

Ibn ʿĀ'isha: Matrilineal Kinship, Naming Practices, and the Poetics of Marwanid Matrilineality

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Abstract

This paper investigates the overlooked topic of maternal ties of kinship in Umayyad history through the case study of ʿĀ'isha bint Hishām ibn Ismāʿīl al-Makhzūmī, the mother of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743). Using a range of primary sources, including annalistic, *adab*, and eschatological sources, as well as early Islamic poetry, it investigates the significance of matrilineal kinship and naming practices in the Marwanid period. ʿĀ'isha's representations across sources illuminates how sources discuss caliphal mothers and the role of the matrilineal family in marriage and naming practices. A brief prosopographical analysis also demonstrates the widespread use of maternal names in early Islamic society – ʿĀ'isha is said to have named her son after her father. Early Islamic poets praised maternal kinship ties, indicating an appeal to caliphal constituents from the maternal family. Overall, by incorporating maternal ties of kinship into Marwanid history, we may gain a more complete understanding of early Islamic society.

Keywords

Umayyads – matrilineality – onomastics – prosopography – Islamic History

1 Introduction

The Umayyad caliphs had mothers. However, asking who they were, where they came from, and what role these kinship ties played remain important and understudied questions. By and large, traditional early Islamic annalistic sources – the main sources for reconstructing the history of the period – are not invested in representing the role or importance of matrilineal kinship ties. This is in part owed to the adoption of patrilineal succession by Mu'āwiyā ibn Abī Sufyān (d. 60/80) and the subsequent production of Abbasid texts after nearly two-hundred years of patrilineal legitimizing rhetoric.¹ This not only established the legitimacy of the ruling elite but also was used to invalidate external claims, such as those of Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 72/692) and Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762) whose kinship ties were largely maternal.² Compounding the limited visibility of maternal ties of kinship is the wide-scale adoption of concubinage by both the Umayyads of al-Andalus and the post-fourth *fitna* (195–211/811–827) Abbasids, which meant their heirs did not possess wider matrilineal kinship ties to call upon. However, no caliphs were born from a concubine-union until the third *fitna* (126–137/744–755)³ and, as demonstrated by Asad Ahmed, Majied Robinson and Andrew Marsham in recent prosopographical studies, matrilineal kinship ties are fundamental for understanding the makeup of the early Islamic elite.⁴ Uriel Simonsohn

1 Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 192.

2 Ryan Lynch, "Sons of the Muhājirūn: Some Comments on Ibn al-Zubayr and Legitimizing Power in Seventh-Century Islamic History," in *The Long Seventh Century: Continuity and Discontinuity in an Age of Transition*, ed. Alessandro Gnasso, Emanuele Intagliata, Thomas MacMaster, and Bethan Morris (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 251–68; Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762: Ṭālibīs and Early 'Abbāsīs in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 60–79.

3 The third *fitna* does not have clear cut beginning and end dates. The dates adopted here take as its extremities the rebellion against al-Walid ibn Yazid in 126/744 (as per Hawting) and, following the conclusions of Borrut, the defeat of the Abbasid pretendant 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī in 136/754, which saw the consolidation of the Abbasid dynasty. Gerald R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2000), 90; Antoine Borrut, *Entre memoire et pouvoir: l'espace Syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides* (v. 72–193/692–809) (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 354–81.

4 Asad Ahmed, *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hījāz: Five Prosopographical Case Studies* (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2011); Majied Robinson, *Marriage in the Tribe of Muhammad: A Statistical Study of Early Arabic Genealogical Literature* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2019); Andrew Marsham, "Kinship, Dynasty and the Umayyads," in *The Historian of Islam at Work: Essays in Honour of Hugh Kennedy*, ed. Maaïke Van Berkel and Letizia Osti (Brill: Leiden, 2022), 12–45.

underlines their overarching importance stating that “the extant evidence highlights the significance of her (the mother’s) enduring relations with her natal family, especially for its material support. In other instances, a woman would attain social status through her descendants.”⁵

The present paper will build on this research to demonstrate how maternal kinship ties served to establish dynastic rule and forge alliance in the Marwanid period by looking at the role of matrilineality in the reign of the longest-serving Marwanid caliph, Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743). Hishām’s mother was ʿĀʾisha bint Hishām ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Hishām ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra al-Makhzūmī, of the Banū Makhzūm (sons of Makhzūm), a prominent Qurayshī clan.⁶ First, I will investigate the narrative (*khbar*) of Hishām’s birth and the representation of ʿĀʾisha as foolish (*ḥamqāʾ*) and the claim that she named her son after her father. That there even is an account – which was widely transmitted – of Hishām’s birth is notable, as it provides information about relations between the Banū Makhzūm and the Marwanids, Hishām’s age, and naming practices. Secondly, I will demonstrate the matrilineal influence through a brief prosopography of prominent Marwanid males as preserved in the *Nasab Quraysh* (Genealogy of the Quraysh) to show that male sons were often named after their important maternal grandfathers in an appeal to these kinship ties. Lastly, the paper will highlight matrilineal praise of Hishām in the poetry of Jarīr ibn ʿAṭīyya (d. c. 110–111/728–729) and al-Farazdaq (d. 114/732), where ʿĀʾisha and the Banū Makhzūm are used to praise the Marwanids particularly through language of nobility and generosity.

2 The Birth of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik

Unlike other Marwanid caliphs, Arabic annalistic and belles-lettres (*adab*) sources preserve an account of Hishām’s birth and his mother ʿĀʾisha. This account (*khbar*) can be found in al-Balādhurī’s (d. 279/892) *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (Genealogy of the Nobles) al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 311/923) *Taʾrīkh* (History), the anonymous *Kitāb al-Uyūn al-Akhbār* (Book of Choice Narratives), and Ibn ʿAbd

5 Uriel Simonsohn, *Female Power and Religious Change in the Medieval Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 8.

6 Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab Quraysh*, ed. Évariste Levi-Provençal (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif li-l-Ṭibāʾa wa-l-Nashr, 1953), 164; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkar, 13 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), 8:367. The only literature I am aware of on ʿĀʾisha is two sentences in Nabia Abbott’s overview of women under the Umayyads, where she is mentioned for her “foolishness” and divorce. Nabia Abbott, “Women and the State in Early Islam: the Umayyads,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1, no. 3 (1942): 341–68 at 349.

Rabbihi's (d. 328/940) *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* (The Unique Necklace).⁷ The accounts are strikingly similar when compared to one another with variations only visible in word choice.⁸ The most common transmitter across the sources is al-Madā'inī (d. 225/843), and the account is always provided at the beginning of Hishām's reign.⁹ Her name, 'Ā'isha, is primarily preserved in the recension of al-Madā'inī, but as we shall see she can be identified by this name in poetry; al-Balādhurī says she may have been named Fāṭima or Maryam.¹⁰ The account provided here is found in al-Ṭabarī, but I will note variations from the other versions where relevant. The structure of the *khbar* is shared across sources and can be summarised as follows:

1. 'Ā'isha is Hishām's mother, she was foolish (*ḥamqā'*)
2. Statuettes narrative.
3. 'Abd al-Malik repudiated (*ṭallaqa*) her.
4. Hishām was born after the defeat of Muṣ'ab ibn al-Zubayr (d. 72/691) and 'Ā'isha named her son after her father.

This anecdote reveals three important factors for the ensuing discussion: 'Ā'isha is remembered as foolish and for this she was divorced by 'Abd al-Malik, the Makhzūmīs played a prominent role in the union, and 'Ā'isha named Hishām after her own father.¹¹ The full narrative follows:

7 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 8:367; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa-l-Mulūk*, ed. Michael J. de Goeje, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1879), 2:1466. Interestingly, the *Kitāb al-'Uyūn* does not say why he divorced her but does add that she was pregnant, see *Kitāb al-'Uyūn wa-l-Ḥadā'iq fī Akhbār al-Ḥaqā'iq*, ed. Michael J. De Goeje and Pieter De Jong, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 1:81–2. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's version is substantially shorter but as shall be discussed it also contains the "dream" *khbar* mirroring the structure of *al-'Uyūn*, Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, ed. Muḥammad Sa'īd al-'Aryān, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1983), 5:192.

8 For instance, where al-Ṭabarī, and *al-'Uyūn* have *ta'amalu minhu tamāthil* (She would construct statues out of it), see *Ta'rikh*, 2:1466; *Kitāb al-'Uyūn*, 82. In al-Balādhurī, we find the near identical *taja'alu minhu tamāthil* (she would make statues out of it), see *Ansāb*, 8:367.

9 On the transmission of al-Madā'inī's work, see Ilkka Lindstedt, "The Transmissions of al-Madā'inīs Historical Material to al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī: A Comparison and Analysis of Two Khabars," *Studia Orientalia* 114 (2013): 41–64; Ilkka Lindstedt, "The Role of al-Madā'inīs Students in the Transmission of His Material," *Der Islam* 91, no. 2 (2014): 295–340.

10 Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 164; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 8:367.

11 As pointed out by Kecia Ali, "marriage was very much a family matter, and involvement of kin in arranging and concluding women's and girls' marriages was assumed." Kecia Ali, *Marriage, and Slavery in Early Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 31.

His (Hishām's) mother was 'Ā'isha [...] she was foolish (*ḥamqā*),¹² her family instructed her not to speak to 'Abd al-Malik until she gave birth. She would stack cushions, mounting the cushion she would ride it as if it were a mount. She would buy frankincense and after chewing it she would make statuettes out of it and set the statuettes on the pillows. Having named each statuette with the name of a slave girl, she would exclaim: "O *fulāna*, O *fulāna*."¹³ 'Abd al-Malik would later repudiate her on account of her foolishness.¹⁴ When 'Abd al-Malik went out to fight Muṣ'ab ibn al-Zubayr and killed him, the news of Hishām's birth reached the Caliph. Looking upon his birth as a good omen, he named the child Manṣūr, but the mother gave him the name of her father, Hishām. 'Abd al-Malik did not oppose that.¹⁵

'Ā'isha's foolishness appears to be related to what could be interpreted as child-like or underdeveloped behaviour, playing with figurines and cushions. 'Ā'isha was undoubtedly younger than 'Abd al-Malik at the time of their union, as she belonged to a later generation. However, it is unlikely that she was a child, meaning the sources may be drawing upon a narrative of neurodiversity, which they are not equipped to recognize.¹⁶ The detail that her family instructed her not to speak to 'Abd al-Malik alludes to her foolishness and recognizes the maternal family's role in the marriage. The allegiance of the Makhzūmīs during the *fitna* is not easy to generalize. They appear to have been linked to the Meccan caliph, Ibn al-Zubayr; however, the line of Hishām ibn Ismā'īl does not seem to have had strong ties to him.¹⁷ That a clan typically linked to Ibn al-Zubayr married into the Marwanid opposition during the

12 The word *ḥamqā* is the feminine of *aḥmaq*. There is a sub-genre of literature known as *akhbār al-ḥamqā* (stories of fools or stupid people), this narrative may fit within this canon. See Sibṭ al-Jawzī, *Akhbār al-Ḥamqā wa-l-Mughafallīn*, ed. 'Azīza Fuwāl (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2005).

13 *Fulāna* (masc. *Fulān*) is the place-holder name in Arabic, equivalent to so-and-so.

14 Interestingly *al-Uyūn* does not say why he divorced her but does add that she was pregnant, *Kitāb al-Uyūn*, 82. al-Balādhurī simply states he divorced her, al-Balādhurī, *Ansab*, 8:367.

15 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:1466; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, tr. Khalid Blankinship, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, 40 vols. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985–99), 25:1–2.

16 Ahmed suggests that a generation span should be viewed as twenty years, Ahmed, *Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijāz*, 7–8. On representations of "madmen and women" in Islamic literature see, Michael Dols, *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

17 Two Makhzūmīs were appointed as governors during the caliphate of Ibn al-Zubayr, al-Ḥārith al-Qubā' ibn 'Abdallāh over al-Baṣra and 'Abdallāh al-Azraq ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān over al-Janad in Yemen. al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 332.

second *fitna* is an excellent reminder not to view early Islamic constituents in a strict binary. Furthermore, that ‘Abd al-Malik and ‘Ā’isha’s union allegedly preceded the defeat of the Zubayrids serves as a reminder that all caliphs who reigned before the third *fitna* were products of unions made before the end of the second *fitna*. This marriage may have been a Marwanid attempt to gain support from the Banū Makhzūm, as they seem to have retained significant authority in the contested Hijāz.

Linking Hishām’s birth to the defeat of Muṣ‘ab al-Zubayr (d. 72/691) provides a *terminus ante quem* for the union and for Hishām’s birth, making him one of ‘Abd al-Malik’s youngest sons. This may be a *topos* used to underline Marwanid legitimacy, as is quite common in Abbasid literature. For example, al-Ma‘mūn (r. 198–218/813–333) is said to have been born on the so called night of the [three] Caliphs, i.e. the same day as al-Hādī’s death (r. 169–170/781–782) and Hārūn’s (r. 170–193/786–809) accession in 170/782.¹⁸ That Hishām could have been named Manṣūr is noteworthy, given Ibn Ḥazm falsely assigned this as his regnal title (*laqab*) and because the sources often compare the reigns of Hishām and the second Abbasid caliph, al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775), with the latter often asking about the conduct of the former.¹⁹ That both ruled for twenty years may also explain some of the comparisons. Even if it is a trope, Hishām is undoubtedly one of ‘Abd al-Malik’s youngest free-born sons. This is based on three factors: first, Hishām was not tasked with any position during the reign of his father ‘Abd al-Malik, unlike his brothers al-Walīd (r. 86–96/705–715) and Sulaymān (r. 96–99/715–717) who both led the pilgrimage (*hajj*), and al-Walīd even led the summer military expedition against the Byzantines (*ṣā’ifa*) in 77/697.²⁰ One tradition preserved in al-Ṭabarī states that Hishām led a summer military

18 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh*, 3:578–9; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, tr. Clifford Bosworth, 30:1–2.

19 Ibn Ḥazm, *Rasā’il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās, 2 vols. (Beirut: al-Mu’asasa al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashr, 2007), 2:48. Al-Manṣūr is often said to have enquired about the conduct of Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh*, 3:412–13, 439. The representation of these two caliphs is strikingly similar even in non-Muslim sources. For instance, the eighth-century Armenian chronicler Lewond mirrors their reigns by emphasizing “the iron yoke of taxation” the two caliphs put on Armenia. See Lewond, “The History of Lewond,” in *Matenagirk’ Hayoc’*, ed. Geworg Tēr-Vardanyan, 22 vols. (Ant’lias: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2007), 6:804, 827.

20 For al-Walīd’s *ṣā’ifa*, see Khalīfa, *Ta’rikh Khālīfa ibn Khayyāt*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, 2 vols. (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah wa-l-Siyāḥa wa-l-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1967), 1:354; Khālīfa ibn Khayyāt, *Khālīfa ibn Khayyāt’s History on the Umayyad Dynasty*, tr. Carl Wurtzel (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 138; al-Ya’qūbī, *Ta’rikh al-Ya’qūbī*, ed. Martijn T. Houtsma, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1883), 2:337; al-Ya’qūbī, *The Works of Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Ya’qūbī: An English Translation*, tr. Chase Robinson, Matthew Gordon, Everett Rowson, and Michael Fishbein, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 3:987; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh*, 2:1032; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, tr. Everett Rowson, 22:176.

expedition in 86/705, but I have found no parallels for this. Furthermore, al-Balādhurī states that Hishām went to defend Melitene sword in hand in 123/740–741 and that “he (Hishām) had not wielded it before that in his days.”²¹ Nor was Hishām granted a governorship like his brothers al-Walīd, Sulaymān, and ʿAbdallāh.²² Second, Hishām’s young age during the caliphate of his father is evidenced by the role of his maternal grandfather and namesake, Hishām ibn Ismāʿīl al-Makhzūmī, who only became governor of Mecca and Medina in 83/702–703.²³ The fact that the Makhzūmīs appear as important figures in the administration of the caliphate towards the tail end of ʿAbd al-Malik’s rule supports the late date of the caliph’s marriage to ʿĀʾisha and suggests their divorce did not cut ties between the families. The final piece of evidence lending credence to the sources’ claim that Hishām was among ʿAbd al-Malik’s youngest sons is that at no point does he feature in any of the succession narratives.

The caliphal succession order is often foreshadowed by narrative sources via anachronistic terminology and narratives. A salient example of this from the Abbasid period is how the sources refer to the caliph al-Amīn (r. 193–198/809–813) as the deposed one (*al-makhlūʾ*) and to al-Maʾmūn as commander of the faithful (*amīr al-muʾminīn*) during his brother’s reign.²⁴ In the case of Hishām, though, it is remarkable that there are no narratives constructed around his eventual succession, despite most sources preserving an account of ʿAbd al-Malik’s intended succession order. These narratives always name al-Walīd and Sulaymān followed by (depending on the source) one of the sons of ʿĀtika bint Yazīd ibn Muʾāwiya, Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (himself a son of ʿĀtika) and then Marwān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik the younger (*al-asghar*).²⁵ Marwān died in 98/716

21 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. Michael J. De Goeje, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 1:186; al-Balādhurī, *History of the Arab Invasions: The Conquest of the Lands*, tr. Hugh Kennedy (London: IB Tauris, 2022), 199.

22 Peter Verkinderen and Simon Gundelfinger, “The Governors of Al-Shām and Fārs in the Early Islamic Empire – A Comparative Regional Perspective,” in *Transregional and Regional Elites – Connecting the Early Islamic Empire*, ed. Stefan Heidemann and Hannah-Lena Hagemann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 255–329 at 298. For Sulaymān’s governorship of Palestine and ʿAbdallāh’s over Egypt see, Khalifa ibn Khayyāt, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:392–94.

23 Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 328; Khalifa ibn Khayyāt, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:383; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:202; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:1085.

24 Tobias Andersson, *Early Sunnī Historiography: A Study of the Taʾrīkh of Khalifa ibn Khayyāt* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 73; Khalifa ibn Khayyāt, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:466–68; al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 360; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:442; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 3:975.

25 Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 162. Another version in Ibn Saʿd mentions this arrangement but indicates the caliphate should pass to both sons of ʿĀtika, see Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. Edward Sachau, 9 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1904–40), 5:250. For Yazīd and Marwān, see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:337; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, tr. David Powers, 24:41–2. To which Marwān this report refers is not clear, given that ʿAbd al-Malik had two sons named

according to al-Ṭabarī, so his preservation within these succession narratives may indicate an earlier historical layer. This makes the absence of Hishām even more notable and underlines his youth at the time of ‘Abd al-Malik’s death. Perhaps, given that ‘Abd al-Malik divorced ‘Ā’isha, Hishām was not high up in the pecking order. Hopefully, this serves to demonstrate that we may conjecture on a caliph’s age even without using the dating mechanisms of the sources, which nearly all agree that Hishām was born the year Muṣ‘ab was defeated.²⁶ This would make Hishām approximately thirteen years old upon his father’s death and one of the youngest sons of ‘Abd al-Malik, which explains both his lengthy reign and why he does not appear in any succession narrative until the death of Sulaymān ibn ‘Abd al-Malik in 99/717; he was just too young.²⁷

Returning to the account about Hishām’s birth, he is the only Marwanid caliph whose mother was repudiated. Given Hishām’s eventual succession, it is doubtful that divorce had any impact on a child’s ability (or that of the faction supporting him) to navigate elite politics.²⁸ The term used is *ṭallaqa/tāliq*, which is divorce achieved through unilateral repudiation by the husband.²⁹

Marwān, Marwān the elder (*al-kabīr*) and Marwān the younger (*al-asghar*). The first was a full brother of al-Walid and Sulaymān given that his mother was Umm Walid bint ‘Abbās ibn Juz‘a, while *al-asghar*’s mother was ‘Ātika bint Yazīd.

26 Khalifa ibn Khayyāt, *Ta’rikh*, 1:341. Al-Ya’qūbī states that Hishām was fifty-three when he died in 125/743, meaning he was born in 72/691–2, al-Ya’qūbī, *Ta’rikh*, 2:394. The *Kitāb al-Uyūn* also states fifty-three, *Kitāb al-Uyūn*, 1:107. Al-Ṭabarī reports differing accounts of his age ranging from fifty-five to fifty-two, giving us a date range of 69/688–9 to 73/692–3, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh*, 2:1728–29. Al-Mas‘ūdī states fifty-three, al-Mas‘ūdī, *al-Tanbih wa-l-Ishraf*, ed. Michael J. De Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1894), 322. Finally, also fifty-three in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd*, 5:191.

27 For a full discussion of the nomination process on Sulaymān’s death, see Clifford Bosworth, “Rajā’ ibn Ḥaywa al-Kindī and the Umayyad Caliphs,” in *The Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures*, ed. Fred Donner, The Formation of the Classical Islamic World (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 90–133. There is one anachronistic narrative that alludes to Hishām’s future accession in both *Kitāb al-Uyūn* and *al-Iqd al-Farīd*. It is a dream that ‘Abd al-Malik had interpreted by Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab: “‘Abd al-Malik saw in his sleep, ‘Ā’isha, the mother of Hishām, cutting his head off and into twenty pieces. So Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab interpreted it and said: ‘Ā’isha will give birth to a son of ‘Abd al-Malik who will rule twenty years.” This dream and its subsequent interpretation immediately precede the birth narrative discussed earlier, feeding into the narrative of ‘Ā’isha’s *ḥamqā’*-ness but also the requisite need to establish Hishām as a pre-destined ruler, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd*, 5:192; *Kitāb al-Uyūn*, 81.

28 Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya’s mother Maysun bint Baḥdal may have been divorced by Mu‘āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān, however, the sources may have conflated her with the poet Maysūn bint Jandal, known for producing a poem insulting her husband, prompting him to divorce her, see Abbott, “Women and the State in Early Islam: The Umayyads,” 342–3.

29 Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money, and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 69–88. See also Ali’s discussion on divorce, which makes use of legal texts, *Marriage, and Slavery in Early Islam*, 133–65.

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih – still on the authority of al-Madāʾinī – expands on the repudiation with a short report, stating that Hishām was born after the divorce. Corroborating this piece of information is the addition by the author of the *Kitāb al-Uyūn* that “ʿAbd al-Malik repudiated her when she was pregnant.”³⁰ These accounts serve to assert that ʿAbd al-Malik respected the waiting period (*ʿidda*) and to remove doubts about Hishām’s parenthood.³¹ As if the repudiation and the *ḥamqā*-ness might have detracted from Hishām’s legitimacy, the Andalusī author, himself a panegyrist of Hishām’s progeny, claimed that “ʿAbd al-Malik had no son more perfect than Hishām.”³² The perception of ʿĀʾisha as *ḥamqā* is even used as a means to insult Hishām as evidenced in the diatribe between the caliph and his governor of Iraq Khālīd al-Qasrī (d. 125/743), in which the latter – himself often insulted for his mother – called him, “son of the foolish one” (*ibn Ḥamqā*).³³ This insult shows how ties of kinship were employed to insult and lampoon and how the narrative around ʿĀʾisha is found outside the above-mentioned account.

The final section of the notice, explicitly stating that Hishām was named after his maternal grandfather, is particularly noteworthy as it fits within a wider onomastic trend that has been noted for the Marwanids but has not yet received a dedicated study.³⁴ Before investigating naming practices, it is worth pointing out that in the above discussion ʿAbd al-Malik is reportedly happy about the decision taken by ʿĀʾisha; however, in one eschatological source, the *Kitāb al-Fitan* (Book of Tribulations) of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād (d. 228/843), that is not the case. According to the *Fitan*, when a messenger reached ʿAbd al-Malik with the news that “a boy had been born to him and that his mother had named him Hishām, he said: ‘May God crush her (*hashamahā*) in the

30 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, 5:192; *Kitāb al-Uyūn*, 82.

31 Joseph Schacht and Aharon Layish, “Ṭalāk,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Online), ed. Peri Bearman et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2012).

32 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, 5:192.

33 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:1646; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, tr. Blankinship, 25:177; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 9:94. Khālīd’s mother was a Christian slave woman, for whom he built a church, al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 9:63.

34 This was noted by Andrew Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 120 and n.43. This phenomenon was pointed out by Donner in his investigation of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam’s naming practice of his own sons, though he did not seem to notice this was coming from the matrilineal side when stating that his sons “had names that can be considered traditional Arabian or specifically family names.” Fred M. Donner, “Was Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam the First ‘Real’ Muslim?,” in *Genealogy and Knowledge in Muslim Societies: Understanding the Past*, ed. Helena de Felipe and Sarah Bowen Savant (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 105–14 at 110.

fire.”³⁵ The pun here is clear: the name Hishām shares the same root with the verb *hashama* (he crushed), so ‘Abd al-Malik’s cursing of ‘Ā’isha reflects the chosen name, underlining the caliph’s discontent. This tradition not only provides a contradictory narrative to the birth notice but also is a great example of how names are used in early Islamic sources as a source of derision or insult. ‘Abd al-Malik’s response to the naming practice in both traditions is representative of the importance of naming in early Islamic societies, and competing historiographies and perceptions of the Marwanids.³⁶ The following section is a prosopographical overview of the matrilineal influence on onomastics to demonstrate that many heirs were named after their maternal grandfathers, just like Hishām. That ‘Ā’isha is granted agency in the naming narratives is significant not only because it may have occurred after the repudiation, but given the significant element of Makhzūmī involvement, I argue that this practice is an appeal to matrilineal ties of kinship.

3 A Prosopography of Marwanid Naming Practice

Naming one’s child is an important rite that we cannot assume was taken lightly and, as demonstrated by scholars like Richard Bulliet and Andrew Lewis, onomastic studies grant insight into the social history of given periods and the role of kinship ties.³⁷ An analysis of the naming practice of

35 §325 on the authority of ʿĪsmāʿīl ibn Ismāʿīl > Abū Qubayl. Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, ed. Sumayr ibn Amīn al-Zuhayrī, 2 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Tawḥīd, 1991), 1:133; Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, *The Book of Tribulations: The Syrian Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition*, tr. David Cook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 57.

36 See, for example, the tradition concerning the name al-Walid, about which the prophet said: “There will be in this community a man called al-Walid who will be more evil to this community than Pharaoh was to his people.” Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammad, *Fitan*, 1:133; Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, *The Book of Tribulations*, 56.

37 Bulliet pioneered onomastic study in the Western scholarship of early Islam in his landmark study in which he aimed to identify conversion rates and practices by tracing when Iranian elites – present in *ṭabaqāt* literature – converted to Islam based on when and where “Muslim” names appear in their *nasab*. Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979). Lewis has convincingly demonstrated that early Capetian (987–1792) naming practices can be used to discern who the intended heir was. In naming sons after agnatic relatives, the early Capetian monarchs can be seen to be appealing to different territorial and dynastic claims. For instance, Robert II (r. 996–1031) named his first son (thus his intended successor) Hugh, after the King’s father, the second eldest son was instead named Henry (later Henry I, r. 1031–1060) after Robert’s great uncle, the duke of Burgundy, a territorial claim and inheritance Robert was claiming at that time and

Marwanid boys will demonstrate that it was common for members of the Marwanid elite to be named after maternal relatives, in particular after maternal grandfathers, like in Hishām's case. This practice should be seen in a similar light to patrilineal *nasabs*, i.e., referring to a child by their father's name, i.e. Hishām ibn (son of) ʿAbd al-Malik. Given that the child's paternal genealogy will always be known; naming them after their maternal ancestors alludes and appeals to matrilineal kinship ties. Matrilineal *nasabs* do exist but were rarely employed for the Marwanids outside of poetry, as will be discussed below.³⁸ For the following prosopographical overview, I have taken as a sample size the three generations of Marwanid caliphs and their progeny that ruled in the early Islamic period. This is because a full-scale study of individual families across the early Islamic elite deserves a dedicated study. The present paper is concerned with the actions of caliphal heirs and the ruling family, and as such I will only analyse naming practices from the generation of Marwān's (r. 64–65/683–685) sons onwards. These were also the generations born into significant positions of authority, if naming practice was indicative of maternal kinship ties as a source of political and religious legitimacy, it would be most visible in these generations. The source used herein is the *Nasab Quraysh* of Ibn al-Zubayrī (d.236/851). As Majied Robinson has already shown, it is well equipped for a prosopographical study and it is structured maternally, i.e., each entry is structured according to the children's mother.³⁹ Although it is possible

that the child, as the second son, was set to inherit. Andrew W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 24–8.

- 38 Matronymics were even the subjects of early textual production such as the *Kitāb man Nusiba ilā Ummihi min al-Shuʿarāʾ* (the Book of poets who were named after their mothers) of Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859). See Giorgio Levi Della Vida, "Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb's 'Matronymics of Poets,'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 62, no. 3 (1942): 156–71. In the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 285/955) we find two similarly named works ascribed to al-Madāʾinī, *Kitāb man Nusiba ilā Ummihi* (book of those who were named after their mothers) and another called *Kitāb man Summiya b-Ismaʾ Abihī min al-ʿArab* (the book of Arabs named after their fathers). Muḥammad ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1929), 133, 164. The only extant version of these texts, that of Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, specifically refers to *nasabs* and not to naming practice necessarily, that is, the figure in question has their mother's name as the second component in their *nasab*, i.e., *fulān ibn fulāna*. That this was a topic early annalists concerned themselves with is testament both to the commonality of this practice and to the importance of matrilineal kinship ties.
- 39 Robinson, *Marriage*, 15–81. A recent study further supports this through the statistical analysis of the *Nasab Quraysh*, revealing that it stands up to the Poisson distribution model, see, Majied Robinson, "The Population Size of Muḥammad's Mecca and the Creation of the Quraysh," *Der Islam* 99 (2022): 10–37.

that including additional genealogical literature into the analysis would change the findings presented below, that would also open further issues. As we have already seen, while most sources are unanimous that Hishām's mother's name was 'Ā'isha, al-Balādhurī includes the variants Fāṭima or Maryām.⁴⁰ Furthermore, some mothers are referred to by their *kunya* (patronymic) rather than their name in different sources or by the nickname of a son, easily leading to misclassification.

The following analysis is then concerned only with the naming practices of three generations of the banū Marwān (sons of Marwān) as preserved in the *Nasab Quraysh*. Although a similar trend can be seen among those daughters of Marwanid caliphs that appear, the limitations of the source material and the preponderance of male children means that the current narrow sample size would not be suitable for such an analysis.⁴¹ As has been made clear by Robinson, the entries for the *Nasab Quraysh* are mainly concerned with child-bearing unions and often omit daughters, usually only including them when they married someone of note.⁴² This limitation prohibits a study of this nature given the narrow sample size, thus by restricting it to male progeny we can be relatively sure that we are not omitting any major Marwanid son.

Of the 101 Marwanid male children recorded in the *Nasab Quraysh* (from the sons of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam to those of al-Walīd ibn Yazīd), sixteen appear to share a name with their maternal grandfather or great-grandfather.⁴³ At first glance this does not appear to be a large number; however, by filtering further it becomes clear how common this practice was. First, we should only consider child-bearing unions with free-born women, as concubine mothers (*umm walad*) are not often named in the genealogical record. Given their unfree status it is also doubtful the Marwanids would have drawn upon maternal naming for their concubine-born sons. In fact, it appears that many of sons with concubine mothers were named after important distant descendants, e.g., Abū Sufyān ibn Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik or Quraysh ibn Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik.⁴⁴ Secondly, we should only expect one child from each union to be named after their maternal relative as it was not common for children from the same unions to share names. Therefore, rather than investigating the

40 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 8:367.

41 E.g., 'Ā'isha bint 'Abd al-Malik, 'Ātika bint Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik and 'Ā'isha bint Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik, al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 162, 167. On the Quraysh having more male offspring than would be expected, see Robinson, "Population Size."

42 Robinson, *Marriage*, 65–81.

43 The only one who appears to share with his great-grandfather is 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz whose mother was Umm 'Āsim bint 'Āsim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 168.

44 al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 167–8.

total number of sons we need to see how many unions produced these children named after maternal forefathers. The *Nasab Quraysh* reports thirty-six Marwanid child-bearing unions (excluding concubines) and, as can be seen below (Table 1), only the sons of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd al-Malik share a mother.⁴⁵ This means that out of the thirty-six child-bearing unions considered for the present study, fifteen produced a child named after his maternal grandfather. Of these fifteen unions, only one mother was non-Qurayshī and ten were daughters of previous caliphs.

TABLE 1 Sons named after Maternal grandfathers^a

Page #	Mother	Tribal affiliation	Child	Father
160	‘Ā’isha bint Mu‘āwiya ibn al-Mughīra ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ	Quraysh Umayyad – Abī al-‘Āṣ	Mu‘āwiya ibn Marwān	Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam
160–1	Qutayya bint Bishr ibn ‘Āmr	Qays	Bishr ibn Marwān	Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam
161	Umm Abān bint ‘ Uthmān ibn ‘Affān	Quraysh Umayyad – ‘Uthmān	‘ Uthmān ibn Marwān	Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam
161	Zaynab bint ‘ Umar ibn Abī Salama	Quraysh Makhzūm	‘ Umar ibn Marwān	Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam
162	‘Ātika bint Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya	Quraysh Umayyad – Sufyanīd	Yazīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik	‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān
163	‘Ā’isha bint Hishām ibn ‘Ismā’il	Quraysh – Makhzūm	Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik	‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān

a Shared names have been placed in **bold** to stress the commonality. Names recurring multiple times throughout the mother’s genealogy have not been stressed. Tribal affiliation is given in order from largest identifier to smallest, and descent from a caliph is marked: e.g., ‘Quraysh, Umayyad – ‘Uthmān’ means that the mother was an Umayyad member of Quraysh and a descendant of ‘Uthmān. Page numbers refer to the page number in Levi Provençal’s edition of Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 115–6, 160–8.

45 The number of marriages and genealogical information is taken from the table (excluding Sufyanīd marriages) in Robinson, *Marriage*, 141–46.

TABLE 1 Sons named after Maternal grandfathers (*cont.*)

Page #	Mother	Tribal affiliation	Child	Father
165	Umm al-Banīn bint ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān	Quraysh Umayyad – Marwanid	‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Walīd	al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
165	Umm Yazīd ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya	Quraysh Umayyad – Sufyanīd	Yazīd ibn Sulaymān	Sulaymān ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
115/ 166	‘Āisha bint ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmān	Quraysh Umayyad – ‘Uthmān	‘Abdallāh ibn Sulaymān	Sulaymān ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
167	Sa‘īda bt ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmān	Quraysh Umayyad – ‘Uthmān	‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd	Yazīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
167	‘Ātika bint ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Sufyān	Quraysh Umayyad – Sufyanīd	‘Uthmān ibn al-Walīd	al-Walīd ibn Yazīd
167	Umm ‘Abd al-Malik bint Sa‘īd ibn Khāid ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmān	Quraysh Umayyad – ‘Uthmān	Sa‘īd ibn al-Walīd	al-Walīd ibn Yazīd
167	‘Abda bint ‘Abdallāh (Al-Uswār) ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān	Quraysh Umayyad – Sufyanīd	‘Abdallāh ibn Hishām	Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
168	Umm ‘Abdallāh bint ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Ḥārith ibn al-Ḥakam	Quraysh Umayyad – Ḥakamī	‘Abdallāh ibn Mu‘āwiya	Mu‘āwiya ibn Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
168	Umm ‘Āṣim bint ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb	Quraysh ‘Adī ibn Ka‘b – ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb	‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz	‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān
168	Umm ‘Āṣim bint ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb	Quraysh ‘Adī ibn Ka‘b – ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb	‘Āṣim ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz	‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān

TABLE 2 Breakdown of naming practice by tribal (and caliphal) affiliation

Mother’s affiliation	Sons
All non-concubine unions	36
All unions with a son named after maternal ancestor	15
Non-Quraysh	1
Non-Umayyad Quraysh	3
Quraysh – Makhzūm	2
Quraysh, ‘Adī ibn Ka’b – ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb	1 (2) ^a
Umayyad	10
Quraysh, Umayyad – ‘Uthmān	4
Quraysh, Umayyad – Sufyanīd	4
Quraysh, Umayyad – Ḥakamī	1
Quraysh, Umayyad – Marwanīd	1

a ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and Umm ‘Āṣim bint ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had two sons named after maternal relatives, ‘Āṣim and ‘Umar, who were named after their grandfather and great-grandfather respectively.

If naming practices reflect an appeal to matrilineal ties of kinship it is necessary to consider which of these unions saw sons named after maternal grandfathers and what the tribal affiliation of their mothers was. As is evident from table 2, the unions that most often yielded a son named after their maternal relatives are Qurayshī marriages and in two thirds of the cases the mother was a daughter of a previous caliph: the daughters of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644) and ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (d. 35/656) feature prominently. Names such as Yazīd being given to children of Sufyanid unions is also indicative of this trend, given that Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya was the second Umayyad caliph. It is not a coincidence that these were the unions where sons shared names with their grandfather, these sons had significant and important kinship ties. In light of the studies by Ahmed and Robinson, where marriage and matrilineality are used to understand the makeup of early Islamic society, this naming practice should be interpreted as a means of appealing to the matrilineal faction.⁴⁶ While *nasabs* are typically based on patrilineal descent, naming children after their maternal grandfather should be interpreted as recognition of matrilineal kinship. In a society where names and the genealogies from which they derive were sources of derision and lampooning – as in the diatribe between Khālīd

46 Ahmed, *Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijāz*, 199–201; Robinson, *Marriage*, 187–94.

and Hishām discussed earlier – we should not underestimate the significance of naming practices. That ‘Ā’isha is granted agency over naming her son in the account of Hishām’s birth may speak to a common custom, particularly in cases where that ancestor bestowed nobility and legitimacy onto a son. This is not only inferred from onomastic trends. Rather, this notion of nobility and appeal to matrilineal kinship ties appears in poetry praising Hishām, where the matrilineal line is repeatedly alluded to, as discussed in the next section.

4 The Poetics of Marwanid Matrilineality

In the following poems by Jarīr ibn ‘Aṭiyya and al-Farazdaq, references to ‘Ā’isha are used as a means through which to praise the Banū Makhzūm and their union with the Marwanid line. These references are vague, often drawing upon distant forefathers and progenitors, demonstrating the centrality of genealogy within early Islamic panegyrics. The paternal (Umayyad line) is praised in quite a formulaic fashion alternated with praise of the matrilineal line which serves to grant generosity and nobility to the heir. The verse from the first poem, composed by al-Farazdaq serves as a good example for these vague and distant references:

The two peaks of [‘Abd] Manāf⁴⁷ have elevated you to its height	and the family (Āl) of Makhzūm⁴⁸ grants you their nobility (‘izāmuhā).⁴⁹
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In the first hemistich, we have a reference to the ancestor of the Quraysh – ‘Abd Manāf – the father of both Hāshim and ‘Abd Shams – which links the Marwanids to the house of the prophet Muḥammad. The second hemistich serves to commemorate the Makhzūmī matrilineal line that grants Hishām his nobility.⁵⁰ Jarīr in another poem to Hishām praises ‘Ā’isha and her Makhzūmī ancestors more explicitly. Again, there is the alternation of hemistichs for the paternal and maternal lines:

47 ‘Abd Manaf is the ancestor of the Quraysh, see the tree in Ahmed, *Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hījāz*, 208.

48 Hishām’s mother was ‘Ā’isha bint Hishām ibn ‘Ismā’īl ibn Hishām ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra of the Makhzūm.

49 Al-Farazdaq, *Dīwān al-Farazdaq*, ed. Richard Boucher, 2 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1870), 2:127.

50 It is quite common for the matrilineal line to grant nobility: see, for example, the *qaṣīda* for ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān where the *Aṣḥabghī* women are referred to as the noblest of the Quḍā’a. ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt, *Dīwān ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1958), 153.

Your house, the Banū Marwān
is in renown

and ʿĀʾisha is the most blessed
mother (*walūd*)

And you have inherited the
nobility of the Quraysh

and [of] Hishām,⁵¹ and al-Mughīra⁵²
and al-Walīd⁵³

The *Āl* Mughīra⁵⁴ is
pre-eminent

and of the *Ayyās*⁵⁵ [you inherited]
the nobility (*makrumāt*) and gener-
osity (*jūd*).⁵⁶

Jarīr appeals to both Hishām's maternal and paternal genealogies with these references to specific family members and larger clan affiliations. The reference to ʿĀʾisha as *walūd* in the second hemistich of the first verse is particularly significant: she is praised for her childbearing, yes, but the importance of matrilineal kinship is underlined by her presence within the poem. The second hemistich of the second verse spans the pre-Islamic and the early Islamic period, underlining the relevance of the Makhzūmīs. Again, these are relatively vague references, and the poet relied upon the audience's knowledge of the subject's matrilineal ties. This indicates that matrilineal kinship was a clear legitimising feature of Marwanid succession politics. As an example of the understudied aspect of matrilineal ties of kinship and the ease of misidentification, the editor of Jarīr's poems viewed this reference to ʿĀʾisha not as Hishām's mother but as ʿAbd al-Malik's, who was a cousin of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, also named ʿĀʾisha – ʿĀʾisha bint Muʿāwiya ibn al-Mughīra ibn Abī al-ʿĀṣ. The editor came to the same conclusion in an earlier poem where Hishām is referred to as son of the blessed ʿĀʾisha (*ibn ʿĀʾisha al-Mubārak*).⁵⁷ This ʿĀʾisha, is again Hishām's mother, as the following verse refers to Ruṣāfa – Hishām's capital – as the house of the caliph.⁵⁸ The editor, al-Bustānī, is not entirely mistaken,

51 Both ʿĀʾisha's father and her great grandfather were named Hishām.

52 Al-Mughīra ibn ʿAbdallāh was the leader of the Banū Makhzūm and Hishām's great-great-great grandfather. al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 164.

53 Al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra, father of Hishām ibn al-Walīd (Hishām's great-great grandfather) and of Khalīd ibn al-Walīd the great commander of the Ridda wars and the Islamic conquests. Crone, "Khālīd ibn al-Walīd."

54 The descendants of Mughīra ibn ʿAbdallāh, the pre-eminent house of Makhzūm. Karl V. Zettersteen, "Al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra."

55 Al-ʿAyyās is another way to refer to the Marwanids, from Abū al-ʿĀṣ, the grandfather of both Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. Giorgio Levi Della Vida and Clifford Bosworth, "Umayya."

56 Jarīr ibn ʿAṭiya, *Diwān Jarīr*, ed. Karīm al-Bustānī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1964), 117.

57 Jarīr ibn ʿAṭiya, *Diwān Jarīr*, 9.

58 Jarīr ibn ʿAṭiya, 10.

these lines were to an extent meant to be obscure, simultaneously praising both Hishām's mother and his paternal grandmother. The same occurs in a poem of al-Farazdaq in praise of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz where he is referred to as Ibn Layla, since his mother was Layla bint 'Āṣim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.⁵⁹ This harks back to 'Umar's father who, as pointed out by Joshua Mabra, was commonly called Ibn Layla in the poetry of Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt.⁶⁰ The repetition of matronymics to refer to sons is a further indication of the importance of this naming practice and of the general understanding and knowledge of maternal ties of kinship. That Jarīr mentions Hishām's grandfather and great-grandfather (both also named Hishām) underlines how sharing names could serve to praise individuals. In another verse by Jarīr, preserved in al-Ṭabarī, 'Abd al-Malik is referred to explicitly as Ibn 'Ā'isha:

You are Ibn 'Ā'isha, who	exceeded her fellow women in descent
She paid no heed to her contemporaries	and she went off on her sweet way. ⁶¹

Marwanid poetry, therefore, draws on maternal kinship ties as a means of praise. These references seem primarily to be concerned with nobility and generosity. These allusions are to an extent formulaic and do not actually reveal much about 'Ā'isha; however, the fact that we are able to identify formulas of matrilineal praise in poetry is evidence of the importance of these ties of kinship within early Islamic society. Ties that al-Ya'qūbī even alludes to when reporting a discussion between Hishām's heir (*walī al-'ahd*), al-Walīd ibn Yazīd, and Hishām's maternal uncle, Ibrāhīm ibn Hishām ibn Ismā'il al-Makhzūmī, whom Hishām made governor of Mecca and Medina upon his succession.⁶² Ibrāhīm would be entrusted with the leadership of the pilgrimage six times while his brother, Muḥammad, three times.⁶³ These two maternal uncles made their partisanship known when Hishām tried to remove al-Walīd ibn Yazīd as his heir, giving the pledge of allegiance in secret to Maslama ibn Hishām ibn

59 Al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 168; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 8:125.

60 Joshua Mabra, *Princely Authority in the Early Marwanid State: The Life of 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017), 55–82.

61 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:1173; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, tr. Martin Hinds, 23:118.

62 Khalifa ibn Khayyāt, *Ta'rikh*, 2:533; Khalifa ibn Khayyāt, *The History*, tr. Carl Wurtzel, 245.

63 This is largely in line with previous pilgrimage policies: the caliph's close relatives and Hījazī governors would often lead the *hajj*. M.E. McMillan, *The Meaning of Mecca: The Politics of Pilgrimage in Early Islam* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 127–30.

ʿAbd al-Malik.⁶⁴ Al-Yaʿqūbī states that Ibrāhīm was holding court in lieu of Hishām when al-Walid walked in, starting a diatribe. Al-Walid asked Ibrāhīm who he was, leading the Makhzūmī to exclaim: “Someone such that your grandfather’s [ʿAbd al-Malik] honour became complete only by becoming related to him by marriage.”⁶⁵ What is an undoubtedly false exchange shows how matrilineal kinship was viewed as an integral aspect of Marwanid legitimacy and in particular, the chroniclers’ view that the Makhzūmīs benefitted under their nephew Hishām. That the Marwanids would gain legitimacy (and not necessarily vice-versa) through these unions pairs well with the poetic exaltations of the matrilineal line; the Marwanids were keen to demonstrate that these marriages were made with the preeminent factions of the caliphate. It remains unclear, however, whether these factions were preeminent and, therefore, the caliphs married into them, or if they became relevant due to the marriages.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, matrilineal ties of kinship were fundamental in securing and maintaining dynastic rule. Matrilineality was a distinguishing feature of the Marwanid elites, only two Marwanid caliphs had the same mother; however, these social ties have not yet been fully incorporated into secondary literature.⁶⁶ The case study of ʿĀʾisha and Hishām demonstrates where and in which sources matrilineal kinship is focused on. It is doubtful that al-Madāʾinī’s account regarding ʿĀʾisha would have been preserved had it not been for the *ḥamqāʾ* aspect. Despite the way she is represented, the anecdote reveals the active role played by the Makhzūmīs in marrying into the Marwanids, an instance of Marwanid repudiation, and evidence of the matrilineal influence on onomastics. This narrative also sheds light on an onomastic phenomenon that, as has been shown with a small sample size, may have been widespread. Many Marwanids were named after their maternal grandfathers, and this is particularly visible in cases where the union was with an important tribe or branch of the family. That many of these unions were endogamous demonstrates how the Marwanids used marriage to consolidate kinship ties and re-incorporate

64 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:1740–52. Al-Walid had been named by Hishām’s brother and predecessor Yazid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. The two Makhzūmīs would undoubtedly regret their actions; upon al-Walid’s accession, the caliph had them captured and tortured to death, al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:1768.

65 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:393; al-Yaʿqūbī, *The Works*, 3:1047.

66 The only caliphs who had the same mother were al-Walid and Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. Their mother was Umm al-Walid bint ʿAbbās of Ghatafan. See al-Zubayrī, *Nasab*, 162.

family members. That so many sons were named after previous caliphs demonstrates these allusions were understood by the target audience, the wider Umayyad family, and the imperial elite.

Poetry is an ulterior source for investigating matrilineal ties of kinship. In contrast to the lampooning of ʿĀ'isha for being *ḥamqā* or being cursed in eschatological literature, in poetry she is praised, which, as Marsham has shown, helps us in understanding how the dynasty was legitimised.⁶⁷ These poems place a strong emphasis on matrilineal genealogies and by drawing upon pre-Islamic and Islamic ancestries they indicate a continued knowledge of and emphasis on these ties of kinship. These matrilineal ties granted nobility and legitimacy to the recipient, but the audience of these poems remains obscure. Given that both maternal and paternal lines are being praised, we should not merely perceive this praise as appealing exclusively to the matrilineal family. The intermingling of evidence across what are typically treated as distinct genres serves to demonstrate the centrality of matrilineal kinship ties in the early Islamic period as well as that of genealogy in early Islamic society. Annalistic sources preserve ties of kinship as does poetry; by combining these sources and, most importantly, knowing who the mothers of the historical figures we assess were, we can begin to ask different questions of the material and fill a clear gap in scholarship.

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67 Marsham, *Rituals*, 95–112.