘Umar b. ‘Alwān, and I saw that he was holding a rosary (*subḥa*), so I asked him about it. He said: Thus did I see my master al-Ḥārith b. Asad holding a rosary, so I asked him the question that you asked me, and he said to me: Thus did I see ‘Āmir b. Shu‘ayb holding a rosary, and I asked him the question that you asked me. He said to me: Thus did I see my master al-Ḥasan b. Abī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) holding a rosary, and I asked him the question that you asked me. He said to me: O my son, this is something that we have been doing since the beginning, and there is no reason for us to abandon it in the end. I like to remember God with my heart, my hand, and my tongue.⁶⁴

2.3. *The timing and location of the ceremony*

What about the timing and location of the *dhikr* ceremony, which was held directly after Friday prayers in the Great Mosque?

Al-‘Uqbānī finds support for this practice in the Qur’ān: “And when the service of prayer is over, spread out in the land and look for the bounty of God and mention God frequently that you may prosper” (Q. 62:10). Here, the Qur’ān

62 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 57–58. Cf. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, Iqāmat al-Ṣalāt wa’l-Sunna, bāb 32, no. 979.

63 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 58. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ṣawm, bāb 11, no. 1942.

64 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 58.

clearly sanctions the remembrance of God following Friday prayers, even if it does not specify that one should do so in a mosque. Al-ʿUqbānī leaves it to the reader to draw this conclusion, if he wishes. And he acknowledges that after this ‘proof’ had come to his mind and he had written it down, he discovered that al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) had made the same argument, previously, although he does not say where.⁶⁵

2.4. *Devotion to the Prophet*

The next activity in the ceremony was for the participants to engage in devotional exercises in which they extolled the Prophet Muḥammad.

“How glorious, beautiful, good, and perfect this is,” al-ʿUqbānī exclaims, adding that the authoritative basis for this practice may be found in the Qurʾān, the Sunna, and Consensus. The muftī notes, first, that both al-Shāfiʿī and “one of our companions,” presumably a Mālikī jurist, held that devotion to the Prophet in prayer is obligatory and that failure to do so renders the prayer invalid. There are countless indicators for this practice in the revealed sources. Al-ʿUqbānī cites only a few, beginning with Q. 33:56: “God and His angels shower their blessings on the Prophet. O believers, you should also send your blessings on him, and salute him with a worthy greeting.”⁶⁶

The muftī then cites five hadiths referring to prayer for Muḥammad: (1) An angel came to Muḥammad (pbuh) and told him that every time that one Muslim prays for him, God prays for him ten times, and that every time that one Muslim says ‘*al-salām ʿalayhi*’, God says the same, ten times.⁶⁷ (2) The Prophet (pbuh) said that the person who prays for him most frequently is the person who is closest to him.⁶⁸ (3) Muḥammad (pbuh) instructed his followers to pray for him not only when they were in their houses but wherever they might find themselves, assuring them that their prayers would reach him wherever they might be.⁶⁹ (4) The Prophet (pbuh) defined a ‘miser’ as a person in whose presence he is mentioned but who does *not* pray for him.⁷⁰ (5) Finally, the Prophet (pbuh) ordered his followers to pray for him frequently on Friday, the best of the seven days of the week, assuring them that their prayers would be displayed in front of him, viz., after his death. His immediate audience responded with

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., 58–59.

67 Ibid., 59. Cf. Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, al-Sahw, bāb 47, no. 1291; cf. ibid., no. 1303.

68 al-Wansharīsi, *Miʿyār* xi, 59.

69 Ibid. Cf. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, al-Manāsik, bāb 99, no. 2044. Cf. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, Iqāmat al-ṣalāt, bāb 186, no. 1440.

70 al-Wansharīsi, *Miʿyār* xi, 59. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Daʿwāt, bāb 113, no. 3891.

incredulity, asking how their prayers would be displayed in front of him after he had died and his body had decayed. To this he replied that God makes the bodies of Prophets sacred and inviolable (*ḥarām*) on earth.⁷¹

2.5. Supererogatory prayer (*duʿā*)

Al-ʿUqbānī now turns to the status of *duʿā* or supererogatory prayer, noting that there is a consensus—he does not say among whom—according to which it is ‘recommended’ (*mustaḥabb*) to begin the *duʿā* by praising God and then praying for the Prophet; the supplicant then makes his wish; and he or she should end the *duʿā* with another prayer for the Prophet.⁷²

Textual evidence for the connection between *duʿā* and prayer for the Prophet may be found in three hadiths: (1) According to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), the *duʿā* prayer remains suspended between heaven and earth until the supplicant offers a prayer for the Prophet (pbuh), whereupon his supplication ascends to God.⁷³ (2) Faḍāla b. ʿUbayd (d. 53/673) reports that the Prophet (pbuh) once observed a man offering a supererogatory prayer in which he did not praise God or pray for His Prophet. Noting that the man was in a rush, the Prophet (pbuh) summoned him and instructed him regarding the proper manner in which to perform a supererogatory prayer: One begins with praise for God, continues with prayer for His Prophet, and only then adds his personal prayer or wish.⁷⁴ According to Ubayy b. Kaʿb (d. 19–35/640–656), it was the custom of the Prophet (pbuh) to wake up when one-third of the night had passed and to warn the believers of the coming of the Hour. On one of these occasions, Ubayy asked the Prophet (pbuh) about the percentage of each prayer that he should devote to him. Ubayy asked, “O Messenger of God (pbuh), I pray for you frequently, so what [percentage] of my prayer should I dedicate to you?” To which the Prophet (pbuh) replied, “As much as you wish.” Ubayy asked, “One-fourth?” He replied, “As much as you wish, and if you do more, that is good.” Ubayy asked, “Shall I dedicate the entirety of my prayer to you?” He said, “If [you do] so, your anxiety will be relieved and your sins will be forgiven.”⁷⁵

71 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 59. Cf. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Witr, bāb 26, no. 1533. Cf. *ibid.*, al-Ṣalāt, bāb 209, no. 1049; Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, Jumʿa, bāb 5, no. 1385; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, Iqāmat al-ṣalāt, bāb 79, no. 1138; *ibid.*, al-Janāʿiz, bāb 65, no. 1705.

72 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 59.

73 *Ibid.* Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Ṣalāt, bāb 240, no. 488.

74 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 59. Cf. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Witr, bāb 23, no. 1483.

75 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 59–60. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Ṣifat al-Qiyāma, bāb 23, no. 2645. Al-Tirmidhī categorized this hadith as ‘good’ (*ḥasan*). Al-Ḥākim said: Its chain of authorities is ‘sound’ (*ṣaḥīḥ*).

2.6. *The sharʿī status of dhikr gatherings*

Only now does al-ʿUqbānī turn to what seemingly was the central issue posed in the question, the *sharʿī* basis of *dhikr* gatherings.

The muftī begins by citing a hadith transmitted on the authority of Abū Hurayra (d. 57 or 58/676–678) and Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693) in which these two Companions bear witness to the following statement attributed to the Prophet (pbuh): “Whenever a group sits down for the purpose of remembering God (*yadhkurūna allāh*), the angels surround them, mercy envelops them, tranquility (*al-sakīna*) descends upon them, and God mentions them to those who are in His presence.”⁷⁶ He then cites a hadith about gathering in mosques for the purpose of reciting the Qurʾān.⁷⁷ On the basis of these two hadiths, it would appear that gathering in a mosque for the purpose of (1) remembering God and (2) reciting the Qurʾān is a highly meritorious act.

Surprisingly, the practice of gathering in a mosque to recite the Qurʾān was a matter of controversy. No less an authority than Mālik, in his *Mudawwana*, expressed disapproval of this activity (although al-ʿUqbānī does not yet cite the relevant text). Other jurists classified the practice of gathering in mosques to recite the Qurʾān as an innovation (*bidʿa*), albeit a good one, comparable to certain religious practices that came to be associated with the month of Ramaḍān. In response to these objections, al-ʿUqbānī cites the Mālikī jurist al-Māzarī (d. 536/1141), who argued that the plain meaning of the second hadith mentioned above clearly indicates that it is permissible to gather in a mosque for the purpose of reciting the Qurʾān. Al-Māzarī speculated that Mālik disapproved of this practice only because he was not aware of any Companions or Successors who had done this, although it is well-known that they were keen to perform good works. Al-Māzarī concluded by noting that the practice of gathering in a mosque to recite the Qurʾān had become an established local custom (*qad jarā al-amr ʿalayhi*) in the city of Mahdia, where the issue was not regarded as an important matter.⁷⁸

Having established that it was customary to gather in a mosque to recite the Qurʾān, al-ʿUqbānī returns to the question at hand, namely, gathering in a mosque to engage in the performance of *dhikr* exercises. Surprisingly, the muftī does not cite any additional textual evidence from either the Qurʾān or the Sunna (cf. section 2.1, above) and limits himself to making the following points: (1) Gathering in a mosque to engage in *dhikr* has developed into a customary practice throughout the Maghrib and, to the best of his knowledge, in

76 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 60. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Duʿā waʾl-Tawbah, bāb 11, no. 7030.

77 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 60. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Duʿā waʾl-Tawbah, bāb 11, no. 7028.

78 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 60.

the countries of the East as well; (2) no one has criticized this practice [*sic*]; (3) the practice is a manifestation of piety and the performance of good works; and (4) certain unnamed jurists have stipulated that the end justifies the means (*ḥukm al-wasā'il 'alā ḥukm al-mutawassal ilayhi*).⁷⁹

3.0. *Melodic Chanting* (samā')

3.1. *Qur'ān recitation*

Clearly, al-'Uqbānī was not troubled in the least by the fact that Muslims were gathering in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen after Friday prayers to engage in remembrance of God. What did concern him were certain elements of the *dhikr* ceremony, first and foremost the practice of chanting the Qur'ān. Is it permissible to listen to a professional Qur'ān-reciter who uses his talent as a singer to embellish the recitation of the sacred text?

Yes it is, al-'Uqbānī pronounces. Indeed, it is 'recommended' (*mustahabb*) to do so because the resulting auditory experience has a positive effect upon the listener: it induces a state of humility and an inclination to mercy and compassion, which causes the supplicant to pray for goodness.

It will be recalled that in the previous section of his response (2.6, above) al-'Uqbānī noted in passing that Mālik expressed his disapproval of gathering in mosques to recite the Qur'ān. The muftī now cites the relevant report: On one occasion, when the mosque in Medina was full, the worshippers asked a man renowned for his beautiful voice to recite the Qur'ān for them. Apparently, their primary motive was to derive pleasure from the beauty of the man's voice and, only secondarily, to listen to the recitation of the Qur'ān. This was the practice about which Mālik expressed his disapproval, on the grounds that it resembles singing (*ghinā'*).⁸⁰ More than three centuries later, Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520/1126) interpreted Mālik's disapproval as referring specifically to the person whose intent is to derive pleasure from the beauty of the reciter's voice. However, when the underlying intent is to induce mercy and compassion in the soul of the auditor, the cause for disapproval disappears.⁸¹

The Sunna contains considerable evidence on the subject of chanting the Qur'ān. In one hadith cited by al-'Uqbānī it is reported that the Prophet (pbuh) once said that "God has not given permission for anything to the extent that

79 Ibid.

80 *ET*², s.v. Ghinā' (H.G. Farmer).

81 al-Wansharīsi, *Mi'yār* xi, 60–61.

he has given permission to a prophet who has a beautiful voice to chant (*yataḡhannā*) the Qurʾān.”⁸² The muftī interprets this hadith as signifying that God does not listen to anything as frequently as He listens to a prophet who chants the Qurʾān with a beautiful voice, seeking thereby to induce mercy and compassion in the hearts of his audience. It is reported that the Companion Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (d. ca. 42/662) had a beautiful voice and that when ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb would instruct him, “Remember (*dhakkir*) our Lord for us,” Abū Mūsā would chant the Qurʾān for him.⁸³ ʿUmar’s purpose, however, was not to take pleasure in the sound of Abū Mūsā’s voice, but rather to induce mercy and compassion in his heart by listening to Abū Mūsā chant the Qurʾān. Abū Mūsā reportedly was troubled by the beauty of his own voice, and the Prophet (pbuh) tried to reassure him by saying, “You have been given one of the flutes (*mizmārs*) of the people of [the Prophet] David.”⁸⁴ On another occasion, when Abū Mūsā discovered that the Prophet had been listening to him chant the Qurʾān, he said to him, “Had I known that you were listening, I surely would have embellished it for you.”⁸⁵ Similarly, the Prophet is reported to have said, “There is not a single person among us who does not chant (*yataḡhannā*) the Qurʾān.”⁸⁶ This statement was understood by some as meaning that there is not a single Muslim who does not embellish his voice in an effort to induce mercy and compassion. This interpretation finds support, the muftī observes, in the Prophet’s instruction to the believers, “Embellish the Qurʾān with your voices.”⁸⁷ The Prophet’s approval (*taqrīr*) of the practice has the status of a legal command (*ḥukm sharʿī*).

Al-ʿUqbānī concludes his discussion of chanting by noting that some scholars interpret the verb *yataḡhannā*—‘he chants or he sings’—as signifying, ‘he has no need for’ (*yastaghni*), i.e., by means of the Qurʾān one attains spiritual wealth (*ghinā al-naḡs*) in the form of asceticism and certainty. This interpretation is supported by a statement attributed to the Prophet (pbuh), “The Qurʾān is [a form of] wealth unlike any other [form of] wealth, and there is no poverty after it.”⁸⁸ Thus, a person who does not engage in the ‘singing’ (*ghinā*) of the

82 Ibid., 61. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḡīḥ*, Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn, bāb 34, no. 1883; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, bāb 20, no. 1475; Nasāʿī, *Sunan*, Iftitāḡ, bāb 83, no. 1025.

83 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 61.

84 Ibid. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḡīḥ*, no. 793; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḡīḥ*, no. 4761.

85 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 61. Cf. Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, no. 4484.

86 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 61. Cf. Aḡmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, no. 1512.

87 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 61. Cf. Nasāʿī, *Sunan*, Iftitāḡ, bāb 83, nos. 1023–1024; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, Iqāmat al-ṣalāt, bāb 176, no. 1403.

88 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 61. Cf. al-Mawṣilī, *Musnad*, no. 2773; Saʿīd b. Maṣṣūr, *Sunan*, no. 5; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, no. 738.

Qur'ān does not understand that the merit or reward for doing so is greater than the merit or reward of the person who sings to earn his or her living.

3.2. Poetry recited in praise of the Prophet

Following the *dhikr* exercise, the *munshid* or chanter arose and recited an ode (*qaṣīda*) in which the poet either praised the Prophet Muḥammad, urged the performance of good deeds, or cautioned against falling into error. His recitation had a cathartic effect on members of the audience, who began to weep and cry, after which an aura of peace and tranquility appeared on their faces.⁸⁹

This too is 'permissible' (*sā'igh*), al-'Uqbānī explains, as evidenced by the career of the Prophet. We know from the *Sīra* and other sources that the Prophet instructed the poet-laureate of the early Muslim community, Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. ca. 54/674), to recite poetry in order to motivate the Muslims in their struggle against the polytheists.⁹⁰ The Prophet reportedly encouraged his followers to listen to poetry during lapses of revelation and in moments of emotional distress. Once again invoking the principle that the end justifies the means, al-'Uqbānī concludes that the recitation of poetry is 'recommended' because it results in a public benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) that is itself 'recommended' (*mandūb*).⁹¹

But poetry is a form of singing, and singing, as noted, is a contested activity.⁹² Certain types of 'singing' are permissible and others are not. On this distinction, our muftī cites 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1262), according to whom the soul of every human being contains an inclination or predisposition to fine tunes or melodies (*naḡhamāt*), that is to say, the urge to sing is an innate aspect of human nature. This is unproblematic. What is problematic is the link or connection that people make between the sounds of instruments and the tunes of a song; in such instances, the sound of the song is forbidden (*yumna'*).⁹³

3.3. Recitation of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's Kitāb al-Shifā

As additional support for the permissibility of listening to poetry, al-'Uqbānī turns his attention to the recitation of selections from Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's *Kitāb al-Shifā bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*.

89 On the *munshid*, see Waugh, *The Munshidin of Egypt*.

90 In 9/630, Ḥassān reportedly recited poetry on behalf of the Prophet in the presence of a delegation from Tamīm. See *ET*², s.v. Ḥassān b. Thābit (W. 'Arafāt).

91 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 61.

92 See *ET*², s.v. *Ghinā'* (Henry G. Farmer).

93 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 61.

The purpose of reciting this text was to educate the participants in the ceremony regarding the proper manner in which to attribute glory and honor to the Prophet. This practice is 'the best of the best,' al-'Uqbānī writes. The recitation of selections from the *Kitāb al-Shifā*, a text that defines the rights of 'the chosen one' (pbuh), more firmly establishes faith in the souls of believers and augments love for the Messenger of God (pbuh) which, in turn, promotes God-consciousness, beneficence, and integrity. Now, the *Kitāb al-Shifā* is written in prose. If it is permissible to listen to the recitation of a prose text, how much the more so is this true of a text that is arranged in verse.⁹⁴

The status of verse provides al-'Uqbānī with an opportunity to address the subject of esoteric knowledge or gnosis (*ma'rifa*), one of the central elements of Sufism. Citing certain unnamed 'Imāms of knowledge' (*'ilm*), he lays out a hierarchy of auditory experiences engaged in by people who seek mystical knowledge (*ḥaḍrat al-ma'ārif*) and states of grace (*aḥwāl*), with special attention to the underlying motives (*asbāb*) of their quest. Proceeding from the most meritorious to the least, he lists four types of auditors:

- 1 Those who listen to the Qur'ān in an attempt to achieve a state of grace and union with the Divinity, which is the best of all possible motivations.
- 2 Those who listen to sermons and *dhikr* formulas (*tadhkiras*) for purposes other than a desire for the stimulation of emotive metres.
- 3 Those who listen to poetry. Indeed, the desire to derive pleasure from the audition of speech arranged in metres is an innate quality of every human being, believer or infidel, pious or profligate. But this desire has no connection whatsoever with religion.
- 4 Confused people who manifest audacity with respect to the 'Lord of the Worlds' by listening to female singers (*muṭarribāt*) whose activities are forbidden. Although this type of audition may arouse praiseworthy emotions such as love, fear, and hope, it is nevertheless a mistake, because it arouses sensual delight, [and] its use for spiritual incitement is forbidden. Although this type of audition combines good and evil, benefit and harm, good and bad, its positive aspects are clearly outweighed by its negative aspects. For example, a person who engages in ecstatic dance (*raqs*) and the rhythmic clapping of hands (*taṣfīq*) may claim that he has achieved union with the Godhead (*tāsha lillāh*) and that his heart left him (*dhahaba qalbuhu*), but he is nothing more than a stupid ignoramus. An intelligent person who possesses virtuous qualities would never make such a claim.⁹⁵

94 Ibid., 61–62.

95 Ibid., 62.

Al-ʿUqbānī expands upon the ignorance of the people mentioned in category (4), citing “one of the Imāms”: One does not find any textual evidence for ecstatic dance or rhythmic clapping of the hands in the Qurʾān, Sunna, or example of the Companions and Followers. Only ignorant fools who cannot distinguish between spiritual truths (*ḥaqāʾiq*) and carnal passions (*ahwāʾ*) listen to forbidden singers. Such people engage in an artificial performance: some scream, faint, and cry, while others beat their breasts and pluck the hair from their armpits—all forbidden actions that have been condemned by generations of religious authorities. Such people delude themselves, believing that they are engaging in obedience to God when in fact their behavior is the ugliest form of foolishness. There is no connection whatsoever between such behavior and that of the Messenger of God (pbuh). Let this be a warning, the muftī implies, to the participants in the *dhikr* ritual who are the subject of his treatise.⁹⁶

4.0. *The communal meal and associated activities*

When the recitations had been completed, the Shaykh provided a communal meal, paid for with his own financial resources, seeking thereby to atone for any sins that he might have committed. Al-ʿUqbānī identifies three issues relating to this activity.

4.1. *The Shaykh's asking for forgiveness*

What is the *sharʿī* status of the Shaykh's seeking forgiveness and atonement for his sins by providing a meal to the participants in the *dhikr* ceremony?

Al-ʿUqbānī opines: This is a meritorious act supported by textual evidence (*shawāhid*) in both the Qurʾān and the Sunna. The muftī begins with the Sunna. The Prophet (pbuh) asked God for forgiveness on behalf of the person most beloved to him in the best of times: ʿĀʾisha. When she asked him what she should say if she were to reach *Laylat al-Qadr*, he replied, “Say: ‘O God, verily You are forgiving and You love forgiveness. So forgive me.’”⁹⁷ Al-ʿUqbānī then quotes eight verses of the Qurʾān in which God instructs Muḥammad and the Believers to seek forgiveness for their sins:

- 1 “... and ask forgiveness for your sins and those of believing men and women” (Q. 47:19).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 62–63. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Daʿwāt, bāb 89, no. 3855 (with minor variants).

- 2 "And seek God's forgiveness, for God is surely forgiving and kind" (Q. 4:106).
- 3 "[Say ...] 'With the Lord are gardens with running streams of water for those who keep from evil and follow the straight path, where they will live unchanged with the purest of companions and blessings of God.' And under God's eyes are devotees who say, 'Our Lord, we believe; forgive our trespasses and save us the torment of Hell.' They are the patient, the sincere and devout, full of charity, who pray for forgiveness in the hours of dawn" (Q. 3:15–17).
- 4 "But God would not choose to punish them while you are in their midst; nor afflict them when they are seeking forgiveness" (Q. 8:33).
- 5 "And those who, if they commit a shameful act or some wrong against themselves, remember God and seek forgiveness for their sins: for who can forgive except God" (Q. 3:135).
- 6 "He who does evil or acts against his own interests [by disbelieving], then prays for God's forgiveness, will find God compassionate and merciful" (Q. 4:110).
- 7 "O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall certainly be lost" (Q. 7:23).
- 8 "Then his Lord sent words to Adam, and turned towards him" (Q. 2:37).⁹⁸

The muftī also cites a hadith transmitted on the authority of Ibn 'Umar according to which Muḥammad's Companions used to repeat the following statement 100 times at a single gathering or session, and that the Prophet would not signal the end of the session until they had done so: "O my Lord. Forgive me and restore me to your grace. Verily you are the forgiver, the merciful one."⁹⁹

The eighth verse in the list (Q. 2:37) mentions certain words that God sent to Adam. What were these words? Al-'Uqbānī answers this question by citing al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, according to whom the words learned by Adam are reported in another Qur'ānic verse (item 7 on the list), "O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves" (Q. 7:23). From this the muftī concludes that the very notion of forgiveness was made possible only as a result of God's creation of language, without which there can be no forgiveness. Forgiveness is thus a special quality of humanity.¹⁰⁰

98 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 63.

99 Ibid. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Da'wāt, bāb 34, no. 3434.

100 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 63.

Al-ʿUqbānī cites an ancient authority who, when asked about what it is appropriate for a sinner to say when he seeks forgiveness, cited statements in the Qurʾān attributed to prophets other than Muḥammad. Adam, Moses, and Jonah all acknowledged their mistakes and asked God for forgiveness.

- 1 Adam said: "O our Lord we have wronged ourselves" (Q. 7:23).
- 2 Moses said: "O Lord ... I have done wrong, forgive me" (Q. 28:16).
- 3 Jonah said: "There is no god other than You. All glory to You; surely I was a sinner" (Q. 21:87).

The seeking of forgiveness is thus an innate characteristic of prophets, messengers, saints (*awlīyāʾ*) and righteous men (*ṣāliḥīn*). The merit of the statements attributed to these prophets is reinforced by the fact that their words are quoted by God in the Qurʾān, i.e., this is what God said that these prophets said. Here, the external form (*lafẓ*) and underlying meaning (*maʿnā*) are identical.¹⁰¹

4.2. *The meal*

The muftī states that the provision of food for the needy is especially meritorious "at a time when there is a need for it," alluding perhaps to the availability of food or lack thereof in Tlemcen. Certainly, drought and recurrences of plague were not uncommon in the Islamic West in the 9th/15th century, and it is possible that by providing a communal meal, the Shaykh was attempting to address the problem of hunger in the city. The distribution of food by Sufi shaykhs also was associated with the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (*mawlid al-nabī*), another controversial practice in the Maghrib.¹⁰²

True to his method, al-ʿUqbānī cites textual evidence in the Qurʾān and Sunna for the merit of feeding the needy. He begins with Q. 90:11–16: "But he could not scale the steep ascent. How will you comprehend what the steep ascent is?—To free a neck [from the burden of debt or slavery], or to feed in times of famine the orphan near in relationship, or the poor in distress." Noting that God draws a connection between providing food and freeing a slave, al-ʿUqbānī states, "Happy is he who has the means to satisfy the need of those who

101 Ibid., 63. The mistakes or sins acknowledged here by Adam, Moses, and Jonah fly in the face of the doctrine of the *ʿiṣma* or impeccability of prophets, that is to say, their immunity from fault and error. See *EQ*, s.v. Impeccability (Paul E. Walker).

102 al-Wansharīṣī, *Miʿyār* xi, 63–64. On the Prophet's birthday, see Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival* 32. On the distribution of food to the poor, see Singer, *Charity in Muslim Societies* 76–77.

are needy and to remove the plight (*darūra*) of those who are in a predicament." He then cites a hadith according to which the Prophet's (pbuh) initial statement upon his arrival in Medina following the hijra was, "O people, promote peace, feed [the hungry], establish bonds of kinship, and pray at night when the people are sleeping. [If you do this], you will enter the Garden in peace."¹⁰³ The Prophet (pbuh) is also reported to have said, "If a believer provides food for a believer who is hungry, God will provide him with food on the Day of Resurrection from the fruits of the Garden. And if a believer provides water for a believer who is thirsty, God will provide him with water on the Day of Resurrection from the choicest wine that has been sealed ..."¹⁰⁴ It is reported that when a man asked the Prophet (pbuh) what is the best act in Islam, he replied, "Provide food for, and greet [lit. say *al-salām* to][both] those who are your acquaintances and those who are not your acquaintances."¹⁰⁵ The Prophet (pbuh) is also reported to have said that a charitable donation (*ṣadaqa*) extinguishes a sin just as water extinguishes fire.¹⁰⁶ And he said (pbuh), "Fear the Fire, even [by providing] a slice of fruit."¹⁰⁷

Al-Uqbānī concludes that providing food is beneficial to the believer because it saves him from the Fire and results in his inheriting Paradise. Thus, man has an interest in performing acts of charity. God established rights in wealth that are His to the exclusion of His creation so that He might bestow wealth on the needy and relieve the plight of those who find themselves in a predicament. The mechanisms for the redistribution of God's wealth include almsgiving, expiatory gifts, recommended [acts], sacrifices, bequests, endowments, and the provision of hospitality.¹⁰⁸

4.3. Praising God after feeding the hungry

At the conclusion of the communal meal, the participants praised God, thanked Him, and magnified Him for the blessings that He had bestowed upon them.

¹⁰³ al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 64. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *Ṣifat al-qi'yāma*, bāb 42, no. 2673 and Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, *Iqāmat al-Ṣalāt*, bāb 174, no. 1395; *ibid.*, *Aṭ'ima*, bāb 1, no. 3374 (on the authority of 'Ubayd Allāh b. Salām).

¹⁰⁴ al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 64. Cf. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *Zakāt*, bāb 42, no. 1684. On 'the choicest wine,' see Q. 83:25.

¹⁰⁵ al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 64. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Īmān*, bāb 6, no. 12 and bāb 20, no. 28.

¹⁰⁶ al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 64. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *Safar*, bāb 315, no. 614; *ibid.*, *Īmān*, bāb 8, no. 2616.

¹⁰⁷ al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 64. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Zakāt*, bāb 10, no. 10.

¹⁰⁸ al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār* xi, 64.

Al-ʿUqbānī assesses these actions as ‘praiseworthy’ because they serve as a sign of the believer’s gratitude for the blessings that God has bestowed upon him. In return, God expresses His satisfaction (*riḍā*) with His servants. There is substantial textual evidence for this practice in the Sunna. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Verily God is satisfied with His servant who, when he consumes food, praises Him for it, and when he drinks water, praises Him for it.”¹⁰⁹ And he said (pbuh), “The person who eats [food] and thanks [God] has the status of the person who fasts and is patient.”¹¹⁰ After the Prophet had finished a meal, it reportedly was his custom to say, “Praise be to God who has provided us with food and water and made us Muslims.”¹¹¹ And he said to God, “Thus, when I was hungry, I beseeched You and I remembered You, and when I was sated, I thanked You and praised You.”¹¹²

On the basis of these reports, al-ʿUqbānī concludes that not only is it legitimate for a believer to praise God after consuming food and water but also that the Sacred Law encourages him to do so. In return, God bestows a gift upon the believer by indicating His satisfaction with him. The muftī now cites a hadith about certain ‘*atīqs* or ‘freedmen of Allāh’ who God admitted to the Garden without their having performed any action (‘*amal*’) and without their having carried out any pious deed (*khayr*):

[God] said, “Enter the Garden, and whatever you see is yours.” To which they responded, “O our Lord, You have given us something that You have not given to any other humans (*min al-ʿālamīn*).” He said, “Your entitlement is even great than that in My eyes.” They said, “O our Lord, what thing could be better than this?” He said, “My satisfaction (*riḍāʾ*). Indeed, I shall never be angry with you after it.”¹¹³

Man is obligated to praise God whether he finds himself in a state of felicity and well-being or in a state of sadness and adversity. Drawing on the *ʿUtbīyya*, al-ʿUqbānī cites a report transmitted by Mālik about the Companion Abū al-Dardāʾ, regarding a visit that he made to Shaddād b. Aws, when the latter was on his deathbed. When Shaddād began to praise God, Abū al-Dardāʾ said to him, “You have hit the mark. Verily, God gives [some] men knowledge (‘*ilm*’) but he

109 Ibid., 64. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Duʿā waʾl-Tawbah, bāb 24, no. 7108.

110 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 64. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Šifat al-Qiyāma, bāb 43, no. 2674 (where this hadith is categorized as *ḥasan gharīb*); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, al-Šiyām, bāb 55, no. 1836.

111 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 64. Cf. Abū Dawūd, *Sunan*, al-Aṭʿima, bāb 53, no. 3852.

112 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 64–65. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Zuhd, bāb 35, no. 2520.

113 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, bāb 81, nos. 183, 2829.

does not give them patience (*ḥilm*); and He gives some [men] patience but He does not give them knowledge. Verily, Abū Yaʿlā Shaddād b. Aws is one of those men to whom God gave [both] knowledge and patience.”¹¹⁴

Thus, the muftī concludes, it is clear that when a servant of God praises his Lord, this causes his Lord to be satisfied with him.

4.4. *The use of perfume—and the order in which it is dispensed*

At the conclusion of the meal, the Shaykh's servant brought in a vessel containing perfume. After the Shaykh had applied some perfume to his body, the person sitting to his right did the same, and so on, until all of the people who had participated in the ritual ceremony and consumed the meal had applied perfume to their bodies.

The use of perfume was another contested practice. Al-ʿUqbānī begins his discussion of this topic by stating that the use of perfume, as described in the question, qualifies as an action that is ‘good’ and ‘encouraged,’ because the *sharʿa* ‘recommends’ that a person should use perfume in connection with his or her fulfillment of the objectives of the law, to wit, gathering for prayer in mosques on Fridays, on holidays, and at other times when people assemble in public. This is because perfume removes harmful and unpleasant odors from the air and replaces them with pleasant odors that envelop the Muslims who are gathered for prayer and other *sharʿī* purposes. The angels reportedly adorn mosques with perfume, thereby enhancing one's ability to think and benefiting both mind and soul. Al-ʿUqbānī adds that the use of perfume is prescribed for “the needs of women,” without any further specification, except to say that this is one reason why a person who is outside the ranks of consanguinity is forbidden to enter the women's area of the house (*ḥarīm*), lest the scent of a perfumed woman stimulate sexual desire for her. Finally, the muftī notes that Islam was established on the basis of cleanliness, one sign of which is the scent of perfume on the body of a believer.¹¹⁵

Only now does al-ʿUqbānī concede that certain uses of perfume are associated with un-Islamic character traits such as egoism, hypocrisy, haughtiness, and boastfulness. In condemnation of such behavior, he cites Q. 57:23, “God does not love the egoist and the braggart.” And he draws special attention to one particular use of perfume that is prohibited. A woman should not use per-

114 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 65. According to Mālik, Abū Yaʿlā was the son of a paternal uncle of the poet Ḥassān b. Thābit. According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, however, he was Ḥassān's brother's son.

115 Ibid.

fume for the purpose of attracting the attention of people who pass by her on the street. She may, however, use perfume within the privacy of her home “for the pleasure of her husband.”¹¹⁶

Al-‘Uqbānī now provides *sunnaic* evidence for the merits of perfume. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that he loved three things in “this world of yours” (*dunyākum*): women, perfume, and the pleasure that he derives from prayer.¹¹⁷ His wife, ‘Ā’isha, is reported to have said that she used to apply perfume to the body of the Messenger of God, noting that it was possible to see the white beads of perfume on his beard and head.¹¹⁸ The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have advised his Companions not to return a gift of sweet-smelling perfume.¹¹⁹ On another occasion, he singled out perfume as one of three types of gift that should not be returned.¹²⁰

Having established the appropriate and inappropriate uses of perfume and provided textual evidence for its use, al-‘Uqbānī turns to the order in which the perfume was applied by the members of the *dhikr* ceremony: first the Shaykh, then the person sitting to his right, and so on around the circle. The issue here—as with the formation of the circle itself (see section 1.1, above)—was the differences in status between and among the participants in the ceremony, some of whom were people of high status (*makārim al-akhlāq*, literally, moral standards) while others were mere paupers. Although all Muslims are equal in the eyes of God, it is customary for a Muslim of lower status to defer to a Muslim of higher status. How is the principle of religious equality to be reconciled with the social etiquette of deference?¹²¹

Al-‘Uqbānī reiterates that the practice of beginning with the right and continuing in that direction is ‘recommended’. And he provides additional textual support for this practice. According to Ashhab (d. 196/725), a Muslim should begin with the right-hand side and continue in that direction when performing any one of the following three activities: writing, testifying, and *wuḍū’*—a term that the muftī glosses here as “the washing of hands (*ghusl*) while in a group for the purpose of eating.” Although he does not explicitly say so, one may extend this statement, by analogy, to the practice of beginning with the right when using perfume.¹²²

116 Ibid., 65–66.

117 Ibid., 66. Cf. al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, Nikāḥ, bāb 23, no. 2676.

118 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 66.

119 Ibid. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Alfāz min al-adab, bāb 5, no. 6020.

120 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 66. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Adab, bāb 37, no. 2790 (the other two items were a pillow and milk).

121 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 66.

122 Ibid.

But there is a countervailing *sunna* indicator: If the group includes a scholar or person of great distinction, the custom (*sunna*) is to begin with the person of distinction, irrespective of his physical location in the circle, after which the activity may proceed to the person to his right. As support for this custom, al-ʿUqbānī cites the example of the Prophet (pbuh), who, on one occasion, was sitting on the ground, flanked by a Bedouin on his right and Abū Bakr on his left. Someone brought the Prophet a vessel containing milk and he drank from it. The Prophet then gave the vessel to Abū Bakr—despite his being on his left—who drank from it, followed by the Bedouin. An unnamed scholar qualified this example by noting that the rule of beginning with the person on the right should not be violated unless the person of higher status who finds himself sitting to the left of the Prophet asks the permission of the person of lower status who is sitting to the right of the Prophet. In support of this qualification, the muftī cites a variant of the above-mentioned report in which the Prophet (pbuh) is sitting on the ground, flanked by a servant on his right and some Shaykhs on his left. After the Prophet had consumed some of the milk, he asked the servant on his right for permission to give the vessel to the Shaykhs sitting on his left. But the servant stood his ground. “No. By God, O Messenger of God. I will not cede to anyone my priority with respect to you.” As a result, the Prophet (pbuh) poured the milk into his hand.¹²³

Thus, the practice of beginning with the right side was subject to modification according to circumstances.

5.0. *The conclusion of the ceremony*

5.1. *The three-fold recitation of the Fātiḥa*

After perfuming themselves, the participants in the *dhikr* ceremony recited a short chapter of the Qurʾān,¹²⁴ followed by the three-fold recitation of the *Fātiḥa*.

This detail gave al-ʿUqbānī an opportunity to deliver a short discourse on the merits of the *Fātiḥa*. The first verse of the opening chapter of the Qurʾān begins with the word ‘Praise’ (*al-ḥamd*): “Praise be to God Lord of the Worlds.” Qurʾānic descriptions of Paradise emphasize the uttering of this phrase. Sūrat Yūnis (Jonah) describes the believers in Paradise as follows: “... and the end of their prayer (will be): ‘Praise be to God Lord of all the worlds’” (Q. 10:10). Similarly, Sūrat al-Zumar (Small Groups) ends with three verses that describe

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Text: *qīṣār al-mufaṣṣal*, a term for the short *sūras* in the Qurʾān, from *sūra* 50 (*Qāf*) to *sūra* 114 (*al-Nās*).

the behavior of the believers as they approach the gates of Paradise in small groups. "Praise be to God the Lord of all the Worlds," they say to the keepers of the gates; and, the Qur'ān continues, the believers themselves see angels hovering around the Throne, singing the praises of God: "Praise be to God the Lord of all the worlds" (Q. 39:73–75). From this, scholars have concluded that it is appropriate to recite the opening verse of the *Fātiḥa* at the conclusion of assemblies and learned gatherings. Thus, it surely was appropriate for the participants in the *dhikr* ceremony to recite the *Fātiḥa*, although al-'Uqbānī does not say so explicitly here, leaving the readers of his *fatwā* to draw this conclusion on their own.¹²⁵

Indeed, it reportedly was the custom of thoughtful people (*ūlū al-albāb*) to recite the *Fātiḥa* immediately after completing the recitation of the Qur'ān, a practice referred to as *al-ḥāl al-murtaḥal* or the state of departing. This practice ensures that the Believer ends the recitation of the Qur'ān with the phrase 'Praise be to God.'¹²⁶

The *Fātiḥa* has numerous additional merits. The blessing embodied in the *Fātiḥa* surpasses every other blessing because it combines all of the following meritorious actions into one: (1) praise (*ḥamd*); (2) commendation (*thanā'*); (3) saying '*al-ḥamdu lillāhi*' (*tahmīd*); (4) the attribution of oneness to God (*tawḥīd*) through (a) devotion to Him and (b) the dedication of good works to Him; (5) the seeking of God's support and assistance by praising Him; (6) the attribution of every command to Him; and (7) seeking His guidance for the performance of the most meritorious actions, spiritual states, and statements.¹²⁷

As additional support for the merits of the *Fātiḥa*, al-'Uqbānī cites a hadith *qudsī* or divine saying related on the authority of Muḥammad: "I divided prayer between Myself and my servant [viz., Muḥammad] into two halves."¹²⁸ Thus, the muftī observes, the three-fold recitation of the *Fātiḥa*, with its remembrances of God and supplications to Him, may result in the doubling or tripling of the reward conferred upon the believer.

The mention of doubling and tripling triggers an association to the 'mathematics' of praising God. Al-'Uqbānī now cites a hadith: Juwayriyya bt. al-Ḥārith, one of Muḥammad's wives, relates that on one occasion the Prophet (pbuh) noticed that she had spent half of the day praying in the mosque. He offered

¹²⁵ Ibid., 66–67.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 67.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, bāb, no. 2953. On hadith *qudsī*, see Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam*.

to teach her a *dhikr* formula, the reward for which would be equal in value to whatever prayers she had uttered in the mosque that day. The formula devised by the Prophet (pbuh) was composed of four clusters of four-word phrases repeated three times each:

- 1 Praise be to God for the number of His creation (*subhāna allāhu ‘adad khalqihī*).
Praise be to God for the number of His creation.
Praise be to God for the number of His creation.
- 2 Praise be to God for the satisfaction of His self (*subhāna allāhu riḍā nafsihī*).
Praise be to God for the satisfaction of His self.
Praise be to God for the satisfaction of His self.
- 3 Praise be to God for the weighing of His throne (*subhāna allāhu zināt ‘arshihī*).
Praise be to God for the weighing of His throne.
Praise be to God for the weighing of His throne.
- 4 Praise be to God for the extension of His speech (*subhāna allāhu midād kalimātihī*).
Praise be to God for the extension of His speech.
Praise be to God for the extension of His speech.¹²⁹

Similarly, it is reported on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet (pbuh) liked to perform the *du‘ā* or supererogatory prayer three times and to ask for forgiveness three times.¹³⁰

The Prophet’s habit of uttering a supererogatory prayer three times is further support for the merit of reciting the *Fātiḥa*, which is an integral part of any supererogatory prayer. The best of all supererogatory prayers, al-‘Uqbānī notes, is one that includes the *dhikr* formulations of the *Fātiḥa*. The preeminence of the *Fātiḥa* over all other *dhikr* formulas is suggested by the prophetic utterance, “The likes of it [viz., the *Fātiḥa*] was not revealed in the Torah, Injīl, Psalms, or Furqān. Verily it is the seven verses (*al-sab‘ al-mathānī*) and the glorious Qur’ān that was given to me.”¹³¹ The status of the *Fātiḥa* differs fundamentally from that of the remainder of the revelation with respect to its function in

129 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 67. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, bāb 19, no. 2726; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Da‘wāt, bāb 118, no. 3555.

130 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 68. Cf. Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, bāb 9, no. 923 (where the report is transmitted on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ūd).

131 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 68.

Islamic ritual practice: the *Fātiḥa* may stand on its own, without any support, whereas every other prayer must be supported by it. It is also called *al-sabʿ al-mathānī* because it is repeated (*tuthannā*) in every prayer. In a hadith relating an exchange between Muḥammad (pbuh) and the angel Gabriel (pbuh), the angel says to the Prophet, "... Give glad tidings of two lights that you have been given that no prophet was given before you: the opening [chapter] of the Book; and the closing [verse of] Sūrat al-Baqara. Not a single word of them would have been recited had I not given it [to you]."¹³²

Having established that it is permissible to utter the *Fātiḥa* near the end of the *dhikr* ceremony, al-ʿUqbānī now raises an issue not anticipated in the original question (*istiftāʾ*), namely, the use of the *Fātiḥa* as a magical formula (*ruqya*).¹³³ He quotes a statement attributed to the Andalusian scholar Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148), "Verily, it is a powerful magic formula." Indeed, the use of the *Fātiḥa* as a magic charm can be traced back to the lifetime of the Prophet. The Companion Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī reports that while he was out traveling with other Companions, the group stopped to rest with a tribe whose leader was ill. A servant girl asked if any member of the group was a 'charmer' (*rāqīn*). Unbeknownst to the others, one of them did have some experience in this field, so he stood up and uttered a magic formula. The chief of the tribe recovered and instructed his people to give the charmer 30 goats and to give the other members of the group milk to drink. Subsequently, the members of the group asked their comrade if he was a trained charmer. To which he replied, "No. The only magic formula that I uttered was the opening chapter of the Qurʾān." Following their return to Medina, the Muslims asked the Prophet about the appropriateness of using the *Fātiḥa* as a magic charm. Muḥammad exclaimed, "How does he know that the *Fātiḥa* is a magic formula? Give me a share of what you [received from that chief]." Muḥammad now showed them how to utter a magic formula by repeating the *Fātiḥa* three times. This report establishes that Muḥammad approved the use of the *Fātiḥa* as a magical charm.¹³⁴

¹³² Ibid. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, bāb 43, no. 806; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, bāb 7, no. 778. The last verse of Sūrat al-Baqara reads as follows: "God charges no soul beyond its capacity; to its account is what it has earned, and against its account is what it has merited. Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden like that you laid on those who were before us. Our Lord, do not lay on us such a burden as we are incapable of bearing. Pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us. You are our Protector—Give us victory over the people who are not believers."

¹³³ See *EQ*, s.v. Magic (Gabriel Mandel Khān).

¹³⁴ al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 68–69. Text: *aḍribū lī maʿakum baynahum*. Read: *waʿḍrubū lī maʿakum bi-sahm*. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-ljāra, bāb 16, no. 2320.

5.2. *Spitting in the hands and wiping the face before departure*

The participants now recited certain prayers composed in praise of God. Then the Shaykh offered a supplication (*yad'ū*), and, as he did so, the members of the group raised their hands, seeking God's favor. They then spit in their hands (n.b.: this detail is not specified in the narrative description of the ceremony) and wiped their faces, shook the hand of the Shaykh, and departed.

Among this cluster of issues, al-'Uqbānī focused his attention exclusively on the practice of spitting in one's hands and then wiping one's face (*mash al-wajh*).¹³⁵ The muftī establishes the permissibility of this practice by citing a hadith related on the authority of 'Ā'isha: When the Prophet went to bed every night, it was his custom to cup the palms of his hands together and spit (*nafatha*) into them. Then he would recite the last three Sūras of the Qur'ān: Q. 112, which begins: "Say: He is God, one"; Q. 113, which begins: "Say: I take refuge in the Lord of the daybreak"; and Q. 114, which begins: "Say: I take refuge with the Lord of mankind." (These three Sūras are known collectively as *al-mu'awwidhāt*; and the last two are known as *al-mu'awwidhatān*, i.e., the two Sūras that begin, "I take refuge in/with ... from ..."). And then, 'Ā'isha added, the Prophet (pbuh) would wipe his face, head, and the parts of the body that were close to them, repeating the action three times.¹³⁶

The fact that the Prophet spit in his hands and wiped his face would appear to indicate that it is permissible for Muslims to do the same. Indeed, this practice apparently was common among Muslims in the first quarter of the 9th/15th century and it remains so to this day. It is important to note in this regard that the practice of spitting in one's hands and wiping one's face was, and continues to be, associated with the utterance of certain magical formulas that are believed to have sacred power (*baraka*). Although the connection between spitting and the utterance of these magical formulas is not stated explicitly in the question, it was obvious to al-'Uqbānī and his audience, and he devoted considerable effort to evaluating it, as we shall see.

The determination of the legal status of the practice of spitting in the hands and wiping the face was not as simple as it appeared at first glance. Certain hermeneutic and legal subtleties had to be examined. At this point in his response, al-'Uqbānī raises the discursive register of the *fatwā* by shifting to the language of law and dialectic. He identifies and formulates four hypothetical objections to the assumption that the preceding Prophetic hadith provides textual support for the permissibility of spitting in one's hand and wiping one's face.

135 The issue of 'wiping' was problematic in other areas of Islamic ritual. See *ET*², s.v. al-Mash' alā al-khuffayn (Ch. Pellat).

136 al-Wansharīsi, *Mi'yār* xi, 69. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, bāb 14, no. 5069.

Objection no. 1. One may argue that the hadith is specific, not general, that is to say, the Prophet spit in his hands and wiped his face only when he went to bed but did not do so at other times or in other circumstances. This position is supported by a hadith related on the authority of the Companion ‘Abdallāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/652): “The Messenger of God (pbuh) disapproved of [the use of] a magical formula (*ruqā*) except for the *al-mu‘awwidhatāni*.”¹³⁷ (It was understood by al-‘Uqbānī and his audience that the utterance of a magical formula was always preceded by the action of spitting in one’s hands).

To this objection, al-‘Uqbānī replies that this hadith is ‘weak.’ Now, the reader will recall that earlier in his response the muftī had argued, with regard to the practice of shaking the hand of the Shaykh, that it *is* permissible to act on the basis of a weak hadith in matters relating to good behavior, encouragement to do good deeds and discouragement to do evil deeds (*faḍā’il, tarhīb* and *targhīb*). However, this concession apparently was not relevant in the present instance because spitting in one’s hands and wiping one’s face before uttering the *Fātiḥa* is a matter of *dīn* or religion. Al-‘Uqbānī cites the Qur’ān commentator, historian, and jurist al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), according to whom the chain of transmitters of this hadith includes the name of someone who is unknown; and it is not sound practice to cite a report such as this as a proof text for a practice associated with religion (*al-dīn*). On the other hand, we do have the aforementioned report transmitted on the authority of ‘Ā’isha in which the Prophet appears to express his approval of the use of the *Fātiḥa* as a magical formula: “How does he [viz., the Muslim charmer] know that [the *Fātiḥa*] is a magical formula? Give me a share of what you [received from that chief].” And we also have the fourth verse of the *Fātiḥa*, “And to You alone we turn for help,” which, the muftī explains, means that the act of asking God for assistance is equivalent to asking Him to remove a harm. Thus, it is permissible to utter a magic formula, i.e., after spitting in one’s hands and wiping one’s face.¹³⁸

For the sake of comprehensiveness, al-‘Uqbānī now assumes, hypothetically, the soundness of the hadith in which ‘Abdallāh b. Mas‘ūd says, “The Messenger of God (pbuh) disliked [the use of] a magical formula (*al-ruqā*) except for the *al-mu‘awwidhatāni*.” If this were in fact a sound report, it would be in conflict with the report in which Muḥammad says, “How does he know that the *Fātiḥa* is a magic formula (*ruqya*)?” In that case, the latter statement would prevail over, and abrogate, the former, because it contains the Prophet’s [implied]

137 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 69. Cf. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*; K. al-Du‘ā, bāb 78, no. 29604.

138 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi’yār* xi, 69.

affirmation that the *Fātiḥa* possesses the virtue of being a magical formula, and positive assertions (*akhbār*) such as this one cannot be abrogated [by negative assertions]. This is not true of the statement attributed to the Prophet as transmitted by ‘Abdallāh b. Mas‘ūd (“The Messenger of God (pbuh) disliked [the use of] a magical formula except for the *al-mu‘awwidhatānī*”), which has the status of a legal injunction (*ḥukm*). Thus, the command (*al-amr*) to use a magical formula (“How does he know ...?”) must be understood as having been uttered *after* the report about dislike for a magical formula (*al-ruqyā*). It follows that the command abrogates the legal injunction.¹³⁹

Objection no. 2. One also may object that whereas the charmer in the aforementioned hadith does in fact spit in his hand, the question to which al-‘Uqbānī was asked to respond does not explicitly mention spitting (as noted above).¹⁴⁰

Al-‘Uqbānī does not reply directly to this question. Rather, he says that the status of spitting is contested. Support for the practice may be found in some hadiths with ‘sound’ chains of transmission, but not in others. Thus, some jurists approved of the practice whereas others regarded it as reprehensible. Those who disapproved of spitting included Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī (d. ca. 96/717) and al-Ḍaḥḥāk [b. Muzāhim] (d. 105/723), who is reported to have said, “Utter an incantation but do not spit.”¹⁴¹

Objection no. 3. One may argue that it is permissible to utter a magical formula for the sake of a person who is ill, but not for a person who is healthy. It is related on the authority of ‘Ā’isha, for example, that the Prophet (pbuh) used to pronounce a charm over a Muslim, rubbing him (*yamsaḥuhu*) with his right hand, saying, “Remove the harm, O Lord of Mankind. Heal. You are the Healer. There is no healing except yours, a healing that leaves no [sign of] illness.”¹⁴² It is also related on the authority of ‘Ā’isha that when the Prophet was stricken with the illness from which he eventually expired, he spat upon himself while reciting the formula, “I take refuge with ... from ...”. When the pain became so intense that he could no longer continue what he was doing, ‘Ā’isha reports that she spat into her right hand and wiped him with the spittle, on account of its sacred power.¹⁴³

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid. Note: The editor has inserted ellipsis here to indicate that something is missing.

142 Ibid., 70. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Mardā, bāb 20, no. 5737.

143 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 70. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Salam, bāb 20, no. 5844; Mālik, *Muwatta’*, bāb 4, no. 1723; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Ṭibb, bāb 19, no. 3904; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, Ṭibb, bāb 38, no. 3659.

To this al-ʿUqbānī replies: Whereas the ‘prevailing’ view (*al-ghālib*) holds that it is permissible to utter a magic formula *only* for a person who is sick, the ‘sound’ view (*al-ṣaḥīḥ*) is that one *also* may utter a magical charm for a person who is healthy. Al-ʿUqbānī reminds his reader that he already has cited a hadith in which it is reported that the Prophet (pbuh) used to spit in his hands and utter three short verses of the Qurʾān whenever he went to bed (see above). On the basis of this report, Muslim scholars have concluded that it is permissible to ask someone to utter a magical formula for a person who is healthy. Just as one is permitted to utter a magical formula to remove a pain, one also may utter a formula in which one asks God *not* to afflict someone with pain or illness. In support of this position, the muftī cites a statement attributed to Muḥammad: “Whoever recites the two verses at the end of Sūrat al-Baqara at night, they are sufficient for him”, i.e., they will protect him from evil.¹⁴⁴

Objection no. 4. The above-mentioned ‘scholarly consensus’ regarding the permissibility of spitting in the hands and wiping the face of a healthy person masks early disagreement in the Mālikī school regarding this practice. Al-ʿUqbānī now discloses that no lesser an authority than Mālik b. Anas, the eponym of the Mālikī *madhhab* or law school, is reported to have expressed his *disapproval* of spitting in the hands and wiping the face of a healthy person. When asked about this practice, Mālik is said to have responded, “I do not know that,” viz., the above-mentioned prophetic hadith. Subsequently, Ibn Rushd¹⁴⁵ sought to provide an explanation for the underlying cause (*‘illa*) of Mālik’s assessment of this practice as *bidʿa* or innovation: Mālik regarded the practice of wiping the face of a healthy person as an innovation because he could find no support for this practice in the *sunna* of the Prophet. Rather, one finds only that the Prophet wiped the face of Companions who were ill. For example, ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ (d. 51/671) reports that he approached the Messenger of God (pbuh) suffering from severe pain, whereupon the Prophet (pbuh) instructed him to wipe his face with his right hand seven times while saying, “I seek refuge in the power of God and His might from the evil that I am experiencing.” ʿUthmān complied and, he reports, God removed the pain that he had been experiencing. ʿUthmān subsequently instructed members of his family and others to engage in this therapeutic practice.¹⁴⁶ Ibn Rushd then

144 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 70. Cf. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, bāb 43, no. 807. The two verses to be recited are vv. 285–286 of Sūrat al-Baqara.

145 Referred to here as “one of the Imāms of the Mālikī *madhhab*,” but subsequently identified as Ibn Rushd.

146 al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* xi, 70. Cf. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Ṭibb, bāb 19, no. 3893; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Ṭibb, bāb 29, no. 2224; Mālik, *Muwattaʿa*, bāb 4, no. 1722. On ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ, see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* viii, 68–70.

cited the report in which ‘Ā’isha states that the Messenger of God (pbuh) used to recite the *al-mu‘awwidhatāni* [Sūras] over himself, spitting [while he did so]; and that when his pain intensified, she would recite these Sūras over him and rub his right hand, because of the sacred power (*baraka*) associated with this action.¹⁴⁷

To this objection al-‘Uqbānī replies: Ibn Rushd’s explanation makes it clear that the answer to the question posed by the *muftā’* (Is it permissible to wipe one’s face with the two hands after reciting the *Fātiḥa*?) may be found in the reports dealing with wiping in connection with the utterance of a magical charm (*al-ruqā*). The answer is “yes,” and there is no need to deduce the rule for one from the rule for the other. In addition, textual evidence in the *sunna* points to the permissibility of wiping the face following the recitation of the *Fātiḥa*. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is reported to have said: “It was the custom of the Messenger of God (pbuh) that when he raised his hands in supplication, he would not lower them until he had wiped his face with them.”¹⁴⁸ This report, classified by al-Tirmidhī as “sound despite being single” (*ṣaḥīḥ gharīb*), makes it possible for al-‘Uqbānī to assert that there is in fact a ‘sound’ report that confirms the practice of wiping the face with the hands following the performance of a supererogatory prayer. But it is nevertheless the case that the opposite, i.e., not wiping, is widespread, largely because of Mālik’s statement, “I did not know that [hadith].”

Al-‘Uqbānī now provides his own explanation for Mālik’s apparent ignorance of this report (and for his, that is, al-‘Uqbānī’s own departure from the *madhhab* of Mālik). According to our muftī, Mālik was either unaware of the above-mentioned report transmitted by ‘Umar or was aware of it but regarded its source as unreliable. Subsequently, al-Tirmidhī identified a version of this report in which the *isnād* is ‘sound’; once this ‘sound’ version had been identified, it became obligatory for subsequent generations of Muslims to follow the report and to ignore Mālik. In support of this argument, al-‘Uqbānī cites a statement attributed to al-Shāfi‘ī: “If a hadith is sound, then I follow it; otherwise, place a wide fence around my *madhhab*.”¹⁴⁹

Other scholars who accepted the above-mentioned ‘sound’ report included Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), both of whom cited the above-mentioned ‘sound’ hadith when deriving a num-

147 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 70.

148 Ibid., 71. Cf. Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Da‘wāt, bāb 11, no. 3386 (where Tirmidhī classifies this hadith as ‘weak’).

149 al-Wansharīsī, *Mi‘yār* xi, 71. Text: “*Idhā ṣaḥḥa al-ḥadīth fa-huwa madhhabī wa-illā fa’ḍrubū bi-madhhabī ‘urḍa hādha al-ḥā’iṭ.*”

ber of rules associated with the etiquette of supererogatory prayer. Subsequent generations of scholars also based their view on this report.¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, al-ʿUqbānī reports that he was aware of a statement attributed to ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Sulamī (d. 660/1262)¹⁵¹ in which this scholar harshly denounced the practice of wiping the face following a supererogatory prayer: “No one but an ignoramus would do this.” In response, al-ʿUqbānī can do no more than express his surprise at how a scholar of ʿIzz al-Dīn’s status could make such a statement, notwithstanding the existence of a ‘sound’ report on the subject. The muftī concludes: The legal assessment with respect to the status of raising the hands following a supererogatory prayer vacillates between ‘permissible’ and ‘encouraged.’¹⁵²

To sum up: In one hadith, Muḥammad spits in his hands, utters three Sūras of the Qurʾān as an incantation, and then wipes his face with his hands. In another, a Companion reports that Muḥammad disliked the use of a magical formula. The muftī must weigh the conflicting evidence: He raises hypothetical objections, distinguishes between ‘sound’ and ‘weak’ transmissions, examines the context of the reports in question and explores the limits of their application, and distinguishes between the ‘prevailing view’ and the ‘sound’ view. Finally, he justifies his departure from the doctrine (*madhhab*) of Mālik and explains how the Mālikī school came to adopt a position seemingly at variance with the position of its Imām. Al-ʿUqbānī’s discussion of the status of wiping the face is a typical demonstration of the methodology used by a jurist when confronted with inconsistencies and contradictions in authority statements. Through performance, al-ʿUqbānī demonstrates what it means to be a muftī.

Excursus 2. Ijtihād, Taqlīd, and Tarjīh

Al-ʿUqbānī’s treatment of the practice of spitting in the hands and wiping the face after saying a supererogatory prayer may be summarized as follows:

The status of the practice is disputed. The muftī resolves the dispute by scrutinizing authority statements attributed to the Prophet in an effort to determine the precise legal assessment of this practice. The authority statements are themselves in conflict. One statement points to ‘disapproval,’ and this is the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Al-Sulamī, the leading Shāfiʿī authority of his generation, is often referred to as a *mujtahid*. He was also a Sufi who attended melodic chanting (*samāʿ*) sessions that were denounced by other jurists. See *ET*², s.v. al-Sulamī (E. Chaumont).

¹⁵² al-Wansharīsi, *Miʿyār* xi, 71.

position adopted by some jurists; but the hadith in which this statement is preserved is itself 'weak,' and, for this reason, al-'Uqbānī concludes, it may not serve as the basis for the determination of the matter. Indeed, another authority statement attributed to the Prophet points to the acceptability of the practice, and this statement is recorded in a 'sound' report. For this reason, the muftī explains, the 'preponderant view' among the jurists is to regard the practice as acceptable. But this conclusion places al-'Uqbānī in conflict with his Imām, Mālik b. Anas, who is reported to have held the opposite view. What is the explanation for this? Why should the Muslims of Tlemcen who regard al-'Uqbānī as their Imām follow him rather than Mālik on this question?

These questions trigger a second excursus in which al-'Uqbānī turns once again from positive law (*fiqh*) to the methods for its derivation (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). The muftī begins by constructing a hypothetical objection that calls into question the qualifications of a *muqallid* to engage in the activity of weighing conflicting or incongruent evidence (*tarjih*). To this objection he begins by defining *taqlid* as "the acceptance of the opinion of someone else *without* a proof text, as, for example, a layman's acceptance of the opinion of a muftī." Does the acceptance of a statement heard directly from the Messenger of God constitute *taqlid*? No, because the hadith is itself a proof-text, and the person who scrutinizes it in an effort to make a legal assessment (*ḥukm*) is therefore engaging in some form of *ijtihād*.¹⁵³

This line of reasoning is itself open to the following objection: The only people who received hadiths *directly* from the Prophet and who therefore were qualified to engage in *ijtihād* were the Companions. A scholar living in, say, the 9th/15th century had access only to a written statement of what the Prophet said, did or condoned by his silence, as recorded in one of the standard collections. To this objection al-'Uqbānī responds that the *isnād* or chain of transmission attached to the authority statement—if it is 'sound'—makes it possible to treat a particular prophetic utterance, as recorded, for example, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, as if it had been heard *directly* from a Companion; and it follows that a qualified jurist may use such a report as a proof-text to make a legal assessment.¹⁵⁴

But what does it mean for a jurist to be 'qualified'? This question triggers a discussion of *ijtihād* and *taqlid*. Al-'Uqbānī explains that there are two approaches to *ijtihād*. According to the first, *ijtihād* is divisible into categor-

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 71–72.

ies, with the result that a particular jurist may be qualified to engage in *ijtihād* with regard to one or more legal topics but not with regard to others. According to the second, *ijtihād* is indivisible and absolute and may be exercised only by a jurist who is capable of issuing *fatwās* on *all* categories of the sacred law. Indeed, the very existence of *ijtihād* in the Maghrib in the 9th/15th century depended on which of these two approaches one adopted.¹⁵⁵

For al-ʿUqbānī, *ijtihād*—like the narrative description that serves as the basis of his *fatwā*—is in fact divisible into parts. This is not only his view but also that of “*ḥujjat al-Islām*,” i.e., al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). He mentions some examples. In inheritance law, there is a crux known as ‘*al-mushtaraka*.’¹⁵⁶ A jurist who is familiar with the sources and meanings of the inheritance rules may propose a solution to this crux, even if he is not an expert in other areas of the law. Such a jurist falls into the category of one who has a trained intelligence (*faqīh al-naḥs*).¹⁵⁷ Other cruxes mentioned by al-ʿUqbānī include the legal assessment of intoxicating beverages and marriage without a guardian (*walī*); if a jurist does not know the reports relevant to these cruxes, he must at least know a summary of the reports. The muftī also mentions a problem associated with ritual ablutions. Q. 5:6 states, “Wash your faces and hands up to the elbows, and also wipe your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles” (*waḥṣaḥū bi-ruʿūsikum wa-arjalukum*). In working out the mechanics of ritual ablution, the jurists devoted considerable attention to the significance of the preposition *bi*, and their discussion of this issue required a high level of expertise in the science of grammar, a level that was lacking in many Muslims, including some jurists. But such a deficiency in the knowledge of grammar causes no harm and does not prevent a jurist from drawing an analogy to this verse on the basis of its generally accepted meaning, nor, by extension, does it prevent him from citing the above-mentioned hadith about ‘wiping.’ It is only by treating *ijtihād* as being divisible into parts that al-ʿUqbānī may assert that the activity of *ijtihād* was unbroken and continuous down to his lifetime.¹⁵⁸

If, however, one adopts the second approach, according to which *ijtihād* is indivisible and absolute, then, al-ʿUqbānī concedes, it follows that “*ijtihād*

155 Ibid., 72.

156 ‘*Al-mushtaraka*’ refers to a case in which agnatic brothers inherit in competition with uterine brothers. See Coulson, *Succession in the Muslim Family* 73–74.

157 On the term *faqīh al-naḥs*, see Calder, Al-Nawawī’s typology of *muftīs* 137–164, at 146–147. The term is used by al-Ghazālī in the sense of one who possesses self-knowledge or self-intelligibility. See Moosa, *Ghazālī & the Poetics of Imagination* 239.

158 al-Wansharī, *Miʿyār* xi, 72.

is absent in our time and has been for centuries before that." All is not lost, however, for the absence of the absolute *mujtahid* is offset by the presence of the *muftī-muqallid*, i.e., "the jurist who is familiar with the methods of derivation and who is qualified to engage in examination [of the sources]." When a *muftī-muqallid* encounters a question that is disputed, he may engage in *tarjih*, that is to say, he may choose or select the opinion that, in his view, is the preponderant one; indeed, it would be inappropriate for him not to engage in *tarjih*. For this reason, the great jurists of the school have stipulated that the *muftī-muqallid* must be familiar with the methods of derivation and must be qualified to engage in examination of the sources. Otherwise, the layman who acted in accordance with a *fatwā* issued by a *muftī-muqallid* would suffer a 'defect' and would 'stagnate.'¹⁵⁹

This last point raises the question of the relationship between a layman and a *muftī-muqallid*. Al-'Uqbānī now cites a statement attributed to 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām according to which if a layman follows a specific Imām whose doctrine (*madhhab*) is at variance with certain textual indicators, the layman nevertheless is expected to follow what the Imām says (*muqallid^{an} lahu*) as if the Imām were himself a prophet.¹⁶⁰

May a *muftī-muqallid* issue a legal assessment at variance with the doctrine (*madhhab*) of his Imām? No, he may not, al-'Uqbānī states emphatically. Indeed, a *muqallid* may not depart from the doctrine of his Imām, even if he is of the opinion that the preferred choice (*mukhtār*) on a particular topic is something other than the view held by his Imām. The obligation of *madhhab* discipline is so strong that a *muqallid* should disregard a judge (*ḥākim*) who says that he will base his judgment on something other than the doctrine of his Imām.¹⁶¹

Did not al-'Uqbānī himself depart from the doctrine of his Imām, Mālik b. Anas, on the question of wiping the face after a supererogatory prayer? No, al-'Uqbānī explains, because wiping the face is a matter of 'etiquette' (*adab*) and 'religion' (*dīn*) in which the choice that a believer makes is a matter between himself and his Master. With regard to such matters, the layman is required to follow the preponderant view, even if that view is at variance with the doctrine of the Imām.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. (bottom).

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 72–73.

¹⁶² Ibid., 73.

4 Conclusion

Al-ʿUqbānī's *fatwā* is important for at least two reasons.

First, it is a marker or index of the mutual accommodation of law and Sufism, a process that had been unfolding in the Maghrib for several hundred years. A simple question about the status of a *dhikr* ceremony became an occasion for reflection and argument and an opportunity for al-ʿUqbānī to demonstrate his juristic skills and authority. Drawing upon his knowledge of Qurʾān and hadith and using the language and methodology of both substantive law (*fiqh*) and legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), al-ʿUqbānī made a persuasive case for the legitimacy of moderate Sufi practices and, at the same time, through performance, demonstrated his credentials as a supreme religio-legal authority. By any standard, his response was an impressive display of scholarly erudition that opens a window on the mind of the *muftī*, his art, and his method.¹⁶³

Second, al-ʿUqbānī's *fatwā* may shed light on the development of *taṣawwuf* in the Maghrib—and beyond. Over the course of the 200 years between ca. 1250 and 1450 C.E., the Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*) emerged and became an important institution that spread across the Islamic world. As noted at the outset, juristic opposition to institutional Sufism in the Islamic West was intense, as exemplified in the writings of al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388). The same was true in the Islamic East, where opposition to Sufism is exemplified in the writings of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328 in Damascus). Both al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Taymiyya were *salafīs*, that is to say, they based their legal arguments largely on evidence found in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. Jurists who were supporters of Sufism found it convenient to adopt the hermeneutical methods of *salafī* opponents of the practice. In the Islamic East, arguably the earliest juristic statement in favor of Sufism is found in a *fatwā* composed by Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī (b. 909/1503 in Egypt; d. 974/1566 in Mecca), who used the *salafī* method to refute Ibn Taymiyya's arguments against *taṣawwuf*.¹⁶⁴ Al-ʿUqbānī's defense of *taṣawwuf*, it will be recalled, was composed ca. 829/1425, that is to say, approximately 150 years before Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī's death in 974/1566. Clearly, al-ʿUqbānī played an important role in the legitimation of Sufism in the Islamic West. In addition, however, the timing and content of his *fatwā* suggest that he may have had an influence on Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī and the legitimation of Sufism in the Islamic East as well. This is a topic that merits further attention from scholars of law and Sufism.

163 On the art of the *muftī*, see. Powers, *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500*.

164 See Nafi, *Taṣawwuf and Reform in Pre-Modern Islamic Culture* 307–355.

A final note: When he had finished copying al-ʿUqbānī's *fatwā*, al-Wansharīsī appended to his transcription the following terse note: "The Shaykh, memorizer, and expert, Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Marzūq, may God have mercy on him, has [written], in refutation to this response, an unequivocal (*shāfʿīn*) composition and discourse that encompasses seven quires (*karārīs*). [However,] I have been unable to record it following this response [because of] its prolixity and length ...". Now Al-Wansharīsī, it should be noted, spent approximately eleven years copying the *fatwās* that would become the *Kitāb al-Mīʿyār*, some of them, like that of Ibn Marzūq, seven quires in length. Was he having a bad day? Or was he exercising his prerogative as a compiler to privilege a *fatwā* with which he was in general agreement and, at the same time, to consign to the dustbin of history a refutation with which he may have disagreed? *Allāhu aʿlam*.

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PART 3

Geography and Ethnography



Al-Jāḥiẓ and Identity

John P. Turner

Al-Jāḥiẓ was keenly attuned to the nuance and gradations of meanings in words and how they were used.¹ When reading his work, we need to be certain that we are hearing him within his context and not through the echoes of our own categories of meaning. As a deeply skilled wordsmith his use of language forces us to read closely and his precise language is one of the things that makes him so difficult yet rewarding to read. We must strive to read him as precisely as his writing deserves.² Famously, al-Jāḥiẓ wrote treatises that dealt with identity categories such as “black” or “Turk.” In this article I want to problematize how we have read, interpreted, and used both these texts and the identities described as frameworks for mapping social interactions in the early ‘Abbasid period. As an entry into the conversation, I will ask what does al-Jāḥiẓ mean when he says “Arab” or “Turk” in his famous epistle *Manāqib al-Turk* (The Virtues of the Turk)?³ He appears to have begun writing the treatise during the reign of the Caliph al-Mu‘taṣim, but in the end presented it to Faṭḥ b. Khāqān at the court of al-Mutawakkil. In it he makes an argument that lays out the differences between the five main groupings within the Caliph’s army and concludes that they all have a place within it.

However, I must confess that, in reality, I am more interested in what those terms do not mean for him. In modern studies of the ‘Abbasid era, more often than not, those words have been assumed to have meanings congruent with contemporary nationalist categories (or subtle gradients of them). Yet, those words have distinct interpretively bounded meanings derived from their con-

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- 1 I find it particularly appropriate for this venue that I began thinking about some of these issues in an appendix to my dissertation. I am eternally grateful to Michael Bonner for guiding, nudging, and supporting me in exploring ideas that seemed fairly far afield and helping me to rein it in when necessary. I have been parsing the question of identity for a very long time and portions of this piece were presented to the School of Abbasid Studies in 2014. Michael introduced me to al-Jāḥiẓ through the story of the judge and the fly, and I have been intrigued by and wrestling with his work ever since. It is particularly fitting to combine the two in one piece.
 - 2 Behzadi nicely shows where al-Jāḥiẓ fits on the *lafẓ-ma‘nā* continuum. Behzadi, Al-Jāḥiẓ and His Successors on Communication and the Levels of Language.
 - 3 al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ* i, 4–85.

text of usage. Clearly, our own discussions of identity have shifted over time in ways that are mostly imperceptible to us, but which reflect our current circumstances, and deeply inform how we read and understand our material. Assertions in our sources of geographic identity describe origin and (possibly) forms of ethnicity, but these do not translate into national identities.⁴ The word Arab does not mean the same thing to us that it did to someone in the ninth century.⁵ Intellectually, that much is obvious, yet the usage continues without much discussion of what makes it problematic. The root of the issue is that the raw material in our sources easily lends itself to fitting our modern categories of identity while being convenient and easy to use. That is what makes avoiding nationalistic vocabulary so devilishly difficult. However, using these categories elides and over-rides the nuances in the source material. Fundamentally, our categories of meaning do not apply and we need to mindfully approach our sources explicitly acknowledging that. Identity is socially constructed through articulation within a matrix of culturally and temporally specific meanings. Naturally, this means that we cannot and must not use the nationalist idiom and vocabulary to describe what al-Jāḥiẓ is saying. We should also be careful with other categories as well. However, once we have exchanged our filters, what is he saying? More importantly, what lessons can we learn from him about how and why identities were articulated and deployed in our sources? In the end, as is true of much wrestling with al-Jāḥiẓ, what I will offer is suggestive, but not conclusive.

In order to begin my discussion, I must first clarify the root of the taxonomic problem. The formulation and articulation of national identity are inherently dependent on modern definitions of interpersonal/intercommunal relations and the construct of the nation-state. The idiom of expression is dependent on modernity, as it cannot exist without the nation-state as a frame of reference. However, the materials of identity that are used in its construction are neither entirely fictive, nor “imagined.” There has been a great deal of scholarly ink spilled trying to define “nation” and to elucidate its mechanisms in order to understand its power. Generally speaking, there are three main theoretical approaches to the study of “the nation”: the Primordialists, the Ethnosymbol-

4 Donner pressed the field to eschew nationalist vocabulary 20 years ago. Donner, *Modern Nationalism and Medieval Islamic History*. Crone also briefly addressed the issue. Crone, *The Nativist Prophets* 160–177. Although explicitly ahistorical in his article, Agha avoids “the concept of nationalism” in order to sidestep the debate over “the retrojection of nineteenth century concepts back to a medieval situation.” Agha, *Language as a Component* 68.

5 For a fruitful discussion of origins see Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*. And Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*.

ists (e.g., Anthony Smith, et al), and the Instrumentalists (e.g., Benedict Anderson, et al).⁶ As with any approach grounded in theory, there is some good and bad to be found. The latter two models offer us substantive tools with which to process our problem. It is worth mentioning that applying any of the models in a Middle Eastern context is always going to be a bit messy. Thus, I situate myself uncomfortably at the margins of the Instrumentalists as I find it somewhat too dismissive of pre-modern collective identity, but otherwise useful.⁷ Modern (and nationalist) modes of articulating identity are inherently imbricated with the effects of Western imperialism and colonialism as *responsa* and on indigenous forms. The impact of 19th century European empires on convincing the rest of the world to think in terms of the nation is undeniable and as is an equal effect on national identifications in the metropole. Any particular national identity is transmuted by the effects of power and translated using local historical memory. Part of the difficulty is that nations are apparently ancient and distinctively modern at the same time. They lay claim to the material effects of ancientness yet do so using modern methods. The modern technologies of rule use artifacts of identity which become routinized to the point of acceptance as givens/common sense to create in the imagination the idea that a person in Provence is French as were all of their ancestors and that persons (past and present) holding that identity have an obligation to France. A key element of the power of the nation as an organizing principle is an unquestioned presumption of continuity and ubiquity, which is leveraged to form bonds, attachments, and motivation to actions where they would not otherwise exist. Of course, the reality is not nearly so tidy as that makes it seem. The ethnosymbolist and instrumentalist approaches can be useful if we maintain both a balance between the poles and a healthy dose of contextual nuance. There were people referred to as “Turk” in the ninth century, but the designation would not have resonated in Samarra the way it does today in Ankara. Thus, the conundrum is discerning what ninth century authors like al-Jāḥiẓ meant when they used the term.

6 For a robust discussion see Conversi, *Mapping the Field*; Horowitz, *The Primordialists*. For some of the Instrumentalists that have influenced my thinking, see Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*; Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 109; Gellner, *Nationalism*; Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Tradition*.

7 I am not the only one discomfited. Even some historians of Europe see it as all a bit too modern focused. For example, see Kostantaras, *Empirical Advances in the Study of Early European Nationalisms* 580. Albeit some of the stated objections to the ‘modernist-constructivist’ school (p. 579) do not apply given that nationalism arrives in the Middle East largely in the late 19th century.

To further complicate our discussion, asking the simple question, “what defines a nation?” highlights a significant problem. If it is posed to a room full of scholars one might come to a consensus, but it would take some time and there would be lots of caveats posed. If one were to take those definitions to a group of the general public, one would be struck by the gaps and striking disagreement. When I say the word “nation” or “national” to my American students they make no assumptions about ethnicity or even identity. They assume that I am speaking of concerns that can be applied to the whole of a country in a generic sense. I suspect that not to be the case in other countries. What identity is and when it matters are difficult questions. There is a sharp difference between modern, national identities and collective identities of the past. What makes modern nationalism new is the nation-state system. The political sovereignty of a country is validated solely through the existence of a nation-state (a slippery term in and of itself). A state that is defined such that sovereignty and participation within the system of nation-states is dependent on the articulation of, projection of, and defense of a totalizing national identity. And that is distinctly new. We have recent examples of ‘failed states’ like Somalia, but the moniker proves the point. Somalia, as a country, is now defined by its failure to participate effectively within the system and its inability to enact state controls over its own territory.

The existence of collective identities is not new. Instead, the global proliferation of nation-states and the sense of nation as a totalizing identity under which all others were subsumed changed how political or collective identities are articulated.⁸ Modern bureaucracy and its ability to project power with an increasing level of granularity when combined with the logic of sovereign participation in a system of nation-states exerts tremendous and deeply imperfect force on expressions of identity. Until the very recent past (turn of the 20th century—perhaps mid-19th) the range of local autonomy could not be eclipsed and then, only through the advent of technologies to overwhelm and subsume those autonomies. Efficient conscription, collection of sales tax, a driver’s license—all dependent on and part of a systematization and retrieval of specific location information—are examples of those technologies. Not all states can do these things, and most do not do them well. However, they are the ideals towards which most are striving. Of greater importance is the ability of the state to enforce responsibility for participation on the individual. This is of course a two-way street. Nationalism and the creation and maintenance of national identity gives the individual the sense of participation, or

8 See Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* 9.

at least inclusion, in the greater whole while in return the state gains legitimacy.⁹ Whether that participation is willing/unwilling, conscious/unconscious is a different set of discussions, but it is mostly through non-conscious participation, except in moments of crisis that trigger, or are leveraged to trigger, identification by, with, and through the national identity.¹⁰

To firmly underline, national identities are not ancient. They are modern interpretations and adaptations of historical data to fit the modern framework of the nation-state system that emerged on the cusp of the 16th century and developed in western Europe in the wake of the wars of religion and then were exported to the rest of the world in the 19th century as part of the building of and justification for empire by those powers. What immediately follows is certainly debatable but as my focus is elsewhere, I will not make the attempt to substantiate it fully.¹¹ In the 16th century our modern idea of nation/nationalism began to fill the void created by the Reformation/Counter-Reformation and the wars of religion in Europe. Greenfeld argues that the idea of the nation emerges out of the mass slaughter of English nobility that was the Wars of the Roses.¹² The Tudors, in an effort to justify the creation of a new aristocracy, had to eliminate the perceived impermeable boundary of inequality between the blue bloods and the masses in order to justify their crossover. The vocabulary/idea of nation facilitated the transference. Naturally, it was bounded and limited, and the permeability was viewed to have dissipated quickly but the fundamentally new way of conceiving of society as a nation lingered powerfully. At the base was an equally lingering sense of the nation as having some baseline quality of equality within, contrasting to the outside other who is a rival in competition for resources, and inherently not equal. Greenfeld's articulation of a model of three initial types of nationalism "individualistic/civic" (Britain/US), "collectivistic/civic" (France) and "collectivistic/ethnic" (Russia) is profoundly helpful in understanding the exportation and divergent expressions of nationalism as they manifest in the colonies/imperial domains and spheres of influence.¹³ She describes the development of the German model of

9 For a discussion of some of the mechanisms involved see Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*; Jenson, *What's in a Name? Nationalist Movements and Public Discourse*; Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*.

10 See Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.

11 I have been deeply influenced by Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*; Greenfeld, *Nationalism: A Short History*; Duara, *Bifurcating Linear History*; Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*; White, *Globalization and the Mythology of the "Nation State"*; Gelvin, *(Re)Presenting Nations*.

12 Greenfeld, *Nationalism: A Short History*.

13 Ibid 81–82.

nationalism, focused on “blood and soil” and the birth of the “science of race” that informed it.¹⁴ Her model helps us to understand why the categories we use, like Arab or Turk, are so stubbornly difficult to think around and outside of. Importantly, when the ideas of nation filtered in the above ways were imported into the Middle East, Turkey and Iran borrowed from the German model. As there was no single state able to dominate an articulation of Arab nationalism, it was more diffuse and subject to the competing nationalisms of the newly formed nation-states struggling for independence under mostly British and French domination.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the idea of nation became more firmly developed and implanted within the discourses of the Enlightenment and began to spread. The advent of the French Republic changed the status of relations between countries and the effectiveness of the state’s leveraging of the French populace in their cause forced the other European states to respond and adapt to a fundamentally changed paradigm. In the 19th century European powers used the resource leveraging that nationalism provided to dominate and create empires with nationalism and social Darwinism serving as legitimation for domination. The idea of nation was exported as those with whom they came in contact had to adapt to the changed narrative of sovereignty. Make no mistake, there is nothing inevitable, or natural, or essential in the evolution of and rise to political dominance of the idea of nationalism or the nation-state. The nation-states of Europe developed technologies of dominance that were effective and extremely hard to defeat because of the increased ability to leverage resources in a particular direction. Because it was so effective the frame of reference slowly eclipsed other ways of thinking about/describing political groupings. It did not do so totally, and certainly not permanently, as people’s identities are relational and malleable. But it did change the way that we describe and talk about such things so that the reference point became ‘national identity’ from which other identities became sub-units. Nation and national identity are ways of thinking about the groupings of humanity that are dependent on the modern political system. They are not essential, not permanent, and are not primordial. Ethnicity and the vocabulary of difference do not necessitate national identity. The importance of these observations for our purposes is to highlight that these terminologies of nation are fluid, variable, contingent, distinctly modern, and we absolutely must resist reading them into our sources.

Much like a language’s rules of grammar, despite the appearance of permanence, the ways of articulating identity are and always have been constantly

14 Ibid 92.

in flux. Race, as a category, is contingent and unstable. This is not to say that ideas about race do not have power. In modern America, the effects of race and racial disparities are undeniable. However, the defining attributes for what defines a race are historically variable.¹⁵ Not too long ago, race and nation were treated as synonyms. Although now hopelessly outdated, reputable scholars used to speak of the “French race.” The term and concept of ‘race’ and ‘racial’ differences are socially constructed and imbued with meaning by the societies that describe them. This is a particularly relevant observation given our sources occasional description of physical characteristics. When al-Jāḥiẓ describes people with “black” skin color, we need to remember that, for him, this (skin color) is an acquired, not innate, attribute. As is obvious, being Black in the U.S. in 2021 does not carry the same connotations and social weight as having a darker complexion in ninth century Baghdad, one is defined through and by the experience and legacy of slavery and the other is not. Importantly, it is through culture that physical differences obtain meaning. This does not mean that the differences do not exist. However, it is to say that the meaning, importance, or relevance of the difference is socially constructed and culturally defined, alongside the awareness that culture changes.¹⁶

Ethnicity presents a similar set of interpretive difficulties. Ethnicities assert immutability, but one can ask immediately what defines an ethnicity and how is it different from race or nation? Anthony Smith uses the term *ethnie* to account for this.¹⁷ He defines an *ethnie* as an ethnic group that shared some meaningful bond whose history is accurately, or inaccurately as is usually the case, mined to show a connection to, and rationale for, a modern national identity.¹⁸ But, ethnicities are not primordial either. Ethnicity, in cultural terms, evolves, shifts, and changes over time. Those who might self-identify in today’s terms as ‘Arab’ would not have recognized or have been recognized under that label as it was applied in the ninth century, which certainly holds true for the terms Turk and Arab as used by al-Jāḥiẓ.

The claim to a totalizing identity has real power and pre-exists modernity, but the diversity of practice in Islam explains why it, the religion, does not serve as a totalizing identity in the same way as modern nationalism. Without a

15 Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*.

16 Smith, *The Nation in History*.

17 Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

18 Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism*. Smith, *Nationalism*. For a more successful attempt at this, though of which I remain skeptical, see James, Arab Ethnonyms (‘Ajām, ‘Arab, Badū and Turk). His approach has the advantage of explicitly engaging the historically shifting boundaries around ethnic labels like “Kurd.”

powerful homogenizing force like the modern state (or church) and its modes of communicating and transmitting power, the level of commonality asserted and consistency in messaging and reach in that messaging cannot be achieved. The identity itself is equally contingent. A Muslim in Jakarta is unlikely to feel much in common with a Muslim in Ann Arbor unless there are specific, intentional interventions articulating the points of commonality in a context where those are felt to be relevant by the two individuals. The same would have been as true for the ninth as for the 21st century. When there are multiple competing identities and one does not come to dominate, if not eclipse, the others, then it is not a definer for a community.

When a scholar says something like “both Iranians and Arabs” the fundamental assumption behind this statement is the presumed ancient reality of these ethnic/national identities and divisions.¹⁹ The field has long ago abandoned the notion that the ‘Abbasid revolution was an Iranian backlash to Arab dominance, but we have not completely broken free from nationalist assumptions surrounding it and its consequences. While Sharon may say in a footnote that the *ahl Khurāsān* at the beginning of the ‘Abbasid revolt was not an ethnicity, the body of his argument leads in a different direction.²⁰ We would do well to remember that the original ‘Abbasid revolutionary army had been registered in the diwan according to place of origin and not according to tribe.²¹ I interpret this as a move to contain and side-step the tribal factionalization that had so powerfully shredded the Umayyad collective during the Third Fitna as opposed to it being a manifestation of anti-Arab, much less pro-Iranian national sentiment.²² This does not invalidate the cultural tools that were deployed as defining elements as a possible unifier.²³ What it does do is question the broader

19 Ayalon, *The Military Reforms of Caliph Al-Mu‘taṣim* 6.

20 Sharon, *Revolt: The Social and Military Aspects of the Abbasid Revolution* 279 note 49.

21 Ibid 279. It must be noted that Sharon is basing his understanding of this on two passages from al-Ṭabarī, both regarding the same incident. Mottahedeh quotes an interesting comment in al-Baghawī, “The *shu‘ūb* are those who do not trace their descent back to any one person; rather they trace themselves ... to cities ... and villages. The qabā’il are the Arabs who trace themselves to their ancestors.” Mottahedeh, *The Shu‘ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran* 169.

22 See al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* iii, 264. “I answered, ‘O Commander of the Faithful, these two are from among your people (*qawm*), the people of honor (*sharaf*).’ And he replied, turning away from me, ‘you care for naught but ‘*aṣabiyya*.’”

23 Note the observation made by McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism* 23. “Such identifiers of ethnicity, however, do not automatically generate an ‘identity’, because the key will be how an individual chooses to identify with these characteristics. ‘Identity is perception. If a particular identity does not mean anything to the population in question, this population does not have this particular identity.’”

relevance of this, particularly as we read al-Jāḥiẓ. People from such disparate areas representing such wide-ranging cultural and ethnic diversity would not have felt any sort of affinity to each other based on common ethnicity without an overt attempt to draw those connections explicitly.²⁴

In the era with which we are concerned, the primary form of identification would have been with the family, perhaps geographical, and for those claiming Arabian connections with the tribe. For example:

And then they said (to me), "Who are you?" I replied, "a man from Hamdān." And they said, "from what Hamdān are you?" And so (in response), I asserted a relationship to a small tribe from among them, as I knew the small tribes of Hamdān. Hence, they left me alone.²⁵

This example highlights three points. First, even though this man is admittedly lying, this is a valid, and in fact the usual, form of self-identification.²⁶ Secondly, it shows that tribal identities were fluid.²⁷ Genealogies were traced for utilitarian purposes to give a tribal identity that fostered alliances, inclusion, and, in this case, deception. Thirdly, identities are relative in the sense that how one articulates them, and which elements are most relevant is situational.

There were people who subscribed to the cultural paradigm of the elites, which given the nature of our sources, is the one we hear the most about. This subscription does not automatically assume that those cultural identifiers become the dominant or sole form of identification for the individual. Arabic language was the dominant means of cultural and scholarly expression in the eighth and ninth centuries and it was to this that people aspired. However, this does not mean that they were identifying with a national grouping any

24 Ibid 28. "The key point here is that there is no one-to-one relationship between ethnicity and cultural identifiers. What matters is which ones key actors regard as significant, for which purposes and under which conditions." and quoting Eriksen on the same page "It is only when they make a difference that cultural differences are important in the creation of ethnic boundaries."

25 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* ii, 2015. Also see Afsaruddin, In Praise of the Caliphs 331. quotes an exchange between Abū Bakr and Baḥīrā; "... and he asked him, 'Where are you from?' He said, 'From Makka.' He asked, 'From which tribe?' He said, 'Quraysh.' He asked, 'What are you?' He replied, 'A merchant.'" The interesting thing to note about this exchange is the way Abū Bakr's identity is mapped. He does identify himself with a locale, but this is clearly only part of the identity code. Tribe is important as is occupation, all three of which establish Abū Bakr as close to the Prophet, making clear allusions to the Prophet, who was from Mecca, was Qurashi and a merchant.

26 For further examples see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* iii, 145–146, 283, 95.

27 Lindner, What Was a Nomadic Tribe.

more than Norwegian scholars writing in English are to be identified as “English” or “American.” In fact, they likely would vehemently reject that notion and point out that English is the idiom through which the largest audience will be reached. The use of Arabic does not express anything more than a willingness and eagerness to participate in a broader culture of knowledge and aspirations to social mobility. The discussions of “racial” and cultural characteristics by early Arabic authors, while perhaps reflecting general attitudes, did not lead the people so described to band together for political or any other purposes. Consider the differences of interpretation between the authors described as being involved in the *shu‘ūbi* controversy. It is worth noting that they were all operating in Arabic. Sarah Savant has eloquently shown that far too much has been made of them in terms that are not accurate and which “plays into the hands of modern nationalist polemics.”²⁸ She and Peter Webb, in the introduction to their edition of Ibn Qutaybah, show that the term *shu‘ūbi* was a retroactive label used to code someone as a bigot and not the name of a movement. There were no self-described *shu‘ūbi*.²⁹ It was not a clash of national or ethnic identities.

One often sees the term *‘ajam* translated as Iranian or Persian. Those are not equivalent terms. First, Iranian, as a term in English, has only relatively recently become dominant. In fact, its usage in place of the word Persian tracks directly to the insistence by the modern nation-state of Iran upon it beginning in the middle 1930s. This does not mean that the term Iran was not in circulation before.³⁰ However, the words Iranian and Persian are not interchangeable. Clearly, what we now know as Persian is not the same as what would have been spoken in the ninth century. At one point Patricia Crone defined *‘ajam* as “unassimilated, half converted or unconverted Iranians.”³¹ However, Ignacio Sanchez, in an article about Ibn Qutaybah and the *shu‘ūbi* comes to the conclusion that “the distinction between Arab and *‘ajam* can be as vague

28 Savant, *Naming Shu‘ubis* 169. Mottahedeh’s classic article has been superseded by Savant’s highly effective refutation of it. Mottahedeh, *The Shu‘ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran*.

29 Ibn Qutaybah, *The Excellence of the Arabs* xvi. In this volume Savant and Webb have produced an excellent critical edition of Ibn Qutaybah that supersedes the others. The Arabic portion is available for free download at the Library of Arabic Literature website.

30 For a more specific discussion of the evolution of the deployment of the words Iran and Iranian see Tavakoli-Targhi, *Historiography and Crafting Iranian National Identity* 8.

31 Crone, ‘Abbāsīd Abnā’ 14. Ayalon, *The Military Reforms of Caliph Al-Mu‘taṣim* 19, mentions something similar to this and cites al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* iii, 829. Crone’s view on the matter certainly became much more nuanced. See Crone, *The Nativist Prophets* especially 160–177.

and misleading as the category of 'Iranian'.³² In this context one might bring up the scholarly debate about whether Ibn Qutaybah and al- Jāḥiẓ were Arab or not. However, whether they were Arab seems not to have mattered a great deal in their own context. What counted was their fluency and eloquence in Arabic.

Sanchez's discussion highlights that geographic identities were deployed for specific descriptive purposes. Importantly, if one looks to the basic meaning of the word '*ajam*' it means someone who speaks Arabic poorly.³³ Savant defines it as a "relational term signifying non-Arabs, with the first marker being 'Persians'."³⁴ In the introduction to their edition of Ibn Qutaybah, Savant and Webb choose to translate it as "Easterners."³⁵ Taking my lead from Gordon and Savant, I would contend that '*ajam*' has a lot in common with the Greek term *barbaroi* in that it vaguely asserts a linguistic and status difference. In context, it usually has largely pejorative connotations for people from the east who either do not speak Arabic or speak it poorly and therefore are not participants in the dominant culture. It is not an ethnic marker. It does not translate as "Iranian" because, even if the nationalist's term were applicable, not all of the people to whom it applies were culturally Persian and when the term is used it does not indicate that the speaker is using Persian.³⁶ In both al-Ṭabarī and al-Ya'qūbī's *Kitāb al-Buldān* one can find the term used as a descriptor for those whom we would label as "Turks."³⁷ This is not to say that it never indicated "Persians" but that it does not exclusively indicate these people.³⁸ The same reservations could be applied to the word "Turk."

Upon al-Mutawakkil's rise to the throne al-Ya'qūbī notes "the first to take the oath of allegiance to him were Sīmā al-Turkī, known as al-Dimashqī, and Waṣīf

32 Sanchez, Ibn Qutayba and the Ahl Khurāsān 244.

33 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* ii, 1967.

34 Savant, Naming Shu'ubis 169.

35 Ibn Qutaybah, *The Excellence of the Arabs*.

36 I am not alone in making this observation. For example see al-Ṭabarī, *Storm and Stress* 27 notes 102, 04; Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords* 54, 58, 60, 96, and notes. It is not as though the term "Farsi" was unknown or unused.

37 Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords* 54.

38 See Mottahedeh, The Shu'ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran 173. where he quotes the poet Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167/783–784) "When I entered the presence of [the caliph] al-Mahdī he said to me 'Of whom do you reckon yourself, Bashshār?' I said, 'As for my language and dress, they are Arab; but as for my origin, it is non-Arab ('*ajamī*') ... [Then Bashshār argued with another man present, and finally al-Mahdī asked him:] 'From which of the '*ajam*' is your origin?' And I said 'From those most prolific in cavalry men, ... the people of Tukhāristan.' Someone present said 'Those are the Soghdians,' and I said 'No, the Soghdians are merchants.'"

al-Turkī.”³⁹ Or much later al-Dhahabī says “*Ītākh al-Turkī al-‘Abbāsī*, the agent (of the Caliph) was the sword of vengeance of the Caliphate and al-Mutawakkil was indeed afraid of him.”⁴⁰ As Ismail has pointed out “there are sufficient references to their lands of origin to show that the name Turk was used indiscriminately.”⁴¹ Given all of the above, one wonders exactly what Turk means in that context. Importantly, note that the above named “Turks” were all military men. I will return to this point.

In the same vein, we should also ponder what the word Arab meant. In Ibn Qutaybah, *‘arab* appears to have connotations of rural Arabian manliness and linguistic virtuosity as opposed to the more urbane civilization of a rapidly changing Baghdad.⁴² When reading both al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn Qutaybah one has the sense that they were offended by slipping standards of Arabic elocution. James Montgomery makes an observation that helps us untangle things a bit. In an article on al-Jāḥiẓ’s discourse on mispronunciation he says, “a resumption of misarticulation as a result of membership of a linguistic community, which for al-Jāḥiẓ was tantamount to what we today would call ethnicity.”⁴³ To be a Turk or Arab one must speak Turkish (whatever that means for the ninth century) or Arabic. Of course, this renders actual ethnicity as a category irrelevant because one can learn a language and thereby stop being one or the other.⁴⁴ One of al-Jāḥiẓ’s critiques of the offending speaker who is the root trigger for writing an epistle on the “Virtues of the Turk” is that he is hopelessly imprecise and garbled in his verbal expression. In short, he speaks Arabic poorly.⁴⁵

I should add here the observation that we, as a species, may group those who look different from us by a characteristic such as skin color which can then be generalized into a racial stereotype, but that stereotype does not recognize differences among the people grouped, differences which are recognized among people that we know and who might be considered grouped with us.⁴⁶ My point is that just because al-Jāḥiẓ may have grouped people in ways that we can interpret as conforming to our understandings of racial or national characteristics, this does not mean that either he or those so grouped perceived and accepted those racial and national characteristics as the basis for a sense of collective

39 al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh* ii, 446.

40 al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh* v. for the years 231–240, 92.

41 Ismail, Mu‘taṣim and the Turks 14.

42 Ibn Qutaybah, *The Excellence of the Arabs* xxii.

43 Montgomery, Al-Jāḥiẓ on Misarticulation 4.

44 For an interesting counter example where al-Jāḥiẓ discusses accents, which can maintain a sense of a lack of full inclusion or incomplete assimilation see *ibid* 18.

45 al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ* i, 11.

46 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* 65–66.

identity for themselves.⁴⁷ To put it more concisely, just because we perceive and project categories onto the information, that does not make it accurate. Interestingly al-Ya'qūbī, in his *Ta'rikh*, does not seem to mention the Turks in relation to al-Mu'taṣim much at all. For a group that played such a forceful role in al-Mu'taṣim's reign, their absence is somewhat shocking.⁴⁸

At this point, it is worth remembering al-Jāḥiẓ's audience for the "Virtues of the Turk." He was writing ostensibly for Faṭḥ b. Khāqān to whom the piece is dedicated. It appears to have gone through some revision from an initial draft written while al-Mu'taṣim was Caliph to the version we have that was presented during al-Mutawakkil's reign when the Turkic soldiery were in the ascendant, but clearly before the assassination. However, it was not entirely a vanity piece. It is written such that it could be picked up and read by the literate public.⁴⁹ In much of al-Jāḥiẓ's corpus he points towards building a society more pleasing to God.⁵⁰ However, al-Jāḥiẓ is in many cases inscrutably clear. His meandering digressions, which as Montgomery has shown are not really digressions,⁵¹ much like the first 100 pages of Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, are a deliberate challenge by the author to the reader's intellect to keep up. In the case of the "Epistle on the Virtues of the Turk" what on the surface appears to be fairly straightforward, in typical Jāḥiẓian fashion is not, in part because we moderns have freighted it with so much baggage.

The Epistle begins with Faṭḥ's recounting of the offensive speech of the aforementioned provocateur at court, which neglected the Turkic military units in its praise of the military. The speech is presented as divisive and likely to sow rivalries and dissention within the ranks. Al-Jāḥiẓ then notes a five-part division of the 'Abbasid army in Samarra; "*Khurāsānī wa turkī wa mawla wa 'arabī wa banawī*". From his oeuvre we know that al-Jāḥiẓ was a deeply intentional writer whose work was widely distributed and popular enough that a great deal of it survived. The parallel structure and rhyme and rhythm means of course that *mawla* is a mistake and should actually be read as *mawālī*, likely introduced as a scribal orthographic error. That aside, what is it that makes

47 See Haarman, *Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity* 177.

48 Equally interesting is the comment "and he moved to it [Qaṭūl] the [important] people from all lands." At least initially Samarra was not necessarily to be just the preserve of the "Turk." al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* ii, 432–433.

49 For more depth on his audience see Schoeler, *Writing for the Reading Public: The Case of al-Jāḥiẓ* esp. 59–60.

50 Heck, *Skepticism in Classical Islam* 39.

51 Montgomery, *Al-Jāḥiẓ in Praise of Books* esp. Chapter 2. His biography, which I will not go into here, is fascinating but obscures much. For a start see Montgomery, *Would al-Jāḥiẓ Please Make Himself Known?*

these into categories? Is it ethnicity? All five words take the form of *nisbas*. The praise that is offered for the Khurāsānīs is based on what they did for the *dawla* and not on the basis of some defining ethnic characteristic. The same is true for the *banawī*.⁵² All of the categories appear to be more geographic than anything else, but they also take account of specialization in military duties. Al-Jāḥiẓ's discussion of the differences clearly groups all five to show the geographic proximity of origin, which has the effect, within the logic of the argument being made, to lessen the differences between the groups. Distinctions made between the groups might distract the reader from noting a shared Arabic-centric mode of expression and yet that overarching connection could have been, but was not, expressed as a shared identity. *Mawali* is a status; a non-Arab who claims incorporation within an Arabian tribal identity (or it means something else that is entirely unclear). Arab and Turk are two potential ethnic designators, but clearly porous ones. However, as Montgomery points out, "ethnicity" is not quite the right word either. Al-Jāḥiẓ admits that his descriptions/categories are not all encompassing and that he is speaking in generalities.⁵³ He also asserts that those boundaries are ephemeral and somewhat arbitrary.⁵⁴ More generally, when using the word '*arabī*' it appears to imply geographic designation of those from the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁵ Importantly, the dominant theme in the descriptions of each group is that what they do and how they behave are what differentiate them and that they have many points for unity.

Othering is a common and unfortunately all too human endeavor. Al-Jāḥiẓ is clearly describing others but does so in a way that leaves space for the other to become 'not other' and to avoid dissention within the ranks.⁵⁶ He is also not asserting that there is an overarching identity that ties the 'not-other' together which would motivate political/military action against each other. To pick up a thread from earlier, we need to be clear that al-Jāḥiẓ is not generalizing about civilians. He is specifically occupied with describing troops. Underlying his discourse is a clear divide between the military and civilians.⁵⁷ Each "group" appears to have its military specialization, with the "Turk" being the light cav-

52 For a thorough discussion of the identity of the *abnā'* see Turner, 'The Abnā' al-Dawla.

53 al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ* i, 72.

54 Ibid i, 33.

55 Hefter, *The Reader in al-Jāḥiẓ* 128. Unfortunately Hefter consistently refers to "the nation" in his descriptions of identity. It is worth remembering that the boundaries of Arabia go all the way up to the Euphrates and Tigris valley and thus encompasses close proximity to Baghdad and al-Jāḥiẓ's hometown of Basra.

56 He all but says as much al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ* i, 29.

57 For example, compare the descriptions ibid i, 68–70.

alry. When reading through the sources for the settlement of Samarra there is a consistent drumbeat of cantons granted to commanders leading soldiers from a specific region. There was not an attempt to forge these into a solitary identity. In fact, just the opposite desire appears to be at work. From the perspective of the ruler, overarching, unified identity amongst the soldiers was something to be avoided. However, from that of al-Jāḥiẓ and presumably Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, disorderly factionalism and competition was equally to be avoided. Both Faṭḥ and al-Mutawakkil would learn that deadly lesson all too soon.

Al-Jāḥiẓ, as was common, conceives of the climes as having the ability to change people.⁵⁸ In other words, ethnic, racial traits, and physical characteristics are inherited by virtue of geographic location and therefore are changeable. Someone has dark skin because they live in a clime that produces that physical response. And that can be changed within a lifetime. He also presents cultural identity, what we might label ethnicity, as learned and transferable, not based on race or ethnicity but based on geographic location. The balance of humours is affected by the clime and those can be reset by a location change. One can change physical and cultural attributes by moving. As well, one can become better (more civilized?) according to al-Jāḥiẓ by learning Arabic well and communicating in the idiom of high culture.⁵⁹ As Lassner observed, by grouping all five as essentially from the same region and clime, they are effectively of the same family and therefore their points of commonality are greater than their differences.⁶⁰ In his description of the inhabitants of Khurasan, al-Jāḥiẓ states that “Arabs and Bedouin” after they have been there long enough start to become indistinguishable from the locals. He is trying to elide the differences so as to encode the Turk as a normal part of military society. The effect is to make them the same as those who came before, hence the focus on *‘arabī*, *mawālī*, *banawī*, *Khurāsānī*, and *turkī*. I have arranged them by their chronological arrival, but, for al-Jāḥiẓ, the clime connection is more powerful. His broader point is that the army in its diversity is nevertheless unified and can coexist harmoniously. Importantly his boundaries for identity and inclusion do not coincide with ours. As I noted before, in al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn Qutaybah the most important marker for status is whether a person can express themselves

58 Hefter, *The Reader in al-Jāḥiẓ* esp. 121–124. Heck indirectly mentions this. He quotes al-Jāḥiẓ “and how many generations did it take for Africans to become black and Slavs to become white?” Heck, *Skepticism in Classical Islam* 41.

59 Agha’s discussion of al-Jāḥiẓ’s use of the Isma‘īl tradition lends weight to this conclusion. Agha, *Language as a Component* esp. 177–178. Also see Miller, *Man Is Not the Only Speaking Animal*.

60 Lassner, *Shaping* 116–136.

well in Arabic, which is, of course, learned, even for native speakers. In the critique of the loudmouth from the beginning of the Epistle, al-Jāḥiẓ makes this point abundantly clear.

Even though al-Jāḥiẓ describes “the Turks” as more prone to longing for their lands of origin than other groups, this is no different from “the Arabs.”⁶¹ The topos of longing for the home of course conjures the opening sequence of a traditional qasida with the meditation on the remains of the abandoned camp. One should note that this is not the only place where al-Jāḥiẓ raises the theme of longing for home.⁶² In the end, in the Epistle, the real cause for the Turks’ desire to go home has a great deal more to do with their being underappreciated and badly utilized by their commanders.⁶³ Importantly, it is not essential that these people that he describes think of themselves as “the Turk” or that they act collectively.

Al-Jāḥiẓ has established a descriptive paradigm based on geography that has little to do with the self-identification of these groups. If asked, they would have primarily identified themselves as part of tribe X, or from town Y, or son of so and so, and not as “I am a Turk.” It is likely that they would have felt no more a sense of common identity with tribes living beyond the Oxus than they would have with any other tribal group. Their primary identification would have been according to more local and intimate ties, which would naturally have been more relevant.

We began our journey in this article by showing how and why our categories of identity, specifically the nation and its monikers, are distinctly modern and therefore inappropriate for use when reading ninth century texts while trying to understand that era and what al-Jāḥiẓ means. We need to be more careful about what terms like Turk and Arab connote in context and chary of the easy teleologies of nationalisms. What I have presented is suggestive that stepping away from national identities as a frame of reference allows for a more nuanced reading of al-Jāḥiẓ and for understanding some of the social dynamics of early ‘Abbasid society. We can see more clearly the distinctions that he is trying to make and the fractures that he deemed most important.

61 al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ* i, 63–64.

62 Hefter, *The Reader in al-Jāḥiẓ* 134–135.

63 al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ* i, 65.

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The Boundaries and Geographies of Medieval Blackness

Kristina Richardson

In his study of the early history of jihad, Michael Bonner showed that many categories taken for granted in the modern episteme inadequately represent the past. He warned that “we cannot understand the doctrines or the historical phenomena without understanding the words as precisely as possible.”¹ Words like ‘jihad’ did not mean ‘holy war’ or ‘just war’, concepts more useful for understanding the Christian Crusades motivated by justice and religious duty. Entering into the thought-worlds of medieval jurists, Bonner was able to elucidate the tensions in legal constructions of jihad throughout history. His sensitivity to the sources was most evident in his text-based seminars, where we would discuss the specific significances of words.

His example of profound care(fulness) guides this exploratory essay. As I research the history of early Basra by centering the lives of non-Arabs and non-Persians, I have found it necessary to expand my definitions and geographies of blackness, which in turn forces a reinterpretation of the Zutt, Zanj, and Qarmatī rebellions in seventh- to ninth-century lower Iraq and Khuzistan. Modern conceptions of the heritability of color and race, specifically blackness, have influenced our interpretations of social belonging and skin color.

1 “The Blacks and the Reds”

When Muḥammad reportedly said that “every prophet was sent specifically to his own people, whereas I have been sent to every black and red (*ila kull aswad wa-aḥmar*),” he was gesturing to the universality of his prophecy.² In classical Arabic “every black and red” is a merism invoking all of humankind. By necessity, these color categories were capaciously defined; al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–869 in Basra) compared them to Arabic grammatical conventions, which enable

¹ Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History* 2.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 5, Hadith 3.

“the masculine to cover both masculine and feminine.”³ One color could then encompass many ethnic groups through these associations. In ancient Arabic poetry “[t]he Arabs, for example, sometimes describe themselves as black in contrast to Persians, who are red, but at other times as red or white in contrast to the Africans, who are black.”⁴ While Arabs could move between color categories, this flexibility did not extend to all people. As al-Jāḥiẓ informs his readers, “Now you know that the Zanj, the Ethiopians, and the Nubians are not called white or red and that *they have no name but black*.”⁵ Such a statement suggests that blackness was a fixed identity. Yet, a little more than a century after al-Jāḥiẓ’ death, we find evidence that at least for some Africans the color boundary was porous. In 367/977 a man in Fustāt purchased “Tawfiq, a woman from Garama (*qaramiyya*) who is black verging on red” for 25 Mu’izzī dinars.⁶ Garama (modern Germa) was the capital city of the ancient Garamantian kingdom in the Fazzān region of southwest Libya. After Herodotus’s (fifth c. BCE) description of the Garamantes, the kingdom only reenters recorded history more than 1,000 years later on the occasion of its conquest by Muslim armies in 668.⁷ Following this takeover, the Arabic sources say precious little about the Garamantians. The Garamantians were presumably absorbed into the Muslim polity, perhaps converted from Christianity to Islam, and certainly learned Arabic. So very little else is known about Garamantians during the Islamic period. A handful of ninth- and tenth-century Arabic purchase deeds for women from Garamantes (*qarmāṭiyyah*) and Garama (*qarmīyyah*) offer names (no lineage) and physical descriptions such as of a red-haired black Garamantian (*qarmāṭiyya*) woman named Jamīl.⁸ Other than these deeds of

3 Lewis, *Islam, from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople* ii, 212.

4 Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East* 22.

5 Lewis *Islam*, ii, 212.

6 Rāḡib, *Actes de vente d’esclaves et d’animaux d’Égypte médiévale* i, 20–23 = *P.Vente* 8.

7 “After ten days’ journey again from Augila there is yet another hill of salt and springs of water and many fruit-bearing palms, as at the other places; men live there called Garamantes, an exceedingly great nation, who sow in earth which they have laid on the salt. The shortest way to the Lotus Eaters’ country is from here, thirty days’ journey distant. Among the Garamantes are the cattle that go backward as they graze, the reason being that their horns curve forward; therefore, not being able to go forward, since the horns would stick in the ground, they walk backward grazing. Otherwise, they are like other cattle, except that their hide is thicker and harder to the touch. These Garamantes go in their four-horse chariots chasing the cave-dwelling Ethiopians: for the Ethiopian cave-dwellers are swifter of foot than any men of whom tales are brought to us. They live on snakes and lizards and such-like creeping things. Their speech is like no other in the world: it is like the squeaking of bats.” Herodotus, *Histories*, trans A.D. Godley Book 4, 183.

8 Vanthieghem, *Quelques contrats de vente d’esclaves de la collection Aziz Atiyya* 168.

sale, the Garamantians curiously disappear from recorded history. However, it is clear that Tawfiq and Jamil's identification with Garamantes and Garama signals the continued existence of these toponyms into the tenth century. If Tawfiq and Jamil are their birth names, they are coming from arabophone, possibly Muslim, environments. Other than a few slave contracts we hear nothing more of the Qarmāṭiyyūn until the Zanj Revolt in 255/869, about which more will be said later.

The fixity of Zanjī, Ethiopian, and Nubian "blackness" apparently extended to Sindis and Indians as well, who are only described in premodern sources as black. In his treatise *Boast of the Blacks over the Whites*, al-Jāḥiẓ included Sindis and Indians among the blacks, detailing their perceived virtues and vices, and later Arab authors maintained this classification. The eleventh-century writer Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Kisā'ī defined the people of "Nubia, Zanj, Barbar, Sind, and India" as blacks descended from the sons of Ham.⁹ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) identified the Zuṭṭ, whom scholars understand to have been a proto-Roma group, as "a race of blacks. It is said that they are from among the Indians."¹⁰ Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) mapped "black nations of the human race" onto Afro-Eurasian territories. He, like al-Jāḥiẓ and others, defined blacks capaciously as the dark-skinned people of Africa and the Indian subcontinent, but his specific geographic placement of black people deserves closer inspection for its unique reorientation. According to him, these black nations

are people of the Second Clime and what is beyond it to the end of the first Clime or rather the end of the inhabited world. They are continuous from west to east for they lie against the land of the Berbers in the Maghrib and Ifriqiya, the lands of the Yemen and the Ḥijāz in the middle, and Baṣra and the lands of India which lie behind it in the east.¹¹

He situates blacks in five geographic spaces: 1) in the first and second climes, 2) in the Sahara, 3) along the East African Red Sea coastline, 4) Basra, and 5) India.

9 al-Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbīyā'*, ed. Isaac Eisenberg 101. Rachel Schine has explained how medieval constructions of race synthesized humoral theories of medicine, the Greek cosmology of climes, and the biblical story of Noah's sons. See her "Race and Blackness in Early Islamic Thought," <https://crh.indiana.edu/teaching-religion-in-public/engaging-religion/teaching-modules/schine-module.html>, last accessed on 12 June 2021.

10 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī: sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn Bāz vi, 485.

11 Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'ibar wa-dōwān al-mubtada' wa'l-khabar fī ayyām al-'arab wa'l-'ajam wa'l-barbar*, ed. William McGuckin de Slane i, 261. Translated in *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, eds. N. Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins 332.

Let us investigate some of these spaces more closely. The First Clime, or inhabited latitudinal zone, lay just north of the equator, extending up to the city of Bornu and laterally from the Canary Islands to the Korean peninsula. Climes grew progressively shorter as one moved closer to the poles, so this first one was the longest zone north to south. In Africa, the Second Clime lay between the Kanuri kingdom based in Bornu and the Maghrib.¹²

According to Ibn Khaldūn, blacks also bordered “the lands of the Yemen and the Hījāz,” or the Red Sea coast, a region known then as Berbera.¹³ One modern survival of that name is the Red Sea port city of Berbera in Somaliland. Al-Mas’ūdī referred to al-Khalīj al-Barbarī (Barbarī Gulf), which is today the Gulf of Aden. Many people carried the *nisba* al-Barbarī(ya) in the early Islamic period, but modern scholars have consistently interpreted this as evidence of Berber origins. When Berbers did take this *nisba*, it was usually qualified with another tribal *nisba*, like al-Zanāṭī, al-Ṣanhajī or al-Maṣmūdī, or with a North African or Andalusian place name, like al-Maghribī or al-Jayyānī. However, when a person, especially an enslaved person, in Arabia or early Islamic Iraq and Iran bore this *nisba* alone, it indicated origins along the African littoral of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. More often than not, a Barbarī person was enslaved. The sale contract of an older Barbarī woman, white-haired, with scarred skin (likely the body art of scarification), “ugly” hands, missing teeth, named Qanyūn was transcribed on a piece of papyrus in 280/893. Her body bears witness to a difficult life, whether marked by violence, hard labor, poor health or corporal punishment is not revealed. The papyrus suggests that the sale was transacted in Egypt.¹⁴ It was common for traders to transport Barbarī slaves down the Nile into Egypt. Others were also brought across the Red Sea into Arabia and sold in markets in Medina, Mecca, and even the premier slave market at Dumat al-Jandal.¹⁵ Ḥamīda al-Barbariyya, a slave of the sixth Shī‘ī Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), bore him a son, Mūsā b. Ja‘far al-Kāzīm (d. 183/799), who succeeded his father as Imam.¹⁶ Arabia may not have been the

12 Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal i, 107.

13 On the ancient Barbaria of East Africa, see Ramzi Rouighi, *Inventing the Berbers* 16–19; on Barbaria in ancient and medieval Jewish texts, see David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham* 43–45.

14 Rāḡib *Actes de vente d’esclaves* i, 9–11 = *P.Vente* 3.

15 Bonner, “Time Has Come Full Circle” 23–24.

16 Al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) identified her as Ḥamīda al-Barbariyya. In his biography of Mūsā, the Zaydī author Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 356/967) claimed that: “his mother was an *umm walad* named Ḥamīda.” (*Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn*, 413). Later Shī‘ī writers, like Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), qualified her Barbarī identity by adding that she was Andalusī. Modern biographers of her son Mūsā typically indicate that Ḥamīda was either Berber

final destination for all slaves. Other East Africans could have been transported through Arabia into Basra via the Basran pilgrimage road.¹⁷

2 Basra at the Confluence of Black Nations

Basra was a destination port for merchant ships carrying slaves, spices, and wares from East Africa, the Yemen, India, and China. It is often billed as the first city that Muslims built from the ground up. Arab troops established it around 14/636 as a military camp atop the ruins of a Sasanian settlement, far from the preexisting Tigris port city of Ubullah. In 17/638 ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb gave orders to expand it. Basra only began to flourish after the death of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib in 661, as various Arab nomadic tribes took up residence there. Although historians do not know what persuaded nomadic tribes to abandon their traditional way of life and settle in urbanizing Basra, the transition was not entirely peaceful. Into the eighth century the “city was rent by intertribal rivalries and recurrent episodes of warfare and rebellion.”¹⁸ Against the backdrop of sustained political unrest, Basra during the Umayyad period developed “houses (*dār*), mansions (*qaṣr*), mosques (*maṣjid*), prisons (*ḥabs*), baths (*ḥammām*), estates (*qaṭīʿa*), rivers/canals (*nahr*), inlets (*khawr*), thickets (*ajama*), and strands (*shāṭiʿ*).”¹⁹ To carry out the work of bringing water to Basra, canals were dug. There was early importation of slaves from Asia and Africa, probably for urban works, digging canals, and building the Imam ʿAlī Mosque.

The city was divided into fifths (*akhmās*) and assigned to the five earliest tribes that settled there: the Ahl al-ʿĀliya (living in the high district Ḥijāz), Tamīm, Bakr b. Wāʿil, ʿAbd al-Qays, and Azd. The Azd were the last tribe to arrive. Each tribe had clients. For instance, the Banū Ḥaṇẓala of the Tamīm tribe recruited low-status people, namely the Zuṭṭ and Sayābija (likely Malaysians) as clients.²⁰ The urban growth fueled commercial expansion. The specialities of the markets point to important transregional industries. The slave market, *Sūq al-nakḥkhāsīn*, was located in west Basra. *Sūq al-kallaʿ* for old ship parts arose from the network of canals and its proximity to the Tigris and

or Andalusī, erasing her East African heritage. For examples see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shiʿi Islam* 39, and Najam Haider, *The Rebel and the Imām in Early Islam* 116.

17 Blair and Ulrich, *From Iraq to the Hijaz in the Early Islamic Period* 44–51.

18 Bulliet, *Sedentarization of Nomads in the Seventh Century* 41.

19 al-Qāḍī, *The Names of Estates in State Registers before and after the Arabization of the Dīwāns* 268.

20 Massignon, *Explication du plan de Baṣra* 159.

Ubullah. Porters, sailors, shipbuilders, carpenters, and blacksmiths probably thrived in Basra due to the maritime industry. The textile market would not have been unusual for a city, but we know that the Zutt manufactured a distinctive cloth known as *zuttī*; several dealers in *zuttī* cloth worked in Kufa and transmitted Shīʿī hadith.²¹ And while we know much about exports of Basran pottery, Basran cloth was probably traded to East African communities. Al-Bīrūnī (d. 442/1050) left a detailed record of later trade. “Basran cloth known as *mubajbajāt* for which they [Sudanese] are known to be eager. This cloth has red fringes and is dyed different colours and is patterned with gold. ... They desire nothing save that cloth.”²²

Within the fortified city of Basra, strong intellectual and cultural communities developed in a variety of fields: Arabic grammar (Sibawayh, al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām), poetry and prose (Bashshār b. Burd, Abū Nuwās, Ibn Muqaffaʿ, Sahl b. Hārūn, al-Jāhīz, al-Ḥarīrī), hadith transmission (Ḥabīb b. al-Shahīd), theology and philosophy (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, Muʿtazilis), and Sufi mysticism (al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Ḥallāj, Rabiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya, Malik b. Dīnār, Ḥabīb b. Abī Qarība, ʿUṭba al-Ghulām). Basra flourished culturally due to the brilliant and motivated people gathered there, who were free to pursue studies because an enslaved underclass—so vast that it gained a reputation as a home to blacks—developed the public infrastructure, staffed the Abbasid army, and provided unpaid domestic and agricultural labor. In fact, blacks may have outnumbered Arabs and Persians. This labor made swift urban growth and commercial expansion possible, transforming a desert garrison town into a transimperial entrepôt. Many Basrans prospered, but the blacks—the Zutt, Zanj, and Sayābija—did not share in the bounty.

3 Al-Jāhīz

Ibn Khaldūn’s unqualified inclusion of Basra as a city with a large black population suggests an organic sense of belonging. Modern typologies of communities implicitly suggest people who belong naturally, and hyphenated identities are associated with qualified belonging/citizenship. In modern parlance the African-American, Afro-Turk, Afro-Iraqi, or Afro-Palestinian is set apart from his national affiliation by phenotypic characteristics, no matter how long his

21 Naji and Ali, *The Suqs of Basrah* 304–306.

22 al-Bīrūnī, *Bīrūnī’s Picture of the World*, ed. A.Z.V. Togan 96. Cited in *Corpus of Early African Sources for West African History* 59.

ancestors have been present in a place. This divide speaks to different time scales for belonging that are not easily mapped onto pre-modern identities.

The biography of the writer al-Jāḥiẓ, born in Basra in 160/776, keenly illustrates how belonging was constructed differently by Abbasid Basrans than by modern scholars of Abbasid Basra. His full name was Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Kinānī al-Fuqaymī al-Baṣrī. His given name was 'Amr, his father was named Baḥr, and his first-born son was named 'Uthmān. He was a client (*mawlā*) of 'Amr b. Qal', was affiliated with the Kināna tribe and the Fuqaym sub-tribe, and was a native of Basra. So why do modern biographies of al-Jāḥiẓ describe him as African, when nothing in his name suggests as much, and al-Jāḥiẓ himself never identified as black or African in his writings? This association hinges on assumptions made among three factors. First, scholars assume that his treatise about the virtues of "blacks over whites" determines his subject position. Second, al-Jāḥiẓ's nephew Yamūt b. al-Muzarra' (d. ca. 303–304/915–916) reportedly stated that al-Jāḥiẓ's grandfather had been black. This testimony is repeated in various sources, including that of tenth-century Baghdadi compiler Al-Nadīm who said that "al-Jāḥiẓ's younger grandfather was black; he was called Nazāra (*wa-kāna jadd al-jāḥiẓ al-adnā aswad yuqālu nazāra*)."²³ This brief passage was translated into English as "the grandparent of al-Jāḥiẓ was a Negro called *Fazārah*."²³ Thirdly, anecdotes about al-Jāḥiẓ's unattractiveness have been understood as euphemisms for his dark skin, even though none of the anecdotes specify which physical features made him ugly. In one al-Jāḥiẓ claimed: "I had been recommended to the Commander of the Faithful Mutawakkil as tutor to one of his sons, but when the Caliph saw me he found my physical appearance so repellent that he had me given 10,000 dirhams and sent me away."²⁴ In another al-Kutubī related that al-Jāḥiẓ had married a beautiful slave girl, hoping their children would be beautiful like her and intelligent like him. However, they were unintelligent like her and ugly like al-Jāḥiẓ.²⁵ The premier biographer of al-Jāḥiẓ, Charles Pellat, concluded that "[t]he information available is vague and contradictory, but it seems clear that his family

23 al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm* ed. and trans. Bayard Dodge 398–399.

24 al-Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'or*, ed. and trans., C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille vii, 222–223; al-Mas'ūdī, *The Meadows of Gold*, ed. and trans. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone 249.

25 This story may simply be a self-deprecating stock tale. The Christian physician Ibn Māsawayh (d. 243/857) reportedly told a similar story about his child with a beautiful, ignorant slave woman, who was born with his unfortunate blue eyes and her slow-wittedness. The full anecdote is translated in Savage-Smith, *Attitudes toward Dissection in Medieval Islam* 83.

was of African origin and that his ancestors had been slaves. ... These [protruding] eyes, together with his extremely swarthy complexion, made him ugly to a degree which soon became proverbial."²⁶ Nothing in the historical record indicates that al-Jāḥiẓ had African heritage or dark skin. Even so, R.J. Serjeant accepted and elaborated on this statement: "[Jāḥiẓ] came from a family of the client class attached to the Banū Kinānah of the Meccan Tihama, probably of the Aḥābīsh, perhaps of the mixed Arab and African ethnic group one still finds in the Tihāmah today."²⁷ This identification of al-Jāḥiẓ as a black African has become canon.

So, how did modern scholars come to define al-Jāḥiẓ as of black African descent? If one assumes that to praise blackness, one must be black, then al-Jāḥiẓ's literary output certainly makes him black. If one subscribes to the biodeterminist, racial regimes governing United States racial hierarchies, where one drop of African blood makes one black, or the racial regimes established by the Nuremberg laws in Nazi Germany, which determined that anyone with one Jewish or Romani or black grandparent was a non-German Mischling of the second degree, then al-Jāḥiẓ was black. And if one believes that having dark skin is objectively ugly, then it is a small leap to read anecdotes about al-Jāḥiẓ's ugliness as proof of his black skin.

Lest one think that the point is exaggerated, I will show that scholars of ninth-century Basra have not otherwise defined a person by the ethnicity of one of their grandparents. Jāḥiẓ died in a few months before the longest-lasting uprising in Basra's brief troubled history broke out in Ramaḍān 255/August-September 869. It was led by 'Alī b. Muḥammad (d. 270/883), who like al-Jāḥiẓ, had a grandparent who was of servile status and likely dark-skinned. His paternal grandmother was an enslaved Sindī woman, whom his grandfather had purchased in Iraq.²⁸ However, this heritage is not highlighted in modern historiography, and no scholar speculates on his Sindī identity. 'Alī b. Muḥammad has been variously introduced as a man "born of Arab parents in a village near Rayy,"²⁹ "allegedly Persian,"³⁰ or even "white, possibly an Arab."³¹ So modern views about race can contort our understandings of identity and ethnicity of the past.

²⁶ Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ* 3.

²⁷ Serjeant, "Introduction," in al-Jāḥiẓ, *The Book of Misers*, trans. R.J. Serjeant xvii.

²⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm ix, 410; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: The Revolt of the Zanj*, trans. David Waines xxxvi, 30.

²⁹ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* 178.

³⁰ Brown, *Slavery and Islam* 145.

³¹ Irwin, *Africans Abroad* 77.

‘Alī b. Muḥammad and al-Jāḥiẓ were contemporaries who had careers as writers and poets in Samarra, Baghdad, and Basra, yet scholarly interpretations of their belonging are markedly different. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad is portrayed as a native Arab or Persian who led the Zanj Rebellion without placing blacks into leadership roles, sustaining an impression that he manipulated the black fighters into carrying out his own political goals. In fact, in the following section of this essay, I will show that ‘Alī b. Muḥammad did appoint black commanders over his troops, collapsing a major false narrative of this event.³²

4 Reimagining the Zanj Rebellion

Among ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s earliest followers was “a black *mawlā* of the Banū Ḥanzala named Sulaymān b. Jāmi’,” who joined ‘Alī’s camp and served him as an officer until the bitter end.³³ As mentioned earlier, the Ḥanzala clan preferred Zuṭṭī and Sayābijī clients, so Sulaymān’s blackness probably refers to one of these Asian ethnicities. In 255/869, a slave named Rāshid al-Qarmāṭī—of Garamantes—was recruited early to be a leader. Nubians, Barbarīs, and Sindis also served as officers in ‘Alī’s military.³⁴ Furthermore, the Garamantians formed a significant contingent of the Zanj fighting force. In this same year “‘Alī [b. Muḥammad] assembled the remainder of the Zanj together—namely, the Fazzāniyyah, the Qarmāṭiyyūn, the Nūbah, and others who understood Arabic.”³⁵ Many fighters were Zanj slaves and freedmen recruited or seized from the salt marshes around Basra. They are known only by single names, a consistent onomastic feature of enslaved people.³⁶ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s use of Zanj fighters paralleled the Abbasid use of black military slaves. In a battle between the Zanj fighters and the Abbasid forces, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s infantry mistakenly attacked the black warrior Dīnār, one of their own men, being unable to distinguish between the two armies.

32 “All of the known leaders seem to have been Arabs, mostly men who had joined ‘Alī in Yamāma or in Baṣra right before the rebellion started and it may be the slaves, though now slave-owners themselves, had little say in the direction of policy.” See Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of Caliphates* 178–179.

33 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 411; al-Ṭabarī, *History* xxxvi, 31–32.

34 Among these commanders were Abū Ṣāliḥ Mufarraǵ al-Nūbī, Al-Nūbī al-Ṣaghīr, ‘Aṭā’ al-Barbarī, and Naṣr al-Sindi.

35 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 419; al-Ṭabarī, *History* xxxvi, 43. Furāṭiyyah is a misreading of Fazzāniyyah. For another misreading of Fazzāniyyah, see Rouighi, 17, who shows that past scholars have misread Fazzān as Qarān.

36 Rāǧib, *Esclaves et affranchis trahis par leur nom dans les arts de l’Islam medieval* 247–301.

Some blacks passed by their comrade Dīnār, whom Abū al-Kubāsh had struck down. He was lying there wounded. The blacks mistook him for one of the enemy's slaves (*al-khawāl*), and so they commenced to beat him with sickles, leaving him severely wounded. A passerby who recognized Dīnār carried him to the Zanj leader, who ordered his wounds attended to.³⁷

Al-Ṭabarī further reports that in 258/872 a contingent of "white fighters" fought on the side of the Zanj, operating a galley on the Tigris.³⁸ Perhaps in a nod to the varied composition of the fighters, al-Ṭabarī notes that in 267/881 an Abbasid general named Abū Aḥmad offered safe-conduct passes "to the blacks and the reds among them [the Zanj] without discrimination."³⁹ Nearly 5,000 "white and black" combatants accepted and surrendered to the Abbasids.⁴⁰ This winning strategy continued as long as the conflict endured. In 269/883, al-Muwaffaq ordered that al-Sha'rānī "and his companions be given gifts and robes of honor. They were to be paraded on mounts that were saddled and fully equipped, and they were to be entertained sumptuously."⁴¹ Eventually, the Abbasids won over enough Zanj fighters to weaken 'Alī decisively. In 270/883 the Abbasid forces burned down the Zanj capital city of Mukhtārah, then captured and decapitated 'Alī b. Muḥammad. His son and political heir Muḥammad died two years later, and his remaining sons entered a Baghdadi prison as children and died there as adults.

In their writings on Middle Eastern slave rebellions, historians have more often than not served as spokespeople for medieval lawmakers and slaveowners, accepting at face value the state's definition of criminality. In Islamic law a slave who escaped his master had committed one of the worst moral crimes, throwing him immediately into a state of unbelief. According to one hadith:

'Alī b. Ḥujr al-Sa'dī > Ismā'il Ibn Ulayyah (d. 193/809) > Manṣūr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān > Al-Sha'bī (d. between 103/721 and 110/728) > Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh (d. 78/697) heard (the Prophet Muḥammad) saying, 'The slave who fled

37 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 427; al-Ṭabarī, *History* xxxvi, 55.

38 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 498; al-Ṭabarī, *History* xxxvi, 145.

39 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 584; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: The 'Abbāsīd Recovery*, trans. Philip M. Fields xxxvii, 46.

40 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 588; al-Ṭabarī, *History* xxxvii, 51.

41 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* ix, 642; al-Ṭabarī, *History* xxxvii, 115.

from his master committed an act of unbelief (*qad kafara*) as long as he would not return to him.⁴²

Even a Muslim slave who escaped his enslaver automatically became an outlaw, a person who lived outside of the protection of Islamic law and of God. A heavy implication hangs over this pronouncement, as it is clear that anyone encountering an escaped slave could kill him. Several scholars have reproduced this logic by characterizing the rebellious Zanj slaves as terrorists, without ever suggesting that slavery was itself a terrorizing institution.⁴³ Some authors have shown clear disapproval of the Zanj rebellions, decrying a moral weakness at the heart of the movement that allowed slaves to focus *selfishly* on getting free.⁴⁴

Other authors deny black subjectivity by referring to escaped slaves as slaves even after they have fled their captors, secured their freedom, and established maroon societies. To adopt this position, the enslavement of black people must be considered an inalienable condition, not a social ascription. In 849/1446 a group of black slaves escaped captivity in Cairo to establish an independent sultanate in Giza. Shaun Marmon opens her inquiry on this subject by declining to characterize the rebellion, leaving it to the reader to determine whether it was “carnavalesque theatre or an open rebellion.”⁴⁵ In spite of this agnostic posture, word choice throughout the article belies intense skepticism about African slave agency. “The slave Sultan” presides over a “mock court of the black slaves,” whose rulings are tangled and illegitimate because the sultan “is himself a slave.”⁴⁶ Such an inversion of status “confirms the fantastic quality of the entire event.”⁴⁷ Marmon ultimately concludes that the rebellion was an earnest one, but the seed of black unseriousness had been planted. When Amina Elbendary later wrote about this same rebellion, she only framed the event as carnivalesque play.⁴⁸

A first reconsideration of the Zanj Rebellion—and all slave uprisings in the Middle East—must treat all historical actors as subjects with agency, without

42 *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 1, Hadith 134.

43 Lewis, “Alī b. Muḥammad al-Zandjī,” *ET* 21, 388–389.

44 Agius, *A Selfish Pursuit in a Slave Uprising of Third/Ninth Century Iraq* 13. “Yet, there was a weakness in this movement, because it had no real programme of reform, no general aim of abolishing slavery, but a selfish pursuit to better its own position.”

45 Marmon, *Black Slaves in Mamlūk Narratives*, 435.

46 Marmon, *Black Slaves in Mamlūk Narratives*, 442.

47 Ibid.

48 Elbendary, *Crowds and Sultans*, 196.

substituting their political and social goals with modern metrics of success or injecting racist assumptions about criminality. It is true that ‘Alī b. Muḥammad did not seek to overthrow the institution of slavery, so his failure to do so has no bearing on understanding his movement and appeal. That the rebels’ successful betterment of their material life conditions has been cast as “selfish” betrays a deep insensitivity to the agency of these fighters. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad and his family suffered grievously, but many of the Zanj commanders and infantry fighters received precisely what ‘Alī had initially promised them—freedom and property, both under his rule and, having surrendered under favorable terms, under later Abbasid protection.

5 Conclusion

Disambiguating the classical Arabic meaning of *aswad* from modern North American and European definitions of ‘black’ as ‘a person of African descent’ reveals a broader spectrum of colors to designate darker-skinned people of Africa and Asia. Overdetermined readings of the sources have produced a consensus about al-Jāḥiẓ’s black African heritage, whereas we can only securely conclude that his maternal grandfather had dark skin and held a menial position as a tribal client. Al-Jāḥiẓ’s contemporary ‘Alī b. Muḥammad has received different racialized treatment in the sources, though he is wrongly portrayed as leading the Zanj without privileging their input. In fact, the leadership of the Zanj Rebellion included Qarmāṭiyyūn, Sindīs, Zuṭṭ, Zanj, whites, reds, and blacks, testifying to the broad appeal of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s message of personal liberation.

The wide support that ‘Alī b. Muḥammad enjoyed cannot be understood outside of the context of earlier uprisings among the Zanj and Zuṭṭ. The general discontent among the lower and servile classes is also evidenced in escalating tribal tensions and in their participation in Shi‘i uprisings in the early Islamic period. Rather than pronouncing these violent outbreaks as aberrant, historians should consider how everyday forms of resistance may not have been recorded. The dispossessed classes only entered the chronicles once they became impossible for the state to ignore, but the smaller cracks in social cohesion must be mined to arrive at more representative understandings of blackness in early Islamic history.

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Ptolemaeus Triumphans, or: Maps, Knowledge, and Ottoman Patronage

Gottfried Hagen

It is a common assumption that spatial or geographical knowledge is an indispensable prerequisite for the exercise of political power. In this sense, mathematical cartography going back to Ptolemy would have the highest claim to producing authoritative and efficacious knowledge. This article seeks to complicate and historicize this understanding of geography by showing that the Ottomans as patrons and producers of maps and texts encountered the Ptolemaic tradition twice with very different results: whereas the first reception in the 15th century led to a dead end, the second, in the 17th, entirely transformed the practice and social function of Ottoman geographical knowledge and mapmaking. The historical geography of the Arab-Byzantine frontier was one of Michael Bonner's central interests and led to several publications and courses. As a new arrival at the University of Michigan, I had the privilege to join Michael and Diane Owen-Hughes to teach a graduate seminar on 'Shaping the Globe', in which we explored European, Arabic, and Ottoman geographical works and travelogues, and in which I learned at least as much as our highly talented students. Michael's mastery of the topic came to bear again when we co-authored an article on Islamic geographical literature for the *New Cambridge History of Islam*.¹ It is therefore fitting that I contribute to this memorial volume for a colleague, mentor, and friend with explorations on the social situatedness of maps and geographical literature in the Ottoman Empire.²

1 Ptolemy as Ideology

The Ottoman traveler extraordinaire, Evliyâ Çelebi (1611-after 1685) frequently references European books and maps as sources in the course of his ten-volume

¹ Bonner and Hagen, Muslim accounts.

² This article is based on a paper presented at the workshop "Knowledge, Exchange, Encounter: Europe and the Ottoman Empire", University of Cambridge, July 2013. I am indebted to the organizers and participants, and to Sonja Brentjes in particular, for their discussion.

travelogue, *Seyāhat-nāme*. Titled “Atlas”, “Minor”, “Coğraf” or “Coğrafiyye”, and “Papamonta”, these works contain, in Evliyā’s view, geographical knowledge that complements his own collected impressions, primarily numerical information such as coordinates, the position of a location in a climate zone, the number of mountains, rivers, lands, cities, length and breadth of islands, as well as the measure of the globe as such, and much more. The titles might be taken as referring to contemporary European atlases, such as Mercator’s *Atlas Minor*, or a *mappa mundi*; in particular, they resemble sources Evliyā’s contemporary Kātib Çelebi (1609–1657) had used for his magisterial world geography, *Cihān-nümā*. As there is no evidence that Evliyā ever consulted these works, these references should be understood as a rhetorical device that serves to authorize a particular kind of timeless geographical knowledge by tracing it, via contemporary Europe, back to a (largely legendary) group of Greek sages, including Socrates and Hippocrates, and most prominently Ptolemy. In fact, the type of data typically attributed to this ancient pagan origin very well matches what was known about Ptolemy’s geographical work, the *Geographike hyphegesis*, among the Ottomans. For Evliyā, this knowledge was obtained through travel and autopsy or through observation and mathematical calculation and preserved and handed down in books. Despite its pagan origins, it was considered valid; moreover, it was key to political and military power and success. To cite an example, in one of Evliyā’s more fanciful narratives two learned European monks, named Padre and Kolon (obviously a dual avatar of Columbus), experts in this field, appear before Sultan Bāyezīd II during the siege of Aḳkırman in 1488, and predict the Ottoman conquest of the fortress on the basis of an ancient book. The fortress is captured a few days later, but despite this proof of the validity of their knowledge, Bāyezīd rejects their suggestion to let them find and conquer the New World for the Ottomans. Padre and Kolon leave to offer their services to the Spanish king, with known results.³ Thus, ancient knowledge such as mathematical geography enabled conquests and discoveries, but it was morally at least ambivalent. In Evliyā’s account of Istanbul guilds, he lists their patron saints with them, often a companion of the prophet Muḥammad, or a later saintly figure. The guild of the mapmakers, however, is associated by Evliyā with Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab, two prominent and vicious adversaries of the prophet. He also deplores how Padre’s and Kolon’s success, the colonization of the New World, has brought death and discord to the region’s innocent natives.⁴

3 Evliyā Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme* x, Y251b–252a. I have pointed to this notion of efficacious knowledge first in Hagen, *Atlas and papamonta*.

4 Evliyā Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme* v, 35b, 1163a; Karateke, Evliyā Çelebi’s perception.

This rich tangle of legendary and ideological narrative testifies to a complicated cultural attitude on the part of the Ottomans towards atlases, maps, and world descriptions. In particular, it points to a perception of certain maps as culturally marked, as non-Islamic, and endowed with a peculiar efficacy.⁵ These maps are based on ancient, quasi pre-existing knowledge, accessed through 'ancient' books, and supported by mathematical, more specifically astronomical calculation and measuring, and by empirical evidence. For the purpose of this article, I will call the type of map in question the *Ptolemaic map*, meaning not that it derived from Ptolemy's data, but that it was based on the mathematical principles of visual representation which Ptolemy had laid out in his *Geographike hyphegesis* and which became part of the Islamic geographical tradition.⁶ A traditional narrative of the history of cartography has conditioned modern readers to assume that this mathematical principle of mapping was obvious and quasi natural, sanctioned by empirical verifiability. In fact, outside a modern ideological perspective focused on 'progress' it is evident that the Ptolemaic map is one of many possible choices for the mapmaker and thus needs to be analyzed in the context of historical contingencies and human agency.

Through its mathematical and empirical foundation, the Ptolemaic map commands authority and precision, as it overlays messy physical reality with the incorruptible purity of mathematical truth. The impartiality of homogenized space subjected to the privileged standpoint of the observer above and beyond the physical boundaries of the earth makes for a perfect metaphor for the imperial position.⁷ Moreover, Evliyā's attitude towards the Ptolemaic map seems to align neatly with a paradigm in the modern history of cartography that sees maps, in the words of J.B. Harley, as "one of the specialized intellectual weapons by which power could be gained, administered, given legitimacy, and codified."⁸ Put differently, Evliyā seems to express in mythical terms that same idea of maps as tools of power that Machiavelli, Castiglione, Elyot, and other political thinkers of the Renaissance recommended to their princes.⁹ But did the Ptolemaic map in general, and Ptolemy's geography in particular, play

5 Edney, *Cartography* has forcefully critiqued the assumptions of efficacy at the core of much modern map history; here we observe one of its early predecessors.

6 These principles so famously resonated with the emerging renaissance in Italy; see Edgerton, *Mental matrix*.

7 Cosgrove, *Apollo's eye*, especially 27.

8 Harley and Woodward, *Concluding remarks*; see also Harley, *Maps, knowledge, and power* 281.

9 Barber, *Pageantry, defense, and government* 30–33.

a comparable role, in practical and in symbolic terms in the Ottoman Empire? How, when, and why did the Ottoman sultans patronize maps? What gain in control, prestige, and legitimacy could the patronage of maps and geographical knowledge bestow on them?

In this article, I track this problem from the earliest Ottoman encounter with Ptolemy in the mid-15th century to the 17th century, when Ptolemaic maps, now mostly based on European models, more or less displaced all other types of maps, thus asserting the authority that Evliyā attributed to them. I use this development to argue for a differentiated, nuanced concept of patronage, that will allow a better understanding of the social, political, and cultural function of geographical knowledge as preserved in maps.

The Ottoman encounter with the Ptolemaic map begins with the translation of Ptolemy's *Geographike hyphegesis* into Arabic, commissioned by Sultan Mehmed II, and carried out by Georgios Amirutzes in 1465.¹⁰ This translation coincided with an eager adoption of older Islamic traditions of mapping and world description, in particular the so-called *Atlas al-Islām*, going back to the tenth century, with the works of al-Iṣṭakhṛī and Ibn Ḥawqal, and cosmographical literature building on the works of Zakariyā al-Qazwīnī from the 13th century.¹¹ In the 16th century, maritime mapping emerged as a distinct genre, as part of a shared Mediterranean culture.¹² Ptolemy's work, however, in these beginnings, was mostly a dead end: the only manuscripts remained confined to the palace, and there is no indication of an impact in the subsequent centuries. Not a single reference to this text has been found, to my knowledge, in later geographical writing. Not even Kātib Çelebi (1609–1657), author of a comprehensive bibliography of Islamic knowledge and a geographer in his own right, about whom more will be said below, was aware of its existence.¹³ The second major encounter with the Ptolemaic map was fundamentally different. Two other translation projects in the mid-17th century, now from Latin and Italian, mark the beginning of modernization of Ottoman mapmaking, and almost entirely eclipse domestic traditions. The first of these translations is Kātib Çelebi's *Cihānnümā* (left unfinished in 1657) mentioned above, based primarily on Gerard Mercator's *Atlas Minor*; the second is a translation of Willem Blaeu's *Atlas Maior*, initiated by Sultan Mehmed IV, and commissioned to Ebū Bekr b.

10 More details on this project and its context below. The book had been translated into Arabic long before, but no such version was available to the Ottomans at the time.

11 Emiralioğlu, *Books on the wonders*.

12 Kahlaoui, *Creating the Mediterranean*; Soucek, *Piri Reis & Turkish mapmaking*; Soucek, *Islamic charting*.

13 Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 590–591, s.v. *juġhrāfiyā*.

Behrām el-Dimeşkī (d. 1691).¹⁴ The adoptions of Mercator and Blaeu two centuries later were met with enormous interest from the reading public, resulting in a large number of manuscripts as well as dissemination in print and became the basis of a new era of Ottoman geographical and cartographic scholarship, and feeding into a new engagement with a global outlook.¹⁵ Prior to the time frame of the two centuries under study here, next to nothing is known of Ottoman mapmaking; in later periods, Ottoman cartography is almost exclusively dominated by the adaptation and translation of European models. These two events centered on Ptolemaic maps therefore lend themselves as bookends for our discussion of maps, patronage, knowledge, and power.

Ottoman historians have frequently interpreted these two-hundred years of cartography and geography largely in relation to the state and its needs in terms of practical knowledge and ideological projection, drawing direct connections between the apotheosis of political and military power that they saw in the Ottoman enterprise in the 16th century, and a perceived adoption of 'scientific' and 'empirical' mapping by the Ottoman 'state'.¹⁶ Jerry Brotton writes:

The fact that Ottoman authorities were quick to capitalize on the scarce geographical resources that were available, in order to facilitate the administration and potential domination of the enormous territories to which they laid claim, only emphasizes their acuity in swiftly perceiving the political importance of maps and geographical information.¹⁷

The pioneer historian of Ottoman science, Adnan Adıvar, had already hypothesized that the world map of Piri Re'īs had served Selīm I (r. 1512–1520) to plot military undertakings on the eastern frontier of the empire.¹⁸ Giancarlo Casale has surveyed much of Ottoman geographical writing as evidence of a

14 For Kâtib Çelebi see Hagen, *Osmanischer Geograph* (Turkish translation: Hagen, *Bir Osmanlı coğrafyacısı*), and the forthcoming translation of *Cihānnümā*, Kâtib Çelebi, *Ottoman Cosmography*. Much less work has been done on Ebū Bekr, but this will change with the forthcoming dissertation of Kaan Üçsu at Istanbul University. For specific aspects see Brentjes, *Mapmaking in Ottoman Istanbul*, and Brentjes, *Two manuscripts*.

15 Hagen, *Osmanischer Geograph* 257–273, for the afterlife of *Cihānnümā*.

16 To what degree the abstraction 'state' does justice to the highly personal network that constituted the ruling Ottoman household is a matter of debate (or of conflicting assumptions that deserved a debate).

17 Brotton, *Trading territories* 104.

18 This was his speculative explanation why the eastern part of the map is missing today (Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde ilim* 76), first published in 1939. For a spectacular (and fictitious) reframing of this speculation see the controversial account of Selīm by Alan Mikhail (Mikhail, *God's shadow* 311–313).

state-driven literature of discovery seeking to establish a “soft empire” in the Indian Ocean.¹⁹ Pınar Emiralioğlu, taking a cue from Harley, has approached Ottoman maps primarily as “tools of imperial propaganda”, in which geographers in the name of their imperial patrons articulated “claims to universal sovereignty that had to be broadcast to the political and religious rivals in both East and West”.²⁰ Generally speaking, a consensus seems to solidify that Ottoman maps and geographical literature should be analyzed primarily as expressions of an imperial “geographical consciousness” (Emiralioğlu) qua political claims and ambitions in a world of early modern territorial states.²¹ In what follows, I will provide a different account of the place and function of Ptolemaic and other maps, together with other geographical literature, in Ottoman culture and society. In determining the meaning and function of geographical knowledge, it is vital to consider its situatedness in specific social, intellectual, and institutional contexts, while being cognizant that, as Philipp Sarasin pointed out, knowledge is knowledge only inasmuch as it circulates; that it “has a tendency to flow across institutional, social, political and even geographical boundaries” and that it inevitably is transformed in the process.²² Thus, maps need to be recognized as a specific technology to store and transmit locational (and other) knowledge, and as objects of value that transcends this strictly technical purpose. I want to demonstrate that texts of geographical import, as well as maps, were attributed meaning that could change depending on the circulation and the boundaries they crossed. Such meanings, obviously, are not inherent in the texts, but emerge from engagement with them in different contexts by different readers, posing special hermeneutical challenges.

2 The Transformation of Maritime Knowledge

The Ottoman captain and naval officer Pîrî Re'îs wrote the first version of his sailing handbook *cum* maritime atlas of the Mediterranean, *Kitâb-i Bahrîye*, in 1521; its main body consists of 130 chapters, each describing a specific location through text and a small-scale map. A second, larger version, with an additional 80 chapters, some more maps and a lengthy rhymed introduction, was

19 Casale, *Age of exploration*. Baki Tezcan has also focused on political statements in geographical texts (Tezcan, *Law in China*; id., *Many lives*).

20 Emiralioğlu, *Geographical knowledge* 70.

21 See also Tezcan, *Law in China*.

22 Sarasin, *Wissensgeschichte*.

prepared in 1526, and presented to Sultan Süleymân I. The small-scale maps of the *Baḥrîye* usually do not carry a coordinate grid, or loxodromes, but only compass roses to indicate north. Nor are they all oriented the same way. Yet, they are drawn in the same visual language as the Ptolemaic map, that is, as projections from an imaginary spot vertically above the surface of the earth. As a result, they are proportionate and readable in multiple directions; they collude with the texts to create the aura of experiential, authoritative knowledge.

At the heart of *Baḥrîye* is an astounding record of practical navigational and locational information, which according to Pîrî Re'îs was above all of 'practical' value. While it was possible to navigate to a specific destination with the help of the usual portolan charts, upon arrival the sailor would still have to hire a local pilot. *Baḥrîye* contained all the necessary information in writing, that is, in portable format: anchoring places, fresh water supply, shoals and reefs, including, incidentally, places to disembark troops in war against the infidels.²³ The claim that the information contained in the book makes navigation easy and safe (*āsān*) is repeated multiple times in the text. Such knowledge, of vital use for the sea captains of the Mediterranean on a daily basis, typically circulated, we may assume, orally, in parts and fragments, and could easily be revised by those in the trade. By collecting this knowledge between the covers of a book, Pîrî Re'îs transformed it, putting it into the hands of an elite that had no intent to sail the Mediterranean themselves, but enjoyed the reading and the aesthetic of the artwork of the maps.²⁴

Pîrî Re'îs was very aware of this transformation as a result of the new medium of the book: in the rudimentary preface of the first version, he explains that upon the ascension of Süleymân I to the throne in 1520 the masters of the craft guilds presented gifts as displays of their skills to the sultan; thus, he wrote this book as an example or memento (*yâdigâr*) of the profession of seafaring and navigation (*deryâ 'ilminden ve mellâḥlar şan'atından*).²⁵ Map historians have not recognized that more than military purposes, this passage likens the sailor to the men of crafts and commerce, who used to present gifts to sultans during public festivities on behalf of their guilds.²⁶ In the Ottoman moral

23 Pîrî Reis, *Baḥrîye* 1.

24 Historians have not come to a final verdict whether *Baḥrîye* was actually used by practicing sailors. At least, no extant copy shows traces of use.

25 Pîrî Reis, *Baḥrîye* 1. This passage is also part of the second version, and from there translated by Soucek, *Pîrî Reis & Turkish mapmaking* 86.

26 See Terzioğlu, Imperial circumcision festival 90 for early examples of artisans presenting gifts at festive occasions.

economy, guilds demonstrated their skills and their commitment to the dynasty and the prosperity of the population, while the sultan, by accepting the gift and rewarding the craftsmen expressed his appreciation and his interest in fostering skill and talent among them as a means of distinction and as a way to ensure the wellbeing of his lands.²⁷ For the sailors and pilots this meant that their gift, such as a compilation of navigational knowledge, were not necessarily meant to be used, but to garner the sultan's benevolence towards the profession as a useful part of the body politic. The very act of codifying practical knowledge and turning it into a literary work²⁸ moved it across an institutional boundary where it was no longer supposed to be applied but served as social currency for the advancement of the author and his profession.²⁹

Its practical validity continued to matter, because under the logic of the gift, only valid knowledge could vouchsafe for the valiance of the navigator. Its purpose was not to ensure its applicability by the dedicatee, in fact, the expectation that the patron would adopt the information and take it upon himself to disseminate or implement it is a back-projection of a modernist bias. Seen from this perspective it is perfectly understandable that *Baḥrīye* was not taken as the basis of an imperially mandated project of maritime cartography but remained “frozen” as an object of admiration and prestige. Soucek, the most prominent Piri Reʾis expert in the West, had criticized the lack of development as institutional failure, expecting the Ottomans to systematically update, improve, and expand on the knowledge preserved by Piri Reʾis. However, codified as it was, *Baḥrīye* was a monument to the expertise of its compiler (and to his profession and his patron), rather than a living body of knowledge.³⁰

27 Murphey, *Ottoman sovereignty* 199.

28 For the narrative digressions in the first version, which do not have any practical value, and are often shortened or omitted in the second version, see Soucek, Tunisia.

29 Brentjes points out that patronage in premodern societies targeted persons, rather than objects such as books (Brentjes, Patronage). In a similar fashion, a 17th-century treatise on architecture includes extensive explanations of various materials and measurements used by the architect, yet it is not intended to convey useful knowledge, but a hagiography of the man who built the Blue Mosque (Ca'fer Efendi, *Risāle-i mi'māriyye*).

30 Most likely the constant improvement Soucek expected did happen at the level of practical usage in the navy, but it obviously did not leave an institutional trace, in an Ottoman equivalent of Spain's *Casa de Contratación* (Soucek, Piri Reis and Ottoman discovery). On the *Casa* as reference point see Emiralioğlu, *Geographical knowledge* 32 *et passim*. Remarkably, there are more manuscripts of the first version, the supposedly practical one, than of the second. Özdemir counts 26 mss. of the first version, compared to eleven of the second, in addition to two with no maps, and three without the text

The transformations of maritime knowledge, however, did not end here. If Pīrī Re'īs' statement about the circumstances of his writing can be trusted, the first version already was intended to be presented to the sultan. Whether this did not happen or whether it failed to make the expected impact we do not know, but Pīrī Re'īs obviously felt compelled to revise his work, resulting in the second version of 1526. He reworked some of the narrative sections and added details, charts, and chapters as mentioned above, and while he remained adamant about the practical validity of the navigational information, he introduced a new framing and a different appeal to patronage.³¹ First, the aesthetic enhancement with additional maps, especially with several uniquely detailed and realistic town views of imperial cities like Istanbul, Genoa, Venice, and Cairo appealed to the tastes of an elite audience.³² Second, and more importantly, the second version has been reframed by a rhymed introduction, which extends over more than 30 folios and explains first the basics of navigation, the winds, the compass rose, and the idea of a nautical map.³³ The presence of such elements, which would have been more than familiar to any active sailor, points to an intended appeal to the armchair navigator, the educated and curious readership of the Ottoman elite. While the work in its new garb continues to invite engagement with its contents, the focus has now changed from a demonstration of navigational expertise to an argument that maritime knowledge is relevant for the aristocratic patron himself. However, it is so again not for 'practical' purposes, but for what I would call "cosmological" interest, that is, a philosophical and pious concern with the contemplation, description and explanation of the physical world as evidence of the omnipotence of the Creator.

(Özdemir, *Ottoman Cartography*). Additional copies surface in the market on a regular basis, e.g. <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/travel-atlases-maps-natural-history-l13401/lot.155.html>.

- 31 In the epilogue to this new version Pīrī Re'īs narrates his encounter with Ibrahim Paşa, who recommended to submit the book to the sultan, and conspicuously highlights how Ibrahim Paşa had watched him consult a book in moments of distress during the passage from Istanbul to Egypt in 1524 (translated in Soucek, *Piri Reis & Turkish mapmaking* 88 ff.).
- 32 While there is any number of highly typological depictions of cities in various manuscripts, some others stand out for their topographical detail and specificity. As such, his work can be considered the forerunner of a new kind of 'realism' in Ottoman illustrations of historical narratives (Rogers, *Itineraries and town views*).
- 33 The second version has been published in facsimile (Istanbul 1935) with a Turkish and English translation. Here I am using the splendid (but late) manuscript in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W. 658, that is available at <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/19195>.

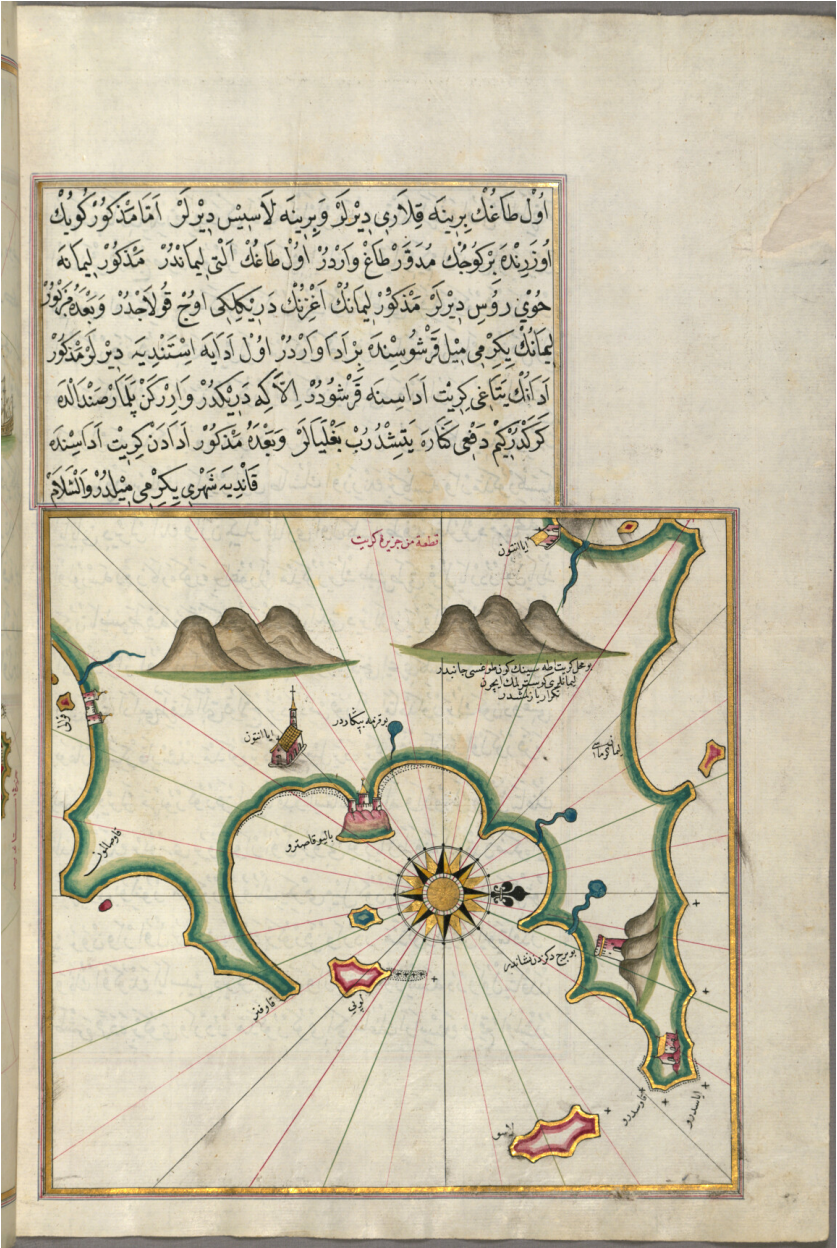


FIGURE 9.1 Map of Crete from late 17th/early 18th century manuscript of Piri Reis's *Kitab-i Bahriye*
THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM, MANUSCRIPT W.658. (CC0) [HTTPS://ART.THEWALTERS.ORG/DETAIL/79915/MAP-FRAGMENT-OF-THE-ISLAND-OF-CRETE-2/](https://art.thewalters.org/detail/79915/map-fragment-of-the-island-of-crete-2/)

This concern is typically associated with a different genre, cosmography, as mentioned above, and often treated as diametrically opposed to the practical and presentist agenda of the mariner, but such a view ignores that the new introduction to *Baḥrīye* very much reads like a versified chapter on the seas from a standard cosmography.³⁴ The explanation of the tides, which follows right after the basics of navigation, is a favorite trope of cosmographical literature, as a phenomenon obviously caused by invisible forces.³⁵ *Mirabilia*, the essential building blocks of the genre, form a significant part of the description of the Chinese Sea and the southern Indian Ocean. That the introduction outside the invocation at the very beginning refrains from explicitly mentioning God as the creator of these marvels hardly constitutes proof of a secular world understanding; rather it shows to what degree its createdness was considered self-evident. Moreover, I suggest that the cosmographical introduction also guides the reading of the bulk of the book as authoritative and experiential description of a part of God's creation, just as, in principle, all geographical texts or maps lend themselves to a cosmological reading.³⁶

By contrast, political implications of his global survey remain elusive. Pīrī Re'īs describes the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean as merchants and explorers more than as political adversaries of the Ottomans.³⁷ He relates how Columbus was able to obtain support for his expedition and find the New World based on a book of navigation that had come down to him from Alexander the Great, the archetype of the pious conqueror in Islamic mythology.³⁸ But instead of endorsing utilization of his work in an agenda of world conquest, it is exactly here that he transitions to the theme of the transience of the world which compelled him to write the present work in order to be remembered favorably, and explains:

I wrote down the full description of the Mediterranean for you; say a prayer for me.

34 Cosmographies usually divide the description of the globe by element, beginning with a chapter on oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers, followed by the inhabited world. The same is true, incidentally, about another Ottoman geographical classic that is frequently taken as a political statement, the *History of the West Indies* (Goodrich, *Ottoman Turks*). On the genre in the period in question see Hagen, *Order of knowledge*.

35 See Hagen, *Osmanischer Geograph* 373, 376, 379 on Kātib Çelebi and some of his predecessors on this question.

36 To understand this approach as part of adab, or 'humanities' points in the same direction, but is less specific.

37 Soucek, *Piri Reis & Turkish mapmaking* 98–99.

38 The idea that this powerful knowledge did not originate with the Franks seems to have been a consolation (and distinguishes his mythology from Evliyā's quoted above).

The people of this area should know the science of the Mediterranean.
 This is why I recorded all of it, and called it *Baḥrīye*.
 Whoever reads it will gain (?) among the navigators.
 O young man, know that a person should know every science;
 he should read and see the lands of the world, so that he will understand his own situation (*ḥāl*).
 An intelligent person is he who knows his own situation, and derives a moral lesson (*'ibret*) from everything.
 O men of the path, that person is called gnostic; the kings also agree with this.³⁹

Transitioning to the vocabulary of Islamic piety, Pīrī Re'īs declares his work part of a larger project of knowing the world as a question of royal morality: cosmological knowledge enables a man to recognize his own place in the world, that is, being cognizant of one's humility as a creature, and the meaninglessness and transience of life in this world. The moral imperative of cosmological reading in this way aligns with a deep Ottoman skepticism against worldly prestige and power, an element that is manifest in many different genres of Ottoman letters, from poetry to advice literature.⁴⁰ Consequently, the note of Muslim triumphalism on which the introduction ends immediately after this passage has nothing to do with holy warfare against the infidel (invoked elsewhere), but with the certainty of salvation in the face of imminent death and resurrection at the end of time.⁴¹ In the moral economy of imperial patronage, in other words, Pīrī Re'īs invites the sultan to study his work in order to gain valid knowledge about the world, contemplate the magnificence and transience of its natural phenomena and of its human endeavor, and thus become a better, more humble, and as a consequence more just ruler.

The case of Pīrī Re'īs' *Baḥrīye* thus provides a rich example of the transformations that a body of geographical knowledge can undergo when moving from one medium, genre, and social context to another. The first version of the work appealed to sultanic patronage for an individual or a group that served him with highly specialized skills, the second sought to insert this specialized knowledge into established discourses about the world, the cosmos, its creator, and the place of human work in it. Whereas the first appeals primarily to justice

39 Pirî Reis, *Baḥrīje* 38b, tr. GH.

40 Hagen and Menchinger, Ottoman historical thought. The dilemma is palpable, although not addressed directly, in much of the material analyzed in Yılmaz, *Caliphate redefined*.

41 Pirî Reis, *Baḥrīye* 38b.

as a virtue on display in the sultan's interaction with his subjects, the second focuses on a notion of piety that is inward looking and not regularly visible to the subjects, but probably to the elite in shared consumption of suitable texts.

3 Philosophical Contemplation

Having established this distinction and its salience for the contexts of patronage, let us return to the beginning of our chronological frame and to Ptolemy. Contrary to Brotton's assertion that the Ottomans took to "mapping of land and strategic locations across which diplomats and armies moved like pieces on an enormous geographical chess board" the translated Ptolemy was hardly of much use for the planning of Mehmed II's military campaigns.⁴² It featured many ancient toponyms transliterated into Arabic according to early modern Greek pronunciation that had little to do with the Ottoman denominations. Nor did the provincial boundaries shown on Ptolemy's maps correspond to the contemporary political and administrative facts on the ground, while delineations of climes, methods of projection, and lists of coordinates were of little use for administrative purposes. What information mattered on a map drawn for military purposes is evident from a crude sketch presented to Sultan Bāyezīd II around 1500 with a brief proposal of how to launch a naval attack against the city of Kiev.⁴³ Although it lacks clear orientation, scale, let alone the Ptolemaic view, and reduces the river to a straight line, it provides all the necessary information for military decision-making.⁴⁴ While contemporary sources tell us that Mehmed II was interested in drawing fortresses and siege plans, Mehmed II's Greek court chronicler Kritovoulos puts the sultan's interest in Ptolemy in a very different context. Due to his own and his soldiers' exhaustion, Mehmed called off military campaigning for the summer of 1465, and instead dedicated himself to the study of Arabic, Persian, and Greek philo-

42 Brotton, *Trading territories* 103. This idea of a predictive use of Ptolemy is also cautiously supported by Mavroudi, *Translations*. A Latin military treatise with illustrations and a map of the Balkans is also attributed to Mehmed II, along with other European maps in the Topkapı Palace (Pinto, *Medieval Islamic maps* 226–231).

43 Illustration in Taşkın, ed. *Maps at the Topkapı Palace* 186–187. Other 16th-century maps clearly originate from military contexts, such as the famous 1565 map of the siege of Malta, but most likely were narrative, rather than predictive in function (Karamustafa, *Military, administrative, and scholarly Maps*).

44 Ibid. Other areas of state centralized control, such as taxation, operated at an unprecedented level of detail, but entirely without visual aid of maps.

sophy, in the course of which he also encountered the work of Ptolemy, in Greek. Fascinated, he commissioned a world map that would synthesize all the information of the partial maps in the manuscript, and a translation of the entire book into Arabic from the scholar Georgios Amirutzes.⁴⁵ Cosgrove's interpretation of the quasi-divine perspective of Ptolemaic mapping, focusing on the discovery of mathematical order in the apparent messiness of the world, suggests one potential way for Mehmed to read Ptolemy.⁴⁶ Such an interest in geography as the rational appreciation of a divinely ordered creation would also strongly resonate with a much older Islamic tradition, represented in the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity of the tenth century CE. Out of this quasi-encyclopedia of various sciences and their religious relevance, the Epistle on Geography is mainly a concise summary of the foundations of Ptolemaic mathematical geography, entirely devoid of the descriptive and human geography otherwise current at the time.⁴⁷ Beyond the rational impulse as such, however, the Epistle on Geography formulates a stark moral and pious imperative for the study of the cosmos, by comparing God to a king who has furnished his city in the most perfect way:

Then he summons his servants into his presence so that he can bestow upon them his generosity. He commands them to travel to this city which is on their way, so that they can see and observe its contents, and reflect upon his wondrous inventions, and learn the lesson of its marvelous forms and designs. He wants their souls to concentrate on all this and for them to become wise, good, and noble, upon seeing it. For then, when admitted into his presence, they will be worthy of his generosity.⁴⁸

45 Kritovoulos, *History* 208–210. Two manuscripts are known; the one containing maps, Aya Sofya 2610 has been published in facsimile by Fuat Sezgin.

46 Cosgrove's emphasis on the particular visual effect of Ptolemaic mapping also explains the appreciation at the Ottoman court for a precious gift from Italy, which had originally been intended for Mehmed II, but arrived only after his death and was rededicated to his son and successor Bāyezīd II. This was the versified translation, complete with maps, of Ptolemy's geography prepared and printed by Francesco Berlinghieri, a milestone of Italian book production, and from the start a highly political enterprise. As Sean Roberts has pointed out, it is very unlikely that the Ottoman readership, whoever it was, had an understanding of the text, which contained quite a few polemic statements against the Ottomans that would not have gone over well. Instead, it is safe to assume that the value for the court, aside from its character as a diplomatic gift, was in the maps (Roberts, *Printing*).

47 Ikhwān al-ṣafā', *On geography*. On the Atlas al-Islam tradition see below.

48 Ikhwān al-ṣafā', *On geography* 59–60.

A prestigious copy of the Epistle on Geography, dated to the reign of Meḥmed II, is preserved in Istanbul.⁴⁹ Just as for the Brethren of Purity, geography was a propaedeutic science leading to the study of astronomy. Meḥmed II's interest in it dovetails with his patronage of astronomers, whom he attracted to his court with extraordinary stipends.⁵⁰ How both the study of Ptolemy and of astronomy more broadly links to the esoteric doctrines of scholars like 'Abdurrahmān Bisṭāmī (d. 1454) under the patronage of the Ottoman court remains to be explored.⁵¹

4 Cosmography

While the philosophical reading of the physical world through maps and descriptions puts the emphasis on the divine order, cosmography finds the evidence of divine omnipotence in the infinite variety of phenomena in the physical world. It combines natural philosophy with the contemplation of monuments of the past, inviting reflections on the transience of human life and worldly power, very similar to the moral to be drawn from the philosophical reasoning discussed above.⁵² The genre of cosmography has a long tradition in the Islamic Middle East and was widely disseminated in the Ottoman realm. The classical texts of this genre, *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt* (Wonders of Creation) by al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283) and *Kharīdat al-ʿajāʾib* (Unbored Pearl of Marvels) attributed to one Ibn al-Wardī (15th century), predate the Ottoman court, but circulated in longer and shorter forms in Arabic as well as in Persian and Turkish translations.⁵³ In her detailed study of the visual aspects of al-Qazwīnī's work, Berlekamp states:

The early illustrated wonders-of-creation encyclopedias are designed to lead readers to respond appropriately to God and his creation through a collection of images of natural wonders, understood as signs pointing to God. The strategy goes hand in hand with the basic tenets of medieval Islamic philosophy regarding human understanding and perception. [...]

49 Ikhwān al-ṣafā', *On geography* 1, 4. I have not been able to verify if the manuscript is in fact dedicated to Meḥmed II, or on what other information the date to his reign is based.

50 EI 2 s.v. 'Alī al-Kushjī (A. Adivar).

51 See Melvin-Koushki, Introduction, and the other articles assembled by him and Noah Gardiner in *Arabica* 64 (2017).

52 Miquel, *Géographie humaine* iv, 95.

53 *EIr*, art. 'Ajā'eb-o'l-makhlūqāt. For the Turkish versions see Kut, Acâibü'l-mahlūkât tercümeleri, and Coşkun, Maḥmūd Al-Ḥaṭīb's translation.

Qazwīnī's encyclopedia of the wonders of creation was not philosophical per se, but it was permeated with the assumptions of philosophical thought.⁵⁴

Different from mathematical geography, cosmography uses Ptolemy's climes primarily as an organizing principle, rather than an analytical tool. This explains why maps in cosmographies (always world maps) build on a cartographic tradition that reflects spatial difference instead of mathematical homogeneity. Named after the (pseudonymous) cosmographer Ibn al-Wardī of the early 15th century, this tradition forms the most important alternative to Ptolemaic mapping. With their regular geometrical shapes of outlines these maps ultimately go back to the so-called *Atlas al-Islam* or Balkhī School of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which circulated under various titles such as *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik* (Book of the Routes of Realms), *Ṣūrat al-arḍ* (a literal translation of "geography"), or *Ṣuwar al-aqālīm* (Maps of the Climes).⁵⁵ Several historical works from the Ottoman period also include maps from this tradition.⁵⁶

Aside from its continuation in cosmographic maps in the Ottoman period, the reception of the Balkhī School by the Ottomans demonstrates another case of a transformation of geographical knowledge. The original works of al-Iṣṭakhṛī and Ibn Ḥawqal provided a wealth of locational and cultural information, supporting a worldview centered on Iran as the blessed middle clime of the ecumene and politically on Baghdad as the capital of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate.⁵⁷ While some of the individual descriptions may still have been of interest, the overall framework was vastly out of date by the Ottoman period. Nevertheless, Ottoman readers discovered an interest in these works, and especially in their maps, when an exquisite copy of al-Iṣṭakhṛī's work fell into Mehmed II's hands.⁵⁸ Of interest for us is that, as Karen Pinto has shown, this manuscript became the basis of a whole set of Ottoman copies starting in 1474,

54 Berlekamp, *Wonder, image, and cosmos* 46.

55 Miquel, *Géographie humaine*. The geometrical abstraction and the absence of orientation and scale in the regional maps of this tradition convey more a sense of the human effort to penetrate and capture the complexities of the physical world than the rational foresight of its creator.

56 On *Zübde'tü t-tevārīḥ* see Karamustafa, Military, administrative, and scholarly maps 220–222. Three out of the 60-odd manuscripts of Muṣṭafā 'Alī's historical works listed by Jan Schmidt are described as having maps (Schmidt, *Pure Water* 363–402). Two maps attributed to him were part of an exhibit shown in Istanbul and elsewhere in 2009 and later (<http://tarihvmenedeniyet.org/2011/08/harita-sergisi-piri-reisten-katip-celebiye/>). The manuscripts are not identified in the exhibit.

57 See also Antrim, *Routes and Realms*.

58 Pinto suggests that the manuscript came to Istanbul from the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun

and that great effort was made to reproduce not only the text, but especially the maps, of which al-Iṣṭakhrī's work originally contained 21. No study of the texts of these Ottoman versions has been undertaken, so it is impossible to say to what degree they might have been adapted to their new context, or if the text possibly was considered mere baggage that came with the maps but was devoid of independent significance.⁵⁹

Two Persian versions of the same text, copied presumably in the late 15th or early 16th century, one of them preserved in Istanbul, contain illustrations on the maps, pointing to yet another dimension of cosmological readings.⁶⁰ The maps of these Iṣṭakhrī translations (again not sufficiently studied as texts) take up motifs from Islamic salvation history, such as the story of Jonah and the Whale, but also *mirabilia* from other legendary traditions, some of which are shared between Islam and Christendom. Pinto has drawn attention to the fact that some of the same motifs of monstrous creatures also appear on Pīrī Re'īs famous first world map, together with *mirabilia* from European lore.⁶¹ Despite its association with Ptolemaic scientific work and practical concerns of sailing Pīrī Re'īs' map here joins the visual discourse of cosmography.⁶² By arranging these images along the periphery of the map, along a circle concentric with the circle of wind roses and focal points of rhumb lines, Pīrī Re'īs appears to reflect a widespread Ottoman mental map that organizes the world in concentric circles. The culturally familiar world is placed at the center, the exotic but relatable in the next, in this case represented by an enthroned black king and an elephant on the African continent, followed by an outer belt of alien, utterly incomprehensible monstrosity.⁶³ Thus, the illustrations added to the maps, and their resonance with Pīrī Re'īs' imagery on his world map help to integrate these works into the corpus of cosmographical knowledge that is studied for edifying rather than practical purposes.

Although cosmography as a genre remained remarkably stable through much of the Ottoman period, as attested by continuing rewritings and transla-

Hasan (Pinto, *Maps Are the Message* 167f. and Pinto, *Medieval Islamic Maps* 251–278). While plausible, the attribution is circumstantial.

59 Pinto points to some rearrangements, but refrains from interpretation (Pinto, *Medieval Islamic maps* 237).

60 Pinto, *ibid.*, proposes a 16th century date and Safavid origins, while art historian Zeren Tanındı attributed one manuscript to the Qaraqoyunlu confederation around 1460 (Taşkın, *Maps at the Topkapı Palace* 80–81).

61 Soucek, *Piri Reis & Turkish mapmaking* 51 on the legend of St. Brendan.

62 A succinct analysis and contextualization is Soucek, *Piri Reis & Turkish mapmaking* 49–79. See also McIntosh and Thrower, *Piri Reis Map*.

63 Emiralioglu, *Cognizance of the Ottoman World* 16, 274.

tions of the classics, some Ottoman authors sought to expand the boundaries of the genre in the late 16th century. One example is Meḥmed ‘Âşık’s massive compilation *Menâzıru l-‘avâlim*, written around 1600, which follows the form, but shifts the emphasis from *mirabilia* to more mundane innerworldly knowledge, based on a new set of sources, and supplemented with his own experience from a lifetime of travel.⁶⁴ More important for us is the anonymous *Tārīḥ-i Hind-i Ġarbī* (History of the West Indies) from 1580, which inserts a narrative of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and a natural history of the New World into the structural framework of a cosmography.⁶⁵ ‘Alī Ekber’s description of China, in its Persian original submitted to sultan Süleymân in 1520, but little known, now became much more popular in a Turkish translation; we will return to this work shortly. An otherwise unknown author Seyfî Çelebi produced a largely legendary history of China and India, which highlighted secret Islamic leanings among the Chinese emperors.⁶⁶ All these works demonstrate the broadening of Ottoman horizons in the period; by putting them in this intellectual context I suggest that they were motivated more by cosmographical or cosmological interests than by the projection of imperial power or geopolitics. In other words, in their appeal to imperial patronage, they all played to the desire of the sultan to acquire an image of piety based on knowledge of the cosmos and the Creator. Interestingly, several of these works were dedicated to a sultan who was particularly concerned with fashioning himself as pious, even saintly, and possibly messianic ruler, Murâd III (r. 1574–1595).⁶⁷ But can we relate the ideas of a ruler, Murâd III or any other member of the dynasty, to the works submitted to them in search for patronage, given the fact that, as we saw, sultans directly commissioning geographical works or maps was extremely rare and no evidence exists of sultans shaping their content?

5 Modes of Patronage

At this point, a closer look at Ottoman notions of imperial patronage over knowledge and knowledge production is in order. We have seen how Pîrî Re’îs

64 Mehmed Âşık, *Menâzıru l-‘avâlim*. See also Hagen, Traveller Mehmed Âşık.

65 Goodrich, *Ottoman Turks*. I am not convinced by Tezcan’s suggestion to identify the author as Emîr Ḥasan es-Su’ûdî (Tezcan, Many lives). Reading this work as cosmography does not mean I consider it “disconnected, frivolous, or even nonsensical” (thus Casale, Alexander 865). Casale’s criticism entirely misses my point that cosmography was a deeply meaningful genre, but that meaning extends beyond political ideology.

66 Matuz, *Seyfî Çelebi*.

67 Felek, Dreams and visions; Felek, *Kitâbü’l-Menâmât*.

played to specific values and expectations of the patron in the way he framed his presentations. The first one was for recognition of able service, the second was an offer of knowledge. Here the picture gets complicated. Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı remind us that according to scholars, bureaucrats, and intellectuals like Laṭīfī and Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, “support of learning and the learned was seen ... as one of the duties of government, enjoined by Islam and traditionally practiced by Islamic rulers”.⁶⁸ In his Counsel for Sultans (*Nuṣḥatu s-selāṭīn*), written for Murād III in 1581, Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī describes the court and the environment of the sultan as a locale for the cultivation of knowledge: not only should the sultan study certain subjects, history in particular, as object lessons for good governance, he should also surround himself with philosophers and scholars, and he should have a capable companion versed in all kinds of arts and sciences, from poetry to travel narratives to astronomy to matters of law.⁶⁹ Accepting wisdom and advice from this group around him is a critical component of good and effective governance. The sultan is not all by himself required to acquire all knowledge (history stands out in Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s list), as long as he can use his learned circle as a resource. The implications for the cultivation of cosmological knowledge are not immediately evident but can be deduced from a number of parallels. First, there is overlap between history and geography in that both touch on remote kingdoms and dynasties, be they distant in space or time. Seyfī Çelebi, mentioned above as author of a unique legendary history of China and India, explained the rationale for this as follows:

It has been reported by great scholars that historiography is a noble science through which both this world and the hereafter are attained, because by reading how sultans and viziers have carried out their offices a man will become knowledgeable regarding matters of government (*re’ye tedbīr şāḥibi*) and will be well received by rulers: thus he wins this world. And by recognizing how rulers and viziers did not last in this transient world he does not pursue this world but dedicates himself to the worship of God the Exalted: thus he wins the hereafter.⁷⁰

Second, in the same context Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī emphasizes the need for the sultan to lead a pious life. While that sounds too commonplace to have much significance, when read together with the cultivation of knowledge it points to

68 Andrews and Kalpaklı, *Age of beloveds* 311.

69 Andrews and Kalpaklı, *Age of beloveds* are surely right to read this at one level as a job application from Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī.

70 Matuz, *Seyfī Çelebi* 2a–b.

the ideal of the just ruler who is aware of the dangers of hubris and injustice and intent on ruling in accordance with his insights into cosmology and the will of the creator. Efficient government is laudable, but the true goal is to obtain the blessings and prayers of the subjects, and thus attain salvation.⁷¹ The English kings of the Middle Ages frequently surrounded themselves with maps, and *mappae mundi* in particular, as part of their public display. While they used *mappae regni* as political symbols (more on which below), their world maps were repositories not only of geographical, but historical knowledge, which for them meant salvation history. The public display behind or above the king would then evince his own position in relation to this salvation history, and his moral rectitude in recognizing this history.⁷² Thus, the theological statement, arguably, was very similar in both cases, but the social context differed, because the Ottomans never displayed their maps publicly.⁷³ Maps were prominently used in the decoration of palaces and seats of government in 16th-century Italy, but no such use is known from the Ottoman court, or elsewhere in the empire.⁷⁴ An entrepreneurial Venetian in the mid-16th century designed a wood-cut world map with an Ottoman legend, obviously to be marketed in the Ottoman Empire as a wall map, but the Venetian authorities stopped the enterprise before any maps could be exported, so that the question if Ottoman recipients would have hung them, and where, does not arise.⁷⁵ The decorative frame of Pīrī Re'īs' second world map in a fine Renaissance pattern seems to suggest that it could have been hung, but the varying orientation of the legends make it more likely that it was supposed to be laid out horizontally, just like his earlier world map.⁷⁶

Instead, the image fashioned for the sultan from the cultivation of this knowledge was visible only within the court, to his innermost circle. In the context of patronage, this difference matters, because patronage is a bargain between the patron and the author/artist/client, and while one benefit for the patron

71 Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, *Nuṣḥatū's-selāṭīn* 41–44 (translation), 126–128 (text).

72 Birkholz, *King's two maps* xx, xxvi has attempted to dissociate the dichotomy of medieval vs. Renaissance mapping from the opposition of theological vs. “scientific”; multiple possibilities of reading as proposed here lead in the same direction.

73 The closest parallel to such public display of knowledge under Ottoman patronage would be public disputations of religious topics, which are attested as early as the period of Meḥmed II.

74 See Schulz, Maps as metaphors.

75 On this map see Ménage, Map of Hajji Ahmet; Arbel, Maps of the world. Casale proposes to study the map as an Ottoman artifact based on alleged Ottoman cultural concepts included in the text (Casale, *Seeing the Past*).

76 See Soucek, *Pīrī Reis & Turkish mapmaking* 79–84 for the most incisive analysis.

may well be that the gift speaks to his personal interests and needs, another—arguably more crucial one—is that the patron be seen to conform to the ideals and expectations articulated by men like Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, on behalf of the elite. Public display of works containing critical knowledge were one way of achieving this visibility. However, where legitimacy was also a bargain between the sultan and his elite courtiers, visibility to this elite also matters, but is less detectable to us. In other words, consumption of maps in the intimate setting of the palace does not militate against the significance in the moral economy of patronage and imperial legitimacy. Another comparison with historiography is useful here. Baki Tezcan had argued that a series of histories, commissioned by and for the sultan in the late 16th century, should be considered failures because they never circulated outside the palace and thus failed to disseminate their ideas of justice and legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans.⁷⁷ Christine Woodhead responded by pointing out that these histories were meant to be read only by the sultan and his immediate retinue, that they were to serve his moral guidance and reassurance, and finally, that in this act of supreme elite cultural patronage, the artistic and aesthetic aspect was no less important than the content of these works.⁷⁸ Following Woodhead, and taking the same reasoning to mapping, I argue that the lack of dissemination of maps make them no less significant as tokens of imperial concern for cosmological knowledge.

6 The Imperial Vision

One of the texts presented to Murād III includes another aspect of royal patronage for maps which points forward to the renewed encounter with the Ptolemaic map. ‘Alī Ekber’s above-mentioned description of China, *Ḥaṭāy-nāme* offers a striking example of those parameters of the symbolic and moral significance of maps and geographical knowledge. He seems to have written his book for Selīm I, but ultimately presented it to Süleymān the Lawgiver, according to its preface. Though often described as a travelogue, the work is in fact a very systematic description of various aspects of Ming China, beginning with the roads leading there, and then touching upon all kinds of aspects of governance, administration, and military affairs, creating a model for an implicit normative critique of the Ottoman state.⁷⁹ Wedged between the dedication to

77 Tezcan, Politics.

78 Woodhead, Ottoman Sehnames.

79 Emiralioğlu, Relocating the center, and Hemmat, Chinese system. Tezcan reads this text at

Süleymān and the introduction of the Persian original (lacking in the Turkish translation) is a poem of 16 lines, entitled *hikāyat* (narrative) which plays on a famous motif from the *Shāhnāme*, the Persian epic Book of Kings.⁸⁰ Jamshīd, the primordial Persian king owned a magical cup, known as the *Jām-i Jam(shīd)*, or *Jām-i Gītī-numā* (lit. “showing the world”), in which he could see, as if in a mirror, any place in the world. But one day, says ‘Alī Ekber, the cup had lost its luster, and the shah summoned the scholars to polish it according to their knowledge and bring back its quality. The physician likened it to a cup of water, the astrologer to the astrolabe, but in truth, ‘Alī Ekber says, it simply stands for the human soul, which if polished properly, that is, cleansed of worldly concerns, is capable of perceiving everything.⁸¹

The cup of Jamshīd is the perfect symbol for the world map and has its counterpart in Alexander the Great’s mirror on top of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, which also could show every place on earth and is often referred to in Islamic texts with the same term *gītī-numā* or *jihān-numā*. The point is brought home by an Ottoman world map belonging to a work of Muṣṭafā ‘Alī, in the style of Ibn al-Wardī, which shows the lighthouse, almost at the center of the map, as a minaret-like structure.⁸² We may speculate whether the fact that both Ottoman palaces, in Edirne and in Topkapı, had a structure called *Cihānnümā Kaşrı* (Cosmorama Tower) refers to a symbolic outlook of the sultan. The cup is the indispensable tool for Jamshīd to govern justly, as in the Persianate theories of statecraft the ruler needs to be aware of everything going on in his realm.⁸³ Several miniatures from imperial chronicles show an Ottoman sultan at a window of the *Cihānnümā Kaşrı* in Topkapı, shooting an arrow at a spherical object suspended in the chamber of the imperial council: is this a ritual performance of the royal gaze encompassing and penetrating the entire world?⁸⁴ The chamber

the political level as an argument for ‘constitutionalism’, which in the context of an Islamicate state however seems to mean little other than conformity to the law (Tezcan, *Law in China*).

80 Taken from *Kanz-i ḥaqā’iq*, a mystical catechism attributed to Maḥmūd Shabistārī (d. 1320), but Hemmat argues that it is by Maḥmūd Puryā-yi Valī (d. 1322/23) (Hemmat, Citations 673–674; for another occurrence of the motif of the Jām-i Jamshīd see 679).

81 Khaṭā’ī, *Khatāynāma* 28.

82 It is the only building indicated on the map. This map was shown at an exhibit in Istanbul, without further provenance: <http://tarihvedenediyet.org/2011/08/harita-sergisi-piri-reisten-katip-celebiye/>.

83 Classical medieval mirrors-for-princes like the *Sīyāsat-nāme* of Nizām ul-mulk and the *Qutadgu Bilig* of Yūsūf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib both argue, with support of historical anecdotes, for visual control of a king’s subjects.

84 Necipoğlu, *Architecture* 82–86.

is situated at the foot of the tower and is the place where the complaints of the subjects are being heard and imperial justice dispensed. On the other hand, if polishing the mirror of the soul corresponds to cleaning the Cup of Jamshīd, then studying an account of a foreign country, tantamount to looking into the Cup, is also an act of self-perfection as part of the pious or mystical pursuit. The successful viewer will thus see “both worlds”, the physical world and the hereafter, in the polished mirror of his soul.⁸⁵ This seems to me an appropriate expression of the piety of Murād III.

While Ottoman (and earlier) references to the Cup of Jamshīd seem to imagine a view of the entire world, the discourse of justice usually seems to be restricted to the territory of the kingdom, raising the question if there was an Ottoman counterpart to the *mappa regni* through which the English kings projected their claim to full control of their realm.⁸⁶ Maps designed to show the territory of the Ottoman Empire in its political borders, however, do not seem to have been produced before the 19th century.⁸⁷ Instead, the surveys of the empire for the practical or symbolic consumption of the sultan were textual. The administrative control by the center was enshrined in detailed registers, settlement by settlement, which however lacked locational information.⁸⁸ A certain Muṣṭafā b. ‘Alī, whose nickname The Timekeeper (*al-muvaḳḳit*) points to his training in astronomy, produced a work that mostly consists of a list of Ottoman cities, with a few beyond Ottoman borders, together with their coordinates and their direction to Mecca measured against the meridian. This book may have served more the traveling jurists dispatched to different cities, than the edification of the sultan.⁸⁹ The historian and model chancellor of sultan Süleymān’s period, Celālzāde Muṣṭafā, planned the most prominent example of a textual *mappa regni*, a survey of all offices and provinces of the empire; however, only the last of 30 projected chapters, by itself a sizable tome, with a narrative of Süleymān’s reign was written.⁹⁰ It may be suggested here

85 Hemmat, Chinese system 147–157 provides a detailed analysis of the verse passage in question but does not notice the political implication of the symbol of the cup.

86 The term *mappa regni* is taken from Birkholz, *King’s Two Maps*. He points to the Gough Map of c.1360 (based on a prototype of c.1280) as the first prominent example. Instances from the continent seem to appear mostly later, raising the question to what degree the insularity of England facilitated this symbolic use.

87 Fortna, Change.

88 One of the few comprehensive attempts to map such data is Hütteroth and Göyünç, *Land an der Grenze*.

89 Emiralioğlu, Cognizance of the Ottoman world 142–153, 285–287.

90 The full plan is evident from the table of content: Celālzāde Muṣṭafā, *Ṭabaḳātü’l-memālik* 10b–20b, see also Şahin, *Empire and power* 193–198. ‘Ayn ‘Alī in the early 17th century

that the Ottoman imperial self-image was much more shaped through a historical continuity than through claim to certain territories.

The image of the cup of Jamshīd allows multiple interpretations, as view of the world and as representation of the human soul. While 'Alī Ekber gave much space to the mystical meaning, as would be appropriate when appealing to Murād III, following generations took more to the governmental dimension of it. That the king needed to have his eyes and ears everywhere in order to do justice to everybody is an old trope of advice-for-kings, recently repeated by Muṣṭafā 'Alī together with the requirements for the king cited above. The idea of a world-viewing device as a tool of government was fully developed by the low-level bureaucrat and polymath Kātib Çelebi, who was mentioned at the very beginning of this article. His geographical compilation, on which he worked for the longest part of his active life as a scholar, resumes the motif of the device in its title, *Cihānnümā*. The textual history begins with a forerunner that was basically an expansion of Sīpāhīzāde's (d. 1589) alphabetic rearrangement of that classical summary of Arabic mathematical geography, Abū l-Fidā's *Taqwīm al-buldān* (14th century). The first independent version returns to Abū l-Fidā's division of the world into 28 conventional climes, and regularly combines them with small regional maps in the margin. Several attempts beginning around 1645 were abandoned, partly for dissatisfaction with the lack of sources for Europe. Kātib Çelebi started over in 1653 when he had Western sources at hand and produced what could be described as an expanded translation of Mercator and Hondius' *Atlas Minor*, in which each chapter is accompanied by a page or half-page size map, ideally translated from Mercator.⁹¹

Interesting for our current purposes are the ways in which Kātib Çelebi diverges from his predecessors which we have discussed before. First, Kātib Çelebi systematically collapses boundaries of genre, by using every available source of geographical information, and by critically unifying and coordinating them for a coherent image of the world. The homogenous, unified space measured in Ptolemy's degrees has not left any room for monsters in the periphery. The use of the rectangular grid of coordinates now for the first time extends to regional maps, in the last version, facilitating the relation of several maps to each other and providing an immediate sense of scale. While the work is

wrote an advice-for-kings treatise which, in support of an argument about state revenues, includes several lists of provinces with their military prebends (Howard, Genre and myth, especially 152–166).

91 For a brief account of the textual history and its context in Kātib Çelebi's 'encyclopedic project' see Hagen, Kātib Çelebi.

divided according to the primordial cultural regions of the world, rather than contemporary political divisions, Kâtib Çelebi gives these cultural regions historical depth by inserting brief chapters on their governments and dynasties. Following Mercator, he systematically addresses questions of natural resources and prosperity of a region. On the other hand, the systematic introduction (only in the last version) pays barely more than lip service to the moral and theological postulates of cosmography and focuses instead on the technical and mathematical foundations of world description. While it is debatable to what degree the work would serve this purpose in practice, Kâtib Çelebi eagerly adopts Mercator's argument for the predictive value of maps. Specifically, he claims that a king needs to be familiar with maps and geography so that he can plan the military defense of his territory appropriately. He adopts Hondius' statement that no science will, according to general consensus (*communi calculo*), appear more useful and excellent to the wisdom of the citizens (*ad civilem sapientiam*), revealingly translating the latter term as governance (*sîy-âset*), and adding that the geographer will be most respected and honored in society.⁹² The reason is, now quoting Mercator himself, that

the owner of a mansion may know the location of all rooms, chambers, stables, kitchen, cellar, window, and everything else, but if he is ignorant of the quarter and neighborhood of the town, where it is located, if sedition or a fire break out, he will not know how far or near it is, and will fail to take proper precautions.⁹³

He concludes:

In general, the science of cosmography and geography is required (to maintain) the order of human society (*ictimâ'-ı beşerî*). If someone knows its rules and principles and can draw on them, he will have acquired more knowledge than he who has been traveling or campaigning under thousands of pains and tribulations for several millennia.⁹⁴

Obviously, Machiavelli's and Elyot's recommendation via Mercator resonated well enough with Kâtib Çelebi's experience of the war over the island of Crete, which at the time of his writing had been dragging on for many years. As he

92 Mercator, *Atlas Minor*, Hondius' preface, s.pag.; Kâtib Çelebi, *Cihānnümā* 17.

93 Mercator, *Atlas Minor* 2; Kâtib Çelebi, *Cihānnümā* 17.

94 Kâtib Çelebi, *Cihānnümā* 17.

saw it, superiority of geographical knowledge gave the Venetians the military advantage that enabled them to threaten the Dardanelles and Constantinople in 1656.⁹⁵

Kâtib Çelebi's work remains committed to the older topos of justice, with the map as the virtual eye of the sultan, by virtue of its title, *Cihānnümā*, which remained the same through all its different incarnations. But on another level, the geographical knowledge provided here is no longer transformed into social currency by means of literarization. Instead, Kâtib Çelebi advocates for the adoption of this very knowledge for practical purposes, to be implemented by the decision-makers of the Ottoman elite. In other words, his ideal is what Brotton imagined, prematurely, for the period of Meḥmed II.

The dissemination of the *Cihānnümā* seems to have been delayed, at least for the last version, until late in the 17th century, when a more recent translation, that of the Blaeu Atlas (or Atlas Maior) was produced by (or under the supervision of?) Ebū Bekr el-Dimeşkī (d. 1691), again with an obvious eye on its usefulness for the state. After this point, with few exceptions of narrative maps of military events, Ptolemaic maps with their mathematical basis and their possibility of non-linear and non-directional reading will be the standard of Ottoman mapping.⁹⁶ Two centuries after the first encounter with Ptolemy's principles of mathematical cartography, with the grid of coordinates as the essential structuring device for the map, Ottoman geographers embraced their possibilities, and never looked back at other cartographical techniques. It was left to the Hungarian-born renegade İbrāhīm Müteferriḳa to begin to distribute Kâtib Çelebi's and Ebū Bekr's maps in print, together with his own. It is only here, at the end of the period under consideration, that direct notations of political and administrative boundaries appear in Ottoman maps. Müteferriḳa's map of western Asia, including Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, and Iran, thus is the closest example yet to the *mappa regni*.⁹⁷ Moreover, it is the first Ottoman wall map known to us, although it is not clear, if, when, and where it was displayed.⁹⁸

95 Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuḥfetü l-kibār* 61.

96 A well-known example of such narrative maps is the siege-plan of Vienna first published by Kreutel (Kreutel, *Zeitgenössischer türkischer Plan*); see also Karamustafa, *Military, administrative, and scholarly maps* 213.

97 Even in the 19th century the maps in the modernizing Ottoman public schools did not center on the territory of the Ottoman Empire (Fortna, *Change in the school maps*).

98 One copy is in the Topkapı Library, another in Vienna (Karamustafa, *Military, administrative, and scholarly maps* 225).

7 Patronage Transformed: Return to Ptolemy

The reason for this fundamental change in map discourses from piety and justice to history, administration, and military planning is, for the time being, far from clear. We can speculate that the rationalism that spread in moralistic, historical, and ultimately cosmological discourses, advocated by the piety-oriented movement led by men like Kāḏizāde Meḥmed Efendi, helped paving the way for a new approach to maps. Kāḏizāde had been Kātib Çelebi's mentor, and his impact continued for generations. It is striking that between the many texts produced under and probably for Murād III and Kātib Çelebi's efforts, there is a half-century interval without any new work in terms of maps and world description. This is a period of complicated and partly traumatic transformations and crises, and it is the period in which Andrews and Kalpaklı locate the collapse of the literary economy with its well-established system of imperial or aristocratic patronage for scholars and poets, pointing to economic changes, monetization in particular, and social and political upheaval.⁹⁹ Evliyā Çelebi, who made a living by entertaining the elite with adventures and learned and witty conversation, and whose monumental travelogue was expressly designed as a *mappa regni* of sorts was relying on a type of patronage that was going extinct, looking at the Empire, and evoking its cultural mythology with an erudite nostalgia mixed with irony.¹⁰⁰ His work, too, languished in Cairo, was never presented to a patron as a whole, and probably survived for its literary and philological interest rather than the geographical.¹⁰¹ Kātib Çelebi himself, materially mostly independent due to an inheritance and a modest day job, never managed to submit any of his major works to the palace, although he was widely recognized as an important thinker and author, and his texts were copied despite their fragmentary state. The autograph of *Cihānnümā* is in the Topkapı Palace library today, but it arrived there in the 18th century, and it is not clear under what auspices. On the other hand, there is evidence that he was supportive of the political agenda of the new grand vizier, Köprülü Meḥmed Paşa, whose family would usher in a new political era, including new reliance on geographical knowledge (and was very susceptible to the teaching of Kāḏizāde's successors). It may not be a coincidence that he was a fierce political opponent of Evliyā Çelebi's patron, and Evliyā had nothing but contempt for him.¹⁰² The charge by Meḥmed Paşa's son, Köprülü Fāzıl Aḥmed Paşa for Ebū

99 Andrews and Kalpaklı, *Age of beloveds* 304–328.

100 Hagen, Ottoman understandings.

101 MacKay, Manuscripts of the *Seyahatname*.

102 Evliyā's aversion is on vivid display in Dankoff, *Intimate life*.

Bekr el-Dimeşkî for the translation of the Blaeu Atlas is the first state-sponsored initiative to create geographical knowledge (or make it accessible). I am calling it 'state-sponsored' in order to purposefully distinguish it from a royal or imperial order. In the latter case, like Mehmed II's Ptolemy, it may as well speak the personal interests of the sultan, but the translated Blaeu Atlas was clearly intended for the state as institution, distinct from the person of the sultan.¹⁰³ İbrâhîm Müteferrika (d. 1746), the pioneer of Turkish printing one generation later, embodies another decisive step in state patronage, as he was licensed to print books, meaning that disseminating them to a wider public beyond the court itself was part of his official agenda. Another state official at the time was Muştafâ Na'imâ (d. 1716), who was charged with writing an official history of the Ottoman Empire starting with the year 1000 H.; he was the first in a line of court chroniclers that lasted until the end of the empire.¹⁰⁴ Together with Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihânnümâ*, the works of these court chroniclers were also part of the publication program of Müteferrika's printing press. In other words, at that point, the state took it upon itself to disseminate history and geography, the key areas of knowledge for the statesman, through books.¹⁰⁵ In this new world, with a new form and meaning of patronage of maps and geography, the future belonged to the empirical, unembellished, and largely secular maps of Kâtib Çelebi, Ebû Bekr, and İbrâhîm Müteferrika, and their authoritative Ptolemaic style.

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103 For the discussion of this 'reification' of the state see Piterberg, *Ottoman tragedy*.

104 On the office of the imperial chronicler (vekâyi'nüvis) see Kütükoğlu, *Vekayî'nüvis*.

105 The success, however, was limited, not least because even printed books ended up being quite expensive, and state license for the project did not mean price subsidies (Sabev, *İbrahim Müteferrika*).

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PART 4

Books, Coins, and Titles



Titles of Honor and Status in the Fatimid Realm

Paul E. Walker

Personal and institutional titles in the Islamic realm fall under the general term *laqab* (pl. *alqāb*) which itself can refer both to a nickname and to a formal mark of honor.¹ In the latter sense they were rarely bestowed in the earliest periods but eventually became a fairly standard means for the ruling authority to confer special recognition and, with it, status to leading figures of the state. When the Fatimids first rose to power in the far west, the local custom, in contrast to what was by then common in the ‘Abbasid east, tended to disparage the awarding of such titles as a mark of the increasingly decadent Easterners, an affectation not in keeping with true Islam. However the first Fatimid caliph al-Mahdī, who had come from the east not long before his public ascension in January 297/910 and who considered the ‘Abbasids his main rival, chose to adopt for himself just such a title, a sign of the very ongoing conflict which apparently required that he outdo his enemy. In fact, as noted by C.E. Bosworth in the *EI2*:

Whereas ‘Abbāsīd honorifics up to the later 4th/10th century and the period of Būyīd control in Baghdād were formed essentially with participles or adjectives of a passive or reflexive character, thereby emphasizing the supremacy of God’s controlling power and the vital securing of His favor for the business of ruling Armand Abel has noted that by deliberate contrast the Fāṭimids, had, in order to press their superior claim, as they saw it, to the caliphate and imamate, to adopt a more aggressive form of titulature.² This new type actively associated the holders of these titles with God’s direct working in the world. Thus we have al-Qā’im bi-amr Allāh “he who takes charge of the execution of God’s command” for al-Mahdī’s successor; and from the time of al-Mu’izz’s accession onwards (341/953), the honorifics of the Fāṭimids are all active participles or adject-

1 For a general but quite detailed review of this topic, see *EI2* s.v. *laqab* (C.E. Bosworth). For an equally important earlier study of Islamic titles see Ḥasan al-Bashā, *al-Alqāb al-islāmiyya fi’l-ta’rīkh wa’l-wathā’iq wa’l-āthār*.

2 Abel, *Le khalife, présence sacrée*, 38–40.

ives emphasizing the ruler's decisive part in the implementation of God's will in this world, usually with a complement like ... *li-dīn Allāh* or ... *bi-amr Allāh*.

Even so, the earliest North African Fatimid caliphs avoided bestowing titles on others, more or less in keeping with the prevailing tradition of the Westerners.³ But, by the final decades of the same fourth/tenth century and most especially following the move to Cairo and Egypt, the situation began to change. A good example to illustrate the previous policy of avoiding the use of titles relates to the famous Fatimid commander Jawhar. His origin as a Slavic slave from Sicily notwithstanding, there is no doubt about his lofty status by the time he, at the head of a large army, was personally dispatched from Ifriqiya by the caliph al-Mu'izz along with a standing order that all persons of any rank whatsoever were to dismount for him.⁴ Nevertheless, in the sources that record the details of his illustrious career, he is generally referred to simply as al-Qā'id (The Commander), or perhaps more often as al-Kātib (The Clerk), signifying his prior work as a secretary in what had passed as the caliph's chancery. By the time he died in 992, the honor he had accrued passed in part to his son as noted in the latter's title al-Qā'id ibn al-Qā'id (The Commander Son of the Commander), an awkward and hardly standard title to be sure, but an indication of a reluctance to deal in more formal titles. Some eight years later, however, on 17 Jumādā II 390/25 May 1000, an imperial decree announced that he would have a new title, that of *Qā'id al-Quwwād* (Commander of Commanders). It was a title the Fatimid had not used previously for anyone.⁵

Thereafter this aspect of later Fatimid rule proliferates with more and more titles granted, some a series of several for a single recipient, and the ceremony surround the event became an elaborate special occasion including typically a formal *ṣijill* read publicly to announce the new titles, gifts, a procession, and more. Hesitation to award titles to vassals, wazirs and others was all but forgotten. An early case saw Ya'qūb b. Killis granted the full title of *al-Wazīr al-Ajall* (Most Illustrious Wazir), Ramaḍān 368/April 979, a first for the Fatimids who had never before delegated that degree of responsibility, either in this instance

3 "The vogue for honorifics followed a rather different course in the Muslim West. In general, their use was less developed in the more puritanical West, where there was a tendency to regard elaborate and fancy names and titles as effete and Persianising phenomena. Hence the term *alkāb mashriqīyya* is not infrequently used by Maghribi writers in disparaging references to them," *ETI* s.v. *lakab* (C.E. Bosworth).

4 By that time, he had been granted free status and was thus no longer a slave.

5 On this and a subsequent use of this title see Walker, *The Pitti Palace Rock Crystal Ewer and the Sordid Story of How and Why It Came to Exist* 41–46.

of appointing a wazir or of bestowing such a title. Use of titles formed with *dawla* (State), moreover, at least for their wazirs and some officials began to be common. A standard formula for Fatimid wazirs was al-Wazīr al-Ajall (Most Illustrious Wazir), as had been awarded to Ibn Killis, but not long afterward, compounds in addition to *dawla*, *al-mulk* (the Kingdom), *al-dīn* (the Faith) and other titles appear as for example Amīn al-Milla (Trustee of the Community) for Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Ammār, a quasi-wazir, at the commencement, or Khaṭīr al-Mulk (Eminent of the Kingdom) for 'Ammār b. Muhammad who was the head of the chancery, at the end of the reign of al-Ḥākim (r. 386/996–411/1021), and for their commanders, governors and vassal princes, e.g. Sayf al-Dawla (Sword of the State) for the Zīrid Yūsuf b. Buluggīn in 361/972, and similar titles for Yūsuf's successors Bādīs and al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs.⁶

A report found in al-Maqrīzī in regard to a problem in the succession to the rule of the Sicilian Kalbids claims that Ja'far, the succeeding son, prior to the event, already possessed such a *ṣijill* issued by al-Ḥākim that provided for him to succeed his father in case of the incapacity of the latter which is what subsequently happened. The caliph also granted this son the further title Tāj al-Dawla wa Sayf al-Milla (Crown of the State and Sword of the Community) by means of a subsequent decree. Then, later, the caliph sent him yet another distinction, a higher honor, by augmenting his title (*laqab*) by the term "al-Malik" (the King).⁷ Other than an extreme honor, the exact meaning of this term in this situation is unclear. Notably in this regard, a report from Egypt in 408/1017, mentions that al-Ḥākim exempted from an order to cancel titles, most significantly, Thiqa al-Dawla (Trustee of the State), the title of Yūsuf, who, though incapacitated, was still the ruler of Sicily in effect, and Tāj al-Dawla (Crown of the State), the title of his son Ja'far.⁸

With the proliferation of titles, the ceremony attached to the event became more and more important, becoming a notable feature of courtly life. But a decree from the year 390/1000, following the execution of Barjawān, the eunuch quasi-wazir at the time, by the caliph al-Ḥākim, runs as follows:

O people who hear this appeal, truly God, who is most great and powerful, requires that the imams have singular obligations that no one else in the community shares. Those who, after the reading of this public decree,

6 see. Idris, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Zirides x^e–XI^e siècles* ii, 509.

7 On Amir Ja'far, see al-Maqrīzī's *Ittī'āz* ii, 99, 161; his *Muqaffā* iii, 66–67; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* xxiv, 376. On this succession see Walker, *Kutāma, Kalbids and Other Westerners* 45–56.

8 al-Anṭākī, *Ta'rikh*, part III, ed. Kratchkowsky, French trans. by F. Micheau and G. Troupeau 373–559 (French trs. 420–421).

have the audacity to address in correspondence or communications to anyone other than the hallowed presence by the term “our lord” or “our master,” the Commander of the Believers has declared his blood lawful. So let those present inform those absent, God willing.⁹

The “hallowed presence” is of course the imam-caliph¹⁰ and this edict states clearly that none but he is to be addressed as our lord or our master, a matter of protocol evidently until then in doubt. That that needed to be formally stated suggests the use of laudatory informal titles of address had gotten out of hand.

Nevertheless, from the very commencement of his reign, al-Ḥākim bestowed titles fairly generously. Thus Ibn ‘Ammār became the “Trustee of the State” and most of the *wāsiṭas* (quasi-wazirs) were given a title, as were many commanders in the army and the rulers of the vassal states in North Africa and Sicily. Yaḥyā of Antioch, whose *History*¹¹ is a major source for this period, comments that this caliph granted such titles to the elite amirs, the commanders and most of the clerks in the government. We have many examples. But oddly, though perhaps in keeping with his desire for simplicity during the last phase of his reign, this same caliph announced at one point that all titles of the kind were to be annulled, except in the case of nine individuals, among them the Zirid ruler of the Maghrib, the Kalbid amir of Sicily and his son, and closer to home the chief *qāḍī* and the chief *dāʿī*.¹²

Al-Ḥākim clearly had thoughts of reform and of reining in the growing tendency to depend on titles as a means of reward and recognition, which however, once begun, was hard to control, each title needing in turn a loftier one for subsequent occasions. The latter problem was partially solved by the addition of one or more for the same individual. And the awarding of a title also provided an excuse for celebratory event, as in the following example:

On Friday with 11 days left in Ṣafar [of 415],¹³ all of the people were to gather in the *ḥwān* of the palace. A call went out through the town to close shops and markets and for the commoners to rouse themselves. When the

9 al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz* ii, 35.

10 On the significance of this form of address, see further, Abel, *Le khalife* 31–32.

11 al-Anṭākī, *Taʾrīkh*, part III, ed. I. Kratchkovsky, French trans. by F. Micheau and G. Troupeau 373–559.

12 Yahya, who supplies this information although it is confirmed elsewhere, connects this action with the onset of the Druze troubles. He adds that it ended soon enough and most titles were restored.

13 May 1, 1024.

people were assembled in the courtyard of the palace portico, the commander Abu'l-Fawāris Mi'ḍād the black eunuch came out wearing a fine covering robe and on his head a turban of high quality Egyptian linen, run through with much gold, reddish brown in color. With him he had a decree that was read for all the commoners and the elite granting him the title "Commander, Might of the State and its Spearhead" (*al-Qā'id 'Izz al-Dawla wa sinānuhā*) Abi'l-Fawāris Mi'ḍād al-Zāhirī and [stating] that it is the Commander of the Believers who so entitles him and gives him this *kunya*. It was an eloquent decree. Then, subsequent to its being read out, he was presented with four horses with heavily decorated saddles. He was also wearing a sword of gold that he had been girded with. All the retainers surrounding him and the rest of the commanders along with the people left with him for his residence. It was an especially fine day.¹⁴

This particular example of such an event may be taken as fairly typical of the care the regime put into the awarding of a title or of a new title, either of a higher status or in addition to a previously given one. Al-Qalqashandī, the great Mamluk era authority on Arabic documents and the working of Islamic chanceries, reports in his *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* that one type it produced was specifically designed for the purpose of conferring titles.¹⁵ They were called technically *kutub al-tanwīh* (documents conferring praise or acclaim) as noted by al-Qalqashandī in a section on *al-mukātaba bi'l-tanwīh wa'l-talqīb* (correspondence conferring praise and titles) quoting from the *Mawādd al-bayān* of the Fātimid author 'Alī b. Khalaf who was himself head of the chancery of his time.¹⁶ Curiously, whereas al-Qalqashandī notes that particular work as his source for the importance of this function of the chancery under the Fatimids, his full example of such a document is one issued for Riḍwān b. Walakhshī in 531/1137¹⁷ conferring on him the titles and *kunyā*: al-Sayyid al-Ajall al-Afḍal, Amīr al-Juyūsh, Sayf al-Islām, Nāṣir al-Imām, Kāfil Quḍāt al-Muslimīn wa Hādī

14 From al-Musabbiḥī who obviously was himself present when it happened. al-Musabbiḥī, *al-Juz' al-arba'ūn min Akhbār Miṣr*, pt. 1, ed. Ayman Fuad Sayyid and Th. Bianquis 24 (with a verbatim copy of the decree itself 24–27).

15 al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'*.

16 Other than that he was the author of this manual for chancery secretaries and that he was living in Egypt in 437/1045–1046, not much is known about him although presumably he, given the authority with which he writes and the details in his account, was in charge of the state chancery.

17 The exact date is Friday 13th of Jumādā I 531/6 February 1137.

Du'āt al-Mu'minīn, Abu'l-Faṭḥ Riḍwān al-Ḥāfiẓī (The Illustrious Lord, al-Afḍal, Commander of the Armies, Sword of Islam, Protector of the Imam, Guardian of the Judges of the Muslims and Guide of the Agents of the Believers, Abu'l-Faṭḥ Riḍwān the Ḥāfiẓite). Thus this latter document cannot have come from the fifth/eleventh century *Mawādd al-bayān*.

The source for the description of the ceremony given above is the *History* compiled by the amir al-Musabbiḥī (d. 421/1030), which, although reportedly itself upwards of many thousands of pages, now exists only in a small section covering the years 414/1023 and 415/1024. Still, in contrast to much that survives of the historical record in general, this portion reflects often the personal experience of the author. Al-Musabbiḥī was a member of the elite and he actively participated in the regular ceremonies of the state. It is easy to see from the specificity of his report how important titles had become in Fatimid governance by the early decades of the fifth/eleventh century when he observed them.

Significantly, by that period, the 'Abbasids were already so free with titles it had become, in their case, a matter of scandal in part because of a tendency to trade in titles by selling them. Two examples of rather sharp comment about this practice are often cited. One is the following by al-Birūnī in *his Chronology of Ancient Nations*:

When the 'Abbasids had decorated their assistants, friends and enemies indiscriminately with vain titles compounded with the word *dawla*, their empire perished, for in this they went beyond all reasonable limits. This went on so long that those who were especially connected to their court claimed something new in order to distinguish themselves from the others. Thereupon the caliphs bestowed double titles. But then the others, too, wanted the same titles, and knew how to make their point through bribery, so it became necessary again to create a distinction between this class and those who were directly connected to their court. So the caliphs bestowed triple titles, adding as well the title of Shahanshah. In this way the matter became utterly opposed to common sense and clumsy in the highest degree, so that he who cites them wastes his time and writing, and he who uses them in addresses runs the risk of missing the time for prayer.¹⁸

18 Cited among other places by Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community: The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate* 77–79, quoting al-Birūnī (*al-Āthār al-bāqīya 'an al-qurūn al-khālīya*, trans. Sachau, *Chronology of Ancient Nations* 129).

Another was some verses by al-Khwārazmī, quoted from al-Tha‘ālibī:¹⁹

What do I care that the ‘Abbasids have thrown open
 The gates of *kunyā* and *alqāb*
 They have conferred titles on a man whom their ancestors would not
 have
 Been satisfied to make a doorkeeper of the outhouse.
 The dirhams in the hands of our caliph are few,
 Thus he lavishes people with *alqāb*.²⁰

However there appears to be no evidence that Fatimid rulers ever sold titles and no such criticism, as in these two examples against ‘Abbasid practice, exists in their case, at least none that has come to light in our sources.

In 1958, the Egyptian scholar Ḥasan al-Bashā published an essential study of these *laqabs* throughout the Islamic world and noted as many examples as he could for the Fatimids.²¹ Since his time, however, we have recovered several sources he could not have used. Moreover, in newer editions of texts brought to light after his work and in newly edited versions of previously known sources, the editors have seen fit to include indices specifically devoted to such titles. We can now assemble a reasonably complete catalog that lists the titles bestowed by the Fatimid caliphs on the ranking elite members of their government.²²

With this data in hand, we can analyze such issues as which titles appear regularly or not, which indicate rank—i.e. are some more exalted than others—what does it mean to earn one as opposed to another, and when and how are they given in multiples. Although Fatimid practice was largely not different from that of others, particularly that of the ‘Abbasids and eastern Islamic regimes, a close look at this subject is nevertheless interesting and warranted

19 al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatimat al-dahr fī maḥāsīn ahl al-‘aṣr* iv, 264. Also cited and translated by Rustow *op.cit.*

20 See also for comparison, Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*, trans. 8:
 What matters to me if the ‘Abbasids have thrown open
 the gates of honour and surnames.
 They have conferred titles on a man whom their ancestors
 would not have made doorkeepers of the lavatory.
 Though plentiful with titles,
 few are the dirhams in the hands of these our caliphs.

21 Ḥasan al-Bashā, *al-Alqāb al-islāmīyya fī l-ta’rīkh wa’l-wathā’iq wa’l-āthār*.

22 Of course, no catalog of such material is ever likely to be complete since not all possible sources have by any means been indexed for this feature and titles pertinent to the Fatimids may exist in records of a wide variety of types (including, for example, documents from the Cairo Genizah).

in part because it clearly constituted a major feature of their governing, as is evident from the considerable attention given to titles and accounts of their conferral in our sources.

An interesting case to illustrate the multiplication of titles is that of the wazir al-Yāzūrī who held that office from Muḥarram 442/June 1050 until Dhu'l-Ḥijja 449/February 1058. He was also the first Fatimid wazir to bring under his direct control the judiciary and the *da'wa* in addition to the wazirate. Once he had acquired all three, he was then titled: "The Illustrious Distinguished Wazir, Lord Master of the Wazirate, Crown of the Most Loyal, Judge of Judges, Dā'ī of Dā'īs, Banner of Nobility, Trustee of the Commander of the Believers" (al-Wazīr al-Ajall al-Makīn Sayyid al-Wuzarā' Tāj al-Aṣfiyyā' Qāḍī al-Quḍāt, Dā'ī al-Du'āt 'Alam al-Majd Khālīṣat Amīr al-Mu'minīn).²³

Approximately a half century later, al-Ma'mūn b. al-Baṭā'ihī was wazir to the Fatimid caliph al-Āmir (r. 495/1101–524/1130). He had risen to this position in 515/1122, following the assassination of the previous wazir al-Afḍal, and he held the position until 519/1125, when he was himself arrested and imprisoned. However, his career prior to the wazirate included significant association with the caliphs al-Mustanṣir (d. 487/1094) and al-Musta'li (r. 487/1094–495/1101), plus serving as chief of staff to al-Afḍal. Over the long period of his various forms of service, he earned the following set of titles awarded in three separate events, the last set being those fairly typical of a wazir, which by then he had become:

1. *al-Ajall al-Ma'mūn, Tāj al-Khilāfa, Wajīh al-Mulk, Fakhr al-Ṣanā'ī, Dhukhr Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (The Illustrious and Trusted, Crown of the Caliphate, Noble Presence of the Kingdom, Pride of the Arts, Treasure of the Commander of the Believers)
2. *al-Ajall al-Ma'mūn, Tāj al-Khilāfa, 'Izz al-Islām, Fakhr al-Anām, Niẓām al-Dīn wa'l-Dunyā* (The Illustrious and Trusted, Crown of the Caliphate, Glory of Islam, Pride of Mankind, Foundation of Faith and the World)
3. *al-Sayyid al-Ajall al-Ma'mūn, Amīr al-Juyūsh, Sayf al-Islām, Nāṣir al-Imām, Kāfil Quḍāt al-Muslimīn, Hādī Du'āt al-Mu'minīn* (The Illustrious and Trusted Lord, Commander of the Armies, Sword of Islam, Support of the Imam, Guardian of the Judges of the Muslims, Guide of the Agents to the Believers)²⁴

23 الوزير الأجلّ المكين سيد الوزراء تاج الأصفياء قاضي القضاة داعي الدعوة علم المجد خالصة أمير المؤمنين

24 ١. الأجلّ المأمون، تاج الخلافة، وجيه الملك، نغر الصنائع، دُخر أمير المؤمنين

٢. الأجلّ المأمون، تاج الخلافة، عز الإسلام، نغر الأنام، نظام الدين والدنيا

Eventually one innovation to the titles of wazirs involved adding the word or term *Malik* (King). The first case appears, according to Ibn al-Athīr and several sources including al-Maqrīzī, to have been the same Riḍwān mentioned earlier (although it is not listed among those in the decree preserved by al-Qalqashandī). Moreover, al-Maqrīzī seems to insist that “none of the wazirs prior [to al-Šāliḥ Ṭalā’ī b. Ruzzīk] were given the title al-Malik.”²⁵ However of the final group of wazirs under the Fatimids, at least four [Ṭalā’ī b. Ruzzīk (549–559/1154–1161), Ruzzīk b. Ṭalā’ī (556–558/1161–1163), Shīrkūh (564/1169) and Salāḥ al-Dīn (564–567/1169–1171)] were accorded that title among others. Here it should be noted that the Sicilian vassal cited earlier and two other Yemeni examples mentioned in the lists below were not wazirs but rather heads of a client entity.

Ayman Fuad Sayyid, who has edited himself most of the critically important sources for the history of the Fatimids (al-Maqrīzī’s *Itti’āz al-ḥunafā’* and *Khīṭaṭ*, Ibn Muyassar, Ibn al-Ma’mūn, al-Musabbīḥī, Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, and Ibn al-Šayrafī),²⁶ is particularly conscientious about providing for each an index of titles. With this kind of tool, it is possible to assemble a catalog of Fatimid era titles arranged by those awarded to individuals under the name of that person, or as lists of the separate uses of various forms of title, as those containing the word *dawla* (for which see Appendix C of the Arabic section below). Another category would be those employing the words *al-dīn*, or *al-mulk*, or *al-imām*, or *amīr a-mu’minīn* (see here as well Appendix C).

A couple of additional examples might be useful. First a list of those individuals who held the wazirate with the title “Illustrious Wazir” (*al-wazīr al-ajall*), also those entitled Malik (*al-Malik* “the king”). Or again those with the word *tāj* (crown) in their title(s). Or *sayf* (‘sword’, as in “Sword of Islam”). The Arabic of those examples is given below in Appendix D.

٣. السيد الأجلّ المأمون، أمير الجيوش، سيف الإسلام، ناصر الإمام، كافل قضاة المسلمين، هادي دعاة المؤمنين

25 On this development, see Sayyid’s edition of al-Maqrīzī’s *Itti’āz* (3: 194–195 notes) where the editor points out the discrepancy and provides full citations for the range of sources involved.

26 Jamāl al-Dīn b. al-Ma’mūn, *Nuṣūṣ min Akhbār Miṣr*; Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Muyassar, *al-Muntaqā min Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. Ayman Fuad Sayyid (Cairo, 1981); Abu’l-Qāsim ‘Alī Ibn al-Šayrafī, *al-Ishāra ilā man nāla al-wizāra*; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-muqlatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*; al-Khīṭaṭ (*al-ma’rūf bi’l-mawā’iz wa’l-i’tibār bi-dhikr al-khīṭaṭ wa’l-āthār*); *Itti’āz al-ḥunafā’ bi-akhbār al-a’imma al-fātimiyyīn al-khulafā’*; al-Musabbīḥī, *al-Juz’ al-arba’ūn min Akhbār Miṣr*, pt. 1.

Note that, among the six “Swords of Islam”, one is the Christian wazir Bah-rām, who held that high office from 529/1135 to 531/1137 under the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ. That he was and continued to be Christian, despite holding his high office, understandably caused much internal debate, leading to chaos and antagonism. Apparently this title itself was of relatively minor concern; more serious was a customary requirement that the wazir of the day mount the *min-bar* during the *khuṭba* ceremony at the ʿīd festival which was, for a Christian, impossible and was, ultimately not tolerated in this case.²⁷

In another oddity, the Coptic Monk Abū Najāh, of dubious notoriety because his major claim to high status and title was based on his ability to expropriate money and property from fellow Christians, was given, among others, the title “The Thirteenth Apostle of Jesus”, which as a title must have been all but unique under Islamic rule. He subsequently fell from the favor of the caliph when he began to use his tactics to extract funds from ranking Muslims as well. Still, during the three years he was in favor (between 519/1125 and 524/1130) he earned the following titles: *al-Ab al-Qadīs al-Rūḥānī al-Nafīs*, *Abiy'l-Ābā'*, *Sayyid al-Ru'asā'*, *Muqaddam Dīn al-Nuṣrāniyya wa Sayyid al-Baṭrīyarkīyya*, *Thālith 'ashar al-Ḥawāriyyīn* (Precious Holy Spiritual Father, Father of Fathers, Lord of Lords, Guardian of the Christian Faith and Lord of the Patriarchate, Thirteenth of the Apostles).²⁸

Finally, we have the impressive string of at least ten separate titles granted to Sayyida Arwa, the Sulayhid queen of the Yemen (d. 532/1138), a loyal vassal of the Fatimid imams. She in fact, as is now clear, accumulated as many or even more titles than any man in the period.²⁹ In the end she held the following: *Al-Ḥurra al-Malika al-Sayyida*, *al-Raḍyya al-Ṭāhira al-Zakiyya*, *Waḥīdat al-zamān*, *Sayyidat mulūk al-Yaman*, *Iddat al-Islām*, *Khālīṣat al-Imām*, *Dhakhīrat al-dīn*, *Iṣmat al-Mustarshadīn*, *Kahf al-mustajīrīn*, *Walīyyat Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, and *Kāfiyyat Awliyā'ihī al-mayāmīn* (al-Ḥurra, Queen and Lord, the Praise-worthy in virtue and piety, Unique of the Age, Lord over the kings of Yemen, Promise of Islam, Treasury of Religion, Protection for those seeking direction,

27 By special dispensation from the caliph, these duties were delegated for the interim to the chief *qāḍī*.

28 الأب القديس الروحاني النفيس، أبي الآباء، سيد الرؤساء، مقدم دين النصرانية وسيد البطركية، ثالث عشر الحواريين

29 An important source for her titles are several imperial decrees or other communications drafted by the chancery and sent to her on behalf of the caliph or his family then collected along with a group of other such messages from Cairo to the Yemen and preserved by the later Ismaili da'wa as the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*. For a list of those addressed to her see Appendix D below.

Asylum of those in doubt, Guard of the Commander of the Believers, Protector of His Fortunate Saints).

While the purpose of the foregoing survey of titles has touched most intended bases and has clearly shown to what extent they became more and more a major tool of Fatimid governance over time, it is not yet nearly as complete as it could be, most especially in the collection and cataloguing of either the expressions and terms used or of fairly complete lists of them. It nevertheless suggests what might be achieved. Ideally, with a master list of those titles known to have existed as attached to the specific person to whom they were awarded, researchers dealing with isolated references in historical records, texts and documents, might be able to connect a mention of a given title with all those known to have held that particular example under the Fatimids.

Appendix A: Titles of Abbasid Caliphs (842–991), Buyid Amirs (10th century) and Fatimid Caliphs (910–1021)

Titles of Abbasid Caliphs

الوائق بالله
 المتوكل على الله
 المنتصر بالله
 المستعين بالله
 المعتز بالله
 المهتدي بالله
 المعتمد على الله
 المعتضد بالله
 المكتفي بالله
 المقتدر بالله
 القاهر بالله
 المقتدر بالله
 القاهر بالله
 الراضي بالله

المتقي لله
المستكفي بالله
المطيع لله
الطائع لله

Titles of Buyid Amirs

ركن الدولة
معز الدولة
عز الدولة
عضد الدولة
صمصام الدولة

Titles of Fatimid Caliphs

المهدي بالله
القائم بأمر الله
المنصور بالله
المعز لدين الله
العزیز بالله
الحاكم بأمر الله

Appendix B: Titles Containing the Terms *Dawla*, *Malik*, *Dīn*, *Mulk*, *Imām*, or *Amīr al-mu'minīn*

الدولة

عزیز الدولة، منتخب الدولة، أمين الدولة، نفيس الدولة، مظفر الدولة، نور الدولة، مجد الدولة، مؤتمن الدولة. منتجب الدولة، ليث الدولة. قطب الدولة، معز الدولة، جيب الدولة وغرسها، زعيم الدولة، مكين الدولة وأمينها، ثقة الدولة، تاج الدولة، ثقة الدولة وسنائها، بدر الدولة، تأييد الدولة، ثقة الدولة الحاكمة، حسام الدولة، خليل الدولة، ركن الدولة، سيد الدولة، عدة الدولة، عز الدولة، عميد

الدولة، عميد الدولة وناصحها، نخر الدولة، مجد الدولة، مستخلص الدولة العلوية وعدتها، مكين الدولة وأمينها، منتجب الدولة وصفوتها، منجب الدولة وصنيعتها، نجيب الدولة، جيب الدولة وغرسها، ولي الدولة،

الدين

أسد الدين، المظفر في الدين، أمين الدين، ناصر الدين، نصر الدين، عز الدين، ذخيرة الدين، نظام الدين، المؤيد في الدين، الموفق في الدين، شرف الدين، علم الدين، كفيل الدين، شرف الدين، عضد الدين، غرس الدين، كفيل الدين، نظام الدنيا والدين،

الملك

وجيه الملك، نخر الملك، شرف الملك، أمين الملك، خطير الملك، شمس الملك، سديد الملك، معد الملك، خطير الملك، شرف الملك، جلال الملك، جلال الملك، مجد الملك، نخر الملك، سيف الملك، سناء الملك، ثقة الملك، جمال الملك، ذخيرة الملك، سيده الملك، عميد الملك، معد الملك،

الإمام

سيف الإمام، عبد الإمام، ظهير الأئمة، ظهير الإمام، ناصر الإمام، وزر الإمامة،

أمير المؤمنين

خليل أمير المؤمنين، محب أمير المؤمنين، ظهير أمير المؤمنين، عمدة أمير المؤمنين، صفى أمير المؤمنين، خالصة أمير المؤمنين، ولية أمير المؤمنين، صفى أمير المؤمنين ووليه، حميد أمير المؤمنين وأمينه، حميم أمير المؤمنين وظهيره، خليل أمير المؤمنين وخالصته، خليل أمير المؤمنين وخالصته وصفوته، مصطفى أمير المؤمنين، ذخيرة أمير المؤمنين، أمين أمير المؤمنين وصفوته، خالصة أمير المؤمنين، صفى أمير المؤمنين وخالصته، ظهير أمير المؤمنين، ولي أمير المؤمنين، أمين أمير المؤمنين وصفوته، ذخير أمير المؤمنين،

Appendix C: Individuals Holding the Title "Illustrious Wazir" (*al-Wazīr al-Ajall*)

الوزير الأجل = أبو القاسم علي بن أحمد

الوزير الأجل = أحمد بن عبد الحاكم بن سعيد

الوزير الأجل الأسعد المكين الحفيظ الأجدد الأمين عميد الخلافة جلال الوزراء تاج المملكة وزر

الإمام شرف الملة كفيل الدين خليل أمير المؤمنين وخالصته = البابلي

الوزير الأجل الأوحـد تاج الوزراء الأمين المكين شرف الكفاة ذو المفاخر خليل أمير المؤمنين
 وخالـصته = أبو غالب عبد الظاهر بن فضل المعروف بابن العجمي
 الوزير الأجل الأوحـد جلال الإسلام ظهير الإمام قاضي القضاة وداعي الدعاة شرف المجد خليل
 أمير المؤمنين وخالـصته الحسن بن القاضي ثقة الدولة وسنائها = المعروف بابن أبي الكدينة
 الوزير الأجل الأوحـد سيد الوزراء مجد الأصفياء قاضي القضاة وداعي الدعاة خليل أمير المؤمنين =
 أبو أحمد أحمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الحاكم
 الوزير الأجل الأوحـد صفى أمير المؤمنين وخالـصته = الجرجاني
 الوزير الأجل العادل الأمير شرف الوزراء سيد الرؤساء تاج الأصفياء عز الدين مغيث المسلمين خليل
 أمير المؤمنين وخالـصته وصفوته = ابن المدبر
 الوزير الأجل الكامل أوحـد أمير المؤمنين وخالـصته = الجرجاني ٤٢٨
 الوزير الأجل الكامل الأوحـد صفى أمير المؤمنين وخالـصته = أبو الفرج بن جعفر المغربي
 الوزير الأجل الكامل الأوحـد علم الكفاة سيد الوزراء ظهير الأئمة سماء الخلفاء نـفر الأمة ذي
 الرئاسةين صفى أمير المؤمنين = أبو البركات الحسين، ابن عمادة الدولة محمد، أخو الجرجاني
 الوزير الأجل تاج الرئاسة علم الدين سيد السادات = أبو علي الحسن ب سديد الدولة ذو الكفائتين
 الماشلي
 الوزير الأجل تاج الرئاسة نـفر الملك مصطفى أمير المؤمنين = ابن يوسف الفلاحي
 الوزير الأجل سيد الوزراء تاج الأصفياء ذخيرة أمير المؤمنين = أبو القاسم هبة الله
 الوزير الأجل نـفر الوزراء عميد الرؤساء قاضي القضاة وداعي الدعاة مجد المعالي كفيل الدين يمين
 أمير المؤمنين وصفوته = عبد الكريم بن عبد الحاكم
 الوزير الأجل قاضي القضاة وداعي الدعاة ثقة المسلمين خليل أمير المؤمنين وخالـصته = أبو علي أحمد
 بن عبد الحاكم بن سعيد

Those with the title “Malik” (*al-malik* “king”):

الملك الأجل الأوحـد المنصور العادل المكرم عمدة الخلافة تاج الدولة سيف الإمام المظفر في الدين
 نظام المؤمنين عماد الملة وغيث الأمة شرف الإيمان ومؤيد الإسلام عظيم العرب سلطان أمير
 المؤمنين وعميد جيوشه = عبد المستنصر أبو الحسن علي بن أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد الصليحي
 الملك الأجل الأوحـد المنصور العادل المكرم عمدة الخلافة تاج الدولة سيف الإمام المظفر في الدين

نظام المؤمنين عمادة الملة وغيث الأمة شرف الإيمان ومؤيد الإسلام عظيم العرب سلطان أمير المؤمنين وعميد جيوشه = أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد بن علي الصليحي
 الملك الصالح = طلائع بن رزيك
 الملك العادل الناصر أمير الجيوش = رزيك بن الصالح
 الملك المنصور = شيركوه
 الملك الناصر = صلاح الدين

Or again those with the word *tāj* (crown) in their title(s):

تاج الأحكام = أبو حجاج يوسف
 تاج الأصفياء = أبو القاسم هبة الله
 تاج الأصفياء = ابن المدبر
 تاج الأصفياء = اليازوري
 تاج الخلافة = المأمون
 تاج الخلافة = بهرام
 تاج الدولة = أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد بن علي الصليحي
 تاج الدولة = ابن أبي حسين صاحب الصقلية
 تاج الدولة = عبد المستنصر أبو الحسن علي بن أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد الصليحي
 تاج الدولة سيف الإمام المظفر في الدين نظام المؤمنين
 تاج الدولة وسيف الملة = أبو محمد جعفر، أمير صقلية
 تاج الدولة وسيف الملك (؟) = أبو محمد جعفر، أمير صقلية
 تاج الرئاسة = الماشلي
 تاج الرئاسة أمين الدين = ابن الصيرفي
 تاج العلي = أبو عبد الله محمد بن أبي حامد
 تاج المعالي = ابن نسطورس
 تاج المعالي = حسن بن جعفر الحسيني
 تاج الملوك = ٤٦١
 تاج الملوك = أبو عبد الله محمد بن أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد الصليحي

تاج المملكة = البابلي
 تاج الوزراء = ابن العجمي
 تاج ملّة = أبي شجاع فاتك الوحيد

Or *sayf* ('sword', as in "Sword of Islam"):

سيف أمير المؤمنين = ظهير الدين طغتكين، صاحب دمشق، ٥١٧
 سيف الإسلام = الأفضل
 سيف الإسلام = المأمون
 سيف الإسلام = بدر
 سيف الإسلام = بهرام
 سيف الإسلام = طلائع بن رزيك
 سيف الإسلام = يانس
 سيف الإمام = أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد بن علي الصليحي
 سيف الإمام = أبو القاسم شاهنشاه
 سيف الإمام = الأفضل
 سيف الإمام = عبد المستنصر أبو الحسن علي بن أبو الحسن أحمد بن علي بن محمد الصليحي
 سيف الإمام = علي بن محمد الصليحي
 سيف الدولة = حسين بن علي نب دواس الكامي
 سيف الدين = صهر مجد الإسلام رزيك؟
 سيف الدين = علي بن إسحاق بن السلار

Appendix D: Titles of al-Ḥurra of Yemen from the Decrees Sent to her in the *Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*

الحرّة الملكة، السيدة السديدة، المخلصة المكيّة، ذخيرة الدين، عدة المؤمنين، كهف المستجيبين،
 وليّة أمير المؤمنين وكافلة أوليائه الميامين
 (من المستنصر بالله، السجلات المستنصرية، ٤٧)

الحرّة السيّدة السديّدة المخلصة المكيّنة، ذخيرة الدين، عدة المؤمنين، كهف المستجيبين، وليّة أمير المؤمنين
(من المستنصر بالله، السجلات، ٤٨)

الحرّة الملكة، السيّدة السديّدة، المخلصة المكيّنة، ذخيرة الدين، عدة المؤمنين، كهف الممستجيبين، وليّة أمير المؤمنين وكافلة أوليائه الميامين
(من المستنصر بالله، السجلات المستنصرية، ٤٩)

الحرّة الملكة، السيّدة السديّدة، المخلصة المكيّنة، ذخيرة الدين، عدة المؤمنين، كهف الممنتجيبين، وليّة أمير المؤمنين وكافلة أوليائه الميامين
(من المستنصر بالله، السجلات المستنصرية، ٥٠)

الحرّة الملكة، السديّدة، المكيّنة، ذخيرة الدين، عدة المؤمنين، كهف المستجيبين، وليّة أمير المؤمنين
(من والده المستنصر بالله، السجلات المستنصرية، ٥١)

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Sikka Denied: A Numismatic Appraisal of al-Qādir billāh's Reception

Eric J. Hanne

On the 13th of Ramadan 381/23 November 991, the Buyid amir, Abū Naṣr Fīrūz Bahā' al-Dawla and his entourage forcibly removed the 'Abbasid caliph 'Abd al-Karīm b. al-Faḍl al-Ṭā'ī' (r. 363–381/964–991) from the throne, sent him to the *dār al-mamlaka* in Baghdad, and called for the *khutba* to be done in the name of al-Ṭā'ī's estranged cousin, Aḥmad b. Ishāq b. al-Muqtadir al-Qādir billāh (r. 381–422/991–1031). Al-Qādir's 41 year reign would be the longest to date for any 'Abbasid caliph, only to be surpassed by his son al-Qā'im's 45 year reign (r. 422–467/1031–1075) and, later, al-Nāṣir's 45 year reign (r. 475–522/1180–1225). Historians of medieval Islam often attribute the length of one's reign either to the willful and dynamic nature of the person in question, or to the exact opposite: their overall impotence and ineffectiveness, resulting in their becoming a non-threatening figurehead to be manipulated or used for ceremonial purposes.¹ In al-Qādir's case, the consensus has been that he fell into the latter camp, a clear representation of how far the 'Abbasids had fallen since the Buyid amir, Aḥmad b. Buyah Mu'izz al-Dawla, had deposed al-Mustakfī in 334/946 and installed his kinsman, al-Muṭī' on the throne in a scenario eerily similar to al-Ṭā'ī's deposition.

As I addressed the condition of the post-fourth/-tenth century Abbasid Caliphate in my 1998 doctoral dissertation, "The Caliphate Revisited," under the tutelage of Michael Bonner and my subsequent 2007 monograph, *Putting the Caliph in His Place*, I will refrain from providing a detailed refutation of the conventional wisdom for my contribution to this volume.² My research under

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- 1 Coincidentally, Michael Bonner, in whose honor this volume is being created, explained this to me during one of our regular meetings as I began my research on the post-fourth/tenth century 'Abbasid Caliphate. Claude Cahen, in his *IEJ* entry for the "Buwayhids," summarizes the "conventional wisdom": "Nevertheless, the life-span of the Caliphs in the time of the Buwayhids—three and a half reigns in a century—was appreciably longer than that of their predecessors—precisely because they no longer ruled in anything but name." *IEJ*, s.v. Buwayhids (Claude Cahen).
 - 2 Hanne, "The Caliphate Revisited: The Abbasids of 11th and 12th Century Baghdad"; idem., *Putting the Caliph in His Place: Power, Authority, and the Late Abbasid Caliphate*.

Michael's guidance showed that when we approach the literary sources (e.g., chronicles, treatises, etc.) and material evidence (e.g., coinage) with a more nuanced understanding of how myriad power relationships were manifested at this time, a more complex socio-political arena in which the 'Abbasid caliph played an integral role emerges. In these works, my engagement of the textual sources was augmented by my utilization of the extant numismatic evidence, and for that I must also thank Michael, who encouraged me to take part in the Eric P. Newman Graduate Seminar at the American Numismatic Society (ANS) in 1996. As a 1985 alumnus of the seminar himself and the author of two numismatic articles³ in which he addressed the importance of contextualizing the titulature found on 'Abbasid coinage and the establishments of new mints, Michael showed his appreciation for the role that material evidence in the form of coinage can play as an auxiliary source in our research. To that end, for my contribution to this volume I am using numismatic evidence for the first decade of al-Qādir's reign (~ 381–390/991–1000) to determine how Bahā' al-Dawla's contemporaries reacted to his unilateral action and what this tells us about the socio-political arena of the late-fourth/-tenth century. Specifically, I will be looking at "the right of *sikka*," or as Jere Bacharach states, "the power to determine what was on the coinage,"⁴ understood as being one of two symbols of authority (the other being the recitation of one's name in the *khuṭba*.) For this work, I conducted a comparative mint study of the extant coinage from approximately 39 mints from territories controlled by the Buyids. In this study, I was looking for whose name was on the coins from a specific mint in a given year. To be clear, I did not focus on the coins' metrology, denomination, or location of the name on the obverse or reverse fields: merely whether or not al-Qādir's name is mentioned and in what city and year. For evidence, I relied on data collected during my time at the ANS in 1996 and 1997 and Luke Treadwell's comprehensive 2001 die corpus study of Buyid coinage.⁵ As is ever the case in numismatic studies, my conclusions are fluid and amenable to change should more data become available.

3 Bonner, Al-Khalifa al-Marḍī 79–91; idem., The Mint of Hārūnābād and al-Hārūniyya 171–193.

4 Bacharach, *Islamic History Through Coins* 6.

5 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage: A Die Corpus (322–445 A.H.)*. This work, a tremendous boon to numismatics and Islamic historians, is the first comprehensive die collection for this period. To be clear, when citing material from this work, I am referring to a die as opposed to an individual coin; as Treadwell shows, in some cases we have numerous specimens housed in collections worldwide from a particular die. When I provide numismatic evidence for my conclusions later in this essay, I will cite either specific coins from the ANS I have handled or dies Treadwell references in his corpus. For the sake of simplicity, I will only provide the pertinent data from the obverse and reverse fields in transliteration.

My findings should be clear from the title of this chapter, “Sikka denied,” but to elaborate, in my study of the coinage from 39 mints for which we have extant coinage for 381–390/991–1000, almost half of the mints—17 to be exact—did not recognize al-Qādir on their coinage immediately, choosing to retain al-Ṭāʿī as the recognized caliph, in some cases, for several years. Given the distances involved, the state of communications, and the basic administration of the production of new dies, one has to give a certain leeway when a new figure ascends the throne. In reviewing the numismatic evidence for the changeovers from al-Mustakfī to al-Muṭṭīʿ and from al-Muṭṭīʿ to al-Ṭāʿī, however, the “right of sikka” appears to have been observed in a timely fashion. (i.e., within a year). This was not the case with Bahāʾ al-Dawla and his choice of al-Qādir as the new ‘Abbasid caliph. While in some instances a year passed before al-Qādir appears on the coins, in many of the 17 mints, al-Qādir was not recognized until anywhere from two to eight years after his ascension to the throne. It should be emphasized that one should not assume that this lack of recognition of al-Qādir is related to the larger lack of respect for the institution of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate; a caliph (i.e., al-Ṭāʿī or al-Qādir) was mentioned in some form on all the coinage studied. It is my belief, rather, that this denial of *sikka* was a clear rejection of Bahāʾ al-Dawla’s attempt to appropriate the persona and related authority of the ‘Abbasid caliph in Baghdad to assert his role, like his father, as the universally recognized leader of the Buyids; this “denial of *sikka*” was a symptom of the inherent weakness of the Buyid system of rule by a familial confederacy from which, ironically, al-Qādir and his successors on the ‘Abbasid throne would benefit. The inability of Bahāʾ al-Dawla to replicate his father ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s (r. 367–372/977–983) attempt to unite the Buyid lands under a single leader is highlighted by the disparate evidence found on the coinage and further evidence of the third generation of Buyid amirs’ relatively rapid loss of effective control over their territories moving into the fifth/eleventh century. To support my conclusion, I will address the larger socio-political arena in which Bahāʾ al-Dawla was attempting to assert his position, the circumstances and reasons behind al-Qādir’s placement on the throne and his relative position in this arena, and the numismatic evidence on display at a regional level that clearly exhibited the rivalries among the Buyid amirs. My hope is that this brief study will highlight the importance of incorporating the material evidence more fully into our textually-based research on the post-fourth/-tenth century era. As Treadwell states: “coins can only yield their full benefit to the historian if they are interpreted, not as disembodied and decontextualized objects, but in the light of the narrative provided by contemporary historians.”⁶ While

6 Treadwell, *Shāhānshāh and al-Malak al-Muʿayyad* 319.

the chroniclers' accounts often teasingly allude to the complex array of political, personal, and military alliances, modern scholars must contend with the biases of these sources and the lack of detailed evidence regarding who controlled what area/city in any given year. The coinage, which has the name of the city and the date along with the names and titlature of key figures, provides us with more concrete evidence as to who was the recognized authority in a city in any given year than the chronicles ever could.

1 The Buyid System

When Bahā' al-Dawla took over the amirate from his brother Abū 'l-Fawāris Sharaf al-Dawla (r. 376–379/986–989) in 379/989, he was in straitened circumstances financially, militarily, and politically. The “familial confederacy” through which the first generation of Buyid brothers (i.e., 'Imad al-Dawla, Rukn al-Dawla, Mu'izz al-Dawla) had successfully controlled their respective lands, with the two younger subordinate brothers (i.e., Rukn al-Dawla, Mu'izz al-Dawla) recognizing the seniority of the eldest (i.e., 'Imad al-Dawla), had, by the third generation of Buyid rulers, begun to show signs of collapse.⁷ As John Donohue argues, a key component of the Buyid's success or failure in the region hinged on their ability to control the 'Abbasid caliphs and Baghdad and thus secure the legitimacy they so sorely lacked. When discussing why Mu'izz al-Dawla in 334/946 only referred to himself as amir as opposed to Chief Amir (i.e., *amīr al-umārā'*), deferring to his elder brother 'Imad al-Dawla, Donohue states, “The apparent confusion is due to the two conflicting political concepts, the 'Abbasid concept focusing on the caliph and his capital Baghdad, and the Buyid concept of rule by the elder. Only for a brief period were these two centers brought into line, and the subsequent failure to keep them aligned explains in part the Buyid collapse.”⁸

The “brief period” referred to is the five-year reign of 'Aḍud al-Dawla b. Rukn al-Dawla (r. 367–372/977–982) in which he commanded respect from all of the Buyid provinces. Prior to his death, 'Aḍud al-Dawla's younger son (Ṣamsām al-

7 While it is beyond the scope of this work to provide a summary discussion of the Buyids, I will note that it is heartening to see new works on this dynasty appear during the last generation, augmenting a regrettably thin historiography on this era. H. Busse's seminal work, *Chalif und Grosskönig: Die Buyiden im Iraq (945–1055)*, has been built upon by such scholars as Udjang Tholib, “The Reign of the Caliph al-Qādir Billāh,” and John J. Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 to 403H./1012*.

8 Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty* 13.

Dawla), as opposed to the eldest (Sharaf al-Dawla), was chosen as his heir, thus keeping Buyid rule in his immediate family as opposed to his extended one; his officials kept his death secret to ensure that ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s will was followed.⁹ ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s brothers, Mu’ayyid al-Dawla (d. 373/978) and Fakhr al-Dawla (d. 387/997) refused to allow this breach of tradition, thus setting the stage for years of infighting among rival Buyid claimants.¹⁰ Donohue concludes with regard to ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s actions: “‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s attempt to establish a dynasty through his sons succeeded only in part. By alienating his brother Mu’ayyid al-Dawla, he forced Rayy and Jurjan to pursue a separate course. By exiling his eldest son, Abū ‘l-Fawāris, he again disregarded the claim of primogeniture and precipitated dissension among his sons. His offspring continued to rule Iraq and Fars, but the relative stability of the first two generations of Buwayhid government was destroyed.”¹¹ Donohue’s assessment regarding the instability of the Buyid political system by the end of the fourth/tenth century is correct, but I do not believe that ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s decision to ignore the role of primogeniture with regard to his succession played a primary role. The larger “familial confederacy” system had already been showing signs of intergenerational strain during ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s reign; the “unity” he had brought about should be viewed as a unique, brief anomaly that would be impossible to replicate given the porous nature of the socio-political arena.

In addition to his five sons (Ṣamṣām al-Dawla, Sharaf al-Dawla, Bahā’ al-Dawla, Tāj al-Dawla, and Diyā’ al-Dawla) and their respective entourages, we have ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s brothers (Mu’ayyid al-Dawla and Fakhr al-Dawla) and their military and administrative officials. To each of these actors’ agendas we must also add the influence and interests of the Buyid Daylamī and Turkish forces as well as the external competition the Hasanwayhids, Hamdanids, and Samanids brought to the region.

In the seven years between ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s death and Bahā’ al-Dawla’s ascendancy to the amirate in Iraq (i.e., 372–379/982–989), we witness the gradual rise of Sharaf al-Dawla’s position at the expense of his brother, Ṣamṣām

9 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī ta’rīkh al-mulūk wa ‘l-umam* xiv, 289; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh* vii, 404.

10 Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty* 86–96. Donohue provides an illuminating summary of the tumultuous seven years between ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s death and the rise of Bahā’ al-Dawla in this section. Wilferd Madelung, in his article on the Buyid adoption of the title, *Shāhānshāh*, addresses the importance of lineage and traditional symbols of authority as they relate to the volatile relationship among the Buyid amirs as well as the increasing role of the caliphs in these relationships: Madelung, *The Assumption of the title Shāhānshāh by the Būyids* 168–183.

11 Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty* 92.

al-Dawla, culminating in the latter's defeat and imprisonment in 376/985.¹² In addition, regular riots between the Turkish and Daylamī Buyid forces disrupted Baghdad and its environs, while Fakhr al-Dawla, the eldest of the Buyids following his brother Mu'ayyid al-Dawla's death in 373/983, bided his time in Jibal, under the increasing influence of Mu'ayyid al-Dawla's former *wazīr* Ibn al-Abbād, who was encouraging Fakhr al-Dawla to assert his position in Iraq.¹³ The disruption brought about by the in-fighting among 'Aḍud al-Dawla's extended family not only cost them dearly in a financial and military sense, but also gave others new opportunities to take advantage of this disunity.

At the age of 28 after a little under a three year reign in Iraq, Sharaf al-Dawla died of dropsy (*istisqā'*), leaving the amirate in Iraq to his youngest brother Bahā' al-Dawla.¹⁴ From the outset, the young Buyid amir faced numerous threats. While the notables in Baghdad had called for Bahā' al-Dawla's ascension, the troops in the city demanded payment for their oaths of loyalty (*rasm al-bay'a*); this required Bahā' al-Dawla to deplete whatever dwindling treasure he had on hand.¹⁵ In addition to these financial strains, Ṣamṣām al-Dawla, who had been imprisoned for a brief period, escaped confinement, went to the Fars region, and recognized the seniority of his uncle, Fakhr al-Dawla b. Rukn al-Dawla in Jibal.¹⁶ For his part, Fakhr al-Dawla and his armies were making their way from Rayy toward Hamadhan in preparation for their final assault on Iraq. Initially successful in his endeavors and taking the city of Ahwaz, Fakhr al-Dawla's forces met up with those of his nephew only to be defeated by the heavy flooding of the Tigris River. In the end, Fakhr al-Dawla and his forces would return to Rayy, leaving Bahā' al-Dawla to his own ends.¹⁷ Bahā' al-Dawla did not make any effort to pursue his uncle, but rather spent part of the next year shoring up his position closer to home. In 380/990 Bahā' al-Dawla sent his armies to Khuzistan and Fars. After a series of skirmishes between the forces of Ṣamṣām al-Dawla and Bahā' al-Dawla, an accord (*al-ṣulh*) was reached in which Ṣamṣām al-Dawla was recognized in lands around Fars and Arrajan and Bahā' al-Dawla was recognized in Khuzistan and Iraq.¹⁸ The

12 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 427–428; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 317–318.

13 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 409; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 301.

14 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 436; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 337.

15 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 338. Ibn al-Athīr does not go into detail regarding this matter but provides an accounting of riots between the Daylami and Turkish soldiery that went on in the city for approximately two weeks, further adding to Baha' al-Dawla's woes: Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 438.

16 Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty* 30–31.

17 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 438–439.

18 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 446–447.

end result is that although Bahā' al-Dawla b. 'Aḍud al-Dawla would achieve the amirate in Iraq in 379/989, there was still no unifying recognized leader among the Buyids. Fakhr al-Dawla, although the eldest of the three remaining Buyid amirs, did not make a serious attempt to assert his position with his two nephews prior to his death in 387/987, keeping to himself in the Jibal region and tending to matters there. Ṣamṣām al-Dawla maintained his accord with his brother while treating his uncle with some semblance of respect. On the other hand, Bahā' al-Dawla would be the one who would attempt to revisit his father's ploy, using his position in Baghdad and his close connection with the 'Abbasid caliphate to buttress his position vis a vis his relatives.

2 Al-Qādir's Ascension to the Caliphate

While financial challenges and rumors of a personal animosity between Bahā' al-Dawla and al-Ṭā'i' are addressed in the chronicles, there is also some speculation that Bahā' al-Dawla needed his "own caliph" on the throne in Baghdad in 381/991. Al-Rūdhrawārī, Ibn al-Athīr, and Ibn al-Jawzī all focus on the dire financial straits in which Bahā' al-Dawla found himself, and that he acted in desperation.¹⁹ Interestingly, Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, in his *Mir'at al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-'ayān*, methodically lists four reasons for Bahā' al-Dawla's actions: 1) his long-held desire to appoint a caliph; 2) his anger over al-Ṭā'i' not mourning the death of his son; 3) his owing Muhadhhib al-Dawla, the leader in "the Marshes," a vast sum; 4) his general avarice.²⁰ While financial reasons appear among all the chroniclers' accounts, the reasoning is a bit short-sighted and does not reflect the long-term threat to Bahā' al-Dawla's position in the region. There was little to gain from "cashiering" the 'Abbasid caliph at this point, as he had long lived in a circumscribed condition and once denuded of his treasure was in no position to replenish his stores. In 363/974, al-Ṭā'i', the 48 year-old son of al-Muṭi', had been placed on the 'Abbasid throne by the Buyid Turkish official Sabuktakīn while Baghdad was in a state of uproar under the weak leadership of 'Izz al-Dawla b. Mu'izz al-Dawla.²¹ For the next 17 years al-Ṭā'i' had been under the effective control of 'Izz al-Dawla's successors, most notably 'Aḍud al-Dawla. He had largely kept himself to affairs in and around Baghdad, fiercely protecting his position within the city and his family.

19 al-Rūdhrawārī, *Dhayl tajārib al-umam* 201–204; Ibn al-Athīr *al-Kāmil* vii, 449–450; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 438–452.

20 Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'at al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-'ayān* xviii, 49.

21 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 223–227.

As alluded to, al-Qādir had no role in his rise to the Caliphate; he had been living in forced exile in Baṭīḥa (“the Marshes”) south of Baghdad under the “care” of Muḥadhdhib al-Dawla since 379/989 following a conflict over estates with his sister, Amīna, who succeeded in getting al-Ṭā’i’ on her side.²² The latter’s deposition in 381/991 had led to some minor upheaval in Baghdad, but with the requisite payment of the *rasm al-bay’a*, the military allowed for the *khutba* to be done in al-Qādir’s name. Upon his arrival to Baghdad, further ceremonies (with further payments) were held in which Bahā’ al-Dawla and his notables swore mutual oaths of loyalty to al-Qādir billāh and his name was proclaimed in Baghdad’s *khutba*.²³ A *dīnār* and a *dirhām* from Baghdad (‘Madinat al-Salām’) dated to 381/991 have al-Qādir billāh mentioned on the reverse, and the full titulature for Bahā’ al-Dawla on the obverse:²⁴

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i>	<i>Muḥammad</i>
<i>wahdahu, lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>rasūl Allāh</i>
<i>al-Malik Shāhānshāh Bahā’</i>	<i>ṣallā Allāh</i>
<i>al-Dawla wa Ḍiyā’ al-milla</i>	<i>‘alayhi wa sallam</i>
<i>wa Ghiyāth al-umma</i>	<i>al-Qādir billāh</i>

From 381/991 until the end of his reign al-Qādir would remain on the coinage of Baghdad. It would appear that at least in the ‘Abbasid capital, Bahā’ al-Dawla’s “right of *sikka*” was respected and that his “chosen caliph” was to be acknowledged.

The fact that Bahā’ al-Dawla was only two years into his 24-year reign (r. 379–403/989–1012) when he decided to place al-Qādir on the ‘Abbasid throne should not be ignored. With one older brother, Sharaf al-Dawla, dead (d. 379/989), and another, Ṣamṣām al-Dawla (d. 388/998), under the thrall of his uncle, Fakhr al-Dawla (d. 387/987) in the eastern Buyid lands, Bahā’ al-Dawla was trying to make the best use of the ‘Abbasid resource at his disposal. John Donohue is correct in his assessment of the situation when he states, “Possession of, or

22 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 337–338; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 439–440; al-Rūdhrawārī, *al-Tajārib* 148–149.

23 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 348; al-Rūdhrawārī, *al-Tajārib* 208–209.

24 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 154 (*dīnār*); British Museum, # 682, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum* ii, 217 (*dirhām*).

at least control of Baghdad and the caliphate stood out as the key to family supremacy and controlling power.”²⁵ Bahā’ al-Dawla’s intent with regard to al-Qādir was apparent from the start. Al-Rūdhrawārī states that, along with much of the wealth of the *dār al-khilāfa* that Bahā’ al-Dawla had sent to al-Qādir, the Buyid amir also sent his own officials to become part of the new caliph’s entourage. Two years later, Bahā’ al-Dawla would contract a marriage between his daughter, Sakīna, and al-Qādir in the amount of 100,000 *dīnārs*.²⁶ While both of these machinations would not work to Bahā’ al-Dawla’s benefit—al-Qādir replaced the Buyid officials with his own, and Sakīna died before the marriage took place—the Buyid amir’s intentions were clear. Bahā’ al-Dawla was determined to follow in the footsteps of his father, ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, who for a brief time had connected the Buyid amirate with the ‘Abbasid Caliphate; as Donohue states, “‘Aḍud al-Dawla had succeeded in associating the chief amirate with Baghdad and the protection of the Caliph, but other than that this institution was fluid, depending completely on the personality and power of the incumbent.”²⁷ Bahā’ al-Dawla’s youth and financial woes were exacerbated by the Hamdanid presence in northern Iraq/Jazira and recalcitrant relatives in Fars and Jibal in the persons of Ṣamṣām al-Dawla and Fakhr al-Dawla. No amount of effort to “incorporate” the ‘Abbasid Caliphate into his master plan of combining the power of the amirate with the authority of the Caliphate was going to succeed; the material evidence bears this out.

3 *Sikka Denied*

For Bahā’ al-Dawla’s plan to work, his extended family and other powers would have to recognize his “right of *sikka*”; the extant coinage shows this “right” was *not* forthcoming.²⁸ Rather than presenting my results in tabular form, I will intersperse the following discussion with examples from several of the mints for which I have clear evidence. I will present my evidence geographically, starting with the Iraq/Khuzistan region around Baghdad and moving east-

25 Donohue, *The Buyid Dynasty* 32.

26 For discussion of al-Rūdhrawārī’s account regarding the Buyid officials see al-Rūdhrawārī *al-Tajārib*, 208. For the wedding contract, al-Rūdhrawārī, *Tajārib* 254; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xiv, 366.

27 Donohue, *Buyid Dynasty* 92.

28 To reiterate, my research focused on the years 381–390/991–1000 and was limited to the extant coinage from this period; in time, more coinage/evidence may become available that could affect my findings.

ward/northeastward to other Buyid regions, following Treadwell’s provincial breakdown of Buyid lands and adjacent territories (e.g., Iraq/Jazira, Khuzistan, Fars, Kirman, Jibal, Caspian Sea).

Turning first to Bahā’ al-Dawla’s “home territory” of Iraq/Jazira, there is little extant coinage available for review in comparison to the other provinces. Of the eight mints in this province, we have data for four, namely those of al-Mawsil, Madinat al-Salam, Wasit, and Basra, for the period covered; of these mints only Madīnat al-Salam has coins from the first year of al-Qādir’s reign.²⁹ For Basra, we have evidence of al-Qādir’s recognition in 384/994 along with Bahā’ al-Dawla:³⁰

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i> <i>wahdahu lā sharīka lahu</i> <i>al-Qādir</i> <i>billāh</i>	<i>Muḥammad rasūl Allāh</i> <i>al-Malik al-‘adl Shāhān</i> <i>shāh Bahā’ al-Dawla wa Ḍiyā’</i> <i>al-milla wa Ghīyāth al-umma</i> <i>Abū Naṣr</i>

For each of the other mints, the earliest evidence I have dates to 385/995, showing that al-Qādir was recognized alongside Bahā’ al-Dawla.³¹ It should be noted that each of these coins provides the full titulature for Bahā’ al-Dawla including the lofty title of *Shāhānshāh* (“King of kings”). Turning southeastward toward the region of Oman, we find a curious situation with coinage dating to 381/991 mentioning al-Qādir, but not Bahā’ al-Dawla; in this case, Fakhr al-Dawla and Ṣamṣām al-Dawla are named:³²

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i> <i>wahdahu lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>Muḥammad</i> <i>al-Malik al-‘adl</i>

29 See above, FN 24.
30 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 134.
31 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 161 (al-Mawsil), 166 (Wasit).
32 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 88.

(cont.)

Obverse	Reverse
<i>al-Qādir billāh</i> <i>Fakhr al-Dawla wa Falak</i> <i>al-Umma</i>	<i>Şamşām al-Dawla</i> <i>wa Shams al-milla</i> <i>Abū Kālījār</i>

This “bifurcation of *sikka*” in which the newly installed caliph (i.e., al-Qādir) is recognized within the year, but the amir who installed him (i.e., Bahā’ al-Dawla) is not, also manifested in the regions just east of Iraq and reflects the lack of unity among the Buyids.³³ Moving northwest from Oman to the province of Khuzistan we find a *dīnār* dating to 384/994 minted in Suq al-Ahwaz that also mentions al-Qādir along with Fakhr al-Dawla and Şamşām al-Dawla.³⁴

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i> <i>al-Malik Şamşām al-Daw</i> <i>la wa Shams al-milla Abū</i> <i>Kālījār bn ‘Adud al-Dawla</i> <i>Abū Shujā’</i>	<i>Muḥammad</i> <i>rasūl Allāh</i> <i>al-Qādir billāh</i> <i>Fakhr al-Dawla</i> <i>wa Falak al-umma</i>

Unfortunately, this is the only evidence for this period from the mints of Khuzistan I have been able to find, underscoring the malleable nature of numismatic studies.

Moving southeast to the region of Fars, we are luckier in that we have evidence from over half of the mints for the first decade of al-Qādir’s reign. Of the seven mints I have data for, al-Qādir is recognized within a year or two on the coinage along with Şamşām al-Dawla and Fakhr al-Dawla for most of the mints.

33 In fact, the latest evidence I have for Oman, a *dīnār* from 386/996 still does not recognize Bahā’ al-Dawla; British Museum, #666, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum* ii, 212.

34 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 118. For the rest of Khuzistan, there is no extant coinage for the period covered in this study.

A *dirhām* dating to 383/993 from Kazirun best exemplifies the ordering of the names, and the priority given to the respective figures:³⁵

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i>	<i>Muḥammad rasūl Allāh</i>
<i>wahdahu lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>al-Malik al-ʿadl</i>
<i>al-Qādir billāh</i>	<i>Ṣamṣām al-Dawla</i>
<i>Fakhr al-Dawla</i>	<i>wa Shams al-milla</i>
<i>wa Falak al-umma</i>	<i>Abū Kālījār</i>

Fakhr al-Dawla appears on the obverse of the coins along with the caliph while his nephew, Ṣamṣām al-Dawla appears on the reverse; to my mind, this reflects the respect afforded to the elder Buyid leader by his nephew, something we also saw in the coinage of Oman. Curiously, there is one mint (Arrajan) in which Fakhr al-Dawla is left off the coinage in 381/991:³⁶

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i>	<i>Muḥammad</i>
<i>wahdahu lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>rasūl Allāh</i>
<i>al-Malik al-ʿadl</i>	<i>Ṣallā Allāh ʿalayhi wa sallam</i>
<i>Ṣamṣām al-Dawla</i>	<i>al-Ṭāʾiʿ lillah</i>
<i>wa Shams al-milla</i>	

Two years later (383/993), we have a coin in which the only change to the obverse or reverse fields is al-Qādir's name replacing that of al-Ṭāʾiʿ.³⁷ As for the "timely changeover" of *sikka*, the 381/991 coinage of Shiraz gives a great example of the ability of the die-makers to work quickly:³⁸

35 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 31.

36 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 13.

37 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 13.

38 The first *dirhām* has al-Ṭāʾiʿ listed; Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 49–50. The second, also dating to 381/991 has al-Qādir listed; Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 50–51.

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i>	<i>Muḥammad rasūl Allāh</i>
<i>wahdahu lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>al-Malik al-ʿadl</i>
<i>al-Ṭāʾīʿ lillāh</i>	<i>Şamşām al-Dawla</i>
<i>Fakhr al-Dawla</i>	<i>wa Shams al-milla</i>
<i>wa Falak al-umma</i>	<i>Abū Kālījār</i>

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā Allāh</i>	<i>Muḥammad rasūl Allāh</i>
<i>wahdahu lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>Şamşām al-Dawla</i>
<i>al-Qādir billāh</i>	<i>wa Shams al-milla</i>
<i>Fakhr al-Dawla</i>	<i>Abū Kālījār</i>
<i>wa Falak al-umma</i>	

It would be easy to assume that the other mints recognized al-Qādir as rapidly as Shiraz, but without evidence it would only be speculation. The mints of Fars, however, clearly show that by 383/993 at the latest, Bahāʾ al-Dawla's chosen caliph was being recognized even if *he* was not.

Moving east to Kirman, of the four mints for which I have relevant data (al-Sirjan, Bardasir, Jiruft, Rudhan) Jiruft showed a delay in recognizing al-Qādir on its coinage along with Fakhr al-Dawla and Şamşām al-Dawla until 382/992. Luke Treadwell's Buyid die corpus shows that al-Ṭāʾīʿ was still recognized in 382/992, but that al-Qādir would be recognized that same year.³⁹ From the extant numismatic data available from these five provinces, in large part Bahāʾ al-Dawla's choice of al-Qādir billāh was accepted, even in cities that did not recognize Bahāʾ al-Dawla on their coinage.

It is only when we turn to the province of Jibal, and the lands around the Caspian Sea, as well as Samanid territory that al-Qādir's—and by extension Bahāʾ al-Dawla's attempt to assert his authority is categorically rejected. In Jibal alone, nine of the 14 mints did not recognize al-Qādir on their coinage for at least three years, instead retaining their recognition of al-Ṭāʾīʿ. In

39 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 79.

one case with the mint at al-Qazwin, al-Ṭā'ī^c remains on the coinage until 391/1001.⁴⁰

Obverse	Reverse
<i>lā ilaha ilā</i>	<i>Muḥammad</i>
<i>Allāh wahdahu</i>	<i>Amīr al-umarā'</i>
<i>lā sharīka lahu</i>	<i>al-Sayyid Abū Ṭālib</i>
<i>al-Ṭā'ī^c</i>	<i>bn Fakhr al-Dawla</i>
	<i>bn Rukn al-Dawla</i>
	<i>Buywayh</i>

For expediency's sake what follows is a list of the mints for which we have the relevant data followed by the latest year in which we have a coin minted with al-Ṭā'ī's name: Mah al-Basra (384/994);⁴¹ Asadabad (384/994);⁴² Isfahan (384/994);⁴³ Hamadhan (384/994);⁴⁴ al-Karaj (385/995);⁴⁵ Mah al-Kufa (385/995);⁴⁶ Qumm (387/997);⁴⁷ al-Muhammadiyya (388/998);⁴⁸ Qazwin (391/1001).⁴⁹ The chroniclers from al-Rūdhrawārī to Ibn al-Jawzī relate how the cities in Jibal did not initially recite al-Qādir's name in the *khuṭba* and that when he heard of this, he attempted to address the issue by informing those going on pilgrimage through Baghdad of his ascension as caliph. It would appear that his efforts had as little effect on having his position recognized as did Bahā' al-Dawla's.⁵⁰ What must have made this situation all the more galling for al-Qādir is that following the death of Fakhr al-Dawla in 387/997, his son Abū Ṭālib Rustam came to Baghdad and was honored by the caliph, who gave him the *laqab* Majd al-Dawla along with robes of honor and official recognition of

40 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 224.

41 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 189–190.

42 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 167.

43 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 183.

44 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 174.

45 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 186.

46 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 194.

47 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 229.

48 ANS 1971.316.900 (3.239 grams). This is one of four specimens held by the ANS; the only differences among the specimens are their die axis and weight.

49 See above FN 40.

50 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vii, 463–464.



FIGURE 11.1 Dirham from al-Muhammadiyya dated 388/998 naming al-Ṭāʾiʿ and Abū Ṭālib Rustam b. Fakr al-Dawla (ANS 1971.316.900)
COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

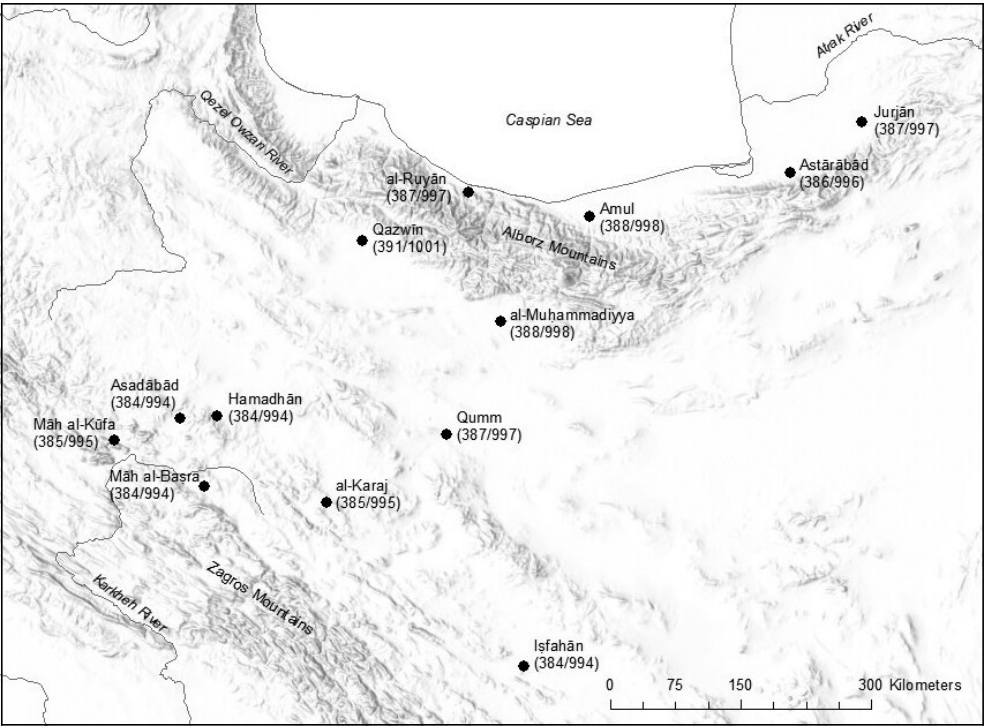


FIGURE 11.2 Map of Buyid Mints: Dates Indicate Last Year Coins were Minted in al-Ṭāʾiʿ's Name

his succession to his father's lands; this, according to the sources, was done at the request of Bahā' al-Dawla.⁵¹ Following this elaborate ceremony recognizing his authority over his father's lands, it would be two years before al-Qādir would be formally recognized on the coinage in Majd al-Dawla's lands; neither the caliph nor Bahā' al-Dawla would be in a position to force the issue.

As we move into the Caspian Sea region and lands controlled by the Samanids and others, the numismatic evidence is like that of Jibal. We find al-Ṭā'i' still mentioned on the coinage of the cities of Astarabad (386/996),⁵² Jurjan (387/997),⁵³ al-Ruyan (387/997),⁵⁴ and Amul (388/998),⁵⁵ In the lands outside of direct Buyid control, the situation was not any better. In Herat, for example, a *dīnār* minted in 383/993 has al-Ṭā'i' and the Samanid ruler, Nuḥ b. Maṣṣūr listed on the reverse field, while in Balkh, we have a *dirhām* minted in 388/998 with al-Ṭā'i'.⁵⁶ And, finally, in the case of Nishapur, we have numerous specimens up until 387/997⁵⁷ in which al-Qādir's predecessor still retains his position on the coinage.

While my summary review of the numismatic evidence has only touched the surface of what information these coins have to offer (i.e., metrology, imagery, denominational distribution, titulature), the basic information in terms of whose name is inscribed on the coin of a given city in a specific year is invaluable when used in conjunction with the literary sources. For while the chroniclers, whether they are contemporary eyewitnesses to the events or compilers of information generations later, must always be approached with caution, the material evidence provides us much-needed raw data that, with patience, can be utilized to either challenge, support, or clarify the textual evidence. In the case involving Bahā' al-Dawla's failed bid to have al-Qādir billāh universally recognized, and in so doing, have his own position in Iraq strengthened, the chroniclers provide us with richly detailed accounts of their lives and careers as well as those of their families, allies, and rivals. While it is often quite easy to get lost in the complexity of these written accounts, the numismatic evidence figuratively grounds us with minute data points, ironically allowing us to get a better glimpse of the bigger picture.

51 al-Rūdhrawārī, *Tajārib* 311; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam* xv, 8–9.

52 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 239.

53 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 243.

54 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 244.

55 Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage* 236.

56 For the coin from Herat see, ANS Photo and accompanying letter from Mansoor Mirza, (10 October 1992); for the coin from Balkh, ANS 1974.160.10.

57 ANS 1922.211.58.

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Mongol Money in Seljuk Sivas

Rudi Paul Lindner

... numismatic evidence itself does not fail or fade away; we numismatists, however, do.

LEO MILDENBERG



On August 24, 1246, near Karakorum, Güyük, grandson of Chinggis Khan, ascended the throne of the Mongols. Many visitors, suppliants, and invited guests attended, among them the Franciscan John of Plano Carpini, who described the spectacle. Also in attendance, accompanied by a party of ambitious men, was a ten-year-old Seljuk prince from Anatolia. The Great Khan, after due deliberation, declared the young boy his choice as Sultan of Rum. The party appears to have enjoyed the pleasures of Mongolia for some time. Then, armed with symbols from on high, accompanied by some Mongol soldiers, and after a journey of some seven months, the boy and his handlers arrived at Sivas in April 1248, where they proclaimed the lad Sultan Rükṇ al-Din Kılıc Arslan IV (r. 646–663/1248–1265).¹

Sivas, the former Sebasteia in Cappadocia, was the second city of the Seljuks and a center of trade, perhaps even more so than the capital, Konya, the former Iconium. It lay along well-traveled routes to the four compass directions. After the Mongol defeat of Keyhüsrev II (640/1243) and his death shortly thereafter, Kılıc Arslan's brother Kayka'us II had been placed on the throne, but he had not obeyed the Mongol summons to appear at court, and while his supporters remained in charge in Konya, the men who shepherded Kılıc Arslan now established a separate, Mongol-authorized, rule in the east.

1 On these events and their background see Lindner, *Challenge* 413–414; Pfeiler, *Münzprägung* 66; and for the festivities, see Eastmond, *Tamta* 348, quoting Juvayni, who refers to Kılıc Arslan as sultan. The usefulness of a personal journey to express submission as a means of obtaining legitimation from the Mongol khan appears in Allsen, *Mongol imperialism* 63–76. My

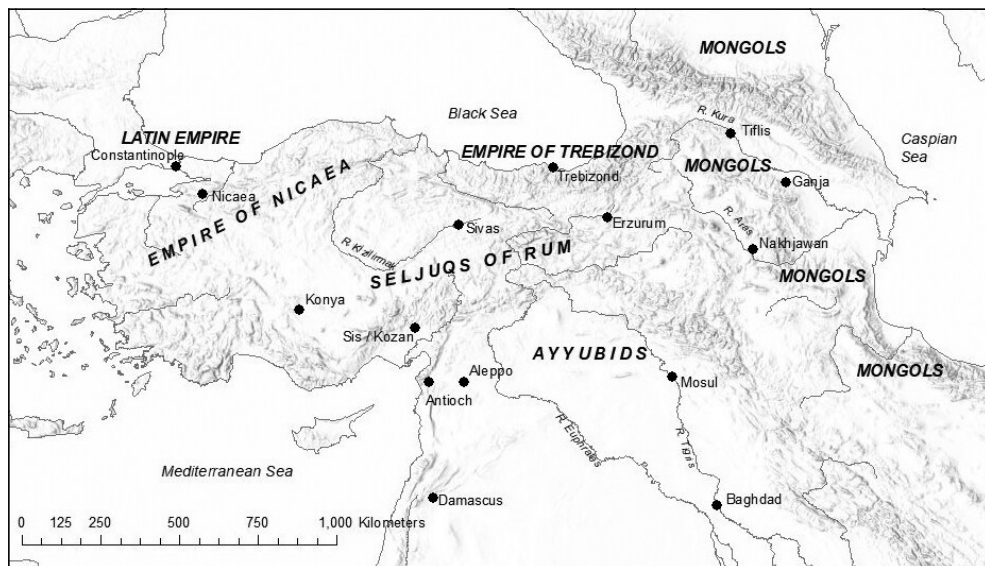


FIGURE 12.1 Map of Anatolia in the seventh/13th century

One of the privileges attached to his office was the issue of coins in the name of the reigning sultan (and, in the circumstances of Seljuk Anatolia, the name of the caliph). The Sivas mint authorities outdid themselves on behalf of their new ruler. The silver dirhem struck at Sivas in 646/1248–1249 is among the most attractive Islamic coins and is highly regarded by collectors (fig. 12.2). What follows is a discussion of the nature of the coin, its iconography, its economic role, and wider aspects of its circulation.²

Sivas was an important mint for the Seljuks. They first struck silver dirhems there in 616/1219–1220 and continued for practically every year until the end of the 13th century. It was an important entrepôt and, given that Kayka'us II and his handlers continued to control Konya and the west, it was a wise choice as an alternate capital city.³

These coins from 646 H. received attention a generation ago, but three considerations justify bringing them up again.⁴ First, it is now possible to

estimate of the time spent returning from Mongolia is based upon the chronologies of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck.

2 A concise description of the coin is in the authoritative listing of Album, *Checklist* 134, no. 1226. Recent catalogue entries are in Broome, *Survey* 189, without weights but with references to catalogues and collections, and Izmirlier, *Coins* 222–223, with weights of two exemplars.

3 For a helpful summary of the rise of Sivas to prominence in the 13th century, see Sinclair, *Eastern trade* 182–188.

4 Lindner, *Challenge* 411–417, with emphasis on the historical account; Pfeiler, *Münzprägung*



FIGURE 12.2 Dirhem struck in the name of Kılıc Arslan IV, Sivas 646/1248–1249
IMAGES COURTESY OF STEVE ALBUM

examine a large number of the coins from this issue. When Hasso Pfeiler gathered together the materials for his article, he could find only 16 exemplars.⁵ For this study the sample consists of 76 coins: nine obverse and 19 reverse dies. Second, there is more evidence on which to connect the iconography of the issue to larger concerns. Third, in the appropriate entry to his catalogue of Rum Seljuk coins, Yılmaz İzmirlier noted that the weights of this issue are below the standard.⁶ Let us now turn to this coin again and see what it tells us of the situation at the outset of Mongol influence upon Anatolia.

The reverse of the coin is straightforward. In the center are the name and attributes of the Caliph al-Mustaʿşim (r. 640–656/1242–1258), and around the border of the flan the inscription “This dirhem was struck at Sivas in the year 646.” An eight-lobed cartouche or rosette divides the center inscription from the mint and date clause.⁷ Professor Heidemann points out that the general design of the reverse harks back to coinage in the name of al-Mustaʿşim struck a few years earlier at Madinat al-Salam.⁸ The coinage of Kılıc Arslan’s rival at

64–73, with emphasis on the evidence of the coin; Kolbas, *Mongols* 137–138, from the Mongol standpoint.

5 Pfeiler, *Münzprägung* 70.

6 İzmirlier, *Coins* 222 n. 107.

7 Noticed by Pfeiler, *Münzprägung* 67.

8 Album, *Checklist* 59, no. 276. See photos at zeno.ru, items 73109, 161909, 257423. The zeno.ru site has numerous photographs of well over 100,000 Islamic coins and is now the first place

Konya, Kayka'us II, follows the style of Keyhüsrev II. In other words, on the one hand, the promoters of Kilic Arslan declaimed the authority of al-Musta'şim and followed a type of his coinage.

On the other hand, the obverse possesses great visual power. Across the center, toward the right, rides a horseman aiming a compound recurved bow and an arrow with a forked tip. From his right wrist hang two reserve arrows, also with forked tips.⁹ Because of wear on the high relief, it is difficult to identify his clothing. On the least worn coins it is possible to discern his tunic or caftan, with six buttons, decorations around the waist, and a bonnet or cap with a puff atop his head.¹⁰ Judith Kolbas viewed this headgear as a crown similar to one depicted on earlier Artukid coins and northern Mesopotamian art.¹¹ Pfeiler suggested that this was an image of the young sultan and that he was clothed in regalia that the Mongols used to invest their vassals.¹²

All the known obverse dies of this issue show the forked tip of the arrow clearly, and it is possible to see the forked tips of the reserve arrows as well. Some commentators believe that these reserve arrows are weighted, because there is a slight bulge just behind the tip that does not appear on the arrow that the rider is about to loose.¹³ This may be the case, but the mechanical disadvantage of swinging a weight at a distance makes it difficult to see how the archer could bring the reserves quickly to bear for action. The further any weight is from a pivot, the greater the effort needed to swing it around the pivot. I prefer to see the reserve arrows as unweighted, ready to be swung forward and placed in shooting position.¹⁴

to look for illustrations of a particular issue. I am grateful to Professor Heidemann for sending me photographs of examples from the Hamburg archive.

9 It has been suggested that because our mounted archer has so few arrows, he is on the hunt rather than ready for battle. Medieval images of Mongol soldiers, however, suggest that they did not carry many arrows in their quiver. For a discussion see Smith, *Ayn Jalut* 318 n.31.

10 See for example zeno.ru, item 165737, accessed October 26, 2020.

11 Kolbas, *Mongols* 137. I am not so sure, as the representation of the headgear on our coin also suffers from wear. For a good image of the Artukid copper coin, cited by Album, *Checklist* 197, no. 1822.1, see zeno.ru, item 239194, accessed May 1, 2020. Professor Heidemann suggests that this headgear is a felt cap. For the headgear on the "Blacas ewer," from Mosul and 1232, see Baer, *Metabwork* 145 fig. 122. I am unable to detect the headgear depicted on Kolbas's second example, a Mesopotamian candlestick.

12 Pfeiler, *Münzprägung* 67–68 and 68 n.10, citing Ibn Bibi. I am again not so sure, in this case because a mounted archer would be hampered by Mongol regalia.

13 Broome, *Survey* 189. Just behind the forked tip of the arrow about to be fired there is a small bulge.

14 Images of Mongol archers depict the quiver in such a position that the horseman pulls

The arrow is a special type, known to aficionados as a “stunning arrow.”¹⁵ It appears in the *Secret History of the Mongols* as an *angqu’a* arrow, which effects a wider and deeper wound in the target and brings it down more quickly.¹⁶ The arrows connect the iconography of the coin with usage familiar to the Mongols and, perhaps more so, to their enemies. The Mongols were not regarded as a nation of archers without good reason.

We may ask whether this image is unique in numismatic iconography, and the answer is, as so often, not quite.¹⁷ Early in the Rum Seljuk series a horseman appears, bearing a spear or a three-forked scepter. The sons of Kılıç Arslan II issued numerous copper coins with these motifs, some silver dirhems, and in one case, a gold dinar (Konya 597/1200–1201).¹⁸ A closer example appears on a Saldukid copper coin without mint (but probably struck at Erzurum in 575/1179–1180): a mounted archer, riding left, takes a Parthian shot at a small animal.¹⁹ On coins that display a visible arrow, it is a normal arrow of the sort with which we are familiar.²⁰ It is not likely that this issue served as a model for the iconography of our coin. However, there are candidates closer in time and space.

In particular, there is a series of issues associated with the Mongol regent Töregene/Turakina and struck in Georgia and Armenia between 642/1244–1245 and 645/1247–1248.²¹ There are at least 15 mints involved, and there are also minor differences between the issues from each of the mints. No matter what mint, however, each coin bears the image of a mounted archer loosing

the arrow backwards from the quiver and then swings it up to the bow. In order to do this with speed, the tip of the arrow should not be weighted.

- 15 I am grateful to the late Helmut Nickel, curator of arms and armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for showing me a number of these arrows and commenting on their use.
- 16 For the term see Holeščák, Mongol archery equipment 41.
- 17 Pfeiler, Münzprägung 68, rejects earlier images of horsemen on Seljuk coins. Lindner, Challenge 415, is not so certain.
- 18 Album, *Checklist* 133, nos. 1195, 1199.1, 1202, T1204 (gold), 1204 (silver), 1205.1, 1205.2, 1207; for illustrations, İzmirlier, *Coins* 58–83, mostly copper, but also examples in silver and one in gold. In general, see Teoman, Figural coins 530–535.
- 19 Album, *Checklist* 203, no.1891. For a photograph of an excellent example, see zeno.ru, item 218045, accessed April 30, 2010. I am grateful to Professor Heidemann for pointing out that I had misattributed this coin.
- 20 See for example zeno.ru, item 172423, accessed April 30, 2010.
- 21 Album, *Checklist* 212, no.1976. Good photographs are available on the website of the American Numismatic Society, accession numbers 1922.216.220 and 1922.216.222. The most recent discussion is by Bennett, *Georgian coins* 88–89. Cf. Lang, *Studies* 34–36; Pfeiler, Münzprägung 68.

a Parthian shot to his rear. The coins from Ganja, Nakhjawan, Tiflis, and an unidentified mint show an arrow with a forked tip.²²

The Sivas mounted archer shoots directly at his target and does not loose a Parthian shot. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the Sivas issue is intended to remind the user of a Mongol connection, indeed, an obligation. First, the mounted archer was, thanks to the 15 mints that had struck such coins, associated with the Mongols. Second, the forked arrow was a clear example of a Mongol style, both in military practice and pictured on issues of three of the mints that had struck Mongol coins a few years earlier. This was no iconographic accident. There are nine known obverse dies, and the forked tip is clear on each one of them. The young sultan possessed, thanks to the *yarligh* from Güyük, a warrant for rule, and the Mongol arrow was a visible intimation of the source of his authority. The obverse image is clear and carefully designed, more expertly than the Töregene/Turakina dies. The Mongol attachment is clear. And if you were a clever consumer, there was another Mongol connection.

In his very useful catalog of Seljuk coins, Yılmaz İzmirli noted that the Sivas coins were a bit lighter than one would expect. Let us seek more evidence for this observation and then ask what it might mean.²³ Our test is to construct what is known as a frequency table. This is a graph whose X axis lists the weights of coins in suitable bins, say 2.50 grams, 2.55 g, 2.60 g, and so on, while the Y axis measures the number of coins found in each bin. The purpose of a frequency table is to discover whether there is a weight standard for a given issue of coins, and if there is, what that standard might be and how well the minting authority has managed to effect that standard.²⁴ The choice of bins is, of course, arbitrary, and another choice, say 2.51 g, 2.56 g, 2.61 g, etc., might lead to a more precise indicator of the mint's weight standard. However, as the coins in the sample were weighed on different scales, the resulting errors might obviate the search for exactitude.

The shape of the graph illustrate multiple possibilities. As long as there are not too many coins below standard, this is not a concern; there is in any case gradual loss in weight from use. There may also be some advantage in pre-

22 In general, Kolbas, *Mongols* 124–128. For an excellent and thoroughgoing study of the issues, Vardanyan, *Some additions* 7–20, with full illustrations and coin weights.

23 The study by Hebert, *Metrology* 157, is not helpful at this point, because the sample is small and coins struck in the name of Kayka'us II are lumped together with those of Kilic Arslan IV.

24 See in the first instance Hill, *Frequency-table* 76–85. For the careful use of this method in an Islamic series, see Smith, *Silver currency* 16–41.

venting coinage from leaving the realm.²⁵ If there is a sharp drop-off in the number of coins above a certain weight, this implies that the mint's weight standard is just above the weight with the greatest number of coins. It also implies that the mint is doing a good job enforcing the weight standard, for allowing above-weight coins into circulation loses money. A flat bell-shaped curve around a putative weight standard implies perhaps that there is no fixed standard, perhaps that it is amateur hour at the mint. It also forces the consumer and merchant to weigh the coins. Rather than agreeing on a price of, say, five of your dirhems, it forces the merchant to weigh the coins ("in your case, the price is as many silver coins as reach a total weight of ..."). This is awkward and is an incentive to ensure good weight and practice at the mint.²⁶ Until the last decades of the 13th century, the Rum Seljuks did a remarkable job producing silver dirhems at about 2.97 grams.²⁷

If there appears to be a weight standard for the series, the question remains whether the fineness of the coins is uniform and robust. Anatolian coins of the 13th century appear to have been struck on flans of good silver. Unfortunately, only one coin of this Sivas issue has been tested, and its content was 92 % silver.²⁸ An Iranian team has used proton-induced x-ray emission to test five dirhems minted in the names of the three brothers, Kılıç Arslan IV, Kayka'us II, and 'Ala al-Din Kaykubad II. These coins ranged from 89 % to 94 % silver.²⁹ By way of comparison, a small sample of contemporary silver trams issued in Cilician Armenia also has a 92 % silver content.³⁰ The contemporary Byzantine silver *trachy* had a 96 % silver content.³¹ A small group of coins struck in the name of Manuel I of Trebizond (r. 1238–1263), analyzed by neutron activation analysis, ranged in fineness from 94 % to 100 % silver.³² The coins of the Rum Seljuks had a good reputation. The Genoese, who were no slackers in regard to coinage, arranged in the Treaty of Nymphaeum with Michael VIII Palaeologus

25 See the discussion in Smith, *Silver currency* 23–26. On the circulation of below-weight coins to prevent export, I am grateful to Professor Heidemann for suggestions.

26 For examples of lax practice, take two sets of Anatolian dirhems struck, in principle, to the Ilkhanid standard of 2.16 grams. Of 39 dirhems minted at Milas in 700 H., at least 16 are above weight; of 75 minted at Bafa (northwest of Milas) in 700 H., 32 are above the standard: Teoman, Erek, and Olcaş, *Figural dirhams* 27–71, 78–106.

27 Album, *Checklist* 132. Even a small sample will illustrate this, e.g., dirhems from the first reign of Kayka'us II, as in Izmirlier, *Coins* 212–220.

28 Lindner, *Challenge*, 414 n.28.

29 Masjedi et al., *Elemental analysis* 7.

30 Saryan, *Chemical composition* 18.

31 Morrisson, Barrandon, and Ivanisević, *Byzantine silver* 57.

32 Gordus and Metcalf, *Non-destructive chemical analysis* 33. See the remarks of Georgan-teli, *Trapezuntine money* 96.

to export “turchifari” from the Seljuks through his domains, and this suggests that the dirhems were of high quality.³³ In the course of the century the Seljuks also opened a number of silver mines, some of which became mints in their own name.³⁴ In a group of 230 Anatolian dirhems deposited ca. 1301 and known as the “Kütahya hoard,” about 200 contained between 95 % and 98 % silver.³⁵ We find similar results in a larger hoard of Anatolian silver deposited in the early 14th century.³⁶ In general, the fineness of Anatolian dirhems was high.

A frequency table for this Sivas issue (fig. 12.3) indicates a weight standard between 2.80 and 2.85 grams.³⁷ This is noticeably below the normal standard for Rum Seljuk silver dirhems, which is around 2.97 grams. Before looking into the reasons for this, it is useful to see whether this is really an exception. In order to do that, we examine those coins struck at Sivas before and after Kılıc Arslan's essay in 646. There are coins that were issued at Sivas in the name of his brother, ‘Izz al-Din Kayka’us II, earlier in the year, and a frequency table of those coins shows that his mint master followed the 2.97 gram standard. In the following year, 647, Sivas struck coins in the names of the three brothers, and these also follow the earlier standard of 2.97 grams.³⁸

How did these coins pass in the marketplace? It is tempting to think the market accepted the coins by weight and not by tale, that is, to complete a purchase, the dealer weighed the coins you presented (assuming that their silver content was high) and the price was considered as so and so much silver. However, the frequency table shows that the Anatolian dirhems of this era were struck to a uniform weight, so that they would easily pass in the marketplace by tale, a much quicker method of payment. How might this work for the dirhems struck on behalf of Kılıc Arslan? Studies by Professor John Masson Smith, Jr., and his students have shown how such coins might pass, on the basis of “so many of these equals so many of those.”³⁹ Let us consider an Anatolian marketplace,

33 Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine coins* 120.

34 Lindner, Seljuk mints 363–371.

35 I thank Stephen Album, who provided the hoard for study, and Professor Adon A. Gordus, who performed neutron activation analysis of the coins.

36 Kolbas, May, and Novák, *Coin hoard* 77–92, with summary on 92.

37 The data for this frequency table derives from published catalogues, the collection of the American Numismatic Society, the Yapı ve Kredi Bankası collection, the listings in the auction and sales records of Stephen Album, the entries in zeno.ru, and the records in the pro.coinarchives.com website.

38 This conclusion follows from an examination of the coins listed in the Izmirlier catalogue or the zeno.ru website.

39 Smith, Jr., and Benin, *Persian market* 431–442; Smith, *Mongol money* 192–203, a brilliant gem.

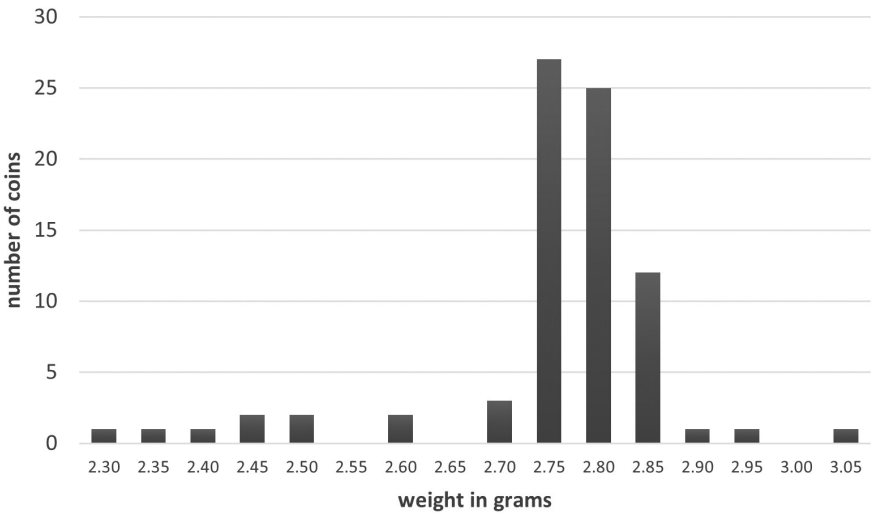


FIGURE 12.3 Frequency table for the 646 dirhem of Kılıc Arslan IV

Sivas or Konya, a few years later, and a William of Rubruck is attempting to close a deal on supplies for the last leg of his trip back from Karakorum. Among the coins in his wallet are Sivas dirhems of 645, 646, and 647. Twenty-one of the Sivas mounted archer dirhems would equal 20 of the epigraphic dirhems of Kayka'us II or of the three brothers. If we consider the regular Seljuk weight standard as representing “24 carat silver,” our mounted archer dirhem is one carat short. So although it would be an awkward transaction, 21 for 20, it would also be straightforward.⁴⁰

Given the awkwardness, however, why did the Sivas mint master choose this standard? One answer is that he had a precedent to follow. We have already seen this precedent, in the Mongol mounted archer series associated with Töregene/Turakina a few years earlier. Since all of the coins share one type, even though there are a number of mints, it is reasonable to surmise that the weight standards of the issues from different mints will be the same. If we establish a frequency table for these coins (fig. 12.4), a weight standard appears, and it is close to that of the Sivas 646 issue.⁴¹ The Sivas mounted archer issue would pass along with the Mongol-inspired issues of the previous years, and it would also pass, as “so many of these equal that many of those,” with the former Rum Seljuk issues.

40 How many transactions would involve more than a score of coins? For many transactions, involving one or two dirhems, the coins would pass along with earlier, worn coins.

41 The material for this table derives from the same sources as figure 12.3, as well as Vardanyan, Some additions.

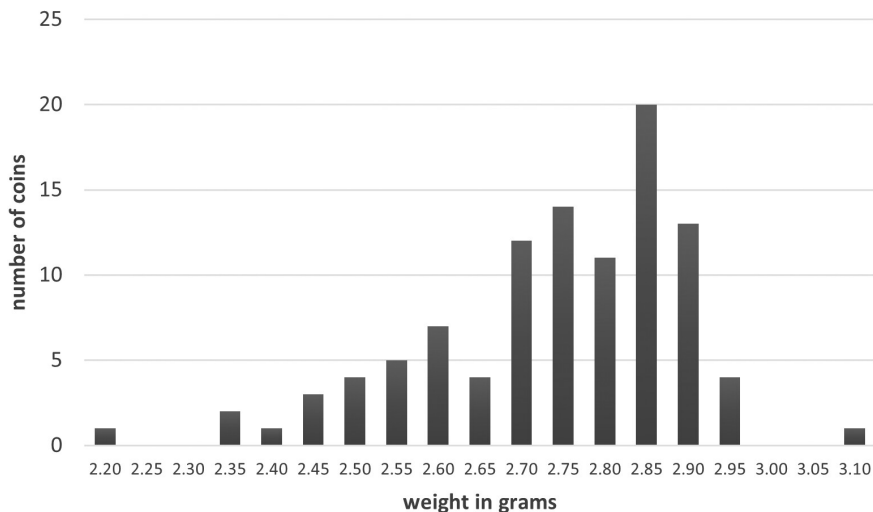


FIGURE 12.4 Frequency table for the Caucasus dirhems of Töregene/Turakina, twelve mints, 642–643 H
CF. THE TABLE IN VARDANYAN, SOME ADDITIONS 19

Now we have no evidence from hoards to show that the Rum Seljuk and Mongol Caucasus issues passed together. However, this may not be the point. The managers of the young sultan owed his title (and their livelihoods) to Mongol support. On the reverse, they showed their deference to the expectations of the market as well as long tradition by following the model of the Caliph's own coinage; on the obverse, they demonstrated their loyalty to the power that had made their fortune. To the Mongols, the reverse did not mean anything; the point was that this youth had come to them, had submitted himself to them, had sought authorization to rule from them.⁴²

To what extent was this issue in the name of Kilic Arslan IV meant as a symbolic or honorific coinage? For an answer to this question, it is useful to have a sense of the size of the issue. Estimating the size of a coinage for which there are no extant mint records is difficult, if not impossible. It is occasionally possible to obtain an index of the size of an issue in comparison to others. Following the example of the Lohe hoard, Smith suggested that this was possible with some of the Ilkhanid issues after 1295.⁴³ Another approach is to consider the

42 On the notion of a "dual" subordination, see the thoughtful remarks of Heidemann, *Das Aleppiner Kalifat* 35–38, and in particular 38: "Recognition of the supremacy of the Caliph justified the rule of these rulers in theory; subjection to the Great Khan secured it in fact." [my translation]

43 Thordeman, *The Lohe hoard* 188–204. See also Smith, *Silver currency* 28–32, especially the graphs on 31.

number of dies and then the number of coins struck from each set of dies. This has proven to be a contentious procedure and the dust has yet to settle on the battlefield.⁴⁴ It is best to consider the number of dies as an index of the size of the issue, rather than offering an opportunity to calculate the number of coins struck as part of that issue.

There are nine obverse and 19 reverse dies. The number of reverse dies associated with a given obverse die ranges from one to nine. This variation is probably associated with the differing lifetimes of the reverse dies. In the sample there are a number of coins with the same combination of obverse and reverse dies. It appears that the mint masters wished to issue a large number of coins. The number of coins from Sivas dated 645 H. and 647 H. and known to me from museums and data bases is much smaller.

The work of Professor Warren W. Esty allows us to calculate the probable number of obverse and reverse dies of this issue.⁴⁵ Using his method, and if the sample is random, the coverage of the obverse sample is 98.7%, and the coverage of the reverse sample is 96.1%. The number of obverse dies would be estimated at 9.1 (with an interval between 8.1 and 10.2), and the number of reverse dies would be 22.9 (with an interval between 19.2 and 27.3). What this suggests is that I am missing one obverse and at least three reverse dies.⁴⁶

It is unwise to suggest from these numbers the total number of coins struck for this issue. However, it is clear from a comparison with the Sivas issues from the preceding and following year that this issue was greater, and possibly considerably greater. Future die studies of Rum Seljuk dirhems will shed further light along these lines. For this issue, however, the Mongols and their clients wanted to make a point and to broadcast it.

When the young prince and his handlers went to submit themselves to the Great Khan, they did not know just what might happen. If they thought that having shown themselves before him would bring them rewards, they were right. But those rewards, their letters of transit to power, came with a price, and they were not sold cut rate.⁴⁷ Once back in Anatolia, with a competing sultan on the throne in Konya, they found themselves bound to the Mongol mission, and they demonstrated their loyalty. Their coinage of Sivas, formerly struck to the historical Seljuk standard, now appeared to cleave to a recent Mongol stand-

44 In general, see. Stahl, *Zecca* 387–390. For a careful critique of the procedure see Buttrety and Buttrety, *Calculating ancient coin production* 113–135.

45 Esty, *Geometric model* 43–58. I am also grateful to Professor Esty for his assistance by correspondence.

46 I intend to publish a die study for this issue.

47 Cf. the experience of Guillermo Ugarte in *Casablanca*.

ard. It was fortunate that these coins could pass in the marketplace, 21 for 20, one carat less; for purposes of small transactions, the difference may not even have warranted comment. The iconography of the issue was also Mongol, distinctively so. The young sultan was a Seljuk, but a Mongol would recognize his money.

I would like to point out that all this derives from the casual remark by Yılmaz İzmirli that the coins of this issue are somewhat lighter than the general run of Rum Seljuk dirhems. The lesson is that big oaks grow from small acorns, or as the motto of the American Numismatic Society puts it, "*ne pereant parva*."

As this article is about to go to press, Stephen Album informs me of a group of Armenian bilingual trams, silver coins probably minted at Sis/Kozan in Cilician Armenia. The coins bear neither mint nor date (the sample is rather small and the date may be off the flan). The typical bilingual trams, which Hetum I struck and which bear his name and that of Keyhüsrev II, typically follow the Rum Seljuk weight standard of 2.97 grams. However, the coins in this group are lighter in weight, following the standard of the Sivas 646 issue and the Töregene/Turakina coins. There were Armenian suppliants present at Güyük's accession festivities, and I suggest that they, too, received their metrological marching orders on that occasion.

It was not clear just how great the Mongol imposition upon Anatolia was to be after the battle of Köse Dağ; hindsight allows us to see this as a turning point in the history of the peninsula. It took two generations for the Ilkhanids to conclude that they had to place a firm hand on the affairs of Rum, and by then it became necessary to decide how far west to extend their reach and how well they might expect to do so. The appearance of the Ottomans on an Ilkhanid tribute list more than a generation into the next century gives us a measure of their intent, if not their success. What happened in the intervening years is a series of leitmotifs with variations: trade and tribute; caravansarays and silver mines; Mongol pastures and Sufi success; more mints, more revolts, more violence; and the creation of new tribal loyalties and polities.⁴⁸

48 I use the term leitmotif because it reminds me of Michael Bonner's teaching. He always saw something suggestive, something that came back in haunting variation of a theme, something worth mentioning to excite the interest of a student, to open a new door before the student, to create a moment for, if not new learning, new questions, new vistas to examine. He occasionally referred to these moments in his own life, especially when we were discussing or playing music. In reminiscing about concerts we had seen in our younger years, I once told Michael that I remembered the exact moment that I learned of the death of the great pianist William Kapell. Michael smiled and responded, "That's nothing. I remember the moment when I found out that Mozart had died." Michael was a Mozartian historian.

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A Library in Fragments: An Inventory of the al-Baʿṭūrī Family & Library in Djerba, Tunisia

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1 Introduction¹

The period of the 16th to the 19th centuries is an important period for the history of the manuscript traditions of Ibadi Muslim communities in Northern Africa. In these centuries, a large number of private manuscript collections formed in the hands of individuals, families, clans, and institutions like mosques and madrasas in what are today Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Ibadi libraries in the Ottoman era came to include large numbers of non-Ibadi texts as the members of the community came into increasing contact with their Sunni coreligionists through the travels of texts and people. This included the movement of students, scholars, and merchants to major Ottoman centers of commerce and learning such as Algiers, Constantine, Tunis, Alexandria, Cairo, Mecca, Izmir, and Istanbul. These expansive networks allowed Ibadi libraries in the Mزاب valley, the island of Djerba, the Jebel Nafusa, and beyond to exchange Ibadi texts as well as to acquire works from the Sunni cannon.²

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- 1 I first encountered the story of the al-Baʿṭūrī Library while still a graduate student doing research in Djerba for my dissertation at the University of Michigan under the supervision of Michael Bonner. Michael's encouragement—and especially his humor—saw me through that process from 2010 to 2016, and I very much miss sitting down with him to talk about libraries, manuscripts, and provenance. Much of the fieldwork for this chapter was within the framework of two Endangered Archives Programme grants (EAP993, 2017–2018; EAP1216, 2019–2021), funded by Arcadia and administered by the British Library. My small obsession with this library's story over the past several years has been fed by advice and materials provided to me by many colleagues in Djerba and elsewhere. I want to extend special thanks to Ali Boujdidi, Mahfoudh Dahman, Said El Barouni, Farid El Cadhi, Soufien Mestaoui, and Vermondo Brugnattelli. Colleagues and friends at the Association pour la sauvegarde de l'île de Djerba (ASSIDJE) have entertained my many visits over the years and graciously allowed me to photograph the typewritten catalog of the library that I edited and added to the end of this chapter.
 - 2 The pre-Ottoman centuries set the stage for this growing convergence of Ibadi and Sunni manuscripts traditions. On this see: Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa*.

With a handful of exceptions, most Ibadi libraries that formed in this period remain in private hands today and their contents are largely unknown outside a small circle of specialists. Recent efforts by cultural associations in the Mزاب and Oman have made the contents of dozens of private libraries available in the form of published catalogs.³ The libraries of the island of Djerba in Tunisia have received comparatively less attention, although there are two especially prominent libraries in Djerba that have been studied and used by historians for the past half century. The first is the al-Bārūniyya Library, belonging to the al-Bārūnī (El Barouni) family. Established in the early-19th century by its eponymous founder Saʿīd b. ʿĪsā al-Bārūnī (d. 1868), the collection comprises over 1,000 volumes collected and copied by al-Bārūnī during his time in Cairo, as well as texts compiled by his descendants.⁴ The second collection, the library of Shaykh Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb (d. 1991), comprises texts collected by the founder in Cairo during the 1930s as well as texts he collected from other private families in Djerba over a 60 year period.⁵ The prominence of these two libraries has long overshadowed a number of smaller collections on the island. Recent efforts to digitize and to preserve these lesser-known collections will insure they receive the attention they merit in the long run.⁶ Here, I present the history of one of these many collections: the al-Baʿṭūrī (Baatour) family library.

The story of this library is unusual. Unlike the al-Bārūniyya, the Bin Yaʿqūb Library, or many of those lesser-known manuscript collections in Djerba, the al-Baʿṭūrī no longer exists. Lost to a fire at some imprecise date in the 1980s, its history is obscured by its absence and must be reconstructed by bringing together fragments and traces of its existence from other libraries and references in historical sources.⁷ What follows represents the cumulative result of

3 On the current state of Ibadi manuscript studies and the conservation and cataloging of Ibadi manuscript libraries in the Maghrib, see the introduction to “Ibadi Manuscripts and Manuscript Cultures in North Africa,” (eds. P. Love and S. Mestaoui) 1–6.

4 On the library and its history, see its website at: <http://elbarounia.com/> [Accessed 20 November 2020].

5 Love, Jr., Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb Ibāḍī Manuscript Library.

6 Efforts include the recently completed (2018) “Al-Bāsī Family Library Project,” supported by the Arcadia Foundation as part of the British Library’s Endangered Archives Programme: Boujdidi and Love, Jr., “Preserving Endangered Archives in Jerba.” The image from the library’s collection will soon be available at: <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP993>. More recently (2019), we launched a larger project called the “Jerba Libraries Project,” also supported by the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP1216). That project will continue until late 2021 and aims to digitize seven manuscript and early print collections on the Island. See: <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP1216>.

7 The precise date of the fire is not certain and has been the subject of rumors for a long time

my efforts at collecting manuscript notes, conducting informal interviews, and gathering other traces of the al-Ba‘tūrī Library in Djerba and beyond. The value of studying a hand list from a modern library that no longer exists is much the same as it was for Konrad Hirschler’s masterful work on the medieval example of the Ashrafiya Library in Damascus; namely, that there is a lot to be learned about context, readership, and manuscript culture from extant catalogs.⁸ While this chapter is a far more modest attempt to reconstruct the history of a small private library in a radically different context, it draws inspiration from the conviction that manuscript library catalogs offer a lot more than a list of titles.

2 The al-Ba‘tūrī Family: A History of and in Manuscripts

What I can say about the history of the al-Ba‘tūrī Library comes primarily from two types of sources. The first is a typewritten inventory of the collection, independently published by the Association pour la sauvegarde de l’île de Djerba (ASSDIJ) in 1987.⁹ The inventory is based on a visit to the library carried out by members of the ASSDIJ in the mid-1980s as part of an island-wide survey of well-known manuscript collections in Djerba. I will contextualize the contents of the inventory below, but I begin by devoting attention to what it reveals about the history of the al-Ba‘tūrī family and their library. The second category of sources for the library’s history are manuscript notes that link individual manuscripts to the al-Ba‘tūrī Library or the family. Together, these two sources allow for a fragmentary reconstruction of the library’s history.

While the inventory of the collection consistently presents the name as “al-Ba‘tūrī,” the family name no doubt originated as al-Bughṭūrī, after the village of Bughṭūra in the Jebel Nafusa area of what is today northwestern Libya. Many Ibadi families in Djerba originate from that region, including some of its most famous scholarly families like the al-Bārūnī and al-Shammākhī families. The change in spelling likely occurred in the 19th century, perhaps as late as the French Protectorate period (1881–1956). When the al-Bughṭūrī family migrated to Djerba, perhaps in the late-18th or early-19th century, they carried with them at least some of the books that would become the al-Ba‘tūrī Library. While most of the titles in the surviving inventory are undated, those that are date to the 18th and 19th centuries (see Appendices for the full list of titles).

in Djerba. While the most likely date range is sometime around 1985 or 1986, it is not possible to verify. On the rumors, see: Love, *Manuscripts Are like Vampires*.

8 Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*.

9 *Qā’imat al-kutub*.

One manuscript from the al-Ba‘tūrī library that has garnered some attention is the *Risālat siyar Nafūsa*, attributed to Muqrīn b. Muḥammad al-Bughṭūrī, who finished the text in 595/1198–1199.¹⁰ The manuscript was borrowed from the al-Ba‘tūrī family in September 1971 by Libyan historian Amr Khalifah Ennami (al-Nāmī, d.1980s).¹¹ Ennami had earlier specifically credited the Ibadi historian Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb with its discovery in 1968 in the al-Ba‘tūrī Library, when he described the manuscript in a 1970 article.¹² Ennami noted that he borrowed the original manuscript from the family, which did not carry a date but was written in an “Old Maghribī hand (after 800 A.H., A.D.1397).”¹³ Color photos of this manuscript from Ennami’s library, along with another copy, are currently the object of study by Professor Vermondo Brugnatelli, who acquired them in 2019 from the family of Ennami’s former colleague, Professor James Bynon.¹⁴ A photocopy of the second manuscript copy photographed by Ennami and today in the collection that belonged to Bynon, labeled “al-Bughṭūrī B”, appears in photographs of manuscripts from Shaykh Sālim’s library taken by German Professor Werner Schwartz during a visit to the library in 1979.¹⁵

In an interview with the Tunisian historian and Ibadi scholar Dr. Ferhat Djaabiri, I was told that the text of the *Risala* was compiled from two manuscripts that were found separately. The first was found in the al-Ba‘tūrī library by Ennami, who took it with him to Cambridge to photograph. The second and

10 The work appears as number 60 in the inventory (p.21). On Muqrīn b. Muḥammad al-Bughṭūrī and the manuscript tradition of the *Siyar Nafūsa*, see: Custers, *Al-Ibāḍiyya* 2:134.

11 A short note, dated 1 September 1971 and written on ruled notebook paper by Ennami specifies that he borrowed two titles “from the al-Bughṭūrī family ... in order to photograph them and return them to [the family].” The second title is the “*Siyar Nafūsa*, no. A 25.” This is one of a few surviving handwritten notes from the al-Ba‘tūrī Library left by those who borrowed books from it in the 1970s. Images of these manuscript statements were shared with me by Dr. Ali Boujdidi via e-mail on 13 October 2020. I deeply grateful to him for sharing them with me.

12 “This book was thought to be missing until two years ago, when Shaikh Sālim b. Ya‘qūb came across it in the al-Ba‘tūr collection.” Ennami, *A Description of New Ibadi Manuscripts from North Africa* 84.

13 Ennami, *Description* 84. Ennami also noted in the same article that he had acquired a copy of another text, known as the *Risālat Abī Yūsuf b. Khalfūn* from the al-Ba‘tūrī library (*Ibid*, 79). He later compared this copy with a few others to produce an edited version as an appendix to his doctoral thesis. See: “3. Ajwibat Ibn Khalfūn” in Ennami, *Studies in Ibāḍism* 30–31.

14 E-mail communication with Vermondo Brugnatelli (November 2019). I thank Dr. Brugnatelli for his willingness to share some photos of these items.

15 Scans of the photographs were graciously shared with me by Dr. Schwartz via e-mail in 2017.

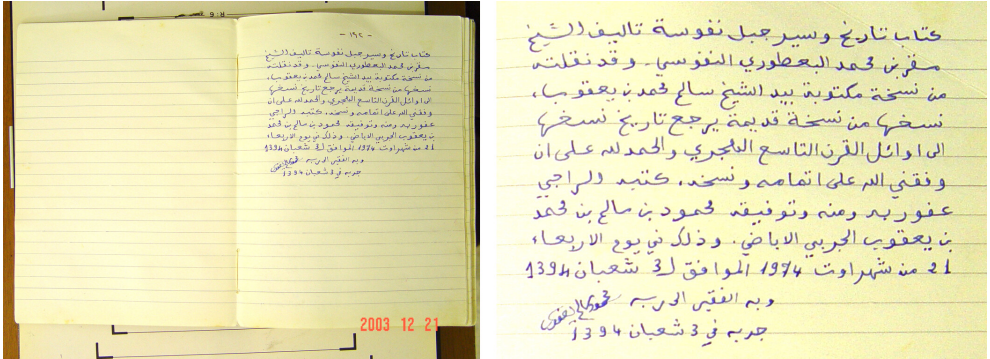


FIGURE 13.1 An image of the colophon from a copy of the *Sīyar Nafūsa*, copied by Maḥmūd b. Sālīm Bin Ya‘qūb in 21 August 1974. Source: A digital image dated 21 December 2003 from the library of Aḥmad al-Fassāṭuwī, held at al-Markaz al-Lībī li-al-maḥfūzāt wa-al-dirāsāt al-tārīkhiyya
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE IBADICA RESEARCH CENTER IN PARIS, FRANCE

complementary manuscript was found by Shaykh Sālīm in the possession of another Djerban family, who had quite literally placed it in the trash. Shaykh Sālīm then used the two halves to transcribe a full copy of the text for his own use.¹⁶ That manuscript would later serve as the exemplar for his son, Maḥmūd b. Sālīm Bin Ya‘qūb, who transcribed a copy of the text in August 1974.¹⁷ In that copy, the colophon notes that

I transcribed [this text] from a copy in the hand of Shaykh Sālīm [b.] Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, which he copied from an old copy. [The older copy’s] date of transcription goes back to the beginning of the 9th hijrī century [15th century CE]. Praise be to God that He granted me the occasion to complete it and copy it. Written by ... Maḥmūd b. Sālīm b. Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Jarbī al-Ibāḍī and that was on the day of al-Arbī‘ā’ 21 August 1974 ... [Signed in] Djerba on 3 Sha‘bān 1394¹⁸

While the original Ba‘ṭūrī manuscript copy of the *Risala* presumably perished in the fire, another late-medieval manuscript that likely came to Djerba with

16 Author’s interview with Dr. Ferhat Djaabiri (18 August 2019 in Tunis, Tunisia).

17 In my own survey of manuscripts from the Bin Ya‘qūb Library in 2014–2015, I did not find this text. It is likely, however that the text transcribed by Shaykh Sālīm himself was copied in one of his many notebooks, which the family did not allow me to include in the survey. See: Love, Jr., Sālīm Bin Ya‘qūb Ibāḍī Manuscript Library.

18 An image of the colophon is reproduced in the introduction to the online edition: al-Buḡḥūrī, *Sīyar mashāyikh nafūsa* 21.

the al-Baʿtūrī family appears to have survived. This is by far the most famous text associated with the library: a unique copy of the *Kitāb badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn* by Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī (d. third/ninth century).¹⁹ Known as the *Kitāb Ibn Sallām*, this text is the oldest extant historical text by an autochthonous North African Ibadi and certainly counts as one of the oldest historical accounts of Islam from the Maghrib.²⁰

The re-discovery of the *Kitāb Ibn Sallām* in the al-Baʿtūrī Library was, like the *Risalat siyar Nafusa*, credited to Shaykh Sālim b. Yaʿqūb.²¹ He borrowed and did not return the manuscript of the text, which he later co-edited and published with Werner Schwartz in 1986.²² The original manuscript presumably remains today in the Bin Yaʿqūb Library so it did not appear in the 1987 inventory of the al-Baʿtūrī collection.²³ The authors' introduction to the edited volume noted that the manuscript did not have a date of transcription but that it carried a watermark that dates it to around the ninth/15th century.²⁴ This suggests that, like the *Risala*, this manuscript traveled to Djerba with the al-Bughṭūrī family.

Unlike these two exceptional cases, the bulk of the library likely formed in the 18th and 19th centuries. These were important centuries for the accumulation of Ibadi and non-Ibadi libraries on the island, including the formation of large collections like the al-Bāsī Mosque Library (late 18th c.) and the al-Bārūniyya library (early 19th c.). The earliest date of a manuscript connected to the al-Baʿtūrī family and attested in the library's inventory is 1143/1730–1731.²⁵ The name of the copyist that accompanies the date, ʿUmar b. al-Qāsim al-Baʿtūrī, is also the copyist for another manuscript dated 1182/1768–1769 (see Figure 13.2).²⁶ Dating to a bit later than these two is another title in the al-Baʿtūrī inventory by a copyist with a similar name: ʿAmr b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Baʿtūrī. While these may represent variations of the same name, the date of

19 Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī, *Kitāb fīhi badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn*.

20 On the contents and historical value of the work itself see, Aillet, A Breviary of Faith.

21 Ennami wrote: "This ms is originally one of the MSS in al-Baʿtūr's collection; I borrowed it from Shaykh Sālim b. Yaʿqūb to whom its discovery is due." Ennami, Description 83.

22 Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī, *Kitāb fīhi badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn*.

23 I did not find a copy of the manuscript in my inventory in 2014–2015, although that does not preclude the possibility that it was not included in the texts to which I was given access.

24 The editors identified a hand/glove watermark, accompanied by a star/flower, which they suggested offer an approximate date of transcription in the late-15th or early-16th centuries. See: Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī, *Kitāb fīhi badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn* 46–47.

25 "11. Mukhtaṣar al-Shammāhni [sic] 'alā kitāb al-'aql sanat 1143 nafs al-nāsikh." (*Qāʾimat* 19).

26 "10. Sharḥ ʿUmar [sic] al-Tulātī 'alā kitāb al-uṣūl li-Tabghurīn b. ʿIsā al-Manshūṭī [sic] ... naskh ʿUmar Ibn al-Qāsim al-Baʿtūrī sanat 1182." (*Qāʾimat* 19).

transcription (1191/1777–1778) suggests that ‘Amr was a son of ‘Umar al-Ba‘tūrī.²⁷ This same ‘Amr al-Ba‘tūrī also copied an additional manuscript, part of an extant *majmū‘* from the Bin Ya‘qūb Library in Djerba, in which the name clearly appears as “‘Amr b. Abī al-Qāsim.”²⁸

Either the son or grandson of ‘Umar al-Ba‘tūrī, Sa‘īd b. Abī al-Qāsim, also copied an undated text in the inventory.²⁹ Fortunately, the same Sa‘īd al-Ba‘tūrī copied three additional texts, today held in the al-Bārūniyya Library, two of which carry the date 1211/1796. In one of the three, his name appears in an elongated form as: “Sa‘īd b. Abī al-Qāsim b. al-Shaykh A‘mar b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Sulaymān al-Bughṭūrī.”³⁰ The ambiguity in the transcription of the names ‘Umar and ‘Amr (differentiated only by a *wāw* and even then, inconsistently), makes determining the relationships among these copyists difficult.³¹

Another branch of the al-Ba‘tūrī family that overlapped chronologically (and perhaps intersected with) the one represented in the extant library inventory was described by the founder of the Bin Ya‘qūb Library, Shaykh Sālim b. Ya‘qūb, in his 1986 history of the island.³² In it, Bin Ya‘qūb wrote about a student of Yūsuf al-Maṣ‘abī (d.1187/1773) named ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Bughṭūrī, who headed the Ibadi council rule system on the island, known as the *‘azzāba*.³³ A manuscript note testifies to his brother, Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūrī, borrowing a book from the al-Bāsi Mosque library in Djerba. The statement of loan specifically notes it was borrowed from the *Jāmi‘ al-Bāsiyīn* (the El Bessi

27 “17. Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān nuskhāt ‘Amr b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Ba‘tūrī 1191.” (*Qā‘imat* 19).

28 Undated fragment of the *Kitāb al-waḍ‘* by Abū Zakarīyā‘ Yaḥyā al-Jannāwunī (sixth/twelfth c.). The shelfmark appears as “Bin Ya‘qūb Qāf 16” in my 2017 inventory: Love, Jr., Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb Ibādī Manuscript Library, 272. The same *majmū‘* is file number 57 in the facsimiles of the library available through the Ibadica Center for Research and Studies on Ibadism in Paris, France. I thank Soufien Mestaoui from Ibadica for making these images available to me.

29 “56. Sharḥ jam‘ al-jawāmi‘ li-‘l-Ḥalabī al-Miḥallī sharḥ Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī naskh Sa‘īd b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Ba‘tūrī” (*Qā‘imat* 21).

30 The three manuscripts are: “Jawāb fuqahā’ balad Ghadāmis,” Bārūniyya *jīm* 67, catalog no.291 (dated mid-Jum 11 1211 /December 1796); a second copy of the same title, Bārūniyya *jīm* 70, catalog no.285 (not dated); “Radd ‘alā risāla min Lālūt,” Bārūniyya *jīm* 86, catalog no. 285 (dated mid-Rabī‘ 11 1211 / mid-October 1796). For descriptions, see the corresponding numbers in *Fihris al-Bārūniyya*.

31 For example, I noticed that the catalogers of the al-Bārūniyya library transcribed Sa‘īd’s name as “Sa‘īd al-Bughṭūrī” but in the image of the manuscript provided at the end of the catalog (p.606), his full name appears as I have transcribed it here. Unable to compare the inventory with the original manuscripts, it is impossible to know if the compilers of the inventory decided to alter or abbreviate the names.

32 Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba* 155–156.

33 On the ‘Azzāba in Djerba see: Djaabiri, *Niẓām al-‘azzāba*.

al-Ba‘tūrī / al-Bughṭūrī

In Djerba (12th/18th – 14th/20th c.)

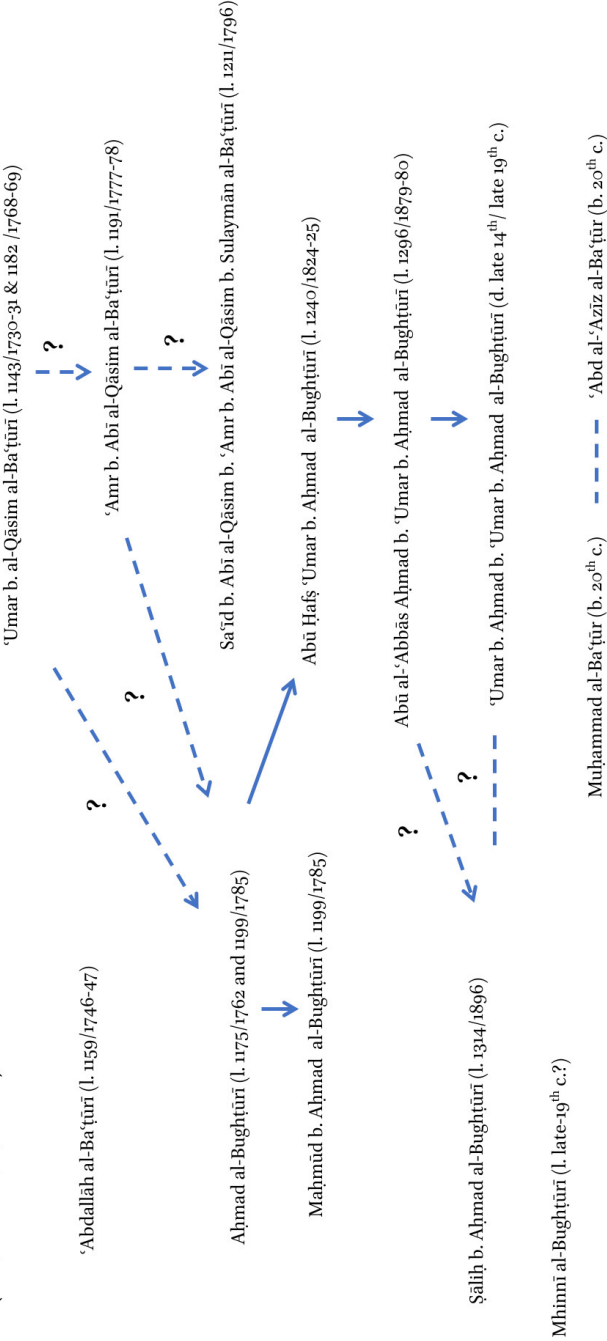


FIGURE 13.2 A tentative family tree of the al-Bughṭūrī/al-Ba‘tūrī family, cumulatively assembled from the sources cited here. Solid arrows represent father-son relationships, while dotted lines with a question mark represent possible relationships

Mosque) meaning that it was borrowed after the creation of that mosque and its endowed library in 1199/1785.³⁴ Maḥmūd also gave his name as the “son of al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūrī, may God preserve him,” meaning that Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūrī was still alive at the time.³⁵ Another manuscript letter written by Sa‘īd b. ‘Aysā al-Bārūnī (eponymous founder of the al-Bārūniyya Library) while in Egypt in 1230/1815, specifically mentioned “al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūrī.” This suggests that Aḥmad lived in the second half of the 18th century and into the 19th century.³⁶

Aḥmad was likely the owner of another manuscript today held in the University of Naples L'Orientale, dated 1175/1762.³⁷ The same manuscript carries an ownership statement for ‘Ayyād b. Qīrāt (d.1282/1865). This second owner was a contemporary of Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūrī’s grandson, Aḥmad b. ‘Umar (d.1296/1879), and his great-grandson, ‘Umar b. Aḥmad b. ‘Umar b. Aḥmad(!), who died in the late 19th century. Both the great grandson and ‘Ayyād b. Qīrāt were students of Sa‘īd b. ‘Īsā al-Bārūnī (d.1282/1865), the founder of the al-Bārūniyya library where texts by earlier generations of the al-Ba‘tūrī family were preserved.³⁸

Based on chronology above, the two branches of the family may well have been linked (see Figure 13.2). Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūrī was alive in 1199/1785 and would therefore have been a contemporary of ‘Umar b. al-Qāsim al-Ba‘tūrī and ‘Amr b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Ba‘tūrī. Given that Aḥmad’s son and grandson both carried the name ‘Umar, it is likely that either ‘Umar or ‘Amr was Aḥmad’s father.

‘Umar b. Aḥmad (d. late-19th c.) was the last figure of the family to be mentioned by Shaykh Sālim.³⁹ A man who was perhaps his brother, Ṣālih b. Aḥmad al-Ba‘tūr, appears in the Tunisian National archives as a notary (*‘adil*) in Djerba. A file dated 1896 notes that one “Salah ben Ahmed El Batour, notary in Djerba guilty of having insulted a *sfahi* [soldier] executing a command, was punished ... with a fine of 10 francs.”⁴⁰ In that same period of the transition between the Husaynid (1705–1881) and Protectorate (1881–1956) eras, the al-Ba‘tūrī family

34 Boujdidi and Love, Jr., Preserving Endangered Archives in Jerba 216.

35 Images of this manuscript and the other manuscript notes connected to the al-Ba‘tūrīs references here were published previously in: Love, Jr., What the Flames Missed.

36 “Risālat al-Shaykh Sa‘īd b. ‘Īsā al-Bārūnī ilā ṣādiqihi al-Shaykh Yaḥi al-Bārūnī bi-Jarba min Miṣr.” A transcription of this letter will appear as an appendix in a forthcoming edition of *Risālat al-Shaykh Sa‘īd b. Tū‘arīt fi ‘ulamā’ Jarba* (Ibadica Editions, forthcoming 2021). I thank Soufien Mestaoui, director of the Centre d’Études et de Recherche sur l’Ibadism, Ibadica, for sharing a copy of the letter with me in advance.

37 “Kitāb al-waḍ‘” (dated 1175 / 1762), UNO Arabe MS 50.

38 Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba* 154–155.

39 Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba* 156.

40 “Salah ben Ahmed El Batour, notaire à Djerba, coupable d’avoir insulté un sfahi exécutant un service commandé, a été puni ... d’une amende de 10 francs.” See: “Notaires de Djerba. Salah Ben Ahmed El Baatour,” Archives Nationales de Tunisie B1 218 0004 0007 1896.

held positions of influence in the government beyond notaries.⁴¹ For example, Dr. Ferhat Djaabiri told me that a certain Mihinnī al-Bugh‘tūrī had occupied the administrative post of the “Cheikhet” (*al-shaykha*) in Djerba in the early days of the Protectorate. He confirmed that the al-Ba‘tūrī family had held positions of power under both the Husaynid and the French colonial governments. He emphasized that it was “certain (*yaqīn*)” that some of the manuscripts from the family library were handed over to the French because of their interest in Ibadis.⁴²

Djaabiri then jumped forward in time to discuss the library in the 1970s, when both Sālim b. Ya‘qūb and Amr Ennami visited it and the latter succeeded in acquiring a copy of the *Risālat siyar Nafūsa* described above. The only mention to my knowledge of the al-Ba‘tūr collection between the end of the 19th century and the late 1960s was a footnote confirming its existence in a 1956 *Revue Africaine* article by Joseph Schacht (d. 1969).⁴³

The final chapter of the library’s history was its loss in a fire around 1985. The owner of the library at the time, Muḥammad b. Šālīḥ al-Ba‘tūr,⁴⁴ confirmed for me through a phone conversation with Said El Barouni (current owner of the al-Bārūniyya Library) that the family’s library was indeed lost to a fire. The details of the story remain uncertain, but both El Barouni and Djaabiri attested to having seen it shortly after its destruction. Despite this, a pervasive series of rumors about the circumstances of the fire—including one that suggests it never happened, at all—continue to circulate today.⁴⁵

Despite these rumors, a handful of manuscript fragments from the library survive today. The family still owns a number of unidentified folio fragments, including texts in both Maghribi and Mashriqi scripts. In addition, a single charred bifolio hangs on the wall of the *Association pour la sauvegarde de l’île de Djerba*, bearing the caption “Bibliothèque Baatour” in Arabic and French.⁴⁶

41 This is further supported by a document (dated 1157/1746) cited by Tunisian historian Muḥammad al-Marīmī in which one ‘Abdallāh al-Ba‘tūrī was a member of the Shaykh Council (*hayat al-mashikh*). See: al-Marīmī, *Ibādīyyat jarba khilāl al-‘aṣr al-ḥadīth* 32.

42 Author’s interview with Dr. Ferhat Djaabiri (18 August 2018 in Tunis, Tunisia).

43 “A Walagh, il y a la *Maktabat al-Ba‘tūr* et la collection du Cheikh ‘Amr b. Marzûq,” Schacht, *Bibliothèques et manuscrits abadites* 376 (fn.2).

44 It is not clear to me whether Salah b. Aḥmad could be the father or grandfather of Muḥammad b. Šālīḥ, since I have not been able to speak directly with the family and do not know the ages of any living or recently deceased members of the al-Ba‘tūr family.

45 Love, *Manuscripts Are like Vampires*.

46 A photo essay on my attempts to understand the story of the library’s destruction is forthcoming, including an image and description of the charred fragment on the wall of the Association.

Ironically, however, it is not the original manuscript fragments from the library but instead surviving notes from those who borrowed them that reveal the most information. A collection of three handwritten notes left by visitors to the library in the 1970s provide seven additional titles to the surviving inventory. One note belongs to Amr Ennami, who specifies that he borrowed two titles in September 1971 to photograph them and return them. Only one, the *Siyar Nafūsa* discussed above, appears in the 1987 inventory. The second title, along with seven additional titles mentioned in the other two statements of loan, suggest that several complete manuscripts from the al-Ba‘tūrī Library may have survived the fire and are today held in two private collections in Djerba and the Mzab Valley, Algeria.⁴⁷

3 Contents in Context: The al-Ba‘tūrī Collection in the Intellectual Landscape of Djerba

Although most of the physical collection itself no longer exists, the surviving manuscript notes and 1987 inventory do offer some indication of how the al-Ba‘tūrī Library fits into the larger intellectual landscape of Ottoman-era Djerba. As mentioned above, the al-Ba‘tūrī collection was gathered over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, in the same period as other prominent libraries on the island were collected. This reflects both a local flourishing of manuscript culture on the island as well as the connections between Djerba and the broader Ottoman world. The 18th century al-Bāsi Mosque Library, for example, included books sent to Djerba from the Ottoman capital at Istanbul.⁴⁸ Similarly, the al-Bārūnī Library, formed in the early 19th century, brought together books from Egypt and Libya.⁴⁹ Without examining any surviving exemplars, it is difficult to know if the al-Ba‘tūrī library held works copied outside of Djerba other than the two early manuscripts discussed above. The fragments still in possession of the family included two folios in *naskh* script, which were no doubt produced outside of Djerba.

47 One note lists four titles borrowed by “‘Umar b. Bū‘īsā Bakīr” (undated). The second lists three titles borrowed by Sālim al-‘Adālī (dated 18 July 1978) and specifies “with the intention to photograph them after presenting them (‘araḍihā) to Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb.” The manuscripts may well have remained in the library of Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb. I again thank Dr. Ali Boujdidi for sharing these images with me. For the full titles and bibliographic references of these seven titles, see the inventory of the library in the appendix.

48 Boujdidi and Love, Jr., *Preserving Endangered Archives in Jerba*.

49 On the history of the library & the life of its founder, see: *Fihris al-Bārūniyya* 1–37.

Based on the titles in the extant inventory, it is clear that the collection included far more non-Ibadi than Ibadi titles. Of the roughly 67 titles in the inventory, around 25 appear to be known Ibadi titles. To these can be added the seven or so mostly Ibadi titles borrowed and not returned to the library in the 1970s (Appendix 2). The remaining texts in the inventory represent the same Sunni titles found in other contemporary Djerban libraries in the 18th and 19th centuries. These include widely copied works like the *Mukhtaṣar Ibn al-Ḥāḡib*, (#3) the *Talkhīṣ al-bayyān* of al-Taftazānī (#19), as well as other well-known *hawāshī* by Sunni authors and books on Arabic language and grammar. The Ibadi titles in the library include not only Maghribi but also Omani titles, which suggests that the al-Baʿtūrīs had access to other collections on the island housing copies of the latter. Beyond a handful of well-known works like the hadith collection of al-Rabīʿ b. al-Ḥabīb, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, eastern Ibadi works were relatively unusual in Maghribi Ibadi libraries until the 19th century.⁵⁰

Three main collections in Djerba would have served as sources for the transmission of Ibadi and non-Ibadi manuscript works into the al-Baʿtūrī Library: the al-Bāsi Mosque Library, the al-Bārūnī Library, and the library of the island's Great Mosque (*al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*). As described above, a manuscript note by Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-Baʿtūrī demonstrates that the family used texts from the al-Bāsi Mosque. The borrowed book, a commentary on Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī's *Kitāb al-talkhīs*, appears near the end of the al-Baʿtūrī inventory.⁵¹ Given the family's ties to the other two libraries, the al-Baʿtūrīs likely copied texts from them, as well. ʿUmar b. Aḥmad al-Baʿtūrī (d. late-19th c.) studied under Yūsuf al-Maṣʿabī (d.1187/1773) at the Great Mosque and his son Aḥmad studied there under Yūsuf's son, Muḥammad (d.1207/1792).⁵² A manuscript copy of an inventory of the Great Mosque's library from mid-19th century, which survives today in the al-Bārūniyya Library, shows it held a rich collection of Sunni works.⁵³ Both ʿUmar and Aḥmad, as well as Aḥmad's own son ʿUmar, would also likely have had access to the collection of Saʿīd al-Bārūnī, who had

50 There are at least three identifiable Omani works in the inventory: "14. Ḥāshiyat al-muḥaṣṣhī 'alā al-jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ" (p.19); "16. Kitāb al-[daqāʾiq?] li-baʿḍ ʿulamāʾ ʿUmān al-Ibāḍiyya" (p.19); "26 Qaṣīdat Ibn Nazar al-ʿUmānī" (p.20); "63. Minhāj al-ṭalībīn li-Khamīs b. Saʿīd al-ʿUmānī" (p.21). See appendix below for the bibliographic references.

51 Number #65 in the inventory, *Qāʾimat al-kutub* 21.

52 Bin Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba* 155–156.

53 "Taḡyīd kutub al-jāmiʿ al-kabīr" (dated 1272/1855–1856), Makt. al-Bārūniyya R13. Curiously, the inventory does not include any identifiable Ibadi texts. Much of the collection of the al-Maṣʿabī family, who served as Imams for the Great Mosque in the 18th and early-19th centuries, seems to have ended up in the al-Bārūnī Library today. See: *Fihris al-Bārūniyya* 30–34.

collected and copied hundreds of Ibadi and Sunni texts during his time in Cairo at the beginning of the 19th century.⁵⁴ Their access to the collection is even more certain since as noted above their grandfather, Aḥmad al-Baʿtūrī (d. after 1815), also knew Saʿīd al-Bārūnī personally.

4 Conclusion

In writing this short history of the al-Baʿtūrī family and their library in Djerba, I have sought to bring together many different types of fragmentary evidence. The combined result of these oral interviews, manuscript notes from Djerba and Naples, library catalogs and inventories, and a file from the Tunisian National Archives are not revelatory. Yet their assemblage reconstructs a history for a library that no longer exists, as well as a relatively coherent picture of the family's history. Currently, efforts are underway in Djerba and elsewhere in the Maghrib to document and to catalog other Ibadi collections in the region. The example of the al-Baʿtūrī Library demonstrates two features of this manuscript landscape that merit attention.

First, the al-Baʿtūrī Library resulted from the movement of people and books across the region. Its founders came to Djerba from the Jebel Nafusa, carrying at least some of their manuscripts with them on the way. Subsequent additions, including both Ibadi and non-Ibadi titles, ended up in the collection in part because of the increasing prominence of Sunni Islam on the island. Others made their way into the collection as a result of the peregrinations of other Djerbans, who brought books back to the island with them from Istanbul, Cairo, and beyond.

The second feature of the library's history, as well as that of the family, is that such an assemblage of fragmentary sources is necessary for understanding the history of private manuscript collections and their links with local histories. Other studies of individual collections and families in Djerba have revealed the interconnected nature of manuscript libraries, in addition to the importance of family papers, archival documents, and oral histories.⁵⁵ By bringing together what initially appears a meagre collection of historical fragments and placing them in both local and broader contexts, family and library histories like the

54 Bābāʿammī, *Muʿjam aʿlām* ii, 184.

55 For example, see the work by Muḥammad al-Marīmī and Alī al-Būjdīdī on the al-Šātūrī and al-Bāsi families, respectively. al-Marīmī, al-Dhākira al-ʿāʾiliyya"; Boujdīdī, Majmūʿat al-makhṭūʿāt al-ibāḍiyya bi-maktabat al-Bāsiyīn bi-Jarba: muqārana kūdikūlūjiyya.

al-Ba‘tūrīs can be reconstituted. More remarkable yet, this remains true even under the most dramatic circumstances in which the library in question no longer exists.

Appendix 1: The Inventory of the al-Ba‘tūrī Library (1987)

الغرض: مكتبة البعطوري (4)⁵⁶

[ص 19]

1. المدد والممنون في علم الكتاب المكنون الجزء 4 لشهاب الدين الشافعي الشهير بالسمين (30 ب)⁵⁷
2. كتاب في الحديث (37 ا)
3. مختصر ابن الحاجب في الاصول نسخ عبد الرحمان بن احمد (ب) سنة 911
4. كتاب في النحو (33 ب)
5. حاشية للمحشي⁵⁸ (50 ا)
6. كتاب في النحو (32 ب)
7. مجموعة كتب⁵⁹ (46)
8. شرح الاجرومية لمحمد بن يعلا الشريف الحسيني (23 ب)
9. كتاب الفرائض⁶⁰ (44 ب)

56 The al-Ba‘tūrī collection is the fourth in a series of inventories in the original type-written document: “Qā’imat al-kutub al-mawjūda fī al-maktabāt al-khāṣṣa wa-al-‘amma allatī tamakkanā min jardiḥa li-iḥṣā’ al-wathā’iq al-jarbiyya,” (dated April 1987). The al-Ba‘tūrī collection appears between pages 19–21. The original is document no.72 in the library of the *Jam’iyyat ṣīyānat jazīrat Jarba* (Djerba, Tunisia). Unfortunately, the pages of only five full inventories of original seven have survived. This document is, to my knowledge, the unique original and all photocopies of it that I have encountered on the island were made from this copy. I have elected here only to provide bibliographic references to Ibadi titles, relying on the three-volume comprehensive bibliography of Martin Custers.

58 Martin Custers, *al-Ibadiyya: A Bibliography*, 2nd ed. (Hildesheim, 2016), ii, 367.

59 Possibly the same *majmū’* described in Ennami, “A Description of New Ibadi Manuscripts from North Africa,” 75.

60 Likely the “Kitāb al-farā’id” by Abū Ṭāhir Ismā’il b. Mūsā al-Jayṭālī (eighth/14th c.). See Custers ii, 262.

10. (([كذا] شرح عمر التالتي⁶¹ على كتاب الاصول لتبغورين بن عيسى المنشوطي [كذا]⁶²
[47ا] نسخ عمر ابن القاسم البعطوري سنة 1182
11. مختصر الشماحي [كذا]⁶³ على كتاب العقل⁶⁴ سنة 1143 نفس النسخ [أي عمر بن القاسم
البعطوري]
12. الفن الثاني في علم البيان [سنة] 1311 (53 ب)
13. حاشية الخبيصي في المنطق (34 ب)
14. حاشية المحشي على الجامع الصحيح للربيع ابن الحبيب⁶⁵ سنة 1173 (13 ا)
15. كتاب اضياء وفواكه العلوم
16. كتاب الرقاع لبعض علماء عمان الإباضية⁶⁶ (فقه) (34 ا)
17. تفسير القرآن نسخة عمرو بن ابي القاسم البعطوري [سنة] 1191 هـ (37 ب)
18. كتاب الناموس وفائق القاموس في علم اللغة (29 ب)
[ص 20]
19. تلخيص البيان في ايضاح المعاني للتفتزاني (22 ب)
20. حاشية المولى علي الجوهري على رسالة الوضع للخواجة علي السمرقدي (28 ب)
21. [قيس؟] ابن الربيع في الحديث (41 ا)
22. شرح الفية ابن مالك للشيخ بدر الدين ابن عبد الله الحسن (21 ب)
23. شرح قواعد الاسلام وذكر حقوقهم أبو طاهر الجييطالي⁶⁷ (14)

61 Abū Ḥaṣṣ ‘Umar b. Ramaḍān al-Tulātī al-Jarbī (d. 1187/1773). See Custers ii, 461.

62 Tabghūrīn b. ‘Īsā b. Dāwūd al-Malshūṭī (d. sixth/twelfth c.). This book is known as the “Aqīdat Tabghūrīn b. ‘Īsā.” This manuscript was described in Ennami, “A Description of New Ibadī Manuscripts from North Africa,” 84. See also: Custers ii, 295.

63 Abū al-Abbās Aḥmad b. Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd al-Wāhid (d. 928/1522). See: Custers ii, 389.

64 Almost certainly should be read as “al-Adl” rather than “al-Aql,” referring to the work known as “Mukhtaṣar al-Adl wa-al-inṣāf.” This work is attributed to Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf al-Sadrātī (d. 570/1174). See: Custers ii, 393.

65 See “Ḥāshiyat al-tartīb” in Custers ii, 377.

66 While unable to identify a work by this title, this could refer to a very popular Omani work from the late-19th century, the *Kitāb al-daqqā‘iq*, also known as the *Kitāb daqqāq a’nāq ahl al-nifāq* by Abū Nabḥān Jā‘id b. Khamīs al-Kharūṣī (d. 1238/1822). See Custers i, 285–286.

67 Abū Ṭāhir Ismā‘īl al-Jayṭālī (d. eighth/14th c.), on whose “Qawā‘id al-islām” see Custers ii, 267.

39. كتاب في الحديث لاحمد بن ابراهيم الجبازي نسخ يوسف بن محمد [المصعبي؟] (36)
40. الكشف الجزء الثاني (18)
41. كتاب في الحديث (49 ا)
42. الجزء الاول من حاشية القطر للشيخ [بياض] الحمص الشافعي (22 ب)
43. حاشية على ابن عقيل للسجاعي (16)
44. كتاب في النحو (45 ب)
45. حاشية المصعبي علي [كذا] الويراني⁷⁷ (4 ا)
46. الايضاح للشماخي⁷⁸ (17 ا)
47. تحفة الاحباب في علم الحساب سنة 1145 (31 ب)
48. قطر الندى لابن اسحاق ابراهيم الاندلسي (20 ب)
49. حاشية الصبان على شرح الملوني [كذا] (10 ب)
50. زهرة النفوس الزكية على شرح الصبب الرحبية (35 ب)
51. حاشية لمحيشي على كتاب الوضع للجنائز⁷⁹ (10 ا)
52. كتاب في علم اللغة العربية لعبد الله المكي الشافعي [ص21]
53. محمود بن احمد اللعيني (15 ب)
54. [ع]نوان غير واضح (50)
55. كتاب في الاصول لاب[ي] عل[ي] الحسي بن سعود اليوسي (2 ب)
56. شرح جمع الجوامع للخللي المحلي شرح تاج الدين السبكي نسخ سعيد بن ابي القاسم البعظوري (17)
57. حاشية على مولى المدائني (4 و5)
58. كتاب في الحديث سنة 1223 (3 ب)

77 This refers to the *hāshiya* by Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Maṣ'abī (d. 1187/1773), a gloss on the work known as the "al-Muṣarra" by Qāsim b. Yahyā al-Wirānī al-Khayrī (d. 1073/1622). See Custers ii, 504 (on al-Wirānī) and ii, 337–339 (on al-Maṣ'abī).

78 Abū Sākin 'Āmir b. 'Alī al-Shammākhī (d. 792/1390). On his *Kitāb al-īdāh*, see Custers ii, 406–411.

79 Custers ii, 249–252. On the *Ḥāshiya* on the *Kitāb al-waḍ'*, see Custers ii, 374–375.

59. كتاب في التوحيد شرح النونية⁸⁰ (11 ا)
60. رسالة سير نفوسة للشيخ مقرئ[د] بن محمد البعظوري [كذا] النفوسي⁸¹ [سنة] 595 هـ (25 ا)
61. رسالة يوسف ابن خلفون المزاتي⁸²
62. حاشية على كتاب مختصر العدل⁸³ (36)
63. منهاج الطالبين نخيس بن سعيد العماني⁸⁴
64. كتاب الاشتموني في النحو
65. الجزء الثاني من شرح ابن يعقوب على تلخيص المعاني والبيان للقزويني (25 ب)
66. كتاب المنطق للسوسي (8 ب)
67. الكشف الجزء الاول

Appendix 2: Additional Titles from the al-Baʿtūrī Library

The following eight titles are those of manuscripts attested in manuscript notes still in possession of the al-Baʿtūrī family today. I drew these titles from three handwritten statements of loan, dating to the 1970s, images of which were provided to me by Dr. Ali Boujdidi via e-mail in October 2020. I have transcribed the titles as they appear in those notes, adding bibliographic references when I am fairly certain of the intended title.

A. Titles borrowed by ʿUmar b. Būʿisā Bakīr (statement of loan not dated)

1. كتاب الارشاد في علم الكلام
2. مجموعة رسائل مسائل التوحيد شرح الجهالات⁸⁵

80 On the “Sharḥ al-nūniyya,” see Custers ii, 504.

81 Muqrīn b. Muḥammad al-Bughṭūrī (d. seventh/13th c.). This work is known by several different titles, on which see Custers ii, 134–135.

82 Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf b. Khalfūn al-Mazātī (d. sixth/twelfth c.). This title likely refers to the “Aḥwibāt Ibn Khalfūn,” on which see Custers ii, 318–319.

83 Likely the *ḥāshiya* of Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Sadwīkshī, “al-Muḥashshī” (d. 1088/1677). See Custers ii, 376–377.

84 The work’s full title is “Minhāj al-ṭālibīn wa-balāgh al-rāghibīn,” attributed to Khamīs b. Saʿīd b. ʿAlī b. Masʿūd al-Rustāqī (eleventh/17th c.). See Custers: i, 467–470.

85 There have been several commentaries on the work known as the *Kitāb al-jahālāt* that this could refer to, on which see: Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya*, ii, 63.

3. الرد على الناكثة و عمروس بن فتح⁸⁶

4. الدليل لأهل العقول

B. Titles borrowed by ‘Amr Khalifa al-Nāmī (statement dated 1 September 1971)

1. الرد على المخالفين ليغلا بن زلتاف و عمروس بن فتح⁸⁷

2. سير نفوسة ورقة = A - 25-88

C. Titles borrowed by Aḥmad al-‘Adālī (statement dated 18 July 1978)

1. نسخة من شرح الدعائم للشيخ قاسم البرادي [كذا] مائة وأربع وعشرون صفحة⁸⁹

2. ورقات مخطوطة في العقيدة: ثمانى ورقات

3. ثمانى ورقات أيضا في الأصول العامة

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86 Custers, ii, 309.

87 While the second part of this title may refer to the same title as number 3 in section A, the first is a different title known as *al-Radd ‘alā jamī‘ al-mukhālīfīn* and attributed to Abū Khazr Yaḡhlā b. Zaltāf al-Wisyanī (and not co-attributed to ‘Amrūs b. Faṭḥ). See: Custers, ii, 505–506.

88 Custers, ii, 134–135.

89 Abū al-Qāsim al-Barrādī, *Sharḥ K. al-da‘ā‘im*. See: Custers, ii, 103.

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