Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal

Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam

EDITED BY

Sebastian Günther

BRILL

IDEAS, IMAGES, AND METHODS OF PORTRAYAL

ISLAMIC HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

STUDIES AND TEXTS

EDITED BY

WADAD KADI

AND

ROTRAUD WIELANDT

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FOREWORD

Exciting things are happening in Arabic-Islamic intellectual history. The present collection of articles is an example of what new methodologies and new formulations of old questions can yield by way of insights. It is therefore a pleasure and a privilege to be asked to write a Foreword to this volume, one which sets out to show what a younger generation of Arabists and Islamicists can bring to a discipline which, in the West at least, can be traced back to the Renaissance of the twelfth century.

As this volume of essays demonstrates, there are several reasons for this excitement. The first and most visible in my view is the new and more systematic attention being paid by younger scholars to current theoretical breakthroughs in intellectual and cultural history. Such postulates as speech-act theory, theories of representation, new quantitative methodologies, textual theories, new historicist theories, the impact of contemporary social science theory and, in particular, a number of prominent modern theorists like Clifford Geertz and Michel Foucault, have all combined to deepen our understanding of classical Arabic culture and literature.

The second reason emanates from the first. By invoking new methodologies and in asking new questions, these essays are helping to bring the field of pre-modern Arabic-Islamic culture into line with what is already happening in adjacent fields, e.g. the study of medieval Europe. My generation of students of classical Arabic culture had not been as open to theory as this younger generation is. Thus, we would occasionally cast envious eyes at other medievalist colleagues, at the theoretical freshness and vividness of their work, the windows they opened onto subjects and themes there for the grasping in our own immensely rich Arabic sources. Why did we not attempt a classical Arabic *Montaillou*? An Arabic Peter Brown's *Augustine*? A study à la Le Goff 's *Intellectuals*?

I am delighted that this collection of essays shows that we are now taking firm steps in that direction. In one area at least our sources are incomparably richer: the area of biography. No pre-modern civilization known to me teems with so many people, with flesh and blood individuals, men and women, as does classical Arabic. A

new generation of Arabists shall knock, and a hundred doors will open.

The third reason concerns the closer attention now being paid by Western Arabists to the work being done by their colleagues in the Arab world writing in Arabic. For many of us who studied our own civilization in the West, the work of fellow Arab scholars was a dim and distant echo. I note with pleasure that the authors of this collection of essays are far more aware than was my generation of the contributions of modern scholarship in Arabic. There is no need to emphasize the trite observation that our "pursuit" should be "common" (I borrow from F.R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit*) and no excuse not to make it so with the Internet now at our fingertips. Within the contemporary world of literary and historical scholarship in Arabic, the North African zone seems currently to be one of the most promising. One is tempted to observe that today the North Africans are playing the role, which one might call theoretically daring, that was once played by the Andalusians.

A fourth and final reason to welcome this volume is that several contributions seem to go off the beaten track, that is to say the canon of "great texts," in order to investigate the rhetoric of texts not commonly regarded as part of that canon. This in itself is a highly desirable invitation to reconsider one major concern of intellectual history today, the debate surrounding what one might call the canon and the sub-canon. Let me illustrate. Among the more fascinating essays of William Hazlitt is one entitled "My First Acquaintance with Poets," where he draws a portrait of Coleridge as a conversationalist, a portrait that must itself rank as part of the canon of English essay writing. One passage runs as follows:

> He considered Bishop Butler as a true philosopher, a profound and conscientious thinker, a genuine reader of nature and of his own mind. He did not speak of his *Analogy*, but of his *Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel*, of which I had never heard. Coleridge somehow always contrived to prefer the *unknown* to the *known*.[1] [Hazlitt's Italics]

It may very well be that Coleridge was an early champion of the sub-canon. He may also, of course, have been showing off; in this

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[1] William Hazlitt: *The Fight and Other Writings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2000, 254. I presume that when a text becomes a Penguin Classic, this is one entry point into the canon.

particular case, however, he was not, since Hazlitt eventually read the *Sermons* and did indeed find them superior to the better-known works. But apart from such considerations, there exists that which concerns our own field in the contemporary debate over the concept of the canon alluded to above. The terms of that debate are eloquently put by Annabel Brett:

> Languages and discourses conceived in this way are not limited to elite productions, a few "great texts." The great texts are written in idioms or rhetorics which may be shared with many not-so-great texts of the most varied provenance: occasional pamphlets, cheap novels, newspapers—they are all grist to the intellectual historian's mill. *For although the "great texts" may and will always fascinate, they did not invent the languages in which they speak (albeit they may move them on or subvert them in some way), and hence making sense of what they are about can never be limited to their study alone.*[2] [My Italics]

Given the immense volume of our medieval Arabic materials, both canon and sub-canon, it seems to me that the time has come for us to enrich this debate. The volume to which I am privileged to pen this brief message of welcome is surely a harbinger of that time.

Tarif Khalidi   Beirut, February 2005

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[2] Annabel Brett: What is Intellectual History Now?, in: David Cannadine (ed.): *What is History Now*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002, p. 118.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume of collected studies in classical Arabic literature and Islam is the result of an international enterprise. It consists of sixteen chapters written by scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies from Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Given the recently increased interest in Arabic culture and Islam, exemplified by the public's demand for more in-depth information, this publication is dedicated to casting light on a spectrum of issues in the classical literary and intellectual heritage of Islam, which are—due to their universal relevance—of interest not only to specialists in Arabic and Islamic studies, but also to a wider readership as well.

The book discusses a number of aspects which characterize the literature, life, and scholarship in Arabic-Islamic society at different historical periods. While underscoring the complexity and progressive nature of Islamic thought in medieval times, it points to a cultural specificity of Islam that facilitated the advancement of intellectual life and the formation of "modern" societies, even by today's standards. Furthermore, the book highlights such aspects as the creative interaction of Muslim scholars with different cultures in their attempt to refine and add to existing fields of knowledge, and the high esteem that knowledge and education are granted in Islam in general. It deals with non-Muslim literary and scholarly activities in the realm of Islam (a notion that challenges the stereotype of the exclusivity of religious societies), and explores controversial issues such as feminism and Islam, and the role of female figures in early Islamic history as portrayed in the classical sources, to mention just a few topics.

Thematically, the studies presented here are united in their primary objective which is to pursue *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal* in selected classical Arabic texts. Methodologically, these studies have in common a rigid focus on primary sources, the use of philological-analytical approaches, and the due consideration they give to the specifics of the Arabic literary tradition. These aspects are worth mentioning since the application of theory-oriented methods and methodologies as offered by contemporary literary theory, cultural studies, and social sciences is also a distinguishing feature of the contributions included here.

The topics dealt with in the book have been arranged in an approximately chronological order. This should help the reader to follow, to some extent, the general course of historical and literary developments in Islam. A chronological rather than a thematic design was chosen to make it easier to handle the material, and the chapters themselves will demonstrate that each topic has its own special merits and concerns that fully justify their inclusion in this book.

Thus this volume hopes to offer original and fresh *Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam*, insights that intend to stimulate thought and further the appreciation and understanding of the complexity and distinctiveness of Arabic-Islamic culture and civilization.

<center>* * *</center>

INTRODUCTION

All seeing is essentially perspective, and so is all knowing. The more emotions we allow to speak in a given matter, the more different eyes we can put on in order to view a given spectacle, the more complete will be our conception of it, the greater our "objectivity."

<div align="right">

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844−1900)[1]

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Classical Arabic literature is valued both as a source of firsthand insights into key aspects of culture, civilization, and society in the realm of Islam, and for the ample and significant contributions it has made to world literature. This view is due, in particular, to the fact that classical Arabic writings echo so well the feelings, attitudes, customs, conventions, and ideas current at the time when they were composed. In fact, classical Arabic texts often seem to reflect human circumstances and developments more accurately than any other form of cultural expression in medieval Arabic-Islamic society. This assessment holds true regardless of whether these texts belong to *belles-lettres* or scholarly literature, and whether they are composed in verse or in rhyming, rhetorical, or narrative prose. Hence, it can be argued that the vividness of classical Arabic literature offers the reader an exceptional opportunity to encounter the intellectual world of Islam in which it thrived, to resurrect some of its main figures, and to re-live and learn from their experiences.

This literature permits us, for instance, to listen to the poet's nostalgic reminiscences about the happiness he shared with his beloved, and the sorrow he feels at her loss; or to picture him paying tribute to his tribe, or to his patron's life and warfare. Through it, we can become acquainted with the eloquence and sophistication of the orator, be amused by the anecdotes of the light-hearted skeptic, moved by the melancholic-philosophical views of the pessimist, or fascinated—and sometimes troubled—by the multitude of voices in the accounts of the Prophetic Tradition that invite us to share in the greatness of the time when the Quran was revealed.

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[1] *Genealogy of Morals*, in: 'The Birth of Tragedy' and 'The Genealogy of Morals,' Translated by Francis Golffing, New York: Anchor Press, 1956, 255.

Story-tellers charm us with their refined narrative techniques in relating historical, legendary, and fabulous stories. Medieval Muslim scholars make us participate in their quest for knowledge and engage us in their study circles. In their anthologies and chronicles, they speak of the precious manuscripts and the wealthy libraries they have consulted. They inform us about their working methods, professional goals and ideals, or their intellectual and, perhaps, political agendas. Classical Arabic littérateurs and sages simply astonish us with the explicitness of their images, the power of their ideas, and the flow of their arguments, which are so eloquently presented in epistles, treatises, and monographs.

These observations emphasize two points. *First*, classical Arabic writing—like literature in general—is a practice in which the authors advance or renew literature. In other words, classical Arabic literature is, implicitly, a reflection of itself: its language, rhetorical figures, structures, styles, aesthetics, and methods of argumentation and writing. This insight is worth noting, for it encourages research to be directed toward the basic characteristics of a text, such as meaning and language; content, form and style; ideas and the means of expounding and promoting them. *Second*, classical Arabic literature, with its refreshing diversity of genres and forms of expression, its abundance of concepts, intellectual discourses, and aesthetic implications, constitutes a wealth of human values and accumulated knowledge that merits full attention and appreciation. It thus presents itself as a source of wisdom, intellectual inspiration, and delight that has lost none of its appeal even in the 21st century.

Objectives and approaches

Contemporary literary and cultural theory offers the student of classical Arabic literature a broad spectrum of methodologies and approaches. These range from liberal humanism, structuralism, post-structuralism and deconstruction, and post-modernism, to psychoanalytic and feminist criticism, new historicism, stylistics, and narratology. A number of findings advanced by these theories and philosophies have proven useful when applied to the topics tackled in this volume.

Yet, with regard to the studies presented here, it is also appropriate to specifically mention two more basic—though antithetical—project models of literary research. The first advocates approaches,

methodologies, and theories broadly classed as "socio-historical," while the second is often characterized as "immanence-based" or "immanence-oriented." While the first position rests on critical and theoretical processes that regard knowledge as contextually based, the second position takes the text itself as its object of analysis, and does so irrespective of such contexts as the author's background, the history of the text's reception, and so forth. In other words, the former view essentially understands literature in a historical context whereas the latter does not and, therefore, occasionally attracts epithets such as "transcendental" and "ahistorical."[2]

In recent years, hermeneutics and poetics have played an effective role in grounding the study of classical Arabic literature in a more rigorously defined theoretical framework, a development that is reflected to some degree in this book. Hermeneutics, as is known, usually starts with texts and asks what they mean; it seeks to interpret or reinterpret texts in order to gain better and, often, new insights into the human condition. It is a theory of interpretation that comes from, and is particularly useful in, the fields of religion and law (where people seek to understand the meaning of authoritative legal or sacred texts in order to decide how to act). In contrast, poetics is based on linguistics. It starts with attested meanings and attempts to understand how texts achieve the effects that they do.

Theoretical positions of this kind direct attention to some of the trajectories taken in this book. In fact, they help us to determine more precisely a number of the major issues that this volume wishes to address. These are as follows:

1) the *genesis* of selected classical Arabic texts as the products of certain milieus that include the authors' intellectual, religious, and societal frameworks;
2) the *implications* that these texts had for the reality of early and medieval Islamic society and the *effects* they had on it;
3) the *ideas* which the classical Arabic scholars addressed and communicated in these texts, and the *images* which they presented;
4) the *form* and *content* of these texts, as two main carriers and promoters of ideas in literature, and the relationship between them.

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[2] Steven Earnshaw: *The Directions of Literary Theory*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1996, 2.

This approach takes into account and reinforces the idea that poets and writers are often more sensitive than other groups when it comes to cultural tensions and changes. On the other hand, it affirms the idea that Islam, with its dynamic diversity of virtues and beliefs, was the main source, impetus, and reason for the intellectual activities of Muslim scholars, and ponders the ways in which medieval Muslim writers used specific methods and modes of portrayal, whether overtly or in a more subtle manner, to advance their ideas and bring them to fruition. This aspect of research, as will be shown, often includes discussion of various literary particularities of texts, whether structural, stylistic, or aesthetic.

This volume, however, also deals with such questions as: How do classical Arabic texts achieve the meanings and effects they do? How is language organized? How and to what effect are poetic and rhetorical devices being used? And what conventions and codes of conventions make certain literary structures possible? Furthermore, epistemological facets of research include the mechanisms that cause and enable the reader or the recipient of the text to identify allusions, plots, themes, and genres, and that engage him in a (symbolic) interpretation of the ideas and images presented in a given text and context.

The detection of textual characteristics of this kind in particular will eventually help advance our understanding not only of *why*, but also of *how*, writers in a specific environment expressed their points of view and participated in intellectual discourses. It may also disclose, for example, how the images of historically or religiously important figures in Arabic-Islamic culture have been developed in literary writings over time, and how they have been shaped in the process of their "literarization." In fact, some of the mechanisms and devices identified in the classical texts under discussion may even inspire today's reader to reread or reinterpret these texts in an alternative, non-dogmatic and, perhaps, post-modern way.

The terms "classical" and "literature"

In view of the book's thematic scope, two more points deserve to be addressed briefly. One relates to the term "literature." In this publication, the term is used in an inclusive rather than exclusive way. Thus "literature" stands for a larger category of exemplary

Arabic writings and thought in the pre-modern period, rather than merely the main form of classical Arabic *belles-lettres*.[3] This is because classical Arabic scholarship itself did not confine "literature," *adab*, to fictional or imaginary prose. Rather, in medieval times, *adab* (including its attested use as "literature") epitomized the humanist concerns of Arabic-Islamic culture and civilization. The celebrated historian, sociologist, and philosopher Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 C.E.) expresses this notion in his discussion of "the discipline of literature," *ʿilm al-adab*, when he states:

> [Philologists] who wanted to define this discipline said: "Literature is expert knowledge of the poetry and history of the Arabs as well as the possession of some knowledge regarding every science."[4]

Hence, it stood for the kind of writing that was "either morally and spiritually edifying or else entertaining through mastery of language and verbal skill."[5] Furthermore, let us not forget that the modern Western understanding of literature as "imaginative writing" is only two centuries old. Prior to 1800, "literature" in English (and the analogous terms in other European languages) meant "writings" or "book knowledge."

It is for these reasons that this volume includes studies of both "literary" and "non-literary" texts, and not simply because the new

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[3] This view is in line with a definition that determines literature as "an art by which expression is achieved in language." Cf. Lascelles Abercrombie: *Principles of Literary Criticism*, London: High Hill Books, 1960, 21. Interestingly, conversation and speeches as such are conventionally not regarded as "literature," although one speaks of the *art*, meaning the *skill*, of conversation and speech. This is because in literature the art, or skill, is *only* in words. In conversation, in contrast, the skill is in the use of personality, sometimes more so than in the use of words. Indeed, poetry is designed to be recited and plays are written to be performed. However, the literary *art* in both of these categories of text is substantially the same whether it is spoken aloud or read in silence (cf. id. 22). See esp. chapter one, which deals with speeches *in* literature or, more precisely, speeches that have *become* literature.

[4] Franz Rosenthal (trans.): *Ibn Khaldûn: Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, iii, 340–341. For the definition of *adab* as "the literary scholarship of a cultivated man," see S.A. Bonebakker: chapter "*Adab* and the concept of *belles-lettres*," in: J. Ashtiany et al. (eds.): *ʿAbbāsid Belles-Lettres*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 16–30; and I.M. Lapidus: Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of *Adab* and the Nature of Religious Fulfillment in Islam, in: B.D. Metcalf (ed.): *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of* Adab *in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, 39–61.

[5] M.M. Badawi: *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 (¹1993), 10.

historicism gives equal weight to both these types of texts, and perceives them as constantly informing and interrogating each other. First and foremost, however, it is due to the fact that "non-literary" classical Arabic texts are often splendid sources for "literary" analysis: for their fine use of language, rhetorical figures and sophisticated structures, and their exemplary methods of argumentation.

As for the term "classical," when used within the framework of Arabic literature it underscores two principal qualities of Arabic texts: (a) their fine, balanced, and proportionate use of the Arabic language, and (b) the time of their origin, i.e. the period between the 6th and 13th centuries C.E. The latter characteristic, however, is not meant to undermine the widely-held notion that the period from the 9th to the 11th century is often termed the "Golden Age" of classical Arabic literature.

Research topics and trajectories

Due to the breadth and complexity of the topics dealt with in this publication, a few main points from each chapter will be highlighted here.

Chapter One, "Context Equivalence: A Hitherto Insufficiently Studied Use of the Quran in Political Speeches from the Early Period of Islam," by Stephan Dähne, deals with a feature of Arabic eloquence that has a long and genuine tradition in Arabic-Islamic culture: speeches. This paper studies four political sermons included in the widely-known historical and literary compilations of such 9th and 10th century scholars as al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār, al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, and Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī. Two of the speeches discussed are attributed to individuals from the 8th century, while the two others belong to figures from the 9th century.

Dähne brings to the fore certain intertextual elements—"allusions"—in these speeches, in which there are frequent references to the Quran. However, his analysis does not focus primarily on these references, but rather on what he calls "context equivalence." According to Dähne, "context equivalence" depends on two factors or processes that can be summarized as follows: First, by placing fragments of quoted quranic "text" in the (new) "context" of the speech, a modification of the original quranic "meaning" of the quoted quranic "wording" is achieved; and second, the association of the "context"

of the given speech with the "context" of the Quran evokes in the minds of the audience the greatness of the time of the revelation and, thus, surrounds the political speech with an aura of sacredness.

Interestingly enough, this technique of intertextual referencing further highlights the fact that in the speeches studied, we are not only faced with a *continuation* of an earlier text (the Quran) in a later one (the speech), but also with an *echo* of ideas that the quranic wording encapsulates and *reflections* of situations that it depicts.

Chapters two and three direct our attention toward issues of a different nature. They deal with the relation between literature and historical context (i.e. the impact reality had on the development of literature and vice versa), and with the relation of literature to such larger structures as the conventions of particular literary genres. Both chapters are concerned with the literary activities of Christian scholarship in early Islam; one focuses on Syriac literature in Syro-Palestine during the 7th century, and the other on early Christian polemical writing in Arabic from the end of 8th and the beginning of the 9th century.

Chapter Two, "Classical Heritage and New Literary Forms: Literary Activities of Christians during the Umayyad Period," by Ute Pietruschka, discusses the phenomenon of preference given in Syriac literature to certain literary themes and forms. This study argues that in the first century of Islam, Syriac scholarship was characterized by the renewal of traditional literary forms, the development of new literary forms, and the growing importance of oral elements in literary production. These developments in the Syriac scholarly tradition were specifically designed to attract a broader Christian audience with the purpose of warding off the danger of a further growth in the number of Christians converting to Islam; a serious challenge for the Christian communities in an increasingly islamicized society.

It was in the context of a rapidly emerging Islamic state that, for Christian scholarship, rhetoric became an effective literary tool for inter-faith discussions with Muslims. As a result, not only did Syriac scholarship adapt to the fundamental changes of society set in motion by the Muslim conquest of Syria and Palestine, but literary activities among Syriac scholars increased noticeably. This development was also accompanied by a general growth in cultural, spiritual, and religious self-consciousness among the Christian intellectual elite in the Syro-Palestinian region vis-à-vis both their Muslim counterparts in Islamic lands and their fellow Christians in Byzantium.

Chapter Three, "Refuting the Charge of *Taḥrīf*: Abū Rā'iṭa (d. ca. 835) and his First *Risāla* on the Holy Trinity," by Sandra Toenies Keating, rests on the premise that a major theme in Muslim-Christian polemics has been the Muslim claim that significant portions of the Torah and Gospels have been falsified by Jews and Christians. This charge of *taḥrīf*, "alteration," arguably lies at the heart of every the-ological disagreement between Muslims and Christians. Among the first Christians to respond to the allegation was Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā'iṭa, a Jacobite from the ancient city of Takrīt near Baghdad.

This study insightfully elucidates how Abū Rā'iṭa—taking advan-tage of the rising interest of the Muslims in Hellenistic philosophy—attempts to convince his readership of the reliability of the Christian scriptures by establishing the reasonableness of the Trinity. In keep-ing with this objective, he lays out his arguments in a manner suit-able to address both Christian and Muslim readers.

This approach of Abū Rā'iṭa's is a unique adaptation of earlier polemical methods to a new religious and intellectual milieu. In Abū Rā'iṭa's treatise, this adaptation results in a rather "organic fusion" of form and content, which bears elegantly the author's opinion. In fact, this "organic fusion" helps him to communicate to his reader-ship a high degree of sincerity. It is interesting to note that this sin-cerity is not only noticeable in the author's intention *behind* the work, but also very much *within* the language of the treatise itself.

Chapter Four, "Meeting the Patron: An *Akhbār* Type and its Implica-tions for *Muḥdath* Poetry," by Beatrice Gruendler, consists of two parts. The first is concerned with "modern" (*muḥdath*) poets from the early 'Abbāsid period (end of the 8th/beginning of the 9th century) who set out to challenge established literary taste and poetic tradi-tion by using—in the view of their contemporaries—avant-garde poetic forms, styles, and themes. The lives of these poets are exam-ined through some captivating narrative passages that are included in five compilations from the end of the 9th to the first half of the 10th century. Surprisingly enough, in these compilations one finds the "modern" poets depicted as successful, for the most part, in their quests for patronage and, therefore, enjoying secure social status. This picture is the more astonishing given the ongoing *querelle des anciens et des modernes* in early 'Abbāsid times.

In the second part of her essay, Gruendler contextualizes these observations. Here she studies the professions of the authors of the 9th and 10th century compilations under discussion, along with their

positions in society and the agendas underlying their works. This leads to another insight in that these compilers apparently had the declared intention to support "modern" poetry by portraying its representatives in the best possible light. In this part of the essay, both the material and the focus of analysis change from the study *of* selected texts to an examination of the socio-historical framework *surrounding* them.

This methodological shift in research hints at a point significant to this and to several of the following chapters. It is the notion that descriptive classical Arabic texts often do not simply *reflect* and *record* data, or reality, but instead they *create* and *shape* it by generating a web of shifting, multi-faceted and often ambiguous meanings. The final determination of meanings, however, is ultimately in the eye of the beholder (as will become clear also in chapters eight to ten, fifteen and sixteen).[6]

The dynamic developments characterizing intellectual culture in the early ʿAbbāsid period are also given prominence in *Chapter Five*, although it studies a very different body of classical Arabic texts. "Advice for Teachers: The 9th Century Muslim Scholars Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Jāḥiẓ on Pedagogy and Didactics," by Sebastian Günther, deals with the genre of "rules of conduct for teachers and students." This is a remarkable sub-category of classical Arabic literature that has received little attention from modern scholarship thus far. In particular, this chapter scrutinizes two of the very earliest Arabic treatises devoted to educational theory and practice in Islam. These two treatises stand out in the history of ideas not only for their early date of origin, but also for the abundance and originality of the educational ideas they contain.

In this article, discursive analysis tackles such aspects of these two texts as their socio-political context, and their literary-historical, literary-stylistic, and educational dimensions. A catalogue of solid data is established (one of the goals of hermeneutics) which, it is hoped, will contribute to increasing the understanding of the educational foundations of a "learning society," as represented by Muslim civilization between the 9th and the 11th centuries.

Among the educational aspects discussed, three points seem to be particularly striking. One relates to the sincerity and enthusiasm with

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[6] Peter Barry: *Beginning Theory. An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, second edition, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002, 35, 61.

which both Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Jāḥiẓ promote such virtues as modesty, patience, and a passion for working with youth. This notion seems to anticipate the idea of the father-son relationship between teacher and student, which will become an issue of major significance in the mystical writings of al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) and the works of other Muslim scholars of later times. A second point concerns the remarkable variety of teaching topics that Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Jāḥiẓ indicate for the 9th century curriculum at the elementary and higher levels of Islamic education. Finally, a third aspect relates to the importance that al-Jāḥiẓ credits to books, reading, and writing, for the stimulating effects these have on independent thinking and intellectual creativity. In fact, since the teacher instructs in reading, writing, and calculation—the "pillars" of human civilization as al-Jāḥiẓ calls them—he deserves praise and special recognition in society.

Chapter Six, "Medieval Muslim Scholarship and Social Network Analysis: A Study of the Basra/Kufa Dichotomy in Arabic Grammar," by Monique Bernards, is a fresh contribution to the ongoing debate among modern scholars about the early history of Arabic grammar and the assumed formation of two distinct schools of grammar: Basran and Kufan.

Bernards tackles the question head-on with the novel application of social network analysis, a well-established method in the social sciences, to the study of classical Arabic grammarians. The focus of her research is the social relationships between Basran and Kufan grammarians during the period from 200 to 250 A.H. (815 to 865 C.E.).

Contrary to what has been assumed to date, Bernards concludes from the examined data that there is no indication whatsoever for a Basran/Kufan dichotomy. This negative finding holds true despite the fact that Sībawayh's *Kitāb*—the most prestigious classical reference work of Arabic grammar—seems to have been transmitted exclusively by Basran grammarians during the period under consideration.

Chapter Seven, "The Contribution of the *Mawālī* to the Six Sunnite Canonical Ḥadīth Collections," by John A. Nawas, addresses the oftmade contention that the *mawālī* (non-Arab converts to Islam; "new" Muslims) had a more significant role in the development of the religious sciences in Islam than did the Arabs. Specific attention is paid here to the contribution of both the *mawālī* and the Arabs to the corpus of Prophetic Tradition (Ḥadīth). Nawas' analysis is based on

data derived from thousands of biographical entries, and shows, in fact, that the contribution to the religious sciences, in terms of the number of contributors, was approximately the same for both the *mawālī* and the Arabs. This finding disproves an oft-quoted statement of I. Goldziher's, according to which a numerical count of individuals would identify the *mawālī* as the majority in this regard. There is essentially no evidence to conclude that the Arabs would have played a less significant role in establishing and advancing Ḥadīth than did the *mawālī*.

Chapters eight to ten, and fifteen, explore phenomena such as the literarization and image-formation of significant early Muslim figures in classical Arabic sources, along with the role that the "collective memory" of the Muslim community and the "editorial work" of the compilers played in this regard. Identification of these phenomena helps advance a better understanding of the dynamics and complexities inherent in the development of Islamic thought.

Chapter Eight, "The Portrayal of the *Ḥajj* as a Context for Women's Exegesis: Textual Evidence in al-Bukhārī's (d. 870) *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*," by Aisha Geissinger, is based on the fact that the canonical Sunnite Ḥadīth collections contain a significant number of traditions concerning the pilgrimage to Mecca that are narrated by female contemporaries of the Prophet Muḥammad. The article examines three such traditions (*ḥadīth*s) that al-Bukhārī—author of the most highly respected compilation of prophetic traditions among Sunni Muslims—included in his chapter on quranic exegesis.

Geissinger's study demonstrates that these *ḥadīth*s are not isolated traditions that are arbitrarily traced back to ʿĀʾisha bint Abī Bakr (d. 678). Rather, they appear to be part of al-Bukhārī's depiction of the pilgrimage, both as a communal act of worship and as a topic in exegesis, concerning which some women exercised a certain degree of religious authority within the early Muslim community.

Examination of these *ḥadīth*s in al-Bukhārī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*—and of related accounts traced back to women in such works as the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* of Mālik (d. 795) and the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd (d. 845)—leads, among other things, to the following conclusion: al-Bukhārī's portrayal of ʿĀʾisha bint Abī Bakr as the pre-eminent female authority on the ritual of the pilgrimage is *shaped* by his views about what constitutes acceptable proof of prophetic practice (*sunna*) and what does not. As a result, while a number of early female experts on the pilgrimage ritual appear in the works of Mālik and Ibn Saʿd, in al-Bukhārī's

discussion of the pilgrimage most of them are either marginalized or absent.

Chapter Nine, "Image Formation of an Islamic Legend: Fāṭima, the Daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad," by Verena Klemm, pursues the questions of how, in the process of literarization, historical individuals are transformed into heroes of legends, and how biography becomes hagiography. Despite the scant historically proven data on the lives of eminent figures from early Islam,[7] the study closely examines the biographical and hagiographical data on Fāṭima (d. 633) in both Sunnite and Shiite texts. Emphasis is placed on the examination of textual devices that promote representations of Fāṭima as a holy person.

Klemm arrives at a number of significant findings. While Sunnite narratives, such as in Ibn Sa'd's biographical dictionary and the literature of Prophetic Tradition, provide a portrait of Fāṭima that is rather indefinite and sketchy (she is confined to her relationships to her father and husband), Shiite accounts appear to relate a more complex religious vita. These accounts place Fāṭima at the center of a web of references that include figures from the transcendental and imaginary worlds of Islam in medieval times. Additionally, some Shiite accounts rely on motifs and narrative techniques known from folk stories and fairy-tales and seem to serve very effectively as a medium to convey Shiite teachings to wider circles of believers. Furthermore, Fāṭima's great piety, love, motherliness, devotion to family, and tolerance are emphasized to such an extent that these characteristics make her an ideal Muslim woman. Interestingly enough, at times Shiite accounts also portray Fāṭima as an apocalyptic advocate and avenger. Given the specifics of Shiite experiences and visions, she appears here as a role model for Shiite eschatology and salvation history.

Issues of image-formation in classical Arabic texts also play a major role in *Chapter Ten*, with "Narratives and Character Development: al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī on Late Umayyad History, by Steven C. Judd. This study is based on the fact that the narrator's voice is

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[7] See also Harald Motzki (ed.): *The Biography of Muhammad. The Issue of the Sources*, Leiden: Brill, 2000 (= *Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts* 32), especially the editor's introduction; and A.J. Cameron: *Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: An examination of his image in the hagiography of Islam*, London: Luzac, 1973. (= *Oriental Translation Fund. New Series* XLII.)

usually hidden in early Islamic historical sources, many of which are often collections of earlier material organized to accommodate the structure of the later medieval compilers' work. The study thus examines how al-Balādhurī (d. ca. 892) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), two celebrated classical Arabic historians, edited the material they culled from earlier works to create "their" narratives of late Umayyad history. In fact, it is shown that their decisions about what to include or omit from earlier sources reveal their interpretations of the reasons for the Umayyads' swift demise. It is skillfully demonstrated that careful parallel readings of classical Arabic historical texts can help us come to a better understanding of how early Muslim historians discreetly inserted their own voices into compilations of earlier material. We are made aware of the fact that the early Muslim historians' *editing* of the material they incorporated into their books is, in fact, a form of *narration*.[8]

Chapter Eleven, "*The Alchemy of Happiness*: Al-Ghazālī's *Kīmiyā* and the Origins of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya Principles," by Alexei A. Khismatulin, consists of two parts. Part One studies the *Kīmiyā*, or "Alchemy," al-Ghazālī's main Persian work, based on its oldest known manuscript preserved in St. Petersburg, Russia. The contents and structure of the *Kīmiyā* are examined in comparison with al-Ghazālī's main work in Arabic, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, or "Revitalization of the Religious Sciences." Contrary to the opinion held in modern scholarship, Khismatulin argues that the *Kīmiyā* is not simply a popular Persian abridgment of al-Ghazālī's *magnum opus*, the *Iḥyā'*, but an independent work deliberately composed in Persian. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the *Iḥyā* has "prologues" (*khuṭba*s) to each of its forty "books," while the *Kīmiyā* has only one at the very beginning.

Part Two deals more specifically with the spiritual-religious principles of guidance for the mystic, featured in both the *Kīmiyā* and the *Iḥyā'*. These principles are compared with those of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya Sufi brotherhood as contained in a later Persian work, the *Rashaḥāt 'ayn al-ḥayāt* ("Drops from the Well-Spring of Eternal Life"), by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Wā'iẓ Kāshifī (d. 1531). Since the

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[8] See also Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (eds.): *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978; and S. Günther: "... *nor have I learned it from any book of theirs*." Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī: A Medieval Arabic Author at Work, in: R. Brunner et al. (eds.): *Islamstudien ohne Ende. Festschrift für den Islamwissenschaftler Werner Ende*, Würzburg: Ergon, 2002, 139–153.

principles in al-Ghazālī's works and those in Kāshifī's closely resemble each other, Khismatulin pursues the important question of their origin and, perhaps, common roots.

It is also interesting to note that in Khismatulin's study we encounter again the *khuṭba* practiced in classical Islam. In contrast to Dähne's research (chapter one), however, Khismatulin looks at this phenomenon as embedded strictly in the written tradition. Khismatulin's analysis of the fortieth *khuṭba* of the *Iḥyā'*, then, serves to expose its multidimensional—or matrix—structure, in which each reference, or "link," refers the reader to one particular passage in the Quran. Thus, it is shown, a hypertext structure is being generated with multiple references and links (similar to a computer website). On this point, the research results reached by Dähne and Khismatulin, carried out independently, turn out to complement each other.

Chapter Twelve, "*Taqlīd* of the Philosophers: al-Ghazālī's Initial Accusation in his *Tahāfut*," by Frank Griffel, analyzes the five brief chapters that precede the discussion of philosophical doctrines in al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* ("The Incoherence (or Inconsistency) of the Philosophers"). The *Tahāfut* is a work written by the theologian al-Ghazālī in about 1095 to refute twenty key teachings of the philosophical movement in Islam, the *falāsifa*, because they were objectionable to Sunnite Islam and inconsistent in and of themselves. The focus of Griffel's study, however, is not the main body of this work, but its various "introductions," or "presumptions," based on al-Ghazālī's own statements on the main objective of the *Tahāfut*.

Griffel's study maintains that there is an overall argument that embraces the twenty discussions. In fact, it seems that al-Ghazālī perceived the *Tahāfut* as a "refutation" (*radd*) of the Muslim philosophical movement, and that he was the first to write such a refutation. Furthermore, it is argued that al-Ghazālī's main criticism of the *falāsifa* pertained to their uncritical acceptance of the view that philosophy could give "demonstrative proofs" of their teachings, even though the *falāsifa*'s arguments were, in fact, far from demonstrative. It is concluded that the *falāsifa* appear to have "believed" in their epistemological superiority just as the Muslim theologians "believed" in the teachings of the Quran. However, while the latter could claim to have the authority of God's Word on their side, the *falāsifa*'s belief in their superior knowledge was, for al-Ghazālī, nothing but vain *taqlīd*, that is, the "uncritical emulation" of such authorities from the past as Plato and Aristotle.

Chapter Thirteen, "The Spread of Ẓāhirism in post-Caliphal al-Andalus: The Evidence from the Biographical Dictionaries," by Camilla Adang, is based on a thorough examination of innumerable passages in medieval Arabic biographical dictionaries. Biographical dictionaries constitute a genre of medieval Arabic literature that is considered to be an indispensable source in any attempt to reconstruct the history of specific categories of individuals in Muslim society. This is particularly true in the case of the now extinct Ẓāhirī ("exoteric" or "literalist") school of law (*madhhab*), which has not left a significant corpus of legal texts that could provide us with additional information about its members.

Given these circumstances, Adang's study charts the spread of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab* in al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) in the period ca. 1050 to 1150, i.e. after the death of its foremost representative, the religious scholar and man of letters Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba (d. 1064). To obtain the fullest picture possible, her research is not restricted to dictionaries of legal scholars, nor to Andalusian dictionaries. Rather, it includes works on poets and grammarians and, moreover, extends to non-Andalusian dictionaries, which at times provide information not encountered in the Andalusian works.

Close examination of the evidence provided in these sources leads to two important conclusions. First, although the Ẓāhirīs were a small minority in al-Andalus, they had gained ground and were perceived as a threat by the dominant Mālikī school. Second, despite the marginal position of the Ẓāhirī school, its individual members by no means lived on the fringes of Andalusian social life, but were fully integrated into it. These findings represent a significant addition to our understanding of a critical time in the history of ideas in Islam.

Chapter Fourteen, "Working within Structure. Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144): A Late Muʿtazilite Quran Commentator at Work," by Andrew J. Lane, draws attention to the fact that, although the title of al-Zamakhsharī's Quran commentary, *al-Kashshāf*, is well known, the commentary itself has not been studied in a sustained and systematic way. While such scholars as Goldziher, Smith, Calder, and Rippin invariably mention the "influence" of al-Zamakhsharī's Muʿtazilism on his commentary (some even speak of his "Muʿtazilite method"), critical questions remain concerning: (a) the material, whether Muʿtazilite or not, which actually is to be found in the *Kashshāf*, and (b) how al-Zamakhsharī went about his exegetical task when composing it.

To answer these questions, Lane meticulously examines al-Zamakh-sharī's commentary on two particular suras, Quran 44 and 54. He reaches two significant conclusions that would contradict what has conventionally been assumed in modern scholarship. These are, first, that al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf* is a traditional "chained commentary" (*tafsīr musalsal*) in which the commentator used:

(a) techniques well-established and well-known in medieval Muslim scholarship, including *tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān* and *masāʾil wa-ajwiba*, i.e. using the Quran itself to answer questions raised in the Quran, and the application of a question-and-answer pattern as a structural scheme for commentary; and that he made use of

(b) traditional materials such as *qirāʾāt* and *asbāb al-nuzūl*, texts containing information about the occasions for the revelation of the Quran.

Second, the analysis of the two suras under discussion shows that the specificity of al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf* lies in the use of poetry, lexis, and grammar—the main interests of this man of letters from Khwārizm—and not in the Muʿtazilite content of his commentary, which is almost negligible.

Chapter Fifteen,[9] "The First Islamic Revolt in Mamlūk Collective Memory: Ibn Bakr's (d. 1340) Portrayal of the Third Caliph ʿUthmān, by Heather Keaney, analyzes the ways in which three 14th century historians creatively selected, edited, and arranged their sources in order to produce distinct narratives of the revolt against the third Caliph, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (d. 656).

As it is known, the revolt against ʿUthmān led to the first civil war in Islam, and to the permanent division between Shiite and Sunnite Islam. Moreover, it effected an ongoing ideological tension between appeals for unity and justice in Islamic political theory and practice. Although the significance of the revolt is very clear in the writings of ʿAbbāsid chroniclers from the 9th and 10th centuries, it has long been believed that later medieval writers were unable to reconcile the tensions arising from the revolt and consequently set-tled for mere repetition rather than reinterpretation of earlier sources.

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[9] Chapters fifteen and sixteen study textual evidence from a time that marks, strictly speaking, the transition from the classical to the post-classical period of Arabic literature.

Through a close comparative analysis of the 250-page biography of 'Uthmān written by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Abī Bakr and the portrayals of 'Uthmān in the chronicles by his contemporaries al-Dhahabī (d. 1348) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), it becomes clear that each author expresses distinct opinions on what constitutes political legitimacy and what circumstances make it permissible to use force against an unjust ruler. In this way, the article convincingly demonstrates how medieval Muslim scholars were able to continually *reinterpret* a sacred past in order to *give meaning* to the present.

Chapter Sixteen, "The Sword and the Pen in the Pre-Modern Arabic Heritage: A Literary Representation of an Important Historical Relationship," by Adrian Gully, revisits a subject that has generally been studied within the parameters of the "literary debate" genre in pre-modern Arabic literature. The interpretation employed in this article provides fresh evidence of the social tension between the *men of the sword* and the *men of the pen* in later medieval Islamic society, which eventually stimulated various textual versions of the subject.

This study focuses on some key stylistic literary developments of the Mamlūk period (1250–1517 in Egypt and Syria) that are reflected in the examined texts. One of these texts is a "Treatise on the Sword and the Pen" ascribed to Ibn Nubāta (d. 1366), poet, prose writer, and Secretary of the Chancellery. The other texts are two versions of the "Treatise on a Competition of Self-Glorification between the Sword and the Pen." One version is attributed to Ibn al-Wardī (d. 1349), a colleague and sometimes rival of Ibn Nubāta, and the other to al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363), a philologist, literary critic, and student of both Ibn Nubāta and Ibn al-Wardī.

Apart from Gully's discussion of the fascinating questions as to the authorship of these texts and their relationship to each other, the main contribution of this study is twofold. First, it provides a number of ideas that are evident in the Arabic texts under discussion, but which were not discussed by the scholars who dealt with them more recently. These include, for example, the importance that subtle "allusion" to the Quran (see also chapters one and eleven) and the use of other literary devices had for the aforementioned authors. Second, this chapter provides substantial new information that ties together the relationship of pen and sword in their complex literary and political dimensions.

Conclusion and prospects

I would like to conclude these introductory remarks with a few thoughts expressed by a writer who was well aware of the importance of meaning and language, as well as content, form, and style in the context of communicating ideas to an audience, be it in writing or verbally. They are to be found in a passage written twelve centuries ago by al-Jāḥiẓ, a celebrated classical Arabic littérateur and philosophical theologian from Basra, Iraq, and a virtuoso in both literary and scientific pursuits.[10] Al-Jāḥiẓ observed that:

> There remains—may God the exalted preserve you—topics that necessitate a lengthy exposition and evoke a need for detailed discussion. [Such a lengthy exposition, however,] that does not exceed the extent needed and stops once [its] purpose is achieved does not constitute prolixity, for words tally with the measure of [their respective] meanings—hence, the abundant tally with the abundant, the few with the few, the noble with the noble, and the inane with the inane.
>
> Words should be used in accordance with meanings. Thus, the abundance of words is for the abundance of meanings, the honorable words for the honorable meanings, and the insignificant for the insignificant.
>
> Also, single meanings, which are clear in their images and intentions, require fewer words than shared meanings and ambiguous intentions. And if all people of eloquence work hard to convey these meanings to those who are less [knowledgeable] than they are—with concise words that do not require [additional] verbal explanations and gestures by hand or head—they would not be able to do so.
>
> There is an old saying: "If what you desire does not exist, then desire what does exist." Hence a wise man should not burden languages with what they are not capable of [expressing]. Nor should he burden souls with something that is not in their nature. That is why the author of the book on "*Articulate Speech*"[11] had to explain his book

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[10] Quoted from al-Jāḥiẓ's famous anthology *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* ("The Book of Animals"), ed. by ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 7 vols., Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938–1958, vi, 7–9. My translation differs from what is given in Charles Pellat: *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ, Translation of selected texts, translated from the French by D.M. Hawke*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, 172.

[11] The Arabic expression here is *Ṣāḥib Kitāb al-Manṭiq*. In this context, *manṭiq* seems to refer to an aspect of *balāgha*, that is, Arabic "eloquence," "the art of good style and composition," or "literature," though implying to some degree its second meaning, "logic." If one were to go beyond the general argument al-Jāḥiẓ seems to be making here, it would be possible, on the one hand, to understand this sentence as referring to Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), with whose works al-Jāḥiẓ was profoundly conversant. Aristotle was called by the medieval Muslim scholars *Ṣāḥib al-Manṭiq*, "author of Logic," in reference to his logical works known as the *Organon*,

to those who wished to learn eloquence from him, even though the speaker was fluent and eloquent.

Nonetheless, at no time do I doubt that souls—since they have the greater longing for curious tales, the greater fondness for numerous anecdotes, and the greater inclination for short discourses, loving them more passionately—are naturally prone to find lengthy exposition wearisome, even if they merit the many [explanatory] meanings, and even if such lengthy exposition is the more useful, and the abundant explanation the more advantageous.

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or "instrument" of thought (cf. W.Ṭ. al-Najm, *Manqūlāt al-Jāḥiẓ ʿan Arisṭū fī Kitāb al-Hayawān*, Kuwait: Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt li-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Thaqāfa wa-l-ʿUlūm, 1405/1985, 42; and J.V. Luce, *An Introduction to Greek Philosophy*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1992, 112). In the Syriac and Arabic traditions, the *Organon* included both Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and his *Poetics*. This is mentioned by Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī, "the philosopher of the Arabs" and a contemporary of al-Jāḥiẓ, probably based on a summary of the *Rhetoric* in Arabic translation. Hence, when medieval Muslim writers speak of Aristotle as *Ṣāḥib al-Manṭiq*, the *Rhetoric* would be included. Moreover, one may also recall that Aristotle did not distinguish thought and speech in the way we do today; he included both thought and speech under *lógos*, whose Arabic equivalent, again, is *manṭiq* (cf. J.W. Erdmann, *A History of Philosophy*, 3 vols., London: Sonnenschein, 1890 (repr. Bristol: Theommes Press, 1997), i, 136).

On the other hand, this sentence could also be a reference to one of al-Jāḥiẓ's contemporaries, the Arabic philologist and lexicographer Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 858 in Baghdad), who is known for his philological treatise, *Kitāb Iṣlāḥ al-manṭiq* (cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, Leiden: Brill, 1954–, iii, 940), a work basically dealing with questions of the "correct" use of the Arabic language.

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXT EQUIVALENCE: A HITHERTO INSUFFICIENTLY STUDIED USE OF THE QURAN IN POLITICAL SPEECHES FROM THE EARLY PERIOD OF ISLAM*

Stephan Dähne

Most people understand the figurative sense of the words "the fight between David and Goliath." This expression, used in reference to a conflict, does not necessarily imply an actual physical combat—rather, one would expect some sort of serious action between two unequal opponents. The same observation can be made with respect to the expression "the mark of Cain," a metaphor used in alluding to someone who is somehow different from other people.

Allusions to biblical figures and events such as those mentioned above, or brief quotations from the Bible, tend to be readily recognized and understood in cultures in which biblical accounts have left their mark. Such allusions create a certain image in the reader's mind. Furthermore, they allow the reader to partake of the greatness of an authoritative or archetypal "model" text of the past.

In Arabic-Islamic culture, allusions to quranic ideas and figures, along with quotations from the Quran, play a similar role. In medieval Islam, such frequent references and allusions to the text of the Quran are particularly striking in classical Arabic speeches. These "speeches" or "orations" (sing. *khuṭba*, pl. *khuṭab*) are integral parts of classical Arabic literature. Moreover, some famous speeches came to be seen as models of Arabic eloquence.

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* The study presented in this chapter develops some particularly interesting aspects of the research I conducted for my Ph.D. dissertation. For more specific information on the theoretical approaches and the material examined in this research, see my book *Reden der Araber. Die politische* ḫuṭba *in der klassischen arabischen Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001, esp. pp. 8–11, 146–152, 261–268. For the tremendous influence the Quran had on classical Arabic literature in general, and on classical Arabic speeches in particular, see the recent comprehensive survey by W. Kadi and M. Mir, "Literature and the Qurʾān," in: *EQ* iii (2003), 205–227, esp. 213–217, and the bibliographical references given there.

The term *khuṭba* is commonly associated with the religious Friday sermon. However, another type of *khuṭba* exists that has been given little attention in Western studies so far: the political *khuṭba*. There are, on the one hand, a large number of similarities between both types of *khuṭba*s, including their overlapping subject matter and a shared wealth of rhetorical figures of speech (the latter is especially outstanding in Arabic prose literature). On the other hand, there are also essential differences between the Friday sermon and the political *khuṭba*. These differences relate firstly to the function of the two types of *khuṭba*s in literature.[1] Furthermore, the principal goals of the two types of speech differ. This is particularly striking, given that the political *khuṭba* usually aims, in the first place, at propaganda.[2] It is exactly this propagandistic objective of political *khuṭba*s that brings their rhetorical strategies to our notice.

While investigating rhetorical strategies, we may first draw attention to a major characteristic of the political *khuṭba*: the use of particular rhetorical devices to achieve certain goals. It seems to be precisely this purpose that has caused speakers to incorporate authoritative quranic vocabulary in a way that, in some cases, has proved to be an ingenious rhetorical device.

In the political *khuṭba*s that are preserved in the texts of the classical Arabic corpus, this extraordinarily frequent use of quranic vocabulary is most remarkable. The usage covers brief quotations and paraphrases, as well as stylistic imitations of the text of the Quran. This shows that political *khuṭba*s were tailor-made for a public expected to know the Quran, or at least parts of it, by heart. In some cases it is evident that the "creator" of the speech relies heavily on the

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[1] Classical Arabic literature has preserved clues showing that early Muslims—or at least those living during the first few centuries of Islam—drew a line between the political and the religious *khuṭba*: in some texts a speaker is mentioned as having immediately descended from the pulpit after the Friday *khuṭba* and then to have climbed it again in order to give a political *khuṭba*. Cf. the remark ascribed to Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī commenting on the behavior of his nephew Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ who had given a speech before him: "O ye people, God has indeed helped the Commander of the Faithful to a mighty victory, but he turned to the *minbar* only after the prayer, for he hated to mix aught else with the congregation's words . . ." (al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* iii, 32; cf. also al-Zubayr, *al-Akhbār* 602, which makes ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān act in the same way).

[2] I permit myself to classify under "propaganda" the actual different aims of a *khuṭba* in literature, like the characterization of people or the illustration of events. For a more detailed examination of the *khuṭba*; cf. Dähne, *Reden*, which deals at length with the functions of the *khuṭba* in literature and with its phenomena.

similarity of contexts, i.e. on a parallelism between (a) the historical situations to which his speech alludes, and (b) the historical context that this quranic passage communicates. This phenomenon, which can be called "context equivalence,"[3] will be illustrated in what follows.

It is notable, however, that in the later medieval historical sources in which some of these political speeches have been recorded, little else but quranic vocabulary seems to have been worth quoting at times. A good example is the speech of Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām (d. 67 A.H./687 C.E.), son of the famous companion of the Prophet Muḥammad and brother of the anti-caliph ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Zubayr (d. 73/692).[4] Muṣʿab is supposed to have given this speech upon his arrival in Basra in 67/686, after he was appointed governor of Iraq. It is reported that the threatening style of his *khuṭba* made the people of Iraq expect energetic action from him against Mukhtār ibn Abī ʿUbayd (d. 67/687), the usurper of Kufa, and the Marwānids. The references to this speech, however, give the impression that it consisted solely of the quranic quotation of Q 28:1–6. Nevertheless, al-Ṭabarī's "Chronicle" and other medieval sources also provide brief descriptions of the speaker's gestures and the movements of his hands, along with this quotation from the Quran. Hence, Muṣʿab's speech seems to have gained its prominent political significance entirely from its contextual elements.

Another example is that of the famous speech of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn (d. 207/822). Ṭāhir was the founder of the Ṭāhirids, a short

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[3] The first—and as far as I know the only—scholar, who pointed to this phenomenon in speeches is G.R. Hawting. He said: "In the course of a speech the speaker is often made to introduce phrases or words which we recognise as a part of the qurʾānic text . . . sometimes a qurʾānic text leads into or comes out of a passage which is not qurʾānic but not notably distinct in style or content," cf. Hawting, *Citations* 260. However, the following examples do not lead us to understand "what is before us . . . as a variant and uncanonical version of a text which is better known to us in its qurʾānic guise," as Hawting suggests for one case (ibid. 260 and 267, n. 1). In fact, one may, rather, understand the example which he cites as a typical *talmīḥ* (allusion) "which consists of alluding to famous passages in the Ḳurʾān or Traditions, or in profane literature," cf. *EI²* iii, 1091–92, art. "Iḳtibās" (MacDonald, Bonebakker); cf. *EAL* i, 81–83, art. "Allusion and Intertextuality" (Heinrichs); *CHALUP* 334–339. Moreover, allusion was meant to bring to life the entire quranic passage which was then remembered according to the audience's own specific exegetical culture.

[4] Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, *al-ʿIqd* iv, 124; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* iv.2, 243; al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān* ii, 299–300; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 717. About the speaker cf. *EI²* vii, 649–650 (Lammens, Pellat).

line of governors in Khurāsān during the high ʿAbbāsid period. In
a public speech, Ṭāhir allegedly gave reasons for the deposition of
the caliph al-Amīn. In his "Chronicle", al-Ṭabarī refers twice to the
above-mentioned speech of Ṭāhir.[5] However, it is worth noting again
that in the first version (al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* iii, 932), al-Ṭabarī gives
the quranic verses used in Ṭāhir's speech to the near exclusion of
everything else. Further evidence concerning famous political *khuṭba*s
can be found in texts of the Prophetic Tradition (Ḥadīth) and of
belles-lettres (Adab). The quotations of political speeches preserved in
these branches of classical Arabic literature clearly testify to the gen-
eral popularity of incorporating quranic vocabulary into such speeches.[6]
In modern times as well, Arab statesmen readily use quranic expres-
sions in order to elicit emotional responses from their audiences. In
this instance, as a recent research study has shown, the emotional
power of quranic words is especially strong as a result of the listener's
participation in its decoding.[7]

As far as the speeches in classical Arabic literature are concerned,
one can hardly draw conclusions regarding their emotional effect.
This is due to the dubious authenticity of many of these speech texts,
as I was able to demonstrate elsewhere.[8] At this point, some read-
ers might be inclined to ask what is so new about this information.
What is the connection between the Quran, political speeches, and
the story of David and Goliath? The use of quranic vocabulary, allu-

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[5] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* iii, 932, and the immediately following lines: 932–933.
[6] Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān* ii, 6: "This youngster was the best speaker of the Arabs
if his speech contained something from the Quran." Cf. a similar remark in al-
Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān* i, 118. See also Ibn Māja, *Sunan* i, 609–610 (*ḥadīth* 1892), which
contains instructions concerning the employment of certain quranic verses in *khuṭab*.
Nevertheless, these instructions were scarcely followed, at least as far as the writ-
ten versions of the political speeches are concerned.
[7] For general remarks on this issue, cf. Stock, *Sprache* 72–92; with regard to the
speeches of ʿAbd al-Nāṣir cf. ibid. 120–128; with regard to Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, ibid.
140–152.
[8] Cf. Dähne, *Reden*, esp. pp. 261–262. Blachère, *Histoire* 731, says: "Il est certes
regrettable qu'on ne puisse faire état des discours attribués à des insurgés chiʾites
ou kharijites dont l'inauthenticité est par trop flagrante." Khalidi, *Thought* 26–27,
n. 20, deals with the question of the authenticity of *ḥadīth*s, which is comparable
to the issues we are faced with here.
Also, it is more probable that scenes describing emotions in speeches serve as
illustration and, thus, as an inconspicuous authentication of the respective text: a
method, which is comparable to what has been called *Situationsschilderung* (portrayal
of the situation) with regard to *ḥadīth*s, cf. Stetter, *Topoi* 2–34. This phenomenon is
also encountered in *khuṭab*s; cf. Dähne, *Reden* 165–167.

sions to famous passages in the Quran—isn't this a widespread, self-evident feature of Arabic texts? This question must certainly be answered in the affirmative. However, there is a deeper dimension, at least in political speeches; a dimension that brings us to view the use of quranic vocabulary in the light of rhetorical strategies: I mean by this the aforementioned "context equivalence." The following examples may be helpful to illustrate this phenomenon.

1   *Abū Ḥamza al-Shārī*

In 130/747, the last year of his life, the famous Khārijite leader Abū Ḥamza al-Shārī[9] is alleged to have given a speech before the people of Medina after having conquered their city. That speech contains the following words (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 2010):

> . . . Then, we met your men at Qudayd, and we summoned them to obey the Merciful Lord and the rule of the Quran. But they summoned us to obey Satan and the judgment of the family of Marwān. And by God's life, far apart are guidance and error! They scurried forward (*thumma aqbalū yuhra'ūna yaziffūna*) hastening, for Satan had struck in them his partners; his cauldrons boiled with their blood. . . .

The underlined passage paraphrases Q 37:94 (*fa-aqbalū ilayhi yaziffūna,* "then came the others to him hastening"). This quranic verse relates to the people of Abraham who are about to stand against him and commit idolatry.

   In the use of this quranic vocabulary, a certain comparison is incorporated into Abū Ḥamza's speech, albeit indirectly; namely, the comparison of Abū Ḥamza with Abraham, "the first Muslim" and "founder of the Ka'ba," on the one hand, and the comparison of the family of the hated caliph Marwān[10] with the heretical people

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[9] Cf. *EI*[2] vii, 524–25 (Pellat).—Khārijites are "the members of the earliest of the religious sects of Islām, whose importance lies particularly . . . in the formulation of questions relative to the theory of the caliphate and to justification by faith or by works, while from the point of view of political history the principal part they played was disturbing by means of continual insurrections;" cf. *EI*[2] iv, 1074–1077 (Levi della Vida). The distinguishing feature of this text is its varying shape and content in the sources; it has been transmitted in more than a dozen versions, cf. Dähne, *Khuṭab* 40–41, esp. n. 2.

[10] Marwān ibn Muḥammad ibn Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 127–132/744–749/50), the last of the Umayyad caliphs of Syria, a grandson of the caliph Marwān I.; cf. *EI*[2] vi, 623–25 (Hawting).

of Abraham on the other. The objective of this passage is to justify
a clash with an enemy and his condemnation. It is thus intercon-
nected subtly with the objective expressed in Q 37:94. Since the
audience was expected to know the Quran, one can take it for
granted that such an allusion did in fact hit its target.

Our second example concerns the same speech of Abū Ḥamza.
The *khuṭba* continues as follows:

> . . . and his supposition about them was confirmed (*wa-ṣaddaqa ʿalayhim
> ẓannahu*). But the helpers of God . . . came forward in small bands and
> groups, with every sharpened blade gleaming; and our coil turned, and
> their coil twisted away,[11] with a blow which makes the liars doubt (*bi-
> ḍarbin yartābu minhu l-mubṭilūna*).

The first underlined passage quotes Q 34:20. The verbatim refer-
ence to the Quran ends at this point of the speech. However, check-
ing the Quran shows clearly that a larger connection exists between
this speech and the sura in question, a connection that goes beyond
a verbatim reference to the latter:

A) The text of this sura refers to sinful people with regard to
whom Satan's supposition was confirmed. The text of this part of
the speech itself refers to Marwān and his dynasty, against whom
the orator was fighting. This leads us to infer that the "creator of
the speech" deliberately chose the wording of Q 34:20. He may
have done so for three reasons: (a) for embellishment purposes, (b)
because of the similarity between the situations, and (c) in order to
win the audience over.

B) Interestingly enough, the passage of the speech subsequent to
the quotations from Q 34:20 indicates the real motive: the Quran,
on the one hand, speaks here of a group of believers who do not
follow Satan,[12] and on the other hand, the *khuṭba* speaks of God's
helpers (i.e. the Khārijites) who "came forward in small bands and
squadrons." Thus, it becomes evident that this part of the speech
consciously follows the rhetorical pattern of the quranic model:

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[11] The metaphor of the "mill of fighting" or "mill of death" is a topos in old
Arabic poetry. It expresses the mere passive role that the enemies held; cf. Ibn
Manẓūr, *Lisān* xiv, 314a; *EI*² x, 114–115 (Waines).

[12] ". . . and the Devil found that his judgment of them was true, so they followed
him, all except a party of true believers," *wa-la-qad ṣaddaqa ʿalayhim Iblīsu ẓannahu
fa-ʾttabaʿūhu illā farīqan min al-muʾminīna* (Q 34:20).

1. "Helpers" in the *khuṭba* is expressed by the word *anṣār*. As is well known, this word was generally used for the Prophet's allies in Medina, whose descendants were the audience of this speech—at least according to the text.
2. The speech creates a reference to the glorious early days of Islam. The passage dealt with here gives the impression that the Khārijites are as important for God as the people of Medina were for the Prophet. Hence, the Khārijites are here fulfilling the Prophet's example (*sunna*).

As in our first example, there is good reason to assume that this subtle interconnection between the aim of the speech and the Quran did not miss its target. Moreover, the Quran seems to have more or less shaped the spiritual background of the audience present at that speech. Thus, one can easily imagine how the audience may have been carried away by this speech.

C) The second underlined passage ("with a blow which makes the liars doubt") is reminiscent of Q 29:48: "And thou didst not recite any Book before it, nor didst thou write one with thy right hand; in that case the liars would have doubted."[13] Here the Quran refers to the opponents of Muḥammad, those who deny his prophetic mission. This allusion signifies two things: a) the liars of the speech are identified with the liars mentioned in the Quran, and b) the enemies of the orator are definitely comparable to the enemies of the Prophet.

Due to the doubtful authenticity of the speeches handed down to us, it would be rash to view this cunning play with associations as part of a persuasive strategy on the orator's part. It may nevertheless be possible that what we are faced with is the persuasive strategy of the unknown "creator of the speech." Irrespective of whether these passages are authentic or not, they still convey an impression of the Arabic rhetorical art in classical times, especially during a time when Khārijite eloquence enjoyed a good reputation.[14] (Did the virtuoso handling of quranic associations possibly play a part in the formation of that reputation?) However, the Khārijites' speeches are not alone in employing the rhetorical trick that we encounter here. Let us have a look at a third example.

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[13] *Wa-mā kunta tatlū min qablihi min kitābin wa-lā takhuṭṭuhu bi-yamīnika idhan la-irtāba al-mubṭilūna* (Q 29:48).

[14] Cf. *EI²* iv, 1074–1077 (Levi della Vida).

2 *'Abdallāh ibn al-Zubayr*

In some sources, 'Abdallāh ibn al-Zubayr[15] is portrayed as a model
of piety. One of these sources, *al-'Iqd al-farīd* by Ibn 'Abdrabbih
(d. 328/940), attributes a speech to him. The function of this speech
appears to be threefold: firstly, it is a model of eloquence; secondly,
it is a report about a military campaign in North Africa, which pre-
sumably took place in 26–27/647;[16] and thirdly, it is by indirect
means an exoneration of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.[17]

   The speech is included in *al-'Iqd* iv, 100. It is supposed to have
been given before the third caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (r. 23/644
to 35/655) and his entourage, after the campaign in which the ora-
tor allegedly took part. It contains the following passage:

> In the first light of dawn we took up our battle formation of the day
> before. Some of us strode in front of the others, and God lent us His
> endurance. So we conquered it (North Africa). . . .[18]

The underlined phrase is reminiscent of Q 2:250. In Q 2:250, the
Israelites beseech God to lend them patience as they set out against
Goliath and his men:

> And when they went into the field against Goliath and his hosts they
> said: Our Lord! Lend us endurance, make our foothold certain, and
> give us help against the disbelieving folk.[19]

The historical event described in the speech is a victorious Muslim
military campaign against Christians in North Africa. The historical
circumstances described in the speech are portrayed with the help
of quranic wording. By means of this allusion to the Quran, the
conquering Muslims are perceived as righteous believers in God,
comparable to the ancient Israelites as mentioned in Q 2:250. The

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   [15] He was born in 2/624, and died in 73/692. He "is said to have killed the
exarch Gregory with his own hand;" and "many sources portray him as avaricious,
jealous, and ill-natured;" cf. *EI²* i, 54–55 (Gibb).
   [16] Abū l-Faraj, *al-Aghānī* vi, 281, transmits a completely different version of it.
According to him, the governor mentioned in the speech is 'Abdallāh ibn Sa'd ibn
Abī Sarḥ. He is known to have undertaken a campaign in the region of Tripolis
in that year; cf. *EI²* i, 51–52 (Becker).
   [17] Cf. *EI²* x, 946–949 (Levi della Vida; R.G. Khoury).
   [18] *Fa-afragha Allāhu 'alaynā ṣabrahu*; cf. Ibn 'Abdrabbih, *al-'Iqd* iv, 100.
   [19] *Wa-lammā barazū li-Jālūta wa-junūdihi qālū rabbanā afrigh 'alaynā ṣabran wa-thabbit
aqdāmanā wa-'nṣurnā 'alā l-qawmi l-kāfirīna.*

enemies of the Muslims, however, are regarded as equivalent to the unbelieving ancient Philistines.

What was the role of this allusion to the Quran for the under-standing of this speech? Let us recall the following two points: Firstly, in its broader sense, the whole speech serves the purpose of exon-erating the caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. By refuting the numerous accusations raised against him, it defends and strengthens the Umayyad dynasty.[20] Secondly, this is done mainly by ignoring these accusa-tions.[21] The speech instead creates a counterclaim against the anti-Umayyad image present elsewhere in literature (and perhaps tacitly alludes to them): it creates a pro-Umayyad image in which not a shadow of criticism falls on ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Zubayr or Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam.[22] In this speech, which portrays a certain stage in the Muslim conquest of North Africa (probably that of the year 26/647–48), ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān is rather incon-spicuously placed next to his predecessor ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.[23] The latter, however, is usually seen as a hero of the grand conquests of the earliest time of Islam.

The role of the quranic passage, then, with its identification of the Muslims (under the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān) with the Israelites on the one hand, and their Christian enemies with the unbe-lieving Philistines on the other, apparently was to convey the distinct message that matters are running smoothly under the Umayyads.[24]

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[20] Meccan clan of Quraysh, first dynasty of caliphs (40–132/661–750); the foun-dation was laid under the third caliph ʿUthmān who had appointed members of his clan to key positions in the Islamic state; cf. *EAL* i, 793–795 (Jacobi); *EI²* x, 840–847 (Hawting).

[21] Only in one place at the end of the speech is allusion made to one of the accusations: the reproach of having given public funds as a present to his relatives is indirectly countered by the formulation "Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam locked up the captured money in the treasure chamber . . ." (*fa-aṣabnā ghanāʾima kathīratan wa-fayʾan wāsiʿan balagha fīhi l-khumsu khamsamiʾati alfin fa-ṣafaqa ʿalayhā Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam*).

[22] ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān's cousin and first caliph of the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad dynasty, r. for several months in 64/684–65/685. Later, anti-Umayyad tradition stigmatised him as *ṭarīd ibn ṭarīd* "outlawed son of an outlaw;" cf. *EI²* vi, 621–623 (Bosworth).

[23] The second caliph (r. 13/634 to 23/644); cf. *EI²* x, 818–821 (Bonner).

[24] The pro-Umayyad tendency in this *khuṭba* might be explained by the com-piler's dependence upon the benevolence of the Umayyad rule in al-Andalus. Cf. Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen* 25.

3   ʿUthmān ibn Ḥayyān al-Murrī

Another speech, attributed to ʿUthmān ibn Ḥayyān al-Murrī (d. after 94/713), is said to have been given in 94/713, i.e. at the time of his appointment as governor of Medina.[25] The whole speech is a coherent polemic against the people of Medina. It deals with both the friendly relationship between Iraq and the Ḥijāz[26] and with the tensions between Iraq and Syria.[27] A passage states:

> We have found you, both long since and more recently, to be insincere to the Commander of the Faithful. Now, there have taken refuge with you <u>those who will increase your corruption</u> (*man yazīdukum khabālan*). The people in Iraq are people of schism and hypocrisy. . . . I shall not, by God, be brought anyone who has given refuge to any one of them . . . but that I shall demolish his house![28]

The underlined passage paraphrases Q 3:118: ". . . [take not others than your own people as intimate friends], they will not fail to corrupt you . . . ([*la tattakhidhū biṭānatan min dīnikum*] *la yaʾlūnakum khabālan* . . .)."

The entire quranic verse is a warning against acquainting oneself with anyone from outside the community of believers. It is based on the premise that such an acquaintance would cause confusion and distress among the believers. The speech, on the other hand, warns its hearers against associating with a certain group of people. Incorporated in this *khuṭba*, the quranic wording serves as a condemnation of this particular group—the "Iraqis"—as unbelievers.

4   ʿAbdallāh ibn Ṭāhir

ʿAbdallāh ibn Ṭāhir (d. 230/844), a famous poet, statesman, confidant of caliphs and governor of Khurāsān,[29] is said to have gone into battle against the Khārijites. On this occasion he is supposed to have

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[25] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1258–60. The text associates the speaker with the tough measures taken against the Iraqi Arabs who are regarded as the root of upheaval against Umayyad rule.

[26] Al-Ḥijāz, "the birthplace and still the spiritual centre of Islam, is in the northwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula. The history of al-Ḥijāz is intimately bound up with the history of Mecca and Medina;" cf. *EI²* iii, 362–64 (Rentz).

[27] These designations are of course not to be understood in the modern political sense, but rather as a paradigm that served to explain conflicts.

[28] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1258.

[29] *EI²* i, 52–53 (Marin).

given a *khuṭba* in order to spur on his soldiers. This *khuṭba* contains the following passage:

> You are the army of God, the fighters for His truth, the defenders of His religion and His holy places. You are those who call to what He commanded: <u>To hold on to the rope of God</u> (*al-dāʿūna ilā mā amara bihi min al-iʿtiṣāmi bi-ḥablihi*)[30] and to obedience to his rulers, to those He made guardians of the religion and organizers of the Muslims. So ask for the fulfillment of God's promises and for His assistance; by fighting ... those who rebel against Him, ... who split up the community![31]

The underlined passage is an allusion to the corresponding commandment in Q 3:103. This quranic commandment, as indicated in this speech, is followed in the Quran by the command *not to split up into groups*. This order clearly corresponds to the *khuṭba*-context:

Speech	Quran
"You are those who call to what He commanded: <u>To hold on to the rope of God</u>. . . .	(Q 3:103) "And hold fast, all together, by the rope of God and be not divided. . . ."
So ask for the fulfillment of God's promises and for His assistance; by fighting . . . those who rebel against Him, . . . who split up the community!"	(105) "And be not like those who became divided and who disagreed among themselves. . . ."
innakum . . . al-dāʿūna ilā mā amara bihi min <u>al-iʿtiṣāmi bi-ḥablihi</u> . . .	(103) *wa-ʿtaṣimū bi-ḥabli 'llāhi jamīʿan wa-lā tafarraqū . . .*
fa-'stanjizū mawʿūda Allāhi wa-naṣrahu bi-mujāhadati . . . ahli maʿṣiyyatihi . . . al-ladhīna . . . faraqū l-jamāʿata	(105) *wa-lā takūnū ka-l-ladhīna tafar-raqū wa-'khtalafū*

Did the "creator" of this speech choose his words in a knowing and calculating way? Had he himself been "quranized" with the knowledge of the wording and the context of the Quran? Whatever the case may be, one may assume that his aim was to achieve the greatest impact possible on his audience. Therefore, one can conclude that the allusion to the quranic context *subsequent* to the paraphrasing of Q 3:103 (not yet the paraphrasing itself) was part of a strategy that eventually helped in winning over the audience.

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[30] *Ḥabl* [*Allāh*], "the rope [of God]," can be interpreted as synonymous to *khilāfat Allāh*, "God's caliphate;" cf. Crone, *Caliph* 82.
[31] Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, *al-ʿIqd* iv, 115.

5   *Conclusions*

Quranic vocabulary was not always incorporated into political speeches
as mere embellishment. In other words, the intertextual relationship
between speeches and the Quran is not always restricted simply to
the presentation of some quranic words. Instead, the original (quranic)
meaning of the quotation could be deliberately modified by placing
the words in the new (speech) context. Interestingly enough, this
intertextuality does not always stop at this point. Sometimes the con-
text of the speech even makes an allusion to the quranic context
from which the quotation (or the paraphrase) was taken.

It should be emphasized that we are not faced with a *continuation*
of the quranic text here. Rather, we are faced with an *echo* of the
idea or of the situation it depicts. While the quranic text fragment
is present in the speech, the speech itself refers to the original and
much larger quranic text-context. Thus one finds that the object of
the speech is subtly interconnected with the object of the quranic
passage.

Given the vast number of medieval Arabic sources available to
us, the examples of political speeches studied in this article repre-
sent only a limited amount of our data on what I call "context equiv-
alence." This expression means that the conformity between the text
of some passages in political speeches and the text of the Quran,
from which these speeches quote, is mirrored by a symmetry of "con-
texts," i.e. the context of the particular political speeches and the
"context" of the Holy Scripture. This "context equivalence" previously
went little noticed by scholars. It becomes evident, however, through
an in-depth analysis of the text and context of a given speech, and
the text and context of the quranic passages quoted therein. Even
if such instances of "context equivalence" may not have been a con-
stant feature in political *khuṭba*s taken as a whole, it can be detected
frequently in several texts of this genre[32] and should, therefore, be
understood both as a by-product of quranic culture and a specific
rhetorical development that is comparable to certain rhetorical figures
in classical Arabic literature which, as a rule, embellish and empha-
size a message. However, even if this "context equivalence" is some-
what similar to other phenomena of classical Arabic literature such

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[32] Cf. Dähne, *Reden* 149–152, and 114, n. 449, for another example not referred
to in this article.

as *iqtibās* ("quoting" from the text of the Quran) and *talmīḥ* ("alluding" to the text of the Quran),[33] it is in fact not identical with them. The main reasons for this are:

(a) The application of quranic vocabulary in political speeches *in general* may have far exceeded the eagerness of the speaker to make use of it for aesthetic reasons.[34] In fact, it seems to have enabled the orator, or "creator of a speech," to somehow sacralize a speech concerning profane matters. As a consequence, it strengthened his position and eventually protected the contents of his speech from disapproval by the audience.

(b) The *special* effect of the deliberate use of "context equivalence" by the orator was emotional in nature. By alluding to the context of the revelation and communication of the Quran by the Prophet Muḥammad, the speech also invoked scriptural authority in some way.[35] The sequence of this special kind of allusion to the Quran shall be visualized in the following figure:

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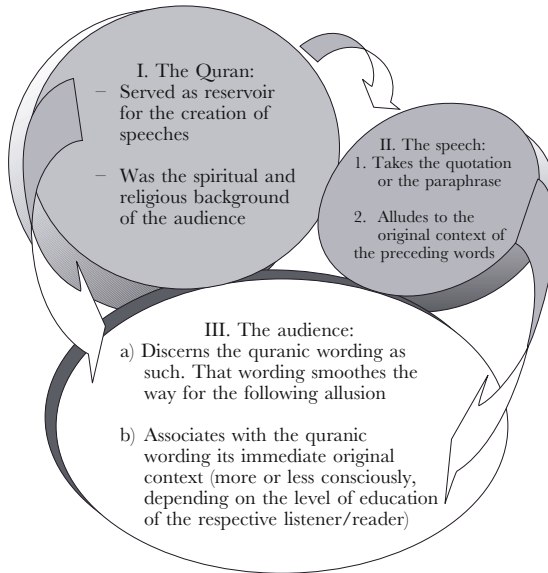
[33] Cf. n. 3.

[34] Cf. n. 6.

[35] However, this system of alluding to the Holy Scripture also worked the other way around. This may have been the case whenever a situation was first portrayed in the speech and then ultimately rounded off by a quotation from the Quran that seemed suitable at that point to provide the "additional" authority needed. One can assume that this was an important tool (if not sometimes the only one) that eventually inclined the audience to accept what was said in the speech.

In any case, the orator, or "creator of a speech," could count on the fact that allusions to the text of the Quran would meet the usual expectations of the audience. This means that after a quotation or paraphrase of a verse or passage of the Quran was given in a speech, the audience was more or less conscious of what the orator *could* or *should* say next, since they were accustomed to hearing the Quran quoted in speeches from attending the Friday sermons, for example. This eventually made it possible for political speakers to exploit the "context equivalence," knowing the audience's ability to decode this literary performance. This observation seems to be true not only for an audience who attended a speech in "reality," but also for those readers who encountered an (actual or fictitious) speech recorded in writing. The basic reason for this is, of course, that the knowledge of the text of the Quran was extremely widespread among the Muslims. In fact, since the rise of Islam it has been "traditionally instilled" in every person from childhood on through memorization of the entire text, or numerous passages, of the Quran. In this regard, any "reverberations of the text [of the Quran] were guaranteed to be felt by many readers."[36]

The medieval Muslim audience listening to or reading a speech was aware, of course, of interferences[37] between the "original," quranic context (i.e. when the revelation was communicated by the Prophet Muḥammad to his people) and the context of the "actual" speech (i.e. the reason for speech, in which quranic passages were quoted). However, such inevitable interferences seem by no means to have negatively affected the harmony between the original, quranic context and the speech context. Rather, strategies such as quoting from the Quran and creating associations with its context seem to have been used without hesitation by certain speech-creators to promote their political goals. For these eloquent leaders and creators of political speeches respectively, the conscious use of references to the content of the Quran (which becomes discrete context) seems to have been a subtle but very effective tool, an ingenious—although hitherto insufficiently studied—feature of classical Arabic rhetoric.

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[36] *EAL* ii 453–456 (Rippin).
[37] I understand "interference" here as Plett does, i.e. as pointing to the "conflict between the quotation and its new context;" cf. Plett, *Intertextualities* 11.

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CHAPTER TWO

CLASSICAL HERITAGE AND NEW LITERARY FORMS:
LITERARY ACTIVITIES OF CHRISTIANS DURING
THE UMAYYAD PERIOD

Ute Pietruschka

When studying the transmission of the Greek heritage to Islam dur-
ing the Umayyad period, one needs to take into consideration the
literary production of Christians in the parts of the former Byzantine
empire, now under Islamic rule. The Graeco-Arabic translation move-
ment of the 8th to the 10th centuries C.E. was recently discussed
by Dimitri Gutas in an erudite study, in which he insightfully explored
the various social, political and ideological factors of the translation
movement that played key roles in the transmission of knowledge
from the ancient Greek culture to the civilization of Islam in medieval
times.[1] In this context, the efforts made by Christian scholars in pre-
serving the classical Greek heritage during the first century after the
rise of Islam cannot be neglected. In particular, the maintenance of
a Hellenistic curriculum among the Syrians after the Muslim con-
quests was of crucial importance for the extensive transmission of
Greek scientific and literary works to, and their adoption by, the
Arabs.

The present study does not intend to review this wide terrain once
more. Rather, it attempts to compare some major aspects of the lit-
erary and scholarly activities in Byzantium with those in the Syro-
Palestinian region. It also deals with the questions as to why and to
what purpose specific literary forms were preferred in the scholarly
activities of Christians during the first century of Islam.

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[1] Gutas, *Greek Thought*. See furthermore Peters, Greek and Syriac background.

1   *Syriac scholarship at the time of the rise of Islam*

At first glance, one might assume that the spread of Islam—and thus of the Arab people, along with the Arabic language—would have resulted in a drastic decay in the literary activities of scholars writing in Syriac. In fact, the contrary is the case: the literary production in Syriac not only continued to exist, but flourished in an amazingly dynamic manner. The 7th century C.E. is even considered to be the period of time when the assimilation of elements of Greek culture into Syriac culture reached its peak.[2] This fresh development continued until the beginning of the 8th century, and started to ebb toward the middle of the same century. During that time, large numbers of Greek works were translated into Syriac for the first time, and other renderings from Greek into Syriac were reworked based on earlier Syriac translations.[3]

As surprising as it may seem, the conquest of Syria and Palestine by the Muslims (as a result of which the political ties of this region were cut with the Greek-speaking world) led to a new political and cultural situation that not only influenced favorably the literary activities of Syriac scholars, but actually promoted them. As it seems, the political conditions from the time of the Arab conquest intensified the interest of Christians in their Syriac (Byzantino-) Hellenistic identity and culture. Eventually it seems even to have increased the need for them to deal, in a scholarly manner, with what formed the basis of Syriac culture and identity within an Islamic domain.

In the 7th century, the Syriac- and Arabic-speaking Christians apparently considered their new (Arabic-speaking) Muslim rulers to be nothing more than a mere change of government. Some Christians in Syria and Egypt even seem to have viewed this new rule as a kind of liberation from the Byzantine authorities. The Muslims' initially rather tolerant treatment of the non-Chalcedonian churches is

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[2] During the period from the 4th to 7th century, a gradual shift in translation techniques can be observed. This shift is characterized by a movement from rather free-style translations toward the more sophisticated method of so-called "mirror translations." In other words, the focus of translation had changed "from a reader- to a text-oriented style." Such renderings, then, seem to have aimed at reproducing the Greek original as precisely as possible in Syriac. Consequently, these translations impressively reflect the great prestige that the Greek language and culture in fact had among Syriac scholars. See Brock, Syriac background 143.

[3] On the history of Syriac translations from the Greek, see Brock, Syriac Translation Technique.

just one example which may help explain these positive feelings that some Christians had at the time toward Muslim government.[4]

Another aspect that needs to be noted relates to the fact that the rule of the Muslim Arabs was seen by many Christians as "God-given." This view is expressed in Syriac sources such as the correspondence of Catholicos Isho'yahb (d. 659) and a summary of world history by John of Fenek.[5] Both documents, dating from the second half of the 7th century, display the rather positive attitude of Christians toward Islam, indicating that Muslim rule appeared to these writers as guaranteeing religious freedom for the "People of the Book." In this context, it is particularly interesting to note also how these two Christian scholars idealized, for example, the reign of the four "Rightly-Guided" caliphs and the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'āwiya, as a "period of tolerance and peace." One encounters a similar, positive attitude toward Muslim rule later in the writings of Catholicos Timothy I; (d. 823)[6] and in some historical works such as those by Michael Syrus and Bar Hebraeus.[7] The last two authors stress in a particularly striking manner the relatively favorable circumstances Christians in Syria and Palestine seem to have enjoyed after the spread of Islam into these territories.

2   *Early Christian-Muslim relations: coexistence based on practical terms?*

In the 7th and 8th centuries, the way in which Muslims viewed Christians was no less complex. In the initial stage of the spread of Islam, the Muslims seem to have felt a kind of indecisiveness in their attitudes toward the Christian population of the newly-conquered lands. One reason for such ambivalence might be the fact that religious issues were not as yet the focus of Muslim politics. Instead, the Muslims needed to address matters of a more practical and pressing nature. The poll-tax and other legal questions were much more important to Muslim governors than theological discussions on such specific issues as the relation of Islam and Christianity. This is reflected in records of intellectual conversations between leaders of Muslim

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[4] See Syrus, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien* ii, *passim*.
[5] This history provides evidence for the currency of apocalyptic expectations in the late 7th century. See Brock, North Mesopotamia 51.
[6] See the relevant passages in Timothy's letters: Bidawid, *Lettres* 77.
[7] *Chronography of Gregory Abûl-Faraj*.

troops and Christians. These records show, for instance, a mere exchange of ideas rather than an in-depth theological debate. In addition, these documents also show that legal questions (the laws of inheritance, for example) were much-discussed issues, as was the nature of Jesus. The latter, however, became in later times a primary topic of Muslim-Christian discourse.[8]

Other practical issues were related to the questions of how the new political system was to be organized, and how the old bureaucratic elite could be of use to the Muslims in making the government function. For these tasks, competent managers were required in the first place, regardless of their religious or ethnic background. This situation brought about some great opportunities for Christians, i.e. for those capable and cooperative enough to participate in the new societal system under Muslim rule.[9] To convert Christians to Islam, however, was an issue of seemingly secondary importance to Muslim authorities—at least in the first century of Islam. This is shown by the earliest treaties Muslim rulers drew up with cities in the newly conquered territories. The treaties expressly preserve the *status quo* of Christian communities, though officially putting them under Muslim protection.[10] This, however, also resulted in the renunciation by Muslim rulers of responsibility for all internal affairs of non-Muslim communities. In effect, this very development eventually enabled the Christians to preserve and safeguard the infrastructure of the Church (including the latter's legal status and financial basis), and strengthened considerably social solidarity and self-esteem among Christian communities.

Another significant point that needs to be made is that, as an immediate result of the Muslim conquests, the provincial Church experienced a shock at first, when its ties with its clerical and administrative center were severed. The Church, however, eventually overcame this concussion and came to an arrangement with the new realities. As for the Jacobites and the Copts, this development was

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[8] Examples of such early discussions are: a conversation between the Jacobite patriarch John I and 'Umayr ibn Sa'd during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and a report on the reception of the Coptic patriarch Benjamin I by 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ in 643. See the literature given in Reinink, Syriac Apologetic Literature, and Pietruschka, Streitgespräche zwischen Christen und Muslimen, esp. 141 and 143. For a general survey, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, chapter 11, and Eddé et al., *Communautés chrétiennes*, esp. 106ff.

[9] Crone, *Slaves*, chapter 8 on Umayyad clientage.

[10] Noth, Verträge der Eroberungszeit 282–314.

somewhat eased by the fact that both communities had already estab-
lished a certain autonomy in the 6th century. The Chalcedonians,
in turn, took advantage of the many positions of power and influence
they held when the Arabs arrived.[11] The Melkite Church benefited
especially from this development. In fact, it was its new indepen-
dence from Byzantium on the one hand, and the promotion of an
Arabic-speaking hierarchy on the other, which eventually helped
ensure this community's survival.[12]

  In conclusion, one can point to a somewhat odd situation char-
acterized by two features: firstly, the early Muslim conquest seems
to have helped stimulate the cultural and religious self-awareness of
the Christian intellectual elite; and secondly, Muslim rule apparently
resulted in an initial strengthening of Christian intellectual (and reli-
gious) identity, rather than in its destruction.

3   *New educational forms and literary tendencies among Christians during
the Umayyad caliphate*[13]

Recently, Daniel J. Sahas[14] has drawn attention to a new under-
standing of the formative period of interaction between the Syro-
Palestinian Byzantine culture and the Umayyad caliphate. This period
overlaps with the centuries of obscurity, the so-called "Dark Age"
of Byzantium. The Dark Age is characterized culturally by a shrink-
ing in the range of secular literature, such as historical writing, pan-
egyrics, epistles and philosophical works, even though other literary
genres, essentially ecclesiastical in nature, continued to flourish at the
same time.

  A comparative study of literary activities on both sides—the Byzan-
tine and the Syro-Palestinian—would help explain the criteria and
motives guiding the selection and transmission of literary genres from
the Hellenistic cultural heritage. However, the question as to why
specific categories of Greek literature disappeared during the 7th cen-
tury while other genres developed further is still a matter of discussion

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[11] Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles* XXIII.
[12] See Kennedy, Melkite Church 325–343.
[13] For the relevant political and historical context, see the detailed description
given in Goddard, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, chapter "The First Age of Christian-
Muslim Interaction (c. 830/215)," 34–78.
[14] Sahas, Cultural Interaction.

in modern scholarship. Two points shall be made here which may help us to understand this phenomenon: firstly, the substantial social, economic and administrative changes in the Byzantine empire had a profound impact on the educational system as well as on the traditional public life and secular culture. Secondly, these educational and cultural changes initiated the development of new styles and scholarly trends in Greek writing.[15]

Interestingly enough, however, a considerable amount of theological literature continued to be written in the 7th and 8th centuries. This is noteworthy since, at this time, the old Byzantine educational apparatus ceased to exist, and the secular system of education seems to have disappeared. As a result, secular institutions were no longer available to promote Hellenistic literary education. The Church, which had managed to maintain its traditional form of administrative organization, now took over this task. However, it gave emphasis to the education of clergy. Therefore, the study of the writings of the Church Fathers, the scriptures and exegesis became the focus of interest. Furthermore, the literary genres flourishing at that time show that the Church played a much more crucial role in elementary and advanced education than it had done before. Reading-material for educational purposes, for example, was now selected from all kinds of theological literature. The use of secular literature for educational purposes, however, was reduced noticeably.

3.1   *From larger compilations to shorter textbooks*

Besides the education provided in monasteries, Christian education flourished in private or semi-private schools. The academic level of such schools was dependent upon the scholarship of individual teachers, who were either laymen or clerics. This resulted in the education they offered becoming more selective and individual.[16] As in monasteries, the teachers at these schools also came to prefer textbooks and handbooks of manageable size, along selections from (or abridgments of) larger, earlier works. This shift from larger compi-

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[15] A comprehensive survey of the developments in Byzantium during the 7th century is given in Haldon, *Byzantium*; see here especially 281–323. On urban continuity/discontinuity in Byzantium (an issue that is still controversial), see Mango, Discontinuity; Kazhdan, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, and Treadgold with a brief survey in: Break in Byzantium.

[16] Yannopoulos, *La societé profane* 169–170.

lations to shorter textbooks and to abridgments was also due to financial reasons; large commentaries were often simply too expensive for most students. One also needs to remember that the cost of writing material had increased considerably in Byzantium during the 7th century as a result of the loss of Egypt, its most important supplier of papyrus. There was, therefore, an increasing demand for more compact and easy-to-manage handbooks, which allowed one to assimilate quickly large amounts of information—a fact that had its impact on the composition and structure of handbooks.

This entire development is perhaps best exemplified by the composition of logical compendia as part of philosophical activity during the 7th century. These logical compendia represent abridgments of both the *Prolegomena* of David and the works of Maximus Confessor (d. 662).[17] The value of these philosophical compendia lies in the transmission—and thus conservation—of the Aristotelian tradition in Byzantium. It also shows the existent demand for brief handbooks of Aristotelian studies, whether in the form of introductions to logic for students of philosophy or for theological training.

3.2   *Secular topics taught at theological schools*

In general, the monasteries in the Byzantine empire did not set out to foster secular learning, and there is little evidence that monks received a higher education in grammar and rhetoric. It is, however, a cliché in the biographies of monastic leaders that the monks disregarded classical learning and—even if they received a secular education—studied "only what was useful."[18] Quite the contrary seems to be the case, however, for rhetoric did play an important role in the education of clergy.[19]

Outside the Byzantine empire though, and in Syriac-speaking areas in particular, a secular tradition did persist: the school of rhetoric at Gaza, which flourished in the 6th century, clearly shows such a

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[17] See Roueché, Byzantine Philosophical Texts.
[18] Maguire, *Art and Eloquence* 18. For a more detailed study of the role rhetoric played in both Byzantine education and the educational system of the Syro-Palestinian region under Muslim rule, see my forthcoming Habilitationsschrift *Studien zur Entwicklung der christlich-arabischen Theologie und Philosophie des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts.*
[19] From the beginning, the church showed interest in the language but not in the content of the classics; with respect to education, style became the most important aspect of rhetoric. See Kennedy, *Classical rhetoric*, 169ff.

union of rhetoric and Christian learning.[20] The theological schools (among them the School of Nisibis) represented important intellectual centers. There is also clear evidence suggesting that secular topics were taught there *along with* religious subjects:[21] After the Arab conquests, the monasteries of Qenneshre, Mar Mattai or Mar Sabas, to name a few, even became notable centers of Greek studies in the 7th and 8th centuries. On the other hand, old secular institutions, which had supported Hellenistic education, disappeared after the Arabs arrived but, as we have seen, this development had already begun in pre-Islamic times.

Unfortunately, no hard evidence on the curriculum in Syriac private or Church schools has been preserved; the *vitae* of certain individuals from Syria (such as Andreas of Crete, ca. 660–740, and John of Damascus, d. 749) do, however, mention secular topics taught in Damascus schools and private teaching circles, such as the Greek language, rhetoric, dialectics, mathematics, music, geometry, astronomy and philosophy. These topics constituted the curriculum of higher education in classical antiquity.

The education described here may be an exception or a topos that underlined the classical educational background of the theologians.[22] The writings of these learned men, however, display the wide range of knowledge and academic interests that was obviously based on a classical *enkyklios paideia*. Hence it is justified to assume that the classical curriculum was carried on in the Middle East even during the time that is called the "Dark Age" of Byzantium. There is also good reason to believe that this curriculum was the basis for private circles of learning and ecclesiastical schools, in which excerpts and compilations of books, which had become inaccessible otherwise, were used as textbooks. The aforementioned logical compendia in

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[20] Concerning the preference of certain genres, such as the epistle, homily and dialogue in rhetorical instruction, see Kustas, *Studies*, 29ff.

[21] Vööbus, *School of Nisibis*, *passim*.

[22] See, for example, the *vita* of Andreas of Crete from the 10th century and a *vita* of John of Damascus from the 13th century C.E. During the so-called renaissance of the 9th and 10th centuries (the "first Byzantine humanism," Paul Lemerle, 1971), interest in the classical past and the preservation of classical literature through the collecting and recopying of the old texts was growing. The "re-discovery" of the old culture and its traditions may explain the explicit mention of the classical curriculum in the *vitae* of saints and learned men. See Hunger, Reconstruction and perception.

Greek are joined by an analogous tradition in Syriac which, in turn, vividly shows how widespread this kind of literature indeed was.[23]

3.4   *Preference for certain literary themes and forms, and Christian identity*

The evidence of Syriac literary activities in Umayyad times lets us conclude that the concept of the *enkyklios paideia* was familiar to Syriac-speaking students of theology. Furthermore, we note that the bulk of Syriac literature was inherently theological in nature; and that the preferred literary themes and forms are comparable to those that flourished at the same time in Byzantium: the hagiographic and homiletic literature,[24] miracle stories, along with quaestiones,[25] florilegia,[26] and disputations.[27]

These literary forms demonstrate also the growing importance of an oral element in this literature.[28] Homilies and biographies of saints were written for a wider audience. The question-and-answer literature gained new importance, along with the disputation literature and the florilegia, since these latter texts were made, as one could say, to marshal the arguments against Christian heretics. But they were produced also to be used polemically and apologetically against Jews and Muslims, and, ultimately, were seen as helpful in defining Christian identity.

The importance of these literary and scholarly genres for Christian self-consciousness had particularly increased after the Arabo-Islamic conquest, when Christians were subjected, from their own perspective, to a "foreign" rule and an "alien" religion. Consequently, the conclusions drawn by modern scholarship from the rather scant evidence of secular writing in Byzantium would seem to be entirely different when it comes to the Syriac-speaking communities of the 7th and 8th centuries in Islamic lands. Here the transmission of secular Greek texts was continued to a certain extent in Syriac translations. These included fields such as: historical writing, philosophy, popular literature, prose and poetry. Moreover, the works of Syriac

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[23] Baumstark, *Syrisch-arabische Biographien*, esp. 182–210.
[24] Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*.
[25] Dörries, Erotapokriseis, esp. 362–364; Richard, Florilèges spirituels grecs; Dagron, Saint.
[26] Chadwick, Florilegium.
[27] Cameron, Disputations.
[28] See also the insightful article by Cameron, New Themes and Styles.

scholars of the 7th century such as Severus Sebokht (d. 666/7), Athanasius of Balad (d. 686) and Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) represent, in fact, the heyday of the history of Syriac scholarship.[29]

The conspectus of these sources reveals most impressively the intense literary activities among Syriac scholars, whereas contemporary scholarship in the Byzantine empire appears to have suffered quite a severe eclipse. Significant examples of Syriac scholars are the aforementioned Severus Sebokht, who was the author of astronomical and logical treatises,[30] and his student, Athanasius of Balad, who wrote an introduction to Aristotelian logic.[31] Furthermore, there is Jacob of Edessa and his *Hexaemeron*, which served as a compendium comprising all the scientific knowledge known at his time, including sections on cosmology, geography and natural history, to mention a few topics.[32] Furthermore, at the turn of the 8th century, the chronographical and historiographical tradition flourished among Christians in North Syrian cities. This tradition is represented by works, which form the basis for annalistic writing and the apocalyptic tradition in Syriac of later times.[33]

The move of education from secular institutions to churches, which in Byzantium caused a kind of decline in secular scholarship, thus became, paradoxically enough, the catalyst for the revival of Greek culture in Syro-Palestine. The Muslim conquests intensified this development, and it seems that "the educational patterns of late antiquity survived better in cities under Muslim rule than in those under Byzantine sovereignty."[34] Such a positive attitude toward Greek learning generated a philhellenic atmosphere, which went together with certain anti-Byzantine sentiments among Syriac Christians.

Interestingly enough, a similar phenomenon can later be detected in the propaganda campaigns of 'Abbāsid rulers (especially during al-Ma'mūn's reign) against the Byzantines. This anti-Byzantine—and anti-Christian—propaganda was linked to philhellenic aspects. It was definitely intended to present the Muslim community as the only true heir to ancient Greece.[35]

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[29] See Brock, Antagonism.
[30] Neugebauer, *Ancient Mathematical Astronomy* 878.
[31] Furlani, Atanasio di Baladh.
[32] *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron*.
[33] Haldon, Anastasius of Sinai 128.
[34] Browning, Literacy 47.
[35] Gutas, Greek Thought 84f.

3.5 *Renewal of traditional literary forms*

As D. Sahas has pointed out,[36] there was continuity in the cultural, intellectual and spiritual life in Syria in general, and in the city of Damascus in particular. This is manifested in a flourishing literary activity, which brought forth a renewal of certain traditional literary forms. Sahas interprets these activities in terms of the existence of a "circle" of "reform-minded and monastically oriented intelligentsia"[37] in the tradition of the Damascene school of rhetoric. Although there is no direct evidence of an intellectual "circle" in the narrow sense of the word, there are several accounts—mostly hagiographical in nature—and some further indicators pointing to an astonishing literary production. They indicate that there was indeed a vital movement of Christian scholars, who continued the Byzantine intellectual and spiritual tradition under new circumstances by meeting the cultural challenge they faced when Islam arrived. But this intellectual movement was obviously not restricted to the city of Damascus; several Christian scholars seem to have been closely related also to the monastery of Mar Sabas in the Judean desert.

A further point needs to be made. In the 7th century, orality seemingly gained much in significance for certain new literary forms and genres of literature. This phenomenon can be explained by the stress put on certain of these literary forms and genres as "educational" tools. Since public education had ceased to exist, as we have seen, the Church took over this task. This kind of Church-conducted education required writings which made it possible to teach the doctrine and theological issues in an attractive, concise and easily memorizable form.[38]

A good example of such a presentation of theological issues are the *canons*; here pedagogy and liturgy united. These *canons* represent a new genre of hymns, which eventually replaced the *kontakion*. John of Damascus and Cosmas of Maiuma, for instance, wrote adaptations of the sermons and homilies, which had been composed by Gregory of Nazianzus (330–390) in the new form of *canons*. These works represent texts that are particularly easy to memorize and that comprise a kind of *summa theologica* in verse.[39]

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[36] Sahas, Cultural Interaction 65.
[37] Sahas, Cultural Interaction 39.
[38] Haldon, Anastasius of Sinai 118.
[39] For the *canon* in detail, see Sahas, Cultural Interaction 50. See also Hoyland, 107f.

3.6 *Question-and-answer literature*

An increasing oral element is also evident in the question-and-answer literature. Collections of questions and answers originated in Classical Antiquity. There, they were a common form by which specific questions in both secular and religious matters were expressed.[40] The Christian tradition adapted this form for both biblical exegesis and discussion of dogmatic questions. These collections often had a didactic purpose, and the question-and-answer pattern particularly promoted the transmission of knowledge to students at the beginner's level. In addition, these texts were often concise enough to be used as handbooks.

In the Christian tradition, the monastic *apophthegmata* took up this literary form in order to provide spiritual and confessional instruction. From these works, originally transmitted orally, there later developed compilations of a somewhat more definite literary shape.[41]

Besides the "didactic" question-and-answer literature, there existed collections of a rather "dialectical" nature.[42] These works were based on the scholastic technique of question and refutation. This technique goes back to Aristotelian dialectics and existed in an already developed stage in the Byzantine theology of the 6th century. It found its continuation in the writings of John of Damascus (d. 749) and Theodorus Abū Qurra (d. ca. 820), whose works represent the climax of this genre. The method these two scholars followed was a method applied by Christian academics, intending to address other Christian scholars.

The greater part of the Christian population, however, had to be won over and educated in a different way: by simplicity and clarity in writing, rather than dialectical sophistries. The collection of *Questions and Answers* of Anastasius of Sinai is, for instance, such a work written for the common people.

There is a wide range of questions in the Anastasian collection that reflect the new situation of Christians under Muslim rule discussed above.[43] Interestingly enough, this particular collection of questions also indicates a kind of uncertainty which the Christians in the former Byzantine lands faced in day-to-day matters of life, a spiri-

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[40] See Dörries, Erotapokriseis 342f.
[41] For a survey of the genre, see Haldon, Anastasius of Sinai 116ff.
[42] Daiber, Masā'il wa-adjwiba, 636.
[43] An overview of the topics has been given by Dagron, Saint.

tual crisis which they experienced after the Arabo-Islamic conquests
had occurred. This spiritual crisis was caused by the fact that the
Christians in this region had not yet viewed the Muslims as the bear-
ers of a new religion but, rather, as apocalyptic enemies and the
instruments of God's punishment inflicted on them for their religious
laxity. This view has to do with the self-image of the Muslim com-
munity: the Muslims themselves were looking for a religious iden-
tity; the Christians and Jews, in turn, had to redefine their own. In
this situation, the perception of other religious communities and the
debate with them was of rather minor importance.

In his *Questions and Answers*, Anastasius of Sinai demonstrates that
a Christian way of life was possible under the new political circum-
stances, although the answers he gives in this collection to some
pressing questions are clearly intended to give comfort to the Christian
community, to support it in its struggle to keep its religious and spir-
itual identity, and to help it to survive in an Islamic state.[44]

4   *The understanding of rhetoric among Syriac scholars*

It has become clear that the Christian literature in the Syriac-speak-
ing region saw a heyday that included the emergence of new liter-
ary forms, even after the Muslim conquests. A major characteristic
of these forms is the strong oral element, which implies the use of
these works for a larger public. Christian authors were familiar with
dialectic aspects of rhetoric and knew very well how to reach and
attract their audience by using the strategies of Greek rhetoric. Their
objective was the "persuasion of the multitude," with the purpose of
warding off the danger of apostasy. It is quite evident that Christian
scholars, during a period of an increasing number of conversions to
Islam, were not only aware of the fact that great efforts were needed
if they wanted to stop this development, but apparently became
active on an intellectual level in this regard. For these intellectual
activities, rhetoric was a most effective literary means.

From the fact that only a few Syriac texts on rhetorical theory[45]
have survived, one could gain the impression that the Syrian Christians

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[44] For a thorough discussion of the works of Anastasius, see Haldon, Anastasius
of Sinai, *passim*.
[45] Watt, Syriac Rhetorical Theory 245–248.

had little interest in classical eloquence or, at least, little taste for oratory. For instance, we know of no Syriac translations of Greek works on rhetorical theory other than the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle and of no original works on the subject in Syriac before the *Rhetoric* of Antony of Tagrit (probably composed in the 9th century). Yet this very fact does not necessarily mean that Syriac education did not cover or include the study of rhetoric. Several works by Syriac authors from the 4th century on, and especially in the 7th century, show an extensive use of rhetorical figures, revealing their authors' profound knowledge of rhetoric.[46] Some impressive examples of the synthesis of Classical rhetoric and Christian eloquence are the homilies of Catholicos Mar Aba II of Kashkar from the 7th century, for they show in a convincing manner the tradition of the *ars rhetorica* among the Syrians.[47] The dominant rhetorical writings in Byzantium—those of Aphthonius, Hermogenes and their commentators, for example—were not, however, translated into Syriac and had no influence on the study of rhetoric by the Syrians.[48]

In contrast to Byzantium, Syriac education seems instead to have given more space to the tradition of Aristotelian works on rhetoric and eloquence, such as the *Topics, Rhetoric* or *Poetics*. There was, for example, a translation of the *Topics* by Athanasius of Balad (d. 686).[49] Furthermore, a letter by Timothy I, Catholicos from 780–823, indicates that there may well have existed Syriac versions of the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, although there is still no proof to support this assumption.[50] At the same time, as Conley has observed,[51] only a few of the hundreds of manuscripts of Aristotle's works, which had circulated in the Byzantine empire up to the 14th century, do include the *Rhetoric*. And there is also no tangible commentary tradition before the 12th century. From these facts, Conley concludes that the Byzantine

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[46] See the contributions at the *IV Symposium Syriacum* 1987, especially Böhlig, Zur Rhetorik im Liber Graduum; Reinink, Rhetorik in der Homilie; Watt, Rhetorical figures.

[47] For Mar Aba, see Reinink, *Studien zur Quellen- und Traditionsgeschichte*.

[48] Conley, Aristotle's Rhetoric.

[49] Brock, Syriac Commentary Tradition. There can be no doubt that later this tradition has influenced the preferred transmission of Aristotelian works on rhetoric to the Arabs as well.

[50] Here Timothy requested a priest from the monastery Mar Mattai to inquire about Syriac manuscripts on Topics, Rhetoric, Sophistici Elenchi and Poetics. See Braun, Briefe des Katholikos Timotheus; also Brock, Two Letters.

[51] Conley, Aristotle's Rhetoric 31ff.

rhetoricians, who complained repeatedly about Aristotle's obscurity, paid little attention to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. The "re-discovery" of Aristotle's writings on rhetoric in Byzantium seems to have been initiated first in the 10th century through the increasing interest of Byzantine scholars in old Greek manuscripts. This situation might have been influenced as well by the collection and translation of Greek scientific works into Arabic conducted in the early ʿAbbāsid caliphate; and it is quite possible that the oldest extant Greek manuscript from the 10th century—containing the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle[52]—indeed stems from a collection of Greek manuscripts prepared by Christian scholars living in the Dār al-Islām.

The question thus arises again as to why the Byzantine world ignored Aristotle's rhetorical writings whereas the Syrians preferred them. On the other hand, Syriac scholars obviously ignored those works which dominated Greek rhetorical theory. Judicial oratory, for instance, which was held in much higher esteem by the Byzantine rhetoricians, had seemingly no perceptible effect on Syriac rhetorical teaching. It was rather the more practical application of rhetoric in its traditional function (going back to Platonic political rhetoric) which dominated the Syrian teaching tradition.[53]

The *Rhetoric* of Antony of Tagrit was the earliest original work on rhetorical theory in Syriac. Obviously it continued to be part of that tradition by accepting the predominant interpretation of rhetoric among the Syrians. It did so as persuasive eloquence which, in turn, is connected both to classical literature (which was, in the Christian context, represented rather by Christian classics, especially those of Gregory of Nazianzus) and to philosophy.[54] This understanding of rhetoric met the educational and didactic purposes as it did the literary forms preferred by Syriac scholars at that time. It was through this art of rhetoric, which combined methods of persuasion and oratory, that they instructed the "multitude." To achieve this goal, not

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[52] On this ms. (Parisinus Gr. 1741), see Harlfinger, Aristotelica. See also Conley, Aristotle's Rhetoric 36.

[53] For the transmission of classical rhetoric, see Watt, Syriac Reception. One encounters this tradition again in the writings of al-Fārābī such as *Kitāb al-Khaṭāba* or "The Perfect State" when he deals with rhetoric. As it seems, these ideas were transmitted to him by his Syrian teachers. Cf. Watt, From Themistius.

[54] For a definition of rhetoric, see Antony of Tagrit 585; Kennedy, Later Greek Philosophy 192. For the relationship of philosophy, dialectic and rhetoric, see Hadot, Philosophie.

only rhetoric but also poetry was used. As shown above, new poetic forms for worship were developed to reach a broader audience and "to stir the mind of the audience" to "accept what is uttered," as we are told by Antony of Tagrit.[55]

Evidently, the old curriculum including elements of Hellenistic literary and elementary rhetorical education lived on in Syriac schools. It contributed to preserving a tradition of rhetorical teaching which had developed in its own particular way apart from the Byzantine tradition.

5   *The emergence of Christian literature in Arabic*

Only a few decades later, the knowledge of rhetoric and dialectics became more and more important and relevant to inter-faith disputation. Its significance is shown by the unprecedented rise of Christian apologetic and polemic treatises written in Arabic from the first ʿAbbāsid century on. The shift from Greek and Syriac to Arabic displays the increasing degree of assimilation of the Christian population to an Arabic-speaking, Islamic environment in the early ʿAbbāsid period. Now Arabic had become the *lingua franca* of the caliphate. This wide use of this language also served to lower ethnic and cultural barriers. In fact, it had a unifying effect.[56]

Politically and ideologically, ʿAbbāsid society no longer focused on *Arab* culture. Instead, the emphasis was now on *Arabic* culture. This significant change made it possible for everyone who knew Arabic to participate actively in the cultural and societal developments of the state.[57] This general cultural and linguistic shift had far-reaching consequences also for the literary activities of Christians in this geographic area.

Christian literature, now composed in Arabic, did, however, perpetuate the novel genres of writing that had developed earlier in Byzantium and in Umayyad times. Among these new genres are homilies, hagiography, disputation, florilegia, and miracle stories.

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[55] Antony of Tagrit 1.
[56] Fück, *Arabiya.*
[57] Gutas, *Greek Thought* 191.

These genres came sometimes to be seen as somewhat exemplary for literary forms applied by Muslims in their Arabic writings.

Christian Arabic theological literature was, to a large degree, apologetic in nature and twofold in approach. On the one hand, it was written to defend the Christian faith externally, i.e. when facing Muslim arguments; on the other hand, it was meant to strengthen the Christians in their faith and self-consciousness, for Christian communities were increasingly confronted with the conversion of Christians to Islam.[58] In effect, polemical and apologetic literature as such received an important fresh impetus at this time.[59]

Literary works written by Christians in Arabic, i.e. the language of the political rulers, found a broader audience from now on outside of the Christian community as well. With the emergence of Islamic theology, the Muslims took notice of Christian theological treatises and were many times impressed by the skills of argumentation among their Christian counterparts. It is not surprising, therefore, that, in the initial stage of the translation movement, Christian writings on dialectics and rhetoric in particular (these had been translated into Arabic from Greek and Syriac) found an interested readership also among Muslims.[60]

During Umayyad times, Christian scholars represented a living intellectual tradition, which was by then dominated by a monastically oriented intelligentsia. The latter, however, gradually decayed through the decline of secular learning in the monasteries in the 8th century. The pressure on the Christian population, then caused by the policy of Arabicization and Islamization implemented by the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik and his successors, largely affected both the public life and the literary production of the Christians. As a result, the internal problems of the Christian community and their religious concerns

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[58] The first appearance of Christian apologetic works corresponds to the time when large numbers of Christians converted to Islam. Cf. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam*. Bulliet maintains that the time between 791 and 888 are the years when the "early majority" (i.e. up to 35% of the population) became Muslim.

[59] In this context, a comprehensive comparison between the rhetorical means and figures used in both Syriac and Christian Arabic theological literature still remains a *desideratum*.

[60] The caliph al-Mahdī (d. 785) commissioned the translation of the *Topics* into Arabic. It obviously served as a kind of handbook and was used to teach the art of argumentation. See van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* iii, 23.

now became the focus of attention of Christian writers. In such an atmosphere, they increasingly disregarded secular themes. Hence, the interest in secular Greek literature—and in translating it into the new *lingua franca*—was rather small among Christians. Moreover, there was no wide basis of support for such translations from Greek into Arabic, neither from inside (the Christian community itself), nor from outside (the Umayyad rulers or other patrons and sponsors). The real need for Arabic translations of philosophical and scientific works first arose when Arab Muslims became increasingly more interested in these fields of scholarship. However, and importantly enough, this translation movement was evidently stimulated by a still-existent curriculum of Syriac education, among other factors.

With the ʿAbbāsid revolution, an intellectual climate emerged again which promoted secular learning.[61] Thus, clerics played a significant role as early translators of Greek works into Arabic.[62] They had the knowledge of various languages, and they had access to the books in demand, because monasteries and churches (especially centers such as those on Mount Sinai and at Mar Sabas) contained valuable collections of Greek and Syriac manuscripts.[63] However, it also became quickly evident that the early translations, carried out first and foremost by inexperienced translators, were of limited use for scientific purposes. The rapidly increasing demand for expert translations in terms of style and substance eventually brought forth groups of professional translators. They combined linguistic competence with scientific knowledge and they soon surpassed by far the clerical translators of the previous generation.

The translation of secular Greek texts into Arabic was now no longer a task for clerics. Thus, it remained secular literature which was, to a high degree, outside of the scope of Christian Arabic literature. On the other hand, the literary production of the Christians during the ʿAbbāsid era was influenced also by Arabo-Islamic philosophy, theology, and other fields of Islamic scholarship which, in general, were closely connected to the Graeco-Arabic translation

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[61] For a discussion of the various factors stimulating the Graeco-Arabic translation movement, which goes beyond the scope of this paper, see Gutas, *Greek Thought* 121ff.

[62] For instance, the translation of the *Topics* by Timothy (or rather Abū Nūḥ); see the passage in Timothy's letter 43: Bidawid, *Lettres* 35.

[63] Wilson, Libraries.

movement. However, Christian Arabic literature remained—except for another new heyday of Syriac and Coptic scholarship in the 12th–13th centuries—a mostly ecclesiastical and theological literature whose objective was, in the first place, to consolidate the Christian community, now a minority in a predominantly Muslim environment.

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CHAPTER THREE

REFUTING THE CHARGE OF *TAḤRĪF*: ABŪ RĀʾIṬA (D. CA. 835) AND HIS "*FIRST* RISĀLA *ON THE HOLY TRINITY*"

Sandra Toenies Keating

The quranic allegation that significant portions of the Torah and Gospels have been falsified, commonly identified as *taḥrīf*, has played an important role in the relations between the Muslim *umma* and Christians and Jews throughout history. It is perhaps the most contentious theological issue between the communities, and arguably lies at the root of all other disagreements. Initially, the claim of *taḥrīf* was primarily employed by Muslims to defend the truth of the revelation to Muḥammad and the authenticity of his prophethood against those who contended they were not legitimate. Over the centuries, however, the argument was expanded and elaborated to explain a wide range of discrepancies between the Quran and the Bible.[1] The charge eventually provided the starting point for all other polemical themes in Islam, becoming one of the most common subjects found in apologetical texts.[2]

Many Christian apologists took up the task of defending Christian faith against the claim that it was founded on the sand of falsehood and lies. Among the first to do so was Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rāʾiṭa (ca. 153–ca. 220 A.H./ca. 770–ca. 835 C.E.), a Jacobite from the ancient city of Takrīt near Baghdad. Although Abū Rāʾiṭa devotes only a very small portion of his writings explicitly to refuting the charge of *taḥrīf*, the problem is clearly at the forefront of his mind as he formulates many of his arguments. His efforts would lay the groundwork for later generations of apologists seeking to answer the accusation.

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[1] Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds* 19–35. The most extensive survey of the argument of *taḥrīf* found in the writings of important Muslim scholars continues to be Di Matteo: Il '*taḥrīf*' od alterazione della Bibbia (1922).

[2] Bouamama, La littérature polémique musulmane 43.

1   *The charge of falsification*

Traditionally, *taḥrīf* is the general term given to the teaching that any disparity between the Quran and the Jewish and Christian scriptures can be traced to the intentional or accidental corruption of the latter by deceitful people, most often the Jews.[3] This doctrine is based on explicit references in the Quran to the problem. According to the Quran, the revelation to Muḥammad is *parallel* to all previous revelations, repeating and confirming what already had been passed on through the recognized prophets from Adam to Jesus (see Q 2:41, 91, 97; 3:3; 4:47; 5:46–48; and passim).[4] All authentic scriptures are "copies" of the original "Mother of the Book," the *umm al-kitāb* (Q 3:7; 13:39; 43:4), identified by theologians as the Word of God. This Word is inscribed on the heavenly "Preserved Tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*, Q 85:22), where it is protected from corruption and guarded from all distortion. Throughout the history of humanity, all or parts of it have been "sent down" many times and communicated through various prophets as an untainted revelation. Among others, the Quran mentions the revelation of the Torah to Moses and Aaron (Q 23:49; 25:35; 37:117), the Psalms to David (Q 21:105), the Gospel to Jesus (Q 19:30), and finally, the Quran to Muḥammad (Q 43:2–3), as examples of this perfect manifestation of the *umm al-kitāb*.

Because authentic revelations of the eternal Book are always copies of the original Preserved Tablet, their monotheistic content never varies.[5] Furthermore, the text descends directly and is literally transmitted through the person who receives it, eliminating any human involvement, and thus any possibility of error or deviation from the previous revelation.[6] As the last historical instance of God's sending down of the *umm al-kitāb*, the Quran serves as the criterion by which all other scriptures are to be judged for their fidelity to the original message, and as the corrective for those who are seeking the truth of God.[7]

Early on, Muḥammad and his followers became aware of significant discrepancies between the Quran and the Torah and Gospels, par-

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[3] See the art. "Taḥrīf," in *EI*² x, 111 (Hava Lazarus-Yafeh).
[4] Watt, Early Development 77–78.
[5] Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes* i, 11.
[6] Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 63–64.
[7] Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes* i, 4–5.

ticularly concerning the authenticity of Muḥammad's prophethood. The unwillingness of both Jews and Christians to accept his claim to be a true, and even the final, prophet sent by God prompted arguments in his defence.[8] Based on the Quran, Muslims maintained that previous prophets, including Abraham and Jesus (Q 7:157; 2:129; 61:6), had predicted Muḥammad's coming, but that their followers had concealed this in various ways. They argued that many Christians and Jews had recognized his true identity based on the prophecies and became Muslims; others, however, had obscured the real meaning of the revelations and refused to acknowledge him.[9] Later, Muslim theologians pointed to changes in dietary laws, monastic practices and the doctrines of the Incarnation and Trinity as especially in need of correction, and claimed that points of disagreement between the scriptures are always to be reconciled in favor of the revelation to Muḥammad.[10]

The Quran places the blame for error in the scriptures of Christians and Jews on those who were entrusted with preserving the revelations. While numerous references do not make clear who is directly responsible—in several places it is simply stated that the Torah and Gospel have been changed—the Quran most often identifies the Jews as the source of the distortions in the scriptures. The fact that Christians based their teachings of Jesus as the Messiah on the Jewish scriptures, along with the Jewish rejection of Muḥammad, made the Jews the prime suspects as the origin of the corruption.[11] One of the most explicit statements in Q 5:13 says that the Jews have altered the scriptures in two ways: "They have altered (*yuḥarrifūna*) the words'

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[8] Watt, Early Development 77; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds* 75–110.

[9] Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 64, 93. One of the most well-known accounts of this phenomenon is that of Ibn Isḥāq (d. ca. 767), who argued in his *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* that Jesus' annunciation of the Paraclete found in the Gospel of John (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13) was in fact a clear reference to Muḥammad; cf. Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabī* i, 25; Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 76, n. 35.

Although Christians countered the claim with evidence that Ibn Isḥāq had confused two Greek terms, his explanation was repeated by subsequent Muslim writers as proof of manipulation and corruption of the previous revelations, and became a standard item in later polemical works. See Guthrie and Bishop, Paraclete 251–256; and Watt, His Name is Aḥmad 113–117; and Early Development 79–80, 82.

[10] Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes* i, 6. Especially relevant here are the verses of the Quran that warn against belief in the Trinity (Q 4:171; 5:73), record Jesus' own denial of his divinity (Q 4:171–172; 5:17, 72), and disapprove of monasticism (Q 57:27).

[11] Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 62, 93.

places and they have forgotten (*nasū*) a part of what was given to
them by Him." Near parallels to this text are found in Q 5:41, 2:75
and 4:46, each of which places the guilt of alteration on the Jews
after Moses.

But this did not allay suspicions that Christians were also respon-
sible. Sometimes Christians are mentioned specifically or included
together with the Jews under the epithet *ahl al-kitāb* in the Quran
as having manipulated the texts. One finds a succinct summary of
their complicity put in the mouth of a Muslim participant in a debate
with a Christian reported to have taken place around the year 800
C.E. in Jerusalem:

> What you have said you report only from your Gospel and your new
> books; however, we have the first, true Gospel. We received it from
> our Prophet, and it contradicts that which is in your possession. For
> after the Ascension of Christ into heaven, John and his followers revised
> the Gospel and set down what is in your possession as they wished.
> This is what our Prophet has handed down to us.[12]

This charge apparently reflects the general opinion of the Muslim
scholarly community. A contemporary of Abū Rā'iṭa, ʿAlī Sahl Rab-
bān al-Ṭabarī (d. 240/855), uses the quranic references to falsification
to expose the truth that he believes Christians have obscured. He is
the author of two of the oldest surviving Muslim refutations of
Christianity: *Radd ʿalā al-naṣārā* and *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla*.[13] In the
latter, al-Ṭabarī states that he wants to uncover the truth in the
scriptures, which the Christians are trying to hide and have altered
(*ḥarrafū*). He does not dispute the general authenticity of the Christian
scriptures, but rather argues specifically that the meaning of the text
has been distorted, especially in what concerns the prophecy of
Muḥammad, in order to conceal the veracity of the Quran.[14]

Eventually, a multitude of problematic discrepancies between the
revelation to Muḥammad and other scriptures came to be identified
as the result of tampering by human hands. In the centuries after
Muḥammad's death, the argument of *taḥrīf* was developed until it
became recognized as a legitimate and standard feature of Islamic

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[12] Vollers, Religionsgespräch 62; see also Griffith, Gospel in Arabic 142.
[13] Khalifé et Kutsch, Ar-Radd ʿalā-n-Naṣārā 115–148; and al-Ṭabarī, *K. al-Dīn wa-l-dawla*.
[14] See especially *K. al-Dīn wa-l-dawla* 7, 6, 20, 117.

apologetics. In keeping with the thesis that the Torah and Gospels had been corrupted, a number of attempts were made to rectify errors found in them by excising problematic passages and substituting words with others more consistent with the Quran.[15] These activities did not go unnoticed by the Christian community, and many felt that they warranted a response.

2 *Abū Rāʾiṭa's "First* Risāla *on the Holy Trinity"*[16]

Naturally, the problem posed by *taḥrīf* had a significant impact on the manner in which Jews and Christians could formulate an effective rebuttal to Islamic claims about the status of their own teachings. Christian apologists recognized that many of the traditional arguments devised to defend Christianity against its early Jewish detractors could also be used to respond to Muslims. They were also well aware that any appeal to a common scripture base was severely limited by the allegation that the biblical texts had been falsified. This compelled them to find common ground in reason supplemented by examples and analogies that would be acceptable to their opponents and draw them into the argument.

Abū Rāʾiṭa was one of the first to recognize the window that had been opened at the beginning of the third/ninth century with the growing interest of Muslim *mutakallimūn* in the Greek philosophical tradition. Drawing particularly on the tools offered by Aristotelian logic, he used reason to formulate his arguments and delineate both what was agreed upon and what was disputed between the two religions. Between the years 199/815 and 215/830, Abū Rāʾiṭa produced at least five treatises (one of which is now lost) aimed at

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[15] Ibn Isḥāq cited John 15:23–16:1 directly, but made "corrections" in order to bring it more closely in line with the quranic views of Jesus. For example, he replaces the three instances of "my Father" with "the Lord," following the Islamic rejection of Jesus' divinity. This passage has been carefully studied by two scholars, Baumstark, Eine altarabische Evangelienübersetzung 201–209; and Guillaume, Version of the Gospels 289–296. A summary of the two is found in Griffith, Gospel in Arabic 137–143. For specific examples of Muslim exegesis of the Bible passages in question, see Goldziher, Ueber muhammedanische Polemik 1–47. A further instance of this phenomenon can be seen in the later anonymous re-working of the psalms, edited and translated by Krarup, *Auswahl pseudo-davidischer Psalmen.*

[16] Because Abū Rāʾiṭa's epistolary texts exemplify a particular type of letter-treatise found in Christian Arabic literature, I have chosen to retain the Arabic term *risāla* (pl. *rasāʾil*) here.

defending Christianity against Muslim polemics.[17] Four of the texts
are in letter format and addressed to unidentified fellow Jacobite
Christians. These are intended to provide ready answers for those
who are being questioned by their Muslim neighbors about Christian
teachings. The fifth is a collection of proof texts taken from the Old
Testament, the importance of which will be seen below.

In these treatises, Abū Rāʾiṭa is attentive to two particular con-
cerns. First, he hopes to supply evidence that can be used by Christians
to convince Muslims of the viability of Christian doctrines (especially
of the Incarnation and Trinity) and show that they are not contra-
dictory or absurd. His secondary purpose is to assuage the doubts
of Christians who are beginning to consider conversion to the new
faith.[18] Both of these objectives are manifested in his use of Arabic
as his literary medium. Abū Rāʾiṭa's apologies are among the first
whose author can be positively identified that are written in Arabic.[19]

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[17] A total of at least eleven texts authored by Abū Rāʾiṭa can be identified,
although only nine of these are extant. In addition to the responses to questions
by Muslims, he wrote several treatises explaining monophysite teachings, including
two defending the Jacobite version of the *Trishagion*. They have been collected
together with two other texts containing excerpts from Abū Rāʾiṭa's works in Georg
Graf's edition: *Die Schriften des Jacobiten Ḥabīb Ibn Ḥidma Abū Rāʾiṭa*. References to
Abū Rāʾiṭa's works here will follow the numbering assigned by Graf. Unfortunately,
Abū Rāʾiṭa's contribution to Arab Christian theology has been neglected. For exam-
ple, "[n]ow the publication of the work of a Jacobite theologian of the beginning
of the 3rd/9th century, Abū Rāʾiṭa Ḥabīb b. Khidma, shows that, contrary to the
opinion of Massignon, this distinction between the divine attributes dates from a
period considerably before that of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, since it is found in the work of
Abū Rāʾiṭa, from whom the author of the letter borrowed it, as well as the whole
of the philosophical-theological section dealing with the unity of God (cf. G. Graf,
Die Schriften 5–10). As for the fact of a Nestorian author borrowing from a Jacobite
a discussion of the unity of God, this is not surprising, since there was no difference
of opinion between them on this point." See the art. "al-Kindī, ʿAbd al-Masīḥ,"
in: *EI²* v, 120 (G. Troupeau).
[18] The Christian community was just beginning to address this important issue.
In the period spanning Abū Rāʾiṭa's lifetime, the Muslim population in Iraq appears
to have increased from approximately ten percent to nearly forty percent. This was
due to several factors, the most significant of which was conversions to Islam.
ʿAbbāsid policies strongly favored Muslims, and increases in the *jizya*, or "poll-tax,"
which, in traditional Islamic law, is levied on non-Muslims in Muslim states, gave
many strong incentives to convert to the new religion. Cf. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam*
81–83. Abū Rāʾiṭa is apparently convinced that many had abandoned Christianity
for political or economic gain, as well as religious reasons. He takes up these prob-
lems in his "Proof of the Christian Religion" (VIII), where he lays out both unac-
ceptable and legitimate reasons to convert to another religion, followed by a defence
of Christian doctrine and practices.
[19] Abū Rāʾiṭa himself was probably a native Syriac-speaker, and is representa-

This suggests that, although the ostensible purpose of the texts is to provide assistance to Christians, he expected they would be read by Muslims as well.

In keeping with this expectation, he lays out the arguments in a manner deliberately intended to convince the readers of both religions. Certainly, Abū Rāʾiṭa's contemporaries would have recognized his efforts as a response to the Quran's testimony that Christians will be called upon to produce their proof (*burhān*) for the truth of their religion on the Day of Judgment (Q 2:111; 28:75). In particular, they will be compelled to give a justification for their belief in the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. The *rasāʾil* Abū Rāʾiṭa offers his readers are a sort of compendium, a kind of *kitāb al-burhān*, of prepared responses to exactly these issues. The treatises are particularly notable for their use of a wide variety of resources, with a special emphasis on certain types of Old Testament examples and on the Hellenistic ideas that were gaining currency in the third/ninth century in Muslim scholarly circles.[20]

A close examination of the texts, however, reveals that Abū Rāʾiṭa is not simply presenting arguments to be translated and applied to individual encounters with Muslims. He is advocating a particular approach for Christians to take in these exchanges that depends primarily on what can be proven by reason and commonly agreed-upon philosophical principles, supplemented by the occasional scriptural reference. The impetus for this move is taken up briefly at the end of one of his most significant writings, the "First *Risāla* on the Holy Trinity" (*al-Risāla al-ūlā fī l-thālūth al-muqaddas*) (I), where he turns to the Muslim charge that the scriptures have been falsified.

After a typical epistolary preface, the "First *Risāla*" (I) begins with a statement summarizing the appropriate attributes (*ṣifāt*) for God, put in the mouth of a Muslim opponent. Abū Rāʾiṭa then proceeds with a demonstration of the logical necessity of a Trinitarian understanding of these attributes. His method is predominantly dialectical, by which he continually narrows the meanings of important concepts. This is followed by several common analogies proving that unicity and plurality are not by definition incompatible (e.g., one

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tive of the important period of transition to Arabic promoted by the policies of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.

   [20] Harald Suermann argues that Abū Rāʾiṭa may be the first Christian to use Aristotle in engaging Muslims on these topics. See id., Trinität, esp. 221–223.

light, many lamps). Abū Rā'iṭa also includes a number of biblical
references in support of his argument, concluding that both scrip-
ture and reason support the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Although several of Abū Rā'iṭa's apologetic treatises responding
to Islam have been directly influenced by the problem posed by the
accusation of *taḥrīf*, none reveals the concern more the "First *Risāla*"
(I), where the overall structure is completely determined by the issue.
Abū Rā'iṭa is acutely aware that the accusation of falsification under-
mines much of the primary evidence for Christian teaching. This
leads him to adopt a two-pronged approach that utilizes both prin-
ciples of logic and elements drawn from Greek thought, and tradi-
tional evidence employed previously by Christian apologists that does
not contradict what is found in the Quran. Consequently, the greater
part of the "First *Risāla*" is taken up with philosophical argumentation,
concentrating especially on precise definitions of "one" and "unity,"
and on necessary attributes and their relationship to the Divine Being.
Throughout the argument, he uses both dialectic and logic to draw
appropriate distinctions and eliminate incorrect assumptions. In this
manner, Abū Rā'iṭa apparently hopes to establish reason as com-
mon ground and lure Muslim intellectuals into the argument. Such
an approach, he contends, will ultimately prove that the doctrines
of the Trinity and the Incarnation are not absurd, but rather philo-
sophically necessary.

Abū Rā'iṭa believes that these proofs are sufficient to convince
both Muslims and Christians of the truth of Christianity. However,
he recognizes that *taḥrīf* remains an issue that cannot simply be
avoided, for it is only through revelation that the specific identities
of the three Persons of the Trinity are known. Furthermore, leav-
ing the issue unaddressed might lend credence to the accusation of
falsification. It is therefore incumbent on him to demonstrate the
integrity of the Bible to his readers in a way that will counter the
allegation of *taḥrīf*. In response, he takes up the problem near the end
of the "First *Risāla*" (I) after he has drawn his opponent in with
non-scriptural evidence, attacking the charge directly by exposing its
lack of a logical foundation. The strong language and strategic place-
ment of this rebuttal is striking, suggesting that Abū Rā'iṭa's own
personal experience of such discussions lie behind the *Risāla*.

The issue of falsification is first raised in (§16) within the context
of a defence of *qiyās* ("reasoning by analogy"), where Abū Rā'iṭa
concludes with the assertion that his argument is reliable proof "even

if the ones who differ from us on it declare it to be false when they claim we have altered (*taḥrīfinā*) [the sacred books] by adding to them and taking away from them." His statement follows the general quranic descriptions of *taḥrīf* as the manipulation of the true revelation either by placing words in the mouths of the prophets or by concealing what was received (Q 2:42, 140, 146; 3:71, 78, 187; 4:46; 5:13, 41; and passim). More specifically, however, Abū Rā'iṭa wants to discredit any suggestion of a particularly egregious type of *taḥrīf*, that of *tabdīl*, or "substitution."

The Quran contends that the reason Christians and Jews have strayed from the original message given to the prophets before Muḥammad is that the texts of their scriptures have been misinterpreted, poorly read, or intentionally manipulated.[21] The most serious form of corruption, *tabdīl*, is counted among the six different verbs and their derivatives (*kitmān, labs, taḥrīf, layy, nisyān, tabdīl*) employed in the Quran to describe these various types of falsification through human intervention.[22] According to Muslim scholars of the first few centuries after Muḥammad, these terms can be generally understood as belonging to one of two recognized categories: *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ* ("falsification of the actual *text* of the scriptures") and *taḥrīf al-maʿānī* ("falsification of the *meaning* of the scriptures"). A further distinction made within the latter category, *taʾwīl*, covers errors made in *interpreting* the meaning of a verse. *Tabdīl* falls under the first heading, and is usually considered to be the most grievous form of *taḥrīf* because it is a willful falsification of the text.[23]

"Substitution" is mentioned explicitly in the Quran twice in connection with the Israelites after Moses in Q 2:59 and 7:162 in which

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[21] Bouamama, *Littérature* 43; Watt, Early Development 78.

[22] The relevant terms are: *kitmān* ("hiding or concealing," Q 2:42, 140, 146, 159, 174; 3:71, 187), sometimes found in conjunction with *labs* ("disguising," Q 2:42; 3:71), which refers to the concealment of the true revelation, such as references to Muḥammad's prophethood. A third term, *layy* ("to twist"), suggests that during recitation of the scriptures the pronunciation was corrupted (either intentionally or unintentionally) so that the listener would not have a proper understanding of it (Q 3:78; 4:46). The Quran also implies that the false interpretation of the meaning of the scriptures stems from disregard for important passages or that some revelations were simply forgotten. The term *nisyān* ("forgetting, overlooking") is used both in reference to Jews (Q 7:53, 164; 5:13) and Christians (Q 5:14; 7:53). Finally, *tabdīl* ("substitution," Q 2:59; 7:162) points to the actual changing of the scriptural texts. Cf. Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 62–63. Each of these terms seems to assume that the distortion occurred while the revelation was being passed on orally, and no written text was available for corrections.

[23] Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 61–63.

it is clearly stated that the evildoers among them "substituted" (*bad-dala*) what was given to them by God with something else. Unlike the other forms of *taḥrīf* identified by Muslim scholars, *tabdīl* is unambiguously intentional. According to the Quran, this deliberate distortion of the scriptures was not limited to the substitution of words in previously revealed texts; those who heard the new message also tried to corrupt it. In Q 10:15, God instructs Muḥammad to resist those who ask him to substitute something else for the authentic revelations, apparently because they are too difficult or contradict the other scriptures. Muḥammad is commanded to say: "It is not for me to substitute it [with something else] of my own accord. . . ." The quranic account of *taḥrīf* implies that his experience is parallel to that of previous messengers: just as the unbelievers attempted to change the true revelations Muḥammad was receiving, the followers of other prophets who kept and interpreted the scriptures knowingly and deliberately altered what they had received. The seriousness of this accusation is obvious, and explains why Abū Rāʾiṭa felt the need to give some response to it.[24]

Abū Rāʾiṭa mentions *tabdīl* in (§19), emphasizing for his Christian readers that the Muslim assertion "that we have changed [the scriptures] and substituted [words for other words]" could be accepted, if it were not the case that Christians and Jews share their scriptures. The verbs *ghayyara* ("to change") and *baddala* ("to substitute one part for another") are evocative of the description the Quran gives of the type of distortion that has occurred in the Bible. Although the verb *ghayyara* is not used to refer to a specific category of *taḥrīf*, the term *ghayr* ("another" or "different") is commonly found with the verb *baddala*, as in Q 7:162: "But the evildoers among [the people of Moses] substituted (*fa-baddala*) the word with something different (*ghayr*) from that which had been said to them [by God]. . . ." The phraseology of this particular verse bears a striking resemblance to Abū Rāʾiṭa's summary, suggesting he was familiar with the quranic basis for the accusation.

The difficulty of responding to the charge of *tabdīl* posed a serious challenge for the Christians of Abū Rāʾiṭa's day—any scriptural

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[24] This was a significant point in the debates surrounding the prediction of Muḥammad in the Bible. ". . . Ibn Saʿd, coinciding with al-Ṭabarī, declares that the monk knew Muḥammad because he had found the announcement of his coming in the unadulterated (*tabdīl*) Christian books, which he possessed. . . ." Cf. art. "Baḥīrā," in: *EI²*, i, 921 (A. Abel).

evidence that might be put forward could simply be rejected on the grounds that it had been tampered with. Proving the integrity of the New Testament posed an especially complicated problem, given that its entire trajectory contradicts the Quran's very explicit rejection of Jesus' divinity (Q 4:157, 171; 5:17, 72–75, 116–118; 9:30), making nearly every verse suspect.

The problem was exacerbated by increasing Muslim interest in collecting and verifying the prophetic traditions (*ḥadīths*), which placed special emphasis on establishing the existence of an uninterrupted chain of verifiable transmitters, or *isnād*, from the origin of a text to prove its authenticity. Christians, however, were unable to provide a convincing *isnād* to confirm the soundness of the scriptures they had in their possession. Muslim scholars identified the failure of the *ahl al-kitāb* to produce complete *isnād*s as a lack of *tawātur*, or authenticated transmission.[25] This, along with the inability of Christians to furnish any other corroborating evidence for the Gospel, allowed the possibility of corruption.[26] These problems led Abū Rā'iṭa and his fellow Christians to turn instead to a defence of the Hebrew scriptures in the hope of constructing arguments against the very notion of *taḥrīf* that could be extrapolated to vindicate the New Testament.

In his brief comments on the problem, Abū Rā'iṭa builds his case for the authenticity of the Old Testament on two pieces of evidence. First, he argues that the teaching of divine plurality is found in the scriptures of the Jews and Muslims as well as those of the Christians; consequently the opponents cannot claim that Christians altered the text. He offers extensive examples in which God is identified with the plural by a respected figure, citing God's own references to a multiplicity in the Divinity reported through Moses (in *Genesis* 1:26; 2:18; 3:22; 11:7) and Daniel (in *Daniel* 4:31) (§16). Abū Rā'iṭa draws a comparison between these and the multitude of passages in the Quran where God speaks in the first person plural: "We said"

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[25] "*Tawātur* is a technical term in the science of *ḥadīth*, which means roughly 'broad authentication.' [. . .] It indicates that a historical report or a prophetic tradition is supported by such a large number of *isnād* strands, each beginning with a different Companion or other ancient authority, that its authenticity/truthfulness is thereby assumed to be guaranteed. The reasoning behind this was that a sizeable number of people engaged in transmitting one and the same text would never by sheer coincidence, or indeed collusion, all relate a falsehood. As far as historicity is concerned, something transmitted *tawāturan* is considered unassailable by mediaeval *ḥadīth* scholars." Cf. art. "Tawātur," in: *EI*² x, 381 (G.H.A. Juynboll).
[26] Caspar and Gaudeul, Textes 66, n. 14; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds* 41–47.

(Q 2:34, 35, 37; and passim), "We created (Q 15:26, 85; and passim), "We commanded" (Q 10:24; 11:40; and passim), and so forth (§17). He concludes that this corroboration between the revelations proves that the Christian teaching of plurality in divine unity cannot be a fabrication.

Abū Rā'iṭa expects that his opponents will argue that this is just a manner of speech that is permitted in Arabic usage. He counters this with the observation that such plural references to God are found not only with the Arabs, but also the Hebrews, Greeks and Syrians before them. Furthermore, it is incumbent on the Arabs to give a justification other than "it is permitted" for allowing such plural speech about God. They may insist that it is possible for a single human being to say "We command" and "We have sent," etc., but this is not the same as a plural reference to God, since plurals in the former case can often be used for someone who is not deserving of honor and respect. In fact, Abū Rā'iṭa points out, God often speaks of Himself in scripture both in the singular and in the plural. This is a clear indication of the truth of the teaching on the Trinity, for God is both one in *ousia*, which is indicated when God says "I commanded" and "I created," and three in *hypostaseis*, as when God says "We commanded" and "We created" (§17).

Abū Rā'iṭa follows his evidence of God's unicity and plurality with illustrations from the Old Testament identifying the three *hypostaseis*. The first he gives is the well-known example of the three visitors to Abraham. This story is the perfect *mysterion* (or prefiguration, Arabic: *sirr*) for the Trinity, he says, because Abraham recognized that the three visitors are one single Lord, who is three *hypostaseis*, and addressed them accordingly. Abū Rā'iṭa emphasizes that Moses confirmed that the one *ousia* of God is the same Lord who had spoken to Abraham and who is identified in the *Shemaʿ*: "Hear, O Israel, your God is one Lord" (§18).[27] He goes on to demonstrate that the "books" of David and Isaiah also contain numerous references to the individual *hypostaseis*, God, His Word, and His Spirit (§18).[28]

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[27] Abū Rā'iṭa gives a slight variation of the version given in Deut 6:4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God."

[28] Abū Rā'iṭa provides explanations of Pss 33:6; 56:11; 107:20; 110:1; and Isa 48:16; 6:3. The last citation is a reference to the threefold praise of the angels, which is one of the most common examples in his treatises and the foundation for his arguments in support of the Jacobite addition to the *Trishagion*.

After presenting these examples from the Old Testament and the Quran, Abū Rā'iṭa comments that the Muslims will deny these witnesses, contending that "The prophets did not say this, rather, you have altered the word's place, and you have made [the prophets] say what is false and a lie. . . ."[29] This statement is a paraphrase of the charge against the Jews in Q 4:46 and 5:13: "they have altered the words' places."[30] Although the initial accusation is apparently directed at Christians, Abū Rā'iṭa's ensuing responses make it plain that the Muslims are claiming "those who are responsible for the alteration [of the books] are the Jews" who are trying to deceive them (§19). This brings him to the second part of his defence of the Christian scriptures: a logical demonstration of how any alteration by Christians or Jews would be exposed and evident to anyone searching for the truth.

He begins by pointing out that if Christians had in fact changed the revelation they had received, there would be conspicuous differences between their scriptures and those of the Jews. One would be able to identify the places in which Christians "have changed [the books] and substituted [words for other words]" (§19). However, since the writings that the Christians have in their possession are in complete agreement with the Torah of the Jews, it cannot be the case that Christians have altered theirs. This is especially convincing, he claims, for the Jews are "our enemies," implying that there is no obligation to be concerned with agreement otherwise and thus no potential for collusion.

Abū Rā'iṭa expects this rebuttal will prompt the Muslims to say that "those who are responsible for the alteration [of the books] are

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[29] The outright accusation that Christians are lying reveals a level of tension between the Christians and Muslims not apparent anywhere else in Abū Rā'iṭa's writings. Throughout his treatises, he continually insists that both sides observe agreed-upon rules of debate requiring that each listen and present its case with respect and openness. However, at this point it appears that Abū Rā'iṭa expects the introduction of evidence he does not recognize as legitimate, whereas his opponents view it as the decisive argument. He also implies that because they are so convinced by the claim of *taḥrīf* they are unwilling to listen to any but the most certain, indisputable evidence to the contrary. Yet, in spite of the open attack on Christianity, Abū Rā'iṭa does not respond with ways in which to discredit Islam. He continues to restrict the discussion to a defence of the soundness of Christian beliefs, seeking only to commend Christianity, not to condemn his opponents. This is in keeping with the general lack of polemics in the previous generations of Syriac disputational texts that provide the model for his letters. See Griffith, Disputes with Muslims 257.

[30] Similar descriptions are given in Q 5:41 and Q 2:75.

the Jews," the traditional view supported by the Quran. He turns
this to his advantage, explaining that the proper reply is to insist
that if the Jews intended only to deceive the Christians, they would
have preserved unaltered "genuine" (*ṣaḥīḥa*) copies of the original
Hebrew texts for their own use and, once again, the differences
between the two sets of scriptures would be apparent to all.[31] This
is obvious, "because the one who seeks the destruction of another
does not seek his own destruction" (§19). Since this is not the case,
no one can accept the Muslim claim of *taḥrīf*.[32]

   With these arguments, Abū Rā'iṭa believes that he has offered
sufficient evidence that biblical texts can be trusted sources for
Christian faith and doctrine. Of course, his defence of the scriptures
is only pertinent to the Old Testament writings commonly held by
Christians and Jews, a significant limitation of his refutation of *taḥrīf*
of which he seems to be conscious. This is indicated by the fact that
although he includes many passages from the New Testament through-
out his writings, these are always intended as evidence and support
primarily for his Christian readers. In his responses to Muslim ques-
tioners, he consistently makes references only to Old Testament
figures and writings that will pass the scrutiny of those suspicious of
taḥrīf. In this manner, he believes that the argument of falsification
can be circumvented successfully, allowing Christians to use scrip-
ture passages effectively in their own defence. Abū Rā'iṭa even went
as far in his "Witnesses from the Words of the Torah, the Prophets
and the Saints" (VI) as to assemble and translate into Arabic a col-
lection of passages taken solely from the Old Testament that can be
used in debates with Muslims.

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[31] Abū Rā'iṭa is assuming a desire within the Jewish community for fidelity to
the original revelation, even if they might attempt to mislead others. As mentioned
above, however, the Quran suggests that the revelation was distorted almost imme-
diately after its revelation to Moses, and that no authentic copy was preserved; cf.
Q 5:13, 41; 2:75–76; 4:46.
[32] This response was fairly common among Christians, and used for centuries
after Abū Rā'iṭa. The Muslim scholar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) replies
to a similar defence in his *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb aw al-tafsīr al-kabīr*: "If it is said: 'How
is this [alteration] possible in the scripture when each one of the letters and words
has been passed on with the utmost care in the East and in the West?' We answer
him, saying: 'The people [of Israel] were few [in number], and the scholars [in
possession of] the scripture were [also] very few, so they had the power to com-
mit this falsification.'" Cf. ibid. ii, 149–150; as cited in Gaudeul ii: *Texts*, 273. The
translation is my own.

3   *Conclusions*

Although Abū Rā'iṭa devotes relatively little space in his treatises to addressing the Muslim charge that the scriptures have been falsified, concern for avoiding dismissal on the grounds of *taḥrīf* fully informs his project of explaining and defending Christian doctrine. Knowing that much of the traditional evidence employed by Christian apologists will be rejected because it contradicts the Quran, he turns instead to principles of logic and elements drawn from Greek thought to build his argument, setting a precedent for those who would respond to Islam in the future. But this does not mean he is willing to abandon the Christian scriptures to the claim of *taḥrīf*.

Abū Rā'iṭa constructs a careful defence of the integrity of the scriptures for the following two reasons; he wants to assure Christians they are reliable for faith, and he does not want to concede to any part of the Muslim accusation of *taḥrīf*. He places this argument near the end of the "First *Risāla* on The Holy Trinity," conceivably because he is well aware that the debate will eventually turn to falsification and that left unanswered, the claim will feed doubt in the Christian community. In response, he proceeds to demonstrate the consistency of plural speech about God in the scriptures of Jews, Christians and Muslims, concluding that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not baseless, but rather the necessary outcome of an honest reading of the sacred texts. Abū Rā'iṭa then turns to the problem of the source of falsification, arguing that if either the Christians or the Jews had altered the books, the differences between the scriptures they hold in common would be clear to all. Furthermore, there is no incentive for the two communities to conspire together to hide the truth, since they are enemies, and yet their scriptures are the same. His reasoning is cautious and limited, but it enables him to add certain Old Testament passages to his arsenal to be used in defence of Christianity.

In the end, while Abū Rā'iṭa believes it is necessary to defend the integrity of the scriptures against the charge of *taḥrīf*, he views such arguments as having limited apologetic value. He submits that a more fruitful strategy is to take advantage of the rising interest of Muslim scholars in the Greek philosophical heritage and establish common ground through reason. Consequently, he builds most of his case on non-scriptural evidence, encouraging his fellow Christians

to turn to shared logical principles to make effective arguments in favor of Christian doctrine. This approach was apparently successful. Abū Rā'iṭa became widely known as a Christian apologist in his day and remained influential in the Eastern Churches until the modern period.

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MEETING THE PATRON: AN *AKHBĀR* TYPE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR *MUḤDATH* POETRY

Beatrice Gruendler

The effects of poetic speech can hardly find a more ample illustration than that furnished by *akhbār* about early ʿAbbāsid poets. This justifies the expectation that *akhbār* collections might yield insights into the role of poetry. The following exploration was sparked by the recurrence of one particular plot type among the diverse *akhbār*, to wit, a poet's first meeting with a patron. Although the nearly thirty examples identified under this rubric provide only limited evidence, I argue that they be considered as a literary refraction of contemporary circumstances. As such they offer a glimpse of an attitude of increased intellectual sophistication, widening poetic range, and greater latitude toward tradition, shared by poets and their audiences alike. After tracing the new mutual aesthetic in this *akhbār* type, I will turn to the question of why meeting a patron was so popular a subject in collected accounts.

   The earliest books devoted to poets of the first ʿAbbāsid era—*al-Waraqa* by Ibn al-Jarrāḥ (d. 296 A.H./908 C.E.)[1]—*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* [*al-muḥdathīn*] by Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 296/908),[2] *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, and the two preserved sections on poets in *al-Awrāq* by al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/946)[3]—all contain *akhbār* that capture events in

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[1] A member of the Banū Jarrāḥ of Iranian origin, skilled administrator, and esteemed man of letters, he headed different offices under the caliphs al-Muʿtaḍid and al-Muktafī and was connected with their viziers; see *GAS* i, 374–75; *EI*[2] iii, 750.
   [2] An ʿAbbāsid prince, he abandoned political ambitions for most of his life, except for a short presence at the court of al-Muʿtamid, befriending his viziers, and a failed quest to unseat the young al-Muqtadir, which ended with his execution. He was one of the earliest critics and a talented practitioner of *muḥdath* poetry; see *GAS* ii, 569–71; *EI*[2] iii, 892–93.
   [3] These were edited by J. Heyworth Dunne under the titles of *Ashʿār awlād al-khulafāʾ wa-akhbāruhum* and *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* (see bibliography). See also the recent edition of the St. Petersburg unicum, covering the period from al-Wāthiq to al-Muhtadī, by V.I. Belyaev and A.B. Khalidov.

poets' lives along with terse general remarks and selections of their verse. Most of these poets composed a mannerist kind of verse, designated as "modern" (*muḥdath*), or the "new style" (*badīʿ*),[4] as distinct from pre-Islamic, early Islamic and Umayyad poetry, subsumed under ancient (*qadīm, mutaqaddim, islāmī*) poetry. The rise of this new style sparked a *querelle des anciens et des modernes* among scholars and critics, which lasted through the fourth/tenth century. The *akhbār* about its early poets allow my line of questioning, as they were fixed in writing either before or closely after the poets' deaths and bear the imprint of their time. The *akhbār* vary in size, content, and structure. Their length ranges between a few lines and several pages. As to substance, the usual combination of *isnād* and narration is often enlivened by dramatic scenes and/or poetry. Concerning the structure, prose and poetry about an event may be integrated, juxtaposed, or haphazardly intertwined. Other than in historical *akhbār*, poetry constitutes a vital element, if not the keystone, for a plot.[5] An author, however, needed to choose between composing a well-paced narrative and preserving a poem in its original form. A good plot could easily support a short quotation of a *qaṣīda*'s incipit and another verse *à propos*. In this manner al-Ṣūlī most often adduced Abū Tammām (d. 231/845) or al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897).[6] The audience immediately recognized the poem, and if not, the poet's *dīwān* was available in the same author's compilation, originally appended to either *akhbār* collection. If the poet was less illustrious, the author often took the occasion to record the poem in full, albeit encumbering the plot. To

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Al-Ṣūlī served al-Muktafī as *nadīm* and al-Rāḍī as tutor and *nadīm*, while he enjoyed the support of both caliphs' viziers. He was a prolific author and edited numerous *dīwān*s of *muḥdath* poets; see *GAS* i, 330–31; *EI*² ix, 846–48. For more detail on the treatment of *muḥdath* poets in contemporary *akhbār* collections, see Gruendler, Verse and Taxes 86–88.

[4] For the description of this style as mannerism, see Wolfhart Heinrichs, 'Manierismus,' and Stefan Sperl, *Mannerism*, with different underlying concepts. The "new style" (*badīʿ*) appeared with the beginning of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty, its earliest forerunners being considered Bashshār (d. ca. 167/783) and Ibn Harma (d. ca. 176/792). In its earliest occurrences, the term overlapped with the imaginary loan metaphor (*istiʿāra*), found objectionable by some early critics, and then expanded to include further figures and their conscious pursuit; see Heinrichs, *Istiʿārah* 187–202. In the *akhbār*, *badīʿ* appears most often as an adjective in this wider sense.

[5] Leder, Prosa-Dichtung 8.

[6] But note the full quotation of a *qaṣīda* where the poet's sustained flawlessness and excellence throughout the entire piece are argued; see al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 108–14.

avoid this, he might first tell the story and append the poetry, as did Ibn al-Jarrāḥ and al-Ṣūlī for minor poets, but this format robbed the poetic action of its immediacy.

One might ask which events in a poet's life thus metamorphosed into *akhbār*. A survey of the enumerated books shows that, while *akhbār* cover an immense thematic spectrum, a significant number of them converge on typical situations in a poet's career, such as his seeking access to a patron, capturing a memorable moment in (remembered or improvised) verse, or proffering a request. While each time the narrative contextualizes the delivery and reception of a poem, the poem, as a verbal act, in turn affects its surroundings.

The question of the "truth" or "falsity" of *akhbār* has in recent times given way to their investigation as a literature whose appearance of reality is a skilful guise.[7] Although *akhbār* certainly contain authentic materials, including residue of earlier oral practice, these have been turned into literature, recast and arranged within the synchronic plane of the final author-compiler. But the accuracy of a single *khabar* is not significant here for two reasons. First, the general conduct of the *dramatis personae* can still be assumed to bear similitude with actual customs, if only to buttress the author's agenda.[8] This extends to conversational conventions and expectations, which reflect the author's experience of actual conversations, even if shortened and optimized.[9] Second, a collection as a whole conveys its compiler's message, which differs from any pre-existing messages of its constituent parts.[10] The last author's "speaking" through earlier authors or transmitters (known or anonymous) is as much his own voice as are his linking direct comments.[11] This last historical, or surface, layer of the *akhbār* collections can thus be studied with slightly less risk then earlier ones and is the one under scrutiny here. Moreover, the earlier layers of the material in these works had undergone only a brief period of transmission in which author and biographee were divided by no more than a century (or two to three transmitters), and they sometimes even met face-to-face. Nonetheless historical

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[7] Leder, Prosa-Dichtung 34.

[8] Conrad, 'Umar at Sargh 522 and 527–28.

[9] Ungeheuer, Gesprächsanalyse 46, and Schütze, Interaktionspostulate 72–73.

[10] Goldberg, Der verschriftete Sprechakt 128 and 131–33; and Leder, *Korpus* 3–4.

[11] The layer of a compiler's direct intervention belongs to Stefan Leder's "contextual determinants" which supply clues as to an author's cultural context, such as his intended recipients; see Leder, Conventions 60.

caution is warranted, as the consistent tone and integrative hand of
an Ibn al-Muʿtazz or al-Ṣūlī constantly betray themselves.

Akhbār about gaining access to a patron stand out by not only
their relative frequency but also structurally by their being placed at
the beginning of longer entries on an individual; they are chosen
therefore as a significant sample. This plot type displays recurrent
props and personages, although the events play out differently each
time, through unpredictable twists and delays and with a fair vari-
ety of dramatized poetry. I will first survey the salient plot elements,
personages, devices, and poetic genres in a paraphrase and then dis-
cuss the function of the *akhbār* as whole entities.

The situation of contacting a patron lent itself to offering spatial
and topographical detail. Space acquired a dramatic dimension, unit-
ing or separating poet and prospective patron. Thus Ismāʿīl ibn Jarīr
al-Qaṣrī (fl. beg. third/ninth century) intercepted Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn
(d. 207/822)[12] during one of his journeys on the open road, and he
so impressed the governor that he made him his sole companion.[13]
But if the poetry did not meet the patron's expectations, a good
opportunity was wasted.[14]

More often the scene of the event is the gate of a palace, trans-
lating the access to a caliph, governor, or official into spatial terms.
The gate physically marked the obstacle the poet had to transcend:
passing through the gate meant success, staying outside, failure. One
example is the gate of al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218–27/ 833–42) at which
poets gathered, presumably the Bāb al-ʿAwāmm of the caliphal palace
in Sāmarrāʾ, which still stands today.[15] Some gates remained closed.
Al-Mukhayyim al-Rāsibī (fl. 170–93/786–809), who waited at the
gate of the untypically stingy Barmakid Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā
(d. 221/835),[16] spent his life's earnings of one hundred thousand

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[12] Of Iranian background, he was instrumental in al-Maʾmūn's victory in the
civil war, became governor of the Western provinces, then head of the guard in
Baghdad. In 205/821, he rose to be governor of the East and Khurāsān, where
he founded a semi-independent dynasty. He avidly patronized Arabic literature; see
*EI*² x, 103; and Bosworth, Tahirids 54–58.

[13] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 84–85.

[14] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 43–44.

[15] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 135, preserved in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān* i, 28. For the gate,
see Northedge, Interpretation 152–53, and figs. 5–6.

[16] This son of Yaḥyā ibn Khālid played no role during his father's vizierate
(170–87/786–803). He was released from prison by al-Amīn. Al-Maʾmūn later
appointed him governor of Sind; see *EI*² i, 1036.

*dirham*s, from a previous patron, without receiving a single gift in return.[17] Another case is that of Abū l-ʿAmaythal (d. 240/854), who was temporarily denied access by Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn.[18]

But gates did not pose the only obstacle; there were the potential competitors crowding them: visitors, petitioners, and other poets. An aspiring protégé needed to single himself out, perhaps through winning a competition arranged by the caliph himself. Thus al-Muʿtaṣim had a *madīḥ* verse by Manṣūr al-Namarī (d. before 193/809) praising al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809) recited to poets waiting outside his gate and challenged them to match it.[19] Tests of this order were not infrequent.[20] Most occasions, however, were less formalized, and the poet had to devise a way to distinguish himself from the crowd. Abū Duhmān al-Ghallābī (fl. 158–69/775–85) did so in the general audience of Saʿīd ibn Salm, the governor of Armenia under al-Rashīd. In the midst of the thronging populace, he caught the governor's attention by extemporizing an oration and a couplet. Yet he betrayed his irritation with the governor's pomp and ceremony too clearly to win any favor.[21] Ḥabīb ibn Shawdhab (or Jundab ibn Suʾdad; fl. mid. second/eighth century) was more successful with the governor of Medina, Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān (d. 176/792);[22] his ultra-short self-promotion in ornate prose instantly earned him a gift.[23] More daring was Abān al-Lāḥiqī (d. ca. 200/815),[24] who maneuvered a letter containing his versified self-promotion into the hands of the Barmakid al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā (d. 193/808).[25] The virtues advertised show the panoply of qualities expected of an ʿAbbāsid court

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[17] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 99. For the currency, see n. 128.

[18] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 287. Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam* 375–76, attributes the same couplet to Muḥammad ibn Hishām al-Sidrī (fl. first half of the third/ninth century), a member of a group of Baṣran literati, who was left waiting at the gate of a Baṣran noble from the Banū Ziyād.

[19] See n. 15 above and Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 245 for the *incipit* of this ode.

[20] Abān al-Lāḥiqī (see al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 3–6) and Ismāʿīl al-Qasrī (see Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 85) were likewise given tests. For the risks inherent in such tests, see fns. 47 and 48.

[21] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 68–69.

[22] He governed Medina for his cousin al-Manṣūr (r. 146–50/ 763–7) and then again for al-Mahdī (r. 161–6/ 778–83). For the poet, see *GAS* ii, 453.

[23] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 79–80.

[24] *GAS* ii, 515–16 and n. 106. For the *khabar*, see n. 27.

[25] Raised as foster-brother of al-Rashīd, he assisted his father, the vizier, in the government, was placed in charge of West Iran and later governed Khurāsān. He was disgraced together with his family in 187/803 and died in prison; see *EI²* i, 1034–35.

poet: Ḥabīb mentions affection, excellence in praise, and a disincli-
nation to pay visits when they may cause boredom, but also to stay
at home if that leads to him being forgotten. Abān adduces many
more; in one verse alone, that which will catch al-Faḍl's interest, he
enumerates:

> *kātibun ḥāsibun khaṭībun, adībun*
> *nāṣiḥun zāʾidun ʿalā l-nuṣṣāḥi* [*khafīf*]

> Scribe, accountant, orator, man of letters[26]
> adviser to advisers, . . .

He further adds: poet, transmitter, traditionist, and grammarian. For
the benefit of gatherings at court he is pleasant-looking (this needs
to be said since the poem is sent by letter), a good converser, jester,
graced with permanent good luck, blessed with moderate piety, nei-
ther ascetic nor libertine, and above all eager to serve.[27] Court poetry
had become inseparable from adjacent literary arts which might have
to be performed on the spot for a patron's entertainment.[28]

   The action in the *akhbār*, however, is not limited to the duo of
poet and patron. Secondary characters fill the floor between both
protagonists and intervene in their relationship. The patron's cham-
berlain could act as an obstructing force, such as Saʿd al-Nūshirī,
who served the vizier ʿUbaydallāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān (d. 263/
877).[29] His power was great enough to deny access to someone as
famous as al-Buḥturī—as the poet's numerous satires and one direct
complaint to the vizier confirm:

> One day ʿUbaydallāh [ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān] said to al-Buḥturī,
> "What a poet you would be, if it were not for your still being alive
> (*taʾakhkhuru zamānika*)!"
>   "What a vizier our lord would be, if it were not for his chamberlain!"
> [The vizier] laughed and forbade Saʿd to deny [al-Buḥturī] access.[30]

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   [26] For the variants "man of eloquence" (*balīgh*) and "sharp mind" (*arīb*), see p. 74
and n. 112.
   [27] Al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 4–5. For a full translation of the *khabar*, see the
Appendix to this article.
   [28] Ouyang, *Literary Criticism* 68–89.
   [29] He served from 236/851 as vizier for al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–47/847–61) and
again until his death for al-Muʿtamid (r. 256–79/870–92), whose later viziers Ṣāʿid
ibn Makhlad and Ismāʿīl ibn Bulbul likewise employed Saʿd al-Nūshirī; see *EI²* iii,
824. ʿUbaydallāh was no relation of al-Fatḥ, who appears in the following *khabar*,
see Gordon, The Khāqānid Families 236 and 239–42.
   [30] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, no. 62.

On the other side, there were supporting figures such as al-Mutawakkil's secretary and favorite, al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān (d. 247/861). His care for al-Buḥturī extended to almost every detail. He first ascertained the poet's ability, then secretly informed him ahead of time of an apt occasion for a *qaṣīda* in praise of the caliph, and a few days later had him present it in person.[31] His efforts did not stop there; the courtier monitored al-Buḥturī's progress and advised him to adjust his style.[32] The support of this influential courtier was a guarantee of entry to the court. Aḥmad ibn Abī Fanan (d. between 260–70/ 874–83) realized this and decided to win himself the graces of al-Fatḥ.[33] A courtier could moreover advise a poet on a political stance to adopt in his *qaṣāʾid* for a caliph.[34] Thus the Barmakid al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā proposed to Abān to compose anti-ʿAlid verse *à la* Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣa the Elder (d. ca. 182/797) to gain the favor of al-Rashīd. Abān took the advice to heart and even tested his ode with al-Faḍl before visiting the caliph.[35]

In addition to viziers and courtiers, lower-ranking scribes, poets, and singers performed intercessory functions. When the mad poet Juʿayfirān al-Muwaswis (fl. first half of third/ninth century) begged for admission to the Arab aristocrat and general Abū Dulaf al-ʿIjlī (d. between 225–28/840–43)[36] in Jibāl, he refused. "What business do we have with the demented? Have we done with the sane?" But Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf [ibn Ṣubayḥ] the scribe (d. 213/828)[37] and the

[31] Ibid., no. 28, dated 233/848.

[32] Ibid., no. 30. In the case of the rough-voiced Abū Tammām, his patron Ibn Abī Duʾād reassured al-Muʿtaṣim that the poet's *rāwī* would deliver his ode; see al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 144, lines 1–2.

[33] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, no. 35.

[34] On the other hand, political poetry was not necessarily self-serving. For instance, the tirades by Sudayf ibn Maymūn (executed in 147/764) against the Umayyads preceded their fall from power and his praise of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ; see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 37–39.

[35] Al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 13–15. The motif of inheritance law Abān applies to the case (ibid., 14, lines 6–9), compares indeed with one used by Marwān, who borrowed it from an ʿAbbāsid client; see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 51, lines 7–14, and the parallel in Ibn Qutayba, *Shiʿr* 482, lines 4–11. For a pro-ʿAlid inversion of the motif by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Abī Murra al-Taghlibī (fl. second half of third/ninth century), see Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī* x, 99–100.

[36] Pro-ʿAlid Arab general who supported al-Amīn in the civil war and later became governor of Damascus under al-Muʿtaṣim. He owned vast estates in Jibāl and hosted an important circle of artists and scholars; see *EI*² iv, 718–19.

[37] Belonging to a *mawlā* family of secretary-poets and a famous writer of epistles, he served al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–33) in various functions before becoming his chief secretary in 211/826; see Sourdel, *Vizirat* I, 225–31.

poet's friend risked speaking up and gained entrance for him. Juʿayfirān's splendid performance fully vindicated this support, and Abū Dulaf conceded, "You knew your friend better."[38]

But intercession alone was no guarantee of success. When ʿAlī ibn Jabala al-ʿAkawwak (d. 213/828), famous for his near blasphemous praises for the said Abū Dulaf and al-Maʾmūn's general Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī (d. 210/825),[39] asked the latter to convey a *qaṣīda* by him to al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–33), the general willingly complied. The caliph, however, imposed on the poet an impossible condition, which he asked the intercessor to convey:

> Give him [sc. al-ʿAkawwak] the choice whether we shall place this composition of his side-by-side with his compositions about you and Abū Dulaf, and if we find his composition about us better, we will give him ten thousand *dirham*s, and if not, one hundred lashes; [or,] if he wants, we will excuse him [from his request].
>   Ḥumayd presented [al-ʿAkawwak] with the choice, and [the poet] chose to be excused.[40]

Poets had no control over the reception of their verse, whether by caliphs or the general public. The same poet, al-ʿAkawwak, tried to equal the fame of his praise for Abū Dulaf with similar praise of Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī, but whereas the former's praise had "spread" (*sāra*), the latter's failed to do so.[41]

Even for the intercessor himself hazards lurked. ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim (d. ca. 220/835), confidant of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn and his son ʿAbdallāh (d. 230/844),[42] once intercepted a poorly composed praise *qaṣīda* about to be recited to Ṭāhir and advised the poet to take instead one of his own poems, which ʿAwf kindly offered to compose. The intransigent candidate, however, mistrustfully declined and saw his praise thrown back at him, while the well-meaning intercessor bore the brunt of ʿAbdallāh's displeasure:

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[38] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 381–82.
[39] This general was responsible for al-Maʾmūn's victory over Ibrāhīm al-Mahdī in 203/819. A literary patron of celebrated magnificence, he died poisoned in 210/825; see *EI²* iii, 573.
[40] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 113–14.
[41] Ibid. 115–16.
[42] Succeeding his brother Ṭalḥa as governor of Khurāsān in 214/829–30, ʿAbdallāh repeatedly quelled revolts for al-Maʾmūn and al-Muʿtaṣim. He was a skilled poet and musician, who championed Arabic over Persian culture; see *EI²* i, 52–53 and Bosworth, Tahirids, 58–67.

Woe to you Abū Muḥallim, did you not hear the poetry about us by
that one who visited us?

"Oh yes," 'Awf answered, "May God grant the *amīr* power! I heard
it and gave him advice, but he did not listen."[43]

Trust would have better served the protégé and his intercessor. But
matters could be worse. An intercessor could suffer harm from his
own ungrateful protégé: Aḥmad ibn al-Khallād, who had procured
al-Buḥturī a thousand *dīnār* reward from al-Mustaʿīn (r. 248–52/862–66)
for a *qaṣīda*, found himself satirized in the inaugural *qaṣīda* with which
the expedient bard ingratiated himself with the next caliph, al-Muʿtazz
(r. 252–55/866–69).[44]

Another danger to a successful poet was the jealousy of his peers.
This made Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. after 198/814) conceal his iden-
tity when seeking an introduction to al-Maʾmūn's governor of Egypt,
al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Khuzāʿī,[45] through the governor's kins-
man and fellow-poet, Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī al-Khuzāʿī (d. 244/859 or
246/860).[46] Ismāʿīl ibn Jarīr had to fend off other poets' allegations
of plagiarism by the rather unusual test of satirizing his own patron,
Ṭāhir. Success in this test put the poet within an inch of his life:
he improvised the requested satire, jotted it down on a sheet which
he handed to Ṭāhir, and began to recite it. But he had performed
the task so well that the governor tore the sheet, interrupted him,
and barked, "May this never leave your mouth or I will kill you!"[47]
Poetic exams were simply not the best means of establishing objec-
tive truth.[48]

Another poet, ʿIṣāba al-Jarjarāʾī (fl. 218–227/833–842) became the
unwilling accomplice of a failed plot to murder his patron, al-Ḥasan
ibn Rajāʾ, the governor of Shīrāz under al-Maʾmūn, forcing ʿIṣāba
to flee his hometown. This rather long story is interesting for another

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[43] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 190, lines 8–10.
[44] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, no. 47; see variant in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*
373–74, with expanded poetic citations.
[45] Governor of Egypt from 198/813, he appointed Diʿbil as governor of Aswān
in 198–201/813–15. For the poet, see *GAS* ii, 600.
[46] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 301–3.
[47] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 85, line 12.
[48] Cf. the test to which Muḥammad ibn al-Saffāḥ, nephew of al-Manṣūr (r. 136–
58/754–75) and his governor of Baṣra, subjected the unsuspecting Ḥammād ʿAjrad
(d. between 155–168/772–84). In order to see whether the poet was in love with
Muḥammad's fiancée Zaynab, he had him compose love poetry for her. Ḥammād
excelled, and Muḥammad saw his suspicions confirmed and broke off the engage-
ment; see al-Ṣūlī, *Ashʿār awlād al-khulafāʾ* 4–5.

reason. Between the poet's dramatic banishment by al-Ḥasan and his final return to his good graces, a delaying device is employed, in the form of 'Iṣāba's attempt to escape from Shīrāz. Over a distance of ten marching miles,[49] the poet is twice intercepted by messengers racing back and forth between him and the patron until the misunderstanding is resolved.[50] Another story contains a similar delaying device. Out of pity, the poet Di'bil takes a shabby-looking individual as travel companion from al-Anbār in Iraq to Egypt, and his good offices to him during the journey are related in detail. When, on their arrival, Di'bil grants the request of the stranger to introduce him to the Egyptian governor, he improvises a stunning praise *qaṣīda* and reveals his identity as the reputed poet Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj. The story, told entirely by Di'bil, is constructed from this poet's point of view. Thus his travel companion's discarding of his incognito is reserved for the final audience scene.[51] The same viewpoint of an unknowing narrator as character within the story enhances the first half of the story of Abān al-Lāhiqī, told by the orator-poet Kulthūm ibn 'Amr al-'Attābī (d. ca. 208/823). Without ever identifying him, the narrator describes Abān from al-'Attābī's perspective, merely as a run-down, barefoot youth, abandoned by his own servant. In sheer despair Abān composes a poem which he smuggles into the palace. To fish him out of the waiting crowd of petitioners later, a servant must shout the poem's contents from the palace roof. Thereafter the scene changes with the protagonist's admission to the palace, where al-Faḍl tests his alleged talents.[52] These sophisticated techniques of employing delay or an unknowing narrator are rare and limited to the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, while most other *akhbār* retain a terse matter-of-fact format.

* * *

Turning to the poetic medium: through which genres,[53] motifs,[54] and styles did poets attract the attention of patrons in the *akhbār*? This

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[49] One *farsakh* (pl. *farāsikh*) measured ca. 6 km or 3.75 miles.
[50] Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 398–401.
[51] See n. 46.
[52] Al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shu'arā'* 3–6.
[53] Genre here signifies a group of texts with shared communicative conventions and expectations, such as panegyric ode and satire, not a rigid catalogue of themes; see Mary L. Pratt, *Towards a Speech Act Theory* 86–87. Some Arabic poetic genres can consist of only one theme, in which case genre and theme overlap.
[54] Motif is meant here as a translation of *ma'nā*, bearing in mind that in medieval

was particularly vital in such situations where they lacked intercessors and had to make their verse speak for itself.

Two strategies were open to them: to satisfy a patron's (literary or political) expectations or to surprise and impress him by flouting these. Regarding the first option of carefully observed expectations, the genre selected is usually the praise *qaṣīda*, with or without introductory theme,[55] and the recipients are almost unfailingly caliphs.[56] In a *qaṣīda* for al-Rashīd, Abān dutifully defends the right of succession of al-ʿAbbās against the claims of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[57] Al-Buḥturī perceives and fulfills in another *qaṣīda* the secret desire of al-Muntaṣir (r. 247–248/861–862) to be known as pro-ʿAlid. Later he wins the favor of al-Muʿtazz by accusing al-Muntaṣir of al-Mutawakkil's murder and criticizing al-Mustaʿīn as usurper.[58] Complying with caliphs' expectations also included literary aspects. The poet-scribe al-Ḥasan ibn Wahb (d. 247/861)[59] won accolades for producing exactly the type of hyperbolic praise al-Muʿtaṣim desired. The model was a couplet by Manṣūr al-Namarī (d. before 193/809):

khalīfata llāhi inna l-jūda awdiyatun
aḥallaka llāhu minhā ḥaythu tajtamiʿu

in akhlafa l-qaṭru lam thukhlif makhāyiluhū
aw ḍāqa amrun dhakarnāhū fa-yattasiʿu [*basīṭ*]

Caliph of God, generosity are valleys
at whose confluence God made you dwell.

If raindrops disappoint, his clouds of promise do not,
or [if] an impasse looms, we mention him, and the path opens up.

Arabic poetics this term covered poetic ideas and their renditions, ranging from one verse to a whole passage with different levels of complexity.

[55] Occasionally smaller pieces of *madīḥ* occur, such as the couplets in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 135.

[56] Interestingly enough, this strategy fails with a high official like al-Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā; see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 45–46. Jaʿfar held several nominal governorships, mint and post office directorships during his father's vizierate but was mainly the confidant of al-Rashīd, who had him executed in 187/803; see *EI*² i, 1034.

[57] See n. 35 above.

[58] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, nos. 45 and 47, which refer to al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān* ii, no. 413, verses 27–28 and 30 with the interpolated condemnation of al-Muntaṣir; and ibid., i, no. 71, verse 16 with the accusation of al-Mustaʿīn as usurper (*ghāṣib*) respectively.

[59] He headed the chancellery, assisting Ibn al-Zayyāt during his vizierate under al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218–27/ 833–42) and al-Wāthiq (r. 227–32/ 842–47) and fervently patronized Abū Tammām.

The couplet contains two hyperbolic images, typical of *muḥdath* poetry, a metonymy, associating the caliph with generosity, and an inverted comparison between the patron's promise and rain, as well as a straightforward description of the patron's dependable protection. In his own couplet, al-Ḥasan succeeded in spanning the arch of rhetoric and fantasy further:

> *thalāthatun tushriqu l-dunyā bi-bahjatihā*
> *shamsu l-ḍuḥā wa-Abū Isḥāqa wa-l-qamaru*
>
> *yaḥkī afāʿīlahū fī kulli nāʾibatin*
> *al-ghaythu wa-l-laythu wa-l-ṣamṣāmatu l-dhakaru* [*basīṭ*]
>
> Three things, in whose splendor the world glows:
> The morning sun, Abū Isḥāq [al-Muʿtaṣim], and the moon.
>
> His actions in each catastrophe are imitated.
> by the rain, the lion, and the hardened steel.[60]

In the first verse, instead of Manṣūr's mere metonymy, al-Ḥasan creates a causal hyperbole of cosmic proportions, containing an element of "make-believe" (*takhyīl*), which "explains" the light of the world as a reflection of the caliph's bright face. In the second verse he produces, instead of one, three inverted comparisons, adding courage and resolve to the patron's generosity. Finally he arranges the whole as a complementary pair of caliphal appearance and action, with both second hemistiches matching in their triadic structure.

In the opposite case of a poet's ignoring a patron's preferences, certain failure awaited him: the Barmakid vizier Yaḥyā ibn Khālid (d. 190/805)[61] thus reprimanded an obstinate candidate who re-used a motif (*maʿnā*) of which he knew Yaḥyā disapproved.[62] At times the adjustment was downward: al-Buḥturī cemented his favor with al-Mutawakkil by stooping to the caliph's more modest poetic grasp.[63]

For patrons other than caliphs a lesser degree of praise had to be chosen. When Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣa violated this unwritten rule

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[60] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 135, lines 15–16 and 18–19; and al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān* i, 28, lines 13–14 and 16–17. See also fns. 15 and 19.

[61] Scion of a noble Persian family supporting the Hāshimite cause, he helped al-Rashīd's ascent to power in 170/786 and headed his administration in 170–87/786–803 until the Barmakids' disgrace in 187/803. He and his sons generously sponsored scholars and poets, the latter through a special office called *dīwān al-shiʿr*; see *EI*² i, 1034–35.

[62] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 43–44.

[63] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, no. 30. See also n. 32.

and waxed hyperbolic in praising the Barmakid Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā,[64] the official quickly diverted him to another topic and rewarded him nominally for something else.[65] The poet al-ʿAkawwak blocked his own access to al-Maʾmūn with unsurpassable hyperbolic praises for the caliph's generals.[66] On the other hand, high functionaries, governors, generals, and courtiers allowed poets a greater creative freedom and demanded a higher literary standard. When he met Ṭāhir on the open road, Ismāʿīl ibn Jarīr al-Qasrī first tried conventional praise with him to no avail. Only when he moved towards the unusual was Ṭāhir's curiosity piqued. The poet began thus:

> "I praised the Commander of the Faithful, will he [sc. Ṭāhir] hear it?"
> "No."
> "I praised you, will you hear it?"
> "No."
> "I have satirized myself, will you hear it?"
> "Go ahead!" [Ismāʿīl] recited to him:
>
> *laysa min bukhlika annī*
> *lam ajid ʿindaka rizqā*
>
> *innamā dhāka li-shuʾmī*
> *ḥaythumā adhhabu ashqā*
>
> *fa-jazānī llāhu sharran*
> *thumma buʿdan lī wa-suḥqā* [*ramal*]
>
> It is not for any avarice of yours
> that I do not find sustenance with you.
>
> Instead this is due to my ill star.
> I am wretched wherever I go.
>
> May God requite me with harm,
> then banishment of mine and demise![67]

A similar strategy was that of Abān, who rather than praising the Barmakid al-Faḍl sang the praises of his own accomplishments. In one version of the story, Abān needs the help of a Hāshimite noble to deliver his poem in a letter, and he wisely conceals its irreverent

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[64] On him, see n. 56.
[65] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 45. By the same token high officials were supposed to remain below caliphs in the sums they awarded; see al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 144, lines 5–7. A one thousand *dīnār* reward by a judge is found excessive; ibid. 144, lines 15–16 and 145, line 9.
[66] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 113–14. See also n. 40.
[67] Ibid. 84–85. See also n. 47.

content from the messenger.[68] In another version, the potential mes-
senger inquires about the content of the writ and frowns upon its
self-serving nature, but the chamberlain sees promise in such pre-
sumption and decides to convey it:

> "A man who seeks connection with someone of the rank of al-Faḍl
> by praising himself, and not praising al-Faḍl, is astounding." He took
> the note from [Abān].
>   Later he went inside, and held it up to al-Faḍl. [The *amīr*] read
> two lines reclining on his cushions, then sat up straight, took the note,
> and perused it.[69]

The fresh combination of talent and impudence intrigued al-Faḍl.
Then he in turn exercised his ingenuity in identifying the anony-
mous letter writer.

Often poets composed praise *qaṣīda*s for high addressees on the
off chance and then entrusted them to a go-between who might
receive praise himself.[70]

The decision to bow to, or flout, common standards was at the
poet's discretion. With the aid of an intercessor or using his own
intuition, the poet gauged the latitude he had to express himself.
Depending on a patron's representational needs and literary savvy,
the poet either satisfied or subverted his expectations. The poets in
the *akhbār* trod carefully with caliphs, but as the audience for their
more daring exploits they chose patrons immediately beneath the
rank of caliph: high functionaries, governors, generals, and courtiers.
Poets' inventiveness appealed to these men's broader literary hori-
zon, and they allowed it to unfold.

                              *   *   *

Among the many facets of the *akhbār* which cannot all be duly
acknowledged here, I will focus on two shared characteristics that
bear upon the role of poetry. First, the portrayed poets overwhelm-
ingly met with success: many of the stories attest to a personal break-
through,[71] and even more to the beginning of a long literary and

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[68] Al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 2–3.
[69] Ibid. 4, lines 8–10. See also n. 27.
[70] For the praise of an interceding Hāshimite noble, see ibid. 2–3. For the praise
of the interceding poet ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim, see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 189, lines
16–17; and for a screening secretary, see al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 167, lines 5–7.
[71] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 79–80 and 135; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 301–303; al-
Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, no. 47; and idem, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 3–6.

convivial relationship with the patron.[72] Poets who failed remained all but nameless, and their unsuccessful verse is never cited. The obstinate would-be protégé of Ṭāhir is merely identified as "a poet called Rawḥ," and his praise only described as weak and unacceptable to an *amīr* or a free-born man.[73] As to Yaḥyā ibn Khālid's bard peddling an unwelcome motif, neither name nor motif is given.[74] The stories of these failed characters survive not for their sake but because of other poets who appear in them and in whose vitae they are placed. With one exception, luckless poets receive no vitae themselves.[75] This namelessness differs from the narrative device of hidden identity in the stories of Abān and Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj, which is only there to be discarded at the moment of their triumph.

Second, there is the prominent portrayal of the recipients of verse. The stature of high-ranking government officials made their acceptance emblematic of the social success of contemporary poets. Connection with them launched a poet's career and endowed him with rank; they gave poets an opportunity to shine. One of al-Ṣūlī's first arguments in support of Abū Tammām is that most people "paid him his due (*ḥaqq*) in panegyrics and accorded him his proper rank."[76] The importance of literary patronage is also visible in the organization of sections by patron in al-Ṣūlī's *akhbār* collections on Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī. Thus the *akhbār* gave elite individuals full credit for their support and literary sponsorship and invested them with the aura of an educated lifestyle. Poets who did not follow this path—like Abū l-Mukhaffaf ʿĀdhir ibn Shākir (fl. 198–218/

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[72] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 84–85; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 287, 381–382, and 398–401; and al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, nos. 28, 30, and 62; and idem, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 2–3 and 13–15.

[73] *Wajadahā ḍaʿīfatan jiddan.... Wa-mithlu hādhā l-shiʿri lā yaqaʿu minhu mawqiʿan yan-faʿuka.... Bi-mithli hādhā l-shiʿri yulqā l-umarāʾu wa-l-mulūk? A-yaqbalu mithla hādhā ḥurrun?* See Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 189, ult. and 190, lines 2–3, 6. See also n. 43.

[74] Ibid. 43–44.

[75] Cf. the ultra-short notice on Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, whom Ibn al-Muʿtazz seems to deplore, "I saw Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām—who was second to none in composing poetry in the City of Peace [sc. Baghdad], though he had no hope—being nothing but poor until he died;" see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 406, lines 14–15. This assessment seems to stand alone, for to my knowledge the poetic tradition has shrouded his bad luck in oblivion. But note that luckless poets and their plights receive some attention in al-Iṣbahānī's *Aghānī*. "Vita" is to be understood within the context of medieval Arabic literature; see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography* 1–23.

[76] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 3–4.

813–33)[77]—ran the risk of obscurity. Yet this poet sagaciously defined a new type of collective patron, to wit, the class of urban dignitaries, merchants, and craftsmen in Baghdad, and invented to this end a new *qaṣīda* variant, the ode on the round loaf (*gharīf*).[78]

Above and beyond flaunting patronage as an emblem of social rank, which it certainly was, many elite individuals gave proof of literary taste and discernment. They were open, perceptive listeners and sometimes even respected poets themselves. A patron's literary aptitude was always highlighted.[79] Lack of it, such as evidenced in judge ʿĀfiya's confusion between praise and satire, was deemed embarrassing.[80] A further testimony to the patrons' more experimental tastes was their readiness to be surprised and amused by their protégés' skilful flouting of expectations, such as Ismāʿīl's self-satire and Abān's boast in lieu of his patron's praise.[81]

In comparison with earlier verse, ʿAbbāsid poetry showed a new face, largely as a consequence of a changed society with new administrative and military elites, including non-Arab clients (*mawālī*) of Turkic, Christian Aramaean, and Buddhist or Zoroastrian Iranian background, who were involved in the revival of Greek and Iranian heritage and a thriving book culture. These leaders, officials, and courtiers in capital and province formed a new audience with whom modern poetry struck a chord. Among the more prominent sponsors were the Barmakids, the Ṭāhirids, the Banū Nawbakht, Banū Wahb, Banū Munajjim, and Banū Thawāba in addition to some members of the old Arab nobility, such as Abū Dulaf, and the new urban upper class, such as ʿAbd al-Malik ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847).[82] Philologists meanwhile greeted the new style with ambivalence. The very frequency of the *akhbār* type asserting the elite's material and

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[77] Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqa* 122–24.
[78] Another collective patron were the Shiites of Qumm, who allocated Diʿbil fifty thousand *dirham*s yearly; see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 265–266.
[79] E.g., *wa-kāna Ṭāhirun adīban shāʿiran yuḥibbu l-adaba wa-ahlahū*; see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 185, line 13. *Wa-kāna [ʿAbdallāh ibn Ṭāhir] min ādabi l-nāsi wa-aʿlamihim bi-ayyāmi l-ʿarabi wa-ajwadihim qawlan li-l-shiʿri . . . Fa-inna l-amīra baṣīrun bi-l-shiʿri, wa-huwa yaqūlu minhu l-jayyida l-qawiyya*; see ibid. 186, lines 5–6, and 190, lines 1–2.
[80] Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 58. See also the removal of judge Sawwār by al-Manṣūr for disregarding a poet's testimony; ibid. 33–35.
[81] See fns. 67 and 69.
[82] This son of a wealthy merchant rose to be vizier under al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Wāthiq (r. 227–32/842–47); see *EI*² iii, 974.

social validation of the controversial modern verse reveals itself as its strongest endorsement.[83]

This overwhelmingly positive depiction of modern poets and their patrons in the *akhbār* leads back to the initial question of why they were thought to be worth collecting. It is not enough to say, by way of an explanation, that the authors of the three compilations studied belonged to the elite, either by birth like Ibn al-Muʿtazz or through skill and generations of service, such as Ibn al-Jarrāḥ and al-Ṣūlī. Rather, all three advocated the novel ʿAbbāsid verse as an art in its own right, while two of them were poets themselves. Implicitly they adopted this stance by dedicating *akhbār* books exclusively to modern poets and recording the works even of those deemed obscure. Al-Ṣūlī compiled *dīwān*s of almost every major modern poet.[84] What is more, in his *Awrāq*, he salvaged the works of lesser representatives, as did Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Ibn al-Jarrāḥ.

To glean a more precise image of their books' agenda and intended audience, one can also rely on occasional direct remarks and comments on *akhbār* as well as the long preface to al-Ṣūlī's *Akhbār Abī Tammām*.[85] Al-Ṣūlī argued here explicitly, "Their [sc. the *muḥdathūn*'s]

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[83] To give a sampling of this group's involvement in *muḥdath* poetry: al-Ḥasan ibn Wahb and Ibn al-Zayyāt were fervent partisans of Abū Tammām; cf. al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 108–14 and 183–210. Either ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim (according to Bonebakker, Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 394 and 406), or his son Hārūn (if one assumes an erroneous inversion of the name as given in the book), first copied Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*. The other son, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā was the dedicatee of Ibn al- Jarrāḥ's *Man ismuhu ʿAmr min al-shuʿarāʾ fī l-Jāhiliyya wa-l-Islam* [partially edited by H. Bräu as *Die alte Einteilung der arabischen Dichter und das ʿAmr Buch des Ibn al-Ǧarrāḥ. Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien* 203, Wien, 1927] and perhaps his *Waraqa*. All three authored books on mainly modern poets; see Bencheikh, Secrétaires 302 fns. 209–211 and Fleischhammer, Hinweise, nos. 39 and 95. Ibn al-Jarrāḥ's nephew ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ, intermittent vizier of al-Muqtadir, patronized al-Ṣūlī. Many of these individuals proved their intellectual openness also in supporting the translation movement; cf. Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought* 127–33.

[84] Preserved wholly or partially are those of Abū Nuwās (d. 200/815), Muslim ibn al-Walīd (d. 208/823), Abū Tammām, Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī (d. 243/857), and Ibn al-Muʿtazz. Others of al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf (d. 188/804, or after 193/808), Diʿbil, ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249/863), Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib (d. 262/876 or 269/883), Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896), al-Ṣanawbarī (d. 334/945), and Abū Shurāʿa al-Qaysī (d. 280/893) are lost, not to mention numerous collections of *akhbār* with selections of poetry in addition to those contained in his *Awrāq*; see *GAS* ii, 331, *EI²* ix, 848. Moreover al-Ṣūlī compiled the *akhbār* of al-Farazdaq; see *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 12–13.

[85] All the other works drawn on here lack their original prefaces. See also n. 11.

poetry is also more like the times, and people employ it more in their sessions, writings, choice of proverbs, sayings, and pursuits."[86] He thus upheld contemporary poetry as culturally more relevant. In a polemic cameo-like statement—attributed via al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870) to Muṣ'ab al-Muwaswis (fl. first half of third/ninth century)—that seems to epitomize the purpose of his book, Ibn al-Mu'tazz makes the *akhbār* and *ayyām* of modern poets "efface" the (ancient) Arabic *shi'r* among other disciplines.[87] The *khabar* appears in a variant in which it is conversation, not modern poetry, that carries the day.[88] Irrespective of whether Ibn al-Mu'tazz or his source performed the substitution, the resulting manifesto for the *muḥdathūn* implicitly reflected the compiler's views, which he also voiced directly in his concluding comments to the vita of Abū l-Shīṣ (d. 196/812):

> His poems, anecdotes, and jests are extremely copious. But we will not abandon the framework of the book, lest the reader should become bored with it, if a single section seems too long to him, and [we also retain it] so that he may remember these jokes, anecdotes, and jests and take a rest from the *akhbār* and poems of the forebears, for they are something people have often told and grown bored with. It has been said: everything new has [its own] charm. What people resort to rather in our time are the poems and *akhbār* of the moderns; hence we have taken the best of each *khabar* and the kernel of each timeless poem (*qilāda*).[89]

The selected *akhbār* and direct comments of Ibn al-Mu'tazz and al-Ṣūlī lead me to further suggest that, besides crediting their own circles with properly appreciating modern poetry, they moreover attempted to claim the intellectual authority over it. Such an ambition was prone to create tension with those who were traditionally thought

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[86] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 17, lines 8–9. This statement concludes a passage distinguishing the ancients' artistic goal of naturalistic description from that of the moderns, who refined and developed the ancients' motifs.

[87] *Wa-ammā lladhī 'affā 'ani l-jamī'i fa-akhbāru l-muḥdathīna wa-ayyāmuhum*; see Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 386, line 8. For *'affā 'alā* as synonymous with the first form "to efface, to forgive," see *Lisān* xv, 78a, lines 8–9.

[88] Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr* i, 155; and Najjār, *Shu'arā'*, part i, no. 77. This variant is related by al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl (d. 236/850), secretary and vizier of al-Ma'mūn, and ends less apodictic, "The one [art] that surpasses (*arbā 'alā*) them are snippets of speech, nocturnal conversation, and what people in sessions receive from each other." Other differences concern the composition of the fields and their designation as "arts" (*ādāb*) rather than "disciplines" (*'ulūm*).

[89] Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 86, lines 7–12. See Bonebakker, Poets and Critics 94 and n. 44 for an alternative interpretation of this passage.

of as poetic specialists, namely, the grammarians and lexicographers, who had built their careers and reputations on ancient poetry and other early proof texts of the *'Arabiyya*.

The debate about the new style has been investigated from the perspective of literary criticism by Wolfhart Heinrichs and Suzanne Stetkevych. Beyond its wealth of tropes and rhetorical figures, this style also gave rise to a new terminology, including its most famous designation, *badī'*, which was applied by poets, critics, and those transmitters who moved with the times,[90] but shunned and circumscribed by philologists.[91] When in 274/887 Ibn al-Mu'tazz composed his pioneering book-length study of *badī'*, he admitted the novelty of the term—if not its substance—and the absence yet of any authority that could define it.[92] Implied is that those to whose province the evaluation of poetry belonged limited themselves to the ancient period and shirked scholarly engagement with the new style—even though they might enjoy it in private.[93] Ibn al-Mu'tazz still strove to vindicate modern poetry by trying to identify its phenomena[94] within the older tradition.[95] But al-Ṣūlī went further and called for literary criticism of modern verse as its own separate discipline. In his eyes, such expertise had to be acquired by study and could not be practiced by simply transferring philological standards:

> . . . The poems of the forebears have been made docile to them [sc. philologists who criticize Abū Tammām], they have transmitted them extensively and found authorities who had gone through [the poems] for them, and tamed their motifs. Thus they recite [these], following

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[90] Heinrichs, *Isti'ārah* 188 and 201–202; see also n. 4.

[91] E.g., as "sophisticated poetic ideas" (*al-ma'ānī al-ẓarīfa*); see Heinrichs, Muslim b. al-Walīd 215–16. This supersedes Bonebakker, Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 396–401.

[92] Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Badī'* 2–4 and 57–58, translated and discussed by Heinrichs, Muslim b. al-Walīd 214–16. For a different interpretation, see Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām* 5–37.

[93] Heinrichs, *Isti'ārah* 192–199, points out, however, that the term, after its first application to *muḥdath* poetry, was adopted by fashion-conscious transmitters and secondarily applied by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–9) to ancient poetry as well. All remaining occurrences gleaned from early literary criticism refer to modern poets.

[94] Without insisting on the exact number, he counts five (loan-metaphor, antithesis, paronomasia, anticipation of the rhyme word, dialectic jargon—the last four often appearing combined with the first) and twelve additional ornaments (*maḥāsin*) of speech.

[95] Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām* 19–37, deems the attempt unsuccessful. As to his *Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn al-Mu'tazz presents it as a collection of not commonly known masterpieces to be learnt by heart for entertainment purposes; see ibid. 80, lines 11–14, and 86, lines 8–9.

the path of others in explaining them, approving the good and blaming the bad. The words of the ancients, even if they vary in excellence, resemble each other and are interconnected.[96] [Philologists] therefore deduce what they do not know from what they know and overcome the difficult with the accessible. For the poetry of the moderns since the age of Bashshār, however, [these philologists] have not found authorities or transmitters like theirs [for the ancient poets], who combine the same qualities. And they have not recognized what [Abū Tammām] achieved and accomplished. They have not given him his due, ignored him, and then opposed him, as God—exalted is He— says 'No; but they have cried lies to that whereof they comprehend not the knowledge,'[97] and it is said, "Man is the enemy of that which he ignores, for he who is ignorant of a thing opposes it." Scholars of [this group], when asked to teach the poetry of Bashshār, Abū Nuwās, Muslim, Abū Tammām, and others, have avoided saying "I do not master this" by insulting Abū Tammām in particular, because he is the closest to our time, and his poetry the most difficult.[98]

Al-Ṣūlī holds that at the root of criticism of the *muḥdathūn*—or their denigration—lies a lack of expertise in what he proclaims a new discipline. He condemns the unfounded animosity as intellectual apathy and conservatism:

How should someone not resort to such an expedient [as the one mentioned above] who says, "Study with me the poems of the forebears," and then, when he is asked about anything in the poems of these [sc. the moderns], he ignores it. What should he fall back on if not insulting that with which he is unfamiliar? If he were fair-minded, he would learn it from its experts (*ahl*), as he has learnt other [poetry], and [then] be preeminent in knowledge of it, for learning is not barred to anyone nor has anyone a special right to it.[99]

In contrast to such narrow-mindedness, al-Ṣūlī shows that the two most famous philologists, Thaʿlab (d. 291/904) and al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), acknowledged modern literary criticism as beyond their purview and did not falsely arrogate knowledge of it to themselves. He corroborates this with a *khabar* about Thaʿlab—whose poetic treatise does not cover modern poetry—candidly admitting his ignorance of this subject. Invited to participate in the literary session of [Abū

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[96] Literally: take each other by the neck.
[97] Q 10 (Sūrat Yūnus): 39; trans. by Arberry, *Koran* 229.
[98] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 14, line 5–15, line 3; see also the translation by Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām* 40–41.
[99] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 15, lines 3–8.

l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad] Ibn Thawāba[100] in which Abū Tammām's poetry
was the going fare, Thaʿlab dreaded embarrassment and asked the
Banū Nawbakht[101] for assistance:

> The Banū Nawbakht related to me—and I never saw Abū l-ʿAbbās
> Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā [Thaʿlab], with all the veneration he enjoyed among
> everyone, to be more revered than by [the Banū Nawbakht], each of
> them deriving his learning from him—that [Thaʿlab] said to them:
>   "I spend much time with scribes, in particular Abū l-ʿAbbās Ibn
> Thawāba, and most of what goes on in their gatherings is [discussion
> of] the poetry of Abū Tammām, which I do not know. Select some
> of it for me!" We made a selection of [Abū Tammām] for him and
> gave it to him. He took it to Ibn Thawāba, who approved it.
>   "It is not something I selected," [Thaʿlab] said to him, "rather, the
> Banū Nawbakht selected it for me."
>   [The Banū Nawbakht]:[102] [Thaʿlab] used to recite to us some verse
> of [Abū Tammām's] poetry and say afterwards, "What did he mean
> by this?" So we explained it to him.
>   "By God," [Thaʿlab] then said, "he has done well and excelled!"[103]

If philology was of no avail in modern literary criticism, intuition
helped even less, as al-Ṣūlī clarifies:

> Why does someone to whom this happens [sc. to embarrass himself
> with unwarranted criticism of Abū Tammām] engage in the knowl-
> edge of poetry, debate (kalām) about its motifs, and the discernment
> of its formulations? Perhaps he imagines that this knowledge comes to
> the brightest and most sagacious people without teaching, serious effort
> and long study with its experts (ahl); how then [should it be] for the
> dullest and slowest? [Moreover,] he whose nature is suited for one or
> two kinds of knowledge, is not [necessarily] suited for others. . . .
>   If I only knew when these people had sat with someone who mas-
> ters this or learned from him and listened to what he says. Do you
> think they imagine that whoever explains the rare vocabulary of a
> qaṣīda or establishes its inflectional endings (iʿrāb) can select the good
> of it, recognize the mediocre and the inferior, and distinguish its for-
> mulations? Who among their authorities mastered this?[104]

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[100] A member of a family of officials of Christian origin, from 255/869 he assisted
the viziers Sulaymān ibn Wahb and Ismāʿīl ibn Bulbul under the reigns of al-
Muhtadī and al-Muʿtamid, and into the reign of al-Muʿtaḍid; see *EI*² iii, 955.

[101] The Banū Nawbakht (or Naybakht) were a Persian family highly instrumen-
tal in the advancement of scholarship, patronage of literature, and the legitimation
of the Imami Shia during the early ʿAbbāsid era; see *EI*² vii, 1043–44.

[102] The *inquit* formula (qāla) does not take account of the plural subject.

[103] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 15, line 9–16, line 4.

[104] Ibid. 126, lines 7–12 and 127, lines 4–7. Al-Ṣūlī comments here on a philol-
ogist's criticism of one of the poet's analogies that had been vaunted by Abū Dulaf.

Al-Ṣūlī's ire was aroused by what he considered a misapplication of philology. He challenged its scholars to acknowledge modern poetry as fundamentally different from the older verse they knew and requiring a separate, but learnable, critical discipline. But if al-Ṣūlī chastised some philologists' self-serving disregard for the intellectual demands of modern poetry, he similarly championed his own cause by validating a knowledge he possessed and used to earn his livelihood.

Though further investigation is required, the chosen sample of *akhbār* would seem to support the suggestion that *muḥdath* poetry had become *de facto* the literary currency of the new ʿAbbāsid elite. What is more, Ibn al-Muʿtazz and al-Ṣūlī ascribed to enlightened leaders and administrators the critical discernment they found lacking in philologists,[105] investing the audience of modern poetry with the *de jure* intellectual authority about it. In the same step they needed to wrest poetic expertise from those who had heretofore controlled it. The theoretical tug-of-war about modern poetry logically followed its adoption by the elite as a living art form, while the archaic canon became increasingly relegated to didactic and scholarly pursuits.

Appendix

Abān al-Lāḥiqī meets al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā[106]

Al-Ṣūlī informed us: Abū l-Ḥasan al-Bardhaʿī related to us: Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan Maṣqūl related to us from [Kulthūm ibn ʿAmr] al-ʿAttābī (d. ca. 208/823).[107]

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[105] Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 174, line 13–175, line 1, and lines 4–5, called "wise kings and high scribes . . . the people most knowledgeable about speech in poetry and prose" in contrast with the philologists of Abū Tammām's time whom he excused for having had "little knowledge of poetry, its criticism, and its discernment" because this was not their craft (*ṣināʿa*). See also Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ* 58, lines 2–3 (see n. 92), who distinguished poets and critics among the literati (*al-shuʿarāʾ wa-nuqqād al-mutaʿaddibīn*) as those who used the term *badīʿ*, from philologists (*al-ʿulamāʾ bi-l-lugha wa-l-shiʿr al-qadīm*) as those who were unfamiliar with it.

My understanding of critical expertise as ascribed to a social class is broader than its definition as a profession, proposed by Ouyang, *Literary Criticism* 166–175.

[106] Al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 3–6. This anecdote and its preceding shorter version (pp. 2–3) mark the beginning of the poet's long connection with the Barmakids, who entrusted him with evaluating the verse of other poets for them (p. 33) and introduced him to al-Rashīd (pp. 13–15). See also a satirical retort to Abān's *fakhr* by Abū Nuwās (p. 22). The long version translated here reappears in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* xii, 336–339. For both *fakhr* and *naqīḍa*, see also Abū

We were at the gate of al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā,[108] four thousand of us, poets and visitors. Among us was a young man (*fatā*) who spoke to us, and we gathered around him.

As he was sitting [there] one day, a page (*ghulām*) of his, seeming to be the most handsome of pages, suddenly came up to him. "My master," he said, "you have taken me from my parents and claimed to have a connection (*wuṣla*) to kings, but we have ended in the worst situation possible. If you see fit to give me leave, so I may rejoin my parents, you will do so."

[Al-ʿAttābī:] the eyes of the young man filled with tears. "Bring me an ink-well and a sheet (*dawāh wa-qirṭās*)," he said after a pause. [The page] brought both, and [the young man] sat aside [from the group] to write a note (*ruqʿa*). Afterwards he returned to his seat.[109] "Leave," he later said to the page, "until such time as I return to you."

At this moment, a man[110] suddenly arrived to request admission to al-Faḍl, and the youth rose and went up to him. "Will you convey this note of mine to the *amīr*?"

"What is in your note?"

"I am praising myself and urging the *amīr* to receive me."

"This is a request concerning you, not the *amīr*. If you see fit to excuse me [from this request], you will do so."

"I do."

[The young man] returned to his seat. Thereupon the chamberlain came out, [the young man] rose, went up to him, and repeated to him his earlier words. The chamberlain was taken with his wit. "A man who seeks connection with someone of the rank of al-Faḍl

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Nuwās, *Dīwān* i, 24–26, and for the former alone, Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, part ii, vol. 3, 238–40. Both poems are rendered into German by Wagner, *Abū Nuwās* 144–145. This translation omits *fa-* and *qāla*, when performing dramaturgic functions, such as a change of scene, speaker, or addressee.

[107] Poet patronized by the Barmakids and al-Maʾmūn. A gifted prose-writer and orator, he allegedly studied and copied Persian books; see *GAS* ii, 540–541.

[108] On him see n. 25.

[109] *Majlis* signifies both "seat" and "group of people sitting;" both meanings are possible.

[110] Later in the book he is identified as Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr [ibn Ziyād], known as Fatā l-ʿAskar, who headed the tax bureau and perhaps the army bureau under al-Rashīd and replaced al-Faḍl during the vizier's absence from Baghdad in 176/792; see al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 22, lines 13–14. In the shorter version the intercessor is identified as a Hāshimite.

by praising himself, and not praising al-Faḍl, is astounding." He took the note from him.

Then he went inside and held it up to al-Faḍl. [The *amīr*] read two lines reclining on his cushions, then sat up straight, took the note and perused it. When he had finished, he said to the chamberlain, "Where is the writer of this note?"

"God grant the *amīr* power—no, by God, I do not know him with this multitude[111] [at] the gate!"

"I will deliver (*anbidhu*) him to you this very instant," al-Faḍl said, "page, climb atop the palace and call 'Who is the one praising himself?'" The page arose and shouted, and the youth among us stood up without coat or shoes.

When he appeared before al-Faḍl, [the *amīr*] said, "Are you the author of its contents?"

"Yes."

"Recite [it] for me!" The youth recited:

> *ana min bughyati l-amīri wa-kanzun*
> *min kunūzi l-amīri dhū arbāḥi* [*khafīf*]

> I am the object of the *amīr*'s desire
> and one of his profitable treasures,

> Scribe, accountant, orator, man of eloquence,
> adviser to advisers,[112]

> Amazing poet, lighter than any feather
> of those beneath the wing,[113]

> And better than Ibn Harma[114] at transmitting
> to people poetry of honed clarity,

> And better than Ibn Sīrīn[115] at transmitting   (5)
> knowledge in words of enlightened eloquence,

> And better than Ibn Sharya at transmitting,
> poetry, works of *nasīb*, and praises.[116]

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[111] Reading *kathrati* as the first term of a construct (see *WKAS* i, 65b–66a), I emend the following as the second term to *man* [*bi-*]*l-bāb*, parallel with al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh* xii, 337, line 12.

[112] Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* i, 24, line 10: "sharp mind, adviser outweighing advisers."

[113] Ibid.: "at the wing."

[114] Poet (d. 176/792) of both dynasties, counted either as the last of the ancients or forerunner of the moderns; see *GAS* ii, 144–145.

[115] Respected Ṭābiʿī jurisconsult and oneiromantist (d. 110/728); see *EI²* iii, 947 and *GAS* i, 633–34.

[116] This and the previous verse are added from Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* i, 24, lines

I have a talent and command of syntax,
which I possess like a collar with bejeweled sash.

If the prince—God grant him prosperity—aimed lances at
me, I would strike the lances' blades.

I am not feeble nor subservient
except to the command of my generous lord.[117]

I am not fleshy, my prince, nor cursed with a stammer,   (10)
nor squat and pot-bellied.

A smooth beard, a handsome face
flaring up like the lighted wick of a lamp,[118]

Witty in conversation of every shade,
skilful in charming tall tales.[119]

How much, how much conversation I have kept hidden
within me that is like [fragrant] apples to kings!

With men like me kings speak privately, entertain themselves,
and whisper about a perplexing, arduous [affair].[120]

I have the luckiest omen of anyone on the day of a hunt,
whether I set out in the morning or at evening time.[121]   (15)

I am the most skilful of people
with birds of prey, steeds and charming beauties.[122]

All this I combine, God be thanked,
and moreover I'm a witty jester.

I am not an ascetic, lining his two garments with hair,
nor a brash, dissolute libertine.[123]

If the *amīr* calls me,
he will find me eager like a chirping nightingale.[124]

13–14, where the name appears correctly as "Ibn Sharya." ʿAbīd (or: ʿUbayd) Ibn Sharya was an Umayyad transmitter of *akhbār* and poetry with a legendary life span; see *GAS* i, 260.

[117] Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* i, 25, line 9: "neither feeble nor subservient, [yet] obedient to the *amīr* and compliant."

[118] Ibid.: "a curly beard."

[119] Var. of *Dīwān* i, 25, line 1, preferred to al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ* 5, line 8: "charming bejeweled [ladies]," which would overlap with verse 16 (as numbered in my translation) below.

[120] Verse added from Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* i, 25, line 3.

[121] Ibid.: "whether I am invited."

[122] Var. of *Dīwān* i, 25, line 5, avoiding al-Ṣūlī's repetition of *milāḥ* from verse 12 by the synonym rhyme word *ṣibāḥ* (s. *ṣabīḥa*).

[123] Ibid.: "with his two garbs tucked-up."

[124] Var. of *Dīwān* i, 25, line 12, preferred over al-Ṣūlī, *Qism akhbār al-shuʿarāʾ*: "ringing bell," as Abū Nuwās' *naqīḍa* repeats the former phrase as *point d'appui*.

"Scribe, accountant, orator, man of letters, adviser to advisers?"[125] al-Faḍl said.

"Yes, God grant the *amīr* prosperity!"

"Page, [bring] the letters that have come from Fars!" al-Faḍl then said, and [the page] brought them.

"Take them, read them, and respond to them," he said to the young man, who sat down to write in front of him.

"Sit by yourself; it will help you to think better," the chamberlain said to him."

"My mind is more focused here, where desire and fear exist." When [the young man] had completed the letters, he presented them to al-Faḍl, and it was as if he [had] looked into his heart.[126]

"Page, a purse, a purse, a purse!"[127] al-Faḍl said.

"God grant the *amīr* power!" The young man addressed the page, "of *dīnār*s or *dirham*s?"[128]

"*Dīnār*s, page." When the purse was placed before him, al-Faḍl said, "Pick it up, God bless you with it."

"By God, O *amīr*," the young man said, "I am not a porter, nor was I created for carrying. If the prince sees fit to order one of his pages to carry it, provided that he be mine. . . ." Al-Faḍl beckoned to one of the pages, but the young man signalled to him, "[Stay] where you are!"

"If the prince, God support him, sees fit to leave me the choice among the pages, as he did with the two purses, he will do so."

"Choose." [The young man] chose the best-looking page.

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[125] This repetition of verse 2 follows the variant from the preceding version of the *khabar* in which only verses 1–3, and 19 appear. They contain the further variants *ʿinda l-janāḥi* (verse 3) and *bulbuli* (verse 19), conforming to Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* i, 24, line 11 and 25, line 12.

[126] Literally: "had laid bare his heart" (*shaqqa ʿan qalbihī*); the phrase occurs in several ḥadīths, e.g., *A-fa-lā shaqaqta ʿan qalbihī fa-taʿlama. . . . Fa-hallā shaqaqta ʿan baṭnihī fa-ʿalimta mā fī qalbihī . . .*; see Wensinck, *Concordance* v, 456a and b; further ibid. iii, 158a and v, 455b, 458a and b.

[127] A *badra*, "purse," contained, or equalled, ten thousand *dirham*s.

[128] One *dīnār* equalled 20–22 *dirham*s at the beginning of the third/ninth century and rose to 25 *dirham*s by the middle of that century. During this period, day laborers earned between 3/4 and 1 1/4 *dīnār*s (15–24 *dirham*s) per month, and a trained craftsman, such as a smith or carpenter, up to two *dīnār*s; see Ashtor, Essai 25 and 48–49. The currency switch in the story changed the reward from a fairly standard sum for *akhbār* to an astronomic figure; *dīnār* awards usually ranged between five hundred and one thousand.

"Pick [it] up." When the purse was on the page's shoulder, the young man wept. Al-Faḍl found this horrible. "Curse you! [Is this because you] find this little?"

"No, by God, may He support you, you have given lavishly, but [I weep] for grief that [the dust of] the earth will cover one like you!"

"This is even finer than what came before," al-Faḍl said, "page, add a suit of clothes and a riding beast for him!"

Al-ʿAttābī: And I had thought the young man[129] would not measure up to al-Faḍl!

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[129] Literally: "I had thought the young man's stirrup to be beneath that of al-Faḍl."

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CHAPTER FIVE

ADVICE FOR TEACHERS: THE 9TH CENTURY MUSLIM SCHOLARS IBN SAḤNŪN AND AL-JĀḤIẒ ON PEDAGOGY AND DIDACTICS*

Sebastian Günther

Dedicated to Professor Michael Marmura,
on the occasion of his 75th birthday, 11 November 2004.

As Islam was spreading among diverse peoples between the 7th and the 9th century C.E., education came to be recognized by the Muslim community as a proper channel through which the universal and cohesive social order—in the way the Quran commanded it—could be established. This resulted in a rapidly increasing need for accessible and effective formal education at both the primary and higher levels. Interestingly enough, the major educational efforts in the formative period of Islam were made by individual scholars, most of them teachers themselves. In other words, these educational activities were individual in nature and intellectual in expression.

1 *The* ādāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim *literature*

By the 9th century, educational thought in Islam started to find its literary expression in Arabic texts devoted to teaching and learning. At this time, educational writing appears to have developed a distinct genre of its own, i.e. the *ādāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* literature. This subcategory of classical Arabic literature is represented, in its core, by works expressly dealing with "rules of conduct for teachers and students." These texts explain and analyze teaching methods, the ways in which learning takes place, or should take place, the

aims of education, as well as the means by which such goals may be achieved. This includes the manner in which teachers and students act and behave, their (moral) characteristics, their relationship with one another in the process of education, the contents of learning, and the means and methods of imparting and absorbing knowledge. In short, this particular type of text can aptly be called pedagogical.

Classical Arabic pedagogical writings provide useful insights into the intellectual culture of Islam in medieval times. They suggest the following: Firstly, the social transfer of knowledge and the intellectual development of individuals and groups were subject to the vivid scholarly interest of Muslims—as witnessed shortly after the rise of Islam in the early 7th century—and became more evident in literary and scholarly writing during subsequent centuries. Secondly, initiated by the translation of classical Greek and Syriac texts into Arabic in the 8th and 9th centuries, the creative adoption of the Hellenistic heritage also left its mark on the Islamic theory of education. This is particularly noticeable in the writings of Muslim authors who deal, from a philosophical-ethical point of view, with the developmental stages in the formation of human character and personality, the early education of the child, and with higher learning. Thirdly, the views on education in Islam benefited from, but also influenced, certain Jewish and Christian ideas on education significant to the Middle East at that time.

Thus far, the *ādāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* literature as a particular type of scholarly expression in Arabic in medieval times has gained only scant attention in Western studies on Islam,[1] despite the fact that al-Ghazālī's (d. 505 A.H./1111 C.E.) insightful passages on the ethics of education in several of his works are fairly well known.[2]

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[1] A classic, so to speak, of Western research on educational thought in medieval Arabic literature is Franz Rosenthal's *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship* (1947). Furthermore, one would need to mention Khalil Abdallah Totah's *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education* (1926), Ahmad Shalaby's *History of Muslim Education* (1954), and A.S. Tritton's *Materials on Muslim Education* (1957). For more specific aspects of the social history of Islamic education, the transmission of knowledge, and the educational practice and institutions, see, for example, the studies by A. Munir-ud-Din (1968), A. Tibawi, (1979), G. Schoeler (1985–), H. Nashshabe (1989), J. Berkey (1992), A. Gilʿadi (1992), and M. Chamberlain (1994).

[2] Cf. the passages on education included in al-Ghazālī's "The [Re-]Vitalization of Religious Sciences (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*)" and "The Criterion of Action (*Mīzān al-ʿamal*)," but also the educational-ethical treatise "O Son (*Ayyuhā l-walad*)" attributed to him.

The originality of the educational ideas in these works, along with the sophisticated way in which they are presented, have caused modern scholarship to appreciate al-Ghazālī as an intellectual mastermind behind classical Islam's philosophy and ethics of education, in addition to his many other celebrated scholarly achievements.

However, a good number of Arabic works from the time before and after al-Ghazālī also deal in a most fascinating way with various aspects of pedagogy and didactics. Unfortunately, only a small portion of these educational texts have been studied and published, and the information about them is rather scattered throughout the primary and secondary sources. The evidence of the *ādāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* works, however, does provide a clear idea of the impressively long and continuous tradition of medieval Arabic scholarship dealing with pedagogical and didactic issues, regardless of their authors' individual theological and juridical stances, ethnic origins, or geographical affiliations.

*   *   *

In this chapter, the focus is on two very early and, in many ways, remarkable examples of classical Arabic writings on education. The first treatise is entitled "Rules of Conduct for Teachers (*K. Ādāb al-muʿallimīn*)," and was written by Ibn Saḥnūn, a scholar from the western part of the Islamic empire. The second work bears the title "The Teachers (*K. al-Muʿallimīn*)," and it is the work of ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, a famous contemporary of Ibn Saḥnūn's from the eastern lands of Islam.

Like other works of the *ādāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* literature, these two texts are significant in several regards: firstly, as historical sources, since they provide information on the realities of intellectual life in medieval Islam; secondly, as evidence for the development of the theory of education, since their authors attempt to establish rules for teachers and students; and thirdly, as literary testimonies, since these texts show the distinctive methods used by their authors for presenting their educational ideas in writing.

2   *Ibn Saḥnūn*

2.1   *The scholar's life and academic career*

Muḥammad Ibn Saḥnūn al-Tanūkhī[3] was a prominent expert of
Mālikī law, a *ḥadīth* scholar, historian, and biographer.[4] He was born
in 202/817 in al-Qayrawān, a city in modern Tunisia. At the begin-
ning of the 9th century, al-Qayrawān was a flourishing economic,
administrative, cultural, and intellectual center, as well as a nucleus
of the Mālikī school of law for the western lands of Islam.[5]

   Ibn Saḥnūn was of Arab descent. His grandfather Saʿīd had arrived
in al-Qayrawān in the middle of the 2nd/8th century with a group
of people from Ḥimṣ in Syria, sent there by the Umayyad authorities
in Damascus to support (militarily) the presence of the Muslims in
the Maghrib.[6] Ibn Saḥnūn's father, Saḥnūn,[7] "a man of rigorous and
demanding ethics," is known as "one of the great architects of the
exclusive supremacy of Sunnism in its Mālikī form throughout the
Muslim West."[8] In addition, it is interesting to note that Saḥnūn had
begun his academic career as an elementary schoolteacher, teaching
the Quran in a simple building rented for this particular purpose.[9]

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   [3] His full name is Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn (Abī Saʿīd) Saḥnūn ibn Saʿīd
ibn Ḥabīb ibn Ḥassān ibn Hilāl ibn Bakkār ibn Rabīʿa at-Tanūkhī; see Ibn Saḥnūn's
biography in: al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs*, i, 443–458; and i, 345ff.; and ʿIyāḍ, *Tarājim*
170–188; see furthermore the art. "Muḥammad b. Saḥnūn," in: *EI*² vii, 409
(G. Lecomte); and G. Lecomte, Le Livre 77–82, esp. 79–80.
   [4] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, p. 13 of the introduction.
   [5] Under the rule of the Aghlabides (r. 184–296/800–909), al-Qayrawān became
a stronghold for the study of the Quran and the Sunna, and for Mālikī law.
Nonetheless, scholars from al-Qayrawān and other Maghribi cities were in vital aca-
demic contact with the east of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, to which the area ruled by
Aghlabides nominally belonged. Scholars made pilgrimages and study trips to Mecca
and Medina, and traveled to centers of higher learning such as Baghdad, Basra,
and Kufa. See, for example, ʿIyāḍ, *Tarājim* 93; *EI*² viii, 843; and the art. "Mālikiyya"
(N. Cottart), in: *EI*² vi, 278–283, esp. 278, 280–281.
   [6] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 346–7; ʿIyāḍ, *Tarājim* 86; al-Qayrawānī, *Ṭabaqāt* 184.
   [7] For his biography, see al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 345–375; and the art. "Saḥnūn"
(M. Talbi), in: *EI*² viii, 843–845. The nickname Saḥnūn—the name of a bird—
was given to him because of his sharp eyesight.
   [8] *EI*² viii, 845.
   [9] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 343–344; and Ismail 37. Saḥnūn owes much of his
scholarly reputation to his *Mudawwana*, one of the great manuals of Mālikī law.
Through this work, Saḥnūn played a major role in "the definitive implantation of
Mālikism in the Maghrib" (*EI*² vii, 409 and *EI*² viii, 843), although he had—due
to the lack of financial resources, as he himself attested—not been able to study
himself with Imām Mālik.

Ibn Saḥnūn spent a carefree childhood in al-Qayrawān. He received
a traditional primary education at an elementary school (kuttāb),[10]
including an introduction to the Quran and the basics of writing. It
appears that his father, Saḥnūn, cared very much for his son; for
example, he is credited with having expressly requested that his son's
teacher:

> Educate him with compliments and kind words only. He is not the
> one to be educated by beating and reprimanding. [When I pass away,]
> I will leave him [as someone who acts] in accordance with what I
> believe (atrukuhū ʿalā niḥlatī). Hence I hope that he will be unique in
> his kind and unparalleled among the people of his time.[11]

Already as a young boy, Ibn Saḥnūn frequently attended the classes
given by his father for more advanced students.[12] Thus he came to
know the academic activities and the pious life-style of scholars par-
ticipating in these study circles on Mālikī law, along with the top-
ics and teaching methods of higher learning.[13] This exceptional study
opportunity at a young age was certainly not an insignificant factor
in preparing Ibn Saḥnūn intellectually for his future academic career
as a leading Mālikī scholar.

In 235/850, at the age of thirty-three, Ibn Saḥnūn left on pil-
grimage. He reached Mecca via Tripolis and Cairo (miṣr).[14] He is
reported to have taught at the Friday-Mosque, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, in
Fusṭāṭ[15] and to have attended lectures by various prominent schol-
ars in Egypt. After fulfilling the obligations of the pilgrimage, he
went from Mecca to Medina. An anecdote relates that, upon arriv-
ing there, he paid a visit to the Mosque of the Prophet (al-masjid al-
nabawī) where a study circle (ḥalqa) was held by Abū Muṣʿab Aḥmad
ibn Abī Bakr al-Zuhrī (d. 242/854), one of Imām Mālik's closest

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[10] "A primary, or elementary school, . . . [it] introduces the six to seven year old
child to the basics of language, and instructs him in Qurʾān, ḥadīth, and different
religious rituals. The structure and teaching methods of the kuttāb . . . were almost
certainly inherited from Byzantium and reflect a wide Mediterranean tradition . . .;"
cf. Baer, Muslim Teaching Institutions 73.
[11] Al-Mālikī, Riyāḍ al-nufūs i, 443–444.
[12] Al-Mālikī, Riyāḍ al-nufūs i, 444, 448; ʿIyāḍ, Tarājim 171.
[13] His father was his first and most important teacher. Ibn Saḥnūn studied also
with some other leading Maghribi scholars such as Mūsā ibn Muʿāwiya al-Ṣumādiḥī
(d. 225/840), ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Yaḥyā al-Madanī (d. 240/854), and ʿAbdallāh ibn
Abī Ḥassān al-Ḥimṣī al-Yaḥṣūbī (d. 227/842); see al-Mālikī, Riyāḍ al-nufūs i, 444.
[14] Al-Mālikī, Riyāḍ al-nufūs i, 444; ʿIyāḍ, Tarājim 177.
[15] Al-Mālikī, Riyāḍ al-nufūs i, 444; and EI² vii, 409.

colleagues in Medina. The students at this circle were arguing on
the legal issue of *umm al-walad*. When Ibn Saḥnūn told them a joke
about the topic of discussion, he attracted Abū Muṣʿab's attention
so that Abū Muṣʿab recognized him as *the* Ibn Saḥnūn from al-
Qayrawān.[16] It is more important, however, to note that Ibn Saḥnūn's
biographers all emphasize the very favorable impression the young
scholar left on the intellectual milieu in Egypt and the Ḥijāz.[17]

At some point before the year 239/854–5, Ibn Saḥnūn returned
to his hometown, al-Qayrawān. There he established his own study
circle (*ḥalqa*) next to his father's.[18] After his father's death in Rajab
240/December 855, Ibn Saḥnūn became the chief *qāḍī* of the Mālikites
in the Maghrib. Supported by the Aghlabid regent and *de facto* gov-
ernor, Emir Ibrāhīm II (r. officially from 875 to 902), Ibn Saḥnūn
is said to have led the Mālikī struggle against the Ḥanafites and
Muʿtazilites in the Maghrib.[19]

Ibn Saḥnūn died in al-Qayrawān in 256/870 at the age of fifty-
four. On the day of his funeral, the stores and schools in al-Qayrawān
were closed as an expression of mourning. The funeral prayer for
the deceased scholar was led by Emir Ibrāhīm II.[20] Ibn Saḥnūn was
buried in al-Qayrawān next to his father's tomb. The memorial
shrine (*qubba*) built over his grave shortly became such a popular site
that shops opened to accommodate and benefit from the many vis-
itors. The Emir, however, eventually ordered these shops closed and
dispersed the people.[21]

Ibn Saḥnūn was a productive scholar. He is reported to have writ-
ten nearly 200 books and treatises. Twenty-four works have been
identified by title, but only three texts have been preserved. Most
titles point to *fatwā*s and other short legal documents. Some books,
however, are said to have been multi-volume encyclopaedias on
Ḥadīth and Islamic history. The preserved book titles indicate that
Ibn Saḥnūn had, in general, a vivid interest in the systematic teach-
ing of the Quran and the essentials of Islamic belief.[22] One can imag-

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[16] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 184.
[17] See also *EI*² vii, 409.
[18] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 444.
[19] *EI*² vii, 409.
[20] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 444.
[21] ʿIyāḍ, *Tarājim* 186–187.
[22] Al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs* i, 443; ʿIyāḍ, *Tarājim* 173. The other two preserved

ine how important this was especially when taking into consideration the attempts made in the 8th and 9th centuries in the Islamic West to Islamize and Arabicize the Berber population.

2.2 *Ibn Saḥnūn's book on "Rules of Conduct for Teachers"*

2.2.1 *Structure, contents, and style*

In terms of intention, content, and style, Ibn Saḥnūn's *K. Ādāb al-muʿallimīn*[23] is part of the so-called professional *adab*-literature. Like other manuals of this type—compiled for secretaries, clerks, copyists, or judges—Ibn Saḥnūn's work addresses a specific community of people: the teachers at elementary schools, whom he provides with professional and juridical advice.

Ibn Saḥnūn's *K. Ādāb al-muʿallimīn*[24] starts with quotations of prophetic traditions, expressing the "merit" (*faḍl*) and the advantage of teaching and learning the Quran. The book concludes with similar statements by Mālik ibn Anas, which in turn display Ibn Saḥnūn's affiliation to the Mālikī school of law. Ibn Saḥnūn's treatise has ten chapters, as follows:

i. [Traditions] on the teaching   *Mā jāʾa fī taʿlīm al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīz*
    of the Quran.
ii. [Traditions] on the equity   *Mā jāʾa fī l-ʿadl bayna l-ṣibyān*
    [to be observed in treating
    school]boys.

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books are: the *K. Masāʾil al-jihād* (ms. Tunis) and the *K. Ajwibat Muḥammad ibn Saḥnūn, riwāyat Muḥammad ibn Sālim al-Qaṭṭān ʿanhu* (ms. Escorial 1162; three copies in Tunis); see *EI*² vii, 409; Lecomte 80.

[23] The complete text of the *K. Ādāb al-muʿallimīn* has been preserved in a unique Tunisian manuscript from the 14th or 15th century (National Tunisian Library, ms. Tunis 8787); cf. also Lecomte, Le Livre 78. For a short description of the Tunisian ms., see Ḥijāzī 43. Fragmentary passages of the text have also been preserved in a Rabat manuscript (catalogued as ms. 85*qāf*) consisting of approximately sixty percent of the work; cf. Ḥijāzī 46. While the Tunisian text starts with *qāla Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Saḥnūn*, the Moroccan text indicates a different transmission by stating: *ḥaddathanī Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAbdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Furāt ibn Muḥammad, qāla: ḥaddathanī Muḥammad ibn Saḥnūn ʿan abīhī* [. . .]. This suggests that Ibn Saḥnūn's treatise for teachers circulated in more than one transmitted version; see also Ḥijāzī 46. A French translation of the *K. Ādāb al-muʿallimīn* was published by G. Lecomte; see his Le Livre 82–105.

[24] This article's references to Ibn Saḥnūn's *K. Ādāb al-muʿallimīn* are based on Muḥammad al-ʿArūsī al-Maṭwī's edition as reprinted in: Ḥijāzī, *al-Madhhab*, 111–128; lower case Roman numerals indicate chapters of Ibn Saḥnūn's work.

iii. Chapter [of traditions] on the reprehensibility of erasing the Word of God the Exalted [when written on slates], and what should be done [instead] in this regard.

Bāb mā yukrahu maḥwuhu min dhikr Allāh taʿālā wa-mā yanbaghī an yufʿala min dhālika

iv. [Traditions] on disciplining [students], and on what is permissible in this [regard] and what is not.

Mā jāʾa fī l-adab wa-mā yajūzu min dhālika wa-mā lā yajūzu

v. [Opinions] on the final exams for the recitation of the Quran [at elementary schools], and what is [to be given] to the teacher on this [occasion]

Mā jāʾa fī l-khitam wa-mā yajibu fī dhālika li-l-muʿallim

vi. [Opinions] on the presentation of gifts [to the teacher] on feast days.

Mā jāʾa fī l-qaḍāʾ fī ʿaṭiyyat al-ʿīd

vii. [Opinions] on [the occasions] when [the teacher] should give days off to the [school]boys

Mā yanbaghī an yukhallā l-ṣibyān fīhi

viii. [Opinions] on the obligation on the teacher to stay all the time with the pupils [under his supervision]

Mā yajibu ʿalā l-muʿallim min luzūm al-ṣibyān

ix. [Opinions] on the wage of the teacher and when it is obligatory

Mā jāʾa fī ijārat al-muʿallim wa-matā tajibu

x. [Opinions] on renting a copy of the Quran, law books, and other such books

Mā jāʾa fī ijārat al-muṣḥaf wa-kutub al-fiqh wa-mā shābahahā

Based on criteria such as formal structure and style, the book is divided into two main parts: The first part comprises chapters one to four. Here the fundamentals of teaching pupils at elementary schools are provided. The author deals with the obligation to learn and memorize the Quran and the need for people to teach it. He talks about the practical issues implied when writing exercises are based on the quranic text, about the disciplinary measures to correct the pupils' behavior, and about physical punishment. As indi-

cated above, this first part is almost entirely based on quotations of prophetic traditions. Only occasionally does the author make short comments on these *ḥadīth*s, rounding off a particular topic.

The second part of the book is formed by chapters five to ten. These chapters follow a different scheme: they present almost exclusively questions Ibn Saḥnūn asked his father and answers his father gave him. Here the author addresses more specific issues related to the actual process of education. He covers the following topics: hiring a teacher, the various obligations regarding the *khatma* (the final oral exam after the pupil has memorized the Quran),[25] some teacher's obligations (including the rental of the school or classroom at the teachers' expense, and the preparation teachers need before entering the classroom), enforcement of the curriculum (including obligatory and optional topics to be taught, supervision of pupils, and consultation with a pupil's parents on the child's strengths and weaknesses). Furthermore, the author discusses the basic salary, additional payments for teachers (including questions of the permissibility of such additional payments), and the legitimacy of renting books for teaching purposes.

As for the formal structure of this second part, a decisive question-answer pattern is striking in Ibn Saḥnūn's work. This pattern supports the sequence of thesis and antithesis which, in turn, displays the author's legal training in reasoning and arguing.[26] Occasionally, the pros and cons of issues are given. For example, he first provides a statement that may reflect an arguable opinion or circumstance, and then quotes an authoritative tradition or a statement that sets things right.

These characteristics of the text altogether make Ibn Saḥnūn's book read like a legal document: it enumerates rules and precedents

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[25] *Khatma* (colloquial: *khitma*), pl. *khitam*, is the technical term used in Islamic education for a child's recitation of the entire Quran and his/her graduation. In modern times, "the so-called *iḥlāba* is celebrated when a boy has read through the whole of the sacred book (the ceremony after the half or one-third is called *iṣrāfa*);" cf. Fr. Buhl, in: *EI*² iv, 1112.

[26] The use of a question-and-answer pattern in scholarly writing has a long tradition in the Middle East; see U. Pietruschka's contribution to this book and the references given there. It is worth mentioning that this pattern is also evident in the narrative passages of the Quran, used there as a powerful stylistic tool to promote instruction; see my art. "Teaching," in: *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. J.D. McAuliffe, vol. iv, Leiden: Brill, forthcoming.

and its language is precise and prosaic, as in a *fatwā*. Ibn Saḥnūn's primary concern is to clarify issues; the style in presenting these ideas is secondary to him. This latter observation might explain, to some extent, why the discussion of certain topics does not always correspond to the chapter headings; why subject matters relating to one and the same issue are occasionally scattered throughout different chapters or listed under various rubrics; and why there are some passages which almost lack a logical sequence for the ideas addressed therein. The last chapter may even give the impression to some readers that issues were included there which the author, for some reason, omitted mentioning earlier in his book at a, perhaps, thematically more fitting place.

2.2.2 *Reflections of historical realities*

In terms of historical and cultural information, Ibn Saḥnūn's book has plenty to offer. As G. Lecomte already noted,[27] there are passages that vividly evoke in the reader's mind the diligent world of elementary schools at the beginning of the 9th century. We learn about the medieval teacher who is proud of the ink spots on his clothing; "It is the sign of manliness (*murū'a*) to see ink on a man's clothing or lips" (iii.116). There is also mention of the parents who offer the teacher gifts as a reward for his good work (vi.118). Yet if a father is unhappy with the results of his child's education, he does not hesitate to argue frankly with the teacher (ix.124, 125).

There are passages that allow us to picture situations where young schoolboys take care of each other at school and accompany each other home after class (vii.118; viii.119). We learn about the different ways of cleaning the writing tablet, either using a little dust cloth or even the tongue (iii.115). If one uses the foot to erase quranic text written on the tablet, one commits—as the text states—an act of irreverence toward the Quran and risks receiving punishment (iii.115). The text talks about school holidays and family celebrations taking place when pupils pass the *khatma* exam and graduate (v.117).

Along with these insights into the everyday life at elementary schools at the beginning of the 9th century, the book provides some significant historical information. One can conclude from the text,

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[27] Cf. his Le Livre 81–82.

firstly, that the teaching of the Quran and its supplementary disciplines at the primary level was, at that time, already well established in the Muslim West. Secondly, primary education was apparently in need of more systematic regulations and scholars responded to this need by offering professional advice. Within this context, the raising of fees for teaching classes—as Ibn Saḥnūn indicates—and even remuneration for teaching the Quran had become a common practice. The author generally supports this practice, yet he feels it indispensable to discuss it in detail (i.114; ix.124).

Ibn Saḥnūn also deals at length with physical punishment (see chapter iv). This, however, is less surprising when taking the author's legal background into consideration. Hence one can appreciate, for example, why he attempts to cover all *possible* precedents, those which actually occurred and those which might occur. Although the text makes it quite clear that punishment was part of rectifying a child's behavior in Islam in the medieval times, Ibn Saḥnūn leaves no doubt that physical punishment should not cross the line. He stresses that the child should not be seriously harmed. On the contrary, basing himself on prophetic traditions, he emphasizes that modesty, patience, and a passion for working with children are indispensable qualities of teachers (ii.115; iv.116; viii.119).

Moreover, Ibn Saḥnūn also advises the teachers to create situations to challenge pupils intellectually. He mentions, for example, that pupils may dictate to each other (ix.124), or that advanced pupils may profit from writing letters for adults (viii.119). Competition amongst pupils is expressly favored because, as the text says, it contributes to the formation of their personalities and to their general improvement (viii.119).

2.2.3   *The curriculum*
As for the curriculum, Ibn Saḥnūn presents to the teachers a number of rules. Some of them are obligatory; others are recommended. One can conclude from the text the following obligatory rules:

1. Teachers must instruct pupils in the precise articulation of the Quran, along with knowledge of reading, orthography, and grammar (viii.119).
2. Teachers are strongly advised not to teach melodious recitation of the Quran (*alḥān al-Qurʾān*). This is "unlawful" since it leads to singing, which is reprehensible (viii.120).

3. Teachers must teach the duties of worship (such as the ablu-
   tions before prayers, the number of inclinations and prostrations
   in prayer, etc.) (viii.121).
4. Teachers must teach the pupils good manners, since these are
   obligations towards God (viii.120).

As recommended topics for teaching, Ibn Saḥnūn suggests the following:

5. The basics of Arabic language and linguistics (viii.119).
6. Arithmetic (viii.119).
7. Calligraphy (viii.119).
8. Writing letters (viii.119).
9. Poetry, however, only if the verses are decent (viii.119).
10. Proverbs of the ancient Arabs.
11. Historical reports (*akhbār*) of the ancient Arabs and legends of
    their battles (viii.120).
12. Sermons (*khuṭab*), if the pupils show interest in them (viii.120).

Given the priority that the Mālikites in the Maghrib generally gave
to instructing boys in the Quran, these rather diverse recommenda-
tions of Ibn Saḥnūn are significant.

   Some other rules concern a variety of matters. For example, teach-
ers are advised not to instruct young girls together with boys, because
mixed classes corrupt young people (viii.123). This statement seems
to point to the fact that, firstly, education was not restricted to boys,
and secondly, that coeducation may have been practiced at ele-
mentary schools to some degree. Also, teachers must not teach the
Quran to the children of Christians (viii.122). This rule is given on
the authority of Ibn Saḥnūn's father. It seems to indicate, on the one
hand, that Muslim and Christian children were attending the same
classes. On the other hand, it shows that Ibn Saḥnūn took the quranic
command "There is no compulsion in matters of faith" (Q 2:256)
literally.

2.2.4   *Rules for teachers and how Ibn Saḥnūn presents them to the reader*
The following passages in translation provide a more detailed and
immediate idea of Ibn Saḥnūn's text. They highlight some major
themes dealt with by Ibn Saḥnūn and the methods used by him for
presenting these issues. These texts may also give an impression of
the pious tone characteristic of this treatise.

Merit and necessity of learning and teaching the Quran

Abū ʿAbdallāh Ibn Saḥnūn said:
[it has been transmitted . . . that] the Messenger of God—God bless him and grant him peace—said:

قال أبو عبد الله بن سحنون:

[... إنَّ] رسول الله، صلّى الله عليه وسلّم، قال:

"The best of you is the one who learns the Quran and teaches it."

"أفضلكم من تعلّم القرآن وعلّمه."

"Through the Quran God elevates [many] peoples."

"يرفع الله بالقرآن أقواماً."

"You must [occupy yourselves with and continually] make use of the Quran, for it eliminates hypocrisy in the same way that fire eliminates rust from iron."

"عليكم بالقرآن فإنّه ينفي النفاق كما تنفي النار خبث الحديد."

"He who recites the Quran accurately (lit.: with desinential inflexion) will receive the reward of a martyr."

"من قرأ القرآن بإعراب فله أجر شهيد."

"He who learns the Quran in his youth, the Quran will mix with his flesh and blood. [However,] he who learns it in old age, and does not give up on it even when it escapes [his memory], will receive double the reward" (i.113–114).

"من تعلّم القرآن في شبيبته اختلط القرآن بلحمه ودمّه، ومن تعلّمه في كبره وهو يتفلّت منه ولا يتركه فله أجره مرّتين."

* * *

[It has been transmitted] *on the authority of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān* (the third Rightly Guided Caliph, d. 35/656)—may God be pleased with him—concerning God's saying—blessed and exalted be He—'*Then We bequeathed the Book on those of our servants we chose* (Q 35:32)' [that] he said, "Everyone who learns the Quran and teaches it is amongst those whom God has chosen from humankind" (i.114).

... عن عثمان بن عفّان رضي الله عنه، في قول الله تبارك وتعالى: ﴿ثمّ أورثنا الكتاب الذين اصطفينا من عبادنا﴾، قال: "كلّ من تعلّم القرآن وعلّمه فهو ممن اصطفاه الله من بني آدم."

[It has been transmitted that ʿAbdallāh]
Ibn Masʿūd [d. ca. 32/625] said:
"Three [things] are essential for people:
[1.] A ruler who rules amongst them
[in justice]; if it were not for that,
they would devour each other.
[2.] Buying and selling copies of the
Quran; if it were not for that, the
Book of God would decrease [in
number].
[3.] Teachers who teach their children
and who receive a salary for that;
if it were not for that, the people
would be illiterate" (i.114).

... **قال ابن مسعود**: "ثلاث لا بدّ للناس،
منهم: لا بدّ للناس من أمير يحكم بينهم ولولا
ذلك لأكل بعضهم بعضاً، ولا بدّ للناس من
شراء المصاحف وبيعها ولولا ذلك لقلّ كتاب
الله، ولا بدّ للناس من معلّم يعلّم أولادهم
ويأخذ على ذلك أجراً ولولا ذلك لكان
الناس أمّيّين."

Further teaching topics

I asked [Saḥnūn]: "So, it is
permissible for the boy to write
letters for someone?"
He answered: "There is no harm [in it].
If he writes letters, this is something
that contributes to the boy's education.
The teacher should [also] teach the
pupils calculation, although this is not
obligatory for him to do—unless it is
imposed on him as an obligation.
Likewise [for] poetry, unfamiliar
[words], the Arabic language,
calligraphy, and all parts of
grammar—[the teaching of] all
of this is at his discretion.
The teacher should teach them the
desinential inflexion of the quranic
text—this is incumbent upon him. [He
should also teach them] vocalization
and spelling, good handwriting and to
read well, when to pause and when to
recite [the quranic text] in a slow,
measured rhythmic way—[all] this is
incumbent upon him.
[Also,] there is no harm in teaching
them poetry—as long as there is
nothing indecent in it from the
language and the anecdotes of the

قلت: فيأذن للصبيّ أن يكتب لأحد كتاباً؟

قال: لا بأس، وهذا ممّا يخرّج الصبيّ إذا كتب
الرسائل. وينبغي أن يعلّمهم الحساب، وليس
ذلك بلازم له إلّا أن يشترط ذلك عليه.
وكذلك الشعر، والغريب، والعربية، والخطّ،
وجميع النحو. وهو في ذلك متطوّع.

وينبغي له أن يعلّمهم إعراب القرآن وذلك
لازم له. وبالشكل، والهجاء، والخطّ الحسن،
والقراءة الحسنة، والتوقيف، والترتيل، يلزمه
ذلك.

ولا بأس أن يعلّمهم الشعر ممّا لا يكون فيه
فحش من كلام العرب وأخبارها، وليس
ذلك بواجب عليه.

Arabs. This [however] is not an
obligation on him" (viii.119–120).
I said [to Saḥnūn]: "Some Andalusians
related that there was no harm in
hiring [someone] to teach Islamic
jurisprudence, religious duties, poetry,
and grammar. It is similar to
[teaching] the Quran.
He replied: "Mālik and our companions
(i.e. the experts of our Law School)
detested this. How could it be similar
to the Quran? [Learning] the Quran
has a [specific] goal that can be
reached, whereas what (i.e., the topics)
you have mentioned has none. So, this
[i.e. the idea mentioned by the
Andalusians?] is unknown.
Islamic jurisprudence and [religious]
knowledge (as studied by the *'ulamā'*)
are something about which there has
been disagreement, whereas the Quran
is the truth about which there is no
doubt at all. Islamic jurisprudence is
not to be learned by heart like the
Quran; hence it is not similar to it,
nor does it have a [definite] goal or
time in which to reach it" (x.128).

قلت: روى بعض أهل الأندلس أنّه لا بأس
بالإجارة[28] على تعليم الفقه والفرائض،[29]
والشعر، والنحو، وهو مثل القرآن.

فقال: كَرِهَ ذلك مالك وأصحابنا. وكيف
يشبه القرآن، والقرآن له غاية ينتهي إليها،
وما ذكرت ليس له غاية ينتهي إليها، فهذا
مجهول.

والفقه والعلم أمر قد اختُلِف فيه، والقرآن هو
الحقّ الذي لا شكّ فيه. والفقه لا يستظهر
مثل القرآن، فهو لا يشبهه، ولا غاية له، ولا
أمد ينتهي إليه.

Writing exercises based on quranic text

Anas [ibn Mālik] was asked: "How were
the educators during the time of [the
first four caliphs,] the Imāms Abū
Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī—may
God be pleased with them?"

قيل لأنس: كيف كان المؤدّبون على عهد
الأئمّة أبي بكر وعمر وعثمان وعليّ – رضي
الله عنهم؟

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[28] *Ijāra* is a legal term that "refers to the permission granted for a compensation
to use a thing owed by, or the service of, another person." Hence the term can
also refer "to a book that was 'hired' for the purpose of, and with the right to,
copying it." See Rosenthal, *The Technique* 8, fn. 3.
   [29] *Farā'iḍ* is ambiguous; it can refer to Islamic inheritance law but, in the pre-
sent context, it is more likely to indicate "religious duties."

Anas answered: "The teacher had a basin. Each boy used to come—every day, each in his turn—with some pure water. They would pour it into the basin and use it to erase the writing from their tablets." [Then] *Anas added*: "Afterwards, they used to dig a hole in the ground and pour this water into it and so it was absorbed" (iii.115).

قال أنس: "كان المؤدّب له إجانة.[30] وكلّ صبيّ يأتي كلّ يوم بنوبته ماء طاهراً فيصبونه فيها فيمحون به ألواحهم. قال أنس: "ثمّ يحفرون حفرة في الأرض فيصبون ذلك الماء فيها فينشف.[31]

Mental challenges for pupils, teaching assistance, and teacher responsibilities

[*Ibn Saḥnūn*] *said that Saḥnūn stated*: "... There is no harm in having them dictate to each other, because this is for their benefit. Yet he (the teacher) must review their dictation. [Moreover,] he must not let them move from one sura to another until they have memorized [the first sura] with its desinential inflexion and orthography—unless [the pupils'] fathers give him leeway to do so" (viii.120).

[*Saḥnūn*] *stated*: "It is more appropriate for the teacher not to put one of the boys in charge of the beatings nor designate for them a monitor from amongst them, unless it is a boy who has finished [learning] the Quran and knows it, and no longer needs instruction. Hence, there is no harm in it. [Also, there is no harm for] the boy to help the teacher; [for] this is of benefit to the boy.

قال: وقال سحنون: ... ولا بأس أن يجعلهم يملي بعضهم على بعض، لأنّ ذلك منفعة لهم، وليتفقّد إملاءهم. ولا يجوز أن ينقلهم من سورة إلى سورة حتّى يحفظوها بإعرابها وكتابتها إلّا أن يسهّل له الآباء.

قال: وأحبّ للمعلّم أن لا يولّي أحداً من الصبيان الضرب، ولا يجعل لهم عريفاً منهم، إلّا أن يكون الصبيّ الذي قد ختم وعرف القرآن، وهو مستغنٍ عن التعليم، فلا باس بذلك، وأن يعينه؛ فإنّ ذلك منفعة للصبيّ.

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[30] For *ijjāna* (vulg.) and *īyāna*, see Lane i, 26.
[31] This was done so that the quranic text would be erased from the tablets respectfully.

Yet it is not permissible for him (i.e. the boy assisting the teacher) to give orders to any of the pupils, or to instruct any of them—unless there is benefit in that for the boy's formation, or his father has approved of it. [If this is not the case,] the teacher himself should be in charge of this [teaching] or hire someone to help him, if he is equally qualified" (vii.118).

ولا يحلّ له أن يأمر أحداً، وأن يعلّم أحداً منهم إلاّ أن يكون ذلك منفعة للصبيّ في تخريجه، أو بأذن والده في ذلك. ولْيَلِ هو ذلك بنفسه أو يستأجر من يعينه إذا كان في مثل كفايته.

Supervision of pupils

[Saḥnūn] stated: The teacher must be committed to working hard. And he must devote himself to the pupils, . . . for he is a hireling and cannot leave his work (viii.119).
I asked [Saḥnūn]: "Then, can the teacher send the boys to look for each other?"
He replied: "I am not of the opinion that he is allowed to do so—unless their fathers or [their] guardians grant him (the teacher) permission in this regard, or if the places are nearby and the boy is not occupied with it [for too long]. He (the teacher) himself must be mindful of the boys at the time [they] return home, and inform their guardians [if] they did not come [to school]" (vii.118).
I asked [Saḥnūn]: "Are you of the opinion that it is [permissible] for the teacher to write fiqh books for himself?"
He replied: "As for the time when he has finished [teaching] the boys, there is no harm in writing [such books] for himself and for others.; for example, [when] he has permitted them to return home. But as long as they are around him, no! That is, it is not permissible for him, for how can he be permitted to deviate from something

قال: وليلزم المعلّم الاجتهاد، وليتفرّغ لهم ...، لأنّه أجير لا يدع عمله.

قلت: أفيرسل الصبيان بعضهم في طلب بعض؟

قال: لا أرى ذلك يجوز له، إلاّ أن يأذن له آباؤهم أو أولياء الصبيان في ذلك، أو تكون المواضع قريبة لا يشتغل الصبي في ذلك. وليتعاهد الصبيان هو بنفسه في وقت انقلاب الصبيان، ويخبر أولياءهم أنّهم لم يجيؤوا.

قلت: فهل ترى للمعلّم أن يكتب لنفسه كتب الفقه؟

قال: أمّا في وقت فراغه من الصبيان فلا بأس أن يكتب لنفسه وللناس، مثل أن يأذن لهم في الانقلاب، وأمّا ما داموا حوله فلا، أي لا يجوز له ذلك، وكيف يجوز له أن يخرج ممّا

that it is incumbent upon him to observe, towards something that is not incumbent upon him? Don't you see that he is [also] not permitted to entrust to some of [the boys] the teaching of others? How, [then,] could he occupy himself with something other than them!" (viii.119).

Saḥnūn stated: The teacher is not permitted to send the boys [to take care of] his personal matters (viii.121).

يلزمه النظر فيه إلى ما لا يلزمه، ألّا ترى أنّه لا يجوز له أن يوكّل تعليم بعضهم إلى بعض؟ فكيف يشتغل بغيرهم!

قال سحنون: ولا يجوز للمعلّم أن يرسل الصبيان في حوائجه.

Just treatment of pupils

[It has been transmitted] on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik that the Messenger of God—God bless him and grant him peace—stated: "Any teacher who is entrusted with three boys from this community and does not teach them on an equal basis—the poor with the rich, and the rich with the poor—will on the Day of Resurrection be raised up with the treacherous" (ii.115).

[It has been transmitted] on the authority of al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī?) that he said: "If a teacher has been hired for a fixed salary and does not treat them—i.e. the boys—on an equal basis, he will be deemed to be one of the wrongdoers" (ii.115).

[...] **عن أنس بن مالك،** قال: قال رسول الله — صلّى الله عليه وسلّم — : "إيّما مؤدّب ولي ثلاثة صبية من هذه الأمّة فلم يعلّمهم بالسوية فقيرهم مع غنيّهم، وغنيّهم مع فقيرهم حُشر يوم القيامة مع الخائنين."

[...] **عن الحسن،** قال: "إذا قوطع المعلّم بالسوية فلم يعدل بينهم — أي الصبيان — كتب من الظلمة."

Handling trouble between pupils

Ibn Saḥnūn said: Saḥnūn was asked about the teacher: "Should he accept the word of boys concerning the harm [done] by others?"

He replied: "I do not consider this [an issue] requiring legal judgment. However, the teacher should discipline them if they have harmed one another. In my view, he should do so if

قال: وسئل سحنون عن المعلّم: أيأخذ الصبيان بقول بعضهم عن بعض في الأذى؟

فقال: ما أرى هذا من ناحية الحكم. وإنّما على المؤدّب أن يؤدّبهم إذا آذى بعضهم بعضاً. وذلك عندي إذا استفاض علم الأذى

knowledge of the harm has been spread by a group of them, or [if] there was admission [of the misdeed]—unless they are boys known to him to be truthful; then, he should accept their word and punish accordingly. The teacher must not be excessive [in his punishment], as I have [already] told you. [Moreover,] he must command them to refrain from harming [one another], and return to them whatever they took from each other—[but] this is not [an issue] requiring a legal ruling; this is [at least] what I heard from more than one of our companions. Their testimony had been granted admission [even] in cases of homicide or injury, so how much more [should it be accepted] in this [matter]! God knows best" (viii.123).

من الجماعة منهم أو كان الاعتراف، إلاّ أن يكونوا صبياناً قد عرفهم بالصدق فيقبل قولهم ويعاقب على ذلك.

ولا يجاوز في الأدب كما أعلمتك، ويأمرهم بالكفّ عن الأذى، ويردّ ما أخذ بعضهم لبعض، وليس هو من ناحية القضاء.

وكذلك سمعت من غير واحد من أصحابنا. وقد أجيزت شهادتهم في القتل والجراح فكيف بهذا! والله أعلم.

Appointing a teacher

Saḥnūn stated: "Some scholars from the Ḥijāz—including Ibn Dīnār and others—were asked [about] a teacher hired for a group [if then] a due share should be allotted to each of them. *So he answered*: "It is permissible if the fathers come to terms on this matter. [This is so,] because this (i.e., education) is a necessity and something the people simply must have. It is the most suitable [thing to do]" (ix.124).

قال سحنون: وقد سئل بعض علماء الحجاز — منهم ابن دينار وغيره — أن يُستأجر المعلّم لجماعة، وأن يُفرض على كلّ واحد ما ينوبه. فقال: يجوز إذا تراضى بذلك الآباء، لأنّ هذا ضرورة ولا بدّ للناس منه، وهو أشبه.

Classroom and teaching equipment

[*Saḥnūn said*:] It is incumbent [upon the teacher]—and not upon the pupils—to rent the shop [to be used as a classroom]. He must inspect [the pupils] by teaching and reviewing

[قال سحنون:] وعليه كراء الحانوت، وليس ذلك على الصبيان، وعليه أن يتفقّدهم بالتعليم والعرض، ويجعل لعرض القرآن وقتاً

[with them]. He must schedule a fixed time to review [the children's knowledge] of the Quran, such as Thursdays or Wednesday evenings. Yet he must give them the day off on Fridays. This has been the practice of teachers since there have been teachers, and they have not been faulted for that (iii.120). [*Saḥnūn stated*:] Also, the teacher is obliged to obtain [at his own expense] the scourge and the device to hold the legs of the delinquent during the bastinado; this is not to be at the expense of the boys (viii.120).

Mālik was asked about the teaching of the boys in the mosque. *He answered*: "I do not consider this to be permitted, because they are not mindful of impurity. And mosques have not been set up for teaching [children]" (viii.120).

معلوماً مثل يوم الخميس، وعشية الأربعاء. ويأذن لهم في يوم الجمعة، وذلك سنَّة المعلمين منذ كانوا و لم يُعَبْ ذلك عليهم.

[قال سحنون:] وعلى المعلّم أن يكسب الدِّرَّة والفَلَقة، وليس ذلك على حساب الصبيان.

وسئل مالك عن تعليم الصبيان في المسجد. قال: لا أرى ذلك يجوز، لأنّهم لا يتحفَّظون من النجاسة. و لم يُنصب المسجد للتعليم.

Payment for teaching the Quran

[It has been transmitted] from ʿAṭāʾ [ibn Abī Rabāḥ] that he used to teach the art of writing during the time of Muʿāwiya (the first Umayyad caliph who r. 661–680 C.E.) and that he stipulated [payment for it] (i.114).

Ibn Jurayj said: I asked ʿAṭāʾ: "Can I take wages for teaching the Book? Do you know of anybody having detested it?" He said: "No, I do not" (i.114).

[It has been transmitted] on the authority of Ibn Shihāb [al-Zuhrī] that Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ got a man from Iraq to teach the Book to their children in Medina and that they (the Medinans) gave him wages (i.114).

Mālik [ibn Anas] stated that "there is no harm in a teacher's taking [payment] for teaching the Quran. If he stipulates something [as payment], it is lawful and permissible. So, there is no harm in his stipulating in this regard.

... عن عطاء، أنّه كان يعلم الكُتَّب على عهد معاوية ويَشترط.

... عن ابن جريج، قال: قلت لعطاء: أ آخذ أجراً على تعليم الكتاب؟ أعلمت أن أحداً كرهه؟ قال:لا. ... عن ابن شهاب أن سعد بن أبي وقّاص قدم برجل من العراق يعلّم أبناءهم الكتاب بالمدينة ويعطونه الأجر.

... وقال مالك: لا بأس بما يأخذ المعلّم على تعليم القرآن. وإن اشترط شيئاً كان حلالاً جائزاً. ولا بأس بالاشتراط في ذلك.

[Moreover,] what is due to him when the Quran has been completely recited from memory is obligatory, whether he had stipulated it or not. The scholars of our country [agree] on this as it concerns the teachers (i.114).

Muḥammad [ibn Saḥnūn] said: There is no harm in a man's hiring a teacher to teach his children the Quran for a predetermined sum for a fixed time, or for each month. Also, [he can teach] half or a quarter of the Quran or any other portion specified by the two [parties].

He said: If a man hires a teacher to teach certain boys, it is permissible for the teacher to teach others together with them—provided that this does not divert him from teaching those for whom we was hired" (x.126).

He said: There is no harm in a man's hiring [an instructor] to teach his child writing and spelling. [In fact,] the Prophet—God bless him and grant him peace—used to free a man who taught writing [to the Muslims] (x.127).

Graduation

I asked him [Saḥnūn]: "When is the time due for the final exam?"
He replied: "[It is due] when he (the pupil) comes near it and has gone beyond [learning] two thirds [of the Quran]."
Then I asked him about [the possibility of having] the final exam [after memorizing only] half [of the Quran].
He replied: "I do not consider it to be compulsory."
Saḥnūn stated: "The final exam on anything other than the entire Quran—be it half, a third, or a quarter [of it]—is not compulsory, unless they volunteer in this regard" (v.117).

وحقّ الختمة له واجب اشترطها أو لم يشترطها. وعلى ذلك أهل العلم ببلدنا في المعلّمين.

قال محمد: لا بأس أن يستأجر الرجل المعلم على أن يعلم أولاده القرآن بأجرة معلومة إلى أجل معلوم أو كل شهر. وكذلك نصف القرآن أو ربعه أو ما سميا منه.

قال: وإذا استأجر الرجل معلما على صبيان معلومين جاز للمعلم أن يعلم معهم غيرهم إذا كان لا يشغله ذلك عن تعليم هؤلاء الذين استؤجر لهم.

قال: ولا بأس بالرجل يستأجر أن يعلم ولده الخط والهجاء. وقد كان النبي — صلى الله عليه وسلم — "يفادي بالرجل يعلم الخط."

وسألته متى تجب الختمة، فقال: إذا قاربـــها وجاوز الثلثين.

فسألت عن ختمة النصف، فقال: لا أرى ذلك يلزم. **قال سحنون**: ولا يلزم ختمة غير القرآن كله، لا نصف ولا ثلث ولا ربع، إلا أن يتطوعوا بذلك.

In conclusion of this part of our study, it is worth noting that Ibn Saḥnūn's *vademecum* for teachers was—already in the Middle Ages— of much interest to Muslim scholars. An example of this is Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qābisī (d. 403/1012), a leading representative of the Mālikī law school from al-Qayrawān who lived about 150 years after Ibn Saḥnūn. Al-Qābisī used Ibn Saḥnūn's text extensively as a source and commented on it when compiling his own "Elaborate Treatise on the Circumstances of Teachers and the Legal Regulations for Teachers and Students (*al-Risāla al-mufaṣṣala fī aḥwāl al-muʿallimīn wa-aḥkām al-muʿallimīn wa-l-mutaʿallimīn*)"[32] Thus, al-Qābisī sets forth Ibn Saḥnūn's educational efforts and, at the same time, affirms that he was one of the earliest Muslim educationalists.

3   *Al-Jāḥiz*

3.1   *The scholar: life and academic career*

Due to his masterly compositions in the areas of belles-lettres, Muʿtazili theology, and political-religious polemics, Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Fuqaymī al-Baṣrī al-Jāḥiẓ is well known as one of the most prominent classical Arabic writers. He was born in Basra in about 160/776 and died there in Muḥarram 255/December 868–January 869. He was probably of Abyssinian origin and received his sobriquet due to a malformation of the eyes.[33]

From an early age, al-Jāḥiẓ dedicated himself to learning. He participated in study circles held at mosques and also attended the debates on Arabic philology, lexicography, poetry, and philosophy conducted at the Mirbad, a celebrated public place in Basra, which played an outstanding role in the shaping of Arabic culture in medieval times.

Al-Jāḥiẓ acquainted himself with the works of the ancient Greek philosophers (especially Aristotle) available in Arabic since the great translation movement under the caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 813–833). He participated frequently in the intellectual conversations taking place in the salons of the upper class, where issues of general concern to

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[32] Reprinted in: Shams al-Dīn, *al-Fikr al-tarbawī ʿinda Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Qābisī* 117–196. See also al-Ahwānī, *at-Taʿlīm fī raʾy al-Qābisī*, esp. 39–41.
[33] Art. "al-Djāḥiẓ" (Ch. Pellat), in: *EI²* ii, 385–388.

Islamic society were discussed. One of his favorite activities, how-
ever, was to spend a great deal of time in libraries and bookstores.
For a small amount of money, he is said to have rented a book-
store overnight to read and copy what was of interest to him.[34]

Only in about 200/815–6, at the age of forty-five, does he seem
to have started writing professionally. Writing, and the considerable
amounts of money he received for dedicating his works to people of
influence and wealth, thus seem to have been his main sources of
income. He built up his private library and even employed a copy-
ist (*warrāq*) known by the name of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn ʿĪsā.[35] Never-
theless, al-Jāḥiẓ also had some bitter experiences, for works of his
were torn apart by envious colleagues and critics shortly after they
were published.[36]

Al-Jāḥiẓ seems to have held no official or regular post in his life.
It is known, however, that when he was in Baghdad he worked for
some time as a scribe and teacher. Al-Jāḥiẓ himself reports that the
caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–861) had apparently endeavored to
entrust him with the education of his children. However, the caliph
later changed his mind, seemingly because of al-Jāḥiẓ's ugliness.[37]

The circumstances and often unfair treatment of professional teach-
ers al-Jāḥiẓ witnessed, and may have experienced firsthand,[38] seem
to have induced him to write a book entitled "The Teachers."[39] This

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[34] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* vi, 56.
[35] Shalaby 90.
[36] Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ's own statements in *Risālat Faṣl mā bayna l-ʿadāwa wa-l-ḥasad*, in: *Majmūʿ rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. Bāwl Krāws [Paul Kraus] and Muḥammad Ṭaha al-Ḥājirī, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Lajnat al-Taʾlīf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1943, 108–109; and Pellat, *The Life* 218–219; see also Rosenthal, *The Technique* 24.
[37] Hirschfeld 202; and Pellat, "al-Djāḥiẓ," in: *EI²* ii, 385.
[38] Hirschfeld 202.
[39] For the theory and practice of Islamic education in medieval times, the ency-
clopedic work of al-Jāḥiẓ as a whole is an important source. It provides much
insightful information on the curriculum for princes, the social status of teachers,
the value of books, and even on the etiquette to be observed by people attending
literary salons, to mention a few topics. This is also the case for al-Jāḥiẓ's main
works: the *K. al-Ḥayawān* ("The Book of Animals," a cerebral anthology on a large
variety of subjects, based on animals); the *K. al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* ("The Book of
Eloquence and Exposition," which Pellat called "an inventory of what have been
called the "Arabic humanities," designed to stress the oratorical and poetic ability
of Arabs;" cf. *EI²* ii, 386); and the *K. al-Bukhalāʾ* ("The Book of Misers," an enter-
taining work praising Arab generosity and analyzing non-Arab avarice). Other works
dealing in more detail with intellectual refinement and ethics are: (1) The *Risālat
al-maʿāsh wa-l-maʿād* ("The Treatise on the Manner of Living [in this World] and
the Hereafter," known also as *Risāla fī l-Akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa-l-madhmūma*, "Treatise

provided him with the opportunity not only to defend but also to
champion schoolteachers and stress their superiority over all other
classes of educators and tutors.[40]

3.2 *Al-Jāḥiẓ's book "The Teachers"*

As is the case for quite a number of al-Jāḥiẓ's writings, no complete
text of the book "The Teachers" has been preserved.[41] Various frag-
ments of this work were discovered, however, in four manuscripts
in Cairo, Istanbul, London, and Mosul.[42] The text has been pub-
lished several times.[43] Nonetheless, this work of al-Jāḥiẓ's—which he
apparently composed at a late stage of his life[44]—is little known thus
far, in either the Arab or the Western world.

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on Laudable and Blameworthy Morals"); (2) The *Kitāb Kitmān al-sirr wa-ḥifẓ al-lisān*
("The Book on Keeping Secrets and Controlling the Tongue"), and (3) the treatise
Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb ("Censure of the Manners of Scribes").

[40] Pellat remarks that al-Jāḥiẓ's "acute powers of observation, his light-hearted
skepticism, his comic sense and satirical turn of mind fit him admirably to portray
human types and society." He says also that, at times, "he uses all his skill at the
expense of several social groups (schoolmasters, singers, scribes, etc.) [although] gen-
erally keeping within the bounds of decency; cf. *EI*² ii, 386. The fact that al-Jāḥiẓ
praises the schoolteachers highly in one passage (e.g., *K. al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* i, 250–2)
and makes rather unflattering jokes about them in another (ibid. 248–49) may there-
fore be understood as the result of an essentially dialectical intellect—something,
however, that was interpreted by his contemporaries (Ibn Qutayba, for example) as
a lack of seriousness. G.J. van Gelder suggests that it is precisely this "lack of seri-
ousness" which seems to be one al-Jāḥiẓ's attractive sides: the fact that al-Jāḥiẓ
mixes jest and earnestness; see van Gelder's article on this topic in: *Journal of Arabic
Literature* 23 (1992), esp. 95–106. In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ's Muʿtazilite views, which
eventually aim at tackling the various aspects of a given topic, may also have played
a role in this regard.

[41] Al-Jāḥiẓ's works comprise nearly 200 titles. However, only about thirty works—
whether authentic or apocryphal—have been preserved in full length. Of about fifty
works, only excerpts, quotations, or fragmentary passages have come down to us;
see *EI*² ii, 386–388, with further references. The *K. al-Muʿallimīn* belongs to this lat-
ter category; cf. Geries 9. C. Brockelmann classified al-Jāḥiẓ's works according to
real or assumed subjects; his list provides a good idea of the breadth of al-Jāḥiẓ's
literary and scholarly interests (*GAL* Supplement i, 241–247).

[42] Geries 9–17, 25.

[43] (1) In the margin of *Kitāb al-Kāmil fī l-lugha wa-l-adab*, taʾlīf [. . .] *Abī l-ʿAbbās
Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-maʿrūf bi-l-Mubarrad al-Naḥwī*, [. . .] *wa-qad ṭurriza hāmishuhu
bi-Kitāb al-Fuṣūl al-mukhtāra min kutub al-Imām Abī Uthmān ʿAmr al-Jāḥiẓ ibn Baḥr ibn
Maḥbūb al-Kinānī al-Baṣrī* [. . .], *ikhtiyār al-Imām ʿUbaydallāh ibn Ḥassān*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat
al-Taqaddum al-ʿIlmiyya, 1323 [1905], 17–40; (2) *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd-al-Salām
Muḥammad Hārūn, ¹Beirut, 1991 (based on the ed. Cairo 1964), vol. iii, 27–51;
(3) in: *al-Mawrid* (Baghdad) 7.4 (1978), *ʿAdad Khāṣṣ: Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ*,
149–158; and (4) *Kitābān li-l-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. Ibrahim Geries, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University,
1980, 57–87. Cf. also Pellat, Nouvel essai 148–149 (no. 143); and Geries 9.—I have

3.2.1   *Intention and literary style*

With regard to al-Jāḥiẓ's literary oeuvre in general, Ibrahim Geries observed that this medieval scholar seems to have believed that "the people's need for one another is a salient characteristic of their nature and an inborn feature of the core of their souls. It is permanent and . . . covers all beings, from the smallest to the greatest."[45] None of God's creatures would be able to reach his goal without the assistance of those deployed to help him; the most respected cannot exist without the least respected; rulers need the lower classes as the lower classes need rulers; rich people need the poor and slaves need masters.[46] This idea, of Greek origin, regarding the interdependence of elements in the universe, influenced al-Jāḥiẓ's general perception of the world. For al-Jāḥiẓ, attempts to comprehend the microcosm lead to an understanding of the macrocosm. This scientific-philosophic approach made al-Jāḥiẓ the sharp observer and analyst he was. Basing himself on deduction and logical reasoning, he unveils to the reader the significance of what is insignificant in the eyes of those relying simply on superficial perceptions and initial sensory impressions. Such a view of the world eventually enabled him to observe and minutely examine various social groups. As a result, his writings reflect, rather objectively and realistically, actual circumstances, opinions, and viewpoints prevalent in his own time, thus providing a spectacular insight into Arabic-Islamic culture and society under the ʿAbbāsids.[47]

  The book "The Teachers" reveals in an aesthetic way many of these characteristics of al-Jāḥiẓ's approach as a scholar and as a man of letters. For example, the various digressions and the original sequence of thoughts in this text appeal to the reader through the

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consulted Hārūn's and Geries' editions of the *K. al-Muʿallimīn*. All references to al-Jāḥiẓ's *K. al-Muʿallimīn* in this article are based on Geries' edition, if not indicated otherwise. I would like to thank Dr. Khaled Sindawi (Haifa) for drawing my attention to the latter edition.

  Passages of al-Jāḥiẓ's essay on "The Teachers" have been translated into English (by H. Hirschfeld, 1922), German (by O. Rescher, 1931), and French (by Ch. Pellat, 1953). In the light of the more recent editions by Hārūn and Geries, some passages in these translations seem to require further thought. Pellat's French translation was later also rendered into English (Pellat, *The Life* 112–114) and German (Pellat, *Arabische Geisteswelt* 181–184).

  [44] Geries argues that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote the book "The Teachers" after he had completed the *K. al-Hayawān*, *K. al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* and *K. al-Bukhalāʾ*; cf. Geries 23.

  [45] Geries 28–29.

  [46] Geries 23–24 (mainly based on al-Jāḥiẓ's *K. al-Ḥayawān*, i, 204–210).

  [47] Geries 24.

balanced repetition of similar ideas presented each time in a different
way. Hence "what would be pointless repetition" in terms of mod-
ern thinking and presentation, arose "in the mind of the 3rd/9th
century writer . . . from the desire . . . to give ordinary prose the sym-
metry of verse," wrote Charles Pellat, one of the best-known experts
on al-Jāḥiẓ.[48]

3.2.2   *Structure and contents*

The author of the book "The Teachers" addresses the reader directly
in the second person singular. He starts with an appeal to God to
protect the people—including the reader of his book—from the rage
of anger and to grant them justice and patience in their hearts. Then
he sets out to defend the teachers against a (fictitious) critic and to
commend them highly. The teachers are described as knowledge-
able, diligent, and hardworking people. Moreover, it is said that they
are passionate about their profession and suffer with their students
when they do not make the progress expected. Parents should not,
therefore, blame the teachers when their children are slow in their
education, but instead look at the mental capability of their offspring.

Al-Jāḥiẓ starts his book with a particularly appealing chapter. It
deals with writing in general and with the fundamental impact writ-
ing has had on human civilization. Writing and recording, along
with calculation, are "the pillars" on which the present and the future
of civilization and "the welfare of this world" rest. Writing and cal-
culation are God-given, as are the teachers themselves, for God
"made them available to us" (p. 60).[49]

The next paragraph of the book deals with memory and memo-
rization. Interestingly enough, the author stresses here that inde-
pendent thinkers and researchers dislike (*kariha*) memorization. He
says that depending on it makes "the mind disregard distinction"
and causes it to neglect thought (p. 62). People with a good mem-
ory are tempted to rely simply on what their predecessors achieved,

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[48] *EI*² ii, 387.
[49] Such praise of books and writing must have been perceived as being even
more polemical and provocative in a society in which people seem to have looked
askance at writing down knowledge. It is worth mentioning here that al-Jāḥiẓ's
refreshing views in this regard are paralleled in a lengthy passage in his *K. al-
Ḥayawān*; see esp. i, 38–102.

without making attempts to reach conclusions of their own. Nevertheless, for the process of studying, a good memory is valuable and necessary; otherwise, the results of study and research would not last.

As for the trust one is to have in teachers, the teachers of princes are mentioned as examples. Rulers entrusted teachers with the education of their children and so should everybody else. However, one is advised to do so only after testing the teacher and being convinced of his pedagogical skills. Attention is also drawn to the many great scholars in all branches of the arts and sciences and to the men renowned in politics and society who were once teachers (p. 63).

At this point of the presentation, the author effectively alerts the reader not to draw conclusions prematurely; instead he advises us to finish reading the entire treatise first (p. 64). He points to the fact that there are teachers for everything one needs to know: writing, arithmetic, law, the religious duties (*farā'iḍ*), the Quran, grammar, prosody, poetry, and history. This is followed by a list of further subjects that are taught: these include astronomy, music (*luḥūn*), medicine, geometry, polo, archery, and horsemanship, playing musical instruments, chess, and other games. The children of the lower classes are given lessons in farming, shop-keeping,[50] construction, jewelry-making, sewing, weaving, dying, and other handicrafts and occupations. It is noted that even animals can be taught. Yet, schoolteachers, as al-Jāḥiẓ stresses, are superior to all other categories of teachers (pp. 64–66).

Manifold pieces of advice for teachers follow. They focus on the qualifications teachers need for their work, but also deal with the actual process of teaching and the curriculum. The "Chapter on the Instruction of Boys (*Fī riyāḍat al-ṣabī*)," one of only two chapters in the treatise that bears a title, discusses extensively the teaching of grammar (as will be shown below in more detail). Further thoughts relate to literature and scholarship, to writing prose, and to the value of reading good books. Frequently these remarks are interspersed with sayings and anecdotes from Arabic literature (p. 72).

The flow of the presentation is seemingly interrupted here by a chapter entitled "On the Censure of Homosexuality (*Fī dhamm al-liwāṭ*)."

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[50] *Tijāra* ("trading") in Geries' edition, p. 66; *nijāra* ("carpentry") in Hārūn's edition, p. 117.

It denounces certain sexual activities among adults, both male and female, and the lust for boys (p. 78).[51]

Then, back to literature, the author praises ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. ca. 139/756), who is best known for his translation of the fables of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* into Arabic. As it is said, he is admired not only as a man of letters, an expert on literary style, a poet, and translator, but also as a teacher (p. 79).

The following paragraph warns that too much self-confidence in scholarly matters is a dangerous mistake. To have knowledge and noteworthy achievements in one or two branches of knowledge, for example, does not necessarily indicate an equivalent excellence in other branches. The famous al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. ca. 175/791) is given as an example; it is said that he gained a fine reputation for his work in Arabic grammar and prosody, but that he failed and made a fool of himself when claiming to be an expert in theology (*kalām*) and the metres of songs (*awzān al-aghānī*; p. 80).

Various fragmentary passages follow: they relate to the importance of the ruler (*sulṭān*) and the administrators of the government. These are praised as most intelligent people and it is said that society is in need of them. Another statement admonishes the teaching of the books of Abū Ḥanīfa. Further remarks then deal with the proper application of analogies (in teaching?). The author uses the history and the merits of the clan of the Quraysh—well known to most Muslims—to show how analogies should or should not be used. The harsh critique of the merchants (which expresses the opposite of what al-Jāḥiẓ said of them in his other writings) and of the money changers seems, again, not to have been initially part of this educational treatise (p. 81).

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[51] Even if one takes into account the possibility that this passage initially was not part of the book "The Teachers" (Rescher 108–109), some readers may nonetheless wonder why a medieval copyist of this book should have included this passage in a text expressly addressing teachers. However, the appropriateness of addressing such a topic in a book on teachers is understandable given the fact that homo-erotic love of young and adolescent boys was rather common in ʿAbbāsid times, and bawdy anecdotes about teachers and their pupils abound. See also the art. "Liwāṭ" (editors), in: *EI*² v, 776–779, which includes more information on al-Jāḥiẓ's concerns in this regard. See furthermore Adam Mez: *Die Renaissance des Islams*, Hildesheim: G. Olms (Repr. Heidelberg 1922), 337–341 (Engl. Tr., Patna: Jubilee Printing and Publishing House, 1937. 364–361). For the meaning of *liwāṭ* in Islamic law, cf. Arno Schmitt: Liwāṭ im Fiqh: Männliche Homosexualität?, in: *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 4 (2001–2002), 44–110.

The book "The Teachers" concludes with a moving passage on the gentle treatment students merit. In the second person singular, it once again directly addresses the teachers and us readers. It advises us to treat the students with great care, gentleness, and kindness and not to force them so as not to make them dislike good manners, nor to neglect them since students "deserve your care and hard efforts" (p. 87).

3.2.3   *Curricular and non-curricular topics of teaching*

In his book "The Teachers," al-Jāḥiẓ suggests an impressive variety of topics to be taught. He does so, however, without indicating that these topics in fact relate to two very different categories of teaching: (a) the formal, curricular kind of teaching, as conducted by the schoolteachers at the elementary and the more advanced levels (i.e. the kind of instruction which Ibn Saḥnūn is concerned with in his treatise on primary education); and (b) the informal, non-curricular kind of teaching, which could take place at various locations, including "on the shop floor," for example. Since al-Jāḥiẓ was interested in teaching in general terms, a clear-cut distinction between the teaching topics belonging to one or the other category is rather difficult to make. This notion needs to be taken into account when looking at the following list of teaching topics drawn from his book.

Obligatory topics:
1. Reading and Writing
   - The essentials of writing (*kitāb*); the focus is on correct spelling (even if the handwriting is at a low level) (p. 64).
   - The essentials of grammar needed for correct verbal communication and for writing (p. 73).
   - The essentials of stylistics, including the use of easy and precise words, and the clarity of expression (p. 74).
   - Correct articulation and basic skills in rhetoric (pp. 74–75).

2. Arithmetic
   - Good knowledge of arithmetic (pp. 64, 70); accuracy is important here even more so than for writing. At the beginner's level, the focus is on the basics of calculation; later on one may deal with higher arithmetic, geometry, field measurements etc. (pp. 74–75).

3. The Essentials of Religion
– Religious duties (*farā'iḍ*, pp. 64, 69).
– The Quran (pp. 64, 69).

4. Literature and Literary Theory
– Poetry: all poems, including those displaying "metrical speech, as used in poems in the metre of *qaṣīd* verse and in poems in *rajaz* metre (*al-mawzūn min qaṣā'id wa-l-arjāz*; pp. 65, 69).
– Prose: including what is balanced and often rhymed (*min al-muzdawij wa-l-asjāʿ*; p. 69),[52] what provides historical information (*akhbār*), and what is to be found in literary works from former times (*āthār*) (pp. 65, 73).
– Prosody (*ʿarūḍ*, p. 65).

5. Logic and Disputation
– Articulate prose (*al-manṭiq al-manthūr*, p. 68).
– Logical argumentation and debate, i.e. formulating questions and answers (p. 68).

6. Accounting
– What is required of government clerks and registrars (*kuttāb al-dawāwīn*); such as arithmetic and what is related to marketing and promotion, as well as correct spelling (for the knowledge of accounting is more useful and fruitful than the knowledge possessed by editors and scribes; p. 74).

Recommended topics [at a more advanced stage of education]:
7. Hunting.
8. Sports, including the use of light arms.

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[52] For *muzdawij* as a technical term of philology, rhetoric, and prosody, see the art. "Muzdawidj," in: *EI*² vii, 825 (M. Bencheneb). For the meaning of *muzdawij* as related here, cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-tabyīn*, ed. Hārūn, ii, 116–117, where al-Jāḥiẓ provides examples of what he calls *muzdawij al-kalām*. See furthermore Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *K. al-Ṣināʿatayn, al-kitāba wa-l-shiʿr*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī and Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, ¹Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya; ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1371/1952, 260–265 ("*Fī dhikr al-sajʿ wa-l-izdiwāj*"). For this term referring to poetry that has paired rhyme (*aa bb cc . . .*), see Gustav E. von Grunebaum, On the Origin and Early Development of Arabic *Muzdawij* Poetry, in: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944), 9–13; and Manfred Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Raǧazpoesie, Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1966, 44–60 ("Das Muzdawiǧ-Gedicht"). I am grateful to Prof. G.J. van Gelder (Oxford) for drawing my attention to these publications.

 9. Music, including how to play various musical instruments.
10. Astronomy, i.e. "the knowledge of the stars."
11. Medicine.
12. Geometry (*handasa*).
13. Teaching (or training) animals, especially those used by people for labor, including camels and horses (pp. 65–66).

Topics recommended specifically for children of people from the lower class: Farming, trading, construction, goldsmithing, sewing, weaving, dyeing, and other crafts (p. 66).

3.2.4 *Advice for teachers*

The text provides numerous pieces of advice for teachers, some of which are given expressly, while others are indicated in a more general way. Some of the more striking examples shall be presented here. They concern:

The process of education
– Take the mental ability of students into account. Use a language understandable to them (p. 74).
– Treat students gently and in a most lovable way. Attempt to reach their hearts when it comes to the subject matters taught (p. 77).

The purpose of reading
– Make the students understand that the purpose of reading books is to learn and to understand and not, simply, the enjoyment of nice words, for: "He who reads the books of eloquent writers and leafs through the collections of sages to acquire ideas pursues the right course. He, [however,] who looks into these books [simply] to learn [more] words pursues the wrong course (*wa-man qaraʾa kutub al-bulaghāʾ wa-taṣaffaḥa dawāwīn al-ḥukamāʾ li-yastafīda l-maʿānī fa-huwa ʿalā sabīl ṣawāb; wa-man naẓara fīhā li-yastafīda l-alfāz fa-huwa ʿalā sabīl khaṭaʾ*)" (pp. 75–76).

The means of expression and style
– Make the students familiar with the arguments of writers and their eloquent use of simple and easily understood words. Make them taste "the sweetness of brevity and the comfort of sufficiency [in expression] (*ḥalāwat al-ikhtiṣār wa-rāḥat al-kifāya*)" (p. 74).

– Warn the students against pretentiousness (p. 74).
– Teach them to express themselves in a way understandable to people without the need for any additional interpretation and comment (pp. 74–75).
– Teach them to choose simple words whose semantic fields, or meanings, do not cover "extremes, nor extravagance and unnaturalness;" there are already too many people who do not care about the loss of meaning in words, but concern themselves instead with eloquence and "meaningless elegance" in expression (p. 75).
– Make the students understand that content has priority over style, because the least eloquent person is he "who has prepared the means of conveying meaning before preparing the meaning itself." Enrich their active vocabulary, for one should not just stick to the words one already knows. New vocabulary, however, should be limited to known and distinct meanings, and should not just be created off-hand (p. 75).

Good manners and style in writing
– Warn the students about using bad manners in life and in writing. They should also be warned about slow articulation, inactive performance, extreme arrogance, and the keenness to be counted among the eloquent. Again, make them aware of good style; prepare them to distinguish between a smooth and easy style and a complicated one (p. 75).

3.2.5   *Further pieces of advice and examples of how al-Jāḥiẓ presents them*

Deduction vs. memorization

The leading sages, masters of the art of deductive reasoning and [independent] thinking, have been averse to excellence in memorization, because of [one's] dependence on it and [its rendering] the mind negligent of rational discernment, so [much so] that they said: "Memorization inhibits the intellect."

وكرهت الحكماء الرؤساء، أصحاب الاستنباط والتفكير، جودةَ الحفظ لمكان الاتّكال عليه، وإغفال العقل من التمييز، حتّى قالوا: "الحفظ عِذق الذهن."

ولأنّ مستعمل الحفظ لا يكون إلاّ مقلّدا،
والاستنباط هو الذي يفضي بصاحبه إلى برد
اليقين وعزّ الثقّة.

[They have been averse to it] because the one engaged in memorization is only an imitator, whereas deductive reasoning is that which brings the one engaged in it to the coolness of certainty and the strength of confidence.

والقضية الصحيحة، والحكم المحمود: أنّه متى
أدام التحفّظ أضرّ ذلك بالاستنباط، ومتى أدام
الاستنباط أضرّ ذلك بالحفظ، وإن كان
التحفّظ أشرف متزلة منه.

The true proposition and the praiseworthy judgment is that, when [a student] perpetuates learning by memorization, this harms deductive reasoning; and when he perpetuates deductive reasoning, this harms learning by memorization—even if memorization has a more honorable rank than [deductive reasoning].

ومتى أهمل أهل النظر [53] لم تسرع إليه المعاني، ومتى
أهمل التحفّظ، لم تَعْلَق بقلبه، وقلّ مكثها في
صدره.

So, when he neglects rational reflection, ideas do not come quickly to him, and when he neglects learning by memorization, [these ideas] do not stick in his mind or remain long in his heart.

وطبيعة الحفظ غير طبيعة الاستنباط. والذي
يعالجان به ويستعينان [به] متّفق عليه وهو
فراغ القلب للشيء والشهوة له، وهما يكون
التمام وتظهر الفضيلة.

The nature of memorization is other than [that] of deductive reasoning. [However,] that which is treated and helped by both [memorization and deductive reasoning] is [something] agreed upon: it is freeing the mind for—and desiring—only one thing. By means of these two (i.e. memorization and deductive reasoning), perfection comes to be and virtue appears.

ولصاحب التحفّظ [ولصاحب الاستنباط]
سبب [54] آخر يتّفقان عليه، وهو الموضع
والوقت.

The adherent of learning by memorization [and the adherent of deductive reasoning] have another aspect [of learning] on which they agree: this is the location and the time [for studying].

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[53] *Naẓar* refers here to "inferential knowledge" differentiated from "necessary knowledge," *ʿilm ḍarūrī*, i.e. the knowledge known immediately without reflection (such as the knowledge of one's existence and of the self-evident truth of logic).

[54] *Sabab* means "cause, reason, motive, occasion," etc.; it was decided, however, to render it here as "aspect" for the generality of the term.

As for the locations, whatever both of them choose [is appropriate]; if they so wish [however, these locations could be upper] chambers without distractions.

فأمّا المواضع فأيّها يختاران إذا أرادا ذلك الغرف دون الشغل.⁵⁵

As for the hours, the early mornings [are preferred] above all other times, because that time is before the time of being occupied [with other things,] and [it] follows [the time of] total relaxation and rest;

وأمّا الساعات فالأسحار دون سائر الأوقات، لأنّ ذلك الوقت قبل وقت الاشتغال، وتعقب تمام الراحة والجمام،

[this is so] since there is a certain amount of time for relaxation, which is [for one's] benefit, just as there is a certain amount of time for hard work, which is [also for one's] benefit.
(pp. 62–63).

لأنّ للجمام مقداراً هو المصلحة، كما أنّ للكدّ مقداراً هو المصلحة.

The teaching of grammar

About the training of the boy:

في رياضة الصبيّ:

As for grammar, occupy [the boy's] mind with it only to the extent that it would safeguard [him] against the [commission of] excessive grammatical errors and against the measure of [grammatical] ignorance [encountered in the parlance of] the commonality— should he happen to draft a piece of writing, recite poetry, [or] describe something.

وأمّا النحو، فلا تُشغِلْ قلبه منه إلّا بقدر ما يؤديه إلى السلامة من فاحش اللحن، ومن مقدار جهل العوامّ في كتاب إن كتبه، وشعر إن أنشده، وشيء إن وصفه.

Anything exceeding this is a diversion from what has a higher claim [for the pupil's education] and is a distraction

وما زاد على ذلك فهو مَشغلةٌ عمّا هو أولى به، ومُذهِلٌ عمّا هو أردُّ عليه منه، من رواية

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⁵⁵ *Ghurfa*, pl. *ghuraf*, means "an (upper) chamber." It also signifies the highest place(s) in Paradise (see Q 25:75, 29:58, 34:37, 39:20; see also Lane vi, 2249). Furthermore, it is one of the names of Paradise (Lane vi, 2249). *Shughl* means "business, occupation, or employment . . . [and in particular business . . . that diverts one from a thing] or an occurrence that causes a man to forget, or neglect, or be unmindful" (Lane iv, 1567). Hārūn's edition, p. 30, offers a different (and perhaps more likely) reading:

فأمّا الموضع فأيّهما يختاران إذا أرادا ذلك الفوق دون السفل.

As for the location [for studying], both [groups] choose, if they so wish, the [quiter?] upper rather than the lower [levels of a building].

from what is more profitable for him in the way of relating the [pointedly] illustrative proverb, the true informative account, and the [most] outstanding interpretation.

المثل الشاهد ⁵⁶ والخبر الصادق، والتعبير البارع.

He who desires to reach the utmost limits [of grammar], and to go beyond [studying only] a moderate amount [of it], is someone who does not need to familiarize himself with substantial matters, the deductive unveiling of the obscurities in the [art of] governance, [knowledge of] the welfare of peoples and countries, the pillars [of religion], and the axis around which the [world's] millstone revolves; [that is to say, this is someone] who has no share [of knowledge] nor any livelihood other than [grammar].

وإنّما يرغب في بلوغ غايته ومجاوزة الاقتصاد فيه من لا يحتاج إلى تعرّف جسيمات الأمور، والاستنباط لغوامض التدبير، ولمصالح العباد والبلاد والعلم بالأركان، والقطب الذي تدور عليه الرحى، ومن ليس له حظّ غيره ولا معاش سواه.

The difficulties of grammar do not occur in human transactions and there is nothing compelling [you] to indulge in it.

وعويص النحو، لا يجري في المعاملات، ولا يضطرّ إليه شئ.

It is sound judgment, then, to direct [the pupil] towards finger reckoning, rather than Indian calculus, and rather than geometry and the difficulties belonging to the [science of] measuring surface areas. Concerning all of this, however, you are obliged to teach him what the competent [clerks] of the ruler and secretaries in the chancelleries need [to know].

فمن الرأي أن يصمد به في حساب العقد دون حساب الهند ⁵⁷ ودون الهندسة وعويص ما يدخل في المساحة، وعليك في ذلك بما يحتاج إليه كفاة السلطان وكتّاب الدواوين.

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⁵⁶ This seems to be the nuance of what al-Jāḥiẓ means by *al-mathal al-shāhid*. A more literal translation would be something like "the proverb that bears witness," or ". . . provides evidence." Alternatively, if *mathal* is taken to mean "example," it would be translated as "the example that serves as evidence," which therefore would make it relevant for the exegesis of the Quran. Hārūn's edition, p. 38, has *al-mathal wa-l-shāhid*. While this reading would also be possible, the text as given in Geries' edition seems to be rhetorically better with respect to the following pairs of noun plus adjective.

⁵⁷ Medieval Arabic scholars were aware of the significance of the decimal numeral system of the Indians. This is shown, for example, by the many books on *al-ḥisāb al-hindī*, as medieval Arabic scholars called the numeral system based on "ten" (see *GAS* v, 195–196). For the Indian calculus as an arithmetic method (and for the classical theory of numbers in medieval Arabic scholarship in general), see al-Hassan

I say that reaching an [adequate] knowledge of accounting, about which [all this] work revolves, and progressing in it and being motivated to do so, is more beneficial for [the pupil] than reaching [the level] of craftsmanship of the skilled copyists and chief calligraphers.

وأنا **أقول** إنّ البلوغ في معرفة الحساب الذي يدور عليه العمل، والترقي فيه والسبب إليه، أرد عليه من البلوغ في صناعة المحررين ورؤوس الخطاطين؛

[This is] because there is communication at the lowest level of penmanship—as long as the spelling is correct—while this is not the case for calculation (pp. 73–74).

لأن في أدنى طبقات الخط مع صحة الهجاء بلاغا، وليس كذلك حال الحساب.⁵⁸

The treatment of the student

After that, I am of the opinion that you should not force him [to work] and so make him dislike good manners and education. [Also,] do not neglect him, lest he get used to wasting [time] in amusing activities.

وبعد هذا، فإني أرى أن لا تستكرهه فتبغض إليه الأدب. ولا تهمله فيعتاد اللهو.

Moreover, I know of nothing in the entire world that is more [capable of] attracting complete corruption than bad companions and leisure-time beyond [what is needed for] relaxation.

على أني لا أعلم في جميع الأرض شيئا أجلب لجميع الفساد من قرناء السوء والفراغ الفاضل عن الجمام.

Teach him knowledge as long as he is free from the tasks of men and the demands of those with high-minded ambitions.

درسه العلم ما كان فارغا من أشغال الرجال ومطالب ذوي الهمم.

(ed.), *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture* iv, 189. Also see Gohlman (ed.), *The Life of Ibn Sina* 20 and 21.

It interesting to note that the word *hind* in classical Arabic also means "a hundred camels," or any hundreds, or higher numbers; or "two hundred [camels or years];" see *Lisān al-ʿArab* iii, 437; and Lane viii, 2903–4. This seems to indicate that the word *hind* in general referred to higher numbers. At any rate, even in this latter case, the first part of the sentence at issue here would refer to "basic" calculation, while the latter would refer to "higher" arithmetic.

⁵⁸ In other words: communication is possible even with little knowledge in writing. In calculation, however, the smallest mistake will lead to inaccurate results.

Devise artful means to make yourself more lovable to him than his mother.

واحتل في أن تكون أحب إليه من أمّه.

[However,] you cannot [expect] him to show tender affection and sincere friendship towards you with his dislike for the heavy burden of education you put on him, [that is] on someone who has not [yet] reached the state of somebody who is familiar with erudition.

ولا تستطيع أن يمحضك المقة، ويصفي لك المودة، مع كراهته لما تحمل إليه من ثقل التأديب عند من لم يبلغ حال العارف بفضل.

Therefore, bring out his innate affection with righteous words and the offer of financial [assistance].

فاستخرج مكنون محبّته بِبِرّ اللسان وبذل المال.

However, there is a limit to this; whoever goes beyond it is excessive, and excessiveness is dissipation; and whoever does not reach it is excessive in neglect, and the one who is neglectful is a wastrel.

ولهذا مقدار، من جازه أفرط، والإفراط سَرَف، ومن قصّر عنه فرّط والمُفرّط مضياع [...].

The one you attempt [to induce]—by way of benefiting the state of affairs of [this person being] the one in whom you have the hope that he will take your place amongst your people and will take care of [and continue] what you have left behind, in the way you would have done [it],—is worthy of all care and the making of every effort on your part (p. 86).

والذي تحاول من صلاح أمر من تؤمل فيه أن يقوم في أهلك مقامك — وصلاح ما خلّفت كقيامك — لحقيق بالحيطة عليه، وبإعطائه المجهود من نفسك.

4   Conclusions

As has become apparent, the two treatises presented in this chapter show in an impressive way the attempts made by two 9th century Muslim scholars to analyze and explain primary education, the objectives of education, and the pedagogical and didactic tools to be applied in achieving such goals.

In terms of the history of ideas, most of the educational rules given by Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Jāḥiẓ can be found—in a more systematic and perhaps more elaborate way—in the writings of the theologian and original thinker al-Ghazālī, who lived 250 years after

these predecessors of his in this particular field of scholarship. None-theless, it is remarkable that these two early texts should already address many major aspects of educational ethics and philosophy, regardless of the fact that each of them approaches these issues from a different perspective: one from a legal and the other from a literary-philosophical point of view.

In more general terms, the pedagogical advice given in the two classical Arabic texts under discussion may remind us also of simi-lar ideas introduced to Europe in the educational renaissance of the 16th and 17th centuries. In Europe, it was somebody like the Czech educational reformer and religious leader John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) who became known for his innovative teaching meth-ods in his time. Like Ibn Saḥnūn, Comenius emphasized the need for teaching all aspects of language, since good language skills are a basic prerequisite for the intellectual improvement of students. Like Ibn Saḥnūn also, Comenius argued that education should aim at equipping young people with a profound knowledge of the Holy Scripture and religious duties. Comenius, though, stressed as well that teachers should ensure a rapid, pleasant, and thorough educa-tion, which follows in "the footsteps of nature."[59] These latter ideas of making teaching and learning a natural and pleasant experience are not yet addressed clearly in Ibn Saḥnūn's book on "Rules of Conduct for Teachers." However, they are present and discussed most insightfully in al-Jāḥiẓ's book "The Teachers."

For these reasons, these two classical Arabic works from the 9th century not only represent some of the very earliest attempts of Muslim scholarship to deal, in an elaborate manner, with pedagogy and didactics,[60] but they also deserve recognition for their contribu-tion to the history of pedagogy in general.

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[59] Weimer, *Geschichte der Pädagogik* 81–86.
[60] See my art. "Education: Islamic Education," in: *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* ii, 640–45, esp. 643–44.

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MEDIEVAL MUSLIM SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF THE BASRA/KUFA DICHOTOMY IN ARABIC GRAMMAR

Monique Bernards

This study of the social relationships of a group of grammarians who died between the years 200 and 250 A.H. (815–865 C.E.) uses the method of social network analysis.[1] The configurations of the sub-groupings these grammarians formed among themselves are also scrutinized, in order to shed light on a central and hotly debated issue in the history of Arabic linguistics: the alleged formation of two distinct schools of grammar in Basra and Kufa.

After an introduction to the study of Arabic grammar and grammarians, this article discusses both the method and criteria used to determine the parameters of each group of grammarians, and the variables involved in the analysis. This is followed by a detailed description of each group of grammarians, along with a discussion of the implications and technicalities of the method of network analysis relevant to this study. A discussion of the findings concludes the article.

1   *Arabic grammar and grammarians in medieval times*[2]

The first full-fledged Arabic grammar appeared some 150 years after the rise of Islam. Naturally, Muslim scholars became particularly

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[1] A more elaborate study applying the method of social network analysis to a smaller group of grammarians than the one selected here was presented at the Elites Conference, Tel Aviv 1998.

[2] An excellent survey of the development of Arabic linguistics up through the tenth century A.H./sixteenth century C.E. is found in G. Bohas, J.-P. Guillaume and D.E. Kouloughli: *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

interested in the language that God had chosen for the revelation of the Quran. Sībawayhi (d. ca. 180/796) is celebrated for his remarkably elaborate grammatical work, which, due to its comprehensiveness, is simply referred to as *al-Kitāb*. Sībawayhi's book soon acquired a prominent place in Arabic linguistics and even today it remains the Arabic grammar *par excellence*.

According to the Arabic sources on the history of Arabic linguistics, Sībawayhi laid the foundations of a school of grammar based in the garrison town of Basra, which was located in the province of Iraq. The Basran tradition was reportedly carried forth by famous scholars like al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 215/830 or 221/835) and his students al-Jarmī (d. 225/839) and al-Māzinī (d. 248/862). The latter's student, al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), gave the Basran "school" the characteristics which eventually distinguished it from the other center of grammatical learning in Kufa, by relying heavily on the methods laid down by Sībawayhi. The sources also mention that the Kufan school was allegedly founded by al-Kisā'ī (d. 183/799) and propagated by his many students and then by their students; the most renowned of them were al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244/858) and Tha'lab (d. 291/904).

By the end of the third/ninth century, however, most of the Basran and Kufan grammarians had gradually moved their activities to Baghdad, the new capital of the Islamic empire. From then on, contacts between proponents of the two schools reputedly became frequent—to the extent that, as the sources indicate, the grammarians commingled. They literally "mixed," as we are told, and Basran and Kufan methods eventually converged, forming the so-called eclectic school of Baghdad.

Arab tradition has always emphasized a strict Basran/Kufan dichotomy. Accordingly, biographical dictionaries classify the grammarians by geographic affiliation, and the special reports mentioned there on grammarians' scholarly meetings (*majālis*) include vivid anecdotes of heated debates between Basrans and Kufans.

In 1913, however, when the German scholar Gotthold Weil published his study and edition of one of these works—Ibn al-Anbārī's *Masā'il al-khilāf bayna l-naḥwiyyīn al-Baṣriyyīn wa-l-Kūfiyyīn*—he argued that the Basran/Kufan dichotomy was nothing but retrojection.[3] With

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[3] Gotthold Weil: *Die grammatische Streitfragen der Basrer und Kufer*, Leiden: Brill, 1913, esp. 68–93.

this statement, Weil initiated a debate about the "historical reality" of the Basran/Kufan dichotomy that continues to date in Islamic studies. Recent studies based on the investigation of grammatical texts and internal grammatical arguments have shown that the Basra/Kufa division as depicted in Arabic historical and biographical sources reflects a social rather than a methodological distinction between these two groups of grammarians.[4]

To pursue this question further, it was decided to analyze the social relations of Arab medieval grammarians who preceded the emergence of the so-called eclectic school of Baghdad. The most appropriate method in this regard is social network analysis. If the study of social relations provides conclusive evidence that Basran and Kufan grammarians operated predominantly within their own isolated networks, this would support the presumption of the existence of two rather distinct centers of grammatical learning. If, however, the study shows that members of a particular grammatical network were not characterized solely by their geographic affiliation, the notion of distinct Basran and Kufan grammar schools would indeed have little basis in reality.

2 *Material used for this study*

Before discussing these early grammarians in more detail, some information needs to be provided about the material derived from the *Ulama Project*.[5]

One of the objectives of the *Ulama Project* (UP) is to chart the evolution of the Islamic sciences in the first four centuries of Islam from

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[4] See Monique Bernards: *Changing Traditions. Al-Mubarrad's Refutation of Sībawayh and the Subsequent Reception of the* Kitāb, Leiden: Brill, 1997, 93–97; and *id.*, The Delusion of Identification: The term Madhhab in Arabic grammatical tradition, in: H.L.J. Vanstiphout (ed.): *All Those Nations . . . Cultural Encounters within and with the Near East*, Groningen: Styx, 1999, 13–20.
[5] An elaborate description of the project is found in J. Nawas and M. Bernards: A Preliminary Report of the Netherlands Ulama Project (NUP). The Evolution of the Class of '*Ulamā*' in Islam with Special Emphasis on the non-Arab Converts (*Mawālī*) from the First Through Fourth Century A.H., in: U. Vermeulen and J.M.F. van Reeth (eds.): *Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society. Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants held at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (September 3–September 9, 1996)*, Leuven: Peeters, 1998, 97–107.

an empirical social science perspective. The project investigates the
grammarians of Arabic as one of five groups amongst the *'ulamā'*
("religious scholars"). This research covers a wide range of variables
on the *'ulamā'* taken from some ninety Arabic biographical dictio-
naries. Up to one hundred distinct pieces of information relating to
different aspects of the life and career of each individual Muslim
scholar have been stored in a computerized database. A special
module was additionally created to record information on teacher-
student relationships as well as on lines of transmission of works.

3   *Selection of grammarians and variables used for this study*

For the study of their interrelations, it was necessary to identify the
grammarians according to certain criteria. These criteria are: a) that
the death date of a given grammarian is between the years 200 and
250 A.H. (ca. 815 and 865 C.E.); b) that the scholarly activities of
this grammarian are attested to have been conducted in the province
of Iraq; and c) that he had, in one way or another, at least one
connection with another grammarian.[6] A group of thirty-five gram-
marians who meet all three of these criteria was identified.

   Inasmuch as UP-findings on age structure indicate that the aver-
age life-span of the scholars being considered here was eighty years,[7]
there is good reason to assume that the thirty-five grammarians
identified were active from around the years 150 to 250 (ca. 765 to
865). This time-span corresponds with the inception of systematic

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[6] "Grammarians" are, in the context of this study, both *naḥwiyyūn* and *lughawiyyūn*
as they are identified by the biographical dictionaries. For those grammarians who
did not obtain an explicit year of death, it was estimated based on the years of
death of their teachers and students. In all, seventy-one grammarians were active
in that period. As this study focuses on the relationships of grammarians, those
grammarians who are not reported to have had contact with others were excluded.
Two grammarians from al-Andalus, and one reportedly affiliated with the Iraqi
town of Anbar, were also excluded from the group because their social networks
were clearly outside the Iraqi context, although, strictly speaking, they did meet the
above-mentioned criteria.

[7] Our findings on age structure corroborate Charles Pellat: Quelques chiffres sur
la vie moyenne d'une catégorie de Musulmans, in: Pierre Salmon (ed.): *Mélanges
d'islamologie: Volume dédié à la mémoire de Armand Abel*, Leiden: Brill, 1974, 233–246; Richard
W. Bulliet: The Age Structure of Medieval Islamic Education, in: *Studia Islamica* 57
(1983), 105–17; Recep Sentürk: *Narrative Social Structure. Anatomy of the Hadith Transmission
Network, C.E. 610–1505*, [Dissertation] Columbia University, 1997, 79.

grammatical activity in Arabic linguistics. Moreover, it also covers the period in which the alleged dichotomy between the Basran and Kufan schools of grammar took shape. Subsequently, the particulars of the relationships of these thirty-five grammarians have been recorded in the database.

As far as the characteristics of these thirty-five grammarians are concerned, information has been included about their reported affiliation with one of the two centers of learning (i.e. *min ahl al-Baṣra; min ahl al-Kūfa*, i.e. "of the Basrans;" "of the Kufans"), and whether the individual scholar at hand was involved in the transmission of Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*.[8] The number of contacts the individual scholar had as well as the *ṭabaqa* ("layer" or "generation") to which he belonged were also recorded.

4   *General description of the group of grammarians*

Before discussing the details of social network analysis, let us have a look at the general characteristics of the group of grammarians based on the variables chosen for analysis: The information on geographic affiliation of the thirty-five grammarians is given in table 1.

Table 1: *Geographic Affiliation of the Thirty-five Grammarians*

	Count	Percent
Basran	20	57%
Kufan	13	37%
Unknown	2	6%
Total	35	100%

This table shows that twenty of the thirty-five grammarians are Basrans (57%), and thirteen are Kufans (37%). Two (6%) are unclassifiable due to the lack of explicit information on geographic affiliation. The overabundance of 57% Basrans over only 37% of Kufans is striking.

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[8] Unfortunately, the Arabic sources do not mention that works by al-Kisā'ī, the alleged founder of the Kufan grammatical school, have been transmitted. For an overview of al-Kisā'ī's scholarly output, see Fuat Sezgin: *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, IX: Grammatik bis ca. 430 H*, Leiden: Brill, 1984, 127–131.

This needs to be kept in mind for the conclusions of our analysis.

Table 2a provides information on years of death for the thirty-five grammarians. It also lists the range in the years of death for the two groups of Basrans and Kufans.

Table 2a: *Distribution of Years of Death*

	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Basran	202	249	47
Kufan	203	245	42

For the Basrans, the earliest year of death is 202 A.H., and the latest is 249. These dates cover a range of forty-seven years. The equivalent figures for the Kufans are 203 and 245, i.e. a range of forty-two years. This means that both groups share similar features in this respect.

The compiler of one of the largest extant biographical dictionaries, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 or 753/1352–3), categorized his work according to *ṭabaqāt*, ("classes" or better, "time-layers"), each of which is one decade.[9] This very same scheme of categorization was used for the grammarians dealt with here. Table 2b shows the distribution of the five layers that cover the period under consideration.

Table 2b: *Distribution of "Layers" of Ten Years Each*

	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Median
Basran Layers	1	5	4	3
Kufan Layers	1	5	4	4

The median of the layers—listed in the fourth column—is three for the Basrans and four for the Kufans.[10] Generally speaking, then, the selected group of Kufan grammarians lived in a slightly later period

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[9] Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348): *Taʾrīkh al-Islām wa-Wafayāt al-Mashāhīr wa-l-Aʿlām*, 52 vols., ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1989–2000.

[10] The median is used here instead of the arithmetic mean because the data distributions are skewed. In such instances, the median is more representative than the mean.

than the Basran group. Consequently, to justify lumping the two groups together, one first needs to determine whether or not a relationship had existed between the layer to which a particular grammarian belonged and the geographic region he was affiliated with. For this purpose, a Chi-square test was performed. Since the result of this test did not provide any evidence for a relationship, it was legitimate to study the relationships of the entire group of thirty-five grammarians irrespective of the layer to which they belonged. It was possible to do so, since a refined time framework (that is, layer) was not a significant factor for this aspect of our study.

Now that the time factor has been shown to be of no relevance, the connections of the identified thirty-five grammarians can be studied more closely. In effect, table 3 shows that there were 144 teacher/student contacts within the entire group under consideration.[11]

Table 3: *Distribution of Number of Contacts*

	Sum	Maximum	Median
Basran	90	13	3.5
Kufan	49	10	3.0
Unknown	5	3	2.5
Total	144	13	3.0

This table also lists the maximum number of these contacts. For the Basrans, this number was thirteen, and for the Kufans ten. The median of contacts for the Basrans is 3.5, and for the Kufans three. One can thus conclude again that also in this regard the two groups scarcely differ from each other. Having also ruled out the extent of relationships (i.e. its size *per se*) as a possible contaminating factor, the data which have direct bearing on the legitimacy of the notion of dichotomous schools can be examined.

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[11] Only teacher and student relationships within the group of thirty-five grammarians have been taken into account. Other contacts between colleagues, for example, during discussion sessions (*majālis*) have been disregarded.

5 *Network analysis*

In social network analysis, relevant information on relationships is tabulated in an adjacency matrix, i.e. a case-by-case matrix that presents individual grammarians in both rows and columns of the table. The cells of the table are filled either with the digit "1" when two individuals reportedly had contact, or with a zero when no contact was reported. Such a data-matrix is, as the following example of a small part shows, somewhat difficult to read.

Example of a Data-Matrix of Grammarians and their Relationships

	Grammarian x	Grammarian y	Grammarian z	. . .	. . .	. . .
Grammarian x	–	1	1	0	1	0
Grammarian y	0	–	1	1	0	1
Grammarian z	1	1	–	0	0	0
. . .	0	1	0	–	0	0
. . .	1	1	0	0	–	1
. . .	0	0	0	1	0	–

A human eye can hardly discern a pattern in all the zeros and ones. At this point, the computer plays a vital role. Through a technique called cluster analysis, the computer scans the data and distinguishes groups or clusters that resemble each other on the variables entered into the analysis.[12] In our case, the variables entered into the cluster analysis are the absence/presence of mutual relationships, the zeros and ones of the matrix. In the course of the cluster analysis, every single contact of every single case is considered and then, based on a proximity measure, the cases are regrouped into clusters of grammarians who resemble each other in their contacts. This clustering is repeated until an appropriate and useful number of clusters is reached.[13]

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[12] For an introduction to the technique of cluster analysis, see M. Anderberg: *Cluster Analysis for Applications*, New York: Academic Press, 1973; and Mark S. Aldenderfer & Roger K. Blashfield: *Cluster Analysis*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1984.

[13] The clustering process was determined by the binary squared Euclidian distance as the proximity measure. The method of clustering used was hierarchical clustering through complete linkage. See Joseph Hair et al.: *Multivariate Data Analysis*,

If each of the Basran and Kufan grammarians really did consti-
tute a network of their own, then the cluster analysis would show a
proximity of contacts amongst the Basrans on the one hand, and
amongst the Kufans on the other, forming two (one Basran and one
Kufan) or perhaps three (one Basran, one Kufan, one Other) clus-
ters. To determine what kinds of cluster of relationship existed for
the thirty-five grammarians, the computer was programmed to search
for between two to seven different clusters. It appeared that only
four meaningful clusters could be identified, two small clusters and
two larger ones. The distribution of Basrans and Kufans over these
four clusters is shown in table 4.[14]

Table 4: *Distribution of Basrans and Kufans over Four Clusters of Relationships*

Cluster	Basran		Kufan		Total
1	11	58%	8	42%	19
2	7	70%	3	30%	10
3	2	100%	–	–	2
4	–	–	2	100%	2
Total	20	61%	13	39%	33

As one can see from table 4, the distribution of geographic affiliation
in the largest cluster, consisting of nineteen individuals, follows the
overall distribution of 57% Basrans and 37% Kufans, a rate noted
already in table 1. The second cluster includes ten individuals. It is
dominated by 70% Basrans over 30% Kufans. Yet, the two smaller
clusters are even more intriguing: each consists of two individuals
and one is completely Kufan, the other completely Basran.

(5th ed.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall International, 1998, chapter 9.
Cluster analysis within the context of social network analysis is discussed by John
Scott: *Social Network Analysis. A Handbook*, Thousand Oaks and London: Sage Publications,
1991, 129–133; Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust: *Social Network Analysis.
Methods and Applications*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 381–385.
(= *Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences* 8).
    [14] The table only shows individuals with an explicit geographic affiliation; two of
the thirty-five grammarians do not have one and consequently are not listed.

6 *Discussion of the evidence and conclusions*

The main finding of the cluster analysis is that no distinct Basran/ Kufan divide could be established for the entire group of thirty-five grammarians. Of the four clusters identified, however, two deserve particular attention.

In the course of the clustering process, the Basran grammarians Abū ʿUbayda (d. 209/824) and al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 213/828 ?) formed one unitary cluster and they remained as such throughout the entire analysis. The same applies to the Kufans Abū ʿUbayd (d. 222/837) and Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244/858). Focusing on the two clusters of these four grammarians—one Basran cluster and one Kufan—another question arises: did we find typically Kufan and typically Basran networks? In other words, did the social relationships of these two clusters represent a Basran/Kufan divide? At this point, a scrutiny of the networks in which the four grammarians operated is needed.

Tables 5a and 5b summarize the information on the networks of these two pairs. The numbers in the tables are the identification numbers of the grammarians. A scrutiny of the "Basran" network of Abū ʿUbayda and al-Aṣmaʿī (see especially the "Distribution of Relations" of 5a), shows that the distribution of the sixteen Basrans and Kufans for this specific network is 63% Basrans and 31% Kufans.[15]

Table 5a: *The "Basran" Network of Abū ʿUbayda and al-Aṣmaʿī*

Relations with only Abū ʿUbayda (803)[16]	Mutual relations	Relations with only al-Aṣmaʿī (749)
(1472) Basran	(1396) Unknown	(1470) Basran
(1489) Basran	(1400) Basran	(1490) Basran
(51) Kufan	(1419) Basran	(1498) Kufan
	(1425) Kufan	
	(1466) Kufan	
	(1491) Basran	
	(26) Basran	
	(58) Basran	
	(748) Kufan	
	(891) Basran	

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[15] The remaining one grammarian in the network received no explicit affiliation in the sources.

[16] The number in parentheses is the identification number of the grammarian.

Distribution of Relations

	For entire group	Abū ʿUbayda	al-Aṣmaʿī
Basran	10 (63%)	8 (62%)	8 (62%)
Kufan	5 (31%)	4 (31%)	4 (31%)
Unknown	1 (6%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
Total	16	13	13

The two grammarians Abū ʿUbayda and al-Aṣmaʿī shared ten con-
tacts (listed in the middle column of Table 5a) while each of them
had two additional Basran and one Kufan contact (as is shown in
the left and right columns of the table). Combining their own indi-
vidual contacts with the mutual contacts amounts to a 62%/31%
for both Abū ʿUbayda and al-Aṣmaʿī separately. Recalling the over-
all distribution of 57% Basrans/37% Kufans, it can be concluded
that the "Basran" network of Abū ʿUbayda and al-Aṣmaʿī is not spe-
cial, since their individual Basran/Kufan ratios more or less follow
the overall group ratio. Accordingly, we have to reject the idea that
the Abū ʿUbayda/al-Aṣmaʿī network is a specific "Basran" one. In
their network, an indiscriminate intermingling of Basran and Kufan
grammarians is evident.

   It is interesting to note that the analysis of the Abū ʿUbayd/Ibn
al-Sikkīt network (see table 5b) does not show a specific "Kufan"
network either. Their entire circle of scholarly contacts consists of
54% Basrans and 39% Kufans, as shown below under "Distribution
of Relations," reflecting once again the overall distribution of the
entire group. Their shared contacts are more Kufan than Basran
(three to two), but in their own individual contacts the additional
Basran ones level this out. Here, too, the only valid conclusion to be
drawn is that there is no evidence of a specifically "Kufan" network.

Table 5b: *The "Kufan" Network of Abū ʿUbayd and Ibn al-Sikkīt*

Relations with only Abū ʿUbayd (748)	Mutual relations	Relations with only Ibn al-Sikkīt (1425)
(1466) Kufan	(1404) Kufan	(1396) Unknown
(1503) Kufan	(1413) Kufan	(1449) Basran
(784) Basran	(749) Basran	(1491) Basran
(859) Basran	(802) Kufan	
(913) Basran	(803) Basran	

Distribution of Relations

	For entire group	Abū ʿUbayd	Ibn al-Sikkīt
Basran	7 (54%)	5 (50%)	4 (50%)
Kufan	5 (39%)	5 (50%)	3 (38%)
Unknown	1 (7%)		1 (12%)
Total	13	10	8

In conclusion, one can say that the group of grammarians active during the period in which Arabic linguistics gradually became a systematic field of learning consisted of about 60% Basrans and 40% Kufans who, as teachers and students, intermingled freely. Basran teachers had Kufan students, and Kufan teachers had Basran students. In transmitting knowledge, there was no separateness that might be indicative of two distinct social groupings.

There was, however, one main difference between the two groups. This difference has not been addressed previously, because it is so constant: without exception, the few grammarians involved during this period in the transmission of Sībawayhi's prestigious work on grammar were all affiliated with Basra. The question of whether or not this aspect eventually became decisive for the introduction of the notion of two distinct schools still remains to be answered.[17] At any rate, the findings about the social relationships among these early grammarians do not provide any grounds for assuming that a Basran/Kufan divide existed. It should be pointed out, however, that other aspects of the question, such as the development of scholarship throughout the first four centuries of Islam, or the subsequent transmission of Sībawayhi's book, must be explored before more definitive conclusions can be drawn regarding the reality or otherwise of the Basran/Kufan dichotomy.[18]

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[17] Four grammarians in the second, predominantly Basran cluster were involved in the transmission of Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*; the two others were grouped together in the third cluster.

[18] From a study of the relationships that a group of grammarians (who died between 200 and 225) had with their teachers on the one hand, and their students on the other—thus constituting a network that covered the period 150–300—it appears that, in the formation of this group's network of teachers, geographic affiliation was a major contributor. As time went by, however, geographic affiliation "weakened" as a factor, as the group's network of students showed. This corroborates the findings of the present study which concentrated on the middle period; see furthermore my study presented at the Elites Conference, Tel Aviv 1998.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE *MAWĀLĪ* TO THE SIX SUNNITE CANONICAL ḤADĪTH COLLECTIONS

John A. Nawas

This study addresses the non-Arab converts to Islam (*mawālī*, sing. *mawlā*) and their contributions to the development of the religious disciplines of Muslim scholarship. In particular, it studies the role the *mawālī* played in the formative period of Islam in preserving, collecting and transmitting prophetic traditions (sing. *ḥadīth*, pl. *aḥādīth*) which found their way into any of the six Sunnite canonical compilations of these traditions.

The main reason for this topic is the suggestion one often encounters in secondary sources to the effect that the *mawālī* played a crucial role in the development of the Islamic religious sciences. The popularity of this idea may go back to a very explicit statement made by Ignaz Goldziher in his *Muslim Studies*. Concerning the role of the *mawālī*, Goldziher writes, "a statistical assessment of these matters [i.e., the role of the non-Arab *mawālī*] would certainly be to the disadvantage of the Arabs."[1]

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[1] Ignaz Goldziher: *Muslim Studies*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1967, translated from the German by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, vol. i, 109, in the chapter entitled "'*Arab* and '*Ajam*." Goldziher's conviction that the civilization of Islam was carried, if not made, by non-Arabs rather than Arabs, is found in other passages of his book and this conviction stands at the center of many later developments in the field of Islamic Studies: "The Persian *mawālī*, not to name other elements, transferred their own religious traditions from their original environment into the new circles; they had only to translate their inherited religious sense into Islamic idiom. They were rather more fitted for this than were the original Arab elements who inwardly rejected Islam and who had not been prepared by their past to create a higher social and moral conception of life from its seeds" (ibid. ii, 59–60). ". . . In this saying [ascribed to 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr] the distaste for the non-Arab method of legal science mostly cultivated by *mawālī* is masked but not hidden. The very first and most important representatives of this trend were of alien non-Arab extraction and the most outstanding amongst them, Abū Ḥanīfa [d. 150/767], was of Persian race. They are the creators of what Renan [wrongly, according to Goldziher] considers an innate product of the Arab spirit, or what an earlier French writer even thought to be the product of the 'desert'" (ibid. ii, 80).

The numerical count that Goldziher had in mind using the word
"statistical" will be the focus of attention in what follows. Prior to
that, however, the material on which this study is based will be
described, followed by a few words about the *mawālī*.

The empirical data of this study are derived from the main data-
base of the Ulama Project, which was carried out between 1994 and
2000 by Monique Bernards and myself. The aim of this project was
the study of the emergence and evolution of the class of religious
scholars (*'ulamā'*, Sing. *'ālim*) during the first four centuries of Islam,
with particular attention given to the role of the *mawālī*. The main
database consists of a random sample of over one thousand schol-
ars who died in or before the year of 400 A.H./1009–10 C.E.[2]

This random sample covers the five main branches of Islamic
learning, namely Prophetic Tradition (Ḥadīth), quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*),
quranic reading (*qirā'a*), grammar (*naḥw*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*).
Through a special computer program that we wrote for the project
to enter data from biographical dictionaries, we were able to collect
data for up to one hundred characteristics per individual. The scope
of the data collected is wide. It contains very basic and mundane
elements such as the name of the scholar, his *nisba* (adjective of rela-
tion) or *laqab* (honorific title), and so on. Other characteristics include
the cause of death, which dye a scholar used for his beard or hair,
geographical givens such as places of birth, death, study, residence,
etcetera. This information was collected from some ninety classical
Arabic biographical dictionaries.[3]

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[2] The total sample size of the Ulama Project's main database is 1,049. This num-
ber, however, includes "duplicates." Duplicates were encountered because we ran-
domly sampled *per Islamic religious science*. This approach allowed that a scholar could
be selected as, say, a traditionist, his data recorded and later, by sheer chance, the
very same person could be selected again but now as a jurisconsult (*faqīh*), for
instance. Taking account of the duplicates brings the data set down to 1,003 *'ulamā'*
and this set is what I have used here. As an aggregate data set, the latter is more
representative for the entire group of scholars than the former one (the one includ-
ing the duplicates).
   The other primary database is not a random sample but one that contains all
known linguists, i.e. scholars active in *lugha* (language, lexicography) and *naḥw* (gram-
mar) of the same period. The year 400 A.H. (1009–10 C.E.) was chosen as the
endpoint because it marks the beginning of the appearance of the Islamic col-
lege/university (*madrasa*), a new form of learning with an institutionalized hierarchy
of paid professorial appointments.
[3] We used almost all published classical Arabic biographical dictionaries to gather
data on individuals who had been randomly selected from a particular field of
Islamic religious learning. Our list of biographical dictionaries starts with the ear-

The data contained in the main database have been culled from about seven thousand biographical entries, which we scrutinized in search of relevant information. It should be pointed out—and this is especially important for the traditionists, the *muḥaddithūn*—that our research design stipulated that an individual could only be entered in the sample if an explicit year of death for that person was mentioned in the sources. When an individual had no such explicit listing of the year of death, he was dropped from the list and we moved on to the next randomly selected individual. Additionally, as we entered data we adhered to the rule that only explicitly narrated information found in the sources was to be recorded, hence disallowing any guesswork on our part. An example of relevance for our purposes in this article is that we recorded that someone was a *mawlā* or an Arab only if this was explicitly stated in the sources.[4]

As the reader may recall, the *mawālī* were non-Arabs who had converted to Islam.[5] The society in which the Prophet Muḥammad had passed on God's revelation to humankind had a tribal social

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liest, Ibn Saʿd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (3rd/9th c.), and ends with the later 11th/17th c. compilations by Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, and al-Irdabīlī's Shiite *rijāl* collection entitled *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt*.

[4] In other words, we did not use indirect information like, for instance, a non-Arab name in a person's genealogy or a tribal *nisba* to conclude that someone was a *mawlā* or an Arab. All references to the *mawlā*/Arab distinction in our databases are *explicitly* mentioned by one or more compilers of the biographical dictionaries used. One could argue that a scrutiny of the names found in the genealogy of a particular person may allow one to deduce who was an Arab and who was not. However, our data indicate that this is probably not a safe approach. We have inspected the names and *nisba*s of individual scholars as well as those of their fathers and grandfathers. No distinguishing features in name patterns between *mawālī* and Arabs emerged that could help identify either of the two merely on the basis of names.

[5] On *mawālī/mawlā* see S. Günther: "Clients and Clientage," in: *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. i (2001), 344–346, and P. Crone's article *mawlā* in the *EI²* vi (1990), 874a–882b; P. Crone: *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law. The Origins of the Islamic Patronate*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, esp. 35–42, and the critical notes on this book by W. Hallaq: The Use and Abuse of Evidence: The Question of Provincial and Roman Influences on Early Islamic Law, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110 (1989), 79–91. Other works include D. Pipes, Mawlas: Freed Slaves and Converts in Early Islam, in: *Slavery and Abolition* 1 (1980), 132–178; J. Juda: *Die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte der Mawālī in frühislamischer Zeit*, (Diss.) Tübingen, 1983; J. Nawas: Birth of an Elite: *Mawālī* and Arab Ulama, forthcoming in: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam. Franz Rosenthal Memorial volume* (2006); J. Nawas: The Emergence of *Fiqh* as a Distinct Discipline and the Ethnic Identity of the *Fuqahāʾ* in Early and Classical Islam, in: S. Leder, H. Kilpatrick, B. Martel-Thoumian, H. Schönig (eds.): *Studies in Arabic and Islam. Proceedings of the 19th Congress, Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (UEAI), Halle 1998*, Leuven: Peeters, 2002, pp. 491–500.

structure. Despite the message about the universality of Islam as a
religion, the transition from a pre-Islamic Arab tribal society to a
pan-Islamic one was not immediate or abrupt. One of the most con-
spicuous features of this transition was the adoption of a patronage
system that served to regulate the arrival of neophytes or newcom-
ers from the existing Middle Eastern societies to the new Arab-
Muslim community. Through this system, a non-Arab convert would
become the client of an Arab patron, resulting in the establishment
of a relationship between the patron, on the one hand, and the client
on the other. As time went by, the necessity of an Arab tribal
affiliation slowly vanished and, as an outcome of a long process, an
Islamic society emerged.

   As backdrop to the main theme of this chapter, I will first touch
upon the *mawālī*/Arab distinction across the course of the first four
centuries of Islam. The trends in the changes of this distinction are
not only important as context for our study of traditionists but also
because they ultimately reflect the important process of change in
social structure just referred to.[6] The analysis will start with pre-
senting data on the religious scholars who received no *mawālī*/Arab
distinction from the chroniclers before it moves on to those who did;
the proportion of the scholars who received no *mawālī*/Arab desig-
nation is graphed in figure 1.
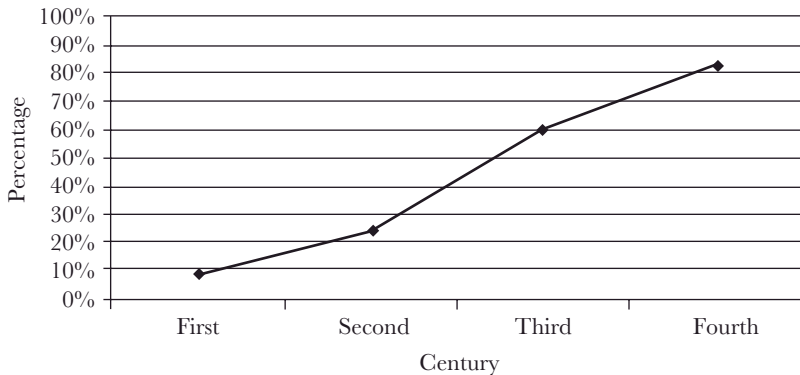
Figure 1. Proportional Contribution per Islamic Century of the *'Ulama'* whose
Ethnicity (*Mawlā*/Arab) is not Listed in the Sources (N = 1,003)

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[6] I have dealt more elaborately with the trend of change in the *mawālī*/Arab dis-
tinction in my article "Birth of an Elite" (see n. 5).

In figure 1, the percentages of scholars whose *mawālī*/Arab origin is not listed by compilers of the sources shows very tellingly a systematic and uninterrupted rise. Respectively for the first, second, third, and fourth centuries of Islam, the percentages of scholars whose *mawālī*/Arab status is not recorded were 8%, 24%, 61% then 83%. Rather than a reflection of gradual inattentiveness of the chroniclers, this trend, on the contrary, suggests that, as time passed by, the distinction became less and less socially relevant or meaningful. In other words, these rises foretell in a global sense the demise of the distinction and mirror at once the steady movement toward a pan-Islamic society that transcended the *mawālī*/Arab divide.

Yet for a fair test of the validity of Goldziher's claim, we must exclude the group who received no *mawālī*/Arab designation since we have no reliable way of knowing who of these scholars were Arabs and who were non-Arabs—at least to the extent that this distinction still meant something. In what follows, we will focus only on the scholars who received a *mawālī* or Arab designation in an attempt to assess Goldziher's statement that the *mawālī* were in the majority. In doing so, we will first study the broader picture. Figure 2 depicts the distribution of *mawālī* and Arab scholars for the entire four-century period.
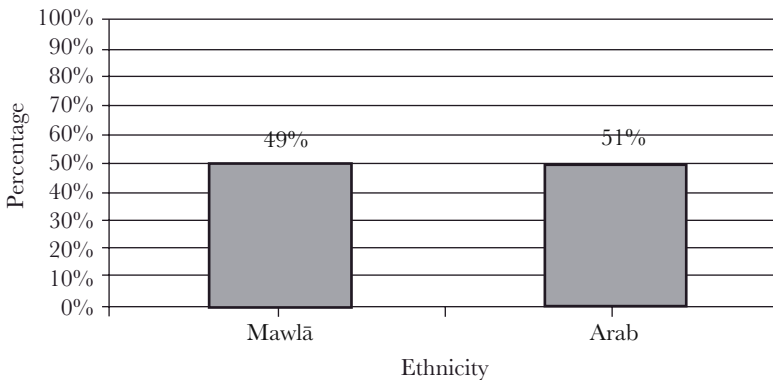
Figure 2. Distribution of *Mawālī* and the Arab *'Ulama'* for the Entire Four-Century Period as a Bloc (N = 472)

It is clear from figure 2 that the overall contribution of the *mawālī* scholars was almost exactly the same as that of the Arabs—each being very close to 50%. The graph shows no overall preponderance

of the *mawālī* in the Islamic religious disciplines during the early and classical period of Islam.

Figure 3 recasts the same distribution of *mawālī* and Arab scholars along the span of time, but now displaying the distribution century by century.
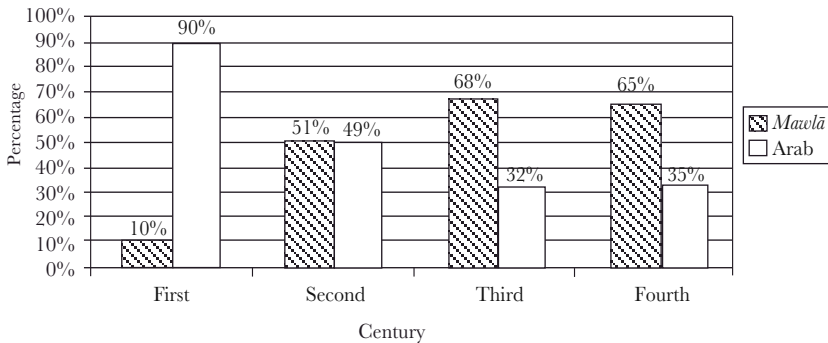
Figure 3. Distribution of *Mawālī* and Arab *'Ulamā'* per Islamic Century
(N = 472)

As can be seen in figure 3, the first century of Islam shows an overabundance of Arab scholars; a mere 10% of the scholars in this century were *mawlā* while some 90% were Arab. In the second century, the proportion of *mawālī* and Arabs is about the same, each being close to 50%. The percentage of *mawālī* scholars was in the third century more than twice as high as that of the Arab scholars—being 68% for the *mawālī* and 32% for the Arabs. The same trend holds for the fourth century where we see that the *mawālī* are still in the majority, constituting 65% versus 35% who were Arabs.

Summarizing the findings until now with special reference to Goldziher's statement, we can say that for the four centuries in their totality, the contribution of neither group was any greater than that of the other. A breakdown by century provides us with a refinement of this observation. The *mawālī* were in comparison with Arab scholars but a small minority in the first century and in the second century of Islam their share was equal to that of the Arabs. The *mawālī*, however, did take the lead in the third and fourth centuries.

We will now focus on the traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) since the Prophetic Tradition is closely linked to the sacred and as such constitutes a large part of the core of Islamic Sunnite dogma. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a detailed study of the con-

tribution of the scholars—*mawālī* and Arabs—who appeared in the Sunnite canonical Ḥadīth collections.[7]

Next to the Quran, the most important source for Sunni Muslims is the text material of the Prophetic Tradition contained in the six canonical collections of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim (d. 261/875), Ibn Māja (d. 273/887), Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/893) and al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915). Though these six collections acquired their canonical status at a much later date, their compilers were all active in the third/ninth century.[8] In the third/ninth century, the compilers decided to include *ḥadīth* texts that were considered by them to be reliable. One of the criteria they used for determining this reliability was a scrutiny of the people listed in the chain of transmission (*isnād*), which precedes the text of the tradition (*matn*). The names of some eight thousand people are listed in the chains of transmission found in the six canonical Ḥadīth collections.[9] Of these eight thousand names, the Ulama Project's main database contains, by chance, 357 individuals who explicitly received a *mawālī*/Arab designation. These 357 *ʿulamāʾ* stand at the center of what we will be studying.

Figure 4 depicts the overall distribution of *mawālī* and Arab transmitters (*muḥaddithūn*) of prophetic traditions who found their way into any of the six canonical Ḥadīth collections.

The contribution of both groups is again about the same. But, unlike earlier, there is a slight edge in the canonical collections that favors the Arabs (54% to 46%) rather than the *mawālī*.

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[7] One of Goldziher's contributions to the field of Islamic Studies is the hypothesis that much of the Ḥadīth was actually a product of the third century of Islam rather than an authentic reflection of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad. Most studies on Ḥadīth have been more or less a reaction to Goldziher's views. His most important pupil is Joseph Schacht (*Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), but others have followed. For a recent overview of the various tendencies in the modern study of Ḥadīth, see H. Berg: *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam. The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000; and Harald Motzki: The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions reconsidered: A Review Article, in: H. Berg (ed.): *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003, 211–257. (= *Islamic History and Civilization Series* XLIX).

[8] Hence, in part, Goldziher's claim just mentioned that much of this material dates from this century.

[9] Al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl* (35 vols., Beirut, 1413/1992) includes all individuals found in at least one of the six collections and has 8,045 entries to be exact.
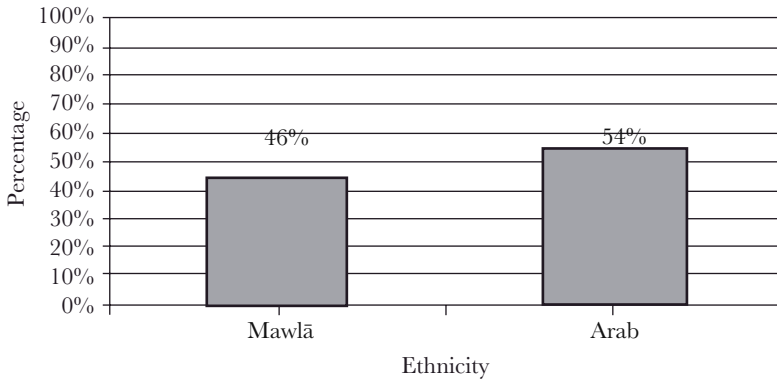
Figure 4. Overall Distribution of *Mawālī* and Arab *Muḥaddithūn* in the Six
Sunnite Canonical Collections (N = 357)

Before addressing the issue of this small Arab preponderance in the
canonical collections, I will first present the distribution of the *mawālī*
and Arabs who found their way into one, two, three, up through
six canonical collections; this distribution is displayed in figure 5.

The graph shows that the *mawālī* constitute the majority of trans-
mitters who are listed in just one, two or four Ḥadīth collections.
On the other hand, the Arabs exceed the *mawālī* for those trans-
mitters who are included in five or in all six Ḥadīth collections.

Once one thinks about it, the observed overabundance of Arabs
in five or six collections makes sense. This is not very surprising if
we recall that in the chain of transmission, the link between the
Prophet Muḥammad and those who followed was in most cases a
ṣaḥābī (a companion of the Prophet, or someone who had at the
very least seen the Prophet in person) or, though much less fre-
quently, a *tābiʿī* (someone who knew a *ṣaḥābī* in person).

I pursued this matter further by isolating in our database the
*ṣaḥābī*s and *tābiʿī*s. More than 80% of these two groups were Arab
while only about 15% were *mawālī*. Additionally, the distribution of
the *ṣaḥābī*s and *tābiʿī*s was checked in the six canonical Ḥadīth col-
lections and in the overwhelming majority of cases they occur in
either five or six collections. Stated alternatively, figure 5 actually
shows the abundance of these two groups (*ṣaḥābī*s and *tābiʿī*s) whose
members were primarily Arabs.

Turning our attention to the majority of *mawālī* in one or two
collections and taking into account that we have already seen that
from the third Islamic century onward the *mawālī* were in the major-
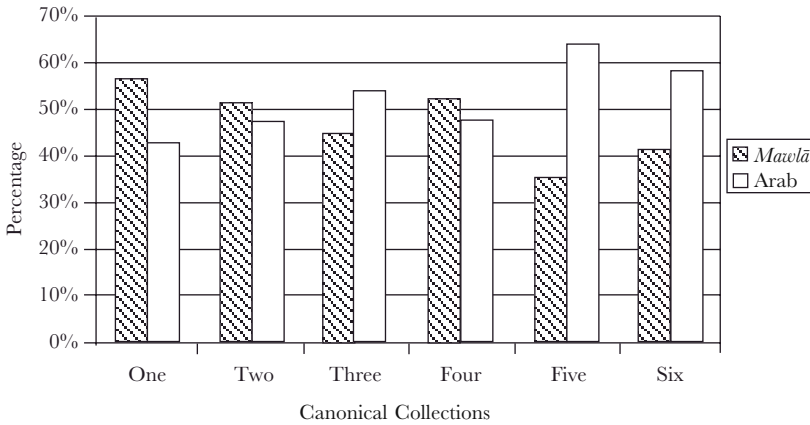
Figure 5. Distribution of *Mawālī* and Arab *Muḥaddithūn* in the Six Canonical Collections (N = 357)

ity, what we see here is that the *mawālī* formed the link of informants up to the compilers of the collections. For example, the compiler al-Bukhārī received his *ḥadīth* material from his own generation or from the generation just prior to that, which, as we have seen, consisted predominantly of *mawālī*. Also Muslim and, say, al-Tirmidhī collected material from this same population while they put together their compilations. In sum, the Arab *ṣaḥābī*s and *tābiʿī*s formed the link with the Prophet while, on the other end of the *isnād*, the *mawālī* formed the link to the compilers who flourished in the third century of Islam and this is illustrated in figure 5 as well.

Yet, to further come to grips with Goldziher's claim, we should additionally consider the possibility that a particular Ḥadīth compiler, for whatever reasons, had the inclination of focusing on *mawālī*: if one or more of the individual compilers deviated from the overall distribution we have just studied, strongly in favor of the *mawālī*, then some support for Goldziher's assertion may be found. This possibility calls for a scrutiny of the distribution of *mawālī* and Arabs per individual compilation. During the data entry phase, we did not record in which collections the transmitters appeared but only counted the frequency of listings per individual and this is what we have been discussing so far. In order to determine what the *mawālī*/Arab distribution is in each distinct compilation and to be able to generalize the findings again, we drew a random sample of 125 canonical transmitters from the 357 we have been studying until now.

Then, for these 125 transmitters, I went back to the biographical sources and noted the collections in which they occurred.[10] Table 1 lists the results of this exercise.

Table 1: Distribution of *mawālī* and Arab transmitters per compilation
(N = 125)

	al-Bukhārī	Muslim	Ibn Māja	Abū Dāwūd	al-Tirmidhī	Al-Nasā'ī	*Total*
mawālī	42%	46%	52%	47%	45%	45%	46%
Arab	58%	54%	48%	53%	55%	55%	54%

If there was no outspoken bias on the part of the compilers with regard to *mawālī* and Arabs, we would expect to find in each of them about the same overall distribution of 46% *mawālī* and 54% Arabs in the canonical collections which we have already reported in figure 4 and which reappears in the far right-hand column of table 1.

The preceding columns give the distribution for each individual collection. All—except column three—follow the overall trend, the *mawālī* being in the minority while the Arabs are, as expected from figure 4, in the majority. The sole exception is Ibn Māja whose collection shows an opposite trend, namely more *mawālī*, but even here the percentages are very close indeed.

*   *   *

In closing, let us return to Goldziher's assertion that the *mawālī* *ʿulamāʾ* had a greater contribution to the Islamic religious sciences than did the Arab *ʿulamāʾ*, a claim which Goldziher was sure would be borne out by a simple count. We have seen that this is not true for the Islamic religious disciplines as a totality, nor does it hold for the canonical Sunnite Ḥadīth collections. In general, the *mawālī* and Arabs played an almost equal part in the enterprise of Islamic religious learning during the first four centuries of Islam.

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[10] The listings are relatively easy to find by referring to either Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (12 vols., Hyderabad, 1325/1907) or to the work from which Ibn Ḥajar drew his revision, i.e., al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. Both of these works mention alongside the name of a *muḥaddith* abbreviations of the canonical collections in which that person is to be found in an *isnād*.

For the *'ulamā'* in their entirety, we have seen that there was an overwhelming Arab presence in the first century of Islam when the *mawālī* were but a small minority. The contribution of the *mawālī* increased, however, in the second Islamic century when each group had an equal share. In comparison with their Arab counterparts, the *mawālī* were in the majority in the third and fourth centuries of Islam.

Concerning the people who found their way into one or more of the canonical collections, we observed a slightly higher percentage for the Arabs than for the *mawālī*—a finding which is the direct opposite of Goldziher's claim. Moreover, we also saw that the distribution across the six collections makes sense in that there are more *mawālī* than Arabs in one or two collections while there are more Arabs in five or six collections. We have furthermore seen that in five out of the six Ḥadīth compilations the same finding holds yet again, namely, that the Arab contribution was larger than that of the *mawālī*. And even in the only collection in which the *mawālī* have a larger proportion than the Arabs, Ibn Māja's, the difference is too small to lend real support in favor of Goldziher's statement. All in all, then, Goldziher's statement is thought provoking but it embodies an over-generalization that is at best slippery.

PORTRAYAL OF THE *ḤAJJ* AS A CONTEXT FOR WOMEN'S EXEGESIS: TEXTUAL EVIDENCE IN AL-BUKHĀRĪ'S (D. 870) "*AL-ṢAḤĪḤ*"*

Aisha Geissinger

The Ḥadīth compilations most widely accepted by Sunni Muslims include statements ascribed to both male and female Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad[1] about the interpretation of quranic verses. Some of the texts attributed to female Companions express disagreement with views credited to senior male Companions on issues of ritual, theological and social importance. Most such traditions are traced back to ʿĀʾisha bint Abī Bakr (d. 58 A.H./678 C.E.), the Prophet Muḥammad's wife, but some traditions are also credited to other female Companions. Moreover, the chains of transmission (*isnād*s) attached to these pieces of exegetical text contain the names of a few female Successors.

How are these texts attributed to Muslim women from the dawn of Islam to be understood? Are they simply isolated reports that happen to be traced back to women? Or are they elements of a larger picture of the early development of quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*) that includes female participants?

This study will examine three such exegetical traditions as related by al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) in his chapter on quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*). These traditions deal with the interpretation of quranic verses about the *ḥajj*, i.e. the pilgrimage to Mecca.[2] It will be demonstrated that

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* This chapter examines—from a different angle and in greater detail—certain *ḥadīth*s also discussed in my paper "The Exegetical Traditions of ʿĀʾisha: Notes on their Impact and Significance," in: *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies*, vi.1 (2004), 1–20.

[1] A "Companion" (*ṣaḥābī/ṣaḥābiyya*) is any Muslim who saw the Prophet Muḥammad; see *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* v, 1 (*Bāb Faḍāʾil aṣḥāb al-nabī*). A "Successor" (*tābiʿī/tābiʿiyya*) is any Muslim who met a Companion.

[2] Al-ḥajj is the fifth of the five "pillars" (*arkān*) of Islam. It is also called the Great Pilgrimage in contrast to the *ʿumra* or Minor Pilgrimage. "Its annual observance has had, and continues to have, a profound influence on the Muslim world. [. . .] For the Muslim community itself this event is the occasion for a review of its extent

these traditions attributed to women cannot be regarded as isolated; they are part of al-Bukhārī's depiction of the *ḥajj* as both an act of worship and an exegetical topic that grants some women space to exercise religious authority.

The first part of this study discusses al-Bukhārī's presentation of these three ḥadīths as *tafsīr* and traces their impact on classical *tafsīr* works. The second part assesses these accounts within al-Bukhārī's larger depiction of the *ḥajj* as a context that favoured the emergence of some female experts on ritual.

1   *The building of the Kaʿba (Q 2:127)*

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ مُحَمَّـدِ

بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، أَخْبَرَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّـــهُ عَلَيْـــهِ

وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ: أَلَمْ تَرَيْ أَنَّ قَوْمَكِ بَنَوُا الْكَعْبَةَ وَاقْتَصَرُوا عَنْ قَوَاعِدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ؟ فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلاَ

تَرُدُّهَا عَلَى قَوَاعِدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ؟ قَالَ: لَوْلاَ حِدْثَانُ قَوْمِكِ بِالْكُفْرِ.

فَقَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ: لَئِنْ كَانَتْ عَائِشَةُ سَمِعَتْ هَذَا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا أَرَى

رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَرَكَ اسْتِلامَ الرُّكْنَيْنِ اللَّذَيْنِ يَلِيَانِ الْحِجْرَ إِلاَّ أَنَّ الْبَيْتَ لَـــمْ يُتَمَّـــمْ

عَلَى قَوَاعِدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ.

> . . . ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿUmar narrated, from ʿĀʾisha (may Almighty God be pleased with her), wife of the Prophet (God bless him and grant him peace), that the Messenger of God (God bless him and grant him peace) said:
>> "Don't you see that when your people rebuilt the Kaʿba, they did not build it on Abraham's foundations, but made it smaller?"
>> I [i.e. ʿĀʾisha] asked: 'Messenger of God, why don't you rebuild it on Abraham's foundations?'
>> He answered: "If your people had not so recently left disbelief [I would do so]."
> ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿUmar said: ʿĀʾisha heard this from the Messenger of God (God bless him and grant him peace). I do not think that the Messenger of God would have avoided touching the two corners of

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and its strength. [. . .] Moreover, in those times, when travelling was still difficult, the pilgrimage helped to produce a mingling among the elite of the Muslim world: scholars on the way to Mecca would stay temporarily at places in the way, forming friendships with colleagues or themselves teaching in the local mosques;" see art. "Ḥadjdj," in: *EI*² iii, 31 (B. Lewis; A.J. Wensinck; J. Jomier).

the Kaʻba facing the *hijr*[3] except for the reason that it was not built on Abraham's foundations.[4]

This is the only *ḥadīth* cited by al-Bukhārī in his chapter on *tafsīr* in explanation of the verse, "And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House. . . ." (Q 2:127). While the *ḥadīth* affirms that Abraham laid the foundations of the Kaʻba, it does not directly interpret this verse.[5] The reference to the recent acceptance of Islam by the Meccans places this exchange between ʻĀʼisha and the Prophet during the last few years of his life, after the fall of Mecca in 8/630.

The account presents ʻĀʼisha in the essentially instrumental role of a careful transmitter, questioning the teacher in order to understand the meaning of the text,[6] with her accuracy corroborated by Ibn ʻUmar. However, several other versions of this *ḥadīth* (appearing in the chapter on the *hajj* as an explanation of Q 2:125–128) lack Ibn ʻUmar's comment, and one of these presents ʻĀʼisha as an "active interlocutor"[7] initiating the discussion. One version indicates that she related the account secretly to select Companions.[8]

Some of the variants of this *ḥadīth* have an egalitarian slant. In one version, ʻĀʼisha first asks the Prophet if the *hijr* is part of the Kaʻba, and then why the entrance to the Kaʻba is located high off the ground. To the second question he replies: "Your people did this so that they could let in whomever they wished and prevent [the entrance of] whomever they wanted." Then, he says that had he not feared that they would reject any renovations, he would have

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[3] The *hijr* is the space enclosed by a low semi-circular wall on the Kaʻba's north-west side. Muslim tradition holds that Hagar and Ishmael are buried there. See Stowasser, *Women* 48.

[4] Al-Bukhārī vi, 12–13 (*K. al-Tafsīr*); no. 4124 [*Mawsūʻat al-ḥadīth*]. In the interest of clarity, I have often slightly adjusted the translation.

[5] Yasin Dutton notes that Mālik utilizes the quranic text in three main ways: direct citation, direct reference to the Quran without actual citation, and implicit reference. The latter category, which is the most common, includes issues dealt with because they are discussed in the Quran; see Dutton, *Origins* 62. The distinction between what is and is not an exegetical *ḥadīth* is thus not always clear.

[6] Al-Bukhārī i, 81 (*K. al-ʻIlm*).

[7] Leila Ahmed asserts that the Ḥadīth generally depict women as "active interlocutors in the domain of faith" rather than as "passive, docile followers;" see her *Islam* 72.

[8] This version begins: al-Aswad related: "Ibn al-Zubayr said to me, *ʻĀʼisha told you many secrets. What did she tell you about the Kaʻba?* . . .;" see al-Bukhārī i, 95 (*K. al-ʻIlm*).

included the area of the *hijr* within the Ka'ba, and lowered its
entrance to the ground.[9]

   This text seems to depict the discussion as taking place by the
Ka'ba itself. Other versions mention a feature that would presum-
ably have made it even more accessible to those wishing to enter it:
the construction of two doors,[10] in order to allow ingress through
one and exit through the other.[11]

   The Quran states that God instructed Abraham to build the Ka'ba
(Q 2:125–127). It is central to the *ḥajj*, and Muslims face the direc-
tion of the Ka'ba when performing daily prayers, in symbolic
affirmation of the oneness of God and the continuity of the mes-
sage of the Prophet Muḥammad with those of previous prophets
(Q 2:142–150).

   'Ā'isha's *ḥadīth* could be read as threatening to this symbolic struc-
ture. Nonetheless, al-Nasā'ī also cites it.[12] This indicates that al-
Bukhārī was not alone in regarding it as an acceptable report.
Moreover, it appears in the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Imām Mālik (d. 179/795)[13]
primarily as an account of the construction of the Ka'ba rather than
(as one might expect given Ibn 'Umar's comment) as a legal proof-
text.[14]

   Al-Bukhārī reports that this particular *ḥadīth* inspired 'Abdallāh
ibn al-Zubayr (d. 73/692) to rebuild the Ka'ba during his unsuc-
cessful uprising against the Umayyad dynasty, extending it to include
the *hijr*, and making an additional door.[15] By doing so, he could
symbolically challenge the hierarchical values implicit in the monar-
chy the Umayyads had founded. This move was apparently very
controversial, both at the time of Ibn al-Zubayr and for those clas-
sical exegetes who refrain from mentioning 'Ā'isha's *ḥadīth*. Instead,

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   [9] Al-Bukhārī ii, 382–383 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).
   [10] Al-Bukhārī ii, 383–384 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).
   [11] Al-Bukhārī i, 95 (*K. al-'Ilm*). The Quraysh claimed pre-eminence as "neigh-
bours of the House [of God]," i.e. the Ka'ba; see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i,
545. Entering the Ka'ba is not one of the rites of the *ḥajj*, but the Prophet had
prayed inside it, and some Companions elected to do so as well; see al-Bukhārī ii,
391–393 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).
   [12] *Tafsīr al-Nasā'ī* i, 186. Al-Nasā'ī died in 303/915.
   [13] For the purposes of this article, I am assuming that the *Muwaṭṭa'* is a sec-
ond/eighth century work. For a discussion of evidence for this, see Dutton, *Origins*
26–27.
   [14] *Muwaṭṭa'* 341–342 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). The *Muwaṭṭa'* lacks a chapter specifically devoted
to exegesis.
   [15] Al-Bukhārī ii, 384 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); i, 95 (*K. al-'Ilm*).

they discuss sayings affirming the centrality of the Kaʿba in sacred history and the cosmos.[16]

Those exegetes who do cite it relate that Ibn al-Zubayr's renovations aroused significant opposition. For example, the influential Quran-interpreter and senior Companion Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687) voices his objections,[17] and the people of Mecca leave the city for three days, fearing divine retribution.[18] After the Umayyad army puts down the uprising, the general writes to the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (d. 86/705), informing him about the renovations and asking for instructions. The caliph directs that the Kaʿba be returned to its previous form,[19] and says that he does not believe that Ibn al-Zubayr had in fact heard the report from ʿĀʾisha. However, when he is subsequently informed that the report is reliable, he says that had he known this, he would not have altered Ibn al-Zubayr's renovations.

About a century later, the ʿAbbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809 C.E.) tells Imām Mālik that he wants to renovate the Kaʿba as described in ʿĀʾisha's *ḥadīth*. However, Mālik dissuades him, pointing out that if the Kaʿba is perceived as "a plaything for rulers" people will no longer consider it sacred.[20]

Throughout these vicissitudes, the weight carried by ʿĀʾisha's reputation as a reliable transmitter is noteworthy. Whether or not the saying originally portrayed a direct comment on Q 2:127, it had an impact on mediaeval *tafsīr*, despite its theologically and politically problematic implications. Classical exegetes do not try to cast doubt

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[16] Issues discussed include the origins of the Kaʿba and the Black Stone, and how many prophets were buried in Mecca. See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* i, 546ff.; al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* i, 384; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i 308ff. Interestingly, al-Ṭabarī mentions ʿĀʾisha's *ḥadīth* in his history, when giving an account of Ibn al-Zubayr's rebuilding of the Kaʿba [*The History of al-Ṭabarī* xx, 176].

[17] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* i, 183.

[18] Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr* ii, 123. The issue seems to be the symbolic content of the renovations rather than opposition to any change *per se*. The Rightly-Guided caliphs ʿUmar (d. 24/644) and ʿUthmān (d. 36/656) enlarged the prayer area, and ʿUmar also had a wall with several gates built around the perimeter; see Mühlböck, Précis 60–61.

[19] ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān had the Kaʿba rebuilt, raised the mosque's perimeter wall and installed marble pillars from Egypt and Syria (see Mühlböck, Précis 61), continuing the trend away from small-scale simplicity.

[20] Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr* ii, 123–127; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* i, 182–184. Such a stance accords with other reports that Mālik considered it wrong to act upon a *ḥadīth* that was contrary to or unsupported by the practice of the people of Medina; see Dutton, *Origins* 43ff.

on it by suggesting that ʿĀʾisha had misunderstood the Prophet; they either avoid mentioning it, or admit its authenticity.[21] For them, ʿĀʾisha is a reliable source of Ḥadīth suitable for their exegetical purposes.

2   Saʿy: *The pilgrim's running between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa (Q 2:158)*

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِعَائِشَـــةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنَا يَوْمَئِذٍ حَدِيثُ السِّنِّ: أَرَأَيْتِ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَـــالَى﴿وَإِنَّ الصَّفَـــا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا﴾ فَمَا أُرَى عَلَـــى أَحَدٍ شَيْئًا أَنْ لاَ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا، فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: كَلاَّ لَوْ كَانَتْ كَمَا تَقُولُ كَانَتْ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْـــهِ أَنْ لاَ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا إِنَّمَا أُنْزِلَتْ هَذِهِ الآيَةُ فِي الأَنْصَارِ كَانُوا يُهِلُّونَ لِمَنَاةَ، وَكَانَتْ مَنَاةُ حَذْوَ قُدَيْـــدٍ، وَكَانُوا يَتَحَرَّجُونَ أَنْ يَطُوفُوا بَيْنَ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةِ، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ الإِسْلاَمُ سَأَلُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّــــهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَـــلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا﴾ .

> . . . [ʿUrwa] said: "When I was young, I once said to ʿĀʾisha, wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): 'How do you interpret the statement of God (blessed and exalted is He) *al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa are among the signs of God. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House [of God] or visiting it, to go between them*. . . . I don't see any harm in not going between them.'
>
> ʿĀʾisha said: 'On the contrary! If it is as you say, [the verse] would be . . . *it is therefore no sin for him if he does not go between them*. . . . This verse was revealed about the Anṣār. They used to visit [the image of] Manāt, which was near Qudayd, and they considered it forbidden to go between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa. After they had become Muslims, they asked the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) about this [custom] and God revealed: *al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa are among the signs of God* . . . [Q 2:158].'"[22]

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[21] Ibn ʿUmar's comment at the end of the *ḥadīth* shows that the question of whether ʿĀʾisha had heard it from the Prophet was raised in the early period. However, it is noteworthy that medieval exegetes do not refer to Ibn ʿUmar's words at all when discussing the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*; see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* i, 183. Medieval Sunni authors rarely cast doubt on the veracity of Companions; see Juynboll, *Muslim Traditions* 192.

[22] Al-Bukhārī vi, 19–21 (*K. al-Tafsīr*); no. 4135 [*Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth*].

This complex account depicts 'Ā'isha interpreting this verse based on her linguistic understanding of it, as well as her knowledge of the circumstances under which it was revealed. The youthful 'Urwa[23] confidently—over-confidently, as it turns out—expresses his understanding of the verse, building his interpretation on its most obvious meaning. Tension builds as the audience wonders how 'Ā'isha will respond, and dissipates as 'Urwa is put in his place by his more knowledgeable aunt. *Ḥadīth*s containing a conflict-arbitration motif in which 'Ā'isha and another prominent early Muslim disagree on an issue are sufficiently numerous that a few classical treatises on them exist.[24]

Al-Bukhārī relates statements ascribed to various Companions about the origins and status of *saʿy*, or ritual of running seven times between the mountains of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa. However, Anas relates that the people of Medina regarded it as a pre-Islamic rite and therefore ceased to perform it when they became Muslims. However, Q 2:158 was revealed, indicating that it was permissible to do *saʿy*.[25] In one text, Ibn 'Abbās states that *saʿy* was not a practice of the Prophet (*sunna*), but in another he relates that it is performed in memory of Hagar's running between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa in search of water.[26]

Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892) cites versions of the statements of 'Ā'isha and Anas, and his version of the latter's states that *saʿy* is optional.[27] It is evident that the origin of *saʿy* and its place in the *ḥajj* were disputed in the early Islamic period. The presence of this explanation of 'Ā'isha's in the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* indicates that it was part of the legal

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[23] The Successor 'Urwa is well known as one "who rarely went beyond ['Ā'isha's] teaching, and judged according to it;" see al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* i, 62. However, G. Schoeler expresses doubts about whether she actually was his original informant for the account of the Prophet's first revelatory experience; see his *Charakter* 87–89. This account is cited in al-Bukhārī's exegetical chapter; see al-Bukhārī vi, 450ff. (*K. al-Tafsīr*).

[24] Such treatises were written by al-Zarkashī (d. 795/1392) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505); see Spellberg, Politics 56. This *ḥadīth* is cited and commented on in al-Zarkashī, *al-Ijāba* 143–144.

[25] Al-Bukhārī vi, 21 (*K. al-Tafsīr*).

[26] Al-Bukhārī v, 118 (*K. Manāqib al-anṣār*); iv, 374 (*K. Aḥādīth al-anbiyāʾ*). Al-Bukhārī relates that Abraham is commanded by God to leave Hagar and Ishmael in the desert valley that would later become the site of Mecca. When they run out of water, Hagar runs between the mountains of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa seven times, hoping to see someone from the heights, and the spring of Zamzam miraculously appears. See ibid., 373–375.

[27] Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan* i, 208.

discourse on the *ḥajj* from a fairly early date. Al-Bukhārī himself evidently agreed with the view credited to ʿĀʾisha.[28]

The disagreement apparently stems from differing interpretations of the phrase, ". . . it is therefore no sin for him . . ." (Q 2:158). However, the requirement that all pilgrims perform *saʿy* asserts their equality as worshippers of God, while de-emphasizing tribal affiliations and traditions. This clearly has socio-political implications.[29]

Classical exegetes focus on the legal implications of the verse. It was apparently agreed that the Prophet had performed *saʿy*, but there was disagreement on the question of whether or not it was obligatory. Anas, Ibn ʿAbbās and his students Mujāhid and ʿAṭāʾ argued that it was optional,[30] and Ibn Masʿūd and Ibn ʿAbbās recited the verse as: ". . . it is therefore no sin for him if he does not go between them. . . ."[31] However, Ibn ʿAbbās is also reported to have considered *saʿy* as obligatory.[32] His position as a major exegetical authority for later generations meant that proponents of differing viewpoints tried to trace their ideas back to him.

An emphatic statement credited to ʿĀʾisha is also cited in most discussions of the issue: "The Prophet established going between [al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa] and it is not for anyone to abandon [the practice of] going between them!"[33] Sayings credited to Ḥabība bint Abī Tajrāh and "a woman" that they had seen the Prophet performing *saʿy* and heard him say that God commanded that it be done are also sometimes adduced as proof. Interestingly, the sub-narrator of these is Ṣafiyya bint Shayba,[34] who is credited elsewhere with transmitting a number of *ḥadīth*s on various topics from ʿĀʾisha.[35] The increasing citation of such sayings seems to reflect the tension between

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[28] Al-Bukhārī ii, 412 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).
[29] It is also possible that it had implications for gender relations, as *saʿy* involves both male and female pilgrims symbolically following the lead of a woman. Barbara Stowasser points out that Hagar is "a most powerful figure" in Islamic tradition, in part because in the *saʿy* pilgrims retrace her footsteps; see her *Women* 44, 49.
[30] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* ii, 49–50; al-Alūsī, *Ruḥ al-maʿānī* ii, 25.
[31] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* ii, 49; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i, 387. The Companion Ibn Masʿūd is a well-known exegete.
[32] Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* ii, 25; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i, 387.
[33] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* ii, 49–50; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr* ii, 178; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* i, 199; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i, 384.
[34] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* i, 199.
[35] Ḥabība was a Qurayshi woman who related *ḥadīth* from the Prophet Muḥammad. Ṣafiyya related from her, and from the wives of the Prophet and others, and in turn "many people related from her;" see Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 174, 303.

those scholars who used arguments based on *raʾy* (i.e. disciplined reasoning) in legal disputes, and those for whom a viewpoint could not be considered authentic unless it could be reliably traced back to the words or deeds of the Prophet.[36]

Jurists came to various conclusions about the legal status of *saʿy*. Mālik and al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) taught that anyone who had omitted to perform *saʿy* had to go back and do it. However, Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and some other jurists opined that while returning to perform it is preferable, it is also possible to compensate for having omitted it by sacrificing an animal. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/922) concludes that *saʿy* is obligatory and that any pilgrim who has failed to perform it must go back and do so, because the *ḥadīth*s make it clear that this rite was the practice of the Prophet. He also rejects the variant readings traced back to Ibn ʿAbbās and Ibn Masʿūd on the basis of the explanation credited to ʿĀʾisha.[37]

The text presents ʿĀʾisha as an exegete. She interprets the verse using her proficiency in the Arabic language and her knowledge of the historical context of its revelation. Classical commentators also tend to treat the text as an interpretation in its own right, rather than merely as raw material useful for their own exegeses. [38]

3   *Wuqūf: Staying at ʿArafa*[39] *(Q 2:199)*

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ خَازِمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: كَانَتْ قُرَيْشٌ وَمَنْ دَانَ دِينَهَا يَقِفُونَ بِالْمُزْدَلِفَةِ وَكَانُوا يُسَمَّوْنَ الْحُمْسَ وَكَانَ سَائِرُ الْعَرَبِ يَقِفُـــونَ بِعَرَفَاتٍ، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ الإِسْلاَمُ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ عَرَفَاتٍ، ثُمَّ يَقِفَ بِهَا، ثُـــمَّ يُفِيضَ مِنْهَا فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ﴾.

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[36] Spellberg notes that al-Shāfiʿī, an influential proponent of the idea that proof-texts should be traced back to the Prophet himself and not merely to a Companion, regarded ʿĀʾisha as a very reliable transmitter; see Spellberg, *Politics* 53–54.

[37] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* ii, 49–51.

[38] As he begins his grammatical analysis of Q 2:158, al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272) reminds the reader that he has already mentioned "ʿĀʾisha's *taʾwīl*;" see his *Tafsīr* ii, 182. "*Taʾwīl*, verbal noun of . . . *awwala* (derived either from *awl* "return" or from *iyāla* "putting into right condition, managing properly"), signifies explanation, exposition, or interpretation as it is literally related to the notion of "returning to its origin or source;" see art. "Taʾwīl," in: *EI²* x, 390 (I. Poonawala).

[39] "ʿArafa, or ʿArafāt, [a] plain about 21 km (13 miles) east of Mecca, on the road to Ṭāʾif, bounded on the north by a mountain-ridge of the same name. The

> ... Hishām narrated from his father ['Urwa] that 'Ā'isha (may God
> be pleased with her) said:
>> The Quraysh, and those who shared their religion, used to stay at
>> al-Muzdalifa.[40] They were called *al-Ḥums*.[41] The rest of the Arabs
>> used to stay at 'Arafa. When Islam came, God instructed His Prophet
>> (peace and blessings be upon him) to go to 'Arafa, stay there, and
>> then depart from there, as in the statement of the Most High: *Then
>> hasten onward from the place where all the people hasten onward* [Q 2:199].[42]

Mālik does not mention this *ḥadīth*, although he does cite a report
that mentions 'Ā'isha staying at 'Arafa.[43] This *ḥadīth* in al-Bukhārī's
Ṣaḥīḥ relates to the transformation of the *ḥajj* from a rite performed
differently by various tribes to one that de-emphasises the social sta-
tus of the participants. Here, 'Ā'isha speaks authoritatively on the
circumstances of the verse's revelation and its ritual implications, and
the view she expresses is in agreement with the opinions of other
Companions and their students.[44]

Al-Ṭabarī cites sayings of 'Ā'isha, 'Urwa, Ibn 'Abbās and others
indicating that the Quraysh believed that as they lived in Mecca,
they were entitled to remain within the city limits during the *ḥajj*.
Therefore, they performed the rite of *wuqūf* ("staying") at Muzdalifa,
while other Arabs did this at 'Arafa. This verse instructs the Quraysh
to follow the practice of other tribes and stay at 'Arafa.[45]

Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) relates that the Arabs, except for the
Quraysh and their descendants, used to circumambulate the Ka'ba
naked. As they did this, men and women from the Quraysh tribe

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plain is the site of the central ceremonies of the annual Pilgrimage to Mecca; ... [it]
lies outside the *ḥaram* or sacred territory of Mecca . . .;" see art. "'Arafa," in: *EI²*
i, 604 (A.J. Wensinck [H.A.R. Gibb*]).

    [40] "Al-Muzdalifa, a place roughly halfway between Minā and 'Arafat [sic.] where
the pilgrims returning from 'Arafat spend the night between 9 and 10 Dhu 'l-Ḥidjdja,
after performing the two evening *salāt*s. On the next morning they set off before
sunrise and climb up through the valley of Muḥassir to Minā;" see art. "al-Muzdalifa"
in: *EI²* vii, 825 (F. Buhl).

    [41] For various dimensions inherent in this important term, see Ugo Fabietti, The
Role Played by the Organization of the "Ḥums" in the Evolution of Political Ideas
in Pre-Islamic Mecca, in: F.E. Peters (ed.): *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*,
Aldershot: Ashgate, Variorum, 1999, 348–356, (= *The Formation of the Classical Islamic
World* iii); and S. Günther's review of this book, in: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and
Islam* 27 (2002), 575–582, esp. 580–582.

    [42] Al-Bukhārī vi, 35 (*K. al-Tafsīr*); no. 4158 [*Mawsū'at al-ḥadīth*].

    [43] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 318 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

    [44] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* i, 243; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i, 545.

    [45] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'* ii, 291–293.

would present them with clothing, and they would put it on. Also, the Quraysh would stay at Muzdalifa, while other Arabs stayed at 'Arafa. He relates several versions of 'Ā'isha's explanation, including one that makes the issues of social status underlying the question clear; the Quraysh apparently justified their staying at Muzdalifa by claiming that they were "neighbours of the House [of God]." Accounts from a number of Companions, including 'Ā'isha's sister Asmā' bint Abī Bakr are quoted, all of which agree with the interpretation credited to 'Ā'isha.[46]

These three accounts clearly differ in their presentation of 'Ā'isha, and this in part reflects the amount of controversy surrounding the issues they address. When 'Ā'isha discusses the most vigorously contested of the three issues, the status of the *saʿy*, she bases her view on linguistic and historical considerations, and expresses her position with eloquence and passion. However, when explaining the minimally controversial question of standing at 'Arafa, her explanation is brief and restrained.

It is noteworthy that 'Ā'isha does not trace her interpretation back to the Prophet in either of these accounts, and that even in the first *ḥadīth*, where she is presented as a transmitter of the Prophet's words, different versions imply varying degrees of subjectivity on her part. Even there, 'Ā'isha is not presented as one who merely retains knowledge and transmits it to others. However, classical exegetes tend to focus on her transmission rather than on her opinions, as is particularly evident in the discourse on the *saʿy*. This seems to indicate that the common representation of 'Ā'isha's role in *tafsīr* as chiefly instrumental[47] developed over time.

All three accounts deal with historical questions, and convey information about pre- as well as early Islamic practices. They depict 'Ā'isha as both preserving and giving voice to the collective memory of the Muslim community. It is known that pre-Islamic Arabia had some roles open at times to women that are in some ways analogous: those of poets and transmitters of a deceased poet's work,[48]

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[46] Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* i, 545.
[47] Spellberg, *Politics* 3. Mainstream Sunni accounts differentiate between those Companions who were experts in *tafsīr* and those who "related traditions relevant to questions of *tafsīr*," and place 'Ā'isha in the latter category; see al-Ṣawwāf, Early *Tafsīr* 140; al Fārūqī, *Cultural Atlas* 244.
[48] Schoeler, Writing and Publishing 426–429. His findings are applicable here, although he does not apply them specifically to women.

and 'Ā'isha's knowledge of poetry is presented as evidence of her guardianship of the communal memory. As 'Urwa narrates, ". . . I never saw anyone more knowledgeable [than 'Ā'isha] about the [circumstances of] the revelation of [quranic] verses . . . or poetry . . . or events in the epic history of the Arabs. . . ."[49] To some extent, these ancient Arabian roles seem to be reflected in the portrayals of 'Ā'isha in the texts discussed above.

4   *Women as ritual experts*

The portrayal of 'Ā'isha interpreting quranic verses that discuss the *ḥajj* rituals is part of a broader depiction of some women as authorities on aspects of the *ḥajj* and the *'umra*[50] found in several early mediaeval Muslim sources. Al-Bukhārī portrays a context that could reasonably be expected to foster the emergence of some women as ritual experts.

The city of Mecca is a sanctuary, where bloodshed, cutting down trees and disturbing game are not permitted.[51] Persons in *iḥrām* (i.e the pilgrim state of ritual consecration) are forbidden to hunt, fight, verbally abuse anyone, engage in sex, or wear face-coverings.[52] These restrictions fall most heavily on free males, whose social positions in relation to slaves and women depend in part on the fact that it is usually they who go to war. The ban on face-coverings, which are associated with rank, applies to both sexes.[53] During the *ḥajj*, relations between free persons and slaves, and men and women are temporarily placed on a different footing. The restrictions of *iḥrām* affirm women's identities as believers and, by forbidding conjugal relations, de-emphasize their roles as wives.[54] Traveling for pilgrimage provides women with a temporary break from many of their usual responsi-

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[49] Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* ii, 183.

[50] *'Umra*, the "lesser" or "minor pilgrimage" or *al-Ḥajj al-ṣaghīr*, is "one of the acts of devotion (*'ibāda*) forming part of the Muslim ritual;" see art. "'Umra," in *EI*² x, 864 (R. Paret-[E. Chaumont]). It is performed by pilgrims prior to or following their *ḥajj*, and also at any other time of the year.

[51] Al-Bukhārī iii, 37 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*).

[52] Al-Bukhārī ii, 358–59 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); iii, 28ff. (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*); see also Q 2:197.

[53] One explanation for men's veiling is that it prevented a warrior's enemies from recognizing him; see El-Guindi, *Veil* 119–121. A man's face-cover, then, would indicate his free status and prowess on the battle-field.

[54] This ban also temporarily shifted the balance of power between free men and their slave women.

bilities, an experience of community, the opportunity to gain or impart valued knowledge, and sometimes a measure of autonomy.

The *ḥajj* is obligatory for women as well as men who have the means to perform it. Al-Bukhārī depicts early Muslim women as full-fledged participants, learning and performing the rituals themselves. They perform the *ḥajj* alongside the Prophet, and are therefore able to attest to the details of his practice. Muslims often approach the Prophet with questions while making the *ḥajj*, in order to ensure that they are performing it correctly. After his death, people direct their questions to knowledgeable male and female Companions, both during the *ḥajj* and after returning home.[55] As women perform the *ḥajj* on behalf of their infirm or deceased parents, fathers as well as mothers,[56] it is evident that a woman's pilgrimage is accorded the same ritual value as a man's. Accordingly, it might be expected that women would be able to speak authoritatively on all aspects of the *ḥajj*, and their practice could be evidence of correct procedure for both sexes.

Al-Bukhārī, along with Mālik and Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), cites a number of *ḥadīth*s pertaining to the *ḥajj* that are traced back to various women. Most of these relate to four main subjects: performance of the *ḥajj* rites, the rules governing *iḥrām*, sacrificial animals, and allowable modifications of rituals. A few of these accounts obviously relate directly to exegetical matters.

When ʿUrwa argues that the first obligation of any pilgrim upon entering Mecca should be to perform *ṭawāf* (i.e. circumambulation of the Kaʿba), he cites (*via* ʿĀʾisha) as evidence the practice of the Prophet, as well as the practices of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, his father al-Zubayr, his mother Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr, and ʿĀʾisha.[57] ʿĀʾisha describes how the Prophet chanted the *talbiya* invocation,[58] and expresses her disapproval of pilgrims who wait until sunrise to perform the prayer following *ṭawāf*.[59] Umm Salama reports about performing this prayer outside the mosque.[60] Umm al-Faḍl[61] relates that

[55] Al-Bukhārī i, 93–94 (*K. al-ʿIlm*); ii, 470 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); iii, 2–3 (*Abwāb al-ʿUmra*).

[56] Al-Bukhārī ii, 344–345 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); iii, 46–47 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*).

[57] Al-Bukhārī ii, 411–412 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[58] Al-Bukhārī ii, 361 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). The *talbiya* is "the invocation made in a loud voice and repeatedly by the pilgrim when he enters the state of ritual taboo (*iḥrām*) for the Pilgrimage at Mecca;" see art. "Talbiya," in: *EI*[2] x, 160 (T. Fahd).

[59] Al-Bukhārī ii, 405 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[60] Al-Bukhārī ii, 404 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Umm Salama is a wife of the Prophet.

[61] Umm al-Faḍl, the mother of Ibn ʿAbbās, was a very early convert to Islam; see Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 193–194.

when pilgrims differed at 'Arafa about whether or not the Prophet was fasting, she sent him a bowl of milk in order to find out.[62]

Al-Bukhārī relates from Ḥafṣa, 'Ā'isha and another unnamed wife of the Prophet that the Prophet had permitted pilgrims to kill dangerous creatures such as scorpions and rabid dogs.[63] These statements may allude to tension between the quranic directive that pilgrims abstain from all aggressive deeds (Q 2:196–197) and Mecca's status as a place of safety (Q 3:97).

While pre-Islamic attire at the *ḥajj* draws attention to tribal status,[64] rules governing the dress and personal hygiene of persons in *iḥrām* underline the unimportance of social rank in the sight of God and the distinctive sanctity of the pilgrim state. As the Quran provides little detail about these aside from alluding to a ban on shaving the head (Q 2:196), their detailed articulation is based on the reported practice of the Prophet Muḥammad and views of various Companions.

Ḥafṣa relates that the Prophet would only shave his head after he had completed his animal sacrifice,[65] and 'Ā'isha's opinion that a pilgrim can scratch is cited.[66] Al-Bukhārī cites views credited to 'Ā'isha on the proper garb for both male and female pilgrims, as well her reported attire when on pilgrimage.[67] Interestingly, Mālik cites the reported practice of Asmā' bint Abī Bakr rather than that of 'Ā'isha, while Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845) relates views traced back to Asmā', "the wives of the Prophet," and 'Ā'isha.[68] Al-Bukhārī also relates that while the Companion Ibn 'Umar held that a pilgrim's body and clothes should be entirely free of any trace of perfume, 'Ā'isha's response to this view was to state that she would perfume the Prophet the night before he entered *iḥrām* and it would still be discernible

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[62] Al-Bukhārī ii, 421–422 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); Ibn Sa'd, *The Women* 145. Mālik also relates this, plus a report that 'Ā'isha used to fast at 'Arafa; see Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 353 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[63] Al-Bukhārī iii, 34–35 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*). 'Ā'isha forbade pilgrims to eat game; see Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 334 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Ḥafṣa was a wife of the Prophet and the daughter of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

[64] Al-Bukhārī ii, 425–426 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[65] Al-Bukhārī ii, 455 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[66] Al-Bukhārī iii, 40 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*). Both accounts also appear in the Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 336, 371 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Scratching the head could cause hair to break off, so the question of its permissibility is raised.

[67] Al-Bukhārī ii, 355, 358 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[68] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 306–307 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); Ibn Sa'd, *The Women* 49, 51, 179, 318. However, these pertain to female dress only.

the next day.[69] Mālik portrays ʿĀʾisha and another wife of the Prophet, Umm Ḥabība, holding the view that perfume is permitted for pilgrims, while two female Successors advocate this view in Ibn Saʿd, one referring to the practice of the wives of the Prophet, and the other to ʿĀʾisha's practice.[70]

A related issue that generates discussion is Ibn ʿAbbās' ruling that persons who send sacrificial animals to Mecca but choose not to go on pilgrimage themselves need to observe the restrictions of *iḥrām* until the sacrifices are performed.[71] This question seems to have arisen due to a literal reading of a quranic verse that discusses what a pilgrim who is prevented from reaching Mecca should do: "Perform the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumra* for God, and if you are prevented [from doing so], then send such sacrificial animals as is easy [for you], and do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animals reach their destination . . ." (Q 2:196).

ʿAmra bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, a student of ʿĀʾisha's,[72] reports that Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān, governor of the Iraqi cities of Basra and Kufa during the reign of Muʿāwiya (d. 61/680), wrote to ʿĀʾisha for her view on this issue. ʿĀʾisha's response is that when the Prophet sent sacrificial animals to Mecca he did not observe the restrictions of *iḥrām*.[73] Masrūq, a Successor, reportedly visited ʿĀʾisha in Medina and asked her about the matter.[74] Her view, which Bukhārī favours over that of Ibn ʿAbbās, is that the status of the pilgrim is to be reserved for those going on the *ḥajj* or the *ʿumra*.

Although al-Bukhārī portrays ʿAmra as a transmitter of only two out of six accounts traced back to ʿĀʾisha on this question,[75] both

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[69] Al-Bukhārī i, 165–166 (*K. al-Ghusl*); see also al-Bukhārī ii, 355–356 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[70] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa* 308–309 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 311, 313.

[71] ʿĀʾisha also reports about garlanding sacrificial animals and preserving their meat. Ibn ʿUmar and ʿAlī oppose the latter, saying that the Prophet forbade pilgrims to eat sacrificial meat for more than three days; ʿĀʾisha holds that this was only a temporary ruling meant to encourage the feeding of the poor of the district; see al-Bukhārī ii, 442–444 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); and id., vii, 336–337 (*K. al-Aḍāḥī*).

[72] ʿAmra is an important source for Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), an expert of Ḥadīth and a historian who played a leading role in the development of Ḥadīth (*awwal man asnada l-ḥadīth* and *awwal man dawwana l-ḥadīth*; see *GAS* i, 280); and for Mālik; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* iv, 508.

[73] Al-Bukhārī ii, 442 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). This text, also *via* ʿAmra, appears in the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* 320 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[74] Al-Bukhārī vii, 334 (*K. al-Aḍāḥī*). Masrūq, a well-known Kūfan student of Ibn Masʿūd, also related a fair number of *ḥadīth* from ʿĀʾisha; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* iv, 64.

[75] Al-Bukhārī ii, 440–443 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

of Mālik's accounts are traced back through ʿAmra. One depicts a male Successor asking ʿAmra about the issue,[76] providing a glimpse of the active involvement of a female Successor in an exegetical issue related to the *ḥajj*.

Unlike most accounts discussed thus far, those pertaining to the question of whether a person sending sacrificial animals should assume *iḥrām* give some indication of the setting within which the discussion takes place. While some other texts depict discussions of various issues taking place during the *ḥajj*,[77] and al-Bukhārī and Ibn Saʿd portray pilgrims of both sexes approaching ʿĀʾisha while on the *ḥajj* with questions on various legal and political topics,[78] the relatively egalitarian ethos of the pilgrimage might be expected to permit such interaction. However, rather surprisingly, these accounts are set in Medina, where ʿĀʾisha and the other wives of the Prophet are reported to have lived in seclusion.[79] Al-Bukhārī depicts an approach to seclusion that does not prevent or discourage male Companions and Successors from asking her opinions, nor ʿĀʾisha from making her views known.[80]

Significantly, her ruling on the question is sought not only by Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān, raised in a culture that permitted some women to act as guardians of the communal memory, but also the Iraqi Masrūq. While it is likely that some non-Arab converts brought negative attitudes toward women teaching or exercising authority[81] with them into Islam, others probably came from communities that at least preserved the memory of some women playing such roles.[82] It

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[76] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʿ* 321 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[77] Al-Bukhārī ii, 421–22, 432 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʿ* 309 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[78] Al-Bukhārī iv, 200 (*K. al-Jihād*); Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 48, 314, 315.

[79] Their lifestyle tends to be portrayed as domestically focused and separate from the realm of community affairs; see Stowasser, *Women* 118; Ahmed, *Women* 53.

[80] The mosque was a "hive of activity," and ʿĀʾisha's room adjoined it; see Ahmed, *Women* 55. Al-Bukhārī does not portray her living in isolation: Two Successors approach Ibn ʿUmar, who is sitting in the mosque by her room, and ask him how many *ʿumra*s the Prophet performed. They can hear her brushing her teeth. One then addresses the question to ʿĀʾisha, and they listen to her answer; see al-Bukhārī iii, 2–3 (*Abwāb al-ʿUmra*).

[81] Ahmed, *Women* 67–68; Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters* 53–55; Archer, The Role of Jewish Women 280–281.

[82] Doumato, Hearing Other Voices 187; Brooten, *Women Leaders* 1. Some sayings credited to female ascetics living in the desert in Egypt and Palestine in the third and fourth centuries C.E. appear in the *Apophthegmata*, a collection of ascetics' sayings from late antiquity; see Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters* 26.

is evident that al-Bukhārī depicts non-Arabs as well as Arabs eagerly seeking knowledge from female Companions.[83]

Al-Bukhārī relates a number of accounts credited to women regarding modifications of rituals for pilgrims in need of such accommodations. The Quran states that the *ḥajj* is a duty for everyone able to travel to Mecca (Q 3:97), and that all believers have the same right to worship there (Q 22:25). In practice, completing a succession of active rituals within a specified time period along with crowds of other pilgrims in the searing heat is not equally possible for all.

Accordingly, Umm Salama relates that the Prophet permitted her to circumambulate the Ka'ba (*ṭawāf*) while riding her camel when she was sick,[84] and 'Ā'isha and Asmā' bint Abī Bakr relate that the Prophet allowed women[85] to leave Muzdalifa early ahead of the crowds.[86] Mālik also cites the accounts of Umm Salama and Asmā', and one about a stout woman, Sawda bint 'Abdallāh, who took all night to perform *sa'y*.[87]

Some modifications of ritual pertain specifically to menstruating women, or those who have newly given birth. In the *Muwaṭṭa'*, a *ḥadīth* from Asmā' bint 'Umays indicates that such women can put on *iḥrām* and enter Mecca,[88] but *ḥadīth*s from 'Ā'isha claim that they should also delay performing both *sa'y* and *ṭawāf* until bleeding stops. However, al-Bukhārī cites reports from 'Ā'isha and Umm 'Aṭiyya to show that such women only need to delay *ṭawāf*.[89] Both Mālik and al-Bukhārī relate reports from Umm Sulaym bint Milḥān

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[83] As Leila Ahmed points out, "[t]o accept women's testimony on the words and deeds of the Prophet was to accept their authority on matters intended to have a prescriptive, regulatory relation to mores and laws;" see her *Women* 72.

[84] Al-Bukhārī ii, 404 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Al-Bukhārī also cites it in his chapter on *tafsīr* because it mentions the Prophet reciting *Surat al-Ṭūr* as he prayed by the Ka'ba; see vi, 357 (*K. al-Tafsīr*).

[85] Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās extend this to children and other "weak" pilgrims; see al-Bukhārī ii, 431 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[86] Al-Bukhārī ii, 432–433 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[87] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 349, 352, 369 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Sawda was the daughter of 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar. While Mālik's jurisprudence is based to a large extent on the reported judgments of 'Umar (cf. Dutton, *Origins* 32); he provides relatively few glimpses of female relatives of 'Umar relating *ḥadīth* or exemplifying the *sunna*. Ibn Sa'd has a few reports about Ṣafiyya bint 'Ubayd, wife of 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar on the *ḥajj*; see Ibn Sa'd, *The Women* 305.

[88] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 301 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Ibn Sa'd also reports this, see Ibn Sa'd, *The Women* 197. Asmā' bint 'Umays was an early Meccan convert to Islam; see Ibn Sa'd, *The Women* 196–199.

[89] Al-Bukhārī ii, 416–419 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'* 386–388 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

and ʿĀʾisha indicating that a woman who has performed *ṭawāf* on the day of sacrifice and then menstruates does not need to wait until she can perform the farewell circumambulation of the Kaʿba before going home.[90] Al-Bukhārī relates that Muslims from Medina did not accept Ibn ʿAbbās' verdict on this because it differed from that of another senior Companion. Therefore, they consulted several Medinan Companions about it, including Umm Sulaym.[91]

It is interesting to note that while Mālik's version of the narration of Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr about leaving Muzdalifa early is related by her freedwoman about a pilgrimage she had undertaken in her company, in al-Bukhārī's version the narrator is a male slave who had accompanied Asmāʾ. Mālik's chapter on the *ḥajj* contains an account of a pilgrimage undertaken by ʿAmra, narrated by the freedwoman who had accompanied her,[92] and several accounts that depict Asmāʾ and ʿĀʾisha leading groups going on pilgrimage, making decisions about when, where and how to carry out its various ritual components. Some such groups seem to have been composed of women only.[93] Significantly, this picture is more liberal than Mālik's legal view.[94] In such texts, ʿĀʾisha, Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr and ʿAmra embody correct practice, which is sometimes but not always referred back to the Prophetic practice.

5   *Women's autonomy and authority*

Paradoxically, this active and autonomous quality of their authority is muted in al-Bukhārī, despite his promotion of ʿĀʾisha as the pre-eminent female authority on pilgrimage. While he provides occasional glimpses of her practice, and (more rarely), that of her sister Asmāʾ, the focus is on accounts about what the Prophet said, did or allowed. Most such accounts credited to women are traced back

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[90] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʾ* 388–390 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); al-Bukhārī ii, 470–472 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Umm Sulaym was one of the earliest persons in Medina to accept Islam; see Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 277–283.

[91] Al-Bukhārī ii, 470 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[92] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʾ* 364–365 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

[93] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʾ* 307, 318, 370, 389 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Ibn Saʿd also depicts groups of women going on the *ḥajj*, see Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 303, 315, 318.

[94] According to Mālik, a woman can go on the *ḥajj* with a group of women if she had not made the *ḥajj* previously, and no close male relative is able to accompany her; see *Muwaṭṭaʾ* 399 (*K. al-Ḥajj*).

to ʿĀʾisha, usually *via* male Successors. To some extent, such differences are traceable to their methodological approaches. The *Muwaṭṭaʿ* is intended to record the *sunna* of the Prophet as exemplified by the behaviour of first few generations of Medinan Muslims; therefore, it includes a number of select portrayals of the actions of female Companions and Successors on pilgrimage.[95] But al-Bukhārī is mainly concerned with depicting the *sunna* through *ḥadīth* recounting the Prophet's own words and deeds.

However, such differences also seem to both reflect and support increasingly negative attitudes to women's autonomy or authority. While al-Bukhārī reports elsewhere that it came to pass that female pilgrims would travel alone and unmolested from Iraq to Mecca, as the Prophet had predicted,[96] he does not depict women going on pilgrimage unaccompanied by a male. However, his portrayal of the wives of the Prophet performing the *ḥajj* escorted by the prominent Companions ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf[97] is more liberal than another *ḥadīth* he cites, which forbids a woman to travel without a *maḥram* (i.e. a male she can never marry).[98] This is part of a general trend towards the proliferation of rulings that emphasize the differences between female and male pilgrims.[99]

While some women traveled widely in the early Islamic period,[100] progressively restrictive sayings ascribed to the Prophet were disseminated, and interpreted ever more narrowly. Although Mālik can make an exception to the ban on travel for a day and a night without a *maḥram*[101] for a woman who has not made the *ḥajj* previously and has none able to accompany her, by the time of Ibn Ḥanbal

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[95] The *Muwaṭṭaʿ* reportedly originally contained several thousand *ḥadīth*s, but Mālik edited out many, in order to leave only those he regarded as presenting a good example for people to follow. However, he is said to have been sorry he had not expunged more; see Dutton, *Origins* 19.

[96] Al-Bukhārī iv, 510–511 (*Bāb al-Manāqib*).

[97] Al-Bukhārī iii, 49 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*).

[98] Al-Bukhārī iii, 50 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*). Such men are a woman's father, father-in-law, uncle, son, step-son, brother, nephew, male relation through fosterage, husband, and (according to some) her male slave; see Q 4:23, 24:31; al-Shawkānī, *Nayl* iv, 297.

[99] For example, while the Prophet's wife Maymūna shaved her head after sacrificing (see Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 98), Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888) cites a *ḥadīth* that says women should only cut their hair (male pilgrims continue to have the choice of shaving or cutting); see Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan* ii, 155–157.

[100] Stowasser, The Status of Women 35.

[101] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʿ* 854 (*K. al-Jāmiʿ*).

(d. 240/855), a *ḥadīth* forbidding all travel for women unaccompa-
nied by a *maḥram* was in circulation.[102] The elevation of ʿĀʾisha to
the position of the preeminent female authority on pilgrimage mir-
rors the fact that the implementation of the *maḥram* rule would
severely limit the chances of many women to go on pilgrimage even
once in their lives,[103] much less perform it repeatedly and become
recognized as ritual experts.

This increasingly restrictive approach reflects to some extent the
gradual development of the classical view that ʿĀʾisha's defeat at the
Battle of the Camel (36/656) meant that women should stay at home
and avoid involvement in political affairs.[104] A woman traveling with
a *maḥram* could be perceived as symbolically remaining in domestic
space, as she was under the supervision of a male relative (although
such "supervision" might be more apparent than real if her *maḥram*
was her son or slave). ʿĀʾisha had reportedly departed on the *ḥajj*
when the caliph ʿUthmān was under siege, and while in Mecca dis-
cussed the unfolding political events with a supporter of ʿAlī. Then,
she and her co-conspirators went to Basra, where the battle against
ʿAlī's forces took place.[105] Significantly, Ibn Saʿd claims that the
Prophet forbade his wives to perform the *ḥajj* or the *ʿumra* after his
death, and that ʿUmar enforced this until near the end of his
caliphate.[106] The report that Sawda bint Zamʿa refused to perform
the *ḥajj* again after the Prophet's death, saying that she would stay
home as God had commanded her,[107] seems to be intended as a foil
for her co-wife ʿĀʾisha, who was reportedly haunted by regrets that
she had not acted thus.[108]

[102] Stowasser, The Status of Women 35.
[103] Al-Bukhārī relates that when the Prophet asked a woman why she had not
gone on the *ḥajj*, she replied that her husband had left for the *ḥajj* on one of their
camels, and the other was needed to irrigate their farmland; see al-Bukhārī iii,
50–51 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*). Women of such modest means needed not only a mount
and provisions, but also (according to al-Bukhārī) a willing *maḥram*. If their men
had already made the *ḥajj*, one wonders how many would be ready to expend their
meager resources to go again for their women's sake.
[104] Spellberg, *Politics* 105–106.
[105] Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 312; Brockelmann, *History* 66–67.
[106] Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 146–148. Stowasser suggests that such texts "may per-
haps signify an early Islamic, but post-Muhammadan, attempt to exclude women
from participation in the pilgrimage;" see Stowasser, *Women* 180–181, no. 51.
[107] Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 41.
[108] Ibn Saʿd, *The Women* 52, 56.

While 'Ā'isha's leading role in the Battle of the Camel apparently did not call her status as an authority into question for Mālik, by al-Bukhārī's time this had evidently become an issue.[109] Al-Bukhārī is able to valorize 'Ā'isha's repeated pilgrimages and her transmission of numerous reliable *ḥadīth*s about the *ḥajj* while, at the same time, indirectly criticizing her actions on the battlefield:

> 'Ā'isha bint Ṭalḥa[110] related that 'Ā'isha, Mother of the Believers (may God be pleased with her) narrated:
>> I said, "Messenger of God, shouldn't we go on military expeditions and make *jihād* along with you?"
>> He replied, "For you women the most excellent and befitting *jihād* [is] the *ḥajj*, a *ḥajj* acceptable to God."
>> And 'Ā'isha added, "I did not pass up [a chance to go on] the *ḥajj* after I heard this from the Messenger of God."[111]

Ruminations of classical scholars on the larger meaning of 'Ā'isha's involvement in that battle reflect not only ongoing sectarian polemics,[112] but also socio-political and economic changes in the first few centuries of Islam and their impact on the scholarly elite's perceptions of women's "proper" place. Literary depictions of women fighting in war were gradually supplanted by images of women sending their men off to the battlefield,[113] and increasingly strict rules governing the seclusion of elite women were articulated.[114]

While many early classical texts point to the existence of a strong tendency to limit opportunities for female pilgrims to act independently and to temper the relatively egalitarian ethos of the pilgrimage,

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[109] Al-Bukhārī reports that when the Companion 'Ammār ibn Yāsir was exhorting the Kufans to fight on 'Alī's side, he said: "I know she is his [the Prophet's] wife in this world and the hereafter, but God is testing you [to see] whether you will obey him/Him or her;" see ibid., v, 76–77 (*Bāb Faḍā'il aṣḥāb al-nabī*) [In the Arabic original, it is unclear whether "him" refers to the Prophet or to God]. For an account of other similar texts, see Spellberg, *Politics* 109–113.

[110] Ironically, 'Ā'isha bint Ṭalḥa's father was a leading figure on 'Ā'isha's side at the Battle of the Camel.

[111] Al-Bukhārī iii, 49–50 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*). For Mālik, striving to perform a *ḥajj* acceptable to God is gender-neutral; see *Muwaṭṭa* 326 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). Al-Bukhārī reports that 'Ā'isha took part in *jihād*; see iv, 85–86 (*K. al-Jihād*).

[112] Spellberg, *Politics* 101ff.

[113] Roded, *Women* 47–48.

[114] "The elite women of the 'Abbāsid period (132–656/750–1258) . . . lived lives in imperial Baghdad defined by their strict separation from the male sphere of action. . . . Muslim male scholars could not fail to have been influenced by the emergence of a very different Islamic *status quo* for their female coreligionists;" see Spellberg, *Politics* 12.

these present only one side of what appears to have been an ongoing controversy on women and pilgrimage. There are also indications of countervailing trends, both in the early Islamic period and following centuries. Al-Bukhārī cites *ḥadīth*s that refute the claims that menstruating women cannot performing *saʿy*, and that women may not circumambulate the Kaʿba along with men, indicating that such early attempts to radically differentiate women's and men's experiences of pilgrimage generated opposition, expressed in the language of memory. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 114/732) is related to have objected to the latter ruling: "*How can you forbid women [this] when the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) performed* ṭawāf *with men?*"[115]

A small number of women involved in the emerging mystical movements in the early Islamic period and later were able to lead relatively independent lives as "career women of the spirit," travelling unaccompanied and teaching men.[116] Some of these reportedly exercised their spiritual authority during the pilgrimage. For example, Fāṭima of Nīshāpūr (d. 223/838) is said to have gone on a number of pilgrimages to Mecca and Jerusalem, and to have given discourses on the meaning of the Quran while she was in Mecca to her student, the mystic Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246/861). Al-Sulamī's praise of her[117] indicates that, for some Sufis at least, the image of the autonomous female pilgrim exercising religious authority could be celebrated, and did not have to be confined to ʿĀʾisha.

While the vast majority of women would not have been able to achieve the independence of Fāṭima of Nīshāpūr, the proliferation of *ḥadīth*s specifying various time-periods for which a woman can travel without a *maḥram*,[118] and the ongoing debate on this issue and the various conclusions reached by scholars about it[119] probably indicates that while the "orthodox" scholars made repeated attempts to control the movements of female pilgrims, and perhaps the activi-

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[115] Al-Bukhārī ii, 399–340 (*K. al-Ḥajj*). ʿAṭāʾ, a well-known student of Ibn ʿAbbās, also related *ḥadīth*s from ʿĀʾisha; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* ii, 137.

[116] Cornell, Introduction 57.

[117] Sulamī, *Early Sufi Women* 142–145. Al-Sulamī died in 412/1021.

[118] Such as one, two and three days; see al-Bukhārī ii, 109 (*K. al-Ḥajj*); iii, 51 (*Abwāb al-Muḥṣar*).

[119] Scholars have derived varying rulings on the question from the *ḥadīth*s of al-Bukhārī and others, ranging from the very restrictive (a female pilgrim can only travel with a *maḥram* and, if married, with her husband's permission) to the liberal (a female pilgrim can travel alone); see al-Shawkānī, *Nayl* iv, 295–298.

ties of Sufi women in particular, some persisted in traveling without a male relative.

Al-Bukhārī's depiction of some women as ritual experts took shape in an environment where the status of the female pilgrim was a matter of debate, the memory of some female ritual experts at the dawn of Islam persisted, and, it seems, a few mystically inclined women of the era may have exercised religious authority while on pilgrimage.

6   *Conclusions*

The three exegetical texts that interpret verses on the *ḥajj* examined above are evidently part of a depiction of some women as authorities on the correct performance of the *ḥajj*. Al-Bukhārī's portrayal of women as authorities on the *ḥajj* is based to a significant extent on the *Muwaṭṭaʿ*. There, some women not only relate traditions about the *ḥajj* and actively participate in the legal discourse surrounding it, but also lead groups of pilgrims. As this picture is more liberal than Mālik's legal views, it is probable that it predates him.

Al-Bukhārī's portrait of women as ritual experts has a less dynamic quality, reflecting the development of more conservative attitudes. Yet ʿĀʾisha, whom he promotes as the preeminent female authority, takes an active part in controversies surrounding the *ḥajj* rituals, and her authority extends to the exegesis of select quranic verses dealing with the pilgrimage. Insight into the evolution of this portrayal of ʿĀʾisha can be gained by reading the exegetical *ḥadīth*s alongside those about pilgrimage that he does not classify as exegetical.

The three exegetical *ḥadīth*s examined above, and other *ḥadīth*s related by Mālik, Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī discussed above fall into three main categories: a) accounts of what the Prophet said, did or allowed; b) reports about a female authority's own view or practice; and c) short narratives centering around a conflict/arbitration motif. An examination of the *ḥadīth*s of each type indicates that those traced back to ʿĀʾisha, whether classified as exegetical or not by al-Bukhārī, fit into all three categories.

ʿĀʾisha reports the Prophet's words in her account of the construction of the Kaʿba, and also about issues such as killing dangerous creatures while in *iḥrām*, and allowable modifications of ritual. She describes various actions of his, such as his recitation of the *talbiya*. She gives her own account of the historical background of the

descent of the quranic command that all pilgrims stand at ʿArafa, and her own views are presented on the garb permissible for male and female pilgrims. ʿĀʾisha's practice of *ṭawāf* and her disapproval of pilgrims waiting until sunrise to perform the prayer following it are cited. Her refutation of ʿUrwa's view on *saʿy*, along with her response to Ibn ʿUmar's view that pilgrims cannot wear perfume and her opposition to Ibn ʿAbbās' opinion that persons sending sacrificial animals to Mecca need to put on *iḥrām* are all narratives structured around a conflict/arbitration motif. These three exegetical *ḥadīth*s on pilgrimage credited to ʿĀʾisha evidently belong to a body of material credited to various early Muslim women that presents her as a reporter of the Prophet's words and deeds and as an authority in her own right.

It is significant that examples of all three types of *ḥadīth*s are also found among the reports credited to other early women by al-Bukhārī. Umm Salama relates that the Prophet allowed her to circumambulate the Kaʿba on a camel, but goes on to describe how she elected to perform the prayer following this rite outside the mosque. Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr justifies leaving Muzdalifa early because the Prophet permitted this to women, and ʿUrwa includes her among the authorities he lists whose first act upon entering Mecca was to perform *ṭawāf*. Umm al-Faḍl with her bowl of milk is not only an "active interlocutor," but also arbitrates between conflicting views, as does Umm Sulaym. While some later medieval authors exalted ʿĀʾisha above her contemporaries by relating *ḥadīth*s highlighting her role as an arbiter of conflict among (usually) male Companions, it is evident that she was not the only woman to be depicted in this role in early sources.

While ʿĀʾisha is portrayed as a prominent female authority by Mālik, for al-Bukhārī she is preeminent among the women of her time. When the *ḥadīth*s traced back to women about the pilgrimage by Mālik, Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī are divided according to topic, the tendency of al-Bukhārī to prefer *ḥadīth*s credited to ʿĀʾisha is often in evidence. It is also evident that a number of topics pertaining to pilgrimage are associated with clusters of *ḥadīth*s traced back to several different women.

The *ḥadīth*s traced back to women on the subject of pilgrimage are all exegetical in the sense that they discuss a practice mandated in the Quran, some more explicitly so than others. However, few of

these are included by al-Bukhārī in his chapter on *tafsīr*, and all
except one is credited to ʿĀʾisha. Nonetheless, classical exegetes, par-
ticularly those who were apt to cite large numbers of *ḥadīth*s, some-
times cite the reports of other women as well, reintegrating them
into the exegetical discourse to a limited extent.

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IMAGE FORMATION OF AN ISLAMIC LEGEND: FĀṬIMA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD*

Verena Klemm

How does a person become transformed into the hero of a legend many centuries after his or her death? How does a biography become a hagiography? What are the literary devices and methods we can discover in Islamic literatures that were applied to form and further develop the images of significant personalities, and to keep these images alive over the centuries? While attempting to answer these questions, this study focuses on the formation of the legend of Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad.

1   *Fāṭima's place in Islam*

Fāṭima is given respectful attention everywhere in the Islamic world, for she is the daughter of the first and much-loved wife of the Prophet, Khadīja, and she had lived in his household.

Fāṭima married Muḥammad's cousin and companion ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and gave birth to four (or five) children. For the Shia, Fāṭima's husband and the two male progeny of this marriage form the beginning of a lineage of twelve Imams which ended in the middle of the third century A.H. It is precisely her *genealogical* function that seems to be the key to the special regard for Fāṭima among the Shiites. There, Fāṭima is honored as the maternal center of the Prophet's family and as the decisive link between the Prophet and the Shiite Imams, the religious-political authorities directly descended

from her. Every year in the month of Dhū l-Ḥijja, Shiites celebrate
the feast of *mubāhala* in remembrance of the event in the year 10
A.H., when, according to Shiite tradition, Muḥammad declared
Fāṭima, ʿAlī and their sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn to be guaran-
tors of the truth of his Divine mission.[1]

Fāṭima died in the same year as her father (11 A.H./ 633 C.E.).[2]
Early Sunnite history only contains isolated reports about her, but
the literature of Prophetic Tradition (Ḥadīth) grants her dignity and
honor. There, she is even elevated at times to a religious dimension.
She is characterized as the "Mistress of all Women of the Worlds,"
Sayyidat Nisāʾ al-ʿĀlamīn. She is also connected with and compared
to female models from sacred history as revealed in the Quran.
Despite her posthumous enhancement, however, the image of Fāṭima
in the Sunna remains somewhat undifferentiated and vague in many
respects.

It is therefore remarkable that we already encounter a fully devel-
oped legend of Fāṭima in the 4th century A.H. in early Shiite devo-
tional literature. In her spiritualized and dramatized biography,
historical, religious and popular, fairy-tale-like elements flow into one
another. Fāṭima's earthly and human characteristics include patient
endurance of suffering, piety, obedience and motherliness; due to
her transcendent characteristics she, "the Radiant" (*al-Zahrāʾ*), becomes
the bearer of a heavenly light, the royal mistress of paradise and the
merciless avenger of her son al-Ḥusayn and all Shiite martyrs on
the Day of Judgment.

How did Fāṭima's transformation into a transcendent personality
take place? In the following, we will address this question from a
literary perspective, while recent findings in the theory of literature
will be taken into consideration when relevant. However, this arti-
cle will not attempt to uncover the contours of the "historical" per-
sonality of Fāṭima from the written evidence handed down to us.[3]

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[1] See art. "Mubāhala," in: *EI²* vii, 276–277 (W. Schmucker); Massignon, La
Mubahala de Medine; *id.*, La notion du voeu 576.

[2] It is not my intention to present here as much material on Fāṭima as is avail-
able. Comprehensive historical and religious portraits of Fāṭima based on extensive
source research can be found in the article "Fāṭima," in: *EI²* ii, 841–850 (L. Veccia-
Vaglieri), as well as in the article "Fāṭema" in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* ix, 400–404
(J. Calmard). The last mentioned article summarizes and supplements the article
in *EI²*.

[3] Cf. the article in *EI²* (see n. 2). The historical information given there is based
on an extensive study of sources. It is still crucial to modern research.

Given the current state of knowledge on the origins, nature, and development of early historiography in Islam, a clear-cut separation of facts and fiction seems to be hardly achievable. The age of the information collected in the *akhbār* literature is uncertain. As Fred M. Donner has recently shown, the historical material collected by Muslim authors and compilers of the second and third centuries A.H. was marked to a great extent by the political and religious tensions in the post-prophetic Islamic community.[4] It is very probable that accounts of the life of a personality as central to competing religio-political claims as the daughter of the Prophet (and, for Shiites, the mother of the Imams) contain incidents concocted for reasons of legitimization.[5] As the true authors of the reports on Fāṭima are to date unknown, the perspective from which the respective records arose must also remain uncertain. Hence, for now it appears to be almost impossible to track down the historical Fāṭima beyond the main biographical dates handed down according to Muslim consensus.

In fact, it appears that the recollection of Fāṭima, which began to leave its traces in Arabic-Islamic literature in the second century A.H., is marked from the very start by literary fiction. As Wolfgang Iser has shown,[6] literary fiction works first of all by way of *selection*, i.e. the *erasure, supplementing* and *weighting* of a reality external to the text; this act has its inner textual correspondence in the (new) *combination* of the selected elements undertaken by the author. Through this creation of new semantic and discursive fields of reference previously still unformed and diffused, imaginary elements become inscribed in the text. The "de-realization of the real" (i.e. the decomposition of life-world reality) goes together with "the imaginary becoming real" (i.e. the "concretization" of virtual images or ideas located till then on a pre-linguistic level).[7] It will be shown how these creative acts become effective in a religious universe in the process of forming itself, or how the image of Fāṭima is formed in the sources and gains in religious significance.

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[4] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, part II: *The Emergence of Early Islamic Historical Writing*.

[5] Ibid. 114–122.

[6] Iser, *Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre* 24–51.

[7] Ibid. 23.

2 *Fāṭima in the Sunnite tradition*

In early Sunnite literature, we encounter information about Fāṭima in the well-known compilations of prophetic traditions, as well as in historical and biographical books. Here we will focus on the most important reports found in relevant works of the 3rd and the 4th centuries A.H.[8]

a) *Historical and biographical works*

The information in historical and biographical works is, in part, contradictory.[9] However, they encompass important genealogical and biographical dates:

> Fāṭima was one of eight children that Khadīja bore the Prophet; Fāṭima was probably the youngest of them since her name regularly appears last on the list of Khadīja's children (IH i, 202; YT ii, 20; ṬT, i.4, 1767). Fāṭima's year of birth is not mentioned.[10] It is known, however, that, in year 1 or 2 H, Fāṭima was married to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (IS viii, 22; ṬT i.3, 1273, 1367). In year 3, she bore their son al-Ḥasan. Only fifty days later, she apparently already conceived al-Ḥusayn (ṬT i.3, 1431; BA i, 404). Fāṭima gave birth also to two daughters, Umm Kulthūm and Zaynab (IS viii, 26, ṬT i.6, 3470). A son mentioned in Shiite sources, al-Muḥassin (YT ii, 213), who Fāṭima according to the legend lost prior to birth due to violence inflicted upon her, is mentioned only seldom in early Sunnite history.[11]
>
> All medieval authors agree that Fāṭima's death was in the year 11/633, but they differ concerning how many weeks or months she died after her father's passing (ṬT i.4, 1825; YT ii, 115; IS viii, 28f.; BA i, 402), and how old she was when she died (YT ii, 115; IS viii, 28.). Apparently, she would have been around thirty years old. The authors give somewhat contradictory details about the following issues:

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[8] The sequence for listing these sources is not in the first place intended to follow chronological criteria, or to judge the respective piece of information in terms of their age and origin. Until now, the question of the age of Sunnite and Shiite Ḥadīth has not yet been conclusively settled. Rather, in line with my goals in this study as outlined above, this listing is solely determined by an increasing measure of literary "denseness" of the Fāṭima image in these medieval sources.

[9] Cf. the art. "Fāṭima" in *EI*² (see n. 2).

[10] It is discussed extensively by Lammens on the basis of contradictory and vague statements in the sources, *Fāṭima*, 8–14; for an evaluation of Lammens' critical verification of sources on Fāṭima, see the "Fāṭima" article in *EI*² (n. 2), as well as Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins* 20–21.

[11] BA i, 402. According to ṬT i.6, 3470, this son died young; see also the *Fāṭima* article in *EI*² (n. 2) 843.

who washed her after her death; who was present at the burial, obviously held at night; and where she was buried[12] (ṬT i.4, 1869; YT ii, 115; IS viii, 28–30).

The central data from Fāṭima's biography are supplemented particularly in the historical works through isolated *akhbār* in which she plays a role, or in which she is mentioned:

The reports from this group begin with the "Biography of the Prophet" (*Sīra*) by Ibn Hishām (d. ca. 215/830). Ibn Hishām cites Ibn Isḥāq (d. 151/768), who, around 130 years after Fāṭima's death, wrote in the forties of the 2nd/8th century in Baghdad. The information given is subsequently repeated in part in other historical sources, where some of it is in turn supplemented by other reports (for example, in YT, BA, ṬT, IA):

> Fāṭima refuses, together with her young son al-Ḥasan, to plead for the protection of Abū Sufyān by the Prophet (IH iv, 38f.; ṬT i.3., 1623–1624). Fāṭima and the wives of the Prophet receive property and specific amounts of wheat after Khaybar was conquered (IH iii, 365, 367). When commanded by the Prophet, she cleans his bloodied sword after the battle of Uḥud (IH iii, 106; ṬT i.3, 1426). Al-Balādhurī names a narratively decorated report in which Fāṭima (after the battle of Uḥud?) takes care of the injured Prophet: she holds him in her arms, cries and wipes the blood from his face. ʿAlī brings water, and she washes his face with it. As the wound does not cease to bleed, Fāṭima burns a piece of straw matting and puts the ashes on the wound (BA i, 324). Al-Ṭabarī mentions that Abū Bakr refused to grant Fāṭima her inheritance (i.e. the oasis of Fadak) after the death of the Prophet. Fāṭima refuses to speak to him till her death (ṬT i.4, 1825).

This selection of *akhbār* may suffice to show that Fāṭima possessed no great significance for the recorders (or compilers) of the above-mentioned works.[13] As a daughter of the Prophet, however, Fāṭima is indeed granted a certain amount of attention. Her biographical data, as uncertain as they may be, were recorded. They were recorded in the same way as were the data of other women and men of the Prophet's family. Only in a few reports does Fāṭima stand at the center. In most cases, the mention of her appears to be determined by rather accidental historical coincidences. Some scenes from her life are handed down to us like fragments: they are cited anew by

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[12] Ibid. 844–845.
[13] See ibid. 843–844 for complete coverage of the historical events in which Fāṭima was involved.

later authors or are left out by them. In Ibn al-Athīr's "History",
for example, they shrink to a handful of *akhbār* (IA ii, 157f., 241,
323, 331; IA iii, 399).

Ibn Sa'd's Ṭabaqāt

The recollections of Fāṭima offered by early Muslim historians occur
in isolated dates and fragments, in remarkable contrast to the pre-
sentation of Fāṭima in another Sunnite work, the biographical lexi-
con *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* by Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845). The last
volume of this work is exclusively devoted to women who were
related or married to the Prophet, or met with him and passed on
reports about him. Here, we find for the first time a whole section
on Fāṭima in which individual traditions about her are brought
together and included in the chapter "About Women" (*Fī l-nisā'*,
19–30). These "splinters" of information are often presented as short,
well-rounded stories that show various narrative elements (such as a
plot, interlocking time levels, stressing story points, direct speech, dia-
logues etc.). Although the scope, the narrative means, and the respec-
tive choice of words vary in these individual reports, one can still
ascertain that they are based on only a few motifs taken from Fāṭima's
stages of life and personal circumstances. Presumably because many
of these events from Fāṭima's life were associated with Muḥammad,
one also finds them, in numerous variations, in the Ḥadīth, the lit-
erary medium of the legacy and actions of the Prophet. With regards
to the representation of Fāṭima, this makes it possible to position an
"open boundary" between the genre of biography and the (pre-
sumably older) Prophetic Tradition. In contrast, there is clearly less
overlapping with the previously mentioned historical works. This
finding may provide us with an indication that Fāṭima's biography
in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* oscillates between historical and religious mes-
sages. In order to clarify this, we will list here the most important
motifs used by Ibn Sa'd:

Courtship (IS viii, 19–21)
Abū Bakr and 'Umar are rejected by Muḥammad as suitable part-
ners for Fāṭima. 'Alī is, at first, too shy to ask for Fāṭima's hand in
marriage, but is encouraged to do so by the Prophet. According to
one report, the bride remains silent:

> 'Alī asked for Fāṭima's hand in marriage. The Prophet, God bless his
> and grant him peace, said to her: "'Alī speaks of you". She remained
> silent. Then he married her. (IS viii, 20).

'Alī can only raise an extremely low dowry (ṣadāq, mahr); according
to some reports, it is a tanned ram skin (ihāb kabsh) and an old cloak
(IS viii, 21). In other reports he sells a coat of mail or a camel to
raise the dowry (IS viii, 19–20).

Wedding (IS viii, 20–25)
The Prophet is extremely satisfied with the groom, 'Alī; a bridal pro-
cession takes place; the Prophet insists upon a feast for which some
friends provide food. The Prophet marks the start of the wedding
night with a festive blessing of the couple:

> In the night, as Fāṭima was taken to 'Alī, the Messenger of God said
> to him: "Undertake nothing till I come to you." The Prophet followed
> them immediately. He stood at the door, requested to be admitted,
> and entered. 'Alī was apart from her. The Prophet said to him: "I
> know that you fear God and his Prophet." Then he requested water
> and washed (maḍmaḍa, his hands?). Then he poured it back into the
> vessel. Then, with the water, he sprinkled her breast and his breast
> (IS viii, 24–25).

In a more detailed variation of this report, the Prophet says to Fāṭima:

> Oh Fāṭima, I have done everything to marry you to the best of my
> family (IS viii, 24).

After the wedding the Prophet makes sure that Fāṭima can move
close to him, into the house of Ḥāritha ibn al-Nuʿmān. Fāṭima con-
ceives her son al-Ḥusayn only 50 days after the birth of al-Ḥasan
(cf. BA i, 403–404).

Marriage (IS viii, 26)
Some reports about the marriage suggest that there was often conflict
between Fāṭima and 'Alī. Ibn Isḥāq also explains that 'Alī was nick-
named Abū Turāb because he had sprinkled dust on his head after
a fight with Fāṭima. The Prophet subsequently called him this name
(IH ii, 249–250).[14] In addition, it is reported that Muḥammad

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[14] For the various explanations given for this name in Sunnite and Shiite tradi-
tions, see E. Kohlberg's article "Abū Turāb." Kohlberg concludes that the original

supported Fāṭima after she complained to him about ʿAlī's rudeness (*shidda*). ʿAlī says:

> Herewith I renounce what I have been used to do: By God, I will never do anything ever again that you dislike!

Love of the Prophet for Fāṭima

Ibn Saʿd also reports on the similarity and close relationship of the Prophet and his daughter, as well as her personal privileges. A particularly impressive scene is narrated by ʿĀʾisha in a *ḥadīth* that, in several variations, belongs to the most frequently quoted reports on Fāṭima. The historian al-Ṭabarī quotes it as well (ṬT i.3, 1140):

> I sat with the envoy of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. Then came Fāṭima and she had a gait exactly the same as the Prophet. And he said: "Welcome, my girl." He sat her down to his right, or to the left. Then he whispered something to her and she cried. Then he whispered something to her and she laughed. . . . I (ʿĀʾisha) said [to Fāṭima]: "I have never seen a laughter that was so close to crying . . . did the Prophet confide something special to you, why are you crying? . . . What did he whisper to you?" She said: "I am not allowed to reveal his secret." (ʿĀʾisha) reported: After the Prophet of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—had died, I asked her [once again] and she said: He said: "Gabriel came once every year to me to present me the Quran. This year, he came twice and I can only assume the appointment for my death has been made. . . ." And he said: "You are the first of my family who will meet me [in the here-after]." She (Fāṭima) said: "And that's why I cried. Then [however] he said: "Aren't you contented that you will be the mistress of [all] the women of this community or the women of the worlds (*sayyidat nisāʾ hādhihi l-umma aw nisāʾ al-ʿālamīn*)?" She said: "And so, I laughed." (IS viii, 26–27).

Poverty of the Household (IS viii, 22–23, 25)

A further motif complex concerns the household of the couple; it was a household that was marked by poverty. One learns of the sheepskin that serves as the marital bed at night and as a tablecloth for meals during the day. The bed and the pillows are filled only with palm fibre (*līf*) (IS viii, 23). In the household there were two

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meaning of the appellation cannot be reconstructed, for it had been obscured by pejorative (Sunnite, i.e. Umayyad) as well as laudatory (Shiite) interpretations. In this context, Kohlberg also refers to the above cited tradition.

hand-mills, a water vessel and two water-skins (IS viii, 25). According to another widespread tradition, Fāṭima was forced to work very hard grinding grain. Despite the insistent pleas of Fāṭima and ʿAlī, the Prophet refused to give the married couple a servant, pointing out that hunger existed in the community (IS viii, 25).

Fāṭima's death (IS viii, 27–30)
A large group of biographical traditions deal with the death of Fāṭima. After the death of her father, Abū Bakr deprives her of her inheritance. Fāṭima is angry. She wastes away, but she eventually forgives Abū Bakr on her deathbed. From her deathbed, Fāṭima herself directs resolutely the preparations for her death: she washes and dresses herself, and allows herself to be laid in the direction of Mecca. She is the first who wants a closed bier. Fāṭima is buried at night at the mosque in al-Baqīʿ. Ibn Saʿd and other medieval authors, however, contradict one another concerning the people attending the funeral.

Salmā, Fāṭima's servant, relates the following about Fāṭima's hour of death:

> Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet, took ill at our place. As the day came on which she was to die, ʿAlī went out (*kharaja*). She said to me: "Oh servant, bring me water for a ritual washing." Then she washed herself [and it seemed to me] as if she had never washed herself so thoroughly. Then she said: "Place my bed in the middle of the house." I did this. Then she lay down and faced the direction for prayer (*qibla*). Then she said: "Oh servant, the hour of my death has come. I am washed and nobody is to lift the shroud." Then he (most certainly ʿAlī) carried her away and buried her after she had washed herself in such a way (i.e. without washing her once again). (IS viii, 27–28).

As can be seen from this list, Ibn Saʿd compiled biographical reports about Fāṭima, which mostly concern her roles as daughter, bride, wife and housewife (Fāṭima's motherhood, however, is not accentuated here; in contrast, Shiite Ḥadīth does elaborate on this). A further point of interest for Ibn Saʿd is Fāṭima's hour of death and her burial. The recording of a biographical date, which is made *exclusively* from the viewpoints of both kinship and religion, was not unusual. This can be seen in the biographical data of the 600 women mentioned in Ibn Saʿd's "Lexicon". These data include information on genealogy, weddings, and model Islamic behavior. In Ibn Saʿd's "Lexicon", these data represent central themes revolving around women other than Fāṭima. Some women, however, stand out particularly

due to their religious behavior. Examples of this are Asmā' bint Abī
Bakr and Maymūna bint al-Ḥārith, the last wife that the Prophet
Muḥammad married. Nonetheless, a few women come to the fore
also through their own independent activities: they convert to Islam
based on their own decision; they fight in battles; and they are, due
to their behavior, eventually considered as precedent cases in clari-
fying legal issues. ʿĀ'isha bint Abī Bakr in particular is accorded an
extremely differentiated description.[15]

Fāṭima's representation in Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*, however, shows a
certain ambivalence. Her personality is almost exclusively outlined
through her family relations, not through actions she undertakes her-
self. Within these contours, determined by social roles, her person-
ality is narrowed down and moves between conformity and rebellion
(i.e. against her husband), as well as between silent obedience (see
the information on the wedding) and individual, religiously motivated
will (see the scene of her death). As several of the traditions express
empathy between daughter and father, and his love and care for
her, Fāṭima's portrait, otherwise not entirely free of contradiction,
receives an aura of distinction. Thus it gains exclusivity and the high-
est level of Islamic legitimization.

On the linguistic-literary level, this elevation of Fāṭima finds its
most succinct expression in the title given to her by her father
"Mistress of all the Women," *Sayyidat al-Nisā'*. As it parallels Muḥam-
mad's title, *Sayyid al-Nās* ("Lord of All People"), it implies that Fāṭima
is his spiritual partner.

Thus, in Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*, a nascent *image* of Fāṭima appears.
This image has no transcendent characteristics. And yet it is obvi-
ous that the imperfect and the perfect, the historical and the imag-
inary, stand side by side even though a clear boundary cannot be
drawn between these two spheres.

b) *Fāṭima in the Ḥadīth literature*

The great Sunnite Ḥadīth compilations arose in the same century
as Ibn Saʿd compiled his *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*. Many of the prophetic
traditions collected in the Ḥadīth however are certainly much older.

Nevertheless, no consensus in Islamic Studies has been reached to
date as to how unequivocal an answer to the central question of

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[15] Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections* 21–38.

their age and authenticity can be approached.[16] Beyond the complicated research into the historical truth or falsehood of the *ḥadīth*s, attention was first directed towards their literary qualities only a few years ago. As Sebastian Günther, taking the findings of modern literary theory as a basis, has shown, numerous *signs of fictionality* reveal the marked parable character ("similarity") and hence the allegorical and symbolic composition of quite a number of *ḥadīth* narratives. He concludes that "[a]ll these *ḥadīth*s have a message to the recipient, which exceeds the relationship of reality experienced by Muslims in early Islamic times. By means of arranging—and fictionalizing— the elements of the world of experience of a former "ideal" generation [. . .], the recipient is left to himself to draw his conclusions and lessons from the happenings recounted."[17] Despite the historical scenarios unfolded in the *ḥadīth*s, these texts can hence also be understood as "literary" sources. This opens up "a framework of general ideas (or paradigms) in terms of which a wide range of experience— intellectual, emotional, moral—can be given a meaningful form."[18] Denise A. Spellberg and Barbara F. Stowasser have also used such a perspective on the Ḥadīth in their studies on the idealization of female figures in Islam.[19]

Thus, it is not surprising that the Ḥadīth is the most important medium for a motif complex about Fāṭima. These traditions form the literary basis for the Sunnite regard for Fāṭima. The nine most widely recognized Ḥadīth compilations among Sunni Muslims contain several hundred traditions altogether (including numerous variations) in which Fāṭima is mentioned.[20] It is interesting to note that these traditions seldom contain themes identical to those in the historical works (see above). On the other hand, we find almost all the

[16] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, summarizes the various research approaches and their limits in the introduction.

[17] Günther, Fictional narration and imagination within an authoritative framework 469.

[18] Cf. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* 123.

[19] Denise A. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past—The Legacy of ʿAʾisha Bint Abi Bakr*, Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1994; and Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾan, Traditions, and Interpretation*, New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

[20] For locating these *ḥadīth*s, use was made of the CD-ROM *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf: Hadith Encyclopeadia* version 2.1; see bibliography). Included in this search were the six canonical collections, along with Mālik's *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, Dārimī's *Sunan*, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*.

motifs or motif groups contained in Ibn Saʿd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*
also in Ḥadīth. The events portrayed in these *ḥadīth* texts were obvi-
ously fictionalized by using various narrative techniques such as plot,
dialogical structure, interlocking time levels, rhyming prose, etc.

The common motifs are: ʿAlī's courtship and dowry, the wedding cer-
emony, and the poverty of the couple. Fāṭima's death, however, is
only rarely a theme (e.g. Ibn Ḥanbal, no. 26333, al-Bukhārī, no. 3913).
Instead, there are *ḥadīth*s that include Fāṭima's sorrow as well as her
lamentation on the state of the community after the Prophet's death.
(e.g. al-Bukhārī, no. 4103). Through the accumulation of many vari-
ations, the particularly recurring *ḥadīth*s are those which stress the close-
ness between Fāṭima and the Prophet (Abū Dāʾūd, no. 4530): the love
he felt for her (Ibn Ḥanbal, no. 5449), the similarity between them
(Ibn Ḥanbal, no. 12213), and the very special, religiously significant
merits and privileges she was granted by him (e.g. Ibn Ḥanbal, nos.
2536, 5449, 11192, 111942). In particular the tradition also cited by
Ibn Saʿd dealing with Fāṭima's crying and laughing (see pp. 188 and
204) is repeated frequently. In the corresponding variations, Muḥammad
does not console Fāṭima with the promise that she will become "The
Mistress of [all] the Women of this Community" and "The Mistress
of [all] the Women of the Worlds" (al-Bukhārī, no. 3353; IS viii, 27).
Rather, he calls her the "The Mistress of [all] the Women of Paradise,"
Sayyidat Nisāʾ al-Janna (al-Tirmidhī, no. 3714)—"with the exemption of
Mary (Maryam)," as Ibn Ḥanbal adds (no. 11192). This *explicit* rela-
tionship to Mary, which shall become so important in later Shiite leg-
end, is only verifiable in two further variations of this tradition in the
literature of Prophetic Tradition.[21]

In the *ḥadīth*s considered here, Fāṭima's fight with ʿAlī is reduced to
one single scene, although it is rendered far more concretely (at least
in some variations) than in Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*. The occasion is ʿAlī's
intention to marry a woman from the clan Banū Hishām ibn al-
Mughīra, long an enemy of the Prophet (BA i, 403). Fāṭima seeks sup-
port against this plan from the Prophet. Presented with this opportunity,
the Prophet says a sentence that is cited again and again (also in vari-
ations): "*Fāṭima is a part of me, and whoever offends her offends me*" (al-
Bukhārī, nos. 4829, 3437, 3450, and passim; al-Tirmidhī, no. 3802;
Ibn Māja nos. 1988, 1989; Muslim iv, chap. 15, nos. 93–96 etc.; the
Arabic term used here for part is *baḍʿa*, which literally means "a piece
of flesh").[22]

A further motif that also has its place in the Ḥadīth is the famous
"garment scene": the Prophet covers Fāṭima, his son-in-law ʿAlī, and
his grandsons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn with a coat (*kisāʾ*), saying: "God

[21] Spellberg, *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past* 158–159.
[22] Cf. art. "Fāṭima," in: *EI²* (see n. 2) 843.

wishes only to remove you from the uncleanness, O People of the House" (Muslim no. 4450). This garment scene is a key motif, since the special religious-political claims of the *ahl al-bayt*, the extended family of the Prophet, is based on this idea.[23] Later, it flows into the Shiite interpretation of the *mubāhala* scene.[24]

In the Ḥadīth, Fāṭima is spiritualized. She is the flesh and blood of the Prophet in a physical and also in a spiritual sense. In a religious act, the garment scene, the Prophet also declares her as being "purified by God," and he assigns her to both his closest family and spiritual community. Furthermore, Fāṭima is connected to the text of Divine revelation, the Quran, through a *scriptualist connection* (B. Stowasser) which proceeds, in literary terms, as an intertextual opening of the Fāṭima image.

The honorable title *Sayyidat al-Nisāʾ* does not simply connect Fāṭima with Muḥammad (see above p. 190), but also with Mary. This is announced by angels, namely that God has "chosen her above (all) the women of the worlds" (Q 3:42). Thus Fāṭima's leading role for the "women of the worlds," and for the "women of paradise" stands in direct relation to Mary's dignity and, at the same time, surpasses it (see below). A further group of *ḥadīth*s assigns Fāṭima to a quartet of model women in the Quran: together with Mary, Āsiya and Khadīja, she stands as one of the "most virtuous" women of heaven (Ibn Ḥanbal, nos. 2536, 2751, 2805, 11942; al-Tirmidhī, no. 3813, etc.).[25]

Mary is mentioned several times in the Quran, from the earlier Meccan to the later Medinan suras. It is noteworthy that Mary is the only woman mentioned in the Quran by name. Sura 19 (whose almost tender, poetic rendering has been remarked upon)[26] is named *Sūrat Maryam* after her, and she is particularly mentioned in sura 3.[27] The Prophet Muḥammad showed special admiration for Mary. In sura 66, her merits are praised following those of Āsiya, wife of the Pharaoh.

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[23] Cf. the art. "Ahl al-kisāʾ," in: *EI*[2] i, 264 (A.S. Tritton).

[24] Cf. n. 1.

[25] Spellberg, ibid., chapter 5, on the basis of the variations between these and a few other traditions in Ḥadīth and Tafsīr, investigates astutely the textual traces of the conflict as to "the best women," above all with a view to the competition between Fāṭima and ʿĀʾisha. For Mary in the Quran, see Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾān*, chapter 7.

[26] McAuliffe, Chosen of All Women 19.

[27] For details see Smith/Haddad, The Virgin Mary in Islamic Tradition and Commentary.

Mary and Āsiya have in common their devotion to God and piety. Both women distinguish themselves through their motherliness, but are nevertheless untouched and chaste: Mary conceived Jesus through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In a similar way, Āsiya is considered pure since—as it is mentioned—her husband, the Pharaoh, is impotent.[28] While Fāṭima is physically a mother, her honorable role as the mother of the Prophet's grandchildren does not contradict the virtue of sexual purity.

Being mentioned together with Mary and Āsiya allows Fāṭima to share in their distinguishing qualities and merits. It is, however, remarkable that no more precise characterisation of Fāṭima's virtues occurs in the early Sunnite tradition. This is also the case in the exegetical literature (Tafsīr) where nothing further than the common and distinguishing features between Fāṭima and Mary as well as their hierarchical positions is mentioned.[29] Also, there both women are not brought into any kind of connection beyond the named ḥadīths (i.e. the ḥadīths of "The Mistress of [all] the Women," and of "The Quartet of Women"). But no matter how "superficially" Fāṭima's connection with Mary is dealt with in Sunnite tradition and exegesis, through the connection itself Fāṭima is religiously idealized. She is presented as exemplifying the ideal of womanhood praised in the Quran.

As Fāṭima is linked to the world of the holy Quran, she crosses the worldly boundary towards the transcendent. In the light of this religious enhancement, the significance of the biographical traditions cited in the Ḥadīth changes as well. These now point beyond the historical framework. By its quranic connotations, the earthly image of Fāṭima is clearly transfigured into a religious image.[30]

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At this point, one can conclude that, in the tradition of the second to fourth century A.H., the historical recollection of Fāṭima was only pale and fragmented. Nevertheless, traditions and textual fragments from Fāṭima's life were collated, ordered and newly arranged by Sunnite biographers and Ḥadīth compilers. Ibn Saʿd offers an initial contouring and articulation of the image of Fāṭima. Through

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[28] Cf. Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾān* 59–60 (also on Āsiya).
[29] McAuliffe, Chosen of All Women; see also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* iii, 262–264.
[30] See Iser, *Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre*, chapter 1.

the presentation of reports, almost exclusively concerned with Fāṭima's marriage and family life, arose the outline of a woman whose life was determined by her relationships to her relatives as well as the roles that grew out of these relationships. The outline encompassed a historical personality whose life was sanctioned by the love of the Prophet.

Beyond this, in the Ḥadīth, Fāṭima was projected into the textual world of the Quran. Incorporated into sacred history and transcendent references, the "historical" narratives concerning Fāṭima also appeared in a new, religiously tinged light. In the Ḥadīth, Fāṭima as a religious figure became a medium for projecting female virtue and piety. In terms of her earthly life, on the other hand, Fāṭima came to be seen as the youngest representative of a succession of exemplary Muslim women who run through sacred history. In this role, Fāṭima is honored by the Sunnite tradition till the present.

However, this marks the end of the matter. In Sunnite Ḥadīth, the corpus of traditions about Fāṭima remains limited, and the network of references loosely knit. The role promised Fāṭima by the Prophet, to be the "Mistress of [all] the Women of the Worlds" or even the "Mistress of [all] the Women of Paradise," is not defined and described any further, and somehow vagueness remains.

3   Fāṭima and the Shia

Fāṭima plays a very different role in the Shiite milieu. By the 4th/10th century, we encounter a richly faceted and complex image of her in religious texts. This is the age in which Shiite scholars, mainly in the urban centers of Buyid Iraq, fostered an intense literary culture of collecting and transcribing traditional records, aiming at setting down their religious belief system in books.[31] At the center of this system stand the members of the Prophet's family who live on in the Imams, the religio-political authorities of the Shia descended from Fāṭima and her husband ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. An important aspect of the Shiite version of history is the succession of suffering and martyrdom. This corresponds to the factual marginality of the Imam within the political reality of the Muslim community.

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[31] Halm, *Shiism* 40–50.

Comparable to Christian literary history, Shiite Islam developed a literature of *vitae*, miracles and passions. In the Shiite books written at that time the religious qualities and virtues of the leaders are set out in the form of Ḥadīth. One genre that developed is the *maʿājiz*, which describe the miracles of the Imams. The *maqātil* genre probably flourished much earlier. Here reports on "violent deaths," particularly of the ʿAlids and their followers, were collected.[32] During the month of mourning, al-Muḥarram, stories and elegies about the violent death (*maqtal*) of al-Ḥusayn, Fāṭima's son, were recited in special lamentation assemblies (*majālis al-niyāḥa*) by professional storytellers and poets to an emotionally moved Shiite public.[33]

In connection with the flourishing of such literature, one comes across the first Shiite writings about Fāṭima. They date from the end of the 3rd and the 4th century A.H. and are not preserved. In the 4th century, however, such material became part of a few compilations that have survived. The first great Shiite compiler, the Iranian Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulīnī (or al-Kulaynī; d. 329/940–1), had already collected legendary records about Fāṭima in his a voluminous compilation of traditions, *al-Kāfī fī ʿIlm al-Dīn*.[34]

Another great theologian and devotional writer of the 4th/10th century is Ibn Bābawayh (or Bābūye) al-Qummī (d. 381/991), called al-Ṣadūq. He allegedly wrote over 300 books of which only a small number are preserved. Ibn Bābawayh was not only productive in regards to the Fāṭima legend. As Heinz Halm has remarked, he contributed greatly to the formation of the teachings of the Twelver Shia by his collection of evidence for the existence of the 12th Imam.[35]

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[32] According to Günther, *Maqātil* Literature, the various pieces of information on the killing of ʿAlids were collected already from the last third of the 1st/7th century on. These efforts were made initially above all by members of the ʿAlid family itself. The first written collections of *maqtal* accounts on individual "martyrs" date from the first half of the 2nd/8th century.

[33] Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islām* 152–155, incl. n. 34.

[34] Al-Kulīnī "is said to have worked for twenty years" on this compilation. The book, though mostly a collection of traditions of the Imams, was meant to be a guide to authoritative Imami doctrine in theology and *fiqh*. Thus it is arranged according to subject matter and tends to contain only those traditions which the author considered as reflecting orthodox teaching. Only exceptionally are the views and elaborations of Imami scholars quoted;" cf. W. Madelung, art. "al-Kulaynī," in: *EI*² v, 362. See also Halm, *Shiism* 42–43.

[35] Halm, *Shiism* 44.

It appears that Ibn Bābawayh played a similarly important role in the formation of the Fāṭima legend. Many of the Fāṭima *ḥadīth*s, taken from over a dozen of his books, are incorporated into the 110-volume work *Biḥār al-Anwār* of the Safawid mega-compiler al-Majlisī (see vol. 43). Ibn Bābawayh was very detailed in his reports about Fāṭima and unfolded her miraculous and, at the same time, sad life to an unprecedented degree. This allows one to contend that the Fāṭima legend, in its essential characteristics, already finds its completion in the works of Ibn Bābawayh.

3.1   *Fāṭima's legend: literary layers, levels, and motifs*

But how did this transition from a dispersed and diverse tradition to the legend of a saint take place? In the following, using Ibn Bābawayh's writings as a basis, some of the literary processes employed to effect this transition will be located.[36]

Viewed formally, it appears at first as if the Sunnite text tradition, in the way it had been recorded, underwent a renewed act of selection. One notices that a great number of the *akhbār* that were originally part of histories and annals have been eliminated. What remains as a result is, in particular, the biographical reports (as we encountered them in Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*) and the religious traditions as preserved in the Ḥadīth. However, the traditions reporting on Fāṭima's conflict with ʿAlī were not incorporated into this newly established corpus of traditions.

Nonetheless, the biographical traditions, reporting on the emphatic relationship between the Prophet and his daughter as well as on her religiously significant characteristics, are found again as a kind of "raw material" in the legend. These *ḥadīth*s are often dramatized and enriched metaphorically by further narrative and rhetorical revision.

> One example takes up the *ḥadīth* cited above in which the Prophet characterizes Fāṭima as a part from his own body (see above, p. 192): ". . . Oh ʿAlī, Fāṭima is a part of me and the light of my eye and the fruit of my heart. What saddens her saddens me, and what brings her joy brings me joy. And she will be the first from my family who will meet me [in the hereafter]. . . . And as for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, they are both my sons and offspring; they are the masters of the youth

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[36] I base the following mainly on the traditions cited by al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 43, from the books of Ibn Bābawayh.

amongst the dwellers of Paradise (*sayyidā shabāb ahl al-janna*) . . ." (IB, *Amālī* = MB 24–25).

Besides the rhetorical elaboration, the reports taken over from the Sunnite tradition are combined with religious topoi and motifs. This especially occurs on the basis of the biographical reports dealing with Fāṭima's wedding, marriage and death. These scenes are further elaborated upon, using fantastic motifs.

Often these are elements taken from folk fairy-tales, miracle narratives, or from topoi of the lives of saints—as also known in the Christian tradition: for example, the child speaking in the mother's womb and praying immediately after birth. Even if miracles confirming Fāṭima's saintliness are seldom told in early Shiite tradition, her reported ability to multiply food can be assigned to this motif group.

Such narrative elements are mostly incorporated into the legend through Fāṭima communicating with figures such as the angel Gabriel and the virgins of paradise. These also sometimes enter the scene as protagonists. One example of the diverse narrative and semantic metamorphosis of a scene is the well-known report of ʿAlī's shyness during courtship in the Sunnite tradition.[37] According to a Shiite tradition, ʿAlī says:

> I wished very much to marry Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. But I did not dare to say this to the Prophet. This moved my heart day and night, till I [eventually] went to the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. Then he said: "Oh ʿAlī!" I said: "At your service, O envoy of God." Then he said: "Are you wishing to get married?" I said: "The Prophet of God knows this best of all. When he wants to marry me to a Qurayshi woman, I fear losing Fāṭima."

Shortly after this event, ʿAlī is called to the Prophet:

> I hurried to him and found him in the room of Umm Salama. After he caught sight of me, his face radiated with joy and he smiled so that I could see the white of his teeth gleam. He said: "Be joyous, ʿAlī, for God the Almighty has complied with what I had in mind as to your wedding." I said: "How is that, oh Prophet of God?"
> He (the Prophet) said: "Gabriel came to me with ears of corn and cloves from heaven. He handed them to me. I took them and smelt." And I said: "What is the occasion for these ears of corn and cloves?" He said: "God the Almighty commanded the angels and all the other

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[37] See IS viii, 19–21 (see above, pp. 186–187).

dwellers of heaven to decorate paradise, with all its gardens, trees, fruits and palaces. And he commanded that it (Paradise) shall be fragrant and there arose many scents and pleasing fragrances. And he commanded his virgins of paradise to recite the suras *Ṭā Hā* and *Ṭawāsīn* and *Yā Sīn* and *Ḥm ʿasq*. Then he announced a call from underneath the throne: 'Today is the wedding feast of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may peace be with him.' Today I testify to you all that I have married Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad, to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib . . ."

Then God the Almighty sent a white cloud and let pearls, gemstones (*zabarjad*, lit: chrysolites) and rubies rain down upon them. Then the angel rose and strewed ears of corn and cloves from paradise. . . .

Then God commanded one of the angels of heaven, called Rakhīl—and there is no more eloquent angel than he—"Preach, O Rakhīl!" And he gave a sermon (*khuṭba*) the like of which the dwellers of heaven and earth had never before heard. . . . (IB, *Amālī* = MB 101–102).

Already the transposed beginning of a traditional report on ʿAlī's courtship and the marriage with Fāṭima may suffice to show the diverse new references that transform the biographical scene into a narrative, at once fairy-tale-like as well as religious. Even in the short example given here, the new levels of meaning in the Fāṭima story are almost limitless. Her story exceeds its earthly setting and is positioned more closely to other texts of crucial religious significance in Islam such as "The Biography of the Prophet" or even the Quran itself. Within these new fields of reference, however, the potential of further Islamic spheres is conceivable—ones which themselves in turn lead further. For example, through the reference to the so-called secret letters of the sura *Ṭā Hā* (Q 20), *Ṭawāsīn* (Q 27, "The Ants"), *Yā Sīn* (Q 36), *Ḥm ʿasq* (Q 42, "The Counsel" or "The Consultation"), there unfolds the entire course of divine creation and revelation for anybody knowledgeable in the Quran: the creation of the cosmos, the sun, the moon, the earth, plants, animals and human life, Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise, the stories of the prophets of the Old Testament (Noah, Moses, David, Solomon, Ṣāliḥ, Lot), the mission of Muḥammad, the significance of the Quran, the Islamic order willed by God, the rewarding of believers, punishment for infidels, the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment, and Paradise and Hell. In this way, the Fāṭima story is tied into the entire cosmic universe and sacred history of Islam.

The text is additionally enriched through the internal accumulation of symbols (ears of corn, cloves, rain showers, emeralds, rubies and white clouds, all of which stand for fertility, blessing and the

highest divine distinction). Narrative techniques (such as the inter-locking dialogue structure, the generation of fairy-tale-like images) allow the scenes related in these texts to appear clearly before the eyes of the listener or reader. Beyond the colorful images, a reli-gious truth arises whose center, for Shiites, is the marriage of ʿAlī and Fāṭima. In the continuation of the tradition translated above, the angel Rakhīl directly states its significance: out of this marriage comes forth God's evidence (ḥujja) for his creation, and that is the Shiite Imam (IB, Amālī = MB 103).

3.2 Fāṭima's female role

There is, however, a further layer of literary elaboration noticeable in Fāṭima's biography: Those scenes, which especially show Fāṭima in her female roles of daughter and wife, and which are also handed down in the Sunnite tradition, are taken up.

In the course of this new and highly complex Shiite narrative, Fāṭima now becomes the paradigm of the Islamic woman *par excel-lence*: she is the *caring* mother of her two sons, the *satisfied* wife, and the housewife who works herself *to exhaustion* (mostly at the mill):

> She ground the grain till she had blisters on her hands. She swept the house till her clothes were the color of dust. She stoked the fire under the kettle till her clothes were black. This caused her great harm (IB, ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ = MB 82).

The tender relationship between father and daughter is rendered narratively with just as much love of detail. In one report the Prophet repeatedly kisses Fāṭima so intensely that some of his wives would like to forbid it.

> "Always when I long for the scent of Paradise, I smell the fragrance of my daughter Fāṭima" is his explanation (ISH = MB 42–43; see also IB, Amālī; and ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā = MB 4).

As his daughter, Fāṭima hears the Prophet's teachings at first hand and with great devotion. The compiler al-Majlisī only cites a single "marital row tradition" in the volume dedicated to Fāṭima. Immediately following it, he quotes Ibn Bābawayh as saying that the report is dubious, because ʿAlī and Fāṭima were "too sublime" to need the Prophet to reconcile them (MB 42).[38]

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[38] Cf. Kohlberg, Abū Turāb 349.

In order to metamorphose Fāṭima into a superhuman woman, her female bodily functions and sexuality are removed. Fāṭima—conceived in Paradise (see below)—is said to be "a virgin of Paradise" (IB, *Amālī* = MB 4). As do many other Shiite compilers of *ḥadīth*s, Ibn Bābawayh stresses that Fāṭima, as the Prophet's daughter, did not menstruate (*Maʿānī al-akhbār* = MB 15; etc.). In bearing her children, she lost no blood (*Mawlid Fāṭima* = MB 7).

In particular, the parallels between Fāṭima and Mary with regard to sexuality and motherhood are now centrally featured: Mary has twenty names in the Quran, each one referring to one of her virtues. Hence, Ibn Bābawayh also gives Fāṭima twenty names. From these, the compiler al-Majlisī gives an account of the following common merits: both women were mothers—one bearing Jesus, the other the grandchildren of the Prophet. Like Mary, praised in the Quran for her chastity, Fāṭima kept her "shame protected," remaining chaste (Q 66:12; and IB, *Mawlid Fāṭima* = MB 50). As Mary, Fāṭima too is called "The Pure," *al-Ṭāhira*, and "The Virgin," *al-Batūl* (MB 16; IB at ISH iii, 357). The mysterious epithet "Mother of her Father," *Umm Abīhā*, which could remind us of the Christian title of Mary as the "Mother of God," does not seem to have been ascribed to Fāṭima in the Shiite tradition of the 4th century A.H.; it is, however, attested in Shiite traditions from later centuries.[39]

In the Shiite tradition, the comparisons between Mary and Faṭima as "The Mistress of all Women" occur increasingly often. Fāṭima's pre-eminence is, however, unchallenged: Mary is "The Mistress of all Women in This Life." Fāṭima though is "The Mistress in This Life and the Hereafter" (IB, *Amālī* = MB 24; variation in IB, *Maʿānī al-Akhbār* = MB 26).

Other names of honor given to Fāṭima in later times are "The Greater Mary," *Maryam al-Kubrā*, as well as "The Greatest Friend" (ISH iii, 357f.). These names come from a list of 89 names reported by the theologian Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) in his work *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*. The names differentiate and define Fāṭima's personality according to her moral and genealogical merits. Their significance as well as their number in relation to God's 99 names is quite obvious. In Ibn Shahrāshūb's list, there is also a series of names designating Fāṭima's aspects in the Hereafter—and so are the newly

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[39] Cf. art. "Fāṭima," in: *EI²* (n. 2) 845.

formed levels of her legend given by the Shiite tradition, as will be shown in the following section.

3.3   *Transcendent spheres beyond biography*

Honorable names like the "The Heavenly," *al-Samāwiyya*, and "The Shining," *al-Nūriyya*, or "The Lamentor before the Throne at the Last Judgment," *al-Mutazallima bayna yadai al-'arsh yawm al-Dīn* (ISH iii, 357), characterize Fāṭima in her celestial qualities and roles.

What is striking is not so much the light metaphor, which is the literary expression of her holiness and divine essence and is compressed into her most important name of honour, *al-Zahrā'*. Insubstantial spiritual light is generally of great significance in Shiite teachings of the Imamate, where it is granted to all Imams as a sign of divine guidance and knowledge. As Fāṭima is at the genealogical "coordinating point" of the system, it is not surprising that she also should be luminous. What is more remarkable is that Fāṭima's light (unlike the light of the Imam) is often related to the heavenly bodies. In the morning her light shines like "the rising sun," before sunset like "the shimmering moon," and in the night like "the glittering star" (*al-kawkab al-durrī*; ISH iii, 330).

To create an awareness of Fāṭima's transcendent aspect, the Shiite legend unfolds the imaginary worlds of paradise and Last Judgment. Ibn Bābawayh had already reported the story of Fāṭima's miraculous begetting in several short and fantastic variations. According to one short version, the begetting occurs after the Prophet received a date (or an apple, according to another version) from Gabriel during a journey to heaven. The date metamorphoses in his loins into sperm. After his return to earth, Khadīja conceives Fāṭima (IB, *Amālī* as well as *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā'* = MB 4). Upon her birth, a light radiates from her that illuminates the houses of Mecca and the entire earth. Maryam, Āsiya, and the virgins of Paradise wash Fāṭima with water from a spring in Paradise, cover her in a white, fragrant shawl and veil her with another one. The baby recites the Shiite creed. Joy reigns in heaven, the *ḥūrī*s congratulate one another on the birth of the child. A light shines, brighter than the angels have ever seen before (IB, *Amālī* = MB 3).

On the day of resurrection, Fāṭima rides on a camel of jewels and gems. A light dome rises itself over Fāṭima. She herself wears a crown of light as bright as "the glittering star" (*al-kawkab al-durrī*) on

the horizon. She is escorted on her right and left by 70,000 angels on both sides. Gabriel leads the bridles of the camel. He calls upon all the inhabitants of Paradise to lower their eyes. After the procession has reached the throne of God, Fāṭima is greeted by a voice. She herself calls God, her descendants, her friends, her Shia. God lets them all enter. The angels surround her with grace and Fāṭima leads them into Paradise (IB, *Amālī* = MB 219f.). Another version portrays Fāṭima in her role as "The Mistress of all Women." The Prophet foresees that Fāṭima will lead the believing women of his community into Paradise.

In another scene, Fāṭima carries the blood-soaked clothes of her son al-Ḥusayn, hangs them on the throne and pleads to God for justice (IB, *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* = MB 120). A *ḥadīth* relates that the Prophet promised Fāṭima that a dome of light will be erected for her. Al-Ḥusayn will come near, carrying his head in his hands, and Fāṭima's sighs will bring the dwellers of heaven to tears. The hour of vengeance has arrived. God will assemble the murderers and their accomplices. He will kill them man for man. Then they will be once again brought back to life and 'Alī will kill them once again. Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn will also kill them. The cruel alteration from fatal revenge and return to life continues till "no one from amongst our descendants remains who has not killed them" (IB, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl* = MB 221–222).

3.4 *Conflict structure*

By pointing out the conflict structure in conclusion, attention shall also be drawn to a further level of the legend-like elaboration of the Fāṭima tradition. In the Shiite narrative dealing with Fāṭima, it is clear that the historical conflict between the Prophet's family and the political successors of the Prophet is amplified and dramatized. Certainly, conflict structure and its arrangement belong to the fundamental scheme of every narration. However, for the conflict structure of legends duality and extreme intensification of the conflict situation are particularly characteristic. Mostly a fundamental opposition reigns between the saint (as representative of an order willed by God) and the Other, a force in which evil is personified.[40]

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[40] Cf. Ecker, *Die Legende* 196–197.

In the case of the Fāṭima legend, the "conflict" draws its material from the historical reports. As Sunnite tradition has it, Abū Bakr denied Fāṭima her inheritance (see above, p. 189; e.g. ṬT i.4, 1825). There are also reports suggesting that—after Abū Bakr was appointed as the caliph—ʿAlī and his like-minded comrades made their way to Fāṭima's house to discuss the situation. (BA i, 583, Shiite view in YT ii, 126).

Taking the Sunnite historical reports as a starting point, the legend transforms Fāṭima's life into an exemplary stage for the clash between the Prophet's family and an Islam deformed by earthly interests. This leads, in turn, towards a stage for the religio-political dispute between the Shiites and the Sunnites. Evil is already expressed through the ridicule of the Qurayshi women that Fāṭima is constantly subjected to. After the death of the Prophet, this ridicule is dramatically intensified. It is personified in particular by Abū Bakr and ʿUmar as well as by the mob in the background. The enemies deny the political rights of the Prophet's family. Fāṭima is at the mercy of Abū Bakr and his supporters. She is humiliated, cheated of her inheritance, and physically attacked. These physical attacks cause a miscarriage whereby the third grandson of the Prophet, al-Muḥassin, dies (MB 197–200). Despite the requests of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, on her deathbed Fāṭima refuses to pardon them for the injustice they have committed (IB, ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ = MB, 201–206).

The legend also places Fāṭima's crying, a motif often associated with female Islamic saints,[41] into the context of political developments after the death of Muḥammad. Fāṭima cries incessantly out of concern for the true Islam and the future destiny of her family. She swiftly pines away towards death in a sea of tears (MB, chapter 7, 155–218, and passim). It must be judged as a specific feature of the Shiite legend that the drama does not end favorably for the heroine in this life through the intervention of divine providence. As legends confirm the religious teachings they have as their background reference, a well-ordered end in favor of the saint is generally the rule.[42] In contrast, the legend of Fāṭima and her family is a Shiite martyr legend. Not in political reality, but rather at the Day of Judgment will Fāṭima, as the avenger of the ʿAlids and their followers, be victorious over evil.

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[41] Smith, *Rābiʿa the Mystic* 57.
[42] Ecker, *Die Legende*, chapters 3.5 and 3.6.

4 *Conclusions*

As indicated above, literary evidence shows that a coherent and meaningful narrative about the life of the holy woman, Fāṭima, was created from mere splinters of historical information and static biographical and religious images.

Reflecting upon the earliest Shiite traditional reports, one observes how the formation of the legend of Fāṭima initially occurred as a formal reorganization of existing (Sunnite) text materials: these reports were selected, adopted in part, supplemented, and merged into new narrative units, i.e. the Shiite *ḥadīth*s. From the perspective of an alternative religious historical vision, these Shiite *ḥadīth*s related anew the earthly story of Fāṭima.

Within the same movement, the narrative reached beyond the enclosed, narrow world of the Sunnite representation of Fāṭima. The Shiite narrative was able to establish countless far-reaching connections between Fāṭima and figures of the transcendental and imaginary worlds of Islam. Motifs and narrative devices taken from folk stories of the saints and from fairy-tales, once woven into the text, now turn the dense narrative (corresponding to the function of a legend) into a neat medium for conveying Shiite teachings to a wide circle of believers.

In both types of texts, Ibn Saʿd's biographical lexicon and the literature of Prophetic Tradition (Ḥadīth), Fāṭima appears mainly in terms of her relationships to her father and husband; that is as a silhouette. Female ideals and religious qualities were projected onto her. The image that arose remained sketchy and indefinite.

In the Shiite narrative, however, these isolated biographical data about Fāṭima's life form a religious vita. Fāṭima is closely tied to her father, her husband and her sons. She becomes the center of a widely spun net of references to texts and myths. Her literary relationship to the Quran is virtually absolute. As was shown, the four "Wedding suras" alone unfold for Fāṭima and ʿAlī the blessings of the entire universe created and sustained by God. Because of their sanctity, God intervenes directly in their worldly lives. Their lives are exemplary for all people.

In this way, Fāṭima becomes the heroine of a religious narrative. She is given mainly tolerant and conforming characteristics. But in her deep sorrow after the death of her father, rage and aggression are mixed. In the Hereafter, Fāṭima is merciless, cruel, and revolutionary.

In her family role, she exemplifies love, motherliness, devotion and
obedience. In accordance with Islam, she is chaste, pious and uncom-
promisingly consistent. The figure of Fāṭima can hence serve as an
Islamic ideal for women. In her role as the apocalyptic advocate and
raging avenger, specific Shiite experiences and visions are crystal-
lized. Hence, she also becomes a role model in Shiite sacred history
and eschatology.

   To use the terms proposed by Wolfgang Iser, the "de-realization"
of Fāṭima's historical world was accompanied by the imaginary world
"becoming real." It appears as if the legend has merged both worlds.
Saints in legends dwell in both immanence as well as in transcen-
dence, and connect these widely separated spheres for mere mortals.
It can be assumed that historical fragments of Fāṭima's life—perhaps
the love between her and her father, perhaps her work at the mill—
have been preserved in the legend. But there they have another
meaning as they could ever have had for Fāṭima herself.

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NARRATIVES AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: AL-ṬABARĪ AND AL-BALĀDHURĪ ON LATE UMAYYAD HISTORY

Steven C. Judd

In the absence of contemporary sources, historians of early Islam must rely on later collections of *akhbār*, such as al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* and al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, to reconstruct events. These compilations preserve an immense quantity of information from a plethora of earlier sources. Unfortunately, they do not often reveal their compilers' authorial hands. Instead, the compilers reproduced material from earlier sources without synthesizing it into a single narrative. When judgments about historical causation, the temperament of central historical actors or the lessons to be learned from particular events do appear, it is often impossible to determine with certainty whether these are the compiler's own judgments or whether he faithfully reproduced the biases of his sources. One method for uncovering the hidden authorial hand of the *akhbār* compiler is to compare how different compilers reproduced material from a single source. Evidence of subtle editing, omission and embellishment of earlier sources can offer some insight into the compiler's agenda and the themes that shaped his retelling of events.

Stefan Leder applied such analysis to reports of the saga of Khālid al-Qasrī, preserved by al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H./923 C.E.) and al-Balādhurī (d. ca. 279/892).[1] He showed that the two compilers manipulated their sources to facilitate character development and narrative cohesion. He found that al-Ṭabarī embellished his sources to create a more complex image of Khālid al-Qasrī in order to produce a more compelling narrative. By contrast, al-Balādhurī's version of the same events leaves Khālid's character less developed. Leder

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[1] Stefan Leder, Features of the Novel in Early Historiography: The Downfall of Xālid al-Qasrī.

used differences between al-Baladhurī's and al-Ṭabarī's versions of
Khālid's rise and fall to argue that compilers of *akhbār* did not sim-
ply repeat the material they heard, but inserted their narrative voices
in subtle ways. His discussion of Khālid illustrates how editing by
later compilers shaped images of historical events and their causes.
However, Leder's findings also raise questions about the role char-
acter development served in the larger narrative of early Islamic his-
tory. Khālid's story is both a discrete tragedy and an episode in the
larger drama of the decline of the Umayyad regime. To understand
why al-Ṭabarī embellished Khālid's story, it is essential to contem-
plate how Khālid's demise fit into al-Ṭabarī's overall understanding
of Umayyad history and to examine how al-Ṭabarī and other com-
pilers developed different Umayyad heroes and villains.

A comparison of al-Ṭabarī's treatment of several key episodes in
late Umayyad history to al-Baladhurī's presentation of the same
events reveals that the two compilers understood the causes of the
Umayyads' decline and the lessons to be learned from their fall very
differently. The following analysis of their development of other late
Umayyad characters demonstrates that both al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī
embellished their sources, and also shows that they omitted mater-
ial that did not serve their narrative purposes. Since both relied heav-
ily on al-Madā'inī (d. ca. 225/840) as a source for the end of the
Umayyad period, this analysis will focus primarily on how they used
material derived from his writings. This examination reveals that al-
Ṭabarī manipulated his sources to emphasize the evils of personal
greed and tribal strife, which his narrative implies were the cause of
the Umayyads' demise. In some instances, al-Ṭabarī added mater-
ial to his sources to develop the characters of his heroes and vil-
lains. In others, he omitted details to render characters who were
not central to his theme more opaque. Al-Baladhurī manipulated his
sources in similar ways, but in the service of a different overall theme.
He focused not on tribal feuds or avarice, but on the moral cor-
ruption and heresy of late Umayyad figures. A comparison of their
exploitation of their sources reveals how al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī
inserted their voices in the chronicles without taking on the role of
narrator explicitly.

Contrasting citations of al-Madā'inī regarding three significant
aspects of the Third Fitna in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*
to similar citations in al-Baladhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf* demonstrates how
the two compilers developed characters differently to elaborate diver-

gent themes. First, differences between their presentations of the caliph al-Walīd ibn Yazīd's shortcomings that eventually led to his murder by supporters of Yazīd ibn al-Walīd in 125/743 reveal their divergent interpretations of his flaws. Second, discrepancies in their descriptions of Yazīd's entry into Damascus, his accession to the caliphate, and the sources of his support demonstrate how the two compilers categorized the conflicting forces in the Third Fitna. Finally, their explanations of Marwān ibn Muḥammad's motives for opposing Yazīd and his brother Ibrāhīm demonstrate how the two developed particular characters who served their thematic needs. The contrasting character development illustrated in this analysis illuminates both the thematic agendas al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī pursued and how they manipulated their sources to produce coherent explanations of the swift, chaotic decline of the Umayyad regime.

1   *Al-Walīd's shortcomings and the reasons for his murder*

Al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī both relied on al-Madā'inī as their major source for al-Walīd's biography. This is not surprising, since most accounts of his caliphate, including those of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967) and Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176), are derived almost exclusively from al-Madā'inī as well.[2] Because they relied on the same source, different historians recorded aspects of al-Walīd ibn Yazīd's troubled life in remarkably similar fashion. For instance, al-Ṭabarī, al-Baladhurī and al-Iṣfahānī all included al-Madā'inī's report describing al-Walīd's hatred for al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), who had urged Hishām to remove al-Walīd from the line of succession, and his determination to kill him after he became caliph.[3] Similarly, al-Ṭabarī, al-Baladhurī and the anonymous author of the *K. al-'Uyūn wa-l-hadā'iq* all included al-Madā'inī's description of al-Walīd's approval of Hishām's decision to exile the Qadarites to Dahlak.[4] These citations of al-Madā'inī, like many others, are virtually identical in al-Ṭabarī, al-Baladhurī, and other sources.

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[2] Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*.
[3] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1811; al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 511; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī* vii, 11.
[4] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1777; al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 517; anonymous, *K. al-'Uyūn wa-l-hadā'iq* 132.

Other episodes in al-Walīd's story, however, reveal significant differences in how al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī used material from al-Madāʾinī. Quotations of al-Madāʾinī's description of al-Walīd's disputes with Hishām's sons show evidence of al-Ṭabarī's editorial hand. In contrast to the embellishments Leder found in al-Ṭabarī's version of Khālid's demise, his description of this feud is abbreviated and omits material from al-Madāʾinī that al-Balādhurī retained. In particular, al-Ṭabarī left out accusations that al-Walīd tortured members of Hishām's family and the list of those whom he imprisoned. He also skipped the poem al-Balādhurī included about the oath being given to al-Walīd's sons, ʿUthmān and al-Ḥakam.[5]

Al-Ṭabarī acknowledged his abridgments, stating that he did not want to make his book any longer by dwelling on al-Walīd's libertine behavior.[6] Of course, no compiler of *akhbār* included every datum at his disposal and each had to decide what material was expendable. Unfortunately, they seldom offered their readers insights about how they determined what to include and what to discard. Thanks to al-Balādhurī's preservation of those parts of al-Madāʾinī that al-Ṭabarī considered superfluous, his criteria for choosing material from al-Madāʾinī can be uncovered. His choices reveal a great deal about his understanding of al-Walīd's flaws and the reasons he inspired so much hostility.

Most of the material al-Tabarī excluded is poetry, a significant quantity of which al-Walīd himself composed. Other sources testify to al-Walīd's reputation as a patron of poets and as a poet in his own right.[7] Al-Walīd's poetry covers a variety of topics, including some of political and religious significance, but much of it is devoted to wine and women. Given the quantity of poetry attributed to al-Walīd and its diverse themes, one might conclude that al-Ṭabarī simply exhibited a chronicler's healthy aversion to poetry, an aversion not shared by al-Balādhurī. However, al-Ṭabarī did not simply banish poetry from his narrative of late Umayyad history. Instead he retained poems that served his thematic purposes, such as al-Walīd's rhymed response to Hishām's withholding of his stipend and the tribal-themed poetry in the account of Khālid al-Qasrī's demise.[8]

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[5] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1776; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 515–516.
[6] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1775.
[7] See especially al-Iṣfahānī's *al-Aghānī*. See also Francesco Gabrieli, Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd 1–64.
[8] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1781, 1749–1750.

Al-Ṭabarī excluded poetry that did not contribute to the image of al-Walīd he intended. The most significant omission is al-Walīd's love poetry composed for Salmā bint Saʿīd ibn Khālid. Al-Baladhurī included extensive accounts of al-Walīd's fixation with Salmā and the voluminous poetry he produced to woo her and to lament his failures in this endeavor. Al-Iṣfahānī, whose work was more concerned with poetry than with the historical circumstances of its production, also preserved al-Walīd's love poetry for Salmā.[9] The story of al-Walīd's obsession with Salmā is soap-operatic in its complexity. Al-Walīd was married to Umm ʿAbd al-Malik bint Saʿīd, a descendant of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, but fell in love with her sister Salmā. He planned to divorce Umm ʿAbd al-Malik and sought Saʿīd's approval to marry Salmā instead. Hishām, al-Walīd's uncle and predecessor as caliph, heard of al-Walīd's plans from his own wife, another sister of Salmā. He scolded Saʿīd, asking if he would have al-Walīd swap one of his daughters for another, and dissuaded him from allowing the marriage. Despite this blow to his plan and, according to some reports, Salmā's failure to requite his love, al-Walīd remained obsessed with Salmā. He even resorted to a variety of antics to meet her, including a trip to her father's residence where he unsuccessful attempted to gain access to her quarters disguised as an olive oil peddler.[10] He merely caught a glimpse of his beloved (which inspired more poetry) and was spurned by Salmā and her servants, who exclaimed that they had no need for his oil (*lā ḥājata binā ilā zaytika*).

Al-Walīd had no choice but to await Hishām's death to fulfill his desire for Salmā, whose father surely could not refuse him once he was caliph. According to al-Madāʾinī, his first priority upon becoming caliph was to marry Salmā (*lam yakun lahu himmatun illā tazawwuj Salmā*).[11] Al-Walīd's romantic frustrations did not end with Hishām's death, since there were legal complications related to Salmā's divorce. Al-Madāʾinī does not explain the nature of the legal obstacle, or even name the party Salmā was divorcing, but some of the *fuqahāʾ*

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[9] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 485–490; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī* vii, 30–44; Gabrieli 30–32.
[10] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 486; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī* vii, 28–29. Al-Baladhurī places Saʿīd's residence in Fuddayn, in southern Syria, but al-Iṣfahānī identifies his residence as Fartana, a *qaṣr* near Marw al-Rudh.
[11] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 498.

argued that this unspecified problem would invalidate al-Walīd's mar-
riage to her. More significantly, they reminded al-Walīd that he was
the Imām and that, if he entered into union with her in these cir-
cumstances, the people would take it as *sunna* and adhere to it. Their
response suggests that members of the community granted the caliph's
actions normative force, even if the caliph had a checkered moral
history.[12] Ultimately, al-Walīd arranged for his nephew to marry
Salmā and subsequently divorce her so that he could marry her after
her waiting period. To complete the tragedy, Salmā died forty days
after al-Walīd finally married her.[13]

The story of al-Walīd and Salmā offers important material for
developing an image of al-Walīd's character. The hopelessly roman-
tic, drunken poet was not the role al-Ṭabarī intended for al-Walīd
in his narrative. Al-Ṭabarī not only excluded the voluminous poetry
the affair produced, but omitted any mention of Salmā whatsoever.
By contrast, al-Baladhurī's understanding of the forces driving late
Umayyad history required that he portray al-Walīd as a moral deviant
who also recognized that his role as caliph limited his freedom some-
what. Hence, the story of his obsession with Salmā and his ultimate
willingness to make extraordinary efforts to ensure the legality of
their marriage are important elements of al-Baladhurī's narrative. Of
course, al-Iṣfahānī was more interested in poetry than in history and
included the story as a vehicle for preserving the poetry attached to
it. Al-Iṣfahānī preserved other, more outrageous poetry as well. In
one of the antics he recounted, al-Walīd's drinking companions re-
minded him that it was Friday and suggested that he give a sermon
at the mosque. Al-Walīd gave an impromptu *khuṭba* in verse, despite
his inebriated state.[14] All three relied on al-Madā'inī's report as their
principal source for al-Walīd. However, the manner in which they
used this material and the portions they chose to omit created different
images of al-Walīd.

Other examples from al-Walīd's caliphate illustrate the impact of

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[12] Regarding the normative value placed on Umayyad practice, see J. Schacht,
Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence 190–213.
[13] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 485–490, 498–500; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī* vii, 30–36.
The need for her to marry another and then divorce suggests that she was previ-
ously married to al-Walīd, since only in circumstances of later marriages to a for-
mer spouse is an intervening marriage required. Nothing in the various versions of
the story, however, suggests that al-Walīd was successful in marrying Salmā at any
previous time.
[14] Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī* vii, 57–58.

the compilers' editorial hands as well. Al-Ṭabarī excluded a wide variety of other reports of al-Walīd's moral decadence. Al-Madā'inī described numerous encounters between al-Walīd and various singers and poets. Al-Ṭabarī offered only telegraphic descriptions of these diversions, but al-Baladhurī and al-Isfahānī included more complete accounts.[15] Some of these apparently minor anecdotes contain important hints of the compilers' perceptions of al-Walīd's fatal shortcomings. For instance, al-Baladhurī included a report from Hishām ibn al-Kalbī, upon whom al-Ṭabarī also relied, describing al-Walīd's reasons for retreating to the fortress at al-Bakhrā', where his final confrontation with Yazīd's supporters took place. According to Ibn al-Kalbī's account, al-Walīd went to al-Bakhrā' to drink and relax. There is no hint in the report that al-Walīd anticipated a showdown with his opponents there or that he was fleeing from Yazīd.[16] Al-Ṭabarī did not include Ibn al-Kalbī's explanation, leaving the reader to assume that al-Walīd fled to al-Bakhrā' to escape Yazīd's forces. Ibn al-Kalbī's report implies that al-Walīd's demise was related to his licentious lifestyle. Al-Ṭabarī preferred not to draw attention to this possibility.

Al-Ṭabarī's abridgment of al-Madā'inī's *akhbār* about al-Walīd creates a different image of al-Walīd's character than that found in al-Baladhurī and al-Iṣfahānī. Al-Ṭabarī could not ignore al-Walīd's moral depravity, but he did minimize it and select accounts of al-Walīd's immorality that supported the theme of his narrative. For instance, al-Ṭabarī included al-Madā'inī's account of al-Walīd's scandalous behavior on the pilgrimage of 116/734, when he brought dogs, wine and a tent that he intended to set up over the Ka'ba to convert it into a huge drinking venue. His version of al-Walīd's outrageous behavior is even more explicit than al-Baladhurī's. However, al-Ṭabarī connected this account to Hishām's efforts to persuade al-Walīd to abdicate in favor of Hishām's son Maslama. To emphasize the depth of the feud between Hishām and al-Walīd, al-Ṭabarī included al-Walīd's acerbic poetic responses to Hishām's requests.[17] The incident precipitated al-Walīd's retreat to his desert palace at al-Azraq and the final rift between him and Hishām.[18]

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[15] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1742–1746; al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 474–531; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī* vii, 1–84.
[16] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 533.
[17] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1742.
[18] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1741–1742; al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 476–477.

In al-Ṭabarī's narrative, al-Walīd's insolence toward his family overshadows his immorality and episodes demonstrating his moral depravity appear only in the context of family disputes. Al-Ṭabarī's editorial choices eliminate much of the complexity of al-Walīd's character. In other sources, his immorality, his tragic love affair, his penchant for answering correspondence in verse and his love of wine make him an intriguing, if flawed character. Al-Ṭabarī's narrative required a simpler al-Walīd with more transparent faults. Unlike Khālid al-Qasrī, whose story al-Ṭabarī embellished to develop his character and magnify his tragedy, al-Ṭabarī's al-Walīd is simply a cruel, arrogant man who serves as a generic villain. Al-Ṭabarī's development of other late Umayyad characters illustrates why he needed to reduce al-Walīd to such a caricature.

2 *Yazīd ibn al-Walīd's rise to power*

The motivation for Yazīd's revolt, which ultimately precipitated the collapse of the Umayyad regime, has been the subject of tremendous debate. Al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī both included accounts of Yazīd's efforts to build a coalition of Umayyad princes to remove al-Walīd from power. These reports reveal the complex relationships between Umayyad family members and provide a basis for tribal analyses of the regime's self-destruction.[19] Al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī also recounted Yazīd's accession speech after his victory over al-Walīd in very similar terms. The program Yazīd laid out in this speech has sparked a lengthy debate about policy disputes within the Umayyad regime.[20] Most analyses of the fall of the Umayyad regime follow these themes from al-Ṭabarī. Tribal or factional strife, the greed and ambition of capricious princes, or fatigue with Umayyad economic and military policies dominate these discussions.

However, al-Baladhurī included significant variations of al-Madā'inī's reports, as well as other accounts that suggest a different interpretation. In particular, al-Baladhurī's citations include religious themes

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[19] For the clearest articulation of the tribal interpretation of Umayyad history, see J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*.

[20] The strongest argument for interpreting the Third Fitna as a dispute over policy is M.A. Shaban: *Islamic History A.D. 600–750: A New Interpretation*. For an opposing view, see Patricia Crone, Were the Qays and Yemen of the Umayyad Period Political Parties?

that al-Ṭabarī omitted. In some cases, there is evidence that al-Ṭabarī abbreviated al-Madāʾinī's reports to minimize religious aspects of the Third Fitna. Minor omissions from accounts of Yazīd ibn al-Walīd's entry into Damascus, as well as variations in al-Ṭabarī's and al-Baladhurī's renditions of Yazīd's accession speech and the circumstances surrounding it reveal al-Ṭabarī's editorial hand.

In what appears to be a minor aside to the story of Yazīd ibn al-Walīd's rise to power, al-Ṭabarī's abridgements of al-Madāʾinī's report reveals his interpretation of the driving forces in Umayyad history. Al-Madāʾinī's description of Yazīd's entry into Damascus includes a brief story of his detour to Mizza after entering Damascus. The people of Mizza had already given their oath to Yazīd, except Muʿāwiya ibn Maṣād al-Kalbī, who was their *sayyid*. Yazīd apparently considered his support to be vital, since he journeyed on foot from Damascus to Mizza specifically to obtain Muʿāwiya's oath. Muʿāwiya initially treated Yazīd rudely and even scolded him for getting mud on his carpet. However, he ultimately offered his oath to Yazīd, who then returned to Damascus.[21] Muʿāwiya ibn Maṣād is a somewhat mysterious figure. He does not appear in the biographical sources, nor does he appear later in al-Madāʾinī's narrative. It is unclear whether he was related to Ibrāhīm ibn Maṣād al-Kalbī, one of the Qadarites whom the caliph Hishām exiled to the island of Dahlak, or to al-Walīd ibn Maṣād al-Kalbī, who was one of al-Walīd's murderers. From al-Madāʾinī's report, however, it is clear that Muʿāwiya and the people of Mizza were associated with the Qadarites, the religious movement advocating human free will.[22]

This connection between Mizza and the Qadarites is not evident in al-Ṭabarī's citation of this *khabar*, which obscures Mizza's connection to the Qadarites. Al-Ṭabarī omitted a parenthetical remark labeling the Mizzites as Qadarites that appears in other citations of the same report. Al-Baladhurī's version and the *K. al-ʿUyūn* both describe the oath from the people of Mizza as follows:

> The people of Mizza, most of whom followed the doctrine of Ghaylān Abī Marwān whom Hishām killed, gave their oath (*wa-bāyaʿa ahl al-Mizza wa-aktharuhum yaqūlūn bi-qawl Ghaylān Abī Marwān alladhī qatalahu Hishām*).

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[21] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1788–89.
[22] Al-Baladhuri, *Ansāb* vii, 521–522; Anon., *Kitāb al-ʿUyūn* 134–135.

Al-Ṭabarī omitted the reference to Ghaylān, a major Qadarite figure, entirely.[23] This omission may appear to be minor, but it alters the implications of Yazīd's support from Mizza profoundly. By identifying the Mizzites as Qadarites, al-Madāʾinī gave Yazīd's revolt an important doctrinal element. Other reports portray the Mizzites as major supporters of Yazīd in Damascus, making their motivations for joining his revolt particularly important. By omitting the reference to the Ghaylāniyya, al-Ṭabarī made the Mizzites appear merely as Kalbī tribesmen whose leader, Muʿāwiya ibn Maṣād, was reluctant to join Yazīd's cause. Consequently, al-Ṭabarī's account implies that Yazīd's initial success at Damascus resulted from Kalbī tribal support rather than Qadarite religious opposition to al-Walīd.

By itself, this omission may not seem significant. Indeed, parenthetical remarks frequently disappear from quotations of *akhbār* in later compilations. However, other examples of al-Ṭabarī's suppression of religious and moral elements in Yazīd's rise to power demonstrate that this minor deletion served a greater purpose. Al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī both relied on al-Madāʾinī as their primary source for Yazīd's accession speech. Their reproductions of his long and much-discussed sermon are virtually identical. The only significant difference is that al-Baladhurī omitted the final sentence of the speech, in which Yazīd asserts that Muslims have a duty to defy a caliph who disobeys God.[24] This omission is consistent with al-Baladhurī's implicit rejection of the legitimacy of Yazīd's revolt.

Earlier in his narrative, al-Baladhurī included another version of Yazīd's speech which he received from another source, Dāwūd ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, who was the *qāḍī* of al-Raqqa. This version is much shorter and is embedded in a short, but slightly different narrative of al-Walīd's demise. Dāwūd's account begins with a brief report indicating that al-Walīd went to al-Bakhrāʾ for his health, to drink milk. This contrasts greatly with al-Madāʾinī's suggestion that he went there to imbibe less wholesome beverages. The speech itself is much abbreviated, but covers the major themes of al-Madāʾinī's longer version. Immediately after the speech, however, Dāwūd mentions that the Ghaylāniyya gave their oath to Yazīd and proceeded

[23] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1878. Regarding Ghaylān, see Josef van Ess, *Anfänge Muslimischer Theologie*; idem, Les Qadarites et la Gailānīya de Yazīd III; and Steven Judd, Ghaylān al-Dimashqī: The Isolation of a Heretic in Islamic Historiography.
[24] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1834–1835; al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 542–543.

to Damascus. His rendition of al-Walīd's death at al-Bakhrā' also lacks the details of al-Madā'inī's account. The details it does include emphasize al-Walīd's immorality. The mob outside his door hurls stones over the wall at him, calling him a *fāsiq* (sinner) and accusing him of homosexuality.[25] This alternative narrative emphasizes different themes than al-Madā'inī's account. Here, Yazīd's supporters are clearly identified as Qadarites and the accusations against al-Walīd involve only moral offenses. Interestingly, al-Walīd's actual behavior is not reprehensible in this version of events. Instead, he drinks milk and dies while reading his Quran. Dāwūd implies that the Qadarites, hurling false accusations, killed an innocent leader.

Al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī also repeated somewhat different versions of Yazīd's letter to the people of Iraq, justifying his revolt against al-Walīd. Both relied on al-Madā'inī as their only source for the letter. Some of the variations are minor, but others reveal their different judgments of the two caliphs. In their presentations of Yazīd's letter, al-Baladhurī's editorial hand is most evident. His version of the letter omits short but important segments that, in al-Ṭabarī's rendition, provide justification for the revolt and explain al-Walīd's downfall. Specifically, al-Baladhurī omitted assertions that God had been pleased with the caliphs until the death of Hishām and that God had killed al-Walīd as a result of his evil behavior.[26]

By themselves, these omissions may seem minor. However, when viewed in conjunction with al-Baladhurī's abbreviation of Yazīd's accession speech, in which he also omitted justification for al-Walīd's murder, they suggest that al-Baladhurī was unwilling either to reject al-Walīd's legitimacy as caliph or to accept Yazīd's rationale for ousting him. Further evidence to support this conclusion is found in al-Baladhurī's citation of a report from al-Madā'inī in which al-Mahdī condemned al-Walīd's murder and asserted that he could not have been an unbeliever.[27] Al-Ṭabarī did not include this report. He was less concerned with Yazīd's doctrinal deviance than with the tribal narrative in which Yazīd's Yemenī allies fought against al-Walīd's Qaysī backers. In his narrative, the death of Hishām marks the end

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[25] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 536.
[26] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1843–1845; al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 535–536; for a close examination of the two versions of the letter, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious authority in the first centuries of Islam*, 126–128.
[27] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 535.

of tribal harmony. He implicitly condemns both al-Walīd and Yazīd for their motives, which have little to do with religion.

In al-Baladhurī, Yazīd clearly plays the role of the villain and his determination to oust al-Walīd stems from his identification with the Qadarites. In his account of al-Walīd's murder, al-Baladhurī included a *khabar* from 'Abbās ibn Hishām who asserted that Yazīd was a good man, except for his adherence to the doctrines of Ghaylān.[28] By contrast, al-Ṭabarī only obliquely acknowledged accusations that Yazīd was a Qadarite. Near the end of his account, after a verse in which Yazīd claimed descent from a *qaysar*, a *khaqan* and Kisra, as well as the Umayyads, al-Ṭabarī merely mentioned in the passive, "It was said that he was a Qadarite."[29] His genealogical pride takes precedence over his alleged religious identity in this brief report, as al-Ṭabarī's narrative required.

Al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī edited their citations from al-Madā'inī to serve different narrative purposes. Al-Ṭabarī excluded references to the Ghaylāniyya to maintain an emphasis on tribal themes. Al-Baladhurī included these references, but omitted some material that provided justification for Yazīd's rebellion. Al-Baladhurī's Yazīd was not fighting an unjust, illegitimate caliph, but was instead inspired by his heretical views to supplant the legitimate, if immoral, caliph. In neither narrative is Yazīd a particularly complex character. His ambitions simply spring from different motivations.

3   *Marwān ibn Muḥammad's motivation for revolting*

Al-Ṭabarī deviated significantly from al-Madā'inī's narrative in his presentation of Marwān's revolt, even resorting to his own narrative voice to explain the circumstances leading to Marwān's southward march. Al-Ṭabarī emphasized that Marwān revolted "on the pretext" (*muzhiran*) that he was seeking vengeance for al-Walīd.[30] Al-Ṭabarī's word choice, which appears in two separate places, suggests doubt about Marwān's real motivations. After his introductory remarks, he abandoned al-Madā'inī's narrative, turning to a report from Abū Hāshim Mukhallad ibn Muḥammad, a *mawlā* of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.

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[28] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 515.
[29] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* ii, 1874 (*wa qīla innahu kāna qadarīyan*).
[30] Ibid., 1870, 1876.

Abū Hāshim described Marwān's campaign in tribal terms. He labeled Marwān's supporters as Qaysīs and reported that the only prisoners Marwān killed were two Kalbīs, one of whom was al-Walīd ibn Maṣād, mentioned above, who participated in al-Walīd's murder.[31] He also included extensive details of the strategy and conduct of the battle between Marwān and Sulaymān ibn Hishām (ibn ʿAbd al-Malik), in the tradition of older *ayyām al-ʿarab* stories.

Al-Ṭabarī's narrative of the events leading to Marwān's seizure of the capital includes only one reference to the Qadarites. For this, al-Ṭabarī returned to al-Madāʾinī, quoting Marwān's letter to Ghamr ibn Yazīd in which he used predestinarian, anti-Qadarite rhetoric to persuade Ghamr to join his cause.[32] With this singular exception, al-Ṭabarī's description of Marwān's campaign is constructed around tribal themes.

Al-Baladhurī's version of Marwān's rejection of Yazīd and Ibrāhīm offers a radically different image of Marwān. Following al-Madāʾinī's narrative, al-Baladhurī described Marwān's deep aversion for Yazīd, Ibrāhīm and their Qadarite supporters. Al-Madāʾinī even suggested that it was Marwān who dubbed Yazīd "al-Nāqiṣ" ("The Inadequate One"). According to this report, Marwān coined the insulting honorific not due to Yazīd's reduction of stipends, as other explanations suggest, but rather because of Yazīd's deficient intellect (*kāna nāqiṣ al-ʿaql*).[33] His determination to avenge al-Walīd was not merely a pretext for seizing power, but derived from a deep-seated hatred for Yazīd and the deviant religious tradition he represented. Marwān labeled al-Walīd as the maltreated caliph (*al-khalīfa al-mazlūm*) and cursed Yazīd as a "Qadarī Ghaylānī" on several occasions. Marwān even described himself in the role of Muʿāwiya seeking vengeance for the death of ʿUthmān.[34] Unlike al-Ṭabarī, who emphasized Qaysī support for Marwān at Qinnasrīn, Ḥimṣ and other towns, al-Baladhurī portrayed Marwān calling people to join him to fight against

> this Qadarī who is the brother of the Qadarī Ghaylānī who stole the affairs of the people [the caliphate], the one who ordered heresy and straying from the right path (*hādhā l-qadarī akhī l-qadarī l-ghaylānī l-mubtazz li-umūr al-nās al-āmir bi-l-bidʿa wa-l-ḍalāla*).

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[31] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* ii, 1876–1877.
[32] Ibid., 1850–1851.
[33] Al-Baladhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 540.
[34] Ibid., 548.

Al-Balādhurī's account does not mention the tribal identity of the participants, much less emphasize tribal themes. Instead, Marwān declared that *jihād* against the usurpers was a duty for all Muslims.[35] His justification for fighting Ibrāhīm was religious rather than tribal. Details of the battles are buried much later in al-Balādhurī's somewhat redundant account of Marwān's caliphate.[36]

The extreme contrast between al-Ṭabarī's and al-Balādhurī's accounts of Marwān's revolt against Ibrāhīm illustrate both their different interpretations of Marwān's motivations and their different narrative agendas. In al-Ṭabarī, Marwān is a rather opaque character seeking power under the pretext of the traditional blood feud. In al-Balādhurī, he is a more complex character who expresses moral outrage at Yazīd's heretical views. Al-Balādhurī's Marwān is less concerned with avenging al-Walīd's murder than with removing the Qadarite usurper from power.

4   *Conclusions*

Both al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī relied primarily on al-Madā'inī to compose their narratives of late Umayyad history. However, they each shaped the material in different ways to create narratives that were consistent with their interpretations of the forces driving Umayyad history. The two historians came to different conclusions about the causes of the Umayyad regime's rapid decline. Al-Balādhurī interpreted the fall of the Umayyads as a consequence of moral depravity and heresy on the part of their leaders. Al-Ṭabarī sought to make sense of the Umayyads' disintegration by delving into ancient tribal disputes between Qays and Yemen.

Al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī used similar methods to shape their narratives around their chosen themes. In particular, both used character development to create heroes and villains and to emphasize particular virtues and flaws in the central characters in the drama of the Third Fitna. Their efforts to develop characters to suit their thematic purposes required that they manipulate al-Madā'inī and

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[35] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* vii, 548.
[36] Ibid., 561–565.

other sources available to them, omitting some reports and emphasizing others.

Al-Balādhurī used al-Madā'inī to create complex images of al-Walīd and Marwān. In his narrative, al-Walīd emerges as a tragic, shockingly hedonistic figure. Al-Balādhurī emphasized his personal faults and the religious implications of his inability to control his appetites. His drunkenness and taste for poetry and singing girls led him to be derelict in his caliphal duties. His tragic love affair with Salmā led him to contemplate assorted violations of moral and legal norms. His opponents frequently condemned him as a libertine, but did not accuse him of heresy. They simply considered him to be immoral beyond belief. At the same time, al-Balādhurī's al-Walīd displays flashes of competence and cleverness. His witty responses to Hishām's criticisms, his proclivity to respond to correspondence in verse, and his careful seizure of the reigns of power at Hishām's death reflect his acumen. Even his drunken, poetic *khuṭba* is not without theological content. In al-Balādhurī's narrative, al-Walīd develops into a complex character who was alternatively drunk, competent, and even occasionally pious.

Al-Balādhurī's version of Marwān is less complex than his al-Walīd, but he is not merely a power-hungry general. He is instead zealous in his hatred of the Qadarites and in his determination to restore power to more orthodox rulers. He is less disturbed by al-Walīd's moral deviance than by Yazīd's doctrinal deviance. His fierce antagonism toward Yazīd stems from his noble desire to safeguard Islam against heresy. In his role as a defender of orthodoxy, Marwān emerges as a somewhat sympathetic character.

Al-Balādhurī created a suitable cast of characters for his narrative of immorality and heresy. Al-Walīd is the orthodox leader whose immorality proves to be his fatal flaw. Yazīd is the heretic who takes advantage of discontent with al-Walīd's moral deviance to oust him. Marwān is the defender of orthodoxy who is determined to cleanse the caliphate of its heretical usurper. In al-Balādhurī's narrative, the twin evils of moral depravity and doctrinal innovation ultimately destroy the Umayyad regime.

Al-Ṭabarī had a different narrative purpose. He understood the downfall of the Umayyads as a product of primordial tribal strife and personal greed. In his interpretation, al-Walīd's moral failings fade into the background. Instead, his alienation from the Umayyad

family and his incitement of tribal feuds cause his downfall. Al-Ṭabarī presents al-Walīd as a simpler, if more obnoxious, character who fanned the hot coals of tribal tensions by acts such as his outrageous treatment of Khālid al-Qasrī. Al-Ṭabarī's embellishment of Khālid's story, described in detail by Leder, makes sense in the context of the general theme around which he built his narrative of late Umayyad history. Khālid becomes the victim of the perversity of tribal strife and the uncontrollable greed of al-Walīd's supporters, a tragic figure who helps al-Ṭabarī epitomize the evil consequences of tribal schisms and avarice.

In al-Ṭabarī's narrative, Marwān and Yazīd are not developed as central characters. Their personalities remain opaque and their motivations are largely tribal and personal. His thematic purposes required that neither be particularly sympathetic characters. Instead, they are merely personifications of tribal identities, which al-Ṭabarī considered to be a primary cause of the Third Fitna and the Umayyad regime's demise.

The differences in al-Ṭabarī's and al-Baladhurī's use of material from al-Madā'inī in their narratives on late Umayyad history illustrate several important points. First, as Leder concluded in his analysis of Khālid al-Qasrī's story, *akhbār* could be manipulated to serve larger narrative purposes. By developing particular characters and by emphasizing certain aspects of those characters, compilers such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī could create thematic narratives to interpret as well as chronicle events without inserting their own narrative voices. Second, this evidence of source manipulation and thematic agendas in our major sources for the Umayyad period raises important questions about the integrity of the major Arabic chronicles as repositories of earlier *akhbār*. Given the fact that al-Ṭabarī became the principal source both for later Arabic historiography and for modern studies on early Islamic history, it may be necessary to reevaluate our assumptions about the significance of tribal identities during the Umayyad period. Apparently not all sources took these labels as seriously as al-Ṭabarī did. Finally, in the absence of an authoritative text of al-Madā'inī, it is impossible to be certain what themes he emphasized in his own narrative of these events and to what extent he may have manipulated his own sources to highlight particular aspects of late Umayyad historical characters. Unfortunately, this analysis of al-Ṭabarī and al-Baladhurī does not enable us to understand exactly what caused the rapid disintegration of the

Umayyad regime. It does, however, illustrate that the chronicles and histories produced by early Islamic scholars are not merely dispassionate compilations of *akhbār*, but instead accommodate the narrators' thematic agendas. Only by careful comparison of narratives utilizing the same sources can the narrators' voices be uncovered.

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"THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS": AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S *KĪMIYĀ* AND THE ORIGINS OF THE KHWĀJAGĀN-NAQSHBANDIYYA PRINCIPLES*

Alexei A. Khismatulin

The scholarly oeuvre of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī al-Ṭūsī (1058–1111 C.E.), the outstanding Muslim thinker of the Middle Ages, constitutes a most valuable intellectual heritage for contemporary Islam. His numerous well-known works on philosophy, jurisprudence, logic, theology, and mysticism allow us to regard him as one of the most prolific authors of the Muslim world. It has been said of al-Ghazālī, for example, that if one divides the number of pages he wrote (in works known to us) by the number of days he lived, one finds that he wrote four pages a day.[1]

The study presented in this chapter is devoted to "The Alchemy of Happiness" (the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*), one of al-Ghazālī's later works. This book is interesting for two reasons: Firstly, while al-Ghazālī wrote most of his works in Arabic, "The Alchemy of Happiness" seems to be al-Ghazālī's first composition written in Persian. Secondly, this book has become a valuable manual of philosophical-ethical issues relevant for Muslim mystics, particularly for those living in areas with an overwhelming majority of native speakers of Persian, i.e. in the Iranian ethno-linguistic region including not only Iran, but also Central Asia, Afghanistan, and parts of India.

The first part of this chapter (i.e. paragraphs one to five) will present information on the text of "The Alchemy of Happiness" as such.

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* This chapter is a substantial development of the preliminary results of my research on this topic, as presented in my paper given at the 1998 UEAI Congress in Halle/Saale (Germany). See also A.A. Khismatulin: Some Notes on the *Kīmiyā-yi Saʿādat* ("The Elixir of Happiness") by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī al-Ṭūsī, in: S. Leder [et al.] (eds.): *Studies in Arabic and Islam, Proceedings of the 19th Congress, Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisant, Halle 1998*, Leuven [et al.], 2002, 469–484. (= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 108).

[1] Ḥaqīqat, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿirfān* 412.

This includes observations on the oldest known manuscript of the *Kīmiyā*, which is preserved in St. Petersburg, Russia, as well as a study of the contents and structure of this medieval text in comparison with al-Ghazālī's *magnum opus*, the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* ("Revitalization of the Religious Sciences").

The second part of the study touches upon aspects of this book that have not yet been studied so far. More specifically, it will investigate the common roots and parallels that "The Alchemy of Happiness" seems to have had in the formulation of basic spiritual-religious principles in Islamic mysticism, some of which apparently played an important role for the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya Sufi brotherhood[2] in determining its path as a mystic one.

1 "The Alchemy of Happiness"
and the Iranian ethno-linguistic region

Al-Ghazālī's "Alchemy of Happiness" was completed presumably between 1102 and 1106 after what is probably his best-known and largest work: the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*.[3] Both were written, along with his other major works, over a period of eleven years, during which he traveled and stayed away from public life; this period, from 1095 until 1106, appears to have been the most productive period in al-Ghazālī's scholarly life. "The Alchemy of Happiness" is not only one of the few works written by the author in Persian, but also one of the first works in Persian compiled by a Muslim religious authority on Sufism. In its popularity in the Iranian world, it stands together with the first voluminous work on Sufism written in Persian, the *Kashf al-maḥjūb* ("Revelation of That Which Is Veiled") by 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī (d. between 1072–1077).

In fact, al-Ghazālī's "Alchemy of Happiness" significantly surpasses al-Hujwīrī's work in the number of preserved manuscript copies and printed editions. Nearly all the large collections of oriental manuscripts contain at least three or four manuscript copies of this work. This may be due to the author's fame and authority, but also to

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[2] By the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya, I mean mainly the so-called "central" lineage.
[3] G.F. Hourani, The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings (1959); idem: A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings (1984).

the simple expository style of the writing. However, it should be noted that this might also be due to a diminishing significance of the Arabic language and a rebirth of the cultural tradition based on the Persian language, which began under the Persian dynasty of the Sāmānids (9th–10th cent.)—with the literary activity of Rūdakī (d. 940/1) and Firdawsī (934–1020)—and which further continued during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and then especially in the wake of the Mongol conquest. Moreover, leaving aside the numerous lithograph editions of "The Alchemy of Happiness" that appeared in the nineteenth century, the dates for the copying of the text, provided by main manuscript catalogues on the whole, indicate a constant demand for this particular work throughout the centuries. This demand began during the twelfth century and has continued down to the present time. Such a fact testifies to the popularity of the book on the intellectual market, within the Iranian ethno-linguistic region and even beyond its borders.

It should be stressed that al-Ghazālī, who had previously written only in Arabic—i.e. the language of the Quran, Arabic-Islamic sciences, and international relations within the Abode of Islam (dār al-Islām)—seems to have felt it necessary to write this particular work in Persian. He was thus able to address a readership that was quite different from the one he had addressed before.[4]

2 *The St. Petersburg manuscript of the* Kīmiyā

As noted, al-Ghazālī's works have come down to us in numerous manuscripts held in various repositories all over the world. Naturally, the oldest copies are of particular interest to specialists, since they constitute a valuable source for those engaged in the investigation of texts.

This oldest known manuscript fragment of al-Ghazālī's "Alchemy of Happiness," is kept at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.[5] This institute, in its turn, had acquired the

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[4] In this connection, C. Hillenbrand's remark that "probably it was intended as a teaching handbook for use in al-Ghazālī's Sufi cloister in Khurāsān" can be taken into consideration; see her Some Aspects of al-Ghazālī's Views on Beauty 250, n. 3.

[5] St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (henceforth SPBIOS), ms. B 4612.

manuscript from the collection of the Russian Orientalist O.L. Vil'chevskii (1902–1964).

Judging from paleographic features, the manuscript can be dated to the beginning of the twelfth century. It contains the complete second "pillar" (*rukn*) of the work (see *illustration 1*).

The manuscript was described for the first time by Vil'chevskii himself,[6] but an unfortunate error prevented this scholar from identifying it as a fragment of "The Alchemy of Happiness." Besides, Vil'chevskii did not focus on the problem of identifying the fragment. Rather, he concentrated on its importance in helping with the reconstruction of the world-view of the urban population of Iran in the Middle Ages. Vil'chevskii dated the manuscript to "no later than the mid-eleventh century," and termed its author as "the anonymous composer." In a note, however, he came close to his real name, and only one step remained to be taken to make the correct suggestion.[7]

Eventually, after consulting this copy for his preparation of a scholarly edition of "The Alchemy of Happiness," the late Persian scholar Ḥusayn-i Khadīwjam confirmed the manuscript's actual age.[8]

In order to convey a full sense of this precious copy, a brief description of the uncatalogued manuscript B 4612 will be given here: The manuscript is 20.0×15.0 cm large and contains 191 folia. The text was written on polished, yellow, rude, thick paper, using black Indian ink; it is written in the *naskh-i Irānī* ductus (see *illustration 2*). The text covers, without frame, 14.5×10.0 cm, and each page is composed of seventeen lines. The cartouches remained unfilled. Restoration work was performed in the twentieth century to the light-brown binding (pasteboard covered in stamped synthetic leather). Two inscriptions are found on fol. 001a (see *illustration 3*): The upper one comprises the date of Ramaḍān 605 A.H. (i.e. March–April 1209 C.E.) and the name of [. . .] Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAmīd. The lower one was made on the occasion of a person's birthday. It contains the information "before breakfast, 25. Rabīʿ al-Awwal 584 A.H. (i.e. 24 May 1188 C.E.)," and the name of Abū Bakr Asʿad Allāh.

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[6] O.L. Vil'chevskii, Novyi istochnik (1955).

[7] "The title of the last of the mentioned writings [i.e. the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*] our composer has referred to is very close to the title of the famous work by al-Ghazālī;" cf. ibid. 97, n. 2.

[8] Al-Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, ed. Ḥusayn-i Khadīwjam i, 39 (henceforth: Khadīwjam).

3   *Structure of the* Kīmiyā

"The Alchemy of Happiness" is divided into eight chapters, four of which have traditionally been viewed as a preface. These four introductory chapters at the beginning of the *Kīmiyā* are entitled *ʿunwān*s (for the meaning of this term, see below). The titles of these first four chapters are:

1. "On self-knowledge" (*dar shinākhtan-i khwīsh*),
2. "On the knowledge of the Most High" (*dar shinākhtan-i ḥaqq-i subḥāna wa-taʿālā*),
3. "On the mystical knowledge of the world" (*dar maʿrifat-i dunyā*), and
4. "On the mystical knowledge of the afterlife" (*dar maʿrifat-i ākhirat*).[9]

These chapters are followed by four chapters entitled *rukn*s ("pillars"). Two of these *rukn*s, chapters five and six,

5. On "religious observances" (*ʿibādāt*), and
6. On "conducts" (*muʿāmalāt*),

deal with the outward observance and performance of the religious commandments of the *sharīʿa*, the revealed or canonical law in Islam, and the customary law respectively. Finally, chapters seven and eight

7. On "the mortal vices" (*muhlikāt*), and
8. On "the virtues leading to salvation" (*munjiyāt*),

cover the inner spiritual qualities that a true believer must possess. In all eight chapters, the smallest division of text is called "section" (*faṣl*). While the first four chapters (*ʿunwān*s) are divided solely into "sections," the remaining chapters (*rukn*s), in addition to the "sections," also contain larger subdivisions of the text according to the following scheme:

– *aṣl* ("basis;" paragraph)
– *bāb* ("part")
– *faṣl* (sub-"section").

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[9] I used here the text of the work as preserved in another manuscript of the SPBIOS collection, that is, al-Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, ms. B 928 (apparently transcribed in Herat in 1495; henceforth: ms. B 928); in addition to the edition prepared by Khadīwjam.

Each of the four chapters (*rukn*s) in the second half of the *Kīmyā* contains ten *aṣl*s.

A more careful analysis of the structure of the *Kīmyā* reveals that the author did not intend the four "introductory" chapters (*ʿunwān*s) to be simply a prelude or foreword to the later chapters (*rukn*s). In using the term *ʿunwān*, al-Ghazālī seems to have had in mind the term's broader range of meanings. This is suggested by the use of this word in combinations, such as *maʿrifat-i ʿunwān-i musalmānī; nīkū-yi ẓāhir ʿunwān-i nīkū-yi bāṭin-ast; ammā ʿunwān-i ān ʿilmhā ān-ast ki . . .; ʿunwān-i musalmānī*.[10] Such expressions provide the grounds for interpreting the term *ʿunwān* as "indication" "possessive marker," "symbol," "upper part," or "peak." These phrases then read "mystical knowledge indicating submission to God," "outer beauty indicates inner beauty," "however, the mark of belonging to that science is . . ." and "indication of humility before God" respectively.

This interpretation is justified also by the translation of the word *ʿunwān* given in the brief glossary of a copy of al-Ghazālī's work dated to 1111 A.H. (1699 C.E.), where the compiler interprets it as follows:

> *ʿUnwān* with *ḍamma* and *kasra* [means] introduction to the book; the beginning of something; [i.e.] that from which something comes; [i.e.] that from which something becomes comprehensible and grasped.[11]

Moreover, on two occasions al-Ghazālī himself gives the synonyms for *ʿunwān*, that is, the Persian *namūdgār* ("indication") and *nishān* ("sign").[12]

As shown later in this study, an understanding of *ʿunwān* as offered here determines our understanding of the composite structure of the entire text of the *Kīmyā*.

4   *The* Kīmiyā *as an independent work*

It is noteworthy that chapters five to eight of the Persian *Kīmyā*, as well as most of their subheadings, bear the same titles as the four

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[10] Ms. B 928, 49a, etc. (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 120, 525, and ii, 374, 419ff.
[11] Al-Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, ms. B 4549 (transcribed in 1699 C.E.), 11a–11b. See also: *Persidskie i tadzhikskie rukopisi* i, 628, no. 75 (addenda).
[12] Ms. B 928, 13a, 49b (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 33, 124.

chapters (*rubʿ*s, "quarters") of al-Ghazālī's earlier, Arabic work, the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. This similarity between the titles of certain chapters of the *Kīmiyā* and the *Iḥyāʾ* has misled some scholars to view the *Kīmiyā* simply as a popular Persian abridgment of the Arabic *Iḥyāʾ*. The first four chapters of the *Kīmiyā* are, however, completely absent from the latter work. That is the only explanation as to why they are considered as the foreword to the *Kīmiyā*. This view appears to have first arisen at the end of the nineteenth century, in the description of one of the earliest full copies of the work, which is stored in the British Museum[13] and dated to 672/1274.

Despite the presence of English and German translations of "The Alchemy of Happiness,"[14] from the time it was first catalogued until the present, this view has made its way from one catalogue to another,[15] appearing also in some contemporary research studies.[16]

A possible reason for this occurrence is that al-Ghazālī's works have been studied mainly by Arabists who considered the existence of an abridged translation of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* into Persian as a natural step. On the other hand, one must consider the fact that translations of "The Alchemy of Happiness" into, for example, English, were undertaken not from the original Persian but from the Turkish and Urdu translations.[17] For instance, C. Field's English translation is abridged to such an extent that it constitutes as little as a third of its original size when compared with the Persian original.[18] This also means that it can hardly provide an adequate sense of the content of the original work, although it may be "ideally suited for educational purposes."[19]

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[13] Rieu, *Catalogue* i, 36–38, add. 25,026.
[14] Al-Ghazālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. by H.A. Homes (1873); trans. by Claud Field (1910); idem, revised and annotated by Elton L. Daniel (1991); *Das Elixier der Glückseligkeit* [German trans. by] H. Ritter (1923, 1998).
[15] Ethe, *Catalogue* i, 975–8; *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei* iii, 97; *Fihris al-makhṭūṭāt al-Fārsiyat* ii, 77–9.
[16] Examples of this are the following studies: E. Bertels, *Izbrannye trudy* (1965), 42–43; I.P. Petrushevskii, *Islam v Irane v VII–XV vekakh* (1966), 223; al-Ghazālī, *Voskreshenie nauk o vere (Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn)*, [Russian trans. by] V.V. Naumkin (1980), 77.
[17] Al-Ghazālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. Field (n. 14).
[18] Idem (1991), xxxviii.
[19] The second edition of the translation differs from the first one in a new foreword by Elton L. Daniel, and by the fact that it is significantly expanded. It has a brief biography of al-Ghazālī, a description of the historical, religious, and intellectual situation during his lifetime (including his influence and importance to the Islamic world); a short analysis of certain questions related to the *Kīmiyā*; and a

As for H. Ritter's German translation, it contains only the first chapter (*ʿunwān*) and one short part from the second *rukn*—On "conducts" (*muʿāmalāt*)—of "The Alchemy of Happiness." The rest are passages abridged by Ritter himself and drawn from the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.[20]

In other words, to this day, there are no scholarly translations of the *Kīmiyā* into a Western language[21] despite the numerous editions of the entire text, which have lately appeared in Iran, and the presence of copies of this work in all of the major European manuscript collections. It follows, then, that the contents of the work have remained little known to scholars.

This might also be the reason for the fact that Western studies into the chronology of al-Ghazālī's works have, until recently,[22] erroneously considered his Arabic work *Mishkāt al-anwār wa-miṣfāt al-asrār* ("The Niche for Lights and Filter for Secrets") to have been written in 1106–1107, i.e. after the *Kīmiyā*,[23] although the text of the *Kīmiyā* contains a direct reference to the *Mishkāt*.[24] Furthermore, some scholars have even considered the *Mishkāt* to be al-Ghazālī's last work, locating the period of its composition "at the end of his life,"[25]

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good bibliography dealing with al-Ghazālī's works, cf. A. Knysh's review of al-Ghazālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. by Claude Field (1991), in: *The Middle East Journal* 47 (1993) 1, 152.

[20] "Der erste Teil *Von der Selbsterkenntnis* ist eine wörtliche Übersetzung der ersten 'Eingangs' (*ʿunwān*) des *Kīmijā as-saʿādat* . . . Das Kapitel über die *Freundschaft und Bruderschaft in Gott* folgt dem arabischen Text der *Iḥjāʾ*, das Kapitel über die Pflichten gegen Muslimen, Nachbarn, Verwandte und Sklaven wieder ganz dem *Kīmijā*, der Rest wieder dem arabischen Text [des *Iḥjāʾ*]. In den dem *Iḥjāʾ* entnommenen Stücken sind einzelne Teile, besonders die Belege aus Koran, Hadith und *athār*, nach dem Vorgang des *Kīmijā* gekürzt;" cf. Ritter, *Das Elixier* (1923) 3. The second edition of Ritter's translation (München: Diederichs, 1989) has a new foreword by A.M. Schimmel. I express my sincere gratitude to Professors A.D. Knysh (University of Michigan) and L. Rzehak (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) for providing me with information on the most recent English and German editions of the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*.

[21] The Western reader may finally see the English translation based on the original text, currently being prepared for publication by C. Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh).

[22] I mean H. Landolt's study, Ghazālī and Religionswissenschaft (1991).

[23] W.H.T. Gairdner, Al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār* and the Ghazālī-problem (1914); M. Bouyges, M. Allard, Essai de chronologie des oeuvres de al-Ghazali (1959); ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Muʾallafāt al-Ghazālī* (1961), 471–478.

[24] Ms. B 928, 23b (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 58. There is some evidence that seems to suggest that al-Ghazālī wrote the *Mishkāt* at the time between writing the *Iḥyāʾ* and the *Kīmiyā*. See my Russian translation of the *Kīmiyā*: al-Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* ("Elixir schastʾya"; 2002), 49, n. 2.

[25] D.B. Macdonald, art. al-Ghazālī, in: *EI²* (French ed.) ii, 157, has "à la fin de sa vie".

i.e. the time of the author's final return to Ṭūs (1109–1111). Other scholars state that "the citations leave a wide margin for the *Mishkāt* but its contents indicate a last date,"[26] or that it must have been completed "between the year 503 and 505 of the Hijra [i.e. 1109–1111 C.E.], that is, after his last return to Ṭūs."[27] Defending this view, Elton Daniel, in his foreword to the second edition of Field's translation (1991) of the *Kīmiyā* asserts: "Since the *Mishkāt* is a very late work by Ghazzālī (*sic*), it would appear that the *Alchemy* should be dated to the final years of Ghazzālī's life."[28] He writes this despite the fact that it does not agree with the already established chronology as set forth in the author's own references.[29]

Although no definitive comparative analysis of the *Kīmiyā* and the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* has been written to date, several researchers have recently made cautious comments on the "slightly altered" contents of certain chapters of the *Kīmiyā* in comparison with chapters of the *Iḥyāʾ*.[30] Certain other remarks point to "some" or even "significant" differences between the two works.[31]

As for Iranian scholars, the overwhelming majority of them do not even raise the issue that the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* would constitute an abridged Persian version of the Arabic *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. They consider it self-evident that these texts represent two different and independent works that both enjoy certain similarities in the titles of the chapters and in the text structure. M. Mīnūwī, for example, states:

> The *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* is similar to the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm*; both are composed along the same pattern and scheme. However, each supplements the other. In particular, the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, which Ḥujjat al-Islām [i.e.

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[26] M.W. Watt, The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to al-Ghazālī 44.

[27] Ḥaqīqat, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿirfān* 413.

[28] Al-Ghazālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. Field (1991), xxxvii.

[29] References to the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* occur in two of al-Ghazālī's works, i.e. *al-Mustaṣfā fī ʿilm al-uṣūl* and *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*; see Badawī, *Muʾallafāt al-Ghazālī* 216. The first reference indicates that the time of the *Kīmiyā*'s composition was "before" his return to teaching at the Nīshāpūr Niẓāmiyya, that is, before July 1106. Therefore, following G.F. Hourani, we can conclude that the *Kīmiyā* was written in Ṭūs before his return to Nīshāpūr. Hourani says: "Thus *Kīmiyā* can be assigned with some confidence to the years at the *zāwiya* at Ṭūs, before the return to Nīshāpūr;" cf. Hourani, The Chronology 232.

[30] For example, M.A. Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue* 159; and Al-Ghazālī, *Muhammad al-Ghazzalis Lehre* [. . .] R. Gramlich, 7.

[31] "There are some differences which have not been fully investigated," cf. art. "al-Ghazālī" (M.W. Watt), in: *EI*² ii, 1041; and "there are . . . some significant differences between the two works," cf. *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. Field xxxvi–xxxvii.

al-Ghazālī] wrote in Persian, is probably more important from the point of view of Persian-speaking people.[32]

It is, in fact, difficult to imagine that al-Ghazālī, as an adult and already well-known in the Muslim world, would have undertaken the effort to simply "repeat" in abridged form in Persian what he had already written in Arabic. It is true that some of the subject matter of the *Kīmiyā* overlaps somewhat with the questions treated in the *Iḥyāʾ*. This is not surprising, however, since both works deal in general with theological, philosophical, and Sufi questions. As well, on several occasions in the *Kīmiyā*, al-Ghazālī makes references to the *Iḥyāʾ*.[33] Still, this should not be taken as an indication of the possibility that the *Kīmiyā* is simply an abridgment of the *Iḥyāʾ*. After all, medieval and contemporary authors are alike in that they refer the reader to their previous works for further details; nobody would consider their later scholarly products simply as a "brief reworking" of what they had written earlier on the same topic.

In this regard, it may be most illustrative that al-Ghazālī himself, several times, points to a principal difference between the two works:

> We spoke about this in more detail in the book *Dhikr al-mawt* ("The Remembrance of Death"), which is part of the *Iḥyāʾ*. Here we limit ourselves (*iqtiṣār*) to an explication of the reality of death, and allude (*ishārat*) to. . . ."[34] [Also,] "anyone who wants to learn in detail about physical torment should consult the *Iḥyāʾ*, while anyone who wishes to learn of spiritual torment should consult the ʿunwāns of this book [i.e., the *Kīmiyā*]. . . .[35]

A quick glance suffices to see the difference between the two works, a difference that goes beyond the "brevity" of the *Kīmiyā*. In this regard, it is interesting to note what al-Ghazālī himself says about "The Alchemy of Happiness":

> In this book . . . we will give explications for speakers of Persian, refraining from long and unclear expressions, [and] from difficult and abstruse contents, in order to make it accessible. If someone wishes to undertake research and to refine what is discussed here, he should consult books [*sic*] in Arabic such as the books *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn, Jawāhir al-*

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[32] Mīnūwī, Ghazālī Ṭūsī 283.
[33] Ms. B 928, 32 a, 100 a, 326 b, 332 bff.; Khadīwjam i, 232, 262, 273, 279, 366, 376ff.
[34] Ms. B 928, 33 b (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 82.
[35] Ms. B 928, 437 b (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 630.

Qurʾān ["Gems of the Quran"], and other works of similar content written in Arabic, as the aim of this book is to be understood by the common people (*ʿawām-i khalq*). . . .[36]

Moreover, in "The Alchemy of Happiness," al-Ghazālī refers the reader to other works of his, such as the *Maʿānī-yi asmāʾ-yi Allāh* (an Arabic work, whose original title is *al-Maqṣad al-asnā fī asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*),[37] *Mishkāt al-anwār wa-miṣfat al-asrār*,[38] *Bidāyat al-hidāya*,[39] and furthermore to some books on logic[40] and jurisprudence (*fiqh*).[41]

In all four chapters (*rukn*s) of the second part of "The Alchemy of Happiness," one encounters references to the first four chapters (*ʿunwān*s) of the work. On the other hand, references to these *ʿunwān*s of the *Kīmiyā* cannot be found in the *Iḥyāʾ*. This seems to be another important indication that testifies to the cohesion of the *Kīmiyā*'s conception as an authorial composition and to its independence from the Arabic *Iḥyā*. Finally, one can pinpoint in this regard the author's own comments on the aims of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* and the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*:

> *Iḥyāʾ*
> What is sought after in this book is only the science of conduct, without the science of revelation, which would be impermissible to include in this book, for the latter represents the final goal of seekers and the desired object of the sincere gaze. The path to it lies through the science of conduct.[42]

> *Kīmiyā*
> As concerns the science of revelation, it is knowledge of the Most High, His qualities, angels, and His messengers. The science of conduct, being already explored in this book, is those obstacles on the religious path of which we spoke in the *rukn* "On the mortal vices;" the amount of travel discussed in the *rukn*s "On religious observances" and "On conducts;" the stages of the path discussed in the *rukn* "On the virtues leading to salvation. . . ."
>
> Thus, it has become clear that human happiness resides in the knowledge of the Most High and in obedience to Him. The bases of [this]

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[36] Ms. B 928, 4 a (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 9.
[37] Ms. B 928, 14 a (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 35.
[38] Ms. B 928, 23 b (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 58.
[39] Ms. B 928, 99 b (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 262, 271.
[40] Ms. B 928, 21 a (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 51.
[41] Ms. B 928, 119 a (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 328.
[42] Al-Ghazālī. *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (ed. Cairo, 1885), i, 4.

knowledge were acquired with the mystical knowledge of the four *ʿunwān*s and obedience will be acquired with the four *rukn*s.[43]

As these quotations show, in the *Iḥyāʾ* al-Ghazālī does not set himself the task of presenting the science of revelation (*ʿilm al-mukāshafa*), saying that the path to it lies through the science of conduct (*ʿilm al-muʿāmala*), to which he dedicates his work. In the *Kīmiyā*, he says that the science of revelation is the "knowledge of the Most High, His qualities, angels, and His messengers . . . the bases of [this] knowledge were acquired with the mystical knowledge (*maʿrifat*) of the four *ʿunwān*s. . . ." That is, the exposition was structured so that first the chapters (*ʿunwān*s) treat the science of revelation, while the later four chapters (*rukn*s) deal with the science of conduct.

Consequently, the science of conduct is perceived differently, through either the prism of mystical knowledge or the science of revelation. In other words, knowledge of God initially points to a different understanding of the observation of religious duties and the behavioral norms required by Islam and described in the later chapters (*rukn*s). Hence, the title contains the word of Greek origin, *kīmiyā*, which in medieval times signified the transformation or transmutation of an ordinary substance into something of great value. This is the meaning with which the word entered the Persian language,[44] and the author himself confirms the same understanding of it.[45]

It should have become clear from these explanations that one can speak of the *Kīmiyā* as neither a Persian translation nor an abridgment of a particular Arabic work of al-Ghazālī's. The *Kīmiyā* is an independent book, written in Persian in an accessible manner in order to ease the understanding of many complex philosophical and theological questions treated by the author in his numerous other works written in Arabic. Nonetheless, like al-Ghazālī's other works, the *Kīmiyā* is distinguished by the same impressive logic in making deductions and conclusions, something that is so characteristic of al-Ghazālī's style of composition.

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[43] Ms. B 928, 337a and 49a (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 373–4 and i, 119.
[44] Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma* (2002; CD, version 2). Muʿīn, *Farhang-i Fārsī* (ed. Tehran, 1992), iii, 3157–8.
[45] Ms. B 928, 2b–3a (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 5.

5 *Multidimensional text and hypertext*

In addition to the proposed arguments, one should separately note a fundamental difference in the compositional structures of the two works. As mentioned above, the *Iḥyāʾ* is divided into four "quarters" (Sing. *rubʿ*), each of which contains ten "books" (Sing. *kitāb*). Nearly all of these forty "books" open with an introduction revealing the theme in the form of an apparently original multidimensional text or—under certain conditions—as part of a so-called hypertext (the term is borrowed from multimedia vocabulary). It begins with a glorification of God, goes on to reveal the concepts introduced, and concludes with a glorification of the Prophet. In the *Kīmiyā*, a similarly structured text is explicitly found only once at the very beginning of the work.

The multidimensional design of these texts supports the essence of the given theme, whether for artistic purposes or for scientific study. Such texts are typical of especially significant sections, when (even a seemingly) ordinary—linear—exposition is capable of fully reflecting the depth or all aspects of the author's thought for the "prepared" reader. That is why these texts form a certain variety of independent syntactic units and are based on parallelisms organized along grammatical, semantic and phonetic lines—syntagmata. They look like a multi-layered pie or, to put it better, like a Rubik's cube, "scrambled" in accordance with some basic rules—but in no way are they verses.

For the reader, these rules can be generally understood with the help of Dmitriy L. Spivak's methodology which was successfully applied by him to analyzing such texts in non-Muslim traditions.[46] Some cross-aspects of this methodology are also reflected in J. Nielson's theory of hypertext.[47] The main principles of the methodology are as follows: the size of a multidimensional text is determined by the interplay of textual segments which stand far apart from one another in linear exposition; to achieve this, the subject under discussion is ideally

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[46] Spivak, *Linguistics of Altered States of Consciousness* (1992). I would like to thank Dmitriy L. Spivak (Institute of the Human Brain, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg) for his advice on this issue.
[47] Nielson, *Hypertext and hypermedia* (1993).

– subdivided by the author into a series of identically structured acts (states),
– which consist of syntagmata equal in number,
– linked by parallelisms, and
– characterized by the same gradation (ascending, descending, etc.).

By juxtaposing such segments according to the number of syntagmata in each act (horizontally) and according to the number of acts themselves (vertically), one arrives at a multidimensional cube constructed from the words. One may also arrive at a rectangular matrix consisting of a certain number of lines and columns. The ratio of the first and second numbers of such a matrix usually corresponds to the ratio of sacred numbers typical of the author's cultural milieu.[48] In all likelihood, the basic task of a multidimensional text is the sacralization of consciousness during reading and the establishment of a certain rhythm. Moreover, one can surmise that familiarity with matrix structures encouraged in attentive readers the ability to think and make decisions. There is also another significant function to these texts, namely that they can disclose the additional meanings of technical terms, which may be incomprehensible while reading, without a reconstruction of their sophisticated structure. Such texts are found in various cultural traditions: Christian, Vedic, Buddhist, Taoist, etc.[49] In Islam, certain texts which are functionally equivalent to matrix structures can be found among mystics. These texts are used orally by the Sufis for a ritual practice known as the completion (*khatm*).[50] Outside of this particular practice, i.e. in the written tradition of the Sufis, these texts have not yet received sufficient attention, or, rather they are still completely unexamined. Therefore, the question of how widely and consciously they were employed in the Muslim written culture remains open.

For present purposes, the issue of a multidimensional structure shall be illustrated by just one example which will be analyzed using the above-mentioned methodology. The excerpt cited below is taken

[48] For more details, see Spivak, *Linguistics* 86–91; and Spivak, *Izmennennye sostoyaniya* 208–209.
[49] For Chinese culture, see especially Spirin, *Postroenie drevnekitaiskikh textov* (1976); Kobzev, *Uchenie o simvolakh* (1994).
[50] Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqšbandiyya* 188–211; Khismatulin, *Sufiiskaja ritual'naja praktika* 105–26.

from the beginning of the fortieth book (entitled "The Remembrance of Death") of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.[51]

It is extracted from a wider context which has very clear boundaries, beginning with the words in praise of God (*taḥmīd*) and ending with the words "and then" (*wa-thumma*). The excerpt is followed by a different segment (not cited here) of rhythmically organized text, also containing the blessings on Muḥammad (*ṣalāwat*), up to the traditional "now then" (*ammā baʿd*). In the oral tradition, a composition of *taḥmīd* and *ṣalāwat* is usually named *khuṭba* ("sermon"). The latter, in turn, is known to have been a significant obligatory part of Muslim Friday service since the rise of Islam.[52] Interestingly enough, however, the passage given below stems from a *khuṭba* in the written tradition. The key elements in the segment's rhythmic organization are highlighted in italics both in the Arabic original and in translation.

Actions of God

[1]Praise be unto God, who snapped *by death* the necks of the tyrants,
الحمد لله الذى قـصم بالموت رقـاب الجـبـابـرة

[2]and broke *by it* the backs of the khusraws,
وكـسـر بـه ظـهـور الاكـاسـرة

[3]and limited *by it* the aspirations of the Caesars.
وقـصـر بـه آمـال الـقـيـاصـرة

The True Promise

[4]Who, no sooner did *their* hearts cease to mention death abhorrent,
الـذيـن لم تـزل قـلـوبهم عن ذكـر الموت نـافـرة

[5]than the True promise came to *them*
حتى جـاءهم الوعـد الحـق

[6]and brought *them* down to the first state.
فـأردهم فى الـحـافـرة

Change of Location

[7]And they were taken *from* palaces *to* graves,
فـنـقـلـوا من الـقـصور الى الـقـبـور

[8]and *from* the light of the cradles *to* the darkness of the burial niches,
و من ضـيـاء الـمـهـود الى ظـلـمة الـلـحود

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[51] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* iv, 408.

[52] For the *khuṭba* as a rhetorical device in political speeches from classical Arabic literature, see S. Dähne's contribution to this volume.

⁹and *from* amusements with girls and young boys *to* the struggle against insects and worms.

و من ملاعبة الجواري والغلمان الى مقاساة الـهوام والديدان

Change of State

¹⁰And *from* the enjoyment of food and drink *to* immersion in dust,

و من التنعم بالطعام والشراب الى التـمرّغ فى الـتـراب

¹¹and *from* the joy of relationship *to* the dejection of loneliness,

و من أنـس الـعـشـرة الى وحـشـة الوحـدة

¹²and *from* a soft bed *to* a fatal place of throwing down.

و من المضجع الوثـيـر الى العصرع الويـيـل

Result

¹³And look, did they find *against* death any fortitude and strength,

فـانظرهل وجـدوا من العوت حصنـا وعـزا

¹⁴and did they acquire *against* it any bar or amulet,

واتـخـذوا من دونه حـجـابـا وحـرزا

¹⁵and look, will you feel any *of* them or hear *from* them any rustle?

وانظر هل تحس منهم من أحد أو تسمع لهم ركـزا

The entire text is devoted to a death commemoration. It describes the destiny of tyrants (Arabic pl.: *al-jabābira*) in general, and of the Sasanian Khusraws (Arabic pl.: *al-akāsira*) and Roman Caesars (Arabic pl.: *al-qayāṣira*) in particular, even though they (as temporal rulers, pretending to be the closest to God) could do nothing against death. During linear reading, we have no idea, however, who these rulers named as tyrants are. Based on the direction from the Sasanian Khusraws to the Roman Caesars, we can only suppose that *al-jabābira* are some pre-Islamic rulers. We can suppose as well that all of them are enumerated in the chronological order of Islam's victories over or contacts with them: first, pre-Islamic rulers, then the Sasanian *khusraw*s (224–651 C.E.), and finally, the author obviously hints at the First Crusade in 1096, led by the Roman Caesars to recover the Holy Land (visited by al-Ghazālī at that time) from the Muslims. In other words, we are apparently shown the destiny of the non-Muslim rulers representing polytheism/paganism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The basic movement within each given triad is from worldly life to physical death. But if we read vertically we will find the same direction and the following correlation of each syntagma, which reveals the main features of these rulers.

The Tyrants (al-jabābira)

¹Praise be unto God, who snapped *by death* the necks of the tyrants—
⁴Who, no sooner did *their* hearts cease to mention death abhorrent—
⁷And they were taken *from* palaces *to* graves—¹⁰And *from* the enjoyment
of food and drink *to* immersion in dust—¹³And look, did they find
against death any fortitude and strength?

Hence "the tyrants" correlates firstly to "their hearts," secondly to
"palaces," thirdly to "the enjoyment of food and drink," and finally
to "fortitude and strength." At the same time, "death" is associated
with "death abhorrent," "graves," "immersion in dust" and "death."

In all reconstructed columns, we find several markers referring the
reader *directly* to the broader context of certain quranic verses and
the commentaries (*tafsīr*s) on them. This correlation between the
excerpt from the *khuṭba* and these other texts allows us to identify
the exerpt as part of a hypertext, since the other texts play the role
of a context for it. The word-for-word combinations used in the
excerpt, which occur only once in the Quran, play the role of a key
to the excerpt; they function like quotation marks and/or footnote
references in modern publications. Since the Quran is the only text
that has been available to absolutely every Muslim, and many peo-
ple even memorized it entirely or in part, it became an easily rec-
ognizable context for any other text.

For "the tyrants," we find just one marker in the whole column.
That is the last word of the last sentence—*And look, did they find against
death any fortitude and strength*—namely "strength." In its form—*ʿizzan*,
this word is mentioned only in *Sūrat Maryam*.[53] Some commentaries
give for the *āya* where *ʿizzan* is found, the explanation that the Prophet
meant by it the people of Mecca who worshipped their idols.[54] Thus,
we may now conclude that by using "the tyrants" al-Ghazālī implies
the local rulers of Mecca, famous for their idol-worship, on the one
hand, and for "palaces," "the enjoyment of food and drink" and
"fortitude and strength," on the other.

The next syntagmata show.

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[53] Q 19:81 (19:84, ed. G. Flügel).
[54] See, for example: *Tafsīr-i Qurʾān-i Majīd* i, 38–9. For this commentary, see also
E.G. Brown, Description of an Old Persian Commentary on the Kurʾan (1894).

The Persian emperors (al-akāsira; *the* khusraws)

²And broke *by it* the backs of the *khusraw*s—⁵[Then] the True promise
came to *them*—⁸And [they were taken] *from* the light of the cradles *to*
the darkness of the burial niches—¹¹And *from* the joy of relationship
to the dejection of loneliness—¹⁴And [look,] did they acquire *against* it
any bar or amulet?

This reconstructed column illustrates the correlation of the expres-
sions "*khusraw*s," "they," "the light of the cradles," "the joy of rela-
tionship" and "any bar or amulet," on the one hand, and "it" (i.e.
death), "the True promise," "the darkness of the burial niches," "the
dejection of loneliness" and "it" (which can be understood as both
"death" and "the True promise"), on the other.

Of course, this new text especially needs to be proven with argu-
ments in favor of its relation to the *khusraw*s and Zoroastrians, because
the former is not mentioned in the Quran, while the latter is referred
to as *al-majūs* (Q 22:17). However, the content of this verse does not
appear to suit al-Ghazālī's Zoroastrians as an exclusive context, for
this particular verse seems to enumerate the adherents of all the reli-
gions known to Muḥammad. What is more interesting, then, is how
al-Ghazālī gets out of such an embarrassing situation.

Here we discover one direct reference and two additional mark-
ers. The direct reference to the Quran is "the True promise" (*al-
waʿd al-ḥaqq*) which occurs in this form only once in the Q 21:97
and which refers the reader to a broader context of this verse and
the previous verses: the Day of Judgment and the two mythological
personages (or peoples) Yājūj and Mājūj (Gog and Magog). One
encounters these personages one more time in *Sūrat al-Kahf*,⁵⁵ i.e. on
the occasion of Alexander the Great's (*Dhū l-qarnayn*) travels to "the
place of sunrise" (*maṭliʿ al-shams*).⁵⁶ The story about "the place of sun-
rise" was quite widespread and popular in medieval times. In the
13th century, for example, the story had been included even in the
romance about Chinggiz-khan's campaigns.⁵⁷ Of course, this place
can simply be interpreted as a direction to the East. But it can also
be the designation of a concrete geographical place. Among mod-
ern scholars, there are different opinions regarding a geographical

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⁵⁵ Q 18:94 (18:93).
⁵⁶ Q 18:90 (18:89).
⁵⁷ J.A. Boyle, Narayrgen or the People of the Sun (1976).

position where this country could be located. These opinions range from Transoxania and Mesopotamia to India and Japan.[58] In our case, we should take into consideration that al-Ghazālī had to refer his reader to one definite place. Therefore, it can only be Xwarāsān, the word-for-word translation of which from the Old Persian (the Parthian) gives "the place of sunrise," i.e. exactly the same meaning as given in the quranic *maṭliʿ al-shams*. Xwarāsān/Khurāsān is known as a region of ancient settlement of the Persians. To be entirely correct, however, we have to answer one question: could in medieval times Xwarāsān/Khurāsān be understood by the educated reader as "the place of sunrise," or, in other words, did the Arabs know the etymology of this geographical name? Here one may consult travelogues of the medieval Arab geographers. One of them, al-Muqaddasī (10th cent.), describes Xwarāsān first as *al-mashriq* and second as *maṭliʿ sirāj al-dunyā*.[59] The latter expression, being extracted by him from the direction to the East (*al-mashriq*), gives the same meaning as that of *maṭliʿ al-shams*. Another famous Arab geographer, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (13th cent.), discloses the etymology of Xwarāsān/Khurāsān as: "*Xwar/Khur* is the Persian name for the sun, and *āsān* seems to signify an origin of thing and its place."[60] So, we can conclude that between the 10th and 13th centuries the etymological meaning of Xwarāsān was clear at least to educated Arabs, i.e. those whom al-Ghazālī addresses with his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. One may add another argument here: "the True promise" came to the last Sasanian emperor, Yazdigard III, at Marv[61] in 651. This city is reported to have been founded by Alexander the Great during his campaign in the East[62] and was also known as the capital of Xwarāsān at the epoch of the Sasanians and later, under Muslim rulers. Only in the 9th century, was the capital of Xwarāsān moved from Marv to Nīshāpūr. Thus, a logical sequence of associations like this can be assumed: *al-waʿd al-ḥaqq* (Q 21:97)—Yājūj and Mājūj (Q 21:96 → Q 18:93)—Alexander the Great (Q 18:93)—*maṭliʿ al-shams* (Q 18:89) = Xwarāsān—the non-Muslim Persians = Zoroastrians.

[58] For the most recent discoveries in this regard, see: A.G. Yurchenko, Chingiz-khan v strane "shumjashchego solntsa," (1998); M.J. Marx, *Untersuchungen zu orientalischen Quellen und Motiven der Tschinggis Khan-Legende* (2001).

[59] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsim fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm* (ed. de Goeje, 1877), 294 (Jānib Khurāsān, lines 5–6).

[60] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (ed. Leipzig, 1867), ii (*z-j*), 409, line 15.

[61] Near the present day city of Mary in the Republic of Turkmenistan.

[62] V.A. Zhukovskii, *Drevnosti Zakaspiiskogo kraya* 8.

As for two additional markers, one of them is "the light of the cradles" (*ḍiyā' al-muhūd*). Being attentively read, this simple expression may look odd. The problem one faces here is the term "the light" (*ḍiyā'*). According to the commentaries given by the Arabic dictionaries for *ḍiyā'*, this word has a synonym: *nūr*. However, both words differ as to the origins of the light. *Ḍiyā'* signifies "that light which subsists by itself, as that of the sun, and fire; and *nūr*, to that which subsists by some other things as does the light of the moon."[63] Thus, *ḍiyā'* is a more intensive light than *nūr*. And people are totally incapable of looking at the blinding *ḍiyā'* of God. Therefore, God has sent his revelations in the reflected light (*nūr*): the *nūr al-Qur'ān*, *nūr Muḥammadī*, etc. Hence "the light of the cradles" is meaningful only if we suppose that the owners of the cradles, i. e. the children, obtain the light (*ḍiyā'*) as an inseparable quality at birth. This was possible only in terms of hereditary transmission of the divine light among the Persian emperors (the *khusraw*s). This light was known as the *farr*.

The second additional marker is represented by "any bar or amulet" (*ḥijāban wa-ḥirzan*). Here one can see a hint of the Zoroastrian magicians who were very famous in the Middle East. Even the word "magic," which entered many European languages, is of Old Persian origin. Thus the whole column can be understood as follows: the Persian emperors (the *khusraw*s) were known for their "light of the cradles;" the cradles naturally imply contact with children, which delights elders (= "the joy of relationship"). Here "a relationship" is used for *'ishrat* which signifies "social, or familiar, intercourse and fellowship" without any sexual implication.[64] At the same time any child represents a new generation that is some kind of bar or protection against death.

The Caesars (al-qayāṣira)

And finally the correspondence between the third syntagmata is as follows:

> [3]And limited *by it* the aspirations of the Caesars—[6]And brought *them* down to the first state—[9]And [they were taken] *from* amusements with girls and young boys to the struggle against insects and worms—[12]And

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[63] Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* i, part 5, 1809.
[64] Ibid., book i, part 5, 2052.

from a soft bed *to* a fatal place of throwing down—[15]And look, will you feel any *of* them or hear *from* them any rustle?

In this column, we also find the direct references to the Quran: "to the first state" (*fī l-ḥāfira*), and "will you feel any of them or hear from them any rustle?" The latter reference is clearly taken from the last verse of *Sūrat Maryam*[65] where it follows rather long reproaches hurled at those who believed that God had children (i.e. the Christians and the Jews).[66] It is noteworthy, that the reference to *Sūrat Maryam* has already occurred in the series of results related to the tyrants. The former expression ("to the first state," *fī l-ḥāfira*), in turn, refers to *Sūrat al-Nāziʿāt* (i.e., the question about the Day of Judgment: *Shall we indeed be returned to the first state?*)[67] The commentaries given for this verse represent at least two different points of view as to the meaning of "we." Some of them say that this word means the people of Mecca, while others assert that it just implies the dead asking about their future destiny. Therefore, we cannot state definitely who "they" are. However, following the logic of the first two columns, we can suppose that "to the first state" (*fī l-ḥāfira*) is directed against some cornerstone religious idea of the Caesars, limiting their "aspirations." Such an idea is found in the ideology of the Crusades. Beginning with Pope Urban II (1088–1099), it was claimed that those who took part in the Crusades, personally or just financially, would be granted freedom from punishment for sins, by the Roman Catholic Church. This indulgence covered not only the sins already committed but also all those sins that would be committed by them in future. Hence, the participants in the Crusade became completely innocent, thus returning to the first state of sinlessness of Paradise. However, al-Ghazālī's definition of the first state for them is death.

Thus, the associative bonds for the third column are: "the Caesars," "they," "amusements with girls and young boys," "a soft bed," on the one hand, and "it" (= death), "the first state," "the struggle against insects and worms," "a fatal place of throwing down," on the other. Here, it seems necessary to comment on two things. During linear reading, syntagma 9 appears to stand apart, as it relates to the next series (Change of State), as does syntagma 12 belonging to Change of Location, which appears to be in the wrong place. By

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[65] Q 19:98.
[66] Q 19:88–19:97 (19:91–19:97).
[67] Q 79:10.

"scrambling" the multi-faceted cube in this way, the author likely
wished to stress the sinful life led by the rulers when we read the
text in the normal way, and to save a logical sequence of exposi-
tion during vertical reading: first, "amusements with girls and young
boys" in "a soft bed" then "the struggle against insects and worms"
ending in "a fatal place of throwing down" (*al-maṣraʿ al-wabīl*).

Syntagma 15 as well, consisting of two verbs—to feel and to hear—
is likely to be in correlation with "girls and young boys" and "insects
and worms" correspondingly: we cannot feel the former, because
they have died, just as we cannot hear the latter, because they have
already completed their work. However, the whole phrase is a rhetor-
ical question filled with a mystical sense.

A mystical sense

The reconstructed columns reveal additional meanings of the text,
which find their confirmation in different parts of the chapter. Without
mentioning the tyrants, the Persian *khusraw*s or the Caesars anywhere
else in this chapter, the author tells us that there are two main obsta-
cles, which divert humans from the commemoration of death and
from the divine world: ignorance and love for this world. The lat-
ter, in turn, consists of: an attraction for food and drink, sexual pas-
sion, a fondness for children and property. In our case, it is interesting
to see to whom al-Ghazālī attributes these qualities. The tyrants, i.e.
pre-Islamic Meccan rulers, were famous for their "palaces," "the
enjoyment of food and drink" and "fortitude and strength." This
means that the attraction of property and of food and drink seems
to give them fortitude and strength. The Persian *khusraw*s were known
for "the light of the cradles," "the joy of relationship" and "bars or
amulets." This means the fondness for the divine children which
may be seen as a bar or amulet against death. And the Caesars
were involved in "amusements with girls and young boys," that is
in unlimited bisexual activity which derives from sexual passion. The
final rhetorical question "will you feel any of them or hear from
them any rustle" (Q 19:98) perhaps implies, according to al-Ghazālī's
matrix structure, that those people, who are unable to feel and to
hear the dead, do not have the inner vision (*al-baṣīra*). They still

Figure: *Hypertext Structure*

19:84

The Quran

21:97   18:89

79:10   19:98

An Excerpt from the Matrix *Khuṭba* of the Fortieth Book of the *Iḥyā'*			
	The Tyrants	The *Khusraus*	The Caesars
Actions of God	1	2	3
The True Promise	4	5	6
Change of Location	7	8	
Change of State			9
Change of State	10	11	
Change of Location			12
Result	13	14	15

Relevant Commentaries of the Quran

Reader
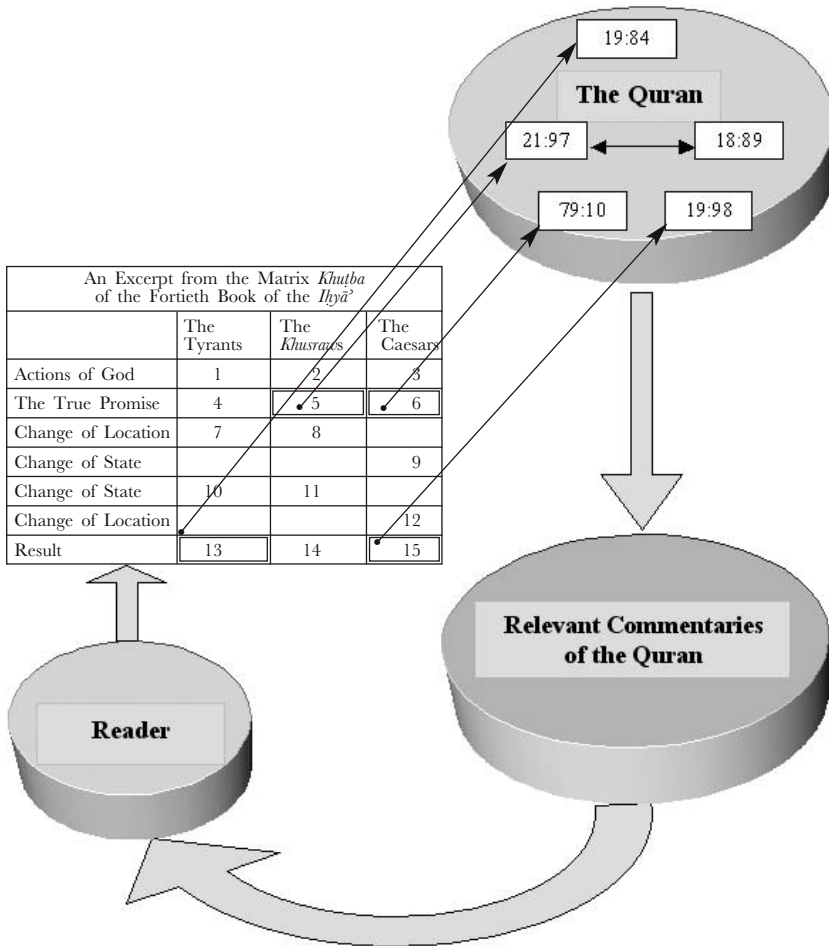
have not purified their hearts from love of this world, i.e. from the same worldly attractions that were described above.

As noted, textual structures similar to those analyzed above precede nearly all of the 40 books of the *Iḥyā'*. (In the *Kīmiyā*, however, they are found only once in the only *khuṭba* at the beginning of the book.) If the introductory texts of those forty books in the *Iḥyā'* are juxtaposed, then the contents of the whole work will be reflected in quite a specific manner, disclosing layers of meanings.

Such multiplication of mystical knowledge, or, according to al-Ghazālī's definition, *takthīr al-maʿrifa*, comes into being as a result of the practice of *tafakkur* (literally: an intense thinking),[68] which means in this context "meditation." Al-Ghazālī provides a detailed description of it in both the 39th book of the *Iḥyāʾ* (i.e. in the 9th book of the fourth quarter, entitled *Tafakkur*) and in the *Kīmiyā*. There he defines it as a way of obtaining the light of mystical knowledge (*nūr al-maʿrifa*). He suggests that one should take two kinds of mystical knowledge and compose them in a specific manner (*tartīb makhṣūṣ, taʾlīfan makhṣūṣan*—sic.) in order to come to a third kind, and so on.[69]

In another of his works, *al-Risāla al-laduniyya* ("The Epistle on Divine Knowledge"),[70] al-Ghazālī uses the same expressions. There he comments on the practice of *tafakkur* as being the only way to receive Divine knowledge through God's inspiration (*ilhām*). This is realized by the entrance of Divine knowledge into the human heart through a window inside the heart. This window is believed to link the heart to the divine world. The bond established in this way is called "the spiritual connection" (*al-nisba al-rūḥiyya*). The idea behind it seems to originate in the Prophetic traditions quoted by al-Ghazālī, which include sayings of the Prophet himself and sayings of ʿAlī, the Prophet's son-in-law. All these traditions (*ḥadīth*s) concern the exten-

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[68] For the practice and definition of this term before al-Ghazālī, see B. Radtke, *Theologen und Mystiker in Xurāsān und Transoxanien* 559.

[69] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* iv, 387; Khadīwjam ii, 504.

[70] Badawī, *Muʾallafāt al-Ghazālī* 270–271 (no. 90).

Some scholars do not consider the -*Risāla al-laduniyya* as an authentic work of al-Ghazālī's. This view, however, seems to need reconsideration due to the above-given explanations as well as the more recent research studies on al-Ghazālī's major Arabic works. For example, see M. al-Janābī, *Al-Ghazālī (al-tāluf al-lāhūtī—al-falsafī—al-ṣūfī)* (1998), iii, 212–15; iv, 399. Yet, like many Arabists, al-Janābī was unaware of the actual contents of the Persian *Kīmiyā*. Moreover, the fact that 12th century manuscripts of the -*Risāla al-laduniyya* have been found recently leaves almost no doubt that this work indeed belongs to al-Ghazālī. The clearest evidence in support of this view is one particular ms. of this epistle, which appears to be a copy prepared only four years after al-Ghazālī's death. This means that the epistle was copied even *before* the birth of Ibn al-ʿArabī (1165–1240), to whom this work has (erroneously) been attributed by many scholars. See furthermore Pourjavady, *Majmūʿah-yi Falsafī-yi Marāghah* (2002), 6–7; idem: *Two Renewers of Faith* (2002).

For the text of the -*Risāla al-laduniyya*, see idem. 100–120; for an English translation of this work, see Margaret Smith in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (April 1938), 177–200; and 3 (July 1938), 353–374; for a Russian translation, see my book *Sufism*, St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 1999, 215–267; ²2003, 175–216. Since the Arabic original of this text was not available to me, I relied on a Persian translation: Imām Muḥammad Ghazālī: *ʿIlm-i ladunī*, trans. by Zayn al-Dīn Kiyāʾi-Nizhād, Tehran: Muʿassasa-yi Maṭbuʿātī-yi ʿAṭāʾī, 1361/1982.

sion and enlargement of knowledge and its multiplication (*kathrat*).[71] Moreover, one *ḥadīth* relates to the possibility of increasing the weight of the meanings of just one chapter of the Quran, the sura entitled *al-Fātiḥa*, 40 times.

> He [= ʿAlī] (may God be pleased with him) said also, speaking of the age of Moses (upon whom be peace): "The exposition of his book amounts to forty loads and if God would give me leave to expound the true meaning of the *Fātiḥa* I would pursue my way therein until it reached the like of that, I mean forty heavy loads."[72]

In other words, by quoting this *ḥadīth* al-Ghazālī indicates that both the Torah and the Quran (and, maybe, other sacred texts as well) have been constructed with some potential for extension while practicing *tafakkur*, or meditating on them. And the example given above has shown that the extension is not just a word here, but an actual increase of the text by a factor of at least two.

<p align="center">*　*　*</p>

At this point, it is interesting to note that the same expressions and technical terms can be traced also in the *Rashaḥāt ʿayn al-ḥayāt* ("Drops from the Well-Spring of Eternal Life")[73] by the Persian author Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn al-Wāʿiẓ Kāshifī (1463–1531).[74] In Kāshifī's book, which came to be seen as the basic hagiography of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya Sufi brotherhood, the author explains the principle of the "awareness of numbering" (*wuqūf-i ʿadadī*)[75] as being obligatory during the remembrance of God, implying the increase of the *dhikr* formula by a certain number of repetitions. Stated differently, one can suppose that the effect achieved as a result of the practice of meditation (*tafakkur*) was similar to that of the other forms of Sufi practice called *dhikr* and *khatm*. The more appealing former one, however, seems to have been in use during the period of the so-called intellectual Sufism, and is likely to have been totally replaced by the simpler latter form in the wake of the Mongol conquest, a period marked by an unprecedented spread of Sufi communities all over the far-flung Muslim world.

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[71] [Al-]Ghazālī, *ʿIlm-i ladunī* 46–56.

[72] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Risāla al-laduniyya*, trans. by M. Smith 367.

[73] Ed. Lucknow ¹1308/1890; ²1315/1897.

[74] Son of the famous Persian writer and preacher Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn al-Wāʾiẓ Kāshifī, see: *EI*² iv, 703 a.

[75] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 26–7.

6 *The spiritual-religious principles of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya*

"The Alchemy of Happiness" was completed, in fact, not long before the emergence of the many Sufi brotherhoods, which were formed on the basis of various Sufi currents and schools. This was the case, for example, for the Khwājagānī current, whose founder, ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Ghijduwānī (d. 1180 or 1220),[76] has been usually considered to have developed the well-known eight principles of this Sufi current. These principles then shaped the spiritual-religious basis of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya brotherhood, which appeared in the same Central Asian region somewhat later.

These principles include the following:

1. Conscious breathing (*hūsh dar dam*),
2. Keeping an eye on every step that one takes (*nazar bar qadam*),
3. Travel in one's homeland (*safar dar waṭan*),
4. Solitude within society (*khalwat dar anjuman*),
5. Remembrance of God (*yādkard*),
6. Return (*bāzgasht*),
7. Preservation, vigilance (*nigāhdāsht*),
8. Memorization (*yāddāsht*).

It seems somewhat surprising for the time of al-Ghijduwānī that none of these principles use Arabic terms to convey the idea involved therein, unlike *al-Uṣūl al-ʿashara* ("The Ten Principles"), a work written in Arabic by Najm al-dīn al-Kubrā (killed in 1221), whose brotherhood was one of the Khwājagān's main rivals in the region. Even the most used Arabic expression, *dhikr* ("remembrance of God"), is replaced with its Persian counterpart *yādkard*. The latter term, however, can rarely be found anywhere except in the Khwājagānī sources. Nonetheless, the Arabic equivalents of the aforementioned Persian terms appear in commentaries on the principles, indicating their "proto-terms."

However, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband (1318–1389) is reported to have later added three more provisions to them, the following three principles:

9. Awareness of numbering (*wuqūf-i ʿadadī*),
10. Awareness of time (*wuqūf-i zamānī*), and
11. Awareness of the heart (*wuqūf-i qalbī*).

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[76] See *EI²* vii, 933 a (art. "Naḳshband, Bahāʾ al-Dīn").

If the Khwājagānī sources are consulted carefully, one finds, for instance, that the first one, *wuqūf-i ʿadadī* is explained as that of being inseparably connected with *al-ʿilm al-ladunī*, "Divine knowledge." The latter in turn is associated again with the initial mystical experience that al-Ghijduwānī gained when he was instructed by al-Khiḍr[77] to perform his "remembrance of God" (*dhikr*) under water (see below), i.e. approximately one and half centuries before Naqshband.

Nevertheless, these eleven principles are traditionally considered to be the sovereign spiritual product of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya. But the text of the *Kīmiyā* in fact formulates already in one way or another the majority of these principles of the Khwājagān-Naqsh-bandiyya, though not always as laconically as al-Wāʿiẓ Kāshifī does in his *Rashaḥāt ʿayn al-ḥayāt*.

In describing the special principles of spiritual-religious life, al-Ghazālī states, for example, that they were arrived at by mystics "who realized that they came into the world for trade. Their deals are with their own souls. The profit or loss from these transactions is paradise or hell."[78] Then he defines these mystics as "people who possess inner vision" (*ahl-i baṣīrat*) and "great men of religion" (*buzurgān-i dīn*). In other words, this means that—although these principles are included in the system of the philosopher's world-view—they occupy here the sixth paragraph (*aṣl*) of the fourth *rukn* ("On the virtues leading to salvation") of the *Kīmiyā*. Al-Ghazālī makes it clear, however, that they came into being before him and that they are not his creation.[79]

Furthermore, in both texts, i.e. the *Kīmiyā* and the *Rashaḥāt*, these principles are termed either as necessary conditions (Sing. *sharṭ*), which must be observed simultaneously in order to set off on the path, or stations (Sing. *maqām*) through which the followers of the path (*sulūk*) must pass successively in order to attain the desired goal.

In the first case, there is no need for successive order in following the *sharṭ*s either on the path or in explanations. One must simply accept them all at once as a given. But in the second case, the absence of a clearly defined order makes no sense for the concept of *maqām*.

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[77] A well-known legendary figure in popular Islam; for al-Khaḍir (al-Khiḍr), see *EI*² iv, 902b.

[78] Ms. B 928, 376a (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 483–4.

[79] They are also described in detail in "quarter" four, "book" eight (*al-murāqaba wa-l-muḥāsaba*) of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā*'.

The seemingly illogical nature of this terminological combination is explained only in the *Kīmiyā*. There it says that all necessary conditions are set to one's soul as to a partner in a game. They are set forth once and for all. Later, as the game with one's soul progresses, the participant must successively pass through the stations articulated as conditions. Al-Ghazālī says the following about the stations:

> They (the Sufis) have defined for themselves six *maqām*s ("stations"): *mushārakat* ("partnership"), *muḥāsabat* ("self-accountability"), *murāqabat* ("observation"), *muʿātabat* ("repentance"), *muʿāqabat* ("punishing oneself"), and *mujāhadat* ("inner struggle, exerting efforts").[80]

All these terms are given as verbal nouns, implying interaction (in this particular case, with one's own soul). Below, are several typical and clearly delineated parallels between the principles of the spiritual life of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya, as described in the *Rashaḥāt*, and the stations indicated in the *Kīmiyā*.

Conscious breathing (hūsh dar dam)—*Partnership, participation* (mushārakat)/*conditionality* (mushāraṭat)

Rashaḥāt
Conscious breathing requires each breath emanating from inside to stem from divine consciousness and presence and to preclude unconcern [. . .]. Conscious breathing signifies the movement from breath to breath and demands an absence of unconcern and the presence of consciousness. Each breath which one takes must be filled with the Most High and devoid of unconcern.[81]

Kīmiyā
The first station is partnership [. . .]. Each breath among the breaths in our life is a gem that can enrich [us]. The most important element in this is accounting and [self-]accounting [. . .] one says to one's soul: "I have no other wealth than life. Every breath which has been emitted is irreplaceable, and their number, in accordance with the science of the Most High, is limited and cannot be increased. . . ."[82]

In illuminating the station of "partnership," al-Ghazālī explains that one must set upon one's soul the condition of remembering God

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[80] Ms. B 928, 376b (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 484. The order of the stations is different in the two texts.
[81] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 21.
[82] Ms. B 928, 376b (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 484.

permanently, just as partners set conditions upon each other at the beginning of a game. In one of the Indian lithographs as well as in Khadīwjam's edition and the *Iḥyāʾ*, this station is even named as the station of "conditionality" (*mushāraṭat*).[83] It is imperative to see to the observance of this condition at each breath, since ". . . every breath which has been emitted is irreplaceable, and their number, in accordance with the science of the Most High, is limited and cannot be increased."

Solitude within society (khalwat dar anjuman)—*Observation, control I* (murāqabat)

Rashaḥāt
Solitude within society is outwardly being with people while inwardly being with God. [. . .] Solitude within society is when one's occupation with and immersion in the mention of the Most High attains such a degree that if one were to enter the market place, one would notice neither the voices nor the words, because the reality of the heart (*ḥaqīqat-i dil*) is entirely in the grips of the remembrance of God (*dhikr*).[84]

Kīmiyā
The second station is *murāqabat*. The meaning of *murāqabat* is control (*pāsbānī wa nigāh dāshtan*). [. . .] The basis of "control" is the knowledge that the Most High is informed about all that is committed and thought by him [i.e. the mystic]. [. . .] Know that "control" is of two types. The first is "control" of the righteous, whose hearts are immersed in the grandeur of the Most High and are not able to withstand its awe-inspiring sight. There is no room in them to pay attention to anything else. [. . .] There are those whose immersion in this world is so great that one addresses them and they do not hear; one approaches them, but they do not see, even though their eyes are open. This is the state of degree, the "control" of the righteous, when they are wholly immersed in the Most High.[85]

Al-Ghazālī distinguishes between two types of the stations of "control." One of them is the "control of the righteous" (*murāqabat-i ṣid-dīqān*) being in correlation with the station of the Khwājagānī's

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[83] Al-Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* (ed. Bombay, 1904), 364; Khadīwjam ii, 484; *Iḥyāʾ* iv.
[84] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 23.
[85] Ms. B 928, 377a–378b (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 486–9.

"solitude within society," i.e. something that is often explained as inner contemplative seclusion.

Both "control of the righteous" and "solitude within society" demand "total immersion" (*istighrāq*) in the mention of the Most High. By practicing it, mystics attain a level of isolation when their surroundings—none of which is related to God—are no longer apprehended by the sensory organs of vision and hearing.

One finds an analogy for al-Ghazālī's second type of "control" in the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya principle of "preservation" or "vigilance" (*nigāhdāsht*). It is presented in the *Rashaḥāt* text as follows.

Preservation, vigilance (nigāhdāsht)—*Observation,*
control II (murāqabat)

Rashaḥāt
Preservation consists of observing one's thoughts. [. . .] For an hour, or two or more hours, one must guard one's thoughts against the interference of the superfluous to the extent that this is possible.[86]

Kīmiyā
The second stage is the "control" of the pious. [. . .] Thus, he who is at this stage must watch all of his states, thoughts and movements. [. . .] At first, one listens to a thought that appears in one's heart. One always looks after one's heart—and the thoughts arising in it—in order to scrutinize the thought that has appeared. If it is from God then one completes it. But if it stems from the desires of the soul, one is afraid, experiences shame before the Most High, and blames oneself.[87]

Here al-Ghazālī speaks of the "control of the pious" (*murāqabat-i pārsāyān*), who should observe all their states, thoughts, and actions. He stresses in particular, constant control of the thoughts that visit one's heart. If these thoughts stem from God or are about Him, they are permissible. But if they stem from the desires of the soul, then one should feel ashamed before God and blame oneself (*malāmat*).

As for the *Rashaḥāt* text, it also terms the concept of "preservation" control over thoughts and recommends that one spend as much time as possible controlling them.

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[86] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 25.
[87] Ms. B 928, 378b–379a (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 489–92.

Awareness of time (wuqūf-i zamānī)—*Self-reckoning* (muḥāsabat)

Rashaḥāt
Amongst the Sufis—may God sanctify their souls—the awareness of time consists of *muḥāsaba*. Ḥaḍrat-i Khwāja [= Naqshband]—blessed be his grave—said: "*Muḥāsaba* means that every hour we take into account what has happened to us, [i.e.] what passed in unconcern and what passed with consciousness. When we see that it is all wrong, we return and begin anew."[88]

Kīmiyā
The third station is self-reckoning after action. It is necessary that the servant of God have, at the end of the day, time before going to sleep in order to settle accounts with his soul for the day, in order to separate the capital of profit from the capital of loss. Capital consists of obligatory religious tenets; profit is what is done above and beyond them, loss is violation.[89]

In this case, the *Rashaḥāt* draws a direct parallel between its principle of "awareness of time" and "self-reckoning."

Travel in one's homeland (safar dar waṭan)

Rashaḥāt
Travel in one's homeland means that one who follows the path of instruction (*sālik*) undertakes travel within his human nature, that is, he makes the transition from human qualities to angelic ones, from the blameworthy to the praiseworthy.[90]

Kīmiyā
Knowledge of this path includes both inner vision and inner contemplation. The person who is going to achieve this has to separate himself from his native realm, leaving the place where he was born and which was his homeland, to set off on a journey of religion (*safar-i dīn*). By homeland (*waṭan*) one should understand not a city or house, which are home only to the outer shell, the perambulations of which are worth nothing. One cannot say this about the spirit, which is the reality of man. It (the spirit) has a quiet place from which it came into being. That is its homeland. And from there it is to undertake the journey.[91]

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[88] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 26.
[89] Ms. B 928, 380a (n. 9); Khadīwjam ii, 493–4.
[90] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 22.
[91] Ms. B 928, 46a (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 110.

Al-Ghazālī does not formulate this particular principle as a station, as in previous cases, although the idea of a spiritual journey is a fundamental one running through the entire work as "travel in one's homeland."

Apart from the clearly delineated parallels in the chosen principles of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya, one should also note the principles of *yādkard* and *wuqūf-i qalbī*, which signify successively the "remembrance of God" (*dhikr*) and the "awareness of the heart."

Of course, the *dhikr* as a form of practical exercise for mystics was known long before al-Ghazālī in both of its aspects: the mention of God in one's heart and pronouncing the *dhikr* with the heart. Therefore, there is no need to pay special attention to them in this context, although al-Ghazālī explains both of them in his *Kīmiyā*.

As for *yāddāsht* ("memorization"), it is shown to be a constant awareness of God. It is also determined by using the Arabic term of *mushāhada* ("contemplation").[92]

7   *The question as to the sources of the spiritual-religious principles of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya brotherhood*

A comparison of the above-mentioned principles of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya with their counterparts in the *Kīmiyā* does not yield sufficient grounds for considering the former to be the result of a simple adaptation made by one single person on the basis of one single book. Also, it is rather unlikely that the similarity between these principles could be the result of a direct borrowing of the principles of al-Ghazālī's spiritual-religious life as formulated in his *Kīmiyā*. However, a single source in the formulations cited is evident. In this regard, there are a certain number of possible explanations. These are:

(a) Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf al-Hamadānī (d. 1140),[93] possibly a teacher of al-Ghijduwānī, is considered to have received his education together with al-Ghazālī from the same teacher,[94] i.e. from Abū ʿAlī Faḍl ibn

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[92] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 25.
[93] See *EI*[2] vii, 933a (art. "Naḵshband").
[94] Dawlatsha bin ʿAlaʾu ʾd-dawla Bakhtisha al-Ghazi of Samarqand, *Tadhkiratu ʾsh-shuʿara* (ed. Browne, 1901), 95 (lines 15–20); Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 6; Ḥaqīqat, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿirfān* 404, 423.

Muḥammad al-Fārmadī al-Ṭūsī (d. 1084).[95] Thus it is reasonable that the teaching of this scholar was the ultimate source for the subsequent formation of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya's principles. This also means that al-Ghazālī may have given such a detailed exposition of these principles in his work, because al-Fārmadī al-Ṭūsī was his teacher, from whom he transmitted the principles. It might have been transmitted orally, for al-Ghazālī quotes al-Fārmadī twice in the *Kīmiyā* and once in the *Iḥyāʾ*, using expressions such as "I have heard from *khwāja* Abū ʿAlī al-Fārmadī that . . ."; in the *Iḥyāʾ*, however, his *nisba* is al-Fārqadanī—a miswriting of al-Fārmadī.[96] The issue as to whether or not al-Ghijduwānī was a disciple of al-Hamadānī,[97] is of little relevance here since these principles obviously had spread long before al-Ghijduwānī's lifetime.

(b) The second possibility is also important enough to deserve more careful attention, namely, that these principles on "how to lead a religious-spiritual life" could have been adopted or, to say it more clearly, borrowed by al-Ghazālī from the works of his Ṭūs and Nīshāpūr predecessors, and included in his own writings. These works would include: *Tahdhīb al-Asrār* ("The Education [in] the Mysteries") by Abū Saʿd/Abū Saʿīd Khargūshī al-Nīshāpūrī (the 10th cent.); *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* by Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (a citizen of Nīshāpūr, d. 1074); and *al-Lumaʿ fī l-taṣawwuf* ("Flashes into Sufism") by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (d. 988). The borrowings from these works in different parts of his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* and *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* have already been definitely established and proven.[98] Therefore, it is quite possible that these principles are in close connection with the precepts of the Malāmatiyya movement since, by al-Ghazālī's lifetime, this movement had already become widespread in Khurāsān and

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[95] Ḥaqīqat, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿirfān*, 403–4. Al-Subkī (14th cent.) states that al-Ghazālī had visited this shaykh in Nīshāpūr before he arrived at Baghdād's Niẓāmiyya college; see al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* (ed. Cairo 1324/1906), iv, 109, line 6; M. Bouyges, M. Allard, Essai de chronologie 1.

[96] Khadīwjam ii, 34, 156; *Iḥyāʾ*, iv, 161–162; see also my preface to the Russian translation of the *Kīmiyā*, xiv–xv (n. 24).

[97] W. Madelung, Yūsuf Hamadānī and Naqšbandiyya 499–509.

[98] For more details, see the most recent and well-grounded research by N. Pourjavady, *Two Renewers of Faith*, esp. Part 3: Manābaʿ-yi *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 213–278. However, one should also not forget about al-Ghazālī's borrowings from the works of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996), al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (ca. 781–857), and some of his other Sufi forerunners, including perhaps Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī al-Nīshāpūrī (d. 1021).

Transoxania (*Māwarā'annahr*), with its origin and center in Nīshāpūr, and at least the aforementioned Khargūshī and al-Qushayrī being its "propagandists." On the other hand, the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya's succession to the Malāmatiyya movement is explicitly confirmed by "an ideologist" of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya, Muḥammad Pārsā al-Bukhārī (d. 1420), in his work entitled *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* ("The Final Decision"):

> Thus, what was mentioned [in the book] about the states of the "people of blame" (*ahl-i malāmat*), explains the states of the Khwājagān family.[99]

Whatever the case may be, the fact remains that al-Ghazālī's most famous Persian work contained a detailed discussion of principles which eventually were renamed and adapted by al-Ghijduwānī and/or, rather, by his followers (who were especially active after the Mongol conquest). Those principles served both for (a) the self-identification of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya communities[100]—in distinguishing them from other Sufi brotherhoods—as well as for (b) an increase in their popularity.

If one accepts the fact that these principles for a spiritual-religious life were known to mystics before they were formulated by al-Ghijduwānī (or at least before the time when they were ascribed to him) for the Khwājagān, then the only new element introduced into Sufi practice by al-Ghijduwānī was the practice of *dhikr* by holding one's breath. As the Sufi tradition has it, al-Ghijduwānī was taught this exercise in visions by the legendary al-Khiḍr. And it is for this reason that the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya tradition considers al-Ghijduwānī as an *uwaysī*, a term referring to his initiation without the participation of a living *shaykh*. Here is how the author of the *Rashaḥāt* describes this mystical experience:

> Enter the reservoir (*ḥawḍ*), lower yourself entirely into the water, and say with your heart (*dil*): *Lā ilāh illā Allāh wa-Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*.[101]

This laconic description plays on two words—the reservoir (*ḥawḍ*), into which one must lower oneself completely, and the heart (*dil*), with which one must pronounce the formula. This exercise naturally

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[99] M. Pārsā, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* 699.

[100] For other ways of the Khwājagān's self-identification, see D. DeWeese, *The Mashā'ikh-i Turk* and the *Khojagān* (1996); idem, Khojaganī Origins and the Critique of Sufism (1999); and J. Paul, *Doctrine and Organization* (1998).

[101] Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 19.

implies the holding of one's breath (*ḥabs-i nafas, ḥabs-i dam*), since full immersion (including the head) in water compels one to hold one's breath as well as to assume a suitable position under water to disassociate oneself from all outer stimulants, something that eventually leads to an altered perception of the world.

Despite the seeming simplicity of performing these exercises, two questions are still to be answered: whether it was easy for al-Ghijduwānī's numerous followers to find deep reservoirs permitting everyday full immersion in the city of Bukhārā and the surrounding regions, and why Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband is known to have not observed the principle of holding the breath, something that is, as proposed by al-Ghijduwānī, obligatory (*lāzim*).[102] A quotation from the first chapter (*ʿunwān*) of al-Ghazālī's *Kīmiyā* seems to elucidate these questions:

> From the preceding, the virtue of the nature of the human heart has become intelligible and the nature of the path of Sufis has become clear. Just as you might hear from Sufis who say "The religious science is the curtain which hides that path" and could deny it, do not deny their words, because this is the truth. For when one is busy with or immersed (*mustaghraq*) in what has been acquired through the senses, a curtain appears [hiding] the path, as though one were to liken the heart (*dil*) to a reservoir (*ḥawḍ*), and the senses to five channels (*juy*) bringing water from outside into the reservoir. If you wish for pure water to rise from the depths of the reservoir, then see to it that you release that water in full, closing off all channels so that it does not return. Deepen the reservoir that pure water might raise from its depths. And, as long as the reservoir is filled with water which flows in from outside, pure water cannot rise from within, just as religious knowledge, which bursts out from within the heart, will not be acquired until the gates of the heart are freed from all that comes from outside.[103]

As is evident, al-Ghazālī here employs the same two words—heart (*dil*) and reservoir (*ḥawḍ*), thus linking the heart to a reservoir containing both the pure, ground water of the reservoir itself and outside water being supplied by the five senses.

If one accepts that the exercise as proposed by al-Ghijduwānī must be considered as a metaphor, it can be interpreted as follows: the disciple enters into the heart-reservoir and immerses himself fully in its water. The latter belongs to the heart itself. Thus all outer senses

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[102] Ibid. 27.
[103] Ms. B 928, 14b (n. 9); Khadīwjam i, 36–7.

are shut off when the disciple pronounces the formula of *dhikr* with the heart.

Holding the breath helps to concentrate attention fully on the heart itself. Apparently, the same effect is achieved by the mental calculation of the number of repetitions of *dhikr* while pronouncing them. This method is ascribed to Naqshband and defined as the awareness of numbering (*wuqūf-i ʿadadī*).[104]

It is therefore quite possible that this exercise had also been transmitted by al-Ghijduwānī himself, or by his followers, as a part of the spiritual-religious legacy belonging to the previous generations of Sufis.

These parallels, which are found in the texts of various scholars, suggest that Muslim mystics already possessed the principles of spiritual-religious life by the time of the Khwājagān's emergence on the territory of the region of Bukhārā in the 13th century. Moreover, even an honorific title *khwāja* and its plural form *khwājagān*, according to al-Ghazālī's *Kīmiyā* (see illustration 4, fol. 125a, line 2–3), were known already in the middle of the 11th century and applied to the predecessors of the "official" Khwājagān of Bukhārā in the region of Ṭūs: *khwājagān-i Ṭūs; khwāja-yi Abū l-Qāsim Gurgānī* (or: *al-Kurragānī*; d. apparently in 1058), and in other places of the text: *khwāja-yi Abū ʿAlī Fārmadī* (d. 1084). This is despite the fact that these principles were formulated in Persian only somewhat later and then—perhaps together with the borrowed honorific title—claimed by the numerous followers of this path among the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya brotherhood.

8   *Conclusions*

We may conclude that "The Alchemy of Happiness," the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, is both one of the first theological-philosophical works and one of the first Sufi books written in Persian. It is an independent work and is not an abridged version of the Arabic work *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. However, the style of writing used by al-Ghazālī in his Persian work *Kīmiyā* shows certain characteristics that can also be detected in his Arabic *magnum opus*, the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.

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[104] Khismatulin, *Sufiiskaja ritualʾnaja praktika* 73–104.

One of the main differences between the two treatises concerns the matrix (or multidimensional) structures of the text. Such structures are found in the *khuṭba* parts of the forty books of the *Iḥyāʾ* but explicitly only once in the *Kīmiyā*, this being in the *khuṭba* to the entire book itself. These structures, as it is shown by the given example, can also function as part of a hypertext, referring the reader to the broader context of the Quran and commentaries on it.

In the Persian ethno-linguistic region of Islamic culture, the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* is one of the most popular and best-known works of its kind. Thus it had been highly influential in the geographical area in which the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya Sufi brotherhood arose.

In the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, al-Ghazālī presents in more or less fully-formulated fashion, religious and spiritual principles that he considers most suitable for leading the life of a mystic. They are very similar to the principles of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya brotherhood, whose members considered them as their own spiritual legacy.

Finally, one more aspect needs to be addressed. It concerns the similarity between the principles of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya brotherhood and the matrix structures discussed above with regard to the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* and the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*. These principles follow a particular internal order. Moreover, they show easily detectable key elements such as a) the availability of prepositions (*dar, bar*) in the composition of the first four terms; b) exposing the second four terms in the form of Persian verbal nouns, and c) including *wuqūf* and *yā-yi iḍāfa* in the third group of three terms (printed here in bold). However, the third line, beginning with *wuqūf*, consists of only three syntagmata instead of four. Therefore, without the forth *wuqūf*, this line might seem to be incomplete.

hūsh **dar** *d***am**	*nazar* **bar** *qad***am**	*safar* **dar** *waṭan*	*khalwat* **dar** *anjum***an**
*yād***kard**	*bāz***gasht**	*nigāh***dāsht**	*yād***dāsht**
wuqūf-i *ʿadad***ī**	**wuqūf-i** *zamānī*	?	**wuqūf-i** *qalbī*

A more detailed analysis of these phenomena is certainly desirable. Nonetheless, even the examples given here (see esp. the lack of the 12th syntagma) indicate how in Naqshbandī narratives one principle is often considered to be in correlation with those belonging to the reconstructed column. For example, the principles of the last column *khalwat dar anjuman* ("solitude within society")—*yāddāsht* ("memorization")—*wuqūf-i qalbī* ("awareness of the heart") are obviously meant to establish and strengthen the *nisbat-i bāṭinī* ("inner connection"), i.e.

al-nisba al-rūḥiyya ("the spiritual connection").[105] These features can hardly be explained without the proposed methodology of analyzing the multidimensional structures. Following this methodology, how-ever, one may eventually also see how the matrix structures, repre-sented in the Semitic languages (i.e. in the languages of the sacred texts of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions), have become adapted by an Indo-European language.

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[105] Cf. Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt* 23 (*rashḥa—khalwat dar anjuman*), 25 (*rashḥa—yāddāsht*), and especially 27 (*rashḥa—wuqūf-i qalbī*).
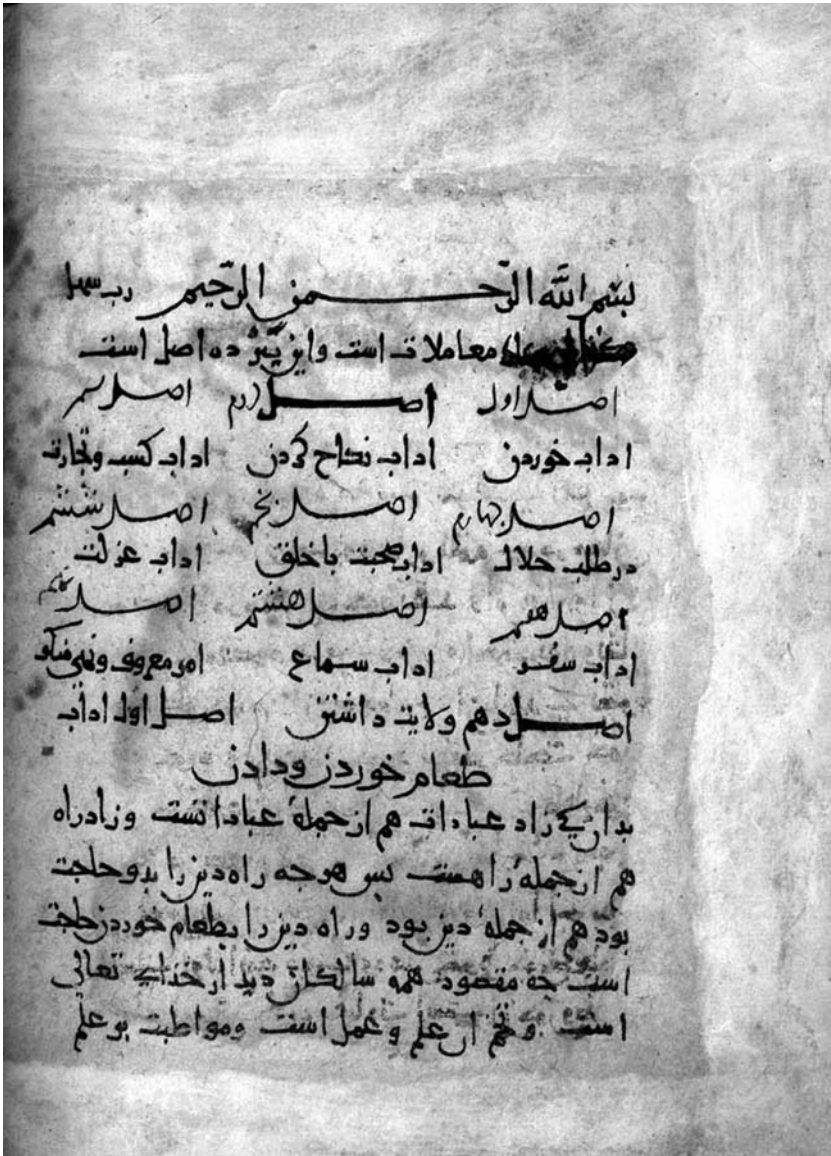
Ill. 1. Ms. B 4612, fol. 1b:
The beginning of the second "pillar" (*rukn*) of the *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*; on "conducts" (*muʿāmalāt*).

Ill. 2. Ms. B 4612, fol. 93b:
An example of the *naskh-i Irānī* ductus from the middle of the 12th century C.E.
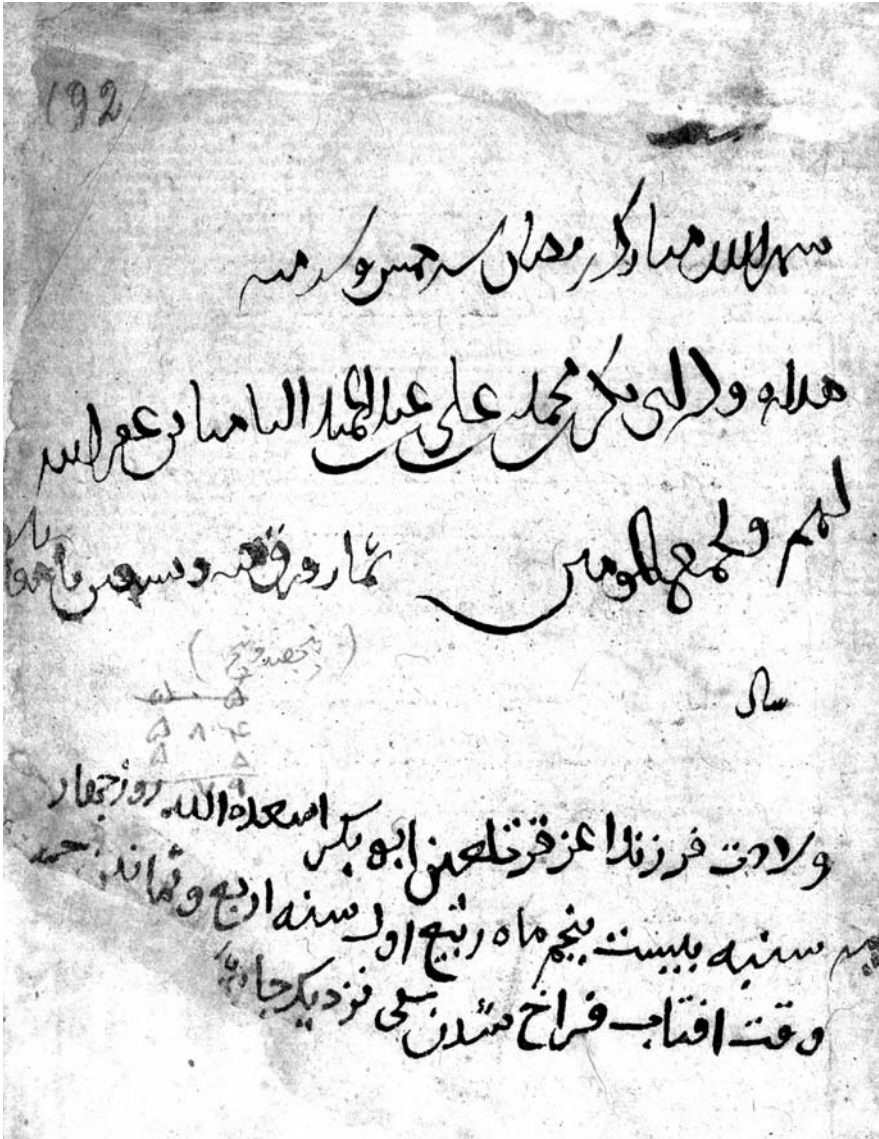
Ill. 3. Ms. B 4612, fol. 001a:
Two references to events in the life of former owners of the manuscript, which
provide indications of the age of the manuscript.

Ill. 4. Ms. 4612, fol. 125a:
For the honorific title *khwāja* ("master"), see lines two and three.

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TAQLĪD OF THE PHILOSOPHERS:
AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S INITIAL ACCUSATION IN HIS *TAHĀFUT*

Frank Griffel

In an address to the Indian Muslims written during his last visit to the subcontinent in 1882, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1255–1315 A.H./1838–1897 C.E.) outlined the importance of philosophy (*falsafa*) for the development of Islam. The Muslims, who in the earliest period of their history had already developed glory, splendor, and greatness, showed humiliation during the reign of the second 'Abbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158 /754–775), and lowered their heads in order to learn the philosophical sciences from their non-Muslim subjects. Nevertheless, the philosophical movement that sprang from the translation of Greek philosophy was, despite the positive impact it had on Muslim culture, insufficient for producing human perfection. Al-Afghānī states:

> The reason for this was that they believed the Greek and Roman philosophers were all possessors of absolute reason, followers of pious habits, and endowed with celestial powers and true revelations, and that the scope of their senses and mental powers was above the scope of the senses of other men. Therefore, accepting their words like a celestial revelation, they followed them completely. They followed them in arguments and proofs just as the masses follow their leaders in object and aims.[1]

Al-Afghānī accuses the classical Muslim philosophers of having slavishly emulated their predecessors in antiquity and of not having developed a critical attitude towards their arguments and their proofs.

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[1] The text is translated into English in Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* 109–122, 115. The original Persian text "Favāyid-i falsafa" was published in a collective volume *Maqālāt-i Jamāliyya*, Calcutta 1884; cf. Kudsi-Zadeh, *Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. An annotated bibliography* 13f., no. 91.5. Al-Afghānī's pupil Muḥammad 'Abduh repeats this criticism in his *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* 363f. He highlights the *falāsifa*'s search for "pure thinking" (*al-fikr al-maḥḍ*) and criticizes their admiration for Aristotle and Plato and their emulation (*taqlīd*) of them.

Such an attitude is likened to the masses' uncritical following of their political leaders and, according to al-Afghānī's judgment, grounded in the Muslim philosophers' conviction that the Greek philosophers were endowed with "absolute reason."

Al-Afghānī's accusation against the philosophers of classical Islam goes back to al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) book on the "Incoherence of the Philosophers" (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*) where it has a specific role which is not evident in al-Afghānī's address. The *Tahāfut* contains an overall argument that starts with a similar accusation against a "group" of al-Ghazālī's contemporaries who follow the teachings of the more eminent philosophers (*falāsifa*). This group emulates the teachings of the philosophers and it is this uncritical emulation (*taqlīd*) that leads them to their disregard for revealed religion.

Starting from al-Ghazālī's statements in his autobiography, I will show in this study that al-Ghazālī understood the *Tahāfut* as the very first response (*radd*) to peripatetic philosophy produced by a Muslim theologian. I will also show that the strategy that al-Ghazālī chose in order to respond to the challenges of peripatetic philosophy does—in most cases—not focus on a refutation of the truth of the *falāsifa*'s teachings. The overall argument of the *Tahāfut* directly addresses the *falāsifa*'s epistemological disregard for revealed knowledge and analyses the reason for this neglect. It finds the reason in the *falāsifa*'s claim that knowledge in metaphysics and the natural sciences is demonstrative (apodeictic). It is this claim that many arguments in the *Tahāfut* aim to destroy. In conclusion it will be shown why many discussions within the *Tahāfut* focus on epistemology and why a refutation of the *falāsifa*'s teaching from the point of view of Muslim theology makes the *tahāfut*, i.e. the self-imposed collapse of the *falāsifa*'s edifice, evident.

1   *The* Tahāfut's *strategy as a response* (radd) *to the* falāsifa

In his autobiography "Deliverance from Error" (*al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*), al-Ghazālī describes the composition of his earlier book on the "Incoherence of the Philosophers" (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*).[2] Here, the

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[2] Al-Ghazālī's sincerity regarding the actual historical events and developments described in his *Munqidh* has often been called into question (cf. al-Baqarī, *I'tirafāt al-Ghazālī* 145f., van Ess, Quelque remarques sur le Munqid min aḍ-ḍalāl 60ff., and

Tahāfut is called a "response to" (*radd ʿalā*) peripatetic philosophy. Al-Ghazālī's report on the process that led to the composition of the *Tahāfut* starts with his puzzlement over the fact that no man of religion and no theologian (*mutakallim*) had ever devoted his efforts to writing a *radd* to the teachings of the philosophers (*falāsifa*).[3] They had written no more than scattered words on this subject entangled in other contexts and had only been concerned with the most obvious contradictions and corruption of philosophy. Despite his initial astonishment, al-Ghazālī comes up with an explanation for this lacuna in Islamic literature. To write a *radd* before one has developed a most thorough understanding of the teachings of a specific *madhhab* is like a stab in the dark. At this point al-Ghazālī decided to make himself ready for the writing of such a refutation. He reports how he started to read the philosophical books over and over again and how he studied peripatetic philosophy in his spare time and without a teacher, while at the same time being heavily involved with his duties at the Niẓāmiyya in Baghdad. At the end of this effort stood the firm conviction that the teachings of the *falāsifa* were full of deception (*khidāʿ*), delusion (*talbīs*) and fancy (*takhyīl*). Subsequently he took on the writing of the *Tahāfut*.[4]

Books that bear the title *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā . . .*, "Response/Reply to . . ." had been written since the 2nd/8th century, so *radd* became "the normal term in classical Islamic literature to denote a response to an adversary, intended to refute his statements or opinions."[5] There has never been a specific instruction on how such a response had to appear. The lists of books that bear such a title reveal that no limitation was given to the topic and the material of a response and no particular school or group of authors had developed a specialization

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Fück, *Die Bekehrung al-Ġazālīs* 134ff.). The *Munqidh* should be regarded as an idealization of al-Ghazālī's intellectual quest written in hindsight of actual events that were most probably prompted by more than just academic decisions.

[3] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 18.3ff. In the *Tahāfut* 6.6 (the *Tahāfut* is quoted in Maurice Bouyges' edition), al-Ghazālī also describes the book as a *radd*.

[4] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 18.15ff., 23.19. Similar words had been used by al-Ghazālī earlier in the introduction to his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, 2.8f. In this book, written much closer in time to the *Tahāfut* than his autobiography, al-Ghazālī also stresses the need for proper understanding and uses the same metaphor of a "throw into the darkness and into error (*ramy fī l-ʿamāya wa-l-ḍalāl*)" for those who do not take charge of this prerequisite.

[5] See Daniel Gimaret: art. "Radd," in: *EI*[2] viii, 363a.

in this genre.[6] Having said this, it is also true that a refutation in
the tradition of Kalām literature followed a particular strategy that
was closely connected with the origins of Kalām in the religious dis-
putations of the 2nd/8th century.[7] The technique of refutation in
traditional Kalām would be to "talk" with the opponent citing his
positions ("*in qīla . . .*") and bringing one's own responses ("*fa-naqūlu . . .*")
in order to force the opponent—who is present in the text as an
anonymous adversary—to further concessions that would reduce his
positions to meaningless alternatives.[8] This strategy aims at making
it evident that the opponent's teachings are either logically incon-
sistent or lead to conclusions that are undesirable, even for their
author. Both results would show that these teachings are funda-
mentally flawed.

The *Tahāfut* follows this scheme which was not only used in books
of refutation but became a distinctive feature of Kalām literature.
However, dialogue seems to be the only convention to which the
Tahāfut complies. In fact, the reference to the genre of *radd* books
in the *Munqidh* merely points to the fact that the *falāsifa*'s teachings
had never been thoroughly refuted and still stood as a challenge to
Islam when al-Ghazālī first read philosophical books. Subsequently,
this challenge was taken up by our scholar who, by the time of the
Munqidh's composition around 501/1107, understood his *Tahāfut al-
falāsifa*—published twelve years earlier[9]—as the decisive Islamic
response to peripatetic philosophy.

The book is arranged in three basic parts. After an introductory
part that consists of five different prefaces, each devoted to a specific
aspect, the main section divides into 20 discussions, composed as lit-
erary dialogues with the *falāsifa*. Each discussion is devoted to one
single element of the *falāsifa*'s philosophical system that al-Ghazālī
chooses to criticize. He argues with the *falāsifa* on 16 questions in
metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*) and four in the natural sciences (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*).
Only questions in these two disciplines are considered problematic
by al-Ghazālī. In the third and the fifth preface of his book, al-

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[6] Cf. the list in Sezgin, *GAS* i, 903f., for instance, or in the index of Tajaddod's
edition of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist* 109–111.

[7] van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* i, 48–55.

[8] van Ess, The Beginnings of Islamic Theology 89.

[9] The *Tahāfut* was published in Muḥarram 488/January 1095; cf. the dating by
Maurice Bouyges in his *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres de al-Ghazali* 23 and in the
introduction to his edition of the text.

Ghazālī lays down his opinion that the two remaining disciplines of peripatetic philosophy, logic and mathematics, do not contain anything opposed to Islam.[10] The third main part of the book is the short *khātima*. In this conclusion of less than one page al-Ghazālī condemns three of the *falāsifa*'s key teachings as unbelief (*kufr*), a judgment that is for him identical to apostasy from Islam and thus punishable by death.[11] The other 17 teachings discussed in the book are considered *bidaʿ*, i.e. heretical innovations that are considered false but nevertheless tolerated views.

The structure of the work reveals immediately that the refutation in the strict sense of the word lies in the discussion of the 20 *masāʾil*. In each of these 20 chapters al-Ghazālī takes up one specific position of the *falāsifa* and questions it. The strategy chosen in each of the 20 discussions is not uniform. In fact, each follows its own dynamic, which has in many cases been analyzed by scholars.[12]

The *radd*, however, is in no way limited to the rejection of these 20 positions. First of all, the *khātima* (conclusion) forms a vital part of the refutation. It may be the most long-lasting and decisive part of this process, since it forbids every Muslim to voice any of the three condemned opinions. For the reader of the *Tahāfut*, however, this judgment appears somehow suddenly on the very last page of the book, without much preparation in the main text. The *khātima* is the legal assessment of a previous philosophical discussion that never explicitly touches the criteria for tolerated and non-tolerable opinions in Islam.

If each of the 20 discussions and the *khātima* has a specific role in the process of the refutation, is there also a role for the five-fold

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[10] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 8f., 14f.

[11] Cf. my Toleration and Exclusion: al-Shāfiʿī and al-Ghazālī on the treatment of apostates, esp. 350–354.

[12] Works that focus on the argumentative strategy in the *Tahāfut* include Perler/Rudolph *Occasionalismus* 63–105; Marmura, Al-Ghazali on Bodily Resurrection and Causality in Tahafut and The Iqtisad; *idem*, Avicenna's Theory of Prophecy in the Light of Ashʿarite Theology; *idem*, Ghazālī and the Avicennan Proof from Personal Identity for an Immaterial Self; *idem*, Al-Ghazālī's Second Causal Theory in the 17th Discussion of the Tahāfut; *idem*, Ghazali and Demonstrative Science; *idem*, The Logical Role of the Argument from Time; Alon, Al-Ghazālī on Causality; Goodman, Did Al-Ghazâlî deny causality?; Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* index; Behler, *Die Ewigkeit der Welt* 146–179; Hourani, The dialogue between al-Ghazālī and the philosophers on the origin of the world; Abū Rīdah, *Al-Ghazālī und seine Widerlegung der griechischen Philosophie* 98–188; Obermann, *Der philosophische und religiöse Subjektivismus* 55–85; de Boer, *Die Widersprüche der Philosophie nach al-Gazzālī*.

introduction to the book? In this paper I shall analyze the five intro-
ductions and focus on the accusations therein based on the *taqlīd* of
the *falāsifa*.[13] These accusations may be regarded as the religious part
of a broader argument that is directed not against the philosophical
or theological views of those who follow the Arabic philosophers,
but ultimately against their religious worship. Its starting point is the
observation that these followers do not acknowledge the authority of
the religious law (*sharī'a*) and its ritual duties. The aim of the over-
all argument of the *Tahāfut* is to convince these people of the author-
ity of the revelation and the *sharī'a* that is derived from it. The
argument that leads to such an acknowledgment relies for its full
verification on the main part of the text, and particularly the first
discussions of the *Tahāfut* on the eternity of the world respond to its
demands. The reasoning, however, commences on the first pages of
the *Tahāfut* and seems to embrace the following chapters, connect-
ing them and holding them together.

2   *The* taqlīd *of the* falāsifa

It has already been said that the introductory part of the *Tahāfut* is
divided into five parts. It begins with a preface that bears no title.
Four short chapters follow that are numbered, starting with "first
muqaddima" in some manuscripts.[14] The introductions (*muqaddima*) num-
bered "second," "third," and "fourth" follow after this "first." Each
of the five introductory texts is devoted to a particular point that al-
Ghazālī intends to make before entering into the main part of the
Tahāfut. In fact, the title of "*muqaddima*" for these five short texts
should be taken literary. They are "premises" of the overall argu-
ment of the *Tahāfut*. The one headed "first *muqaddima*" stresses the
differences amongst the philosophers—a point whose importance will
become apparent—and gives *en passent* an overview of the historical
development of the movement. It explains the role of Aristotle as its
founder, and of al-Fārābī (d. ca. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 429/

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[13] So far two attempts have been made to understand the introductory part of
the *Tahāfut* as part of al-Ghazālī's refutation, Marmura's Al-Ghazali on Bodily
Resurrection and Causality in Tahafut and The Iqtisad 48f., and Frank's Al-Ghazālī
on Taqlīd. Scholars, Theologians, and Philosophers 244–251.

[14] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 8.1, although most of the mss. used by Bouyges in his edi-
tion have just *muqaddima*.

1037) as those who continued the tradition in Islam.[15] The second *muqaddima* gives an introduction to kinds of possible disputes between *mutakallimūn* and *falāsifa*, and alerts the reader to some likely errors in dealing with the *falāsifa*'s teachings. The third *muqaddima* points to the dialectical character of the book. Nothing in the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī says here, is stated in order to uphold the truth, but rather in order to "render murky what they are convinced of."[16] The remaining two introductory chapters—the fourth *muqaddima* and the initial preface—shall be subjected to a closer reading.

M.E. Marmura in his translation of the *Tahāfut* calls the initial preface, i.e. the very first portion of the book that has no title, the "religious preface" and that shall be maintained here. Indeed the discussion of this first preface contains a fierce accusation against the religious practices of one "group," or better the lack of these practices, and explains this deficit with their practice of *taqlīd*, i.e. the emulation or uncritical repetition of other people's opinions. The accusation of *taqlīd* has a long tradition within Ash'arite Kalām. Earlier Ash'arites saw a clear opposition between *taqlīd* and knowledge (*'ilm, ma'rifa*) in the sense that the one excludes the other. In this respect, the Ash'arite school was an heir to a Mu'tazilite notion according to which true belief (*taṣdīq*) involves assent in the form of the ratification of the tenets of belief. Such an assent would be impossible to achieve without a proper knowledge of the objects of religious speculation, e.g. the nature of God, the order of the world, or the nature and end of human existence.[17] For earlier Ash'arites, belief (*taṣdīq*) requires knowledge (*'ilm*), and knowledge excludes *taqlīd*. The emulation of other people's sayings is an insufficient means of acquiring the understanding necessary to form the basis of belief. If the tenets of belief are not completely understood, there can be no valid

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[15] Ibid. 8.8, 9.5. Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī are denied the title of *falāsifa*, but dubbed "amongst the *mutafalsafa* in Islam" which is unclear in its meaning, but most probably a more pejorative expression than *falāsifa*.

[16] Ibid. 13.11.

[17] On this element of the theology of some Mu'tazilites like Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825), al-Murdār (d. 226/841), and Thumāma (213/828), see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* iii, 109, 139–142, 167 and his *Erkenntnislehre* 45ff. Unlike in early Ash'arism, the notion that knowledge is a necessary pre-condition to belief was not unanimously accepted amongst the Mu'tazilites. The various positions within this school are laid down in a doxographic report in al-Baghdādī's *Tafsīr asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* fol. 220b. The Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, for instance, discusses the Mu'tazilī positions on *takfīr al-'awāmm*, "to charge the (non-educated) mass of the people with unbelief" and rejects this notion in his *al-Mughnī* xii 530–533.

ratification of them, and thus no belief. Only if one indulges in inde-
pendent reasoning does one acquire knowledge whose truth can be
accepted in an act of ratification (*taṣdīq*).[18]

  Like earlier Ashʿarite writers al-Ghazālī considers *taqlīd* and knowl-
edge to be in a certain opposition to each other. But for him this
opposition is not exclusive. Knowledge can be achieved by emulat-
ing other people. In fact, most people rely heavily—some entirely—
on this form of acquiring knowledge. Al-Ghazālī regards this kind
as an inferior knowledge to the one gained by independent reason-
ing. In fact, it does not count as "real knowledge," but is rather a
"knowledge in the broad sense."[19] Compared to his predecessors, al-
Ghazālī raised the stakes when it comes to the conditions "real knowl-
edge" has to fulfill. The question of knowledge, however, is of far
less significance to his theology, since knowledge ceases to be a nec-
essary condition for belief. Whether one has real or only broad
knowledge is of no theological consequence when it comes to the
notion of belief.[20] In his book "Restraining the Common People from
the Science of Kalām" (*Iljām al-ʿawāmm ʿan ʿilm al-kalām*), a treatise
written late in al-Ghazālī's life on the dangers of making ordinary
people acquainted with Kalām, he expresses the view that belief is
not connected to the development of knowledge:

> Firmly rooted belief (*al-taṣdīq al-jāzim*) rests neither on inquiries nor on
> the capacity to bring forward arguments.[21]

When it comes to the class of learned people, however, al-Ghazālī's
relationship between *taqlīd* and knowledge is still heavily influenced
by the notions developed in the earlier Ashʿarite school. Emulating
other people's thoughts is considered a grave mistake for those who

[18] Al-Baghdādī's *Tafsīr asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā* fol. 220b; Frank, Knowledge and
Taqlīd; Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* 482f.; cf. also my *Apostasie und Toleranz* 208ff.,
214.
  [19] This distinction is used by Frank, Al-Ghazālī on Taqlīd 208 and it is not
prompted by any usage in the writings of al-Ghazālī, but probably by al-Juwaynī's
words reported by al-Anṣārī, *al-Ghunyā* fol. 6a ult.: *ʿilm wa-maʿrifa ʿalā sabīl al-tasawwuʿ*.
On this notion in al-Ghazālī, cf., for instance, *Iḥyāʾ* iii, 1371.4ff.
  [20] Al-Ghazālī requires a mere understanding (*fahm*) of the subject matter of *taṣdīq*;
cf. Frank, Al-Ghazālī on Taqlīd 219f.
  [21] Al-Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 116.6f. Parallel passage in *Iḥyāʾ* i, 211.9ff. Cf. also
Fayṣal al-tafriqa 203 on the motive that one hears seldom of a conversion caused
by the better argument of a *mutakallim*. Conversions are caused by other reasons
than the arguments of the *mutakallimūn*. (The *Fayṣal* is quoted in Sulaymān Dunyā's
edition.)

are capable of independent reasoning. There should be no doubt that, in the case of the ʿ*awāmm*, i.e. the ordinary people, *taqlīd* is not only tolerated but welcomed, since an acquaintance with independent thinking would run the risk of having this group of people fall into unbelief.[22] A scholar or someone who considers himself a *mutakallim* must, however, accept the religious imperative to reason independently. In his book on "The Criterion of Distinction" (*Fayṣal al-tafriqa*), also a work from his late period, al-Ghazālī says that this imperative is not an obligation imposed to achieve the state of a believer, a *muʾmin*, as in earlier Ashʿarite theology. Nevertheless, he finds strong words for those who follow slavishly the arguments even of such eminent teachers as al-Bāqillānī or al-Ashʿarī.[23] In the *Fayṣal* he puts forward two objections against *taqlīd*:

> If you treat this subject rightly you may come to the conclusion that whoever limits truth to one specific theologian (*nāẓir*) comes fairly close to unbelief and to hypocrisy. Firstly, he comes close to unbelief, since he places this one theologian in the position of the Prophet, who is infallible. Belief is something that is constituted only by consent with the Prophet, and to contradict the Prophet necessarily constitutes unbelief. Secondly, it comes close to hypocrisy, because it is the duty of every single theologian to speculate (*naẓar*), and emulation of an authority is for him forbidden. How can he say [to his pupil], "You must speculate but nevertheless follow my authority." Or, "You should inquire (*yanẓur*) but while following your own inquiries you should not develop positions that would deviate from mine. Everything that I hold is an argument for the truth, and therefore you should accept it as such an argument. Everything that you hold is doubtful, and therefore you should consider it doubtful."[24] Is there not a huge difference between him who says, "Emulate me only in my *madhhab*!" and him who says, "Emulate me both in my *madhhab* and in the way I argue for it!" Is this not hypocrisy?[25]

Two aspects become apparent in this passage. First, the only source of emulation that should rightfully be followed is the prophets, since their infallibility puts their judgment above ordinary humans. Second,

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[22] Al-Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 67f., 109f., *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 203.20ff.

[23] Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 131.

[24] The last four sentences are corrupt in the edition of Sulaymān Dunyā. My reading follows ms. Berlin We 1806 (Ahlwardt 2075) and ms. Istanbul, Shehid Ali Pasha 1712 fol. 3a (cf. Samīḥ Dughaym's edition of the text p. 53). Cf. my German translation of this text in al-Ghazālī, *Über Rechtgläubigkeit und religiöse Toleranz* 58, 94.

[25] Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 133.15ff.

although *taqlīd* itself does not constitute unbelief, it violates the self-declared ethics of religious scholarship and replaces both the authority of the prophets and that of reason with that of someone less eminent.[26] This replacement bears the danger of unbelief, depending on how far the teachings of the emulated persons deviate from those of the prophets. These two aspects are, in fact, one general objection to the use of *taqlīd* according to which it belittles or may even diminish the authority of the two sources through which God has given humans knowledge in the science of *uṣūl al-dīn*: revelation (Quran and *ḥadīth*) and the individual capacity to come to right conclusions.[27] Whoever indulges in theology should rest his judgment entirely on these two sources.

Reading these lines from his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* one gets the impression that al-Ghazālī is mainly at odds with the more conservative or rather less open-minded elements of his own profession. This is indeed how Western scholars understood these pages of the *Fayṣal*.[28] But al-Ghazālī's understanding of "real knowledge" is bound to stricter conditions than that of his predecessors in the Ashʿarite school, and this leads him to accuse groups of scholars of *taqlīd* who had not had this accusation leveled against them by any previous author.[29] Most striking is the case of the followers of *falsafa*. On first sight there seems little connection between the charge of blind emulation and peripatetic philosophy, since the latter presents itself as the purest and strictest form of reasoning using the tool of demonstration (apodeixis). Al-Ghazālī's charge of *taqlīd* is brought forward on the very first page of his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* where he refers precisely to the claimed apodeixis of the philosophical method. The beginning of the *Tahāfut* (right after the *khuṭba*) reads:

> I saw a group of people who—being themselves convinced (*yaʿtaqidūna*) to be distinct from the companions and peers by virtue of a special clever talent (*fiṭna*) and quick wit (*dhakāʾ*)[30]—have rejected the duties

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[26] A third criticism is added in the second book of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* i, 211.9ff. where it is said that belief founded on mere *taqlīd* (the "belief of the *ʿawāmm*") tends to vary in its firmness like a thread on a spindle.

[27] It need not be stressed that the latter knowledge comes to the soul from God. Cf. Frank, *Knowledge and Taqlid* 226.

[28] Cf. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* 76ff.

[29] Frank, *Al-Ghazālī on Taqlīd* 232ff.

[30] It has been noted by Janssens, *Al-Ghazzālī's Tahāfut: Is it Really a Rejection of Ibn Sīnā's Philosophy* 2 that the use of *dhakāʾ* in this passage is prompted by

of Islam regarding acts of worship, who have disdained religious rites
pertaining to the office of prayer and the avoidance of prohibited
things, who have belittled the devotions and ordinances prescribed by
the divine law, and who have not stopped [their transgressions] in the
face of prohibitions and restrictions. More than this, they have entirely
cast off the reins of religion through multifarious beliefs, following
therein a troop "who rebel away from God's way, intending to make
it crooked, who are indeed unbelievers in the hereafter (Q 11:19)."

There is no basis to their unbelief other than emulation (*taqlīd*) of
what they hear and what is most familiar (to them), such as the emu-
lation of the Jews and the Christians, since their upbringing and that
of their children has followed a religion other than that of Islam (*ghayr
dīn al-Islām*).[31]

The initial charge of the *Tahāfut* is prompted by the group's lifestyle,
which, according to al-Ghazālī, lacks acknowledgment of the ritual
duties of the Islamic religion. The reason for this un-Islamic lifestyle
is twofold. It is—according to the very first sentence—prompted by
the hubris of this group to be cleverer than their peers. According
to the last sentence of this passage it is due to their practice of *taqlīd*.
The fact that the children of the Jews and the Christians almost
exclusively follow the religions of their parents is a subject that occu-
pied al-Ghazālī in other of his writings, most notably in his *Munqidh*.
Since the initial disposition, the *fiṭra* of every human, would lead him
to become a monotheist, the continuous existence of polytheism
(including Christianity, for instance) needs to be explained. This
explanation had already been provided by a *ḥadīth* that says, "Every
infant is born endowed with the *fiṭra*, but the parents make him a
Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian."[32]

The repeated hearing of the alleged truths within these religions
leads—in al-Ghazālī's view—to the acceptance of wrong convictions.
If the non-Muslims would, however, give up their *taqlīd*, and start
to question their traditions, they would soon find out about the truth
of Islam and give up their false creeds.[33] The explanation in the

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Aristotle's *Posterior Analytic* 89b 10. (Cf. Badawī, *Mantiq Arisṭū* ii, 426.) Quick wit
(*ankhínoia*) is the ability to hit upon the "middle term."
    [31] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 4.3ff. I am using Michael E. Marmura's English transla-
tion, but altering it where necessary. On al-Ghazālī's use of *bal* as a conjunction
between two sentences, for instance, cf. passages in his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 176.6–7,
187.19, 202.9f.
    [32] Wensinck, *Concordance et indices* v 180.
    [33] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 11.1ff. On the connection between *taqlīd*
and remaining in the Jewish faith cf. also *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 117.15ff.

Munqidh for the existence of Christian and Jewish communities is the
background for the discussion of a popular movement of peripatetic
philosophy within Islam:

> The source of their unbelief is their hearing of high-sounding names
> such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and their likes, and the exaggeration
> and misguidedness of groups of their followers in describing their minds,
> the excellence of their principles, the exactitude of their geometrical,
> logical, natural, and metaphysical sciences [. . .].[34]

The group described here has created a tradition that is almost as
forceful as the ones of non-Muslim religions. Their belief in the intel-
lectual superiority of the founding fathers of their tradition puts them
in the same situation as Christians and Jews, for instance, who, for
their practice of *taqlīd*, cannot see that the convictions they grew up
with are wrong.[35] As said earlier, *taqlīd* for al-Ghazālī leads to the
replacement of the prophets' authority with the lesser authority of
those emulated, in this case the Greek philosophers. But there is an
additional reason why the *taqlīd* of this group leads to a thorough
disregard for, and neglect of, the religious duties of Islam. The ulti-
mate reason for the group's disregard for revealed religion is their
opinion that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and those like them denied
revealed religion:

> [. . .] they (*scil.* the group) say about them (*scil.* the ancient philoso-
> phers and their likes) that concurrent with the sobriety of their intel-
> lect and the abundance of their merit is their denial of revealed laws
> and religious confessions and their rejection of the details of the reli-
> gions and faiths, and they are convinced that the [religious] laws are
> composed [by man] and that they are embellished tricks.[36]

This group of people thus "embrace unbelief through *taqlīd*" and
are heretics (*mulḥida*).[37] But since *taqlīd* in itself does not lead into
unbelief, it is the content of what is emulated that is the source for
the unbelief of this group. In this case, the group denies revealed
religion because they are convinced that the ancient philosophers
denied it. But who is this group? Throughout the whole religious

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[34] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 5.1ff.
[35] It is one of the characteristics of *taqīd* that the *muqallid* is unaware of follow-
ing it and convinced that he is knowledgeable and in possession of the truth, al-
Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 117.11ff.
[36] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 5.6ff.
[37] Ibid. 7.2 and 6.9.

preface, the people who hold this opinion appear only in the third
person plural and are not given a name except for "a group" (*ṭā'ifa*).
In a later passage of the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī contrasts the views of
the *falāsifa* with those of "their masses,"[38] and it seems most likely
that this distinction is also applied in the beginning of the religious
preface. The "group" seems to be those who read the books of the
falāsifa and were misguided by some of their ambiguities. It is clear
that the accusations are leveled against contemporaries of al-Ghazālī.[39]
Indeed, the "leaders and the heads of the *falāsifa*" are explicitly
excluded from the allegation of heresy. They are

> [. . .] innocent of the imputation that they deny the religious laws.
> They believe in God and His messengers, but they have fallen into
> confusion in certain details beyond these principles, erring in this stray-
> ing from the correct path, and leading others astray.[40]

The accusation of unbelief and *ilḥād* (most accurately translated as
"heresy") is directed only against those who emulate the leading
philosophers, and it is this group of *muqallidūn* who are falsely con-
vinced that their leaders taught that religious laws are man-made.
The leaders themselves, it is implied, did not come up with this
particular teaching. Nevertheless, their teachings are not free from
blame, since the errors they made led others astray. In order to deal
with the group of his contemporaries and to restrain their arrogant

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[38] Ibid. 21.3f. (*jamāhīruhum*).
[39] It is thus not an accurate description when Jules Janssens in his recent article,
Al-Ghazzālī's Tahāfut: Is it really a rejection of Ibn Sīnā's Philosophy, p. 7, con-
cludes that the book's targets "appear to have been ancient philosophy, especially
its metaphysics, and the uncritical acceptance thereof." The lively intellectual dis-
cussion in the book suggests otherwise. For instance, in the course of the 20th dis-
cussion al-Ghazālī genuinely alters his position from the one expressed in other
books in order to make it more appealing for people with an education in peri-
patetic philosophy (cf. *Tahāfut* 364.4 with al-Ghazālī *al-Iqtiṣād fī l-iʿtiqād* 214.2; on
this see Marmura, Al-Ghazali on Bodily Resurrection and Causality 51–57). This
flexibility points to the fact that he is indeed dealing with "living" individuals, and
not with the authors of philosophical books from the past, such as Ibn Sīnā. The
readers addressed in al-Ghazālī's book are Ibn Sīnā's students, their students, and
those who were attracted to his or their positions. In addition, a distinction needs
to be made between the supposed readership of the book and the *falāsifa* of the
title, who are indeed named, being Aristotle, Plato, and Galen (*Tahāfut* 8.2–9,
21.3–10). Given al-Ghazālī's reliance on Ibn Sīnā, both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā
must be included in the class of *falāsifa* although in the introductions they are rather
polemically dubbed *mutafalsafa* (*Tahāfut* 9.5f.). In other places, however, the title of
a *faylasūf* is not withheld from Ibn Sīnā (cf. e.g. *Tahāfut* 176.7).
[40] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 7.4ff.

disregard for revealed religion, al-Ghazālī decided to address the
teachings of the heads and leaders:

> [. . .] I took it upon myself to write this book in refutation (*radd*) of
> the ancient philosophers, to show the incoherence (*tahāfut*) of their
> creed (*'aqīda*) and the contradiction of their words in matters relating
> to metaphysics, to uncover the dangers of their doctrines and their
> shortcomings [. . .].[41]

By now it has become clear that what al-Ghazālī says here in the
religious preface of the *Tahāfut* does not agree with its *khātima* where
everybody[42] is condemned for unbelief—with the penalty of death—
who is convinced of the three quoted positions. There can be no
doubt that the "leaders and heads of the *falāsifa*" are included. In
fact, Aristotle, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā would surely be included,
since they all taught, for instance, the pre-eternity of the world. The
"certain details beyond the principles of religion" where the promi-
nent *falāsifa* erred and strayed, that were mentioned at the begin-
ning of the book, have become major points of accusation and *kufr*
by its end. The only way to reconcile the initial, religious preface
with the *khātima* is to argue that there is an inconsistency between
the two parts of the book. It seems impossible to explain this dis-
crepancy without referring to a change in al-Ghazālī's judgment.

3 *Apodeixis as the basis of the* falāsifa's *convictions*

The concluding element of the *Tahāfut*'s initial accusation is in the
last introduction (or "premise") headed "fourth *muqaddima*." This
introduction refers to the one particular element within the teach-
ings of the prominent *falāsifa* that led their group of followers to go
astray and fall into unbelief. In the religious preface it had already
been said that the second reason for the un-Islamic lifestyle of the
falāsifa was—in addition to their uncritical "emulation of what their
hear and what is most familiar to them"—their conviction that they
were "distinct from the companions and peers by virtue of a spe-
cial clever talent and intelligence."[43] This hubris goes back to the

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[41] Ibid. 6.5ff.
[42] Ibid. 376.3f. (. . . *al-qawl bi-takfīrihim wa-wujūb al-qatl li-man ya'taqidu i'tiqādahum*).
[43] Ibid. 4.3f.

claims they make in their logic. The fourth *muqaddima* deals with the
merits of logic for a methodologically sound conduct of the sciences
and with the truth that can be found in every logical proposition.
Nevertheless, it also deals with the exaggerated pride the *falāsifa* take
in their logic. In fact, one of the most preposterous tricks the *falāsifa*
use in order to parry any attempts to criticize their teachings in
metaphysics is to point to the necessity of the prior study of logic
and mathematics.[44] In this way they throw the cloak of a sound log-
ical method around their most problematic teachings and win over
new followers whose uneasiness with the *falāsifa*'s metaphysics is over-
shadowed by their fascination with the seemingly complicated field
of logic and by their trust in it.

Here, the most basic problem for al-Ghazālī is the *falāsifa*'s claim
that they conduct metaphysics in a demonstrative way. Al-Ghazālī's
criticism of this philosophical position is brought forward in a sin-
gle passage at the end of the fourth *muqaddima*:

> We will make it plain that in their metaphysical sciences they have
> not been able to fulfill the claims laid out in the different parts of the
> logic and in the introduction to it, i.e. what they have set down in
> the *Kitāb al-Burhān* on the conditions for the truth of the premises of
> a syllogism, and what they have set down in the *Kitab al-Qiyās* on the
> conditions of its figures, and the various things they posited in the
> *Isagoge* and the *Categories*.[45]

The method and technique of apodeixis is taught in the section called
Kitāb al-Burhān of the logical books of a *faylasūf*. Since all logical
books in the peripatetic tradition follow the canon of the *Organon*,
the *Kitāb al-Burhān* would be the equivalent to the *Posterior Analytics*.
This part aims at explaining how the use of sound syllogisms that
employ premises whose truth has either been proven through other
syllogisms or is self-evident through intuition leads to judgments that
are indisputable. The *Kitab al-Qiyās* within a philosopher's textbooks

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[44] Ibid. 14.5ff.

[45] Ibid. 16.8ff. This passage has been mistranslated in the English translation of
Sabih Ahmad Kamali (p. 10). Marmura in his translation (p. 9) renders the *mādda*
of a syllogism as its "matter" and not as its premise. (On *mādda* as "premise," cf.
al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* 130, 182, and Marmura, Ghazālī and Demonstrative Science
194.) Marmura's translation, however, stresses the notion of demonstration, and in
his article Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection 48f., he rightly points to the con-
nection with al-Ghazālī's rules for the interpretation of revelation, according to
which the literal sense of revelation can only be interpreted if a demonstration
shows that it is impossible for it to be true (cf. n. 54).

of logic (equivalent to the *Prior Analytics*) would explain how to form the figures of sound syllogisms, and the *Isagoge* as well as the *Categories* (sometimes also referred to as *Kitāb al-Madkhal* and *Kitāb al-Maqūlāt*) are concerned with defining the subjects of scientific inquiry. These four books together were the textbooks for the apodictic method in the sciences.

With apodeixis comes the claim of scientific indubitability[46] and the sense of being in possession of an infallible scientific method. For the "group" (*ṭā'ifa*) mentioned in the religious preface of the book, i.e. the "masses of the *falāsifa*," this sense grows to a conviction in a superior knowledge and intelligence over their peers in the religious sciences. The religious sciences cannot claim to have a foundation on proven premises, but they advance from axioms such as the belief in the essential qualities of God or the belief in the veracity of his messenger. These premises cannot be logically proven or deduced from proven principles, but are accepted through revelation. A science that uses syllogisms and premises that are accepted by those to whom they are addressed is, according to Aristotle's classification, a dialectical science.[47] Religious sciences can only be conducted as dialectical sciences.

The general classification of sciences into dialectical and apodictical ones was accepted by al-Ghazālī.[48] Mathematics and to a certain extent also the natural sciences count for him as apodictical sciences that yield necessary knowledge which is indeed indubitable.[49] In the second introduction al-Ghazālī defends the apodictical character of the description that a solar eclipse is caused by the moon coming between the observer and the sun. Since this is the case, the religious scholars should not take issue with such a description unless they want to make themselves ridiculous and lose credibility,

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[46] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 13.9f. "Let it be known that (our) objective is to alert those who think well of the philosophers and believe that their ways are free from contradictions [. . .]."

[47] Aristotle, *Topica*, 100a.30.

[48] Like al-Ghazālī, later Muslim jurists held that the basic difference between a logical *qiyās* (syllogism) and a juridical *qiyās* was the status of its premises. Ibn Taymiyya, for instance, also shared al-Ghazālī's suspicions about the possible accomplishments of the syllogistic method. On al-Ghazālī's and Ibn Taymiyya's position on these two issues cf. Hallaq, *A history of Islamic legal theories* 139f.

[49] On the possibility of apodeixis in the natural sciences cf. footnote 55 and Marmura, Ghazali and Demonstrative Science 188f., 191f., where the following statement is discussed.

for these matters rest on demonstrations, geometrical and arithmetical, that leave no room for doubt.[50]

The passage from the fourth *muqaddima* quoted above suggests that al-Ghazālī aims at refuting the *falāsifa*'s claim that their metaphysics follows the demonstrative method. This assumption is supported by two short passages from the part of the *Munqidh* where al-Ghazālī describes the results of his studying and criticizing the books of the *falāsifa*. The first passage from the *Munqidh* deals with metaphysics:

> The majority of their errors (*aghālīṭ*) are in metaphysics. [Here,] they are unable to fulfill apodeixis (*burhān*) as they have set it out as a condition in the logic. This is why most of the disagreements amongst them are in (the field of) metaphysics.[51]

The second passage from the *Munqidh* explains how the useful nature of peripatetic logic is brought into disrepute by the *falāsifa*'s claims in metaphysics:

> Indeed, the philosophers are themselves bringing some injustice (*ẓulm*) into this science (*scil.* logic). This is that, in order to arrive at apodeixis, they bring together conditions known to lead undoubtedly to certain knowledge. But when they finally arrive at the religious aims (*maqāṣid dīniyya*), they cannot fulfill these conditions, but remain extremely negligent [in applying them].[52]

If the metaphysics of the *falāsifa* cannot accomplish the claims brought forward in the textbooks for demonstrative science, it must subsequently be counted amongst the dialectical sciences. The acceptance of the relegation of metaphysics to the same class as that of the religious sciences would put an end to the arrogant sense of superiority amongst the masses of the *falāsifa*. This, in turn, would prevent any further shunning of religion. The reasoning behind this accusation seems to be that theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) and metaphysics are for al-Ghazālī on the same epistemological level.[53] According to the classification of sciences based on Aristotle's *Organon* both are dialectical sciences, since both rely on accepted premises that cannot be

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[50] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 11.8f. (*barāhīn handasiyya ḥisābiyya la yabqā maʿahā rayba*).

[51] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 23.14f.

[52] Ibid. 22.21ff.

[53] Al-Ghazālī characterizes Kalām in his *al-Mustaṣfā* 5.*ult.* and 6.10f. as the science amongst religious sciences that is concerned with general notions (*kullī*) and looks into "the most general of things and that is being (*aʿamm al-ashyāʾ wa-huwa al-mawjūd*)," mirroring Ibn Sīnā's definition of metaphysics, e.g., in his *al-Najāt* 235.

proven. Given this basic equality, the religious sciences, however, are ultimately superior to metaphysics, since its un-proven premises are supported by revelation. This additional authority tips the scales in favor of religion. Whoever is compelled to accept the conclusion of a syllogism, even if its premises are not proven or self-evident, should be even more compelled to accept the statements of revelation in those areas where demonstration is—according to al-Ghazālī—just not possible.[54]

The five introductions to the *Tahāfut* thus conclude in an explanation according to which this book is not only about truth and error, but—amongst other things—about the epistemological status of the *falāsifa*'s metaphysics and, to a lesser extent, that of the natural sciences.[55] Nowhere else is this more apparent than in the first *masʾala* of the *Tahāfut* on the pre-eternity of the world. This discus-

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[54] Marmura in many of his publications stresses that for al-Ghazālī the literal sense of revelation can only be interpreted if a demonstration (*burhān*) shows that it is impossible (cf. for instance his Al-Ghazali on Bodily Resurrestion 49 or his review article Ghazalian Causes and Intermediaries 91). This rule forms indeed the cornerstone of what al-Ghazālī himself called the "rule or interpretation (*qānūn al-taʾwīl*)" in his later writings (al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 184). On this rule, cf. my *Apostasie und Toleranz* 304–319.

[55] Some of the questions discussed in the four *masāʾil* on the natural sciences do not touch the question of demonstration (*burhān*). As in the case of the afterlife (20th discussion) the *falāsifa* did not claim that their convictions were based on *burhān*. The same seems to be true for the 19th discussion on the impossibility of the soul's perishing after it has been created. Particularly problematic is al-Ghazālī's denial of the necessary connection between a cause and its effect. This is discussed in the 17th *masʾala*. Marmura, in his Ghazali and Demonstrative Science, suggests that al-Ghazālī's position includes the denial of causality as an ontological principle inherent in cause and effect, but nevertheless upholds the claim of necessary knowledge in the natural sciences. Those who do natural sciences interpret God's "habit" to arrange things in a causal manner as being the epistemological principle of causality. According to al-Ghazālī, they have every reason to do so, since God is not only the immediate creator of events in the outside world, but also the immediate creator of our knowledge of it. (This argument is also discussed by Ulrich Rudolph in Rudolph/Perler, *Occasionalismus* 86f.). Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System* 63–77, goes further and says that al-Ghazālī held that God cannot interfere in his creation once it is created. This presumption would—in the given philosophical systems— open the possibility of necessary knowledge in the natural sciences. Rudolph (in Rudolph/Perler, *Occasionalismus* 84–96) stresses that al-Ghazālī presents two causal theories in the 17th discussion which both seem to lead to an acknowledgment of the possibility of necessary knowledge in the natural sciences. However, for al-Ghazālī there are still elements in the *falāsifa*'s natural sciences that are claimed to rest on demonstration, but do, in fact, not. In the 18th discussion it is his declared aim to deny "their ability to prove through rational demonstration that the human soul is a self-subsistent spiritual substance (*fī taʿjīzihim ʿan iqāmat al-burhān al-ʿaqlī ʿalā anna l-nafs al-insānī jawhar rūḥānī qāʾim bi-nafsihī*)," cf. *Tahāfut* 297.

sion begins almost immediately after the passage from the fourth *muqaddima* quoted above, with a seemingly minor reference to the fact that the ancient philosophers did not teach the pre-eternity of the world unanimously. Plato disputed the world's pre-eternity and Galen expressed a non-committal position and admitted that for him the world's pre-eternity or temporal origination was probably unknowable.[56] This allusion to a disagreement amongst the philosophers— and most notably between Aristotle and Plato—is not only a rhetorical device, but also a powerful argument in al-Ghazālī's overall strategy of the *Tahāfut*.[57] If the world's pre-eternity were a conclusion based on apodeixis, all those who know how to conduct demonstrative science (and most notably Aristotle and Plato) would agree upon it. Disagreement amongst philosophers clearly indicates that the matter under discussion cannot be settled in an indisputable manner.[58]

The issue at stake in this first *mas'ala* is not whether the world is pre-eternal or temporally originated, but whether the world's pre-eternity is a subject that can be decided in an indubitable manner by using apodeixis. Al-Ghazālī is convinced that the world's creation or eternity is a matter left to a dialectical discussion based on revelation. His strategy aims at relegating the *falāsifa*'s statements on the world's pre-eternity to the same level as that of theological speculation. Al-Ghazālī's vivid doubts about the claims of the *falāsifa* are expressed in the repeated question:

> Do you know this through the necessity of reason or through speculating about it?[59]

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[56] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 21.3ff. Here al-Ghazālī also says that, despite the disagreement of the ancient *falāsifa*, the "masses (*jamāhīr*) of them, both ancient and modern" uphold the pre-eternity of the world.

[57] It already appears in the first *muqaddima, Tahāfut* 8f.

[58] Already Aristotle in *Topica*, 104b.4ff, mentions that dialectical problems are those on which members of the wise class of men disagree among themselves, and amongst these kinds of problems is the question as to whether or not the world is eternal (*aídios*). Later Ibn Rushd in his *Faṣl al-maqāl* 20 accepts the force of al-Ghazālī's objection and defends the position of the philosophers by saying that the disagreement is limited to the role of time, and whether its past is infinite or finite. This disagreement does not affect their consensus, which in Ibn Rushd's view is even shared by the *mutakallimūn*. They all agree on the division of beings into three classes: beings created and originated in time, a being not created and not preceded by time, and beings created but not preceded by time. Here, exactly as in his small treatise on the subject (extant in Hebrew, cf. Kogan, Eternity and Origination), Ibn Rushd clearly tries to limit the disagreement to questions of terminology.

[59] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 29.10 (*ta'rifūnahū bi-ḍarūrat al-'aql aw naẓarihī?*). This sentence is followed by a methodological passage on the significance of disagreement

4   *Conclusions*

In the *Kitāb al-Khazarī*, a book written less than fifty years after the
Tahāfut, the Andalusian Jewish philosopher Yehuda Halevi (d. ca.
1143 C.E.) reports of a competition held by the king of the Khazars.
Proponents of the four most important religious traditions of the time
were invited to interpret a dream of the king while he declared his
readiness to convert to the religion whose representative gave the
most convincing explanation. Apart from the three monotheistic reli-
gions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the fourth sage attempting
to convert the king is a *faylasūf*. In fact, this *faylasūf* presents his epis-
temological and ethical system as the "religion of the *falāsifa*."[60] All
three of the propositions that al-Ghazālī condemned as *kufr* in the
khātima of the *Tahāfut* are present in the *faylasūf*'s creed. His homily
also contains a passage that mirrors al-Ghazālī's initial accusations
from the *Tahāfut*. The *faylasūf* says that if the king of the Khazars
decides to follow the *falāsifa* in their religion he will reach a step,

> which is the utmost and the remotest of all and the one that the per-
> fect human hopes for after his soul is cleansed of doubt and after he
> has acquired the sciences according to what they really are (*'alā
> ḥaqā'iqihā*). Then, the soul will become like an angel and it will be on
> the lowest level of the incorporeal heavenly realm (*malakūtiyya*), and
> this is the level of the active intellect.[61]

To master the apodictical sciences and to exclude doubts is only one
of the lower steps in the intellectual development towards the union
with the active intellect. Once the *faylasūf* has reached this union,
he will be, according to the philosophical spokesman in Halevi's *Kitāb
al-Khazarī*, in the company of Hermes, Asclepius, Socrates, Plato, and
Aristotle.[62]

   If we follow al-Ghazālī and accept that there was an emulative
tradition of philosophy, one of the most fundamental tenets of this
tradition was the conviction that metaphysics can be conducted apo-
dictically and produce indubitable knowledge on important questions

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amongst scholars for the claim to know something apodictically. The interrogation
into the alleged necessity (*ḍarūra*) of the *falāsifa*'s position appears countless times in
the first discussions.
   [60] Halevi, *Kitāb al-Radd wa-l-dalīl* 6.9 (*dīn al-falāsifa*).
   [61] Ibid. 4.19–5.1.
   [62] Ibid. 5.5.

such as the pre-eternity of the world. Such knowledge was, according to the *falāsifa*'s convictions, unknown to the religious scholars who were not versed in the apodictical method. For al-Ghazālī, however, the *falāsifa*'s belief in their scientific superiority was simply *taqlīd*. If they had started to doubt what they were told by their teachers, they would have begun to question the coherence of their epistemological system and find that key arguments used in metaphysics were neither based on previously proven premises nor self-evident. When al-Ghazālī tries to cast doubts on the results of philosophical metaphysics in the first discussions of the *Tahāfut* he aims to lead his philosophically educated readers to the discovery that the arguments in metaphysics and in the natural sciences cannot comply with the rules set out in the *Organon*. In the case of the Jews and the Christians, the God-given calling (*fiṭra*) to follow the right religion is obscured by the children's upbringing. Similarly, the students of philosophy neglect the truth of the revelation because of their most basic belief in a superior truth. This is why a *radd*, a refutation of the philosophical tradition becomes a proof of their *tahāfut*, a proof of the incoherence and inconsistency of the *falāsifa*'s epistemological edifice.

If this is the overall argument in the *Tahāfut*, or at least one that connects the accusation of the introductions with the first discussions in metaphysics, it does not require for its validation a proof of the falsehood of the *falāsifa*'s positions. In fact, the argument is validated by making it evident that the *falāsifa* are incapable of demonstrating apodictically (*ʿan burhān*) the truth of some of their positions in metaphysics and the natural sciences that are relevant in a religious debate. Thus al-Ghazālī makes his task of refuting the *falāsifa* much easier. Instead of having to prove the falsehood of the *falāsifa*'s positions, he only needs to show that the scientific achievements of the most venerated philosophers of his time still leave someone, who has studied their epistemological system and who has accepted their underlying logical principles, with ample opportunities to doubt.

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THE SPREAD OF ZĀHIRISM IN POST-CALIPHAL AL-ANDALUS: THE EVIDENCE FROM THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES[1]

Camilla Adang

> The first reprehensible innovation (*bidʿa*) I encountered on my journey was the doctrine of the *bāṭin*, but when I returned I found that the whole of the Maghrib had been filled with the doctrine of the *ẓāhir* by a feeble-minded man by the name of Ibn Ḥazm, from the countryside of Seville [. . .] When I returned from my voyage, I found that my city was teeming with [Ẓāhirīs], and that the fire of their error was scorching. Therefore, I stood up to them, though unaided by my peers and lacking any worthy helpers to follow in my footsteps. Sometimes I would feel attracted by them, then again I bared my teeth at them, hesitating whether to shun them or to take them on.[2]

The author of these lines is the famous Andalusi *qāḍī* Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 543 A.H./1148 C.E.).[3] This man, a staunch Mālikī, was born in the year 468/1076, to a family of notables in Seville. His father Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn al-ʿArabī (b. 435/1043)[4] served the ʿAbbādid dynasty ruling in Seville as a

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[2] Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira* iii, 1149; *id.*, *Siyar* xviii, 189; for a different translation, see Chejne, *Ibn Hazm* 9.

[3] On Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī, see al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 125–31, n°. 180; al-Nubāhī, *Quḍāt* 105–7; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* iv, 296f., n°. 626; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xx, 197–203, n°. 128; *id.*, *Tadhkira* iv, 1294–1298, n°. 1081; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* ii, 25–43; al-Ruʿaynī, *Barnāmaj* 117–120; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* iv, 141f.; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 303f.; Aʿrāb, *Maʿa l-Qāḍī Abī Bakr*; Ṭālibī, *Ārāʾ Abī Bakr*; Lagardère, *Abū Bakr*; *id.*, *La haute judicature* 195–215; *id.*, *Le vendredi de Zallāqa* 166–175; Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi*.

[4] On Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn al-ʿArabī, see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 438f., n°. 640; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 130f., n°. 68; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* iv, 297; al-Ṣafadī,

vizier, until they were deposed in the year 484/1091 by the Almoravids, who added al-Andalus to their North African territories, thus marking the end of the period of the party-kings (*mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*).⁵ It was at least partly his fall from grace and his fear of Almoravid retribution which made Abū Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī decide to leave al-Andalus and to embark on a *riḥla*, together with his son Abū Bakr. They left in the year 485/1092, and visited North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Iraq, as well as the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, taking the opportunity to study law and theology under the famous masters of the regional capitals. They did not limit themselves to jurists of their own, Mālikī, school, but developed extensive contacts with Ḥanafīs, Shāfiʿīs and Ḥanbalīs alike. At some point they were commissioned by the Almoravids, who had apparently forgiven them, to procure messages from the ʿAbbāsid caliph confirming the legitimacy of the new lords of North Africa and al-Andalus. In 493/1099 Abū Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī died in Egypt, on the way back to al-Andalus, and his son Abū Bakr arrived in Seville on his own in 495/1101. Once back, the younger Ibn al-ʿArabī devoted himself to teaching, and showed himself a loyal servant to his new patrons. When in 503/1109 all those who owned copies of the works of al-Ghazālī were forced, under threat, to dispose of these books, Ibn al-ʿArabī, who had himself studied with the master in Baghdad and had introduced his writings into al-Andalus, destroyed his copy of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.⁶ In 528/1134 Ibn al-ʿArabī was briefly appointed chief judge of Seville, after a long period of scholarly activity during which he produced an impressive series of works in the fields of *ḥadīth*, theology, language, exegesis and *fiqh*.⁷ His interest in the different schools of law and their methods of deduction did not extend to the Ẓāhirī, or literalist, school.⁸ In fact, he composed

Wāfī xvii, 568, n°. 477; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* iv, 142; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 295f. References to Abū Muḥammad's position as vizier may be found in Yāqūt, *Irshād* iv, 1652, 1653.

⁵ The *ṭāʾifa* period had officially started in the year 422/1031, with the removal of the last caliph, Hishām III al-Muʿtadd, but in fact small states had begun to be formed since the assassination of the third ʿĀmirid *ḥājib*, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān "Sanchuelo", in 399/1009. On this chapter in Spanish history, see Wasserstein, *Rise and Fall*; Viguera, *Los reinos de taifas; ead.*, Historia política. For a collection of historical texts on the ʿAbbādids, see Dozy, *Scriptorum arabum loci*.

⁶ Fierro, Opposition to Ṣūfism 186, and Religious dissension 472.

⁷ For a complete list, see Aʿrāb, *Maʿa l-Qāḍī*, Chapter 4.

⁸ The Ẓāhirī *madhhab* was founded by Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 370/883), who advocated the literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunna,

polemical tracts against the Ẓāhirī school in general, and its Andalusi *imām* Ibn Ḥazm in particular.[9] The quotation above—which is both preceded and followed by invective against Ibn Ḥazm—gives some indication of the vehemence of his polemics.[10] This is interesting for two reasons: first of all, his own father, Abū Muḥammad, had been one of the most loyal students of Ibn Ḥazm, and secondly, as we shall see, Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī had himself been on very good terms with a number of Andalusi Ẓāhirīs he encountered in Baghdad.

In the passage which opens this chapter Ibn al-ʿArabī suggests that there had been few Ẓāhirīs in al-Andalus when he embarked on his journey, in the early Almoravid period, but that they had multiplied—especially in the region of Seville—during his absence, which had lasted all of ten years. This is certainly an exaggeration, as is his claim that he almost single-handedly took on the Ẓāhirīs since he had no true peers who could help him in his polemic, which seems to have centred mainly on *uṣūl al-fiqh*. It implies criticism of his fellow Mālikīs, most of whom were indeed no match for the literalists with their superior knowledge of *uṣūl* and of *ḥadīth*. On the other hand, there may be a grain of truth to Ibn al-ʿArabī's statement: he may in fact have noticed upon his return from the Mashriq that the number of Ẓāhirīs in al-Andalus was rather large in comparison with other places he had been to, probably including Damascus and Baghdad.[11] It seems worth while to examine his statement more

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and categorically rejected any use of *qiyās* and other methods that were accepted by other legal scholars, as too arbitrary. See on him Schacht, *Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī*. In general on the Ẓāhirī *madhhab* and the principles which distinguish it from the other schools of law, see Goldziher, *Ẓāhirīs*; Turki, *al-Ẓāhiriyya*. On its origins and early spread in the East, see Melchert, *The formation*, Chapter 9.

I am currently preparing a monograph on Ẓāhirī *uṣūl* and *furūʿ*, with ample attention to comparative aspects.

[9] The titles of these tracts are *al-Nawāhī ʿan al-dawāhī*, on legal matters; *al-Ghurra fī naqḍ al-Durra*, against Ibn Ḥazm's theological tract *Risālat al-Durra fī l-iʿtiqād; al-ʿAwāṣim min al-qawāṣim*, in which he polemicizes against the views on the battle of Ṣiffīn of a variety of sects and individuals, and finally a *qaṣīda* against Ibn Ḥazm; see Aʿrāb, *Maʿa l-Qāḍī* 144, 150, 151, 167; Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi* 51, 52, 55. *Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-qawāṣim* is included in its entirety in Ṭālibī, *Ārāʾ Abī Bakr*.

[10] Al-Dhahabī, after quoting Ibn al-ʿArabī's invective against Ibn Ḥazm, defends the latter by saying that the *qāḍī* had got it all wrong, and that Ibn Ḥazm's intelligence was far superior to his; see *Siyar* xviii, 188–190; Chejne, *Ibn Ḥazm* 9f.

[11] A systematic perusal of Ibn ʿAsākir's *Taʾrīkh Dimashq* and *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī did not yield evidence of a significant Ẓāhirī presence in these two major cities in the period under discussion. On the decline of Ẓāhirism in Baghdad, its city of origin, see Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl* 278–281.

closely, then, and to try and establish to what extent the sources confirm that there was a significant Ẓāhirī presence (if not perhaps a clearly defined community) in post-caliphal al-Andalus, and to what extent it was due to Ibn Ḥazm's influence that the country was "teeming with them." In the following pages, I shall examine the evidence from a number of biographical dictionaries, Andalusi and other, which provide information on Andalusi Ẓāhirīs who were active in the Almoravid period and the period immediately preceding it: that of the Ṭā'ifa kingdoms.[12] Who were these Ẓāhirīs of al-Andalus? What can be said about their geographical distribution? What public positions, if any, did they hold? Who were their masters and students? The fact that no Ṭabaqāt al-Ẓāhiriyya, conveniently listing the representatives of the literalist school of law, has survived renders it necessary to carry out a meticulous search in biographical dictionaries of various types and geographical range.[13] Wherever possible, the information provided by the biographical dictionaries is supplemented with details encountered in sources of a different type.

In order to be included in the list of Ẓāhirīs presented here, an ʿālim had to be described in at least one source, biographical or other, as having been a Ẓāhirī, tended towards literalism, or adopted a literalist approach to the revealed sources of the law, Quran and Sunna, even if other sources do not give any information about madhhab affiliation, or list the person in question as belonging to a different school altogether. (An exception are the descendants of Ibn Ḥazm, not all of whom are explicitly listed as Ẓāhirīs, but whose literalism may nevertheless be assumed, as will be argued.) Moreover, I have chosen to include only those Ẓāhirīs who died at least twenty years after the beginning of Ṭā'ifa rule in al-Andalus, i.e., people who died after the year 1051 C.E. This leaves out scholars whose active lives were spent largely in the caliphal period (929–1031), although some of these men will be encountered as teachers of the Ẓāhirīs discussed here.[14] Furthermore, I have excluded Ẓāhirīs who were active mainly

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[12] A first list of this kind, less comprehensive than the present one, was prepared by Asín Palacios; see his *Abenházam* Chapter XIX.

[13] Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī's *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'* includes a section on Ẓāhirī scholars (pp. 148–152), but this is limited to a very small number only, which moreover does not include any Andalusis. I thank Professor Devin Stewart for referring me to this work. On Abū Isḥāq, who was a friend of **al-Ḥumaydī** and a teacher of **Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿAbdarī**, to be discussed below, see Chaumont, al-Shīrāzī.

[14] See on these earlier Ẓāhirīs Adang, Beginnings.

in the post-Almoravid period, i.e., from 1145, though we shall meet some of them as students of our biographees.[15] Apart from the descendants of Ibn Ḥazm, who will be discussed as a separate group, these criteria yield a list of sixteen people, who will be presented in the following pages. I have added lists of the biographees' Andalusi (and some North African) teachers, omitting the oriental ones, since I am working on the assumption that their Ẓāhirī identity was shaped and crystallized in al-Andalus. In order to establish to what extent the scholars discussed here may themselves have contributed to the dissemination of Ẓāhirism in the Iberian peninsula, their Andalusi students will be mentioned as well.[16] A more in-depth analysis of the teacher-student networks is projected for a future publication. In what follows, I shall provide composite accounts; only where the sources contradict each other on important points will this be indicated explicitly. Cross-references to the biographees, as well as to some important common links, are printed in bold type. Since it will be seen that Ibn Ḥazm, who may be considered the *imām* of Andalusi Ẓāhirism, is often a point of reference, I shall first give a brief survey of his life as far as it is relevant to the present discussion,[17] and then present a prosopographical study of the Ẓāhirīs of the Ṭā'ifa and Almoravid periods, including Ibn Ḥazm's descendants.

Ibn Ḥazm

Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd Ibn Ḥazm was born in Cordoba in the year 384/994 as the son of a courtier of the *de facto* ruler, al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir, the powerful *ḥājib* of the Umayyad caliph Hishām II al-Muʾayyad. His sheltered youth in his father's palace came to an abrupt end in 403/1013 with the conquest of Cordoba by the Berbers, one of the ethnic groups that were vying for power in al-Andalus after the demise of al-Manṣūr's son, ʿAbd

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[15] A number of Ẓāhirīs who spent part of their active lives in the Almoravid period, but died in the Almohad period, have been discussed earlier in my Ẓāhirīs of Almohad Times, and will not be presented here again.

[16] Information on these teachers and students is given whenever I have been able to trace them in the most commonly used biographical dictionaries.

[17] Further biographical details may be encountered in Arnaldez, Ibn Ḥazm; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam*; Chejne, *Ibn Hazm*; García Gómez, *El collar* (introductory essay); Adang, From Mālikism; Kaddouri, Identificación, and now Ljamai, *Ibn Ḥazm*.

al-Raḥmān "Sanchuelo".[18] For Ibn Ḥazm, a period of wanderings
now began, during which he took up the cause of the Umayyad
house as a propagandist and soldier, a course of action which landed
him in prison more than once. In between these apparently short
prison terms, he not only wrote his famous *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, but also
studied law, first following the dominant Mālikī school but soon
switching to the Shāfiʿī one. Ultimately, however, he chose the Ẓāhirī,
or literalist, *madhhab*, which had but few adherents in al-Andalus.
Although it has been suggested that there were no Ẓāhirī teachers
in the peninsula before Ibn Ḥazm, and that he therefore had to
learn his Ẓāhirism from books,[19] we know that in fact the school
was well established in al-Andalus as early as the 4th/10th century,
and that Ibn Ḥazm had at least one Ẓāhirī teacher, Ibn Muflit.[20]
Ibn Ḥazm apparently raised his own sons into Ẓāhirism, and attempted
to spread the *madhhab* further, beyond his own family circle, with
varying degrees of success. In Cordoba, he taught in the Great
Mosque, alongside Ibn Muflit, and managed to draw a sizeable crowd
of people. However, they were apparently too successful for the
Mālikīs' comfort: both were expelled from the mosque and forbid-
den to teach their deviant views. Ibn Muflit took this ostracism very
hard, and died in solitude not long after the expulsion.[21] Ibn Ḥazm,
on the other hand, sought refuge in Majorca, where he stayed for
ten years (430–440/1038–1048).[22] He was given free rein to teach
his doctrines by the island's governor, Ibn Rashīq, and gathered a
group of students. One of them was Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Murajjā.
His knowledge and understanding were such that he is said to have
surpassed Ibn Ḥazm himself. Ibn al-Abbār, our source for this infor-
mation, does not actually mention that Ibn Murajjā was a Ẓāhirī,

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[18] See n. 5.
[19] See Melchert, *The formation* 186, 189f.
[20] Adang, Beginnings. It should be added that Ibn Ḥazm was personally acquainted
with two of the sons of the Ẓāhirī *qāḍī* Mundhir ibn Saʿīd of Cordoba (d. 355/966),
viz. al-Ḥakam (d. ca. 420/1029) and Saʿīd (d. 403/1013), whom he met when he
himself was still quite young and well before he formally turned to Ẓāhirism. Whether
he was at all influenced by them cannot be established. See on Mundhir ibn Saʿīd
and his sons Pellat, (al-)Mundhir, and De Felipe, *Identidad y onomástica* 200–220, with
full bibliographical references.
[21] See Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 137–139.
[22] On the Majorcan period, see Asín Palacios, *Abenházam*, Chapter XV.

which is why I refrain from giving him a separate entry.[23] Several others are specifically identified in the sources as literalists, and will therefore be discussed in this study. After some years Ibn Ḥazm was forced, or felt compelled, to return to the mainland, allegedly after being defeated in a public dispute with the formidable Mālikī scholar Abū l-Walīd al-Bājī, who had recently returned from his *riḥla*, equipped with a knowledge of *uṣūl al-fiqh* that more than matched Ibn Ḥazm's.[24] After spending several years in Almeria, where he was joined by his disciple al-Ḥumaydī (see below), Ibn Ḥazm arrived in Seville. The local ruler at that time, al-Muʿtaḍid bi-llāh ʿAbbād ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAbbādī,[25] had his books torn up and burned. According to Asín Palacios, the motive for the destruction of Ibn Ḥazm's works was a political, rather than a religious one.[26] In his *Naqṭ al-ʿArūs*, Ibn Ḥazm had implicitly accused al-Muʿtaḍid of extreme cruelty: he had killed his brother, an uncle, a nephew, and his own son Ismāʿīl.[27] Moreover, Ibn Ḥazm had the audacity to expose as fraudulent the ruler's claims that he received his brief from the Umayyad caliph Hishām II: the caliph had in fact been dead for decades, but was being "resurrected" whenever a ruler needed legitimacy.[28] Faced with al-Muʿtaḍid's hostility, Ibn Ḥazm decided to withdraw to his family's estate, near Niebla, where in spite of warnings, he continued to receive his most loyal students, among them the elder **Ibn al-ʿArabī**[29] and apparently **al-Ḥumaydī**.[30] These men, as well as Ibn Ḥazm's sons and grandsons, would be instrumental in spreading his teachings during the last years of his life and after his death, which occurred in 456/1064. Ibn Ḥazm left an enormous oeuvre, which according to his son Abū Rāfiʿ was made up of some 400 works, totalling close to 80,000 pages.[31]

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[23] On Ibn Murajjā, see Ibn al-Abbār, *Apéndice* 198, n°. 2279; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 290; Urvoy, Vie intellectuelle 102, 104f., 117f.

[24] See on this man and his polemic against Ibn Ḥazm: Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb* iii–iv, 702–708; Dunlop, al-Bādjī; Turki, *Polémique*; Urvoy, Vie intellectuelle 100–102.

[25] Ruled 433/1041–2–461/1068–9. See on him al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 256–257, n°. 129, and Dozy, *Scriptorum arabum loci, passim*.

[26] Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 230ff.

[27] *Naqṭ al-ʿArūs fī tawārīkh al-khulafāʾ* 90, 92, 89.

[28] On the lives and deaths of Hishām II, see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* viii, 244–253, n°. 55; xviii, 257; xix, 60; Wasserstein, *Rise and Fall* 66f., 70–72, 118–120, 156f.; id., *Caliphate in the West* 192f.

[29] See Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 295f.

[30] Huici Miranda, al-Ḥumaydī 573.

[31] See Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt* 183. On Abū l-Qāsim Ṣāʿid ibn Aḥmad

Ibn Ḥazm's descendants

Abū Rāfiʿ al-Faḍl was not Ibn Ḥazm's only son, but he was the old-
est and, according to the later Ẓāhirī Ibn Khalīl,[32] the ablest one.[33]
According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrākushī, he was a Ẓāhirī *faqīh*.
This was obviously due to the fact that he had been taught by his
father. The latter had instructed his sons to complete his *Kitāb al-
Muḥallā* (the most important extant work of Ẓāhirī *fiqh*) in case he
should die before finishing the work himself, and when this did
indeed happen, the sons decided among themselves that Abū Rāfiʿ
would do the job. It is unlikely that Ibn Ḥazm would have entrusted
the task of completing his work to his sons if he had not relied on
their ability, and willingness, to represent his Ẓāhirī views faithfully.[34]
It is for this reason that I assume that all of Ibn Ḥazm's sons were
Ẓāhirīs, even though Abū Rāfiʿ is the only one who is explicitly
mentioned as such. An additional reason for this assumption is the
fact that one of Ibn Ḥazm's grandsons is described as a Ẓāhirī,
which suggests that literalism was transmitted within the family.

Apart from his father, Abū Rāfiʿ studied under the famous *faqīh*
Abū ʿUmar **ibn ʿAbd al-Barr**[35] and Abū l-ʿAbbās **al-ʿUdhrī** al-Dalāʾī,[36]
both of whom were in close contact with Ibn Ḥazm sr. In addition

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(d. Shawwāl 462/July-August 1070), a onetime student of **Ibn Ḥazm** who became
qāḍī of Toledo, see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila*, 370, n°. 545; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam*
284f.; Martinez-Gros, *Ṣāʿid al-Andalusi*. On the basis of Abū Rāfiʿ's description,
Ṣāʿid compared the size of Ibn Ḥazm's output with that of al-Ṭabarī, the famous
historian and exegete. Unfortunately, only a small number of his works have come
down to us. For a list, see Chejne, Ibn Hazm 301–313.

[32] See al-Kattānī, Ḥawla kitābayn.

[33] On Abū Rāfiʿ, see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 678, n°. 1004; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl*
v.2, 540, n°. 1059; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* iii, 329; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 241–243;
Pellat, Ibn Ḥazm, patronymic.

[34] Nevertheless, the above-mentioned Ibn Khalīl, himself the author of an abridg-
ment of the *Muḥallā*, accuses Abū Rāfiʿ of having done a bad job; see al-Kattānī,
Ḥawla kitābayn.

[35] See on this leading Mālikī *faqīh* Pellat, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr. It is said that he
adhered to the Ẓāhirī school for a considerable period of time at the beginning of
his career; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 160. He also taught Ibn Ḥazm's son **Abū
Usāma Yaʿqūb** and **al-Ḥumaydī**.

[36] On this man from Almeria, whose full name is Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn
ʿUmar ibn Anas ibn Dilhāth al-ʿUdhrī al-Dalāʾī, and who died in 478/1085, see
al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwa*, 213–217, no. 237; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 115–117, no. 141; al-
Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 567f., no. 296. He transmitted from **Ibn Ḥazm**, and had a
number of Ẓāhirī students in addition to Ibn Ḥazm's son Abū Rāfiʿ, viz. the lat-
ter's brother **Abū Usāma, al-Ḥumaydī,** and **Ibn Yarbūʿ** (see *infra*).

to completing at least one of his father's works, Abū Rāfiʿ is known
to have composed a history of the ʿAbbādid dynasty of Seville, enti-
tled *Al-Hādī ilā maʿrifat al-nasab al-ʿAbbādī*, which has not come down
to us.[37] Unfortunately, it cannot be established at what point Abū
Rāfiʿ entered the service of the ʿAbbādids, but he was apparently
very close to the royal family. A passage in Ibn Khallikān suggests
that he was one of the viziers of al-Muʿtamid, the son and successor
of the ruler who had ordered the burning of Ibn Ḥazm's books. Ac-
cording to this account, the king of Seville was angry with his uncle
Abū Ṭālib ʿAbd al-Jabbār ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismāʾīl ibn ʿAbbād,
and wished to get rid of him since he was suspicious of him. Al-
Muʿtamid summoned his viziers, and asked them who of them knew
of any caliph or party-king who had killed an uncle who planned
to overthrow him. Abū Rāfiʿ stepped forward and told him: "We
only know of someone who forgave his uncle after he revolted against
him, namely Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī, the uncle of the ʿAbbāsid al-
Maʾmūn".[38] Thereupon al-Muʿtamid kissed him on the forehead and
thanked him. He then invited his uncle and treated him graciously.

When in October 1086 the Almoravids crossed the Straits to come
to the aid of the panic-stricken party-kings, who had witnessed the
capture of Toledo by the Christians in the previous year, Abū Rāfiʿ
fought on the side of the ʿAbbādids against the forces of Alfonso VI
of Castile, at the battle of Zallāqa (Sagrajas), which took place on
Friday 12 Rajab 479/23 October 1086, and was killed in action.

In his lifetime, Abū Rāfiʿ had been praised by the poet Abū
Muḥammad Jahwar ibn Yaḥyā Ibn al-Fulūw who, upon meeting
him for the first time at a *majlis*, spontaneously uttered the follow-
ing lines: "I had seen Ibn Ḥazm without meeting him, but when I
met him, I didn't see him/for the radiance of his face prevents the
eyes of a man from beholding him".[39] Ibn al-Fulūw describes Ibn
Ḥazm's son as *al-raʾīs* Abū Rāfiʿ. Although this may just be an expres-
sion of admiration, it is not inconceivable that there is more to it,
and that it indicates that after his father's death, his oldest son was
considered the leader of the Ẓāhirīs in al-Andalus. Similarly, Ibn

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[37] Referred to in Ibn al-Abbār, *Ḥulla* ii, 34f.
[38] Interestingly enough, this incident is not mentioned in Ibn Ḥazm *père*'s *Naqṭ
al-ʿArūs* where one would expect to find it.
[39] See al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwa* 291, n°. 360; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 319, n°. 626. The
same lines of poetry are quoted in al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* v.2, 540 (entry on Abū Rāfiʿ).

Ḥazm himself had been referred to (by his cousin Abū l-Mughīra) as *ra'īs midrāsihim wa-kabīr ahrāsihim* in an apparent reference to his leadership of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*.[40]

We know of one son of Abū Rāfiʿ who was involved in scholarship: Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Fatḥ ibn al-Faḍl, who transmitted from his uncle Abū Sulaymān Muṣʿab (see below).[41] Ibn al-Abbār specifically mentions Ibn Ḥazm's *Kitāb al-Manāsik*—which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been preserved—as a work that was transmitted by al-Fatḥ on his uncle's authority, but there may have been additional tracts by Ibn Ḥazm that were passed on to his grandson.[42]

Al-Fatḥ was apparently not Abū Rāfiʿ's only son: we hear of another one, named ʿAlī. Or rather, we hear of this man's son, Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Faḍl, Abū Rāfiʿ's grandson and Ibn Ḥazm's great-grandson.[43] Abū ʿUmar transmitted from his father, ʿAlī, who transmitted from his own father, Abū Rāfiʿ who, as we know, had been taught by Ibn Ḥazm himself. Unfortunately, our source does not bother to inform us what works were thus being transmitted within the family, but it stands to reason that the material would include several works by Ibn Ḥazm, whether writings of an explicitly Ẓāhirī legal character or other. Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad also transmitted from Abū l-Ḥasan **Shurayḥ al-Ruʿaynī**, who possessed an *ijāza* from Ibn Ḥazm and had at least four additional Ẓāhirī students.[44]

Abū ʿUmar died in or around the year 543/1148. We do not know the date of death of his father ʿAlī.

Ibn Ḥazm's second son, Abū Sulaymān al-Muṣʿab,[45] who is said to have shared with his ancestors their thirst for knowledge, studied with his father, and in Rabīʿ II 457/March–April 1065 briefly with Abū Marwān al-Ṭubnī, who was murdered in his own home that

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[40] See Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra* i.1, 163.

[41] See al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* v.2, 529, n°. 1018.

[42] The full title of this work is *Kitāb Manāsik al-ḥajj*; see Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 262f.

[43] Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (BC) 66f., n°. 151; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* i.1, 314, n°. 406; ibid. 302, n°. 384.

[44] On Shurayḥ as a transmitter of Ibn Ḥazm's works, see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 420–422. Apart from Ibn Ḥazm's descendant **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad** (see below), the Ẓāhirī students in question are **Ibn Abī Marwān**, **ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Umawī**, **Saʿd al-Suʿūd ibn ʿUfayr**, and **Ibn Baqī**, all of whom belong to the Almohad period. See on them Adang, Ẓāhirīs.

[45] See Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* i, 385, n°. 1097; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 243.

same month.[46] Another teacher was the philologist and lexicographer Abū l-Ḥasan ibn Sīda (d. 458/1066),[47] on whose authority he transmitted al-Zubaydī's abridgement of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad's grammatical tract *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*. Among the men who, in turn, transmitted from al-Muṣʿab were his nephew **Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Fatḥ ibn al-Faḍl** (see *supra*), the Ẓāhirī Abū l-Ḥasan (b.) **al-Khiḍr**,[48] and a number of others. A date of death for this son of Ibn Ḥazm is not given. He seems to have spent most of his life in Cordoba, alhough he may have had to go to Murcia or to Denia to study with Ibn Sīda.

The third son, Abū Usāma Yaʿqūb,[49] was born in the year 440/1048–49, either just before or shortly after Ibn Ḥazm's departure from Majorca. His father was fifty-six years old at the time. Ibn Ḥazm taught Yaʿqūb himself: he is mentioned as one of the people from whom he transmitted, along with **Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr**, from whom he received an *ijāza*, and Abū l-ʿAbbās **al-ʿUdhrī**. Both these men had also taught Yaʿqūb's brother **Abū Rāfiʿ**.

Yaʿqūb made the *ḥajj* to Mecca, being, as far as we know, the only one in the family to do so, and died in Jumādā I, 503/November or December 1109, probably in al-Andalus. In his lifetime, he had transmitted several of his father's works, among them *Naqṭ al-ʿArūs*, to Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Biṭrūjī.[50]

Ibn Ḥazm may have had several other children. We find references to a grandson whose full name is Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn ʿAlī ibn Hazm,[51] and to another descendant bearing a very similar name, viz. Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad.[52] Although the biographical dictionaries present them as two separate individuals,

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[46] See Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra* i.1, 535–547; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* ii, 968.

[47] See on him Talbi, Ibn Sīda.

[48] See on him Adang, Ẓāhirīs 423f. (Ibn) al-Khiḍr (d. 571/1175) had at least one additional Ẓāhirī teacher, **Ibn Abī Marwān** (who taught the Ẓāhirī **Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda**, to be discussed below), and among his students was **Ibn ʿUṣfūr** of Seville, who is described as *shadīd al-taʿaṣṣub li-bn Ḥazm*; see al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 456, n°. 1228.

[49] See on him Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 988, n°. 1534; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 243.

[50] See on al-Biṭrūjī: Ibn al-Abbār, *Muʿjam* 26–30, n°. 18. This biography (p. 29) contains a reference to one Abū Usāma al-Faḍl ibn Ḥazm, who transmitted the works of Ibn Ḥazm to al-Biṭrūjī. However, this is apparently a conflation of the names of two of Ibn Ḥazm's sons: Abū Usāma Yaʿqūb and Abū Rāfiʿ al-Faḍl. See also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān* i, 447.

[51] Ibn al-Abbār (BC), 63, n°. 144; Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* v, 326, n°. 17; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* i.1, 121–123, n°. 167; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* v, 391, n°. 2905.

[52] Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* v, 345f., n°. 67; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* i/1, 407f., n°. 598; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya* i, 364f., n°. 708.

the details they provide about the lives of each of them are strik-
ingly similar on some points, obviously as a result of confusion
between the two men.

Of Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd it is said that he lived in Silves, in the
Algarve, and that he was a grandson of "our" Ibn Ḥazm,[53] which
suggests that the latter had a son called Saʿīd. He is said to have
been a *faqīh* of his grandfather's Ẓāhirī *madhhab*, which he ener-
getically defended in disputations. Moreover, he combined a solid
knowledge of grammar with poetical skills. He died in 540/1146,
after his possessions had been confiscated and he had been beaten
and imprisoned for his alleged role in a revolt against the ruler. The
circumstances of this revolt are not specified.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, on the other hand, lived in Seville and
is said to be descended from "our" Ibn Ḥazm through his mother,
whereas his paternal ancestor was another Ibn Ḥazm, viz. al-Madhḥajī.
If this information is correct, we have here the first indication that
Ibn Ḥazm had a daughter or granddaughter. Of course this possi-
bility has always to be taken into account; mothers, sisters, wives,
daughters and other female relatives are simply seldom referred to
in Islamic biographical literature, and we generally hear only about
male ancestors, siblings and descendants. This usually renders it vir-
tually impossible to uncover family networks of scholars.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad is described as *shadīd ḥarakat al-bāṭin*. He
was accused of plotting a revolt in favor of the Mahdī. This may
be either a reference to the Almohad Mahdī Ibn Tūmart, or to the
Sufi rebel Ibn Qasī, who was active in the Algarve but had sup-
porters in other parts of al-Andalus as well.[54] The combination of
Sufism or Bāṭinism with a Ẓāhirī approach to the law is an inter-
esting one, though not as unusual as one might think, and we shall
come across additional cases in the course of this study. As a result
of his agitation, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad was beaten and impris-
oned, and his possessions were confiscated. As was seen, similar
details are given about Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd, and it is not clear to which

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[53] According to Ibn Furtūn he descended from Abū Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm on
his mother's and on his father's side; see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* v, 326. Al-
Marrākushī (*Dhayl* i.1, 121) shows that this is impossible if he is the grandson of
Ibn Ḥazm, rather than a descendant further removed. In Ibn al-Zubayr's entry we
find Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad referred to as the father of the above-mentioned
Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd, which is equally problematic.
[54] See Fierro, Opposition to Sufism 188f.

of the two they really apply.[55] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad is said to have crossed the Straits into North Africa at the beginning of the war between the Almoravids and the Almohads, and to have settled down there. He served as a soldier and sometimes as a scribe. No date or place of death are provided.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad transmitted from the *muḥaddith* Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭāhir, and from **Shurayḥ** al-Ruʿaynī, who was himself in possession of an *ijāza* from Ibn Ḥazm.[56] He studied *ʿarabiyya* with Abū l-Qāsim Ibn al-Rammāk and was a gifted linguist.[57]

Among those who in turn transmitted from him, we encounter the Ẓāhirī Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī **ibn ʿUṣfūr**,[58] Abū l-Majd Hudhayl, and two men who may have had literalist sympathies as well, viz. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh **ibn Jumhūr**[59] and Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿAtīq ibn ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī of Cordoba, also known as **Ibn Muʾmin**.[60] Apart from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, Ibn Muʾmin's teachers included the Ẓāhirīs **Ibn Abī Marwān**, **Ibn Baqī**,[61] and **al-Ḥawḍī** (see below). Moreover, one of his own students, **Saʿd al-Suʿūd ibn al-ʿUfayr**, was to become a prominent Ẓāhirī.[62] Among the teachers of Ibn Jumhūr we find the Ẓāhirīs **Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda** (discussed below) and **Ibn Abī Marwān**, as well as **Shurayḥ** al-Ruʿaynī, who transmitted Ibn Ḥazm's works. Although he is nowhere listed as a literalist, these multiple links with Ẓāhirīs and other people close to Ibn Ḥazm make it likely that Ibn Jumhūr himself felt attracted to literalism. However, until further evidence can be adduced that Ibn Jumhūr was a literalist in the sense of the word

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[55] Fierro seems to regard them as one and the same person: the descendant of Ibn Ḥazm mentioned in her Religious dissension (p. 474) combines biographical details of both Aḥmads.

[56] See n. 44. He had also taught Ibn Ḥazm's great-grandson **Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī** (see above).

[57] One of the teachers of Ibn Maḍāʾ (d. 592/1196), whom I have described elsewhere as a "semi-Ẓāhirī," see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 429–432. On the term "semi-Ẓāhirī," see n. 63 below.

[58] See n. 48.

[59] See on this man, who died in Rabīʿ II 592/March 1196, Ibn al-Zubayr, Ṣilat al-ṣila iii, 124–126, n°. 208.

[60] Ibn al-Abbār, Takmila ii, 674f., n°. 1878; al-Marrākushī, Dhayl v/1, 256–264, n°. 525; Ibn al-Zubayr, Ṣilat al-ṣila iv, 121f., n°. 248; Makhlūf, Shajarat al-nūr i, 161, n°. 495. He also studied with **al-Ḥawḍī** (see below).

[61] **Ibn Abī Marwān** and **Ibn Baqī** belong to the Almohad period. See on them Adang, Ẓāhirīs 418–422, 444–448.

[62] Adang, Ẓāhirīs 419.

that I am using throughout this study, I prefer to consider him a "semi-Ẓāhirī"[63] at best. The same goes for Ibn Mu'min.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, whom I assume to be a Ẓāhirī like the rest of Ibn Ḥazm's descendants despite his alleged Bāṭinism, wrote a number of works of which one deserves special mention, viz. *al-Zawāʾigh wa-l-dawāmigh*, in which he systematically refutes Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī's polemic against Ibn Ḥazm contained in his tract *al-Nawāhī ʿan al-dawāhī*.[64]

Although Ibn Ḥazm's closest disciples were no doubt his own sons, they were by no means his only loyal followers; we have already come across Abū Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī who studied almost his entire oeuvre with him in Niebla, and they may have been joined in their sessions by Abū ʿAbdallāh **al-Ḥumaydī**, prior to his departure for the Mashriq (see below). However, even before his return to Niebla Ibn Ḥazm had managed to command the loyalty of a number of students, among them our next biographee:

Abū l-Najāh[65]

Abū l-Najāh Sālim ibn Aḥmad ibn Fatḥ was born in 397/1007 in Cordoba. He studied *ḥadīth* with a number of well-known masters in his native city, and copied out most of the available collections in their possession. He was especially attached to **Ibn Ḥazm** (*wa-lazima Abā Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm fa-akthara ʿanhu*), and like the latter tended towards Ẓāhirism: *māla ilā l-qawl bi-l-ẓāhir; māla ilā l-Ẓāhiriyya bi-ṣadāqat mutashāʿibihim fī l-Andalus Abī Muḥammad . . . Ibn Ḥazm*. This description gives the impression that his choice of Ẓāhirism was made under the influence of his mentor, Ibn Ḥazm, with whom he must have studied in the period when Ibn Ḥazm resided in the capital, for we have no indication that Abū l-Najāh himself ever lived outside of Cordoba. Whatever the case may be, Abū l-Najāh copied out a large number of Ibn Ḥazm's writings, and at first became famous among his contemporaries for that. After that, he applied

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[63] A variation on the term "semi-Ḥanafī" introduced by Nurit Tsafrir in her *Semi-Ḥanafī*.

[64] See n. 9 above.

[65] Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* 712, n°. 2004; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* iv, 1–2, n°. 3; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 289f.

himself to the art of writing, and became known as the ablest copy-
ist of his time. Abū l-Najāh died childless in Dhū l-Qaʿda 461/
September 1069, five years after his master, and was buried in the
new cemetery facing Cordoba's Bāb al-Qanṭara. Prayer was said
over him by the *faqīh* Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muʿāwiya al-ʿUqaylī,[66]
in the presence of a crowd of people who spoke highly of him. Al-
ʿUqaylī was *ṣāḥib al-ṣalāh* in the Great Mosque of Cordoba, and on
Fridays sometimes delivered the *khuṭba*. This means that he was a
man of no small importance, and the fact that it was he who officiated
at Abū l-Najāh's funeral may give an indication of the Ẓāhirī's stand-
ing in the community.

Faraj ibn Ḥadīda[67]

Faraj ibn Ḥadīda (or Ḥudayda) was from Badajoz, in the south-west
of Spain. He made a *riḥla* which included the pilgrimage to Mecca.
Described as a Ẓāhirī *faqīh, ʿalā madhhab Dāwūd al-Qiyāsī*,[68] he was
learned in the readings of the Quran, and was apparently the lead-
ing *muqriʾ* in Badajoz. We know nothing about his teachers or where
he acquired his Ẓāhirism.

   Ibn al-Abbār informs us that at some point he had to leave Badajoz
after a conflict with the local ruler, al-Muẓaffar Abū Bakr Muḥammad
ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Maslama ibn al-Afṭas (*regn.* 437/1045–460/1068).[69]
Unfortunately, we know nothing about the nature of this conflict
and whether it had anything to do with Ibn Ḥadīda's literalist lean-
ings. In any case, he found refuge in Seville, which was then ruled
by al-Muʿtaḍid. The latter's mother had just witnessed the comple-
tion, under the supervision of al-Ḥājj Fāris ibn Qādim,[70] of the
mosque named after her. Al-Muʿtaḍid appointed the Ẓāhirī scholar
as Quran reader to the mosque, with a salary and maintenance paid

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[66] See on him Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 886f., nº. 1355; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya*, 612, nº.
1344.
   [67] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 674, nº. 998; Ibn al-Abbār, *Apéndice*, 282–3, nº. 2520;
al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* v.2, 538f., nº. 1053.
   [68] As was mentioned above (n. 8), the "founder" of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab* rejected
the use of *qiyās*. It is for this reason that he is often paradoxically referred to as
Dāwūd al-Qiyāsī.
   [69] Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* iii, 323, nº. 1381.
   [70] See on him Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 681, nº. 1010.

from a religious endowment (*min al-aḥbās*). Ibn Ḥadīda continued to occupy this position until his death on 13 Muḥarram 480/20 April 1087. He was buried in Seville's Rawḍat al-Wazīr Ibn Zaydūn the following day.

Considering the fact that al-Muʿtaḍid had earlier ordered the burning of the works of Ibn Ḥazm, it is perhaps surprising that he apparently had no qualms about appointing a Ẓāhirī to a responsible post in a mosque directly associated with him. This tends to support Asín Palacios' assumption that the motives for burning Ibn Ḥazm's works were political. The impression that the ʿAbbādid king and his son and successor, al-Muʿtamid, had no issue with Ẓāhirism as such, but solely with the man who happened to be its most vocal exponent, seems to be confirmed not only by the fact that Ibn Ḥazm's son Abū Rāfiʿ al-Faḍl, who was a literalist himself, was associated with the royal family, but especially by the fact that one of the sons of al-Muʿtamid himself, viz. al-Rāḍī, was a Ẓāhirī.

Al-Rāḍī ibn al-Muʿtamid[71]

Abū Khālid Yazīd al-Rāḍī was one of the sons of the last ʿAbbādid ruler of Seville, al-Muʿtamid. Although he had a keen interest in religious learning, his father had other plans for him and first appointed him governor over the district of Algeciras, and after the Almoravids conquered the district, over Ronda. These two areas had briefly constituted independent Ṭāʾifa states, but had been annexed to the larger and more powerful kingdom of Seville between the years 446/1054–55 and 458/1065–66.[72] Ibn al-Abbār mentions that al-Rāḍī read the works of Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-Ṭayyib, i.e., the Ashʿarī theologian and Mālikī jurist al-Bāqillānī, and was attached to the *madhhab* of Ibn Ḥazm al-Ẓāhirī. This is an interesting combination, for in his *Kitāb al-Fiṣal* Ibn Ḥazm singles al-Bāqillānī out for severe criticism as the personification of all that is reprehensible in Ashʿarī *kalām*.[73]

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[71] Ibn al-Abbār, *Ḥulla* ii, 71–75, n°. 122; Dozy, *Scriptorum arabum loci* i, 419–422; ii, 75–80. Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra* ii,1, 422–424, 428; Ibn Saʿīd, *Kitāb Rāyāt al-mubarrizīn* 10, 131.

[72] See Viguera, *Los reinos de taifas* 117f., 119f.; Wasserstein, *Rise and Fall* 83, 93.

[73] See Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Fiṣal* iv, 204–226 *passim*. A later Andalusi scholar, al-Lablī (d. 691/1292), was to polemicize against Ibn Ḥazm's strictures against Ashʿarism

We do not know who al-Rāḍī's preceptors in Ẓāhirism were, but it is not unlikely that Ibn Ḥazm's son, the courtier **Abū Rāfiʿ**, was involved. In addition, Ibn Ḥazm's student **Abū Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī** who, as we have seen, was also associated with the ʿAbbādid court, may have provided the prince with copies of his master's works. In any case, Seville had been a centre of Ẓāhirī studies ever since a number of representatives of the school, who had arrived from the Mashriq as merchants, had established themselves there in the first decades of the 5th/11th century.[74]

While some of al-Rāḍī's poetry has survived through quotations in Ibn Saʿīd, Ibn Bassām, and Ibn al-Abbār's dictionary of poetry-writing princes and dignitaries (where the prince's skills are praised), he did not live long enough to make his mark in religious scholarship: he was killed in 484/1091, at the time of the Almoravid conquest of Ronda, the city that had been placed under his reluctant authority by his father, al-Muʿtamid.[75]

Al-Ḥumaydī[76]

By the time the Almoravids conquered al-Andalus, another follower of Ibn Ḥazm, al-Ḥumaydī, had long been gone.

The family of Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr Futūḥ ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Azdī al-Ḥumaydī was from Rabaḍ al-Ruṣāfa, a suburb of Cordoba, but at some point they transferred to the isle of Majorca, where our biographee was born before the year 420/1029. It is said that he started attending the lectures of scholars as a child, in the year 425/1033, sitting on the shoulders of older students. The first master whose classes he thus followed was Abū l-Qāsim Aṣbagh ibn Rāshid ibn Aṣbagh al-Lakhmī (d. ca. 440/1048–49), a *faqīh* and *muḥaddith* who had studied with the famous Mālikī scholar Ibn Abī

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in general and al-Bāqillānī in particular; see *Fihrist al-Lablī*. I propose to discuss this tract elsewhere.

[74] See Adang, Beginnings.

[75] Lagardère, *Les Almoravides* 131f.

[76] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 818f., nº. 1238; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 161, nº. 258; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* iv, 282–84, nº. 616; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* iv, 317–318, nº. 1863; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 120–27, nº. 63; *id.*, *Tadhkira* iv, 1218–22, nº. 1041; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* x, 254; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* ii, 112–15, nº. 63; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* iii, 392; Pons, *Ensayo* 164–67, nº. 126; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 291–93; Huici Miranda, al-Ḥumaydī; Rosselló Bordoy, al-Ḥumaydī, which has some inaccurate dates.

Zayd al-Qayrawānī, and who later on taught al-Ḥumaydī some of
the latter's works when they met again in the Ḥijāz.[77] At a more
mature age, al-Ḥumaydī transmitted from Abū Marwān ʿAbd al-
Malik ibn Sulaymān al-Khawlānī,[78] Abū ʿUmar **ibn ʿAbd al-Barr**,[79]
Ibn Ḥazm's student Abū l-ʿAbbās **al-ʿUdhrī**,[80] and especially **Ibn
Ḥazm** himself. He spent so much time with the latter that he became
known for his friendship with the famous man. In 448/1056 he
undertook a journey to the East. According to Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ his depar-
ture from Majorca had to do with Ibn Ḥazm's fall from grace after
his apparent defeat in the dispute with al-Bājī, referred to above. In
fact, al-Ḥumaydī seems to have joined his master in Almeria in the
year 441/1049, and may even have accompanied him to Seville and
afterwards to Niebla before finally leaving for the East. In the course
of his *riḥla*, which took him to Ifrīqiyyā, Egypt, Syria and Iraq, al-
Ḥumaydī took the opportunity to perform the *ḥajj*. The biographi-
cal dictionaries supply the names of the men (and one woman) with
whom he studied in Mecca, as well as those of the scholars whose
lectures he attended in Egypt and Syria. The most famous among
his teachers in Damascus was Abū Bakr ibn Thābit al-Khaṭīb, the
historian of Baghdad,[81] the city in which he ultimately settled down.[82]
He ended up living next door to another Ẓāhirī from Majorca: **Abū
ʿĀmir** (to be discussed below), who arrived in 484/1091 and became
his student.

We possess long lists of al-Ḥumaydī's teachers and informants in
Baghdad. He had a special kind of relationship, one of equals, with
Abū Naṣr ibn Mākūlā,[83] who belonged to a family that produced a
number of viziers and was himself the author of a quasi-biographi-
cal dictionary.[84] Al-Ḥumaydī much admired Ibn Mākūlā's dictionary,

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[77] Al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwa* 269, n°. 325.
[78] *Ḥadīth* scholar, died around 440/1048–9; see al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwa* 450, n°. 630;
Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 527, n°. 777; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 493, n°. 1069.
[79] See n. 35. He also taught Ibn Ḥazm's sons **Abū Usāma** and **Abū Rāfiʿ**.
[80] See n. 36. Ibn Ḥazm's son **Abū Usāma** and **Ibn Yarbūʿ** were also among
his students.
[81] See on him Sellheim, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 270–97,
n°. 137.
[82] On the intellectual milieu of Baghdad at the time, see Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl*, and
Ephrat, *A Learned Society*.
[83] Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 569–78, n°. 298; Vadet, Ibn Mākūlā. Ibn Mākūlā him-
self is often called *al-wazīr* or *al-amīr*, although he apparently never held a political
position.
[84] See for this term al-Qāḍī, Biographical Dictionaries. The work, entitled *Kitāb*

and contributed material to it, while the latter studied and trans-
mitted the works of the Andalusi, whom he calls "our friend al-
Ḥumaydī" (as we shall see, Ibn Mākūlā had warm relations also
with a number of other Majorcans, among them the lapsed Ẓāhirī
al-ʿAbdarī and the fervent literalist Abū ʿĀmir).

Among those who transmitted from al-Ḥumaydī in Baghdad, we
find the Andalusis Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad **al-Ṣadafī**,[85]
who received his *ijāza*, and Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAbbād ibn Sarḥān.[86]
Although Ibn Bassām states that Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī was among
his students, this is clearly an error, for al-Ḥumaydī had already
died by the time Ibn al-ʿArabī arrived in Iraq.[87]

Al-Ḥumaydī died in Baghdad in Dhū l-Ḥijja 488/December 1095.
Prayer was said over him by the Shāfiʿī scholar al-Shāshī, whom we
shall encounter below as the one who inducted another Majorcan
literalist into the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*.[88] The fact that someone of such
importance performed the funeral prayer shows that al-Ḥumaydī was
a highly respected member of the scholarly community of Baghdad.
This may be due not only to the fact that he had followed an irre-
proachable lifestyle characterized by extreme modesty and devotion
to learning, but also to the fact that he had been very low-key about
his Ẓāhirism, apparently out of fear of being marginalized.[89] In this
he differed from his neighbor and student Abū ʿĀmir who, as will
be seen, was much more vocal and controversial.[90]

Ikmāl fī rafʿ al-irtiyāb ʿan al-mukhtalif wa-l-muʾtalif min asmāʾ al-rijāl (or a variant of this
title), deals with the correct vocalization of the names of ḥadīth transmitters and is
available in several editions.

[85] See on this man, who died in 514/1120 and was also known as Ibn Sukarra,
al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 376–78, nº. 218; *id.*, *Tadhkira* iv, 1253–55, nº. 1059; Fierro,
al-Ṣadafī. Ibn al-Abbār's *Muʿjam* is a biographical dictionary of al-Ṣadafī's students.
Relations between him and al-Ḥumaydī seem to have soured at some point for
reasons that remain unclear. He taught **Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī**, **Ibn Ṭāhir** and
al-Ḥawḍī, and corresponded with **Ibn Yarbūʿ**.

[86] Would-be *ḥadīth* scholar, d. ca. 543/1148; see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 658f., nº. 980.

[87] Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra* i.1, 172; Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi*, 124, n. 66.

[88] Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl* 208–210. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 393f., nº. 234. He wrote a
well-known work of *ikhtilāf al-fuqahāʾ* in which he includes the views of the Ẓāhirī
school, which was obviously still considered to be of importance despite its decline.

[89] Goldziher, *Ẓāhirīs* 158f.

[90] Their characters and temperaments were so totally different that one wonders
how they got on. It is to be regretted that al-Ḥumaydī's tract *Ḥifz al-jār*, which
was apparently an *adab* work about neighborly relations, has not survived; it might
have allowed us a glimpse into the lives of these two Majorcan Ẓāhirīs in Baghdad.

Al-Ḥumaydī had requested to be interred near the famous Bishr
al-Ḥāfī (d. 227/841),[91] at the cemetery of Bāb Ḥarb, but his friend
and protector, the vizier al-Muẓaffar ibn Raʾīs al-Ruʾasāʾ,[92] who was
to see to this, had him buried in another cemetery instead, near the
grave of Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī, who had been one of al-Ḥumaydī's
teachers.[93] When al-Ḥumaydī appeared in his dreams, scolding him,
al-Muẓaffar made good on his promise and had him reburied. This
event took place some three years after his death, in 491/1097, but
it is said that when his grave was opened, his shroud was as new,
and the body fresh, exuding an odor of perfume. Al-Ḥumaydī's
choice of Bishr al-Ḥāfī as his neighbour in death may reflect certain
Sufi tendencies, although it is not by itself conclusive: burial plots
near the tomb of Bishr were very much in demand among Sufis
and non-mystics alike: the mourners at the funeral of al-Khaṭīb al-
Baghdādī found the spot intended for the recently deceased occu-
pied by a Sufi, who had reserved it for himself. Only the intervention
of another mystic could persuade him to vacate the plot.[94] But
although it is not clear whether Bishr was considered a mystic in
his own lifetime, rather than a mere *zāhid*, he had come to be
regarded in retrospect as a fully-fledged Sufi over the centuries fol-
lowing his death.[95] In al-Ḥumaydī's days, he was already widely
regarded as a mystic, and the Andalusi scholar was no doubt aware
of this when he gave instructions that he was to be buried next to
him. Moreover, the fact that he wrote a book on the mystics of Iraq,
entitled *Kitāb taḥiyyat al-mushtāq fī dhikr Ṣūfiyyat al-ʿIrāq*, seems to confirm
that al-Ḥumaydī had mystical tendencies which went beyond *zuhd*,
and it is more than likely that the stories about the miraculous preser-
vation of his body emanate from Sufi circles. His master Ibn Ḥazm
would almost certainly have disapproved of the path chosen by al-
Ḥumaydī; it should be recalled that Ibn Ḥazm had attempted to
develop the Ẓāhiriyya into a theological system, as well as a juridi-
cal one, and that he rejected all speculation about the deity.[96]

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[91] See on him Meier, Bishr al-Ḥāfī.
[92] See on him Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* xii, 124, 156; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* viii, 430, 432;
ix, 17. His home was a meeting-place of scholars.
[93] See n. 13.
[94] The anecdote is given in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* i, 93; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xiii,
286f. Ibn al-ʿImād's *Shadharāt al-dhahab* contains numerous references to scholars,
many of them Ḥanbalī *fuqahāʾ*, who were buried near the tomb of Bishr.
[95] See Melchert, The transition; Gobillot, Zuhd 560.
[96] Goldziher, *Ẓāhirīs* 109–156; Asín, *Abenházam*, Chapter XII. On Ibn Ḥazm's
criticism of Sufis, see Fierro, Opposition to Sufism 184f.

Al-Ḥumaydī had been a very productive scholar. Apart from the above-mentioned tract, the sources list a number of works in the fields of history, Prophetic Tradition, *adab* and morals with titles such as *Jumal ta'rīkh al-Islām*; *Jadhwat al-Muqtabis fī ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus*; *Kitāb al-Tarassul*; *al-Jam' bayna l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*; *Kitāb al-Amānī al-ṣādiqa*; *Kitāb Adab al-aṣdiqā'*; *Ḥifẓ al-jār*; *al-Dhahab al-masbūk fī wa'z al-mulūk*; *Dhamm al-namīma*, and others. None of these titles reveals anything about the author's Ẓāhirī leanings. Al-Ḥumaydī's fame among modern scholars rests mainly on one work: *Jadhwat al-Muqtabis*, a biographical dictionary of the scholars of al-Andalus.[97] He states that he wrote it in Baghdad from memory, at the request of local scholars. His indebtedness to Ibn Ḥazm for biographical information and anecdotes about the scholars of al-Andalus is apparent throughout the work.[98] In addition to the tracts mentioned above, al-Ḥumaydī also wrote poetry, in which he expressed his outlook on life. *Zuhd* is praised as the greatest virtue; human company is to be shunned unless one can actually learn something from one's interlocutor, and the Quran, Tradition, and *ijmā'* are all one needs. This latter statement reflects a Ẓāhirī point of view, at least if *ijmā'* is interpreted as the consensus not of the entire Muslim community, nor even of its religious scholars, but of the Companions of the Prophet.

Abū l-Ḥasan al-'Abdarī[99]

Like Abū l-Ḥasan ibn Murajjā and al-Ḥumaydī, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥriz ibn Abī 'Uthmān al-'Abdarī was born in Majorca, where he came in contact with **Ibn Ḥazm**. This contact turned out to be mutually beneficial: the two men exchanged knowledge, and al-'Abdarī apparently adopted Ẓāhirism. At some point, however, he embarked on his *riḥla* to the East, which included the *ḥajj* to Mecca. Once in Baghdad, he decided to abandon the *madhhab* of Ibn Ḥazm, and began to study *fiqh* under

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[97] This may be about to change: in recent years, several other works by al-Ḥumaydī have been published that have not yet been fully analyzed and exploited by scholars, viz. (1) *Al-Tadhkira li-Abī 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Ḥumaydī wa-Marātib al-jazā' yawm al-qiyāma*: (2) *Al-dhahab al-masbūk fī wa'z al-mulūk*; and (3) *Al-Jam' bayna al-ṣaḥīḥayn*.

[98] See Terés, Enseñanzas de Ibn Ḥazm.

[99] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 614, n°. 913; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya* v, 257f., n°. 502.

the Shāfi'ī scholar Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī,[100] and thereafter with Abū
Bakr al-Shāshī, who had done the honors at the funeral of **al-
Ḥumaydī**. He wrote a commentary on the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, and
studied *ḥadīth* with a number of important scholars, among them the
qāḍī Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī, author of *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* and
other influential works. In addition, al-'Abdarī was in contact with
the biographer Ibn Mākūlā, referred to earlier, who describes him
as "our friend the *faqīh* Abū l-Ḥasan al-'Abdarī" and praises him as
an excellent man of learning and *adab*. Moreover, he studied with
al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. This information was communicated to Ibn
Bashkuwāl by the later *qāḍī* Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī, who spent much
time in al-'Abdarī's company and studied with him.[101] Ibn al-'Arabī's
disapproval of Ẓāhirism, a *madhhab* with which he must already have
been very familiar through his father's education and perhaps through
discussions with scholars during his *riḥla*,[102] may have received an
added impulse under the influence of the lapsed literalist al-'Abdarī.
Ibn al-'Arabī parted with him in 491/1097, and he died two years
later, on Saturday 16 Jumādā II, 493/28 April 1100.

Ibn Burrāl[103]

Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd ibn Aṣbagh ibn
Burrāl (variant spellings are Biryāl, Burriyāl, and even Qurriyāl) al-
Anṣārī of Guadalajara (Wādī l-Ḥajāra) was born in 416/1025. He
was known as a *faqīh* and a specialist in *ḥadīth*. Ibn Bashkuwāl, who
received information on Ibn Burrāl from several of his teachers, men-
tions his nobility and intelligence, as well as his skills as a *ḥāfiẓ* and
a poet. Among the people he studied with, the sources mention **Ibn
Ḥazm** and Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn al-Fatḥ. It is worth dis-
cussing this second teacher in some detail, since he may himself have
had Ẓāhirī leanings.[104] His full name is al-Qāsim ibn al-Fatḥ ibn

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[100] See n. 13. He was a friend of **al-Ḥumaydī**.
[101] See Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi* 75.
[102] We know of one Ẓāhirī whom he encountered on his journey, viz. Makkī al-
Rumaylī; see Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi* 77.
[103] See Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 561f., n°. 831; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 519, n°. 1128; Ṣilafī,
Akhbār 53f.; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* v, 343 s.v. Wādī l-Ḥajāra.
[104] This was first recognized by Goldziher: in the margin of his copy of Ibn

Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf, also known as Ibn al-Ruyūlī.[105] While this name indicates that his father or an earlier ancestor hailed from Orihuela, he himself was from Guadalajara, where he died in 451/1059, aged sixty-three. He is described as being learned in *ḥadīth* and *qirāʾāt*, as well as all other branches of scholarship. He wrote much, including poetry, and kept aloof from the world. Although Ibn Bashkuwāl does not explicitly identify him as a Ẓāhirī, the description given of the man's attitude to the sources of the law gives the impression that he was, indeed, a literalist: he did not approve of *taqlīd* but freely expressed his own opinions (*kāna mukhtāran*);[106] he did not adopt anyone's views but acted in accordance with the Quran and the Sunna, following the sound *āthār*, and would not use any of the hermeneutical methods used by the other schools.[107]

Other tutors of Ibn Burrāl include Abū l-Ḥakam Mundhir ibn Mundhir ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥajārī,[108] also from Guadalajara, Abū l-Walīd Hishām ibn Aḥmad al-Kinānī,[109] and the *muqriʾ* Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭalamankī, who had also taught **Ibn Ḥazm**.[110] Finally, mention must be made of Ibn Ḥazm's student Ṣāʿid ibn Aḥmad,[111] author of the well-known *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, a work Ibn Burrāl studied with him. Interestingly, Ṣāʿid had also studied with Ibn al-Ruyūlī.

Ibn Burrāl's own students included ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿIṣām, Abū Bakr Ghālib ibn ʿAṭiyya,[112] Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Fahmī,[113] Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Bakrī

Bashkuwāl's *Ṣila* which is kept in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, he identifies him as a literalist.

[105] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 688–690, n°. 1024; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 115–16, n°. 56.

[106] I take this to mean that he felt free to give his own opinion, rooted in scripture, rather than repeating the views of an earlier authority (*taqlīd*). *Ikhtiyār* in this sense should not be confused with *raʾy* (personal opinion), which often has no basis in scripture.

[107] This is what I understand *lā yarā l-akhdh ʿalā shayʾ min al-ʿilm* to mean.

[108] *ʿĀlim*, d. 423/1032; see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 900f., n°. 1384.

[109] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 938f., n°. 1449; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya*, 653, n°. 1430; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 134–46, n°. 71.

[110] See on this man, who died in 429/1037, Fierro, El proceso contra Abū ʿUmar. Ibn Burrāl is mentioned on p. 106, though without being identified as a Ẓāhirī.

[111] See n. 31.

[112] *Faqīh* and *ḥadīth* scholar with ascetical tendencies (d. 518/1124); see al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 577f., n°. 1281.

[113] Linguist and specialist in *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, died in 530/1135 or 544/1149. See al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 338f., n°. 897; Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* v, 406, n°. 206.

al-Ḥajārī,[114] Abū Marwān ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Būnuh,[115] and the Ẓāhirīs
Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī, Ibn Marzūq, and **al-Ḥawḍī**, to be dis-
cussed below. The last two studied with him in Almeria, where he
had moved towards the end of his life. It was there also that he
taught the famous mystic, Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 536/1141).[116]
The latter was probably not interested in Ibn Burrāl's lessons on
Ẓāhirism, since he was vigorously opposed to the literalists in gen-
eral, and to Ibn Burrāl's teacher **Ibn Ḥazm** in particular. He crit-
icized Ẓāhirism in his *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda*,[117] and moreover coined the
expression "The tongue of Ibn Ḥazm and the sword of al-Ḥajjāj are
twins" (*kāna lisān Ibn Ḥazm wa-sayf al-Ḥajjāj shaqīqayn*).[118] What, then,
did Ibn al-ʿArīf hope to find in his encounters with Ibn Burrāl?
From a comment made by the biographer Ibn Masdī it may be
inferred that Ibn Burrāl transmitted knowledge of a *mystical* nature
to him, and that it was he who presented Ibn al-ʿArīf with his *khirqa*.
In al-Andalus, this expression did not mean literally presenting the
aspiring mystic with the Sufi's frock, but indicated the relationship
between master and disciple.[119] After learning about al-Ḥumaydī's
mystical leanings, Ibn Burrāl's combination of literalism and Sufism
need no longer surprise us. Ibn Burrāl died in Valencia at the begin-
ning of Ramaḍān 502/April 1109.

Ibn Kawthar[120]

Apart from being a Ẓāhirī *faqīh*, Abū ʿAmr Bakr ibn Khalaf ibn
Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Kawthar al-Ghāfiqī of Seville was a poet
and an *adīb*. The date of his birth is not known, but it must have
occurred before 456/1064, since he received an *ijāza* from **Ibn Ḥazm**

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[114] *Ḥadīth* scholar, who died in or after 519/1125; cf. Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (C),
i, 422, n°. 1199; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 430, n°. 1148.
[115] Originally from Granada, he moved to Malaga, where he became *qāḍī*. He
died in 549/1154. See Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* iii, 237f., n°. 402; Ibn al-Abbār,
Muʿjam 250f., n°. 230; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* ii, 489, n°. 1063.
[116] See on him Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* i, 168–170; Faure, Ibn al-ʿArīf.
[117] Ibn al-ʿArīf, *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda* 124, 160, and Dandash's introduction, pp. 51, 54.
[118] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* i, 169; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* iii, 300; Asín Palacios,
Abenházam 192.
[119] Dandash's introduction to *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda* 46; Fierro, La religión 487, 497.
[120] Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (BC) 257, n°. 577.

to transmit his *Kitāb al-Muḥallā*.[121] It should be pointed out, how-
ever, that Ibn Ḥazm gave permission to transmit his works also to
Shurayḥ al-Ruʿaynī[122] when the latter was a mere child. Ibn Kawthar,
too, may have been very young, therefore, when he received his
ijāza. We do not know who his teachers were, but we have already
seen that there were Ẓāhirīs in and around Seville with whom he
could have studied, such as Ibn Ḥazm's son **Abū Rāfiʿ** and **Faraj
ibn Ḥadīda**.

As a Ẓāhirī, Ibn Kawthar did not approve of *taqlīd*, and he used
his poetical skills to write a *qaṣīda* in which he propagated a liter-
alist reading of prophetic *ḥadīth* and criticized the following of per-
sonal opinion and local custom. His son ʿAbdallāh ibn Bakr, who
was also a Ẓāhirī,[123] transmitted this poem, and Ibn al-Abbār, our
main informant, heard it from one of ʿAbdallāh's companions. It
was still being recited in Seville, and especially in the mosque where
Ibn Kawthar worshipped, in the year 505/1111–12. Although Ibn
al-Abbār does not say so, the impression one gets is that the author
of the poem was already dead by then.

Ibn Marzūq al-Yaḥṣubī[124]

Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn Marzūq al-Yaḥṣubī was born in
Zaragoza in the year 456/1064, the same year in which Ibn Ḥazm
died. Ibn Marzūq was later to point out this coincidence. Before
embarking on his *riḥla*, he studied in al-Andalus with **Ibn Ḥazm**'s
student **Ibn Burrāl**. We owe this information to the famous Shāfiʿī
ḥadīth scholar Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafī of Alexandria (d. 576/1180),[125]
who had taught a large number of students from al-Andalus. Al-
Silafī had much contact with Ibn Marzūq in Cairo, and later on
also in Alexandria. Since it appears that al-Silafī spent the period
between 515/1121 and 517/1123 in Cairo, and was back in Alexandria
by 518/1124, we can pin down Ibn Marzūq's period of study with
the master fairly accurately. What impressed al-Silafī about Ibn

[121] See al-Kattānī, Ḥawla kitābayn 312.
[122] See n. 44 above.
[123] See on him Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* ii, 488, nº. 1399; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* iv, 185–87, nº. 344; Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* iii, 113, nº. 188, and my Ẓāhirīs 425f.
[124] Al-Silafī, *Akhbār* 51–53, nº. 28; Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (C) 818, nº. 1996.
[125] See Gilliot, Al-Silafī.

Marzūq, apart from his piety and his devotion to religious matters, were his unabated efforts in acquiring the books and *rasā'il* of Ibn Ḥazm. He explicitly mentions the fact that Ibn Marzūq was an indirect disciple—via **Ibn Burrāl**—of Ibn Ḥazm. This obviously gave him confidence in the reliability of Ibn Marzūq's transcripts of Ibn Ḥazm's works, for he himself copied a large number of them, thus possibly contributing to the spread of Ibn Ḥazm's oeuvre in Egypt and, through the mediation of his countless students from the Mashriq, perhaps further east as well. From Ibn Marzūq al-Silafī also received Ṣā'id al-Andalusī's *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, which Ibn Marzūq himself had studied under **Ibn Burrāl**. At some point Ibn Marzūq moved on to Damascus, and as far as al-Silafī knew, he died there, although he did not know when.

Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda[126]

Abū l-Ḥasan Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda, also known as the *ghulām* (or *mawlā*) of Ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Birzālī[127] was a Ẓāhirī who acted as *ṣāḥib al-ṣalāh* in the Sabā'ī mosque of Seville. He is described as a *muḥaddith* with a good memory, accurate, and with a good hand in writing. He transmitted from Abū ʿUmar Maymūn ibn Yāsīn al-Lamtūnī,[128] Abū l-Qāsim al-Hawzanī, Abū Mahdī Nuʿmān ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Nafzī,[129] Abū Muḥammad Jābir ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī,[130] and Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Manẓūr, who acted as *qāḍī* in Seville.[131] Moreover, he obtained an *ijāza* from Abū Muḥammad

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[126] We owe most of our information on Ibn Saʿāda to Ibn al-Abbār (*Takmila* i, 398, n°. 1146), who had it from the Ẓāhirī Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Nabātī, also known as Ibn al-Rūmiyya (see Adang, *Ẓāhirīs* 453–459). See also Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* iii, 63, n°. 69.

[127] The reference is possibly to one of the *ṭā'ifa* rulers of Carmona; see Idris, *Les Birzalides*; Viguera, *Los Reinos de Taifas* 127–129.

[128] Scholar from Almeria who seems to have been related to the Almoravid leadership; see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (C) ii, 718f, n°. 1823. He died in Dhū l-Qaʿda 530/August-September 1135.

[129] *Ḥadīth* scholar from Seville, also known as Ibn Radī/Zaynī; see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (C), ii, 752f., n°. 1865.

[130] *Ḥadīth* scholar. See on him Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (C) i, 246, n°. 649; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* xi, 33, n°. 61.

[131] Died in 520/1126. See on him al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 518, n°. 301; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 132f., n°. 171; Avila, Los Banū Manẓūr 29. The Ẓāhirī **Ibn Baqī** (see n. 61), prayed over him at his funeral.

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Attāb.[132] As far as we know, this list does not include any Ẓāhirīs. However, living in Seville Mufarrij ibn Sa'āda would have had ample opportunity to attend the lectures of Ẓāhirī teachers: we have seen that **Ibn Kawthar, Abū Rāfi'** and **Faraj ibn Ḥadīda** were active in that city.

Among the men who transmitted from Mufarrij ibn Sa'āda, mention is made of Abū Bakr ibn 'Ubayd, **Ibn Jumhūr**,[133] and **Ibn Abī Marwān**,[134] who studied with him in 534/1139–40, making this year a *terminus post quem* for Mufarrij ibn Sa'āda's death. Ibn Abī Marwān, now, was a Ẓāhirī, and as was seen earlier, the same may be true of Ibn Jumhūr. The latter's literalist sympathies seem to have been shared by another student of Mufarrij ibn Sa'āda: **Abū Bakr al-Nayyār**, who was a close colleague of the younger Ẓāhirī 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Yūsuf **ibn Khaṭṭāb** and a teacher of **Sa'd al-Su'ūd ibn 'Ufayr**, another literalist. Since these men were active mainly in the Almohad period, they will not be discussed here.[135]

Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī[136]

Abū Bakr (also known as Abū 'Abdallāh) Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Bishr al-Anṣārī al-Azdī al-Mayurqī al-Aṣamm is described as a *faqīh* of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*, knowledgeable about *ḥadīth* and the names of its transmitters, precise in what he transmitted, ascetic and pious. He was born in Majorca at an unknown date, but at some point left the Balearics and moved to Granada. He studied with **al-Ḥumaydī**'s onetime student Abū 'Alī **al-Ṣadafī**,[137]

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[132] *Muḥaddith* from Cordoba, d. 520/1126. See on him al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 514–515, n°. 297. The source expressly mentions that Mufarrij had actually met Ibn 'Attāb. This shows that it had become common practice to request and receive *ijāza*s from masters one had not in fact studied with; cf. Vajda, Idjāza. Ibn 'Attāb taught the Ẓāhirī **Ibn al-Shabūqī** (see below).

[133] See n. 59.

[134] See n. 61.

[135] See on them Adang, Ẓāhirīs 426–428, 449f.

[136] Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* 173f., n°. 609; *id.*, *Mu'jam* 139f., n°. 123; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 169f., n°. 452; Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* v, 392f., n°. 172; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* ii, 155, n°. 106; al-Silafī, *Akhbār* 120f., n°. 78; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 302; Urvoy, Vie intellectuelle 107–109, 118.

[137] See n. 85. He taught **Ibn Ṭāhir** and **al-Ḥawḍī**, and corresponded with **Ibn Yarbū'** (see below).

and received his *ijāza*. Other teachers included Abū ʿAlī **al-Ghassānī**[138] and Abū Marwān al-Bājī.[139] Most interesting for our purpose, however, is the fact that one of his teachers was **Ibn Burrāl**, the Ẓāhirī mystic and student of **Ibn Ḥazm**.

In the year 517, in the months of Shawwāl and Dhū l-Qaʿda (November 1123–January 1124), we find al-Mayurqī in Mecca. Either on his way to the Ḥijāz or on the way back, he studied with the famous master al-Silafī, who had probably already made the acquaintance of **Ibn Marzūq**, and with a number of other teachers in Alexandria, such as the expatriate Andalusi, Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī.[140]

After a long *riḥla*, Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī came back to al-Andalus, where he wandered around, teaching and transmitting *ḥadīth*s, and never settling down properly. The sources mention the following students: Abū Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ghāsil;[141] Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Maʿqil;[142] Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk;[143] Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ṣaqr; Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aslamī; Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Numayrī; Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Faras and his son ʿAbd al-Munʿim;[144] Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Abī Sibāʿ; Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ṣaqr; Abū Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAṭiyya;[145] Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Munʿim ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk;[146] Abū Bakr ibn

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[138] Abū ʿAlī Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ghassānī, *muḥaddith* from Cordoba, d. 498/1105; see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 233–35, n°. 333; Ibn al-Abbār, *Muʿjam* 77–80, n°. 67; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 327, n°. 645. He also taught **Ibn Yarbūʿ, Ibn Ṭāhir** and **al-Ḥawḍī** (see below).

[139] *Qāḍī* of Seville, d. in Rajab 532/March-April 1138; see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* ii, 533f., n°. 782.

[140] For a detailed account of the life and works of this important scholar, who died in 520/1126, see the introductory study in Fierro's translation of his *Kitāb al-ḥawadith wa-l-bidaʿ*. Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī is mentioned on pp. 101f. of this study as a student of al-Ṭurṭūshī.

[141] *Muqriʾ* from Granada, d. after 570/1174; see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) ii, 44, n°. 121.

[142] *Imām* and *khaṭīb* at the mosque of Ubeda, d. after 514/1120; see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) ii, 52, n°. 154.

[143] Scholar from Granada, d. 552/1157; see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) iii, 195, n°. 493.

[144] The son, Abū Muḥammad, was an influential scholar from Granada. He also taught the Ẓāhirīs **Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh**, **Ibn al-Rūmiyya**, and **Ibn al-ʿArabī**. He had studied with **Shurayḥ** and with the Ẓāhirī **Ibn Baqī**; see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 437, n. 98 for references.

[145] See on this *qāḍī*, who died after 537/1142: Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) i, 272, n°. 941.

[146] *Qāḍī* from Granada; see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) iii, 128, n°. 312.

Rizq,[147] and Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq ibn al-Kharrāṭ. The latter had studied a number of works by Ibn Ḥazm which were transmitted to him by **Shurayḥ**. He also studied with the Ẓāhirī **Ibn Abī Marwān**, and taught at least one other literalist, viz. **Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh**.[148]

Towards the end of his life, Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī was summoned to the court of the Almoravid ruler ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf ibn Tāshfīn in Marrakesh for questioning, together with the mystics Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn al-ʿArīf and Abū l-Ḥakam ibn Barrajān.[149] This fact suggests that al-Mayurqī himself was no mere ascetic, but had mystical tendencies.[150] Since we have already encountered two other Ẓāhirīs who apparently combined a literalist approach to the law with a more speculative attitude to theological questions, viz. **al-Ḥumaydī** and **Ibn Burrāl**, this is not at all unlikely, especially since the latter was al-Mayurqī's own teacher. Abū Bakr was questioned and flogged at the orders of the ruler, but unlike Ibn al-ʿArīf and Ibn Barrajān, who died in 536/1141 under suspicious circumstances, al-Mayurqī managed to leave Marrakesh. According to Ibn al-Abbār, he escaped and went to Bougie, *hāriban min ṣāḥib al-Maghrib*, whereas al-Marrākushī and Ibn al-Zubayr state that he was released from prison, and went back briefly to al-Andalus. Although he initially intended to travel to the East once again, he ended up staying in Bougie, where he continued to transmit traditions. It was in this city that he was to die in or after the year 537/1142, apparently not of natural causes: Ibn al-Abbār states that al-Mayurqī was called to martyrdom (*ustushhida*).[151]

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[147] This scholar also taught the later Ẓāhirī **Ibn al-Imām**; see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 423.

[148] On Ibn al-Kharrāṭ, see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* 115–117, n°. 9, and Adang, Ẓāhirīs 419, 461f. On **Ibn Abī Marwān** and **Shurayḥ**, see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 418–422; on Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh, already referred to in n. 144, see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 433–443.

[149] Fierro, La religión 486–489; and *id*., Opposition to Sufism 184–188. See on Ibn Barrajān Faure, Ibn Barradjān.

[150] See Fierro's (transl.) introductory study to al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawadith wa-l-bidaʿ* 102. However, in later publications, Fierro states that al-Mayurqī cannot be linked with Sufism; see La religión 497 n. 51, and Opposition to Sufism 184, n. 40. According to Urvoy (Vie intellectuelle 109), al-Mayurqī was a precursor of the famous mystic **Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī** (not related to Abū Muḥammad and Abū Bakr), another man who combined an interest in Ẓāhirism and *ḥadīth* with speculative mysticism. On Ibn al-ʿArabī's Ẓāhirism, or affinity with it, see Adang, Ẓāhirīs 461–464.

[151] Ibn al-Abbār mentions that this occurred more than eighty years before he himself was born. However, since Ibn al-Abbār (d. 658/1260) was born in 595/1198–99, this is problematic. Al-Marrākushī does not mention a violent death, but has *tuwuffiya*.

Ibn al-Shabūqī[152]

Al-Mayurqī was not the only Andalusi Ẓāhirī summoned to Marrakesh by the Almoravid ruler: this fate was shared by Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn al-Lakhmī, also known as Ibn al-Shabūqī, who is described by al-Marrākushī as a *muḥaddith* and a *faqīh* of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*.

He studied with Abū l-Ḥasan **Shurayḥ**,[153] Abū l-Aṣbagh ʿĪsā ibn Abī l-Baḥr,[154] Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn Makḥūl, Abū Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlī al-Lakhmī, *sibṭ* Abī ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Barr,[155] Abū Muḥammad ibn ʿAttāb,[156] Abū Yaḥyā Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ṣumādiḥ,[157] and Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Aḥmad ibn Qāsim al-Khawlānī.[158] Although al-Marrākushī gives him a separate entry in his biographical dictionary, the latter may be the same person as Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Qāsim al-Khawlānī of Seville,[159] a scholar who had studied with **Ibn Ḥazm** and **Ibn Khazraj** who, as will be seen below, transmitted from a number of oriental Ẓāhirīs. If this is correct, Ibn al-Shabūqī may be regarded as an indirect student of Ibn Ḥazm, as well as of additional literalists.

His own students included Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn al-Niqrāt;[160] Abū l-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Maṣmūdī, Abū ʿAlī Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Qāsim ibn ʿAshara al-Salwī and his sons.

Al-Marrākushī mentions that he has seen a *Majmūʿ fī l-taṣawwuf* which Ibn al-Shabūqī is said to have written in prison in Marrakesh,

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[152] Al-al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 181f., n°. 498.

[153] See n. 44.

[154] Scholar from Santarém, d. ca. 530/1135; see on him Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 638f., n°. 954.

[155] The grandson of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, who had taught Ibn Ḥazm's sons **al-Faḍl** and **Abū Usāma**, as well as **al-Ḥumaydī**; see n. 35. See Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) ii, 255, n°. 739; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xx, 92, n°. 52. He acted as *qāḍī* in Aghmāt, and died in 532/1137.

[156] See n. 132. **Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda** had obtained his *ijāza*.

[157] Specialist in *ʿarabiyya*, descended from the party-kings of Almeria. Wandered throughout the peninsula, but ended up in prison in Marrakesh. He died in 540/1145. See Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) ii, 22, n°. 59; al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 335f., n°. 883.

[158] See al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 182, n°. 499.

[159] See al-Marrākushī, *Dhayl* vi, 188, n°. 533.

[160] *Muqriʾ* from Jaén, moved to Fez, where he became *khaṭīb* in the Qarawiyyīn mosque. Died after 593/1196. See Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) iii, 219, n°. 548.

and to have finished on the last day of Ramaḍān 529/14 July 1135.
The fact that he wrote a work on Sufism suggests that he, too, was
a mystic, and that the reason for his expulsion and detention was
not his Ẓāhirism, but rather his mystical tendencies.

The fact that so many mystics, Ẓāhirī and other, were summoned
to Marrakesh clearly shows that Sufism was perceived by the
Almoravids as a threat. At a time when the Almohads were increas-
ing their pressure on the power base of the Almoravids in North
Africa, the rulers could not tolerate anyone who offered a new type
of authority.[161]

Ibn Ṭāhir[162]

The next man who adopted a literalist approach to the sources of
law (*wa-yamīlu fī fiqhihi ilā l-ẓāhir; wa-yamīlu fahmuhu* [i.e., of *ḥadīth*]
ilā l-ẓāhir) is Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Ṭāhir ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā ibn
ʿUbāda al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī,[163] whose family hailed from Shārifat
Balansiya, the area of Valencia where the notables lived. He himself
was born in nearby Denia on 17 Shawwāl of the year 467/6 June
1075, and he would spend most of his life there. In Denia he acted
as a member of the advisory council (*shūrā*) and as *muftī*, apparently
refusing to accept the office of *qāḍī*. That the offices of judge and
mushāwar were offered to him in the first place is perhaps somewhat
surprising, considering Ibn Ṭāhir's Ẓāhirī sympathies. This either
means that despite their crackdown on certain mystics, the Almora-
vids—who are usually described as strict Mālikīs—were less obscurant-
ist and intransigent than is often assumed,[164] or that Ibn Ṭāhir put
aside his Ẓāhirī views when issuing legal opinions and ruled accord-
ing to Mālikī law. If so, he was not the first literalist to do so: Mun-
dhir ibn Saʿīd, who acted as chief *qāḍī* of Cordoba under the caliphs
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III al-Nāṣir and al-Ḥakam II al-Mustanṣir, agreed
to rule according to Mālikī principles although he was a Ẓāhirī.[165]

[161] Fierro, Opposition to Sufism 190, 206.
[162] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 130f., n°. 168; Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (BC) 55–57, n°. 127;
id., *Muʿjam* 14–17, n°. 12; Ibn Farḥūn, *Dībāj* 45; Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Ghunya* 118, 43.
[163] Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (*Ghunya* 118) gives his name as Aḥmad ibn Ṭāhir ibn ʿAlī ibn
Shibrīn ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿIsā al-Anṣārī.
[164] See Fierro, La religión 437f., 459.
[165] See Adang, Beginnings, and n. 20 above.

We know that Ibn Ṭāhir was also active in Murcia and Almeria, though what position he held there is not known.

The names of several of Ibn Ṭāhir's masters are known to us, as well as the places where he studied with them. In his native Denia, he followed the lectures of a *muqriʾ* called Abū Dāwūd, and in Murcia he sought out the famous teacher Abū ʿAlī **al-Ṣadafī**,[166] in the year 505/1111–12. For Almeria, we possess a relatively long list, which features, among others, Abū ʿAlī **al-Ghassānī**;[167] Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shafīʿ; Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn al-Farrāʾ al-Jayyānī; Abū Muḥammad (b.) al-ʿAssāl, and Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khayyāṭ. In Orihuela he studied with Abū l-Qāsim Khalaf ibn Fatḥūn and Abū l-Qāsim Khalaf ibn Muḥammad al-Gharnāṭī.[168]

At some point, Ibn Ṭāhir crossed the Straits to North Africa. We find him at the feet of Abū Marwān al-Ḥamdānī in Qalʿat Ḥammād, and among the students of Abū Muḥammad *al-muqriʾ* in Bougie. Moreover, he studied with the jurisconsult Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Māzarī, who is known among modern scholars especially for the *fatwā* he issued concerning the status of the Muslims of Sicily after the Christian (re)conquest.[169] However, towards the end of his life he returned to Denia, where in Jumādā I, 531/January–February 1138 Ibn al-Abbār studied with him. Other students included his own son, Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad; Abū l-ʿAbbās (or Abū Muḥammad) al-Uqlīshī;[170] Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Miknāsī; Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn Abī Qurra; Abū Muḥammad (or Abū ʿAlī) al-Rushāṭī;[171] Abū l-Walīd ibn al-Dabbāgh,[172] and the famous *qāḍī* Abū l-Faḍl ʿIyāḍ, who attended his lectures in Ceuta. Ibn Ṭāhir died on 7 Jumādā I, 532/21 January 1138.

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[166] See n. 85. He had studied with **al-Ḥumaydī**, taught **Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī** and **al-Ḥawḍī**, and corresponded with **Ibn Yarbūʿ**.

[167] See n. 138. He also taught **Ibn Yarbūʿ, Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī** and **al-Ḥawḍī** (see below).

[168] See Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H) i, 244, n°. 837.

[169] On al-Māzarī (d. 536/1141), see Pellat, al-Māzarī. On his *fatwā*, see Turki, Consultation juridique.

[170] On this scholar from Denia, who had Sufi tendencies, see Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (H), i, 56–58, n°. 168. He died in Upper Egypt in 550 or 551/1155–56.

[171] See on him Ibn al-Abbār, *Muʿjam* 217–22, n°. 200; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughya* 452f., n°. 946; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* iv, 462; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* iii, 106f., n°. 352.

[172] *Ḥadīth* scholar, *khaṭīb* and member of the *shūrā* in Murcia, later *qāḍī* in Denia, d. 546/1151–52. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xx, 220f., n°. 138. He also taught the Ẓāhirī **Ibn al-Imām**; see n. 147.

Ibn Yarbūʿ[173]

Our following biographee, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn Yarbūʿ ibn Sulaymān, was born around the year 444/1055 but it is unclear whether his family originated in Santarem, or in Santamaria de Algarve, both in present-day Portugal. Whatever the case may be, Ibn Yarbūʿ chose not to remain in this area, if he himself was born there at all; our sources place him in Seville and Cordoba.

Among his masters, we encounter Qāḍī Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Manẓūr; Abū l-Qāsim Ḥātim ibn Muḥammad; Abū Marwān ibn Sirāj; Abū ʿAlī **al-Ghassānī**;[174] Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn Khazraj (see below), and a number of others.

It was al-Ghassānī, however, to whom he was especially attached. The admiration was mutual: al-Ghassānī praised Ibn Yarbūʿ's knowledge and acumen. Ibn Yarbūʿ also wrote to another Abū ʿAlī: the famous **al-Ṣadafī**,[175] inquiring about the *Sunan* of al-Dāraquṭnī and corresponding with him about the *Jāmiʿ* of al-Tirmidhī, and he received an *ijāza* from **Ibn Ḥazm**'s student Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad **al-ʿUdhrī**.[176] Special mention must be made of Abū Muḥammad **ibn Khazraj** (d. 478/1085),[177] who had studied with several earlier Ẓāhirīs who had arrived in al-Andalus from the East, viz. Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Ṭālib **al-Baṣrī** (arrived in 420/1029); Abū Sālim Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn Maḥmūd **al-Khawlānī** (or perhaps al-Ḥarrānī) (arr. 423/1031), and Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf ibn Kathīr **al-Iṣfahānī** (d. after 425/1034).[178] Although Ibn Khazraj is usually listed as a Mālikī, this does not preclude his having transmitted works by Ẓāhirī authors. On the contrary, we know that he transmitted the, or some, writings by the above-mentioned Abū Sālim al-Khawlānī. Similarly, **Shurayḥ** al-Ruʿaynī, the bibliographer Abū Bakr ibn Khayr, and the *faqīh* ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Ishbīlī all transmitted works by **Ibn Ḥazm** despite

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[173] Ibn al-Abbār, *Muʿjam*, 206, n°. 191; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 578, n°. 331.
[174] See n. 138. He also taught **Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī, Ibn Ṭāhir** and **al-Ḥawḍī**.
[175] See n. 85. He had studied with **al-Ḥumaydī**, and taught **Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī, Ibn Ṭāhir** and **al-Ḥawḍī**.
[176] See n. 36. He also taught Ibn Ḥazm's son **Abū Usāma** and **al-Ḥumaydī**.
[177] Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 488f., n°. 251. See Adang, Beginnings.
[178] See on them Adang, Beginnings.

their association with the Mālikī *madhhab*.[179] Ibn Khazraj, then, may well have been the source, or at least one of the sources, of Ibn Yarbū''s information on Ẓāhirism.

Of all the works Ibn Yarbū' must have studied, only one is explicitly mentioned: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which he read under the supervision of Ibn Manẓūr. Moreover, the titles of some of his own works reveal acquaintance with Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, as well as with Mālik's *Muwaṭṭa'* and a tract by al-Kalābādhī. To these should be added the works he studied through his correspondence with Abū 'Alī al-Ṣadafī, as well as the works which he was allowed by al-'Udhrī to transmit, and which may well have included certain works by Ibn Ḥazm.

Ibn al-Abbār describes Ibn Yarbū' as *Ẓāhirī al-madhhab*, though it is unclear whence he obtained his literalist tendencies. Another question is whether he himself transmitted Ẓāhirī teachings to his students, who included Abū Ja'far ibn Bādhish and the biographer Ibn Bashkuwāl, who attended his *majālis* and obtained his *ijāza*. The latter, who taught a number of Ẓāhirīs himself, praises him in glowing terms as a specialist in *ḥadīth* and the various branches of the science of tradition.[180] Ibn Yarbū''s preoccupation with *ḥadīth* is also reflected in the titles of his books: *al-Iqlīd fī bayān al-asānīd; Tāj al-ḥilya wa-sirāj al-bighya fī ma'rifat asānīd al-Muwaṭṭa'; Kitāb Lisān al-bayān 'ammā fī Kitāb Abī Naṣr al-Kalābādhī min al-aghfāl wa-l-nuqṣān; Kitāb al-Minhāj fī rijāl Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj*. Unfortunately, none of these works seems to have come down to us. Ibn Yarbū' died on Saturday, 8 Ṣafar 522/12 February 1128, and was buried at the Rabaḍ cemetery in Cordoba. The name of the man who said the funeral prayer is given as Qāḍī Muḥammad ibn Aṣbagh. This is probably a reference to Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aṣbagh ibn Muḥammad, better known as Ibn al-Munāṣif, who was chief judge (*qāḍī l-jamā'a*) in Cordoba and *ṣāḥib al-ṣalāh* in the Great Mosque of that city. Once more, then, we have here an example of a Ẓāhirī who was paid the last respects by an eminent member of the Mālikī religious establishment.

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[179] See Adang, *Ẓāhirīs*, 419, 420–422, 461f. On Ibn Khayr, see Pellat, Ibn Khayr.
[180] On Ibn Bashkuwāl, who is the author of *Kitāb al-Ṣila*, one of our most important sources, see Bencheneb, Ibn Bashkuwāl. His own Ẓāhirī students were **Sa'd al-Su'ūd ibn 'Ufayr**, **Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh**, and **Ibn Baqī**. Ibn Diḥya claimed to have studied with him, and 'Alī ibn Khaṭṭāb received his *ijāza*. All these men belong to the Almohad period, and are discussed in my *Ẓāhirīs*.

Abū Isḥāq ibn al-Mālaqī[181]

The family of the Ẓāhirī *faqīh* Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Anṣārī, known as Ibn al-Mālaqī, apparently had its origins in Malaga. However, Abū Isḥāq, whose date of birth is unknown, chose Seville as his domicile, and acted as *ṣāḥib al-ṣalāh* in that city's *ḍarb Ibn al-Akhḍar*. Apart from his father, Muḥammad, who may have been a Ẓāhirī himself, he transmitted *ḥadīth* from Abū Bakr (or Abū Jaʿfar) ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Zaydūn,[182] and from Ibn Ḥazm's son **Abū Usāma Yaʿqūb**. We may safely assume that the materials taught by the latter included certain works by his father.

Only one of Ibn al-Mālaqī's own students is mentioned by name: Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Nabātī. This man is none other than the Ẓāhirī **Ibn al-Rūmiyya**, who is described in the sources as *shadīd al-taʿaṣṣub li-bn Ḥazm* and who actively propagated the works of **Ibn Ḥazm** during the Almohad period.[183] Part of these texts may have reached him through his master Ibn al-Mālaqī, whose role in the transmission of Ẓāhirī thought may thus have been very significant indeed. Unfortunately we do not know the date of Ibn al-Mālaqī's death.

Abū ʿĀmir al-ʿAbdarī[184]

Abū ʿĀmir Muḥammad ibn Saʿdūn ibn Murajjā ibn Saʿdūn ibn Murajjā al-Qurashī al-ʿAbdarī al-Mayurqī al-Maghribī al-Ẓāhirī was born in Cordoba into a family which had its origins in Majorca.[185] This may mean that his father was exposed to Ẓāhirī teachings on the island, even if he had not joined the *madhhab*, and that some of these teachings reached Abū ʿĀmir.

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[181] Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* ii, 481, nº. 1385; *id., Muʿjam* 123–24, nº. 113; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 301f.

[182] See on this *faqīh* from Seville Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* (C) ii, 268, nº. 778. He died in 564/1169.

[183] See n. 126 above.

[184] Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 823, nº. 1246; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ* ii, 138f., nº. 81; al-Dhahabī, *ʿIbar* iv, 57; *id., Siyar* xix, 579–83, nº. 332; *id., Tadhkira* iv, nº. 1072; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* iv, 70; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam* xvii, 261f., nº. 3963; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidaya* xii, 201f.; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh* liii, 59–61, nº. 6377; Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Taʾrīkh* xxii, 172f., nº. 225; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* iii, 93, nº. 1023; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* v, 246 s.v. Mayurqa; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 302; Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi* 75.

[185] Ibn al-Jawzī has Barqa, a city in present-day Libya, as the family's place of origin, but this is certainly an error for Mayurqa. Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl* 281 also has

His date of birth is unknown, as is the initial date of his *riḥla*, which was to take him to Damascus and finally to Baghdad, where he arrived in 484/1091. He decided to settle down and pursue his studies here. Among the many masters he studied with in Baghdad, special mention should be made of his fellow-Ẓāhirī, **al-Ḥumaydī**, who, as we have seen, became his neighbor (*jāruhu*). Abū ʿĀmir also befriended the young Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī, who would later mention to his own student Ibn Bashkuwāl that he had never met a nobler man in Baghdad than he.[186]

Abū ʿĀmir's *madhhab* affiliation is described in the following terms: *wa-kāna Dāwūdī al-madhhab; wa-kāna faqīhan Dāwūdiyyan; wa-kāna yuftī ʿalā madhhab Dāwūd; min fuqahāʾ al-Ẓāhiriyya; kāna Abū ʿĀmir Dāwūdiyyan; wa-kāna yadhhabu madhhab Dāwūd; wa-kāna yadhhabu fī l-furūʿ madhhab al-Ẓāhiriyya.* Although Abū ʿĀmir, like al-Ḥumaydī, was not to return to al-Andalus and spent the larger part of his life abroad, I have seen fit to include him anyway since it is likely that he received his Ẓāhirī formation in al-Andalus. His contacts with Ẓāhirīs like al-Ḥumaydī probably only strengthened his commitment to the *madhhab*.

Apart from Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī, Abū ʿĀmir's students included the historian Ibn ʿAsākir,[187] who praised him as *aḥfaz shaykh laqaytuhu*. Yet it is the same Ibn ʿAsākir who provides us with some biographical accounts highly critical of the man. Thus he was ill-behaved and disrespectful of the *imām*s. Mālik ibn Anas he called a windbag, which provoked violent reactions on the part of Hishām ibn ʿAmmār, who hit him with a whip; Abū ʿUbayd[188] was nothing in his eyes but a dumb ass with no understanding of *fiqh*, and Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī[189] he described as a wicked one-eye. Once, during a study-session with Abū l-Qāsim ibn al-Samarqandī, Abū ʿĀmir made a rude comment, which moreover revealed his ignorance. Ibn ʿAsākir told him off, saying his attitude towards the great scholars he vilified was simply intolerable, which had Abū ʿĀmir trembling with rage. Ibn al-Samarqandī told him he would be treated with respect as

him down as "originaire de Barqa (Cyrénaïque)," although he mentions that Ibn al-ʿImād has *al-Mayurqī*.

[186] See Drory, *Ibn el-Arabi* 58, 75.
[187] See on him Elisséeff, Ibn ʿAsākir.
[188] Grammarian, *faqīh* and Quran scholar, d. 224/838. Author of *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, the work studied by Ibn ʿAsākir with Abū ʿĀmir. See Gottschalk, Abū ʾUbayd.
[189] See on this famous traditionist and jurisconsult Lecomte, al-Nakhaʿī.

long as he treated the *imām*s with respect, at which he retorted that his own knowledge of *ḥadīth* was unparalleled. Ibn ʿAsākir mocked him, left, and decided not to resume his studies with him.

What also struck Ibn ʿAsākir and his contemporaries as near heresy was that Abū ʿĀmir took the attributes of God described in the Quran and prophetic traditions in their most literal sense. The author of *Taʾrīkh Dimashq* furthermore mentions that Abū ʿĀmir issued *fatwā*s according to the *madhhab* of Dāwūd. As an example, he relates that someone came to Abū ʿĀmir and asked him whether it was obligatory to perform the ritual ablution after intravaginal intercourse which did not result in intra-vaginal ejaculation. Abū ʿĀmir's reply was: "This is not required. I did the same just now with Umm Abī Bakr."[190]

When al-Silafī came to Baghdad, Abū ʿĀmir exchanged information with him and together they attended the lectures of a number of local scholars. Al-Silafī says that he had already heard Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl[191] sing Abū ʿĀmir's praises, but that when he met the man in the flesh, he realized that these descriptions did not do him justice and that he far exceeded his expectations. He asked him about **al-Ḥumaydī**, and Abū ʿĀmir told him that he had never seen anyone like him.

Abū ʿĀmir, who had continued to study and write throughout his life, died in Rabīʿ II 524/March 1130 in Baghdad, after a brief illness. He was buried in the cemetery of Ghulām al-Khallāl or Maqbarat al-Fīl, near Bāb al-Azaj and was mourned by Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir,[192] who had earlier praised his learning, his modesty and his poverty.

It is surprising that someone as staunchly orthodox as Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī should speak so highly of this controversial man, while vilifying Ibn Ḥazm. However, this may well reveal something about the relative strength of Ẓāhirism in al-Andalus, as opposed to Baghdad, where it seems to have been dwindling and where the main representatives of the *madhhab* appear to have been Andalusis.

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[190] From the wording of the reply, it would seem that the question is about deliberate *coitus interruptus*. According to Musallam (*Sex and society* 18f.) Ibn Ḥazm is the only Muslim *faqīh* who categorically forbids this practice as a contraceptive method. His point of view was apparently not adopted by all Ẓāhirīs.

[191] Eminent scholar of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*, d. 535/1140–41; see on him al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xx, 80–88, n°. 49.

[192] Traditionist and legal scholar, first a Shāfiʿī, then a Ḥanbalī, d. 18 Shaʿbān 550/17 October 1155; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xx, 265–271, n°. 180.

Al-Ḥawḍī[193]

The last Ẓāhirī in our list is Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Ḥawḍī, better known by his nickname Ibn Abī Iḥdā ʿAshara (or Ibn Abī Aḥad ʿAshar). Like Ibn Marzūq, mentioned above, he was born in 456/1064, the year of Ibn Ḥazm's death. He seems to have spent all his life in Almeria, al-Ḥawḍ being the name of a suburb of that city. That he was a literalist is indicated by the sources in various ways: *al-Ẓāhirī al-Ḥawḍī; Ẓāhirī al-madhhab; kathīr al-ʿināya bi-l-ḥadīth mutamassikan bi-ẓāhirihi, ḥattā shuhira bi-l-Ẓāhirī*. We have no information about his profession.

Al-Ḥawḍī studied with the following masters: Abū ʿAlī **al-Ṣadafī**;[194] Abū ʿAlī **al-Ghassānī**,[195] Abū Isḥāq ibn Aswad; Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Quḥāfa; Abū Khālid Yazīd, the *mawlā* of the ruler of Almeria, al-Muʿtaṣim; the *zāhid* Abū ʿUmar ibn Yumnaʾlish,[196] and **Ibn Burrāl**, who has been encountered earlier as a Ẓāhirī who had studied with Ibn Ḥazm and taught **Ibn Marzūq** and **Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī**. Among the works studied by al-Ḥawḍī, mention is made of *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī, al-Shamāʾil* by the same author, *Musnad al-Bazzār*, and *Adab al-ṣaḥāba* by al-Sulamī.

The sources mention the following students: Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Dhī l-Nūn;[197] Ibn Bashkuwāl,[198] who received his *ijāza*; ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Ḥājj,[199] and **Ibn Muʾmin**, who had studied with Ibn Ḥazm's great-grandson **Abū ʿUmar** and whose Ẓāhirī sympathies have already been referred to.[200] Another

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[193] Ibn al-Abbār, *Muʿjam*, 123f., nº. 113; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 845, nº. 1288; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāya* ii, 134, nº. 2974; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 301f.

[194] See n. 85. He had studied with **al-Ḥumaydī**, taught **Ibn Ṭāhir**, and corresponded with **Ibn Yarbūʿ**.

[195] See n. 138. He had also taught **Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī, Ibn Yarbūʿ** and **Ibn Ṭāhir**.

[196] On Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad ibn Marwān ibn Qaysar ibn Yumnaʾlish of Almeria, see Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila* 124, nº. 156.

[197] *Muḥaddith* from Almeria (d. Ṣafar 591/January–February 1195). See Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* iii, 119–124, nº. 207. He transmitted to **Shurayḥ** and to the Ẓāhirī **Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh**.

[198] See n. 180.

[199] His full name is Abū Muḥammad (or Abū l-Aṣbagh) ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Salama ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Sumātī, also known as al-Ṭaḥḥān or Ibn al-Ḥājj; *muqriʾ* of Seville who later moved to the East, d. after 560/1164–65; see on him Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila* ii, 628f., nº. 1759; al-Dhahabī, *Maʿrifa* 548f., nº. 496. He studied with the Ẓāhirī Ibn Baqī and with **Shurayḥ** al-Ruʿaynī.

[200] See n. 60.

possible semi-Ẓāhirī who studied under al-Ḥawḍī is Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad **ibn Ḥubaysh**,[201] who also transmitted from **Shurayḥ** al-Ruʿaynī and had at least one Ẓāhirī student, viz. Ibn al-Imām.[202]

Al-Ḥawḍī died in Almeria either in Muḥarram 532/October 1137 (according to Ibn al-Abbār) or in 536/1141 (according to Ibn Bashkuwāl).

Conclusions and comments

In this article it was attempted to trace the presence of Ẓāhirī scholars in al-Andalus in the period of the party-kings and the subsequent Almoravid period, this with the aim of establishing to what extent Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī's statement about an explosive growth of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab* in the peninsula under the influence of Ibn Ḥazm is correct. Our findings are based mainly on biographical dictionaries, a genre of Islamic literature which, despite its obvious drawbacks—they rarely tell us what we really want to know—is still our most important type of source when it comes to reconstructing the history of specific categories of actors within Muslim society.[203] This is true especially in the case of the now extinct literalist *madhhab*, which has not left a significant corpus of legal texts which might provide us with additional information about its members.

In order to obtain as full a picture as possible, we did not limit our search to dictionaries of legal scholars but cast our net widely,

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[201] On this historian and student of *qirāʾāt* and *ʿarabiyya*, who died in 584/1188–89, see Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ṣilat al-ṣila* iii, 195–197, nᵒ. 338; Pons Boigues, *Ensayo* 253f., nᵒ. 205; Dunlop, Ibn Ḥubaysh.

[202] See n. 147.

[203] On the different categories of scholars and men of letters described in this type of literature, see Gilliot, Ṭabakāt. The specialized dictionaries of transmitters of *ḥadīth* are discussed in Juynboll, Ridjāl. For an inventory of biographical dictionaries, including most of the ones used here, see Auchterlonie, *Arabic Biographical Dictionaries*, Chapter 2. Many scholars have dealt with the origins, development and significance of the genre; see the references in al-Qāḍī, Biographical Dictionaries. See now also Mediano, El género biográfico árabe, and Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, Chapter 1. On the frustrations experienced by the user of biographical dictionaries, see al-Qāḍī, Biographical Dictionaries 93. Avila, El género biográfico, discusses specific features of the Andalusi biographical tradition, e.g. the standard structure of the biographies provided. She shows that while the works compiled by native Andalusis usually contain only a minimum of detail, the dictionaries compiled by North Africans who deal with Andalusi *ʿulamāʾ*, such as Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ and al-Marrākushī, are very rich in anecdotes.

including, e.g., works on poets and grammarians. This proved to be a highly rewarding exercise, for it allowed us, for example, to identify a poetry-writing prince of Seville as a devoted Ẓāhirī. Moreover, we did not limit ourselves to Andalusi dictionaries, but consulted others as well, since they at times provide information not encountered in Andalusi sources. This is especially, but not exclusively, true for the biographies of al-Ḥumaydī and Abū ʿĀmir, two Ẓāhirīs who settled in Baghdad and never returned to al-Andalus. We learn about al-Ḥumaydī's Sufi leanings and Abū ʿĀmir's obnoxious behaviour only through Eastern sources. And while none of the Andalusi dictionaries mentions that Ibn Burrāl was a Ẓāhirī, and a student of Ibn Ḥazm to boot, it is al-Silafī of Alexandria who fills us in.

What the oriental dictionaries fail to clarify, however, is to what extent the Andalusi Ẓāhirīs who went to Baghdad could link up with fellow-literalists: admittedly it was in the ʿAbbāsid capital that the *madhhab* had had its inception, but there is little or no evidence of a local Ẓāhirī community, and it is probably no coincidence that Abū ʿĀmir sought the company of al-Ḥumaydī. We do not know to what extent the Andalusi Ẓāhirīs who travelled to Baghdad were successful in spreading their views, and whether their own variant of literalism, which must have been strongly influenced by the teachings of Ibn Ḥazm, differed from the local brand still encountered there. It is when facing such questions that the absence of Ẓāhirī legal works is most keenly felt.

Interestingly enough, two of our Andalusi literalists either hid or altogether abandoned their Ẓāhirism in Baghdad, viz. al-Ḥumaydī, who kept a low profile as a Ẓāhirī, and Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿAbdarī, who turned his back on it, becoming a Shāfiʿī instead. This probably says something about the low prestige enjoyed by Ẓāhirism in Baghdad, where the Ḥanbalī, Ḥanafī and Shāfiʿī schools were in the ascendant.

Perhaps one of our most surprising findings is the fact that various Ẓāhirīs had Sufi leanings.[204] This shows that Ibn Ḥazm's attempts to create a Ẓāhirī theology rejecting all speculation about the deity had failed. Only in the case of Abū ʿĀmir does there seem to be a Ẓāhirī approach to theological matters as well, to judge by his literal interpretation of certain anthropomorphic descriptions. Two of

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[204] I am currently preparing a separate study on this phenomenon.

the mystically inclined Ẓāhirīs were summoned to the Almoravid court in Marrakesh. However, it would seem that it was Sufism, which was becoming increasingly popular, which worried the ruler, rather than Ẓāhirism.

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If we look at the geographical distribution of the Ẓāhirīs in al-Andalus itself, we immediately see that there was no one single undisputed centre of Ẓāhirī studies, and that adherents of the *madhhab* were to be found throughout the peninsula. Nevertheless, two foci of intensive Ẓāhirī activity may be indicated. First of all, the literalists were well represented in the isle of Majorca, where Ibn Ḥazm had been able to spread his doctrines. Four of the Ẓāhirīs discussed here, viz. al-Ḥumaydī, Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿAbdarī, Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī and Abū ʿĀmir hailed from Majorca, where some had the opportunity to study with Ibn Ḥazm.[205] Several other Ẓāhirīs (viz. Ibn Ṭāhir and Ibn Burrāl) were encountered in other parts of Sharq al-Andalus, namely in Denia, Valencia, and Murcia. Almeria, too, was home to a number of literalists: apart from Ibn Ḥazm and al-Ḥumaydī, al-Ḥawḍī, and again Ibn Burrāl and Ibn Ṭāhir lived there for shorter or longer periods.

A second focus was the *kūra* of Seville, including Niebla. Literalists had started to settle in Seville even before Ibn Ḥazm returned to the area, and some of them may have taught Ibn Kawthar and Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda. And though originally from Badajoz, Ibn Ḥadīda, too, found his way to Seville where the political and religious climate may have been more favorable. Ibn Ḥazm's oldest son Abū Rāfiʿ flourished in Seville, and although Ibn Yarbūʿ lived there for a while, he seems to have moved on to Cordoba, where we also encounter Abū l-Najāh and Ibn Ḥazm's son Abū Sulaymān. However, other cities, too, are represented: one, or possibly two, Ẓāhirīs—if we count Ibn al-Ruyūlī—hailed from Guadalajara, while Ibn Marzūq was from Zaragoza. Al-Mayurqī lived in Granada prior to his departure to the Mashriq, and Ibn Ḥazm's grandson Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd was from Silves. Ẓāhirism, then, was far from being a local phenomenon.[206]

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[205] However, as was already pointed out by Urvoy (Vie intellectuelle 103f.) none of these Majorcans remained in his native region. Nevertheless, Ẓāhirism continued to be taught on the island: the well-known Ẓāhirī from the Almohad period, Ibn Ḥawṭ Allāh, was from Majorca as well; see Urvoy, Vie intellectuelle 116.

[206] We do not know where Ibn al-Shabūqī was active.

From the prosopography presented in this article, we can reconstruct the following lines along which Ẓāhirī thought was transmitted in al-Andalus. First introduced in this area during the lifetime of its "founder," Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī al-Iṣfahānī, there was a constant trickle of literalists from the East who settled in Seville and elsewhere, and rapidly attracted local students.[207] It was under the influence of one of these Andalusi Ẓāhirīs, Ibn Muflit, that the famous Ibn Ḥazm adopted and refined literalism, teaching it in various locations in the peninsula, especially Cordoba, Majorca and Niebla.

Ibn Ḥazm's son Abū Rāfiʿ, who may have taught the ʿAbbādid prince al-Rāḍī, transmitted to his son ʿAlī, who in turn taught his own son Aḥmad. In all likelihood Abū Rāfiʿ also transmitted his father's works to his second son, al-Fatḥ, who also received some works by Ibn Ḥazm from his uncle, Abū Sulaymān, who had himself been taught by his father. In addition, Abū Sulaymān taught the Ẓāhirī Abū l-Ḥasan (b.) al-Khiḍr. Ibn Ḥazm also taught his son Abū Usāma, who transmitted some of his father's works to Abū Jaʿfar al-Biṭrūjī and to the Ẓāhirī Ibn al-Mālaqī, who in turn transmitted to the Ẓāhirī Ibn al-Rūmiyya, who was very active in spreading the writings of Ibn Ḥazm in the Almohad period.

Other Ẓāhirī students of Ibn Ḥazm included Ibn Burrāl, who taught the literalists Abū Bakr al-Mayurqī, Ibn Marzūq and al-Ḥawḍī, who may all have met in Almeria; al-Ḥumaydī, who taught the Ẓāhirī Abū ʿĀmir; and al-ʿAbdarī and Abū l-Najāḥ, whose students may or may not have included additional Ẓāhirīs. Ibn al-Shabūqī, finally, may have been an indirect student of Ibn Ḥazm.

Works by Ibn Ḥazm were also transmitted by two men who may never have met the master, but who received his *ijāza*, viz. the Ẓāhirī Ibn Kawthar, who taught his son Abū Muḥammad, himself a literalist and teacher of the Ẓāhirī Saʿd al-Suʿūd ibn ʿUfayr, and Shurayḥ al-Ruʿaynī, who had distinct Ẓāhirī sympathies, and among whose students is mentioned Ibn Ḥazm's descendant Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. The latter taught the fervent Ẓāhirī Ibn ʿUṣfūr, as well as Ibn Muʾmin and Ibn Jumhūr, who had strong Ẓāhirī sympathies.

Further students of Ibn Ḥazm who had apparently not adopted Ẓāhirism as their *madhhab* are al-ʿUdhrī, the master of Ibn Yarbūʿ, and the elder Ibn al-ʿArabī, who may well have provided prince al-Rāḍī with copies of his master's works.

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[207] See Adang, Beginnings.

We have not found any direct link between Ibn Ḥazm on the one hand, and Faraj ibn Ḥadīda, Mufarrij ibn Saʿāda and Ibn Ṭāhir on the other, although the possibility that they, too, had encountered the man and studied with him is not to be rejected out of hand. But even if we exclude these three Ẓāhirīs, it is still clear that most of our biographees were connected, either directly or indirectly, with Ibn Ḥazm, and in this sense Ibn al-ʿArabī is quite right when he points to Ibn Ḥazm as the source of the in his eyes offensive teachings, even if he seems to be exaggerating the scope of the phenomenon. For sixteen Ẓāhirīs—plus a small number of descendants of Ibn Ḥazm—on a total of well over a thousand Andalusi ʿulamāʾ encountered in the biographical dictionaries for the period, is hardly an impressive figure, even if it is double the number found in the preceding caliphal period, in which we encountered (at least) eight Ẓāhirīs active in al-Andalus.[208] While we can hardly speak of a sudden explosion, then, our conclusions here are tentative at best, for several reasons.

First of all, not nearly all the biographical tracts covering the period have come down to us. We know that a considerable number of ʿulamāʾ compiled so-called barāmij, in which they listed the men—and occasionally women—with whom they studied as well as the works they transmitted on their teachers' authority. It is obvious that access to such tracts could significantly alter our conclusions. Unfortunately, however, very few of them have reached us.[209] Secondly, there may well have been additional literalists who simply did not make it into the extant biographical dictionaries because they were not considered important, or whose biographies—or perhaps only the reference to their madhhab affiliation—were later deleted, possibly as the result of censorship in the post-Almohad era, which was characterized by a limited tolerance towards non-Mālikī groups.[210] Until further texts come to light, we have no way of establishing how many Ẓāhirīs were really active in the period, and for now our

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[208] See Adang, Beginnings.

[209] Although some of them have been exploited extensively by the compilers of the extant dictionaries; thus the barnāmij of Ibn al-Dabbāgh is often referred to in Ibn al-Abbār's Takmila. For an inventory of biographical works, including barāmij (most of them not extant), see al-Kattānī, Fahras al-Fahāris.

[210] Fricaud speaks in this context of the "désalmohadisation" of the sources in the years following the Almohad period, which saw a return to Mālikism; see his Les Ṭalaba 331.

conclusion must therefore be that Ibn al-ʿArabī's claim that there was a dramatic increase in the number of Ẓāhirīs in al-Andalus is not borne out by the extant biographical literature.

However, the biographical dictionaries do confirm in a more general way that Ẓāhirism was considered a force to be reckoned with. According to Fierro, "the refutation of Ibn Ḥazm's or Ẓāhirī doctrines seems to have been a common occupation of Andalusi scholars."[211] We have already seen that the mystic Ibn al-ʿArīf was very vocal in his criticism of Ibn Ḥazm, and that Ibn al-ʿArabī wrote several polemical tracts against the man.[212] However, in spite of what he suggests in the passage quoted at the beginning of this article, he was by no means the only one to do so. The dictionaries tell us of several other scholars in this period who composed tracts in refutation of the Ẓāhirī *imām*, viz. Abū Bakr al-Yāburī[213] and Abū Bakr ibn Mufawwiz al-Maʿāfirī.[214] The family of the former hailed from Evora in Portugal, but he lived in Seville. He is described as follows: *wa-kāna mutakalliman wa-lahu radd ʿalā Abī Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm.* This suggests that his issue with Ibn Ḥazm was of a theological rather than a legal nature. The second opponent's family was from Jativa, the town where Ibn Ḥazm had composed his most famous work, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, but he himself spent most of his life in Cordoba. Like al-Yāburī, al-Maʿāfirī wrote a *radd ʿalā Abī Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm*. Neither of these tracts has come down to us. Lately, however, fragments of a third polemical work, written by the well-known Qāḍī Abū l-Aṣbagh ʿĪsā ibn Sahl (d. 486/1093) have come to light.[215]

The existence of so many tracts against Ibn Ḥazm and his *madhhab* indicates that Ẓāhirism was indeed gaining ground and perceived as a threat in the Almoravid period. This seems to be confirmed also by the fact that the chief *qāḍī* of Cordoba, Ibn Rushd (d. 520/

[211] Fierro, Religious dissension 473.
[212] On Ibn al-ʿArabī's polemics against Ibn Ḥazm, see Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 303f.
[213] On al-Yāburī (d. in or after 516/1122), see Maqqari, *Nafḥ* ii, 648f., n°. 283; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 305.
[214] On this man, who died in 505/1111, see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 421, n°. 243; id., *Tadhkira* iv, 1255, n°. 1060; Ibn al-Abbār, *Muʿjam* 94f., n°. 81; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ*, ii, 84, n°. 375; Asín Palacios, *Abenházam* 305.
[215] Their contents are discussed in Kaddouri, Identificación. On Ibn Sahl, see Ibn Farḥūn, *Dībāj* 181f.; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xix, 25f., n°. 15.

1126), issued a *fatwā* disqualifying Ẓāhirīs from acting as witnesses because of their rejection of *qiyās* (reasoning by analogy).[216]

Despite all this activity directed against literalism in general, and Ibn Ḥazm in particular, Ibn al-ʿArabī and his fellow-opponents were not successful in stamping out Ẓāhirism: it continued to flourish in the Almohad period, although the oft-heard claim that it was elevated to state doctrine under the Almohad caliphs cannot be supported.[217]

Although the Ẓāhirīs in al-Andalus were without a doubt a small minority in comparison with the dominant Mālikīs, it would be incorrect to call them marginalized.

First of all, when we look at the way in which they are depicted, we see that they are not treated any differently from their Mālikī colleagues, and that their biographies tend to conform to the standard pattern. None of the Ẓāhirīs is accused of *bidʿa* or heresy, and they are usually described in sympathetic terms, or even singled out for praise. (As was seen, the picture is somewhat different for Baghdad.)

Moreover, as we have seen, several literalists were employed in official or semi-official positions, such as *mushāwar, muqriʾ* or *khaṭīb* in the mosque. And finally, the fact that important members of the Mālikī establishment said the funeral prayers for deceased Ẓāhirīs says something about the latter's standing in the community of scholars, and shows that they were fully integrated into it,[218] both in the Ṭāʾifa and in the Almoravid periods. However, apart from Ibn Ḥadīda, and perhaps Ibn Ḥazm's son Abū Rāfiʿ al-Faḍl, none of the Ẓāhirīs discussed here was close to the ruling classes. There does not seem to have been any Ṭāʾifa king or Almoravid dignitary who particularly encouraged or supported Ẓāhirīs, as was done several decades later by the Almohad caliph al-Manṣūr.[219] Nevertheless, the oft-heard claim about the Almoravids' intolerance of non-Mālikī legal schools is not supported by the evidence examined.

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[216] Ibn Rushd, *Fatāwā* iii, 1435–1442; al-Wansharīsī, *Miʿyār* ii, 341–344. I propose to analyse this *fatwā* elsewhere.

[217] See Adang, Ẓāhirīs 413–416, 471f.

[218] It is unfortunate that the biographers do not always mention the person who did the final honors.

[219] Adang, Ẓāhirīs. The expatriate al-Ḥumaydī was probably the most successful in forging ties with the political elite: he enjoyed the friendship and protection of Ibn Mākūlā and al-Muẓaffar ibn Raʾīs al-Ruʾasāʾ in Baghdad.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WORKING WITHIN STRUCTURE
AL-ZAMAKHSHARĪ (D. 1144): A LATE MUʿTAZILITE
QURAN COMMENTATOR AT WORK

Andrew J. Lane

Sometime after he had finished writing his Quran commentary, *al-Kashshāf*, the Muʿtazilite grammarian and man of letters from Khwārazm, Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 A.H./1144 C.E.), added the following postscript:

> This copy is the first, original copy (*nuskhat al-aṣl*), which was transcribed from the rough draft (*al-sawād*); it is the original Meccan version of the *Kashshāf* (*umm al-Kashshāf al-ḥaramiyya*), blessed and source of blessing (*al-mutamassaḥ bihā*), worthy of being used to invoke heavenly blessings and to pray for rain in a year of drought. The author finished it with his own hand, facing the Kaʿba, in the shade of his house, the Sulaymāniyya, overlooking the Ajyād Gate, [which house has] *Madrasat al-ʿAllāma* written on it. [He finished it] on the morning of Monday, 23 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir in the year 528 (20 February, 1134 C.E.).[1]

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[1] *Kashshāf* iv, 831. This postscript is to be found at the end of most, though not all, editions of the *Kashshāf*, indicative perhaps of the manuscripts that were used in preparing these editions. For this chapter, four editions of the *Kashshāf* were consulted (see bibliography); however, all references are to the 1997 Beirut edition. *Al-Kashshāf* is the shortened version of the commentary's title. The full title is *Al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl* ("The Discoverer of the Truths of the Hidden Things of Revelation and the Choicest Statements concerning the Aspects of Interpretation").—Al-Zamakhsharī's description of the *umm al-Kashshāf* may seem a little surprising and yet it provoked no reaction from those who copied or commented on his commentary. In his *sharḥ* on the *Kashshāf*, al-Jārabardī (d. 746/1345–6), in fact, says that *al-mutamassaḥ bihā* means that this copy was touched (*massa*) in order to obtain a blessing by means of it (*li-l-tabarruk bihā*), as other honored things (*ashyāʾ sharīfa*) were touched with this intention.—According to a gloss in several manuscripts of the *Kashshāf*, the *dār al-Sulaymāniyya* was a house built by the *sharīf* of the Banū Sulaymān in Mecca, Sulaymān being a son of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

For a comprehensive list of biographical works on al-Zamakhsharī, cf. *Taʾrīkh* 521–530H/531–540H, 486 [no. 398], n. 8; and *Lisān* vi, 651 [no. 8313].

In the introduction (*muqaddima*) to his commentary, al-Zamakhsharī writes that he has put together a short *tafsīr*, which nevertheless is, in his own estimate, quite useful; and that with God's blessing, despite age and illness, he has been able to complete in only two years what should have been the work of thirty. This accomplishment, he points out, is only "one of the miraculous signs from the Kaʿba," and "one of the blessings from that exalted sanctuary" that flowed over him.[2] Nevertheless, the illustrious birthplace of the *Kashshāf* did not prevent it from receiving some serious criticism in later centuries from orthodox scholars, ostensibly worried about its influence on an unsuspecting public.

    The evaluation of the *Kashshāf* to be found in the sources is, on the whole, positive; either the work is singled out for special commendation or it is listed among the praiseworthy works written by al-Zamakhsharī. For example, about a century and a half after the *Kashshāf* was written, Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) gives the following description of it: "nothing like it has ever been written before;" and prefaces his list of al-Zamakhsharī's works with the words: "marvelous compositions" unseen before.[3] However, at the same time that Ibn Khallikān was writing such positive things, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286) was composing his *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl* ("The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation"), a quranic commentary which Robson describes as "largely a condensed and amended edition of al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf*," that sometimes refutes the latter's Muʿtazilite views and sometimes simply omits them.[4] Al-Bayḍāwī's contemporary, the Alexandrian *qāḍī* Ibn al-Munayyir (d. 683/1284), was also busy, writing a counterblast to the *Kashshāf* entitled *Kitāb al-Intiṣāf min al-Kashshāf* ("The Book on Exacting What is Due from the *Kashshāf*").[5] Half a century later, al-Dhahabī

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[2] *Kashshāf* i, 44. Al-Zamakhsharī actually says that he finished the commentary within the space of time of the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (r. 632–634 C.E.).
    [3] *Wafayāt* v, 168 [no. 711]. This evaluation is given by other authors also (perhaps taking it from Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt*), when they give their lists of al-Zamakhsharī's works, lists that invariably start with the *Kashshāf*.
    [4] J. Robson, art. "al-Bayḍāwī," in: *EI*² i, 1129. Robson's statement is not new. Al-Bayḍāwī's dependence on al-Zamakhsharī is indicated already by al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), for example, both of whom list an "abridgement of the *Kashshāf* (*mukhtaṣar al-Kashshāf*)" among al-Bayḍāwī's works (*Ṭabaqāt* 8: 157 [no. 1153]; *Bughya* 2: 50 [no. 1406]).
    [5] His work on the *Kashshāf* has been described as a counterblast "against the heresies and some opinions on grammar" (GAL i, 291). All modern editions of the

(d. 748/1348) was still warning his readers: *fa-kun ḥadhiran min Kashshāfihi*, "Be wary of his *Kashshāf*,"[6] and a century after that, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), quoting al-Dhahabī, repeats the same warning and practically tells his readers not to touch the book.[7]

The question naturally arises as to the truth behind these very divergent views. Is the *Kashshāf* full of Muʿtazilite theology? Does al-Zamakhsharī have an innovative approach to exegesis? Is he content to give his own personal opinion (*raʾy*), without paying any attention to the tradition that preceded him? This article will attempt to answer these questions by shedding some light on *how* al-Zamakhsharī goes about his exegetical task in the *Kashshāf*. To the extent that it does this, it will be a study in method or methodology. However, these words should be used with some caution here, for al-Zamakhsharī's commentary has frequently simply been classified as *tafsīr bi-l-raʾy* (commentary based on sound, personal opinion), a categorization, finally, that says very little about how al-Zamakhsharī goes about explaining the quranic text.[8]

Reading the secondary literature on *tafsīr* is insufficient to give answers to the questions that have been raised. Some of this literature is rather general; the rest treats a particular theme or a limited number of quranic passages—and so, only refers indirectly to, or deals partly with, the *Kashshāf*. In order to answer these questions, two particular suras, Q 44 (*Sūrat al-Dukhān*) and Q 54 (*Sūrat al-Qamar*), have been studied in order to discover everything that al-Zamakhsharī actually says about them.[9] While it probably would not be correct to speak of these suras as being "representative" of the quranic sura as such, the forty-fourth and fifty-fourth suras are a good choice for giving some insight into how al-Zamakhsharī worked when composing the *Kashshāf*. First of all, they are of manageable length; each has approximately the same number of verses (59 and 55) and lines

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Kashshāf contain Ibn al-Munayyir's *Intiṣāf* printed in the bottom margin. A recent work that presents Ibn al-Munayyir's commentary on the *Kashshāf* is Ṣāliḥ ibn Gharam Allāh al-Ghāmidī's *Al-Masāʾil al-iʿtizāliyya fī tafsīr al-Kashshāf li-l-Zamakhsharī fī ḍūʾ mā warada fī Kitāb al-Intiṣāf l-Ibn al-Munayyir (620–683H)* (Ḥāʾil: Dār al-Andalus li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, [1998], 2v.).

   [6] *Mīzān* iv, 78 [no. 8367].
   [7] *Lisān* vi, 652f. [no. 8313].
   [8] Cf. A. Rippin, art. "Tafsīr," in: *EI*[2] x, 84.
   [9] *Kashshāf* iv, 272–87, 431–41. English translations of quranic passages are from Arberry. Verse numbers vary slightly since Arberry follows Flügel's enumeration of the verses.

(46 and 44). Secondly, they are both from approximately the same period of revelation, being neither early nor late suras.[10] Finally, both suras deal with common themes of quranic history (punishment inflicted on those who rejected the messengers sent by God) and eschatology (chastisement for the sinner, reward for the righteous). Although al-Zamakhsharī's commentary on these suras did not prove to be overly abundant, it was, nevertheless, still impossible to present all the data that were gathered as a result of this research. Consequently, only some particularly noteworthy examples will be presented in this article.

This approach will serve to illustrate what al-Zamakhsharī's method in the *Kashshāf* actually is and, in the process, will highlight any Muʿtazilite interpretations that might have merited the aforementioned words of caution and censure uttered by orthodox scholars in later centuries.

1   *Formal structure of the* "Kashshāf" *as tafsīr*

To speak of the "formal structure of *tafsīr*" is, in a sense, to strike a discordant note; there is a certain dissonance in the expression, like speaking of "rough silk" or "hard water." To speak of structure is to speak of organization, of construction, of framework, of building—all of which have a certain rigidity in them. Structure implying rigidity or inflexibility is misleading; it would perhaps be more accurate to speak of the "flow of *tafsīr*." A Quran commentary simply flows continuously, from beginning to end, going over or around a word or phrase from the revealed text, as water would a rock in its path. For the *Kashshāf* it is the same. Al-Zamakhsharī did not organize his material and impose a rigid framework on it when composing the commentary. He began with the first verse of the *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* and commented, essentially, on individual words or phrases until he reached the end of the quranic text at Q 114, "following

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[10] According to Blachère and Nöldeke, they are Meccan II, although Welch says that it is no longer possible to speak of "middle Meccan" or "late Meccan" suras, and that, while one can speak more confidently about "early Meccan" suras, it is not certain which suras belong to this group (Welch 418). Traditional Muslim scholarship says they were both revealed at Mecca. For theories of the chronology of the revelation, see the aforementioned article.

the sequence of the text rather than the revelation."[11] As such, then, the *Kashshāf* merely follows the traditional format of the *tafsīr musalsal* ("*chained* commentary"), a format to which the word "structure" must be applied with care.

While Rippin gives "*chained* commentary" as the only formal characteristic of *tafsīr*[12] and McAuliffe likewise refers to it as the "standard procedure" in quranic commentary,[13] Calder considers it to be only one of three formal structures of *tafsīr* that he has determined, but one "so fundamental as to require no exemplifications."[14] His second formal structure, however, the "citation of named authorities and the consequent polyvalent reading of the text," is more a characteristic element of the text than it is an element of the overall framework of *tafsīr*; Calder, in fact, refers to it as a "structural characteristic."[15] With his third formal structure, measuring the quranic text against instrumental and ideological structures, Calder moves well into the domain of method and content, even if he calls it "the most complex structural organization which constitutes the literary genre of *tafsīr*."[16] Finally, then, only "chained" commentary can truly be called an integral structure of quranic *tafsīr*; it is in relation to *tafsīr* as the bed is to the river that shapes it. Al-Zamakhsharī's method, then,

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[11] McAuliffe 34.
[12] Rippin says that a work of *tafsīr* "will follow the text of the Ḳurʾān from the beginning to the end, and will provide an interpretation (*tafsīr*) of segments of the text (word-by-word, phrase-by-phrase, or verse-by-verse) as a running commentary." He adds that these two elements are to be found in all periods of Islamic exegesis, although in the formative period (until al-Ṭabarī, d. 310/923) works of *tafsīr* were to be found that covered only segments but not the entire Quran, while in the contemporary period "thematic" exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) is to be found; cf. Rippin 83.
[13] About this type of commentary, McAuliffe writes: "[T]he standard procedure is remarkably uniform. Within the sura each verse is quoted separately and then broken into exegetical units, what medieval Biblical scholars would call *lemmata*. Each passage, or *lemma*, is then analyzed separately and relevant comments are made about the verse as a whole, such as its *sabab al-nuzūl*;" cf. McAuliffe 34.
[14] Calder 101.
[15] Calder 103f.
[16] The third structural characteristic of the *tafsīr* genre, in Calder's evaluation, is what "can be described as a measuring of the quranic text against the following: 1. Instrumental structures: orthography, lexis, syntax, rhetoric, symbol/allegory; 2. Ideological structures: prophetic history, theology, eschatology, law, *taṣawwuf*." Calder clarifies some of his terms as follows: (i) prophetic history covers the disciplines of prophetic biography (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, *sīrat al-nabīy*); (ii) theology is scholastic Kalām; (iii) orthography, lexis and syntax are dealt with in the grammatical disciplines; and (iv) allegory and symbol are treated in the discipline of rhetoric; cf. Calder 105f.

can never be divorced from this format; nor can it amount to more
than the choice he makes as to where he will stop and what he will
say along a path that has already been traced for him.

2   *Al-Zamakhsharī on the suras al-Dukhān (Q 44)*
and al-Qamar (Q 54)

In general, the commentary on these two suras shows distinct sim-
ilarities although there are differences in detail, of course. The first
of these concerns al-Zamakhsharī's goal of explaining the revealed
text; this is seen every step of the way, not only in the vocabulary
but also in the very composition of the text itself. Throughout the
Kashshāf, al-Zamakhsharī's commentary frequently consists of noth-
ing more than copying a quranic word or expression and following
it immediately with one or more synonyms. On other occasions,
though, he signals that he is explaining the meaning of a word or
expression by a number of indicators: *ay, yaʿnī, maʿnā, yurīdu, yurādu,
murād*; all of these can be translated basically as "that is" or "the
meaning is." Finally, a third method of explaining a word or expres-
sion is the addition of a complement that clarifies to whom or what
it refers, or in some other way puts it in context. However, al-
Zamakhsharī's approach to the text is not solely lexical; he draws
on another resource in his exegetical effort as well: grammar.

   Throughout his commentary on the two suras, Q 44 and Q 54,
al-Zamakhsharī constantly makes use of grammar to explain the text
and its multiple meanings. Sometimes his analysis is based on vari-
ant readings (*qirāʾāt*); other times it derives from the different ways
a single text can be grammatically understood. Suffice it to say that,
"[t]o understand al-Zamakhsharī's commentary entails acquaintance
with the classical rules of Arabic grammar"[17] and the plethora of
technical terms that he employs. His multiple interpretations of the
text are not, however, limited solely to grammatical niceties and vari-
ant readings. He also supplies his reader with numerous interpreta-
tions of the text based on earlier sources, as will be seen below.[18]

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[17] McAuliffe 53.
[18] Frequently al-Zamakhsharī does not name his sources but simply says that, "it
was said (*qīla*)." While he makes considerable use of the verb *qīla/yuqālu*, it is not
the only one he employs. We also find other terms that signal some traditional

2.1 *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān*

One of the basic principles of exegetical methodology is "to inter-
pret the Quran by the Quran (*tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān*)," that is,
to use one part of the revealed text to clarify or elaborate on another.
In the *Kashshāf*, al-Zamakhsharī follows this method for a number
of passages, situating them in some way with respect to other quranic
verses. In the course of his commentary on the verses of these two
suras, he makes reference to twenty-six passages in other suras on
twenty different occasions. An analysis of these twenty passages shows
that al-Zamakhsharī makes use of the twenty-six quranic references
in different ways; these are categorized and illustrated below.

Justification
First of all, al-Zamakhsharī uses other quranic passages to justify his
interpretation of the verse or passage at hand. There is an attempt
to draw a conclusion from the information to be found in other
quranic passages to prove, in a sense, that his understanding of the
passage is correct. This is by far the most complex use that al-
Zamakhsharī makes of this method. It is illustrated by the following
example: At Q 54:6, the text reads:

> Upon the day when the caller shall call (*yadʿū l-dāʿi*) unto a horrible
> thing.

Al-Zamakhsharī says that the caller is Isrāfīl or Jibrīl;[19] he supports
this statement with a reference to Q 50:41:

> on the day when the caller shall call (*yunādi l-munādi*).

Q 50:41 is in the context of the Day of Resurrection, and a check
of al-Zamakhsharī's comments on it reveals two traditional scenar-
ios for this day: (i) Isrāfīl alone is the one who blows the trumpet
and calls out; and (ii) Isrāfīl blows the trumpet while Jibrīl calls out,
announcing the gathering (*al-ḥashr*).[20] So the caller who calls is one
of these two angels, although which one exactly is uncertain.[21]

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piece of information that he wishes to make use of. Two of these are the verbs
ḥukiya/yuḥkā and *ruwiya/yurwā*. In the suras that are presented here, however, the
use of other terms can in no way be compared to that of *qīla/yuqālu*.
   [19] *Kashshāf* iv, 433.
   [20] *Kashshāf* iv, 396.
   [21] Other verses where al-Zamakhsharī employs the method in this way are:
Q 44:2–4 (Q 97:1,4; 2:185); Q 44:16 (Q 79:34); and Q 54:13–14 (Q 21:107);

Illustration

Secondly, al-Zamakhsharī makes use of quranic passages outside the
sura he is studying to support and illustrate the point he is making.
At Q 54:20, the effects of a raging wind are described:

> plucking up men as if they were stumps of uprooted palm-trees (*aʿjāzu
> nakhlin munqaʿirin*).

After his explanations, al-Zamakhsharī notes that the adjective *munqaʿir*
has been left in the masculine form because it agrees with the form
of the word *nakhl* (*ʿalā l-lafẓ*), which does not have the feminine form,
i.e. a *tāʾ marbūṭa*. However, if it were to be in agreement with the
meaning of the word (*ʿalā l-maʿnā*)—*nakhl* is feminine—then it would
have been put in the feminine, i.e. (*munqaʿira*), as in Q 69:7:

> the stumps of fallen down palm-trees (*aʿjāzu nakhlin khāwiyatin*).[22]

Elaboration

Thirdly, al-Zamakhsharī makes frequent use of other quranic passages
to give details about what is to be found in the verse he is com-
menting on. This usually takes the form of telling his readers what
someone has said, by quoting their words from the same context in
another quranic passage. At Q 54:9, the text speaks of Noah's rejec-
tion by his people:

> they cried lies to Our servant, and said, "A man possessed!" And he
> was rejected.

Here al-Zamakhsharī describes what it meant to be rejected:

> they chased him away with abuse and blows and the threat of ston-
> ing him (*al-waʿīd bi-l-rajm*).

The threat to stone him is supported and put into words by a ref-
erence to Q 26:116, which is also in the context of Noah's rejec-
tion by his people:

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references between parentheses, here and below, indicate the passages that al-
Zamakhsharī draws on, in his commentary on the passage at hand.

   [22] *Kashshāf* iv, 436. Here the reference is to the destruction of the tribe of ʿĀd,
described as "an ancient tribe frequently mentioned in the Ḳurʾān [whose] history
is related only in sporadic allusions;" cf. F. Buhl, art. "ʿĀd," in: *EI*[2] i, 169. Other
verses where al-Zamakhsharī makes use of this method in such a context are:
Q 44:5–6a (Q 35:2); Q 44:31 (Q 28:4); Q 44:33 (Q 2:49); Q 54:4 (Q 33:21);
Q 54:12 (Q 19:4); Q 54:19 (Q 41:16; 54:19); Q 54:40 (Q 55:13; 77:15).

If thou givest not over, Noah, thou shalt assuredly be one of the stoned
(*min al-marjūmīna*).[23]

Resolution

Al-Zamakhsharī also uses extra-sura references to resolve what appears
to be a contradiction, inaccuracy or some other kind of imperfection
in the sacred text. An example of this usage is: At Q 44:48, the text
speaks of the torment of the sinner in Hell; part of the text reads:

Then pour (*ṣubbū*) over his head the chastisement of boiling water
(*ʿadhāb al-ḥamīm*)!

At Q 22:19, which also speaks of the torments of Hell, the text says:

and there shall be poured (*yuṣabbu*) over their heads boiling water (*al-
ḥamīm*).

The question is asked: why does Q 44:48 not read: "Then pour
over his head boiling water," as in Q 22:19, instead of "the torment
of boiling water," since it is the water not the torment that is poured?
Al-Zamakhsharī says that the torment is also poured out with the
boiling water, but that the verse speaks of pouring torment (*ṣabb al-
ʿadhāb*) by "way of metaphor (*ṭarīqat al-istiʿāra*)" for this causes more
fear and dread, and he gives a reference to a metaphorical use of
a synonym of the verb *ṣabba* in Q 2:250: "they said, 'Our Lord,
pour out (*afrigh*) upon us patience (*ṣabr*).'"[24] The verb used here,
afragha, means "to pour something out or forth," like water or blood.
The connection with the metaphorical use of a word is evident.[25]

Description

Finally, on one occasion al-Zamakhsharī seems merely to be mak-
ing an effort to describe what he has found in a verse. At Q 44:43–46,
the text reads:

[43]*inna shajarata l-zaqqūmi* [44]*ṭaʿāmu l-athīmi* [45]*ka-l-muhli yaghlī fī l-buṭūni* [46]*ka-
ghalyi l-ḥamīmi*.[26]

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[23] *Kashshāf* iv, 434. Other occasions where al-Zamakhsharī uses this method to
complete the information given in a verse are: Q 44:18 (Q 20:47); Q 44:22 (Q 10:85);
and Q 54:33–40 (Q 11:81).
   [24] *Kashshāf* iv, 284f. Q 2:250: *qālū rabbanā afrigh ʿalaynā ṣabran*. Lane vi, 2381, at
the root *f-r-gh*, says that this verse means "O our Lord, *pour forth upon us patience*, like
as [the water of] the leathern bucket is poured forth."
   [25] Other examples are: Q 44:35; (Q 2:28); Q 44:37 (Q 54:43).
   [26] Q 44:43–46: "[43]Lo, the Tree of Ez-Zakkoum [44]is the food of the guilty, [45]like
[*muhl*], bubbling in the belly [46]as boiling water bubbles."

Al-Zamakhsharī says that *muhl* is "the sediment from olive oil (*durdī l-zayt*)." This is indicated, he says, by two other quranic references that describe heaven on the last day:

> Q 70:8: *yawma takūnu l-samāʾu ka-l-muhli*; and
> Q 55:37: *fa-idhā nshaqqat al-samāʾu fa-kānat wardatan ka-l-dihāni.*[27]

He then adds that it was also said (*qīla*) that *muhl* is molten silver and copper (*dhāʾib al-fiḍḍa wa-l-nuḥās*).[28]

At the first reference he mentions (Q 70:8), al-Zamakhsharī gives two explanation: first of all he repeats what he has said above—*muhl* is the sediment from olive oil—, but he then adds an explanation on the authority of Ibn Masʿūd, similar to the second one he mentions himself: *muhl* is molten, colored silver (*al-fiḍḍa al-mudhāba fī talawwunihā*).[29]

At the second verse (Q 55:37), the sky is again described as it will be on the last day; this time, the verse says it will be like *dihān*. Al-Zamakhsharī gives three explanations for this word: first of all, *dihān* is taken to be the plural of *duhn* (oil) and the passage is taken to mean that the sky will be like olive oil (*duhn al-zayt*), that is, like *muhl*, "the sediment from olive oil (*durdī l-zayt*)"—this has already been seen above; secondly, it could be oil in general; and finally, it could mean red leather (*adīm aḥmar*).[30] It is clear, then, that al-Zamakhsharī is not defining the word *muhl* as such but is, rather, seeking to describe it in another context, that of the sky on the last day. In a rather circular fashion, he manages to give an impression as to the color and perhaps the consistency of the food of sinners.[31]

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[27] Q 70:8: "Upon the day when heaven shall be as [*muhl*];" Q 55:37: "And when heaven is split asunder, and turns crimson like [*dihān*]."

[28] *Kashshāf* iv, 284. Lane iii, 870, at the root *d-r-d*, says that *durdī* is: "The *dregs, feces, lees,* or *sediment,* or *what remains at the bottom,* of olive-oil, and of other things; or of [the beverage] called [*al-nabīdh*] or of any fluid, such as beverages, or wines, and oils."

[29] *Kashshāf* iv, 612.

[30] *Kashshāf* iv, 449.

[31] It is interesting to note the translations of the words *muhl* in Q 44:45; 70:8 and *dihān* in Q 55:37. In Q 70:8, *muhl* is always rendered as "molten brass" or "molten copper;" however, in Q 44:45, some translations abandon this meaning and translate *muhl* as "dregs of oil." *Dihān* is invariably translated to mean red leather or hide.

In these examples we see al-Zamakhsharī use passages from the Quran to explain in one way or another those he is commenting on. Upon closer examination, though, it can be seen that this exegetical principle is not as simple and as straightforward as one might like to think. In his commentary on Q 54:20, al-Zamakhsharī refers to Q 69:7 but this verse does not actually "explain" anything in the former which is quite clear. Rather, both verses illustrate the grammatical rule that an adjective can agree with the form or meaning of a feminine word that is not feminine in form.[32] Likewise, in his commentary on Q 44:43–46, al-Zamakhsharī explains what *muhl* is in v.45 with a reference to Q 70:8 and Q 55:37, both of which speak of the sky (*al-samāʾ*) on the last day. The first verse contains the word *muhl* itself, which is probably why al-Zamakhsharī provides the second reference, which speaks of *dihān* instead of *muhl* and gives the impression that they are synonyms. However, neither verse actually says what *muhl* is; the meaning is not clarified until al-Zamakhsharī does it himself.[33] Even when a passage does clarify the verse being commented on, there is the hint of a certain arbitrariness in al-Zamakhsharī's choice of passages. At Q 54:9, where he speaks of Noah's rejection by his people, al-Zamakhsharī's explanation of what it means to be rejected includes a number of points, one of which, the people's threat to stone Noah, allows al-Zamakhsharī to include a reference to Q 26:116 which speaks of this too.[34] The other points are not supported by quranic references.

Furthermore, there are occasions when al-Zamakhsharī seems to be rather careless in his application of the *tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān* principle itself. At Q 54:6 he supports his statement that the one who calls (*dāʿī*) on the Day of Resurrection is Isrāfīl or Jibrīl, with a reference to Q 50:41. However, this verse makes no reference to either Isrāfīl or Jibrīl, but, rather, to a caller (*munādī*); nor does al-Zamakhsharī make any reference to other verses at this point that do mention these names. It is only in al-Zamakhsharī's own commentary that we find references to the various scenarios associated

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[32] Such verses could very well be connected with the origins of such a rule, which harmonizes what could be a discrepancy between the two verses and precludes any grammatical error from the revealed text.

[33] In fact, he gives more than one meaning.

[34] With the exception of references to (*al-*)*shayṭān* (*al-*)*rajīm* and Q 67:5 which speaks of "things to stone Satans" (*rujūm li-l-shyāṭīn*), all references to stoning in the Quran are related to a people's threat to stone a prophet or messenger sent to them by God.

with the caller on the Day of Resurrection. Finally, at Q 44:48 he
explains an apparent discrepancy between a phrase in this verse and
a similar one in Q 22:29, in terms of the metaphorical use of the
verb *ṣabba* in the former, and illustrates this metaphorical usage with
a reference to a similar usage of the synonym *afragha* in Q 2:250.
However, he does not say *why* the verb is used metaphorically in Q
44:48 and not in Q 22:29. One could simply ask afterwards why
the metaphorical use was not also employed in Q 22:29.

The impression is left, then, that the passages chosen by al-
Zamakhsharī illustrate (or justify) what he is saying first of all, and
that it is only to the extent that they do this that they can also be
said to be explaining (*tafsīr*) the Quran. As with the *mutashābih* and
muḥkam verses in the Quran, the verses that ostensibly explain oth-
ers appear to be simply those that al-Zamakhsharī (or others before
him) chose for this purpose. This is not surprising, of course, even
if the exegetes themselves may not wish to admit it.

2.2   *Variant readings of the Quran* (qirā'āt)

Although al-Zamakhsharī seeks to explain the Quran, this does not
mean that he gives only one, precise meaning for everything. In fact,
a second element that appears in al-Zamakhsharī's commentary on
Q 44 and Q 54 is his presentation of a number of variants for a
word or passage (*qira'āt*). In some cases, al-Zamakhsharī indicates
which is better or more widely accepted; usually though, he simply
lists the different possibilities and leaves it at that.

When it comes to the *qirā'āt*, al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf* is a ver-
itable mine. For some of these he quotes his source by name while
for others he simply states that a variant was recited (*quri'a*) in the
given way. In the two suras, Q 44 and Q 54, al-Zamakhsharī makes
reference to a total of sixty-seven variant readings of the quranic
text (32 in Q 44; 35 in Q 54). The vast majority of the variants
mentioned (48/67 or just over 70%) are anonymous; al-Zamakhsharī
merely writes "it was recited (*quri'a*)" and gives the variant.

When he quotes his actual source (19/67 or just under 30%), it
is one of ten men, mostly well-known Muslims from the generation
of the Successors (*tābiʿūn*): al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (5 times); Zayd ibn ʿAlī[35]

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[35] A grandson of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, he led a popular revolt against
the Umayyads in 122/740 at Kūfa, where he was defeated and killed.

and ʿUbayd ibn ʿUmayr[36] (3 times each); ʿAbdallāh[37] (twice); Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿIkrima,[38] Ḥudhayfa,[39] al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, Qatāda[40] and Abū Jaʿfar[41] (once each).

An analysis of the variant readings from Q 44 shows that there are thirty-two variants of twenty-six different words or expressions in twenty-five different verses; this means that al-Zamakhsharī usually gives only one variant. Only in five cases does he give more: in four cases he gives two variants, and in one case he gives three; for the remaining twenty-one, he gives only one variant. As for Q 54, there are thirty-five variants of twenty-eight words or expressions in twenty-one verses. Of the twenty-eight words or expressions, al-Zamakhsharī gives one variant for twenty-two of them; for five he gives two variants and for one he gives three.

The vast majority of these cases affect in no significant way the consonantal structure of the ʿUthmānic text. Mostly it is a question of vocalization, although sometimes it is the doubling of a consonant (*tashdīd*) or the changing of a long vowel. There are only two cases in which the variant reading involves more than these kinds of changes to the text; in one case a word changes, while in the other a word is added to the text.[42] Al-Zamakhsharī usually mentions

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[36] This is ʿUbayd ibn ʿUmayr al-Laythī (d. 74/693–4), an early Meccan Reader; cf. Jeffery 236.

[37] This is ʿAbdallāh ibn Masʿūd, a Companion of the Prophet and one of the earliest Muslims; he died in 32/652–3.

[38] A member of the generation of the Successors (*tābiʿūn*) and one of the main transmitters of the traditional interpretation of the Quran attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās, he died in 105/723–4.

[39] This is Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān al-ʿAbsī who was the second in command of the army at the battle of Nihāwand in 21/642 when ʿUmar's armies broke the Iranian resistance and opened the door to Iran for the Muslim armies. He was also one of ʿUthmān's generals and tradition reports him as having complained to ʿUthmān about conflicts caused in Iraq by the differences in quranic recitation. This complaint was the impetus for ʿUthmān's collection of the Quran and the promulgation of a vulgate.

[40] Qatāda ibn Diʿāma (or Diyāma) al-Sadūsī Abū l-Khaṭṭāb (d. ca. 117/735) was of the generation of the Successors (*tābiʿūn*); born blind, he had a prodigious memory and a vast knowledge of genealogies, lexicography, *akhbār*, *aḥādīth*, *qirāʾāt* and exegesis. He was a pupil of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and took his place after he died. According to one main tradition, he gave the Muʿtazila their name since, when ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd and his group withdrew from their circle, he called them al-Muʿtazila, "the Withdrawers."

[41] This is Abū Jaʿfar Yazīd ibn al-Qaʿqāʿ al-Makhzūmī al-Madanī, one of the "ten readers." He died around the year 130/747.

[42] At Q 44:54: *wa-zawwajnāhum bi-ḥūrin ʿīnin* ("And We shall espouse them to wide-eyed houris"), the expression *ḥūrin ʿīnin* implies eyes characterized by a contrast

the variants without further comment; when he does choose to explain a passage in terms of its variant readings, they present no problems for him. He presents the variant readings in an almost perfunctory way, with little interest as to the lineage of any given variant. There is a store of *qirāʾāt* to which he has access and on which he draws as he composes. The variants do not seem to be of importance to him. Nevertheless, he includes them in his commentary since they constitute one of the basic elements of a work in exegesis.

2.3 *Occasions of revelation* (asbāb al-nuzūl)

In his commentary on Q 44 and Q 54, al-Zamakhsharī refers on four occasions to the circumstances in which verses were revealed: their *sabab al-nuzūl*.

At Q 44:43–46, the text speaks about the tree of Zaqqūm;[43] this is one of three references to this tree in the Quran.[44] Here, however, al-Zamakhsharī makes reference to the revelation of both Q 44:43–44 and Q 37:62. He says:

> It was related that when "Is that better as a hospitality, or the Tree of Ez-Zakkoum?"[45] was revealed, Ibn Zibaʿrāʾ[46] said, "The people of Yemen call (eating) a food made of fresh butter and dates *tazaqqum*." So Abū Jahl[47] called for dates and fresh butter and said, "Have some

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between black and white; in the reading of ʿAbdallāh, the expression used is *ʿīsin ʿīnin* which would mean eyes of a pinkish color (*Kashshāf* iv, 285).

    At Q 44:56: *lā yadhūqūna fīhā l-mawta* ("They shall not taste therein of death"), ʿAbdallāh's reading has the word *ṭaʿm* (taste) added: *lā yadhūqūna fīhā ṭaʿma l-mawti* (*Kashshāf* iv, 286).

    [43] Q 43:43–46: [43]Lo, the Tree of Ez-Zakkoum [44]is the food of the guilty, [45]like molten copper, bubbling in the belly [46]as boiling water bubbles ([43]*inna shajarata l-zaqqūmi* [44]*ṭaʿāmu l-athīmi* [45]*ka-l-muhli yaghlī fī l-buṭūni* [46]*ka-ghalyi l-ḥamīmi*).

    [44] The two other occasions are: Q 37:62: "Is that better as a hospitality, or the Tree of Ez-Zakkoum" with *shajaratu l-Zaqqūm*; and Q 56:52: "you shall eat of a tree called Zakkoum" with *shajarin min zaqqūmin*.

    [45] Q 37:62.

    [46] He was a noted poet of the Quraysh who satirized the Prophet and his followers. When the Prophet took Mecca and ordered the execution of a number of persons who had hurt him with their words, he escaped this fate thanks to the intercession of others; cf. J.W. Fück, art. "Ibn al-Zibaʿrā," in: *EI*² iii, 975–6.

    [47] Abū Jahl was an influential leader of the clan of the Banū Makhzūm of the tribe of Quraysh and Muḥammad's most implacable opponent in Mecca, responsible for the boycott of Hāshim and al-Muṭṭalib when they gave protection to Muḥammad; for encouraging Abū Lahab, the Prophet's uncle and later leader of the clan, to withdraw this protection; and for an attempt to murder Muḥammad shortly before the Hijra. When, in the year 2/624, the message came that Abū Sufyān's caravan from Syria was threatened, he led the Meccans out to defend it.

zaqqūm! This is what Muḥammad had been frightening you with."
Then [Q 44:43–44] was revealed.[48]

At Q 44:49, the text says that, to the one who has been dragged
into the middle of Hell and has had boiling water poured over his
head, it will be said:

> Taste! Surely thou art the mighty, the noble! (*dhuq innaka anta l-ʿazīzu
> l-karīmu*).

Al-Zamakhsharī explains that this verse is said

> by way of mockery and derision of those who had power (*yataʿazzazu*)
> over and feigned generosity (*yatakarramu*) with their people.

He then adds that,

> it has been related that Abū Jahl said to the Messenger of God, "There
> is nothing between [Mecca's] two hills mightier (*aʿazz*) and nobler
> (*akram*) than I. By God! Neither you nor your Lord can do anything
> with me."[49]

Al-Zamkhsharī does not actually say here, "then [Q 44:49] was
revealed." However, this account is given in other sources as the
occasion for the revelation of Q 44:49.[50]

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Even though the caravan was safe, he engaged the Muslims at Badr, probably hop-
ing for military glory, but was killed there. "Owing to his hostility to Muḥammad
during the latter years of the Meccan period many acts of persecution are attrib-
uted to him, though probably not all really happened" (W.M. Watt, art. "Abū
Djahl," in: *EI*² i, 115).

[48] *Kashshāf* iv, 284. Al-Suyūṭī gives this occasion of revelation in a slightly different
form, without mentioning Ibn al-Zibaʿrā; he also gives an *isnād* for it (*Lubāb* 254).—
Lane iii, 1239, at the root *z-q-m*, has nearly an entire column on the word *zaqqūm*,
whose definition is as given by Ibn Zibaʿrā although Lane does not limit it to (or
even mention) Yemen. With regard to the present *sabab al-nuzūl*, Lane has another
variant from Ibn ʿAbbās, in which the revelation of Q 44:43–44 prompted a satir-
ical response from Abū Jahl ("Dates and fresh butter: we will swallow it leisurely"),
which response was followed by the revelation of Q 37:64–5: "It is a tree that
comes forth in the root of Hell; its spathes are as the heads of Satans." According
to Lane, one of the meanings of *zaqqama* is denominative: "The *eating what is termed*
[*al-zaqqūm*], as meaning *a certain food in which are dates and fresh butter*." He does not,
however, give a similar meaning for *tazaqqama* as such; rather, this verb means: to
swallow something (a morsel, a mouthful), or to swallow in a leisurely way (as in
Abū Jahl's remarks), which would not exclude *zaqqūm*, of course.

[49] *Kashshāf* iv, 285. The Arabic text speaks of *mā bayna jabalayhā*, "what is between
its two hills." I take the pronoun to refer to Mecca and the two hills to be Ṣafā
and Marwa, between which pilgrims run seven times, beginning at Ṣafā and end-
ing at Marwa.

[50] *Asbāb* 315, where slightly different versions are given, including one in which

At the beginning of *Sūrat al-Qamar* (Q 54:1–2), the text reads:

> ¹The Hour has drawn nigh: the moon is split. ²Yet if they see a sign they turn away, and say "A continuous sorcery!"

Al-Zamakhsharī begins his commentary on this sura by stating that the splitting of the moon was one of the signs (*āyāt*) and miracles (*muʿjizāt*) performed by the Prophet. This is followed by two *ḥadīths* which deal with the occasion of the revelation of vv. 1–2, although, again, al-Zamakhsharī does not actually say: "and then [Q 54:1–2] was revealed." In these *ḥadīths*, the basic story is that the unbelievers (*kuffār*) of Mecca ask Muḥammad for a sign and the moon is split in two twice. There are two versions: according to Ibn ʿAbbās, one half of the moon left and the other remained; according to Ibn Masʿūd, he could see Mount Ḥirāʾ between the two halves.[51]

At Q 54:43–45, the text reads:

> ⁴³What, are your unbelievers better than those? Or have you an immunity in the Scrolls? ⁴⁴Or do they say, "We are a [host] that shall be succoured?" ⁴⁵Certainly the host shall be routed, and turn their backs.

It is addressed to the people of Mecca (according to al-Zamakhsharī) and "those" is a reference to the disbelievers already encountered in the sura: the people of Noah, Hūd and Ṣāliḥ, and the house of Pharaoh. Al-Zamakhsharī says that,

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Abū Jahl declares, "I am the mighty, the noble (*wa-anā l-ʿazīz al-karīm*)," setting up even better, so to speak, the occasion for the revelation of Q 44:49. Verse 49 is the only verse in Q 44 for which al-Wāḥidī gives an occasion; he supplies chains of authority for his accounts. Al-Suyūṭī gives the same *sabab al-nuzūl* as well as *asbāb* for Q 44:10,15,16, about which al-Zamakhsharī says nothing (*Lubāb* 254f.).

  [51] *Kashshāf* iv, 431. Al-Suyūṭī has the basic version according to Anas ibn Mālik (d. ca. 92/710): the people of Mecca ask for a sign; the moon is split in two and Q 54:1–2 is revealed. He does not mention Ibn ʿAbbās or Ibn Masʿūd. He also has another version, on the authority of Ibn Masʿūd, but it is not linked with the Meccans' request for a sign. In this second version, Ibn Masʿūd says that he saw the moon split in two twice, in Mecca before the Prophet's departure for Medina. The people of Mecca accuse Muḥammad of casting a spell over the moon but then Q 54:1 is revealed (*Lubāb* 277). Al-Wāḥidī has a similar version of events, in which the splitting of the moon occurs for no apparent reason (except, perhaps, in preparation for the revelation of the verses at the end of the account). Quraysh say that it is the magic (*siḥr*) of Ibn Abī Kabsha (i.e. Muḥammad) who has cast a spell over them. So they consult travelers who say they have seen the moon split asunder also. Then Q 54:1–2 is revealed (*Asbāb* 337). [Ibn Abī Kabsha was a name given to Muḥammad early in his prophetic career by the Meccans since he had deviated from the beliefs of his ancestors; cf. M.J. Kister, art. "Khuzāʿa," in: *EI*² v, 77.]

[it was recounted] about Abū Jahl[52] that he struck his horse on the day of Badr and moved forward in the line, and said, "We will take revenge on Muḥammad and his companions." Then, "Certainly the host shall be routed" (Q 54:45a) was revealed. [It was also transmitted] on the authority of 'Ikrima: when this verse was revealed, 'Umar said, "Which host will be routed?" Then, when he saw the Messenger of God jumping into [his] coat of mail (*yathibu fī l-dirʿ*) saying, "The host will all be routed," he knew the interpretation [of the verse].[53]

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The rather unreliable historical nature of the *asbāb al-nuzūl* material did not keep al-Zamakhsharī from using it. As with his use of the variant readings (*qirāʾāt*), al-Zamakhsharī is content simply to present what the exegetical tradition has transmitted, without expending any effort to evaluate the various scenarios. Not only is his focus elsewhere, but he was most probably not asking himself questions about the historicity of the accounts he was passing on.[54]

2.4   *Poetry*

In the course of his commentary on these two suras al-Zamakhsharī makes reference to thirteen verses by poets from the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, four in Q 44 and nine in Q 54.[55] For example, commenting on Q 44:28–29:

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[52] The preposition *ʿan* usually implies a source or an authority, which source or authority tends to follow it in the genitive—as here: *ʿan Abī Jahl*. However, seeing who the source is (see the note on Abū Jahl above), I have taken it simply to mean "about." Later, with *ʿan ʿIkrima*, it has its technical meaning.

[53] *Kashshāf* iv, 439–40. This occasion of revelation is reported by al-Suyūṭī (*Lubāb* 277) although not by al-Wāḥidī; al-Suyūṭī also supplies an *isnād*. Al-Suyūṭī's version is much simpler than what al-Zamakhsharī offers. There is no mention of Abū Jahl and his ride; nor is there anything about 'Umar (ibn al-Khaṭṭāb)'s understanding of the verse when he saw the Prophet don his coat of mail. It merely states that, "they said on the day [of the battle] at Badr, 'We are a host that shall be succoured' (*qālū yawm Badr naḥnu jamīʿ muntaṣir*)," and then the verse was revealed. In this scenario, what "they" said at Badr is, in effect, verse 44. Both al-Wāḥidī and al-Suyūṭī also have occasions of revelation for Q 54:47–9, about which al-Zamakhsharī says nothing.

[54] Rippin considers the historicisation of the quranic text through the general tools of narrative provided by the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, *sīrat al-nabīy* and *asbāb al-nuzūl* literature to be part of the "genius of Muslim *tafsīr*" (Rippin 85). See also his: The function of *asbāb al-nuzūl* in qurʾānic exegesis, in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 51 (1988), 1–20.

[55] Other references to poetry are at: Q 44:24,48; 54:8,12,13,17,24,34,47,48.

²⁸Even so; and We bequeathed them upon another people. ²⁹Neither heaven nor earth wept for them, nor were they respited,

al-Zamakhsharī says[56] that the first verse refers to God's giving to the Banū Isrā'īl what had belonged to Pharaoh's folk, after they had been destroyed. He then says that,

> when an important man dies, the Bedouins say, in honouring his death: "Heaven and earth wept over him; the wind mourned him; and for him the sun grew dark."

This was not done for those who were destroyed. Al-Zamakhsharī then cites some lines of poetry by Jarīr:[57]

> *tabkī ʿalayka nujūm al-layl wa-l-qamar;*
> The stars of night and the moon weep over you;[58]

and by al-Khārijiyya:[59]

> *a-yā shajara l-Khābūr mā laka mūriqā*   *ka-annaka lam tajzaʿ ʿalā Ibn Ṭarīf*
> O trees of the Khābūr![60] Why are   It is as if you did not mourn
> you in leaf?   Ibn Ṭarīf.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

At Q 44:48, the text reads:

> Then pour upon his head the torment of boiling water.

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[56] *Kashshāf* iv, 279–80.

[57] This is Jarīr ibn ʿAṭiyya al-Khaṭafa (Hudhayfa) ibn Badr (ca. 650–ca. 730), who "may be considered one of the greatest Islamic-Arabic poets of all time;" cf. A. Schaade and H. Gaetje, art. "Djarīr," in: *EI²* i, 479f.

[58] This line is part of a *qaṣīda* composed to elegize the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 101/720).

[59] The verse is attributed to Laylā bt. Ṭarīf who elegized her brother al-Walīd. He is al-Walīd ibn Ṭarīf al-Taghlibī, a Khārijite who led a rebellion against the ʿAbbāsids in the Jazīra in 178/794; he was killed by Hārūn al-Rashīd's (d. 193/809) armies in 179/795; see, for example: M. Canard, art. "al-Djazīra," in: *EI²* ii, 524a; F. Omar, art. "Hārūn al-Rashīd," in: *EI²* iii, 233b; W. Madelung and K. Lewinstein, art. "Ṣufriyya," in: *EI²* ix, 767a. His theological-political leanings explain his poet sister's nickname.

[60] Khābūr is the name of a river in the Jazīra (where the brother of the poet led his rebellion). There are, in fact, two rivers in the region that bear the name Khābūr, but the one being referred to here is the larger of the two. It is one of the main affluents of the Euphrates, which it joins near Qarqisiyya. (The other, often called Khābūr al-Ḥasaniyya, after the town bearing this name, is a tributary of the Tigris.) Lassner notes that the "whole region through which the Khābūr flows, and especially its lower course, was renowned for being fertile; its trees are mentioned in Arabic poetry" (J. Lassner, art. "Khābūr," in: *EI²* iv, 898; see also Lane, *Lexicon* iv, 1507, at the root *sh-j-r*).

As already noted above, al-Zamakhsharī explains why the verse speaks of "pouring torment" and says it is by "way of metaphor" (ṭarīqat al-istiʿāra). He supports this use by a reference to a line of poetry which has a similar use of metaphor. The source of this verse is not given; al-Zamakhsharī merely writes, "like his saying (ka-qawlihi)." The line reads:

> ṣubbat ʿalayhi ṣurūf al-dahr min ṣabab—Has had misfortunes poured down upon him.[61]

2.5 Question-and-answer

A set pattern in al-Zamakhsharī's exegesis is the theoretical question-and-answer format (masāʾil wa-ajwiba); in his commentary on these two suras, this method is employed fifteen times. This is perhaps the most obvious "structure" in the text. In it al-Zamakhsharī asks a question, preceded by "If you were to say (in qulta)," and then answers his question, beginning with "[then] I would say (qultu)."[62] His use of this method is the same: based on the passage being studied, a question is raised; not infrequently, a passage from elsewhere in the Quran will be used to highlight in some way the question he is asking; and in the answer, the matter is settled, often with the help of yet another quranic verse.

It is in this section especially that one can see al-Zamakhsharī's finely tuned mind at work, particularly when he explains apparent inconsistencies or discrepancies in the revealed text. This is undoubtedly good pedagogical method and definitely a more interesting way to write than simply to expose some point of exegesis. Al-Zamakhsharī's questions must have often led his reader to ask: How is he going to get himself out of this one?

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[61] Kashshāf iv, 284–5. This is the second line of a poem, the first of which has two variations I have seen: kam imraʾ kāna fī (or: kāfī) khafḍ wa-fī daʿa—"Many a man [living] in (sufficient) ease and tranquility." Both of the roots, kh-f-ḍ and w-d-ʿ connote: lowering, reducing, putting down, and ṣabab from the second line means an incline, slope, or declivity. The whole image, then, is that of water pouring down a slope onto lower ground. The poem may also refer to a life of meekness and limited means.

[62] My translation is perhaps more hypothetical than the conditional in would imply. This question-answer routine is not something new with al-Zamakhsharī. It was a standard technique of argumentation in mediaeval Islam, to be found in writings in practically every field of knowledge. Here al-Zamakhsharī uses the technique for didactic purposes in his exegesis, the field in which it was probably first employed; cf. H. Daiber, art. "Masāʾil wa-Adjwiba," in: EI² vi, 636–9; D. Gimaret, art. "Radd," in: EI² viii, 362–3.

The type of question varies and it is hard to classify them rigorously since there is a certain overlap. However, it is possible to make some distinctions in order to bring out the various themes that al-Zamakhsharī deals with in the *Kashshāf*; each will be illustrated by a few examples. Sometimes the question al-Zamakhsharī raises deals simply with the meaning of an expression[63] or with the understanding of a structure in the text.[64] At Q 44:3 for example, the text reads: "We have sent it down (*anzalnāhu*) on a blessed night;" in the commentary the text reads:

> If you were to ask, "What does it mean that the Quran was sent down (*inzāl al-Qurʾān*) on this night?" then I would say. . . .

and the text continues with the explanation.[65] At Q 44:7b, at the end of verses that speak of the revelation of the Quran, the text reads: "if you have faith (*in kuntum mūqinīna*);" the commentary reads:

> If you were to say, "What is the meaning of the condition (*sharṭ*): 'if you have faith'?" then I would say . . .,

and al-Zamakhsharī replies to his question by developing a short scenario based on the preceding verses and explaining the condition in terms of this scenario.[66] On other occasions, it is a grammatical or syntactical question that is raised.[67] At Q 44:5b–6a, for example, in the context of the revelation of the Quran, the text reads: "(We are ever sending) as a mercy from us." Here the commentary reads:

> If you were to say, "What is '(We are ever sending) as a mercy from us' connected (*yataʿallaqu*) with?" then I would say. . . .

and al-Zamakhsharī goes on to give a number of explanations.[68] At Q 44:16, the text reads: *yawma nabṭishu l-baṭshata l-kubrā*;[69] the text of the *Kashshāf* reads:

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[63] As at Q 44:3; 54:23–4.

[64] As at Q 44:7b; 54:9, 40.

[65] *Kashshāf* iv, 274. Here al-Zamakhsharī gives the traditional explanation, introduced by "They said (*qālū*)," that the Quran was sent down from the seventh heaven (*al-samāʾ al-sābiʿa*) to the nearest heaven (*al-samāʾ al-dunyā*), that the recording angels (*al-safara al-kirām*) were then ordered to copy it on the Night of Destiny (*laylat al-qadr*), and that the angel Gabriel finally revealed it piecemeal to Muḥammad.

[66] *Kashshāf* iv, 275.

[67] As at Q 44:3b–4,5b–6a,16; 54:4–5.

[68] *Kashshāf* iv, 275. Al-Zamakhsharī says that it is possible (*yajūzu*) to connect this phrase with three different passages in the preceding verses.

[69] Q 44:16: "Upon the day when We shall assault most mightily."

> If you were to say, "On account of what (*bima*) is *yawma nabṭishu* put in the accusative (*intaṣaba*)?" then I would say. . . .

followed by the reason.[70] Again, sometimes it deals with the logic of the quranic text; that is, there appears to be a contradiction in the text.[71] At Q 44:48, for example, the text reads: "then pour over his head the chastisement of boiling water!" The commentary reads:

> If you were to say, "Why is it not said, 'Pour upon his head boiling water' as in His word, 'there shall be poured over their heads boiling water' [Q 22:19] since the boiling water is what is poured, not its chastisement?" then I would say . . .,

and al-Zamakhsharī solves the difficulty.[72] Another type of question is the theological one; the question is prompted by an apparent discrepancy between the text and accepted dogma—in the following case, that of the inimitable Quran revealed in clear Arabic (*ʿarabī mubīn*). At Q 44:53, the text reads: *yalbasūna min sundusin wa-istabraqin mutaqābilīna*.[73] In the commentary the text reads:

> If you were to say, "How can it be that a foreign word (*lafẓ aʿjamī*) appears in the clear Arabic Quran (*al-Qurʾān al-ʿarabī l-mubīn*)?" then I would say . . .,[74]

and the problem is solved.[75] Finally, the question can be complex and incorporate a number of different elements, as for example at

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[70] *Kashshāf* iv, 277–8. Here we see an interesting point of grammar. The entire verse reads: *yawma nabṭishu l-baṭshata l-kubrā innā muntaqimūna* ("Upon the day when We shall assault most mightily, then We shall take Our vengeance"); *yawm* is an accusative of time (*ẓarf, mafʿūl fīhi*) and so it is *yawma* (with *a*). Al-Zamakhsharī's question aims at the syntactical unit that governs this accusative. It is governed, he says, by what the second part of the verse, *innā muntaqimūna* ("We shall take Our vengeance"), points to (*dalla ʿalayhi*), that is, the verbal sentence *nantaqimu*, and not by the second part of the verse itself, which is a separate sentence (it begins with *inna*) and, therefore, one that cannot govern an adverb that comes before it. Hence, a verbal sentence (*nantaqimu*) is understood to be governing the *ẓarf* but one that has been omitted since its meaning is given by the following sentence (*innā muntaqimūna*).

[71] As at Q 44:15,37,48,56.

[72] *Kashshāf* iv, 284–5. This reference has already been met, as an example of al-Zamakhsharī's use of one quranic passage to explain another. Al-Zamakhsharī points out that the torment is poured with the water but that this expression is used by way of a metaphor since it is more terrifying (*ahwal*) and frightening (*ahyab*).

[73] Q 44:53: "robed in silk and brocade, set face to face" (a description of the God-fearing in Paradise).

[74] *Sundus* and *istabraq* are the foreign words.

[75] *Kashshāf* iv, 285. Al-Zamakhsharī's explanation is that since these words are completely inflected (*taṣarruf*), they have become Arabic (*taʿrīb*) and are no longer foreign.

Q 44:35[76] where the question is raised concerning the first death.
In his answer al-Zamakhsharī again creates a scenario in which the
verse is explained.[77]

2.6 *A Muʿtazilī interpretation of the text*

As already noted above, al-Zamakhsharī is considered to have given
a Muʿtazilite interpretation of the Quran. Goldziher says that in the
Kashshāf al-Zamakhsharī "produced a concise fundamental work for
Muʿtazilite Quran interpretation;"[78] Smith notes that, "[al-Zamakh-
sharī's] interpretation of and commentary on the Quran were strongly
influenced by his theological viewpoints;"[79] Brockelmann speaks of
the *Kashshāf*'s "Muʿtazila bias;"[80] Calder, of how al-Zamakhsharī
"notoriously combines [in the *Kashshāf*] a meticulous concern for
grammatical nicety with a defence of Muʿtazilī theology,"[81] while
McAuliffe refers to it as a "mouthpiece for the dogmas of the
[Muʿtazilites]."[82] Going in what appears to be the opposite direction
are Rippin, who says that the *Kashshāf*, "renowned for its Muʿtazilī
perspective, is distinctive primarily for its special outlook and not for
the presence of an overall theological argument *per se*, nor for the
quantity of such argumentation;"[83] and Gimaret, who writes that the
quranic commentaries of al-Ṭūsī (d. 459/1067) and al-Ṭabarsī (d. ca.
548/1155) "are overtly Muʿtazilī commentaries, even more so than
the *Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī."[84]

The study of Q 44 and Q 54 would tend to support this latter
view, for in his commentary on these two suras, al-Zamakhsharī
makes only one reference to what appears to be a Muʿtazilite tenet
at Q 54:17. The quranic text reads: *wa-la-qad yassarnā l-Qurʾāna li-
l-dhikri*.[85] Al-Zamakhsharī explains the passage as follows:

> *ay sahhalnāhu li-l-iddikār wa-l-ittiʿāz bi-an shaḥannāhu bi-l-mawāʿiz al-shāfiya
> wa-ṣarrafnā fīhi min al-waʿd wa-l-waʿīd*

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[76] Q 44:35: "There is nothing but our first death; we shall not be revived."
[77] *Kashshāf* iv, 281–2.
[78] Goldziher, Theologie 220.
[79] Smith 92f.
[80] C. Brockelmann, art. "al-Zamakhsharī," in: *EI*² iv, 1205.
[81] Calder 103.
[82] McAuliffe 53.
[83] Rippin 85.
[84] D. Gimaret, art. "Muʿtazila," in: *EI*² vii, 786.
[85] Q 54:17: "Now We have made the Quran easy for Remembrance."

> that is, we have made it easy to remember *and to take a warning from*, in that we have filled it with healing exhortations and have dispensed freely in it of *the promise and the threat*.

Al-Zamakhsharī begins his commentary, then, by using synonyms to explain the quranic passage: *sahhala* (to facilitate, to make easy, to ease) means the same as *yassara* in the verse, and *iddikār* (to remember, to think about, to bear in mind) has the same meaning *dhikr*. At the same time, however, his explanation goes beyond simple synonyms, for he adds:

> and to take a warning from (*itti'āz*).

He then continues:

> in that we have filled it with healing exhortations and have dispensed freely in it of *the promise and the threat*.

Interestingly enough, this last expression, "the promise and the threat" (*al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd*), is one of the five principles of the Mu'tazilite school of theology.[86]

Having given an interpretation of the text in line with what would appear to be his own theological views, al-Zamakhsharī then proceeds to give two other interpretations of the text; clearly, he is not intent on having the Mu'tazilite view accepted at all costs. The first of these views, which "was said (*qīla*)," is that the Quran has been made easy to memorize (*hifz*) and those who wish to memorize it are helped to do so; here the accent of the interpretation is on the understanding of the word *dhikr*—it means *hifz*.[87] Secondly, al-Zamakhsharī says it

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[86] The Mu'tazilites were known as the People of (Divine) Unity and Justice (*ahl al-tawḥīd wa-l-'adl*) because of their views on the divine attributes and on how God should treat his creatures. They had, in fact, five principles (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*) but the other three were derivative of these two, divine unity and justice. One of the remaining three principles was known as "the promise and the threat (*al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd*);" this meant that God must necessarily reward the good and punish the wicked in the next life. However, the accent was on the second part only, the eternal damnation of the sinner who did not repent. Van Ess gives the "eternal punishment of the 'transgressor'" as the third principle of the founding father, Abū l-Hudhayl (van Ess 225); and Gimaret writes that by *al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd* "is understood that on account of the 'threat' uttered against him in the Ḳur'ān, every Muslim guilty of a serious offence, who dies without repentance, will suffer for eternity the torments of Hell" (Gimaret, Mu'tazila 786).

[87] Before ending his comments on the passage, al-Zamakhsharī returns to stress the validity of this interpretation. He says that it is related (*yurwā*) that, "the peoples of [other] religions (*ahl al-adyān*)" recite their books only by looking at them

is possible that the passage also means (*yajūzu an yakūna l-maʿnā*) that the Quran has been made ready for remembrance (*hayyaʾnāhu li-l-dhikr*); the accent is on the idea of making remembering the Quran easy by specifically preparing it for this purpose.[88] Having presented what could be said about this passage, both Muʿtazilite and other in meaning, al-Zamakhsharī then moves on to the next verse.

Within the framework of the traditional *tafsīr musalsal*, then, al-Zamakhsharī seems willing to offer his readers a Muʿtazilite interpretation of a passage when the opportunity presents itself but, even then, he does not necessarily do so; nor does he go into a developed theological interpretation when he does. In fact, as his commentary on Q 54:17 illustrates, a Muʿtazilite interpretation of a passage might only be one of several that he offers his readers. He cannot, therefore, be accused of being excessively Muʿtazilite in his exegesis or of using the *Kashshāf* as a means of promoting the doctrines of this school.[89]

3   *Conclusions and perspectives*

This study has allowed us to look over al-Zamakhsharī's shoulder and see *how* he composed the *Kashshāf*. Having studied in detail a part of what al-Zamakhsharī says in his commentary, it is time to offer a few concluding remarks that open perspectives for future research.

First of all, the *Kashshāf* is *tafsīr musalsal*, basically a running commentary on the revealed text; it has nothing specific about it in this regard. When it comes to method, al-Zamakhsharī does not stand out in any respect, either as a commentator or a Muʿtazilite. He employs many of the traditional techniques and sources that were at his disposal, like other commentators before and after him: grammar and lexis; *tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān* and *masāʾil wa-ajwiba*; variant quranic readings, occasions of revelation, poetry and traditions.[90]

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and that they do not memorize them as do the Muslims with the Quran. He gives, as examples, the books of the Jews and the Christians (*naḥw al-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl*).

[88] *Kashshāf* iv, 436.

[89] It is enough to skim through the *Kashshāf* to realize that there are no long excurses on any topic; the most that can be hoped for is a series of explanations, interpretations or variations of the passage under scrutiny.

[90] Although it was not incorporated into this paper, research carried out for it

Describing the *Kashshāf* as a Muʿtazilite commentary may give an inaccurate impression for it attributes to the entire commentary what is applicable to only a small part of it. The study of Q 44 and Q 54 reveals, in fact, a rather insignificant amount of Muʿtazilite theology in the commentary on these two suras (and in the one case concerned, other explanations of the passage are also provided). It might be more accurate to say, then, that the *Kashshāf* is a commentary composed by a Muʿtazilite. Al-Zamakhsharī's goal, then, is not primarily a Muʿtazilite theological interpretation of the Quran; nor is his goal in any explicit and sustained way the demonstration of the revealed book's rhetorical grandeur and inimitability (*iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*), as maintained by Goldziher and Brockelmann.[91] Even if these elements are to be found in the *Kashshāf*, the amount of grammatical and lexical material to be found therein is much more important; furthermore, the text is sprinkled generously, if not inundated, with grammatical terminology that stands out clearly. These indicate that al-Zamakhsharī's main concern in the *Kashshāf* in not his Muʿtazilism.

What, then, can be said about the specificity of the *Kashshāf*? There is no need to doubt that al-Zamakhsharī was writing his commentary with a goal in mind, the explanation of the revealed text; that is why the *Kashshāf* is *tafsīr*. However, just as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), the historian, or al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), the mystic, explained the Quran in their way, so al-Zamakhsharī, the grammarian and man of letters from Khwārazm, explained it in his way.[92] His explanation of the quranic text reflects, therefore, his interests: grammar

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shows a staggering use of *ḥadīth* by al-Zamakhsharī in his commentary. ʿAbdallāh ibn Yūsuf al-Zaylaʿī (d. 762/1361) and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) both composed works (*takhrīj aḥādīth*) based on the traditions that were to be found in the *Kashshāf*. A cursory glance at al-Zaylaʿī's work shows that in the *Kashshāf* al-Zamakhsharī makes reference to reports that go back to the Prophet on about 1,340 occasions. In the two suras studied here there is only a total of about fifteen *ḥadīth*s, a number that pales in comparison with the nearly one hundred and fifty to be found in *Sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2).

[91] Goldziher, *Richtungen* 120–2; Brockelmann 1205.—The study of al-Zamakhsharī's commentary on Q 44 and Q 54 (and other suras that were examined elsewhere) does not corroborate Brockelmann's statement that al-Zamakhsharī "devotes special attention to pointing out rhetorical beauties and thus supporting the doctrine of the *iʿdjāz* of the Ḳurʾān." In fact, nowhere in his commentary on these suras does al-Zamakhsharī speak specifically about the rhetorical beauty of a passage or even use the expression *iʿjāz* (*al-Qurʾān*).

[92] For al-Ṭabarī and al-Sulamī, see C.E. Bosworth, art. "al-Ṭabarī," in: *EI²* x, 11–5; and G. Böwering, art. "al-Sulamī," in: *EI²* ix, 811–2.

and lexis, poetry and belles-lettres.[93] He was not a theologian (*uṣūlī*). Likewise, his exegesis is a response to the perceived needs of his fellow countrymen, as stated in an embellished and occasionally opaque manner in the *muqaddima* to the *Kashshāf*, for they had begged him to compose a Quran commentary.[94] By employing all the traditional methods and personal scholarship at his disposal, al-Zamakhsharī creates an original composition that responds to the needs of his milieu, while remaining intimately connected to both the tradition of *tafsīr* and his own fields of interest and expertise.

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[93] A comparison of al-Zamakhsharī's grammatical work, the *Nukat al-aʿrāb fī gharīb al-iʿrāb*, with the *Kashshāf* reveals an important number of identical passages common to both, that deal with grammatical and lexical matters. It is not certain which work was written first and became the source for the other. It is even possible that the common material is based on notes that existed before either book was written.

[94] *Kashshāf* i, 43–4. Al-Zamakhsharī says, in fact, that he had initially tried to avoid the task, knowing what was required of one seeking to accomplish it and seeing the level to which knowledge of the Arabic linguistic sciences had sunk.

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THE FIRST ISLAMIC REVOLT IN MAMLŪK COLLECTIVE MEMORY: IBN BAKR'S (D. 1340) PORTRAYAL OF THE THIRD CALIPH ʿUTHMĀN*

Heather Keaney

The revolt against the third caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān in 35 A.H./656 C.E. was a cataclysmic event in Islamic history. It marked the end of the religio-political balance established by Muḥammad and inaugurated the debate over and quest for authentic Islamic government. It was the first revolt and regicide by Muslims against a Muslim ruler. It also led to a series of events that brought about civil war and an end to the Caliphate of the Rashidūn (the Rightly-guided Caliphs) and the permanent division between Sunnite and Shiite Islam. Finally, the two sides in the revolt came to represent in Islamic collective memory and political discourse one of the key tensions in Islamic government—justice vs. unity of the community.

In addition to its historical significance, the imagery of ʿUthmān's murder was graphic and moving in such a way that it could take on greater symbolic significance in Islamic collective imagination. For example, considering the description of ʿUthmān's death, one reads:

> The attackers entered his room and one stabbed him in the face with a stake and ʿUthmān said, *In the name of God! I put my trust in Him.* And then the blood flowed down onto his beard and trickled onto the Quran that was between his hands. For he had been reading the Quran and saying *Praise God the Almighty* when the blood flowed onto the Quran and gurgled up and stopped his speech. The Quran closed and together they struck him as a group. God have mercy upon him.[1]

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[1] Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ashʿarī: *al-Tamhīd wa-l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān*, Cairo: Dār al-kuttub al-Miṣriyya, 134.

The contrast between 'Uthmān's piety and the attackers' aggression evidenced here could be manipulated to emphasize or downplay one or the other. In this way, the symbolic power of the event could be continually re-interpreted and re-deployed as a commentary on the revolt and the tensions behind it. For example, T. El-Hibri has argued that through their narration of regicide accounts, 'Abbāsid chroniclers, like al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), were addressing a contemporary core moral problem, "namely whether it is legitimate to use force to depose a reigning monarch, and how this political upheaval can bring a social and religious shakeup in the life and fate of the community."[2] El-Hibri's comparative analysis of regicide accounts reflects recent developments in the field of Islamic historiography. The comparative analysis in this article also benefits from these same developments and pushes their application beyond 'Abbāsid historiography by comparing three different portrayals of the revolt against 'Uthmān in Mamlūk (1250–1517) period sources.

Historiographical studies were slow to develop in the field of Islamic history, in large part because of the nature of Arabic historical writing. Rather than writing a single, smooth narrative, the first universal chroniclers of the 3rd and 4th A.H. (9th and 10th C.E.) centuries kept their sources in the form of independent accounts (akhbār, sing. khabar). These were separated by the chain of transmitters (asānīd, sing. isnād) that traced the report from the chronicler back to the first narrator of the account, usually an eye-witness or contemporary of the event. The resulting presence of contradictory accounts side-by-side in the chronicles made these historians appear to be nothing more than compilers of earlier sources who did not provide any detectable, overarching interpretive framework. Consequently, it was believed new questions and concerns did not enter the historical discourse, making historiographical studies largely irrelevant for understanding the contemporary milieu of the chroniclers themselves.

In the last twenty years, however, close analysis of the akhbār and asānīd in the 'Abbāsid chronicles of the 9th and 10th centuries has revealed that historians could indeed present their own opinion of events through how they selected, arranged, and edited the earlier accounts. In this way, chroniclers could retain the authority of the

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[2] T. El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography* (1999), 84.

earliest sources, while at the same time have what S. Leder has called "unavowed authorship."[3] Recognition of the authorial role of chroniclers has on the one hand undermined faith in the historical reliability of the *akhbār* and the *asānīd*, but at the same time has enhanced historiographical studies through the use of a literary critical method to uncover topoi, themes and narrative structures that can tell us a great deal about the role of historical writing in conceptualizing and transmitting images of a sacred past.[4] Uncovering the narratives, however, requires looking at the chronicle as a whole or in comparison with other chronicles in order to see what liberties the author has taken with the sources in terms of selection and editing. Numerous studies along these lines have increased our appreciation for the Arabic historians' ability to maintain the apparent authoritativeness of the earliest accounts through the *khabar* and *isnād* format, while at the same time engaging in a creative process of reinterpretation that reflects their own views.[5] Thus far, however, such studies have focused almost exclusively on chronicles from the 'Abbāsid period.

Although it is now generally accepted that "a methodical reading of an event discloses the intentions and strategies of an astute Muslim historian,"[6] this approach has not been as readily applied to chronicles after the 'Abbāsid period.[7] This is in part due, once again, to the nature of medieval Arab historical writing. As the historians of the 9th and 10th centuries appeared to be primarily compilers, so those of the later medieval period appeared to be merely paraphrasing and summarizing the syntheses of al-Ṭabarī and his contemporaries, while focusing their attention on more topical events.[8] This view was supported by the assumption that with the collapse of 'Abbāsid authority, medieval Muslim historians were unable to

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[3] S. Leder, The Literary use of the *Khabar* (1992), 284 *passim*.

[4] R.S. Humphreys, Qur'anic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography (1989); T. Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (1994); A. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source Critical Study* (1994); S. Günther, Modern Literary Theory Applied to Classical Arabic Texts (2000), S. Leder (n. 3).

[5] J. Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory* (1986); T. Abdelkader, Ṭabarī on the Companions of the Prophet (1999); M.Q. Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbāsids* (1997); A. Afsaruddin, In Praise of the Caliphs (1999), S.C. Judd, Ghaylan al-Dimashqi (1999); El-Hibri (n. 2).

[6] Abdelkader, Ṭabarī on the Companions of the Prophet, 209.

[7] One long-standing and noteworthy exception to this is D. Spellberg's *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of 'Ā'isha' Bint Abī Bakr* (1994).

[8] R.S. Humphreys, art. "Ta'rīkh," in: *EI*² x (2000), 271–283.

reconcile current political realities with the ideals of the early Islamic
community. Consequently, it was believed they remained silent about
the tensions, no longer engaged their early history, and merely para-
phrased previous authorities.

This article, however, will demonstrate that medieval Islamic his-
torians and biographers continued to communicate their own inter-
pretation of the pivotal events and characters of the Rashidūn
Caliphate through the careful editing of their sources.[9] Moreover, a
comparative analysis of portrayals of the revolt against ʿUthmān in
Mamlūk chronicles suggests that concern for the ideals of justice and
unity embodied in the early Islamic community may have been re-
invigorated in the face of the crises of the 7th/13th century.[10] Among
these were the Crusader, Tatar and Mongol invasions, the latter of
which also brought about the end of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate with
the sacking of Baghdad in 658/1258. The Mamlūks who came to
power in Egypt and Syria at this same time were warrior slaves from
Central Asia, who ruled by military might—a far cry from the religio-
political ideals of the early community and caliphate.[11] All of these
challenges to the notions of an Islamic polity combined to create a
general sense of crisis which in turn encouraged what T. Khalidi
terms a "then and now" historical perspective with earlier moments
of crisis in Islamic history.[12]

That this was indeed the case is supported by a 250-page long
biography of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān written in 699/1299 by Muḥam-
mad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Abī Bakr (d. 741/1340). It is entitled *Al-Tamhīd
wa-l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān* ("An introduction and
elucidation of the death of the martyr ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān").[13] There

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[9] This view is supported by F.M. Donner's article: ʿUthmān and the Rāshidūn
Caliphs in Ibn ʿAsākir's *Taʾrīkh madinat dimashq* (2001).

[10] This opinion is supported by several related and recently published studies.
L. Wiederhold, Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in
Mamluk Society (1999); L. Wiederhold, Blasphemy Against the Prophet Muhammad
and His Companions (*Sabb al-rusūl, sabb al-ṣaḥāba*) (1997); Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion &
Violence in Islamic Law* (2001).

[11] Further contextualization of the literary analysis offered here is beyond the
scope of this article, although I will offer some suggestions in the conclusion. Placing
the historiographic discourse on the revolt against ʿUthmān within its changing his-
torical contexts is the subject of my dissertation *Remembering Rebellion: ʿUthmān b.
ʿAffān in Medieval Islamic Historiography* (2003).

[12] Khalidi 184.

[13] This manuscript is from the Ottoman period and is the only known copy. Dr.
Maḥmūd Zāyid of the American University in Beirut published an edited version

is an entry for Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā in the biographical dictionary of noteworthy figures of the 8th/14th century, *Durar al-kāmina* by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 1449). Here his name appears as Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Bakr ibn Saʿd al-Ashʿarī al-Mālikī, commonly known as Ibn Bakr.[14] His dates are given as 674–741/1275–1340. Thus we know that he wrote this work when he was about twenty-five years old and probably when he was a student in Cairo or the Ḥijāz. From al-ʿAsqalānī we learn, however, that the author was actually of Andalusian origin, was among the leaders of the *ʿulamāʾ* there, and was known for his administration of justice and readings in *ḥadīth*, dates, and lineage. He traveled throughout Syria, the Ḥijāz, and Egypt and then returned to al-Andalus. He became a *shaykh* in his hometown of Malaga and was later appointed to be its *qāḍī*. In the year 737/1336 he was invested with the office of preacher and judge in Granada.[15]

Al-ʿAsqalānī's entry is a summary of that found in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's (d. 1375) "History of Granada."[16] This same entry is also quoted in the later Andalusian chronicle *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* by al-Maqqarī (d. 1631/2). From al-Maqqarī we learn that Lisān al-Dīn studied with Ibn Bakr when he was the *qāḍī* in Granada. Ibn Bakr died "a martyr," along with Lisān al-Dīn's father, in the battle of Salado or Tarifa in 741/1340—the "greatest single reverse suffered by the Muslim cause in Spain until the final loss of Granada in 1492."[17]

In this article, Ibn Bakr's portrayal of ʿUthmān will be compared with that found in the narratives of two better known, though perhaps

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of the manuscript in 1964 (see bibliography). I did not become aware of this edition until I had completed my own work with the Dār al-Kutub manuscript. I have seen Dr. Zāyid's edition and we rely on the same sources for information about the author and he offers no comment on where or why Ibn Bakr would write such a work. Moreover, he does not include in his edition the last fifteen pages from the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya ms. These pages are primarily an attack on the Shiite sect of the Rāfiḍites. M. Zāyid states that he has not published these pages because he has chosen to focus on the ʿUthmān material. Nonetheless, one cannot help but wonder if the situation in Beirut in the 1960s may have contributed to this decision.

[14] A footnote in al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikar, 1986, addresses the slight difference in the names and that, although his name was Ibn Abī Bakr, the *Abū* was dropped and he was known as Ibn Bakr.

[15] Secall, Rulers and Qadis 247, cites Ibn Bakr as an example of a just *qāḍī*.

[16] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Lisān al-Dīn: *Al-Iḥāṭa fī aḥkbār Gharnāṭa*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Fanjī, 1973.

[17] L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain* (1990), 190.

less colorful, historians from the Mamlūk period: al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) whose history is entitled *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), author of the universal chronicle *Al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*.[18] Although al-Dhahabī was born, taught, and died in Damascus, he spent most of his time studying law and tradition with Shāfiʿī scholars in Mamlūk Cairo. This is also where he began *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*. Upon al-Dhahabī's death, Ibn Kathīr succeeded him as teacher of *ḥadīth* in Damascus. Although also trained in the Shāfiʿī school of law, early in his career Ibn Kathīr fell under the influence of the Ḥanbalī jurist, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1327–8), and was, at his request, buried next to Ibn Taymiyya.[19] By comparing these three works, we can see how through the editing process each historian becomes the author of his own narrative of the revolt against ʿUthmān. The range of emphases in these narratives, in turn points to an ongoing dialogue about whether ʿUthmān's actions justified his forceful removal from office and murder and the related question of whether it is ever legitimate to use force against a ruler.

The three portrayals of ʿUthmān discussed below reflect a spectrum of interpretations on authority, rebellion, and regicide. Although each narrative includes a standard corpus of material on the events of the revolt, each varies in the context, explanation, and interpretation the historian provides for these events. Consequently, very subtle, yet distinct emphases can be detected in their narratives. Al-Dhahabī claims that regardless of the ruler, a revolt, even to restore religious principles, is not justified. In contrast, Ibn Kathīr leaves open the possibility for the unjust Imām to be killed as an act of judgment by God—but ultimately defends ʿUthmān as a just Imām. Ibn Bakr argues that ʿUthmān was not only just, but the ideal of piety and probity. These three positions are illustrated through the way each author explains the revolt, defends ʿUthmān and describes the final stages of the siege and murder.

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[18] Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987; and Ismaʿīl ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr: *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, Beirut: Dār al-Hiyā' al-ʿArabī, 1989.

[19] H. Laoust: art. "Ibn Kathīr," in: *EI*², iii, 817–18.

1   *Ibn Bakr*

In order to understand why Ibn Bakr would feel the need to write such a lengthy treatise on ʿUthmān in 699/1299, it is probably best to start with his own explanation. After giving praise to God, Ibn Bakr summarizes the content of his work as follows:

> In this book, I recall the death (*maṣraʿ*) of the martyred Imām of the two lights,[20] ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, and his circumstances and some of his just conduct, and this without divergence and partisan fanaticism. Rather I relate what the community of *ʿulamāʾ* have transmitted in their books and histories.[21]

He then mentions specifically Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*, Sayf ibn ʿUmar's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn's *Kitāb al-Sharīʿa*, Ibn al-Athīr's *Taʾrīkh*, and others. Thus he claims to offer his reader an unbiased survey of the literature on ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. Ibn Bakr also provides the chains of transmission for most of his accounts, and it is through these that we can gauge more accurately his intent by analyzing which particular accounts he chose from the sources available to him.

In terms of the revolt, Ibn Bakr relied predominantly on accounts based on the authority of Sayf ibn ʿUmar (d. ca. 180/796). This is a little surprising since accounts based on Sayf ibn ʿUmar rarely appear in the historical narratives after al-Ṭabarī.[22] On the other hand, it is not surprising at all since the Sayf accounts generally defend ʿUthmān. Sayf's reliability as a historical source, however, has long been debated. R.S. Humphreys has called his accounts a "Sunday school version" of the first *fitna* (trial, civil strife), one in which the Companions of the Prophet are isolated from communal divisions and personal antagonisms and the tragic outcome of the revolt is blamed on fringe, heretical groups. On the other hand, E. Landau-Tasseron has argued recently that there is no reason to consider Sayf any less reliable than his contemporaries.[23] In his history

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[20] The "possessor of the two lights" (*dhū l-nurayn*) was an honorary title given to ʿUthmān because the Prophet Muḥammad gave him two of his daughters in marriage. In all of human history, ʿUthmān is the only one to have this distinction.

[21] Ibn Bakr 1.

[22] One noteworthy exception to this is *K. al-Ghazawāt* by another Andalusian, Ibn Hubaysh (d. 1188).

[23] Humphreys: Translator's Foreword, in: *The History of al-Tabari* xv (*The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*), 1990; and E. Landau-Tasseron, Sayf ibn ʿUmar in Medieval and

of the revolt, al-Ṭabarī juxtaposed accounts by Sayf ibn ʿUmar with
those by al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822), who is critical of ʿUthmān. Unlike
al-Ṭabarī, however, Ibn Bakr included almost no accounts based on
al-Wāqidī. Consequently, Ibn Bakr's reliance on accounts attributed
to Sayf ibn ʿUmar produces a one-sided coverage of the events that
makes his work almost hagiographical in its defense of ʿUthmān. In
fact, Ibn Bakr's text is hard to categorize; he constructs a narrative
that is part history, part biography, part anti-Shiite polemic.

   Ibn Bakr divides his manuscript into twelve thematic and chrono-
logical chapters. These are as follows:

   1. His lineage, children and wives;
   2. His conversion to Islam and pilgrimage;
   3. The oath of loyalty and the story of his *shūrā*;[24]
   4. Treatment of his authority, what was held against him and what
      happened during his caliphate;
   5. Those who set out against him and besieged him;
   6. What was said by those who wanted to remove him and his
      response;
   7. His murder and the site of his burial;
   8. The extent of his *sunna* and caliphate;
   9. His characteristics and clothes;
  10. His habits and virtues;
  11. What the poets say about him, and
  12. Proclamation of what happened to those who killed ʿUthmān or
      defended him.

In this article, I draw on material from chapters four through seven.
These chapters on the revolt, siege, and murder make up exactly
half of the manuscript.

   In his explanation for the revolt, Ibn Bakr emphasizes ʿUthmān's
decisive leadership and blames the revolt on the spread of heresy
and discontent. In chapter four, Ibn Bakr addresses the political and
religious complaints that are commonly held against ʿUthmān. Or
rather he dismisses them.

Modern Scholarship (1990). Debates over the historicity of accounts transmitted by
Sayf are in many ways a case study for ongoing concerns about *akhbār* in general
(n. 4).
   [24] The consultative body of six men appointed by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to elect
the next caliph.

The most common criticism of 'Uthmān is that he removed Companions of the Prophet from governorships in Kufa, Basra, and Egypt and replaced them with members from his own family and tribe. The problem was not just nepotism, but the belief or implication that he was reasserting pre-Islamic authority structures based on tribal affiliation over primacy in Islam. Ibn Bakr, however, makes few references to these accusations and concerns, and, when he does, it is to dismiss and undermine them. He relies on accounts that describe the problems in the garrison towns of Kufa and Basra as stemming from personal antagonisms between leaders in these cities. 'Uthmān replaced the governors in an effort to solve these disputes and in response to the people's request. It is never mentioned that the people he removed were Companions of the Prophet or that the men he appointed were members of his tribe or that the people later held this against him. Instead, 'Uthmān comes across as a concerned ruler, doing all he can to ensure sound and just government. When problems continued and the people redirected their anger at 'Uthmān himself, rather than their governors, Ibn Bakr attributes this to either the spread of religious heresies or the machinations of disgruntled ex-governors.

The groups that actually departed from Kufa, Basra, and Egypt to confront 'Uthmān and eventually besieged and murdered him were, according to Ibn Bakr, from a heretical fringe group rather than representatives of a group with any legitimate religious or political grievance. Ibn Bakr addresses this in chapter five. This chapter is roughly equivalent to the events of year thirty-four and thirty-five A.H. in the chronicles. Ibn Bakr begins the chapter with the story of 'Abdallāh ibn Sabā', a Jew, who was spreading the heretical teaching of the second coming of the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Bakr spends some time on how this heresy was spreading through the garrison towns, and was especially successful in Egypt. Followers of this heresy, the Sabā'iyya, wrote back and forth and then decided to meet in Medina to confer on how they would proceed. This then is Ibn Bakr's explanation for the first group of "dissidents" who approached 'Uthmān; it is a heretical fringe group rather than one upset with 'Uthmān or his policies.

When the Sabā'iyya arrived in Medina, 'Uthmān sent envoys to see what they wanted. The dissidents summarized their plan to the messengers as follows:

> We want to mention to him certain misdeeds we have already planted
> in the hearts of the people. Then we will return to them and pretend
> that we had forced him to acknowledge these things, but that he did
> not depart from them or repent. After that we will depart as if we
> are going on the pilgrimage until we arrive in [Medina]. We will sur-
> round him and depose him, and if he refuses, we will kill him.[25]

With one stroke Ibn Bakr discredits the more common narrative of
events that 'Uthmān had committed innovations, was confronted by
a representative group from the garrison towns, repented to them
and then did not follow through and change his behavior.

Ibn Bakr continues to give only one interpretation of events, one
that defends 'Uthmān's character and policies, when he dismisses
the last serious charge held against 'Uthmān—the letter he suppos-
edly wrote to the Egyptian governor ordering him to kill the lead-
ers of the dissident group upon their return to Egypt. When the
band of Sabā'iyya broke up and headed for their respective towns,
the group returning to Egypt came upon a messenger carrying this
letter. The letter had 'Uthmān's seal on it and was carried by one
of his servants riding one of his camels. In most narratives, regard-
less of how they explain this event, it is seen as the turning point
in the rebellion. Often it is upon this point that the debate over
whether 'Uthmān's actions justified rebellion and ultimately regicide
is determined. Upon discovery of the letter, the Egyptians returned
to Medina, laid siege to 'Uthmān and ultimately killed him. However,
just as Ibn Bakr discredited the first delegation, he dismisses this crit-
ical event as another conspiracy.

According to Ibn Bakr, the dissidents left Medina the first time
only as a ploy to throw off those who were defending 'Uthmān so
they could return and besiege the city. When 'Alī went out to ask
why they had returned—the point at which we would expect to hear
about the discovery of the incriminating letter—Ibn Bakr reveals the
story of the letter to be nothing but a fabrication and an excuse.
He provides only one account of the event. In it 'Alī points out to
the band that it was impossible for the group from Basra and Kufa
to have known that the Egyptians found such a letter and so the
fact that they had all returned to Medina together meant it had to
have been a conspiracy they planned before they left Medina the
first time. The dissidents responded:

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[25] Ibn Bakr 92.

> Explain it however you wish. We reject this man ['Uthmān]. Let him be removed from us![26]

According to Ibn Bakr's version then, the revolt against 'Uthmān is not a revolt at all, but a plot by a few malcontents and heretics who acted deceptively and without popular support.

It is clear that Ibn Bakr's entire explanation for the revolt is also a defense of 'Uthmān. He links his defense of 'Uthmān personally with a defense of the principle of the unity of the community. For example, in Ibn Bakr's narrative, 'Uthmān's advisors repeatedly urge him to use force against the rebels, but 'Uthmān refuses, insisting he will not be the first to bring bloodshed into the Prophet's community. 'Uthmān then warns the besiegers that if they kill him the community will be permanently divided and they will never pray together again, or wage war together or divide booty together. This argument appears in all the histories and is part of the canon on the revolt against 'Uthmān. But Ibn Bakr also emphasizes the importance of unity by putting it in the context of the battle between good and evil, sin and obedience.

He argues for 'Uthmān's overall righteousness in contrast to the rebels' sinfulness when he records Laylā bint 'Umays' following observation:

> *Verily the lamp consumes itself as it gives light to the people. Do not sin in a matter that you may bring on to someone who has not sinned against you. This matter that you are pursuing today will affect someone else tomorrow. Beware lest your deeds today become a source of grief to you.* But they were obstinate and went off in anger, saying, *We will not forget what 'Uthmān has done to us.* She responded, *He did nothing to you except to compel you to obey God.*[27]

This is a powerful image of 'Uthmān's role as the lamp giving light to the community. It contrasts his righteousness to the rebels' sinfulness. Furthermore, beyond the permanent division of the community, 'Uthmān later warns the rebels that they will be destroyed by God just like the sinful in the days of Noah and Lot. Ibn Bakr concludes the chapter with an account of 'Uthmān's last sermon in which he stated:

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[26] Ibid. 101.
[27] Ibid. 121.

> Beware lest God's [favor towards you] be altered: cling to your com-
> munity (*jamā'a*) and do not be divided into factions. "Remember God's
> blessing upon you when you were enemies, and He brought your
> hearts together, so that by His blessings you became brothers".[28]

This final statement is from a quranic verse that reminds his listen-
ers that the creation of the unified Islamic community is an act of
God and a confirmation of His blessing.

In his chapter on the siege itself, Ibn Bakr contrasts 'Uthmān's
piety with the attackers' violence. Ibn Bakr drives home the com-
parison between 'Uthmān and his attackers when he describes how
the rebels responded to his final sermon by throwing stones at him
and his supporters in the mosque of the Prophet in Medina. They
eventually knocked 'Uthmān from the pulpit and he was carried into
his house unconscious. It is at this point that the siege or "battle of
the house" begins. Earlier Ibn Bakr discredited the rebels as reli-
gious heretics; he now describes them as a group of bandits moti-
vated by bloodlust and greed. Ibn Bakr portrays 'Uthmān repeatedly
urging his supporters to return to their homes and refrain from vio-
lence, while he points out that 'Uthmān's besiegers did not even
permit him water to drink and savagely assaulted a woman who
tried to bring him water. The Sayf account points out that not even
the infidels behave so inhumanely.

Ibn Bakr continues to rely on the accounts by Sayf ibn 'Umar
and presents a very dramatic picture of the murder. However, he
also augments the Sayf accounts with others so that his narrative of
the murder goes on for ten pages. As in the siege, the emphasis is
on 'Uthmān's piety in contrast to his attackers' aggression. He dwells
for some time on the image of 'Uthmān weeping and praying as he
read the Quran.

> During those days 'Uthmān took up the Quran in tears, praying and
> keeping the text beside him. When he became fatigued he would sit
> up and read in it, for people used to regard reciting the Quran as a
> form of worship. Meantime, his defenders, whom he had restrained,
> were between him and the door. When the Egyptians remained unable
> to break in, though no one was keeping them away from the door,
> they brought fire and set the door and the portico ablaze. . . . Then,
> as 'Uthmān prayed, the men in the house rose up and fended off [the
> assailants].[29]

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[28] Ibid. 113; Q 3:98 (trans. by Aḥmad 'Alī, Princeton: Princeton University Press,
1984).
[29] Ibid. 126. This is identical to a Sayf account in al-Ṭabarī.

Ibn Bakr goes on to highlight how ʿUthmān was able to recite the Quran without making any mistakes despite the fierce battle that was raging around him. He also draws out the details of the battle in order to emphasize the amount of support for ʿUthmān and the dedication of his defenders. He gives several accounts detailing how when the rebels finally did break in, they were unable to kill ʿUthmān after they saw him and talked to him.

Once someone was finally able to strike the first blow, Ibn Bakr contrasts ʿUthmān's piety and the attacker's brutality. Another Sayf account later on states two men rose up and attacked ʿUthmān, and one of them:

> Struck him with an iron tool he was carrying and kicked the Quran with his foot. The Sacred Text flew over, dropping into ʿUthmān's hands and his blood flowed upon it. Sūdān ibn Ḥumrān came up to strike him, and Nāʾila bt. al-Farāfiṣa bent over him and warded off the sword with her hand. He aimed at her and struck off her fingers. As she turned to flee, he fondled her hips and said: *How large your buttocks are!* Then he struck ʿUthmān and killed him.[30]

The Sayf account continues to describe the attackers' aggression and also focuses on their greed. According to this narrative, the rebels pillaged the house and drove out those who lived there and then ran through the house grabbing anything they could find, even what was on the women. The account concludes with the rebels crying out:

> *Seize the public treasury! No one must get there ahead of you!* The guards of the public treasury—in which there were but two sacks—heard their voices and said: *Run! These people are only after worldly goods.* They fled, while [the rebels] came to the Treasury and pillaged it.

By portraying the attackers in this way, Ibn Bakr reveals them to be not representatives of a political rebellion, or even of a religious movement, but rather mere bandits out for booty.[31] Ibn Bakr marginalizes the rebels in order to defend ʿUthmān, but also so he can claim there were no divisions within the community or between the Companions of the Prophet.

The accepted wisdom is that defending the sanctity of the early community and the piety of the first four caliphs was the standard

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[30] Ibid. 134.
[31] Abou El Fadl examines the legal distinctions between rebellion and brigandage. A key element in the legal discourse was whether a group had a following and a distinct religious interpretation, or whether they were a small band intent on material gain (n. 10).

Sunnite position in the Mamlūk period. But the fact that Ibn Bakr
felt the need to write such a tract and that the historian, al-Dhahabī,
writing only a short time later described a divided community due
to ʿUthmān's poor leadership, suggests that Muslim thinkers in the
Mamlūk period were still wrestling with the causes and consequences
of the revolt against ʿUthmān.

2   *Al-Dhahabī*

Al-Dhahabī is critical of ʿUthmān from the opening events explain-
ing the reasons for the revolt up until the closing scenes of ʿUthmān's
death.[32] Indeed his overall lack of sympathy for ʿUthmān is some-
what surprising. Al-Dhahabī selects and arranges his sources in such
a way that ʿUthmān appears responsible for the breakdown in the
community because of his acts of nepotism and subsequent inability
to respond decisively to the growing unrest. Al-Dhahabī begins year
thirty-five of his chronicle by stating it was the year of the military
expedition at Dhū Khushub, in which Muʿāwiya was commander.
Secondly, ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbbās led the Hajj that year. And finally
he states that it was the year in which ʿUthmān was murdered and

> in which the Egyptians and others revolted against ʿUthmān and went
> to him to depose him from the caliphate.[33]

Thus, from the very beginning, ʿUthmān is portrayed in a position
of weakness while others have taken over the roles of military and
religious leadership in the community. Al-Dhahabī then provides a
litany of the complaints against ʿUthmān, among them that he
"destroyed" the Quran and favored his family.

Al-Dhahabī notes that ʿUthmān's removal of Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ from
the governorship of Kufa was the "first weakness to enter ʿUthmān's
[reign]" and that subsequently the people were "emboldened against
him."[34] This event is generally held up in the chronicles as the turn-
ing point in ʿUthmān's reign. Al-Dhahabī goes on to state that after
this ʿUthmān "became weak and wavered in his command of them

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[32] He combines all the events that led up to the revolt as well as the revolt itself
in year thirty-five of his chronicle *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*. The narrative of the revolt is
about thirty pages in length.
[33] Al-Dhahabī 429.
[34] Ibid. 431.

and installed his relatives and people of his house."[35] He continues by providing accounts of 'Uthmān replacing other governors, the motivation for which is clearly portrayed as nepotism or capriciousness. Al-Dhahabī further criticizes 'Uthmān not only for his lack of leadership, but for his weakness of character as well, by including an account that reminds the reader that 'Uthmān fled at the Battle of Uḥud and was absent at the Battle of Badr.

This is very different from the accounts found in Ibn Bakr in which 'Uthmān appears to do all in his power to seek counsel and act decisively to address complaints and restore order. Nor does al-Dhahabī give any mention of the Sabā'iyya heresy that was spreading through the garrison towns. Whereas Ibn Bakr, relies primarily on Sayf ibn 'Umar for the shape and tone of his narrative, al-Dhahabī uses a wide variety of sources. He uses accounts based on al-Wāqidī, Sayf ibn 'Umar, al-Zuhrī, (d. 124/742) and al-Sha'bī (d. ca. 103/721) only a couple times each; he then uses close to another forty sources only once each. It is really quite remarkable that he has so distanced himself from the compilations of the 9th century like al-Ṭabarī who relies predominantly on Sayf and al-Wāqidī, or al-Balādhurī (d. 279/893) who relies on al-Wāqidī, Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845) and al-Madā'inī (d. 225/840).

There are a couple of possible explanations, both of which require further consideration and evaluation. It is possible that al-Dhahabī was simply what modern scholars would consider a more scrupulous historian who made a point of going back to the earliest available sources rather than relying on later compilations.[36] His selection of sources may also reflect a particular political agenda. Further research and comparative analysis is needed to determine whether al-Dhahabī selected a disproportionate number of sources that were pro-Shiite.[37]

Rather than being sympathetic to the Shiite position, however, I would argue that al-Dhahabī was concerned with the threat of weak leadership within the Sunnite context. For example, al-Dhahabī takes liberties with the two Sayf accounts he does use in a way that contrasts Mu'āwiya's decisiveness with 'Uthmān's weakness. In the first,

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[35] Ibid. 432.
[36] M. Cooperson describes al-Dhahabī as a scrupulous and critical historian; cf. Cooperson, *The Heirs of the Prophets* (1994) 149.
[37] I hesitate to prematurely label these historians believing M. Cooperson's observation to be a good one, that labeling usually results in circular reasoning and does little more than point out predictable correlations; cf. Cooperson 32.

he tells how Muʿāwiya, while in Medina for the pilgrimage, "saw how pliant ʿUthmān had become and the disturbance of his affairs."[38] Muʿāwyia then asked ʿUthmān to accompany him to Syria where, due to his strong leadership, the people were still obedient. This is an account by Sayf that appears in almost all the chronicles; however, in other references to it Muʿāwiya urges ʿUthmān to accompany him because he fears for his life. In the more common Sayf account the focus is on the aggression of the dissidents. Al-Dhahabī inserts the phrase "pliantness of ʿUthmān" to blame ʿUthmān's incompetence. The shift in focus is subtle, yet significant. In a later Sayf account, when Muʿāwiya sends an army to defend ʿUthmān, al-Dhahabī has Muʿāwiya explain that it is because ʿUthmān "is not capable" of dealing with the situation.[39] Thus al-Dhahabī's narrative indicates once again that historians could continue to reinterpret the past through both the selection and arrangement of early, individual *akhbār* as well as through the editing and manipulating of those *akhbār*.[40] Furthermore, in contrast to Ibn Bakr, whose final chapter is a direct attack on Shīʿism, al-Dhahabī seems motivated by an inner-Sunnite concern with strong and legitimate government. This further illustrates the ways in which these sources reflect the contemporary concerns of the individual authors.

Thus far then in al-Dhahabī's narrative, ʿUthmān's poor leadership is responsible for the unrest and rebellion. More specifically, to explain why the siege took place when it did, al-Dhahabī describes the dissidents riding from the garrison towns to confront ʿUthmān and the event of the letter to the Egyptian governor. He includes the account found in Ibn Bakr, in which the band admitted to two of ʿUthmān's envoys that they would return to their town claiming to have confronted ʿUthmān and that he did not repent—thus making the whole situation a set up. But unlike Ibn Bakr's version, this group is composed of general dissidents, not followers of the Sabāʾiyya heresy. Furthermore, it is preceded by accounts that blame ʿUthmān for the initial dissatisfaction felt by the people and is followed by accounts that focus on the discovery of the letter ʿUthmān supposedly wrote to the Egyptian governor. In contrast to Ibn Bakr's quick

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[38] Al-Dhahabī 435.
[39] Ibid. 451.
[40] S. Leder's article on the use of the *khabar* is pivotal for any discussion of *akhbār* formation and manipulation. However, his remark that "*akhbār* were given their final shape" by the authors of the 9th century appears in need of further consideration.

dismissal of the letter, al-Dhahabī highlights its importance by giving several versions of the event. The last one has the rebels stating,

> *God has made your blood lawful, and you have violated the pact and the covenant* [*which you made with us*]. And they laid siege to him in the palace.[41]

Thus, in al-Dhahabī, 'Uthmān himself is responsible for the general feeling of discontent in the community as well as for instigating the siege itself with his provocative letter.

It is only after the siege has actually begun, that al-Dhahabī offers any defense of 'Uthmān. Ultimately, he appears more concerned with condemning the revolt than he is with defending 'Uthmān. This is supported by the fact that all his arguments are based on the importance of the unity of the community. He begins with the most common, namely 'Uthmān's refusal to remove a shirt of authority placed upon him by God and 'Uthmān's warning that it was only lawful to kill a Muslim on one of three occasions: murder, adultery, and apostasy. 'Uthmān also warned that if they killed him the community would never pray, fight or divide booty together again. Al-Dhahabī makes the principle of political unity more important than religious principles when he offers two accounts that deal with the dangers of raising the Quran against the ruler. The first warns that if a community kills its prophet, it will not be reconciled together by God until the blood of 70,000 has been shed. And the community that kills its caliph will not be reconciled together by God until the blood of 40,000 has been shed. The speaker within the account continues his warning, stating:

> *And the community was not destroyed until they raised the Quran against the ruler.* But they did not pay any attention to him and [went ahead and] killed him ('Uthmān).[42]

This brings up anachronistic images of a later decisive conflict in the move towards the permanent division of the community—the Battle of Ṣiffīn between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya in 657. In this conflict, a group suggested placing the Quran on the end of their spears stating the Quran would decide which side was in the right. 'Alī allowed for this, lost the military advantage and eventually lost the battle. Al-Dhahabī's next account also reminds his readers that raising the

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[41] Al-Dhahabī 443.
[42] Ibid. 446–7.

Quran against the ruler only produces divisions by pointing out that
the Khārijites (those who departed from ʿAlī) were the first to do
this. By reminding his readers of these events and conflating them
with the revolt against ʿUthmān, al-Dhahabī implies that religion,
even in the form of the Quran, should not be allowed to determine
political legitimacy. Authority and stability are the most important
objectives according to al-Dhahabī.

   That al-Dhahabī is criticizing rebellion in general rather than
defending ʿUthmān in particular, becomes even more apparent in
his portrayal of the final stages of the siege and the murder itself.
He shows very little support or sympathy for ʿUthmān and down-
plays the attackers' aggression and violence. He makes no mention
of the besiegers throwing stones or refusing to give ʿUthmān any
water to drink, both points that are elaborated upon in Ibn Bakr
and Ibn Kathīr. Al-Dhahabī likewise, virtually ignores references to
popular support for ʿUthmān. As far as his portrayal of ʿUthmān
himself, al-Dhahabī acknowledges that ʿUthmān was reading the
Quran when he was killed, but he does not dwell on it or develop
it in terms of a case in ʿUthmān's defense. Finally, he makes only
a passing reference to any pillaging that may have taken place.
Moreover, after the murder, he summarizes the reasons for the revolt
in which he offers no defense for ʿUthmān in terms of his charac-
ter or behavior. Rather, he reminds the reader of all the grievances
against ʿUthmān. He concludes his account of the revolt by moving
immediately to the events surrounding the oath of allegiance being
given to ʿAlī. This is not too surprising in light of al-Dhahabī's
emphasis on unity and authority.

   Clearly there is a difference of intent between Ibn Bakr's biogra-
phy and al-Dhahabī's universal chronicle. However, the intent of the
individual author is more significant than the difference between
chronicle and biography. The distinction between biography and his-
tory is a difficult one in medieval Islamic sources. Al-Dhahabī, for
example, went on to write a biographical dictionary that is a com-
pendium of the biographical entries in his universal chronicle. And
E. Landau-Tasseron points out that when Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī
(d. 764/1362) described the characteristics of a good historian, he
was actually referring to biographers.[43] The works discussed here

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[43] Landau-Tasseron 11. This death date may well be an error as the more com-
monly recognized date is 756/1355.

reflect the intentions of their authors. Ibn Bakr claimes to provide an unbiased survey of the literature, but in actuality relies predominantly on one source to defend ʿUthmān during the revolt and then in later chapters relies on arguments by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) to attack Shīʿism in general. In contrast, based on the introduction and conclusion in al-Dhahabī's chronicle, he is writing to impart knowledge—knowledge that will ostensibly aid his readers in their quest for salvation.[44] Apparently, he thought he could do this best not by presenting an idealized past to emulate, but by pointing out errors to avoid, errors that plagued even the Companions of the Prophet. The point remains, however, that each author used similar methods of manipulating the available material to produce remarkably different narratives of the revolt against ʿUthmān. Moreover, that each used this editorial method to convey such distinct interpretations of a past that had supposedly become sacrosanct, is further evidence of an ongoing dialogue between that past and their present. This is further supported by a final comparison with the narrative of the revolt against ʿUthmān in another Mamlūk chronicle written by al-Dhahabī's student, Ibn Kathīr.

3   Ibn Kathīr

Ibn Kathīr begins his narrative of the revolt against ʿUthmān in year thirty-four of his universal chronicle *Al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*.[45] Ibn Kathīr uses only twelve different sources and many of his accounts are in the form of extended narratives rather than short and isolated *akhbār* as in al-Dhahabī. He not only cites al-Ṭabarī specifically several times, but appears to follow to a certain extent a similar format of juxtaposition as he uses Sayf ibn ʿUmar five times and al-Wāqidī seven times. He also relies heavily on Ibn ʿAsākir for lengthy narratives of events and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal for short accounts that defend ʿUthmān's character and that highlight his virtues. Consequently, from the very beginning Ibn Kathīr's tone is different from that found in Ibn Bakr or al-Dhahabī. He acknowledges that ʿUthmān made mistakes, but he vindicates ʿUthmān by focusing on his piety

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[44] Cooperson, *The Heirs of the Prophet* (1994), 150.
[45] All together the events of the revolt and related reports make up sixty pages of text.

during the final stages of the siege and assassination.[46] Because
'Uthmān ultimately proves to be a righteous ruler, Ibn Kathīr con-
demns the revolt against him. Nevertheless, the murder of the unjust
ruler, as an act of judgment, remains a real possibility in Ibn Kathīr's
narrative.

Ibn Kathīr's narrative of the revolt combines elements of criticism
and praise of 'Uthmān. On the one hand, he acknowledges that
there was unrest in the provinces, but does not attribute it directly
to 'Uthmān. In his narrative 'Uthmān's replacement of governors is
in response to the unrest rather than the cause of it. He describes
the Kūfans as "plotting against" their governor and "speaking rudely"
to 'Uthmān.[47] He also shows how these displaced governors went to
Medina to turn the people against 'Uthmān. According to Ibn Kathīr's
narrative, 'Uthmān continued to replace governors because the peo-
ple were never satisfied, not as a whim as al-Dhahabī would have
us believe. Furthermore, Ibn Kathīr acknowledges that the heretical
teaching of the second coming of Muḥammad was being spread in
the garrison towns by 'Abdallāh ibn Sabā', a Jew, who was turning
the people against 'Uthmān.[48] However, Ibn Kathīr also points out
that 'Uthmān "cut off" many of the Companions of the Prophet
and replaced governors with members from his own tribe and family.
It is clear in Ibn Kathīr's narrative that 'Uthmān made mistakes.
However, he also shows him seeking counsel, apologizing to the
people, and trying to rectify the situation.

The sense that 'Uthmān's authority is contingent on his justice
and the people's approval is most clearly displayed in an account of
'Alī confronting and warning 'Uthmān. This account is transmitted
by al-Wāqidī's chain of authority and does not appear in Ibn Bakr
or al-Dhahabī. 'Alī states:

> Know, 'Uthmān, that the best of God's servants in His eyes is a just
> Imām, one who has been guided aright and who himself gives right
> guidance . . . The worst of men in God's sight is a tyrannical Imām,
> one who has gone astray himself and by whom others are led astray. . . .
> Verily, I heard the Messenger of God say: *The Day of Resurrection will
> be brought by the tyrannical Imām; he will have no helper and no advocate, so
> that he will be cast into Hell. . . .* I tell you beware of God and His sud-

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[46] This reflects El-Hibri's point stated earlier (n. 2).
[47] Ibn Kathīr 187.
[48] Ibid. 188.

den assault and His vengeance, for His punishment is harsh and pain-ful indeed. I tell you beware lest you be the murdered Imām of this community.[49]

This is a powerful indictment against ʿUthmān that his acts are not minor political mistakes, but acts of injustice—injustice that will be divinely punished. The account continues by claiming ʿUthmān was not following the example set by his predecessors and that he did not have control over his governors, Muʿāwiya in particular.[50] ʿUthmān defended his actions on the pulpit in Medina, but he also apolo-gized. Here we see a very different portrayal of the relationship between the people and the ruler. In direct contrast to al-Dhahabī, the threat to the community is not division or disobedience, but the unjust Imām.

Year thirty-five of Ibn Kathīr's chronicle opens with the contin-uing problem of governors in the provinces, but there are no fur-ther references to nepotism on ʿUthmān's part. Rather it is the fickleness of the people that is the problem. However, at this point the issue of the letter to the Egyptian governor comes into play. Ibn Kathīr gives several varying accounts of the letter and ʿUthmān's denial of any knowledge of it.[51] What is noteworthy is that towards the end of his coverage of the revolt, after ʿUthmān's death, Ibn Kathīr includes a lengthy account that he attributes to Ibn ʿAsākir. In this account, the event of the letter again takes center stage, and ʿUthmān's accusers point out that even if he did not write the let-ter, that such a thing could happen without his knowledge shows his weakness and therefore he has no right to be caliph.[52] Ibn Kathīr again argues that authority is, at least to a certain degree, contin-gent upon performance.

In his portrayal of the siege, Ibn Kathīr defends ʿUthmān's lead-ership by focusing on his piety and close relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad. He provides pages of traditions defending ʿUthmān, most of which are based on the authority of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn Kathīr reminds his readers that ʿUthmān bought the well at Rūma, a place near Medina, for the Muslims and enlarged the

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[49] Ibid. 188–9. This passage is identical to al-Wāqidī's account in al-Ṭabarī.
[50] This is another interpretive difference with al-Dhahabī.
[51] Ibn Kathīr 196.
[52] Ibid. 208.

mosque in Medina—both things for which he was promised Paradise.[53] In addition, he gives an account that states Muḥammad preferred the tribe of Quraysh to any other and that, if he had the keys to Paradise, he would give them to the Banū Umayya.[54] And finally he cites, again on Ibn Ḥanbal's authority, the report from ʿĀʾisha that when Muḥammad was sick and called for some of his companions he did not want to see any one but ʿUthmān.[55] This same account continues by stating ʿUthmān refused to fight back during the siege because he had promised Muḥammad (perhaps in that final visit) he would not fight other Muslims and he would endure any hardship with patience.

Ibn Kathīr continues to focus on the defense of ʿUthmān's character into the final hours of the siege and the actual murder of ʿUthmān. First of all, he creates a unique setting by opening this section of his history with the account of ʿUthmān praying and fasting and then having a dream in which Muḥammad and the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, appear to him. Muḥammad tells ʿUthmān he will breakfast with them that day.[56] This tradition is usually cited in the chronicles, but Ibn Kathīr offers no less than nine variations of it. Visions of Muḥammad and the promise of Paradise are clearly a strong personal vindication of ʿUthmān and his religious qualifications to guide the community of Believers. On the other hand, by focusing his defense on ʿUthmān personally, he opens up the potential for attacks on the office itself.

Ibn Kathīr's history continues with the siege and assassination in which he contrasts the attackers' violence with ʿUthmān's pious patience. Unlike al-Dhahabī, he draws out the narrative of the battle to enter the house and says that the besiegers had to burn down the door to reach ʿUthmān.[57] Finally, Ibn Kathīr provides several different accounts of the murder itself producing a narrative that is more graphic and gruesome than al-Dhahabī's, but less so than Ibn Bakr's. One account states:

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[53] Ibid. 200.
[54] Ibid. 201.
[55] Ibid. 203.
[56] Ibid. 203–4.
[57] Ibid. 207.

> Then a man came upon 'Uthmān and hit him on the head and his blood trickled onto the Quran (*muṣḥaf*) and stained it. Then they took turns beating him and then another man came and struck him in the neck with a sword. And Nā'ila bt. al-Farāfiṣa al-Kalbiyya ('Uthmān's wife) jumped on him screaming . . . and she grabbed the sword so that the man sliced her hand. . . . Then they seized the property of the house. And a man passed by 'Uthmān and his head was resting on the Quran and he kicked his head with his foot away from the Quran saying: *By God, I have not seen a better face of an unbeliever than today nor a more generous unbeliever prostrate on his side.*[58]

Ibn Kathīr follows this with several more accounts all of which focus on the violent nature of the assault while 'Uthmān himself continued reading the Quran so that his blood flowed onto its open pages. The rebels, in turn, come across as violent and aggressive, as well as irreligious when in another account they kicked the Quran out of 'Uthmān's hands onto the floor and then pillaged the house. The account quoted above concludes by stating that the attackers raced through the house seizing everything down to the drinking glasses. By portraying 'Uthmān's final hours in this way, Ibn Kathīr can denounce this particular revolt as illegitimate because of 'Uthmān's piety and because the attackers did not have sufficient religious or political justification.[59]

Ibn Kathīr concludes his narrative of the revolt with the attackers regretting their deed after the fact. He has them express their regret with a verse from the Quran in which the Israelites regret worshipping the golden calf.

> Then they were filled with remorse and saw that they had erred and said: *If our Lord does not forgive us we will surely be lost* (Q 7:149).

The Sūra goes on to state that there are consequences for disobedience, but that God is also forgiving and compassionate. A few verses later Moses prays:

> O Lord, if You had pleased You could have annihilated them and me before this. Will you destroy us for something the foolish among us have done? This is but a trial from You whereby You will lead whom You will astray and guide whom You please. You are our savior,

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[58] Ibid. 206. This account is similar to a Sayf account in al-Ṭabarī, although the final remarks about 'Uthmān being an unbeliever are not in the al-Ṭabarī version.

[59] By dwelling on images of 'Uthmān praying, fasting and reading the Quran, he may have been building on al-Māwardī's argument that these are the minimal requirements that legitimize a ruler's right to demand obedience.

so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of forgivers
(Q 7:155).

This image of reconciliation and forgiveness is very different from
those that focus on the permanent division of the community. It
could be that Ibn Kathīr was thinking of this as well and making
a defense for rebels that even when they are in error, forgiveness
and reconciliation are the appropriate response.[60] Consequently, in
Ibn Kathīr's narrative the unity of the community requires justice
on the part of the ruler, not just obedience on the part of the peo-
ple, as we saw in al-Dhahabī. Nor, however, does he have to be an
idealized ruler as described in Ibn Bakr.

4   *Conclusion*

One would expect to find in Mamlūk Sunnite discourse a defense
of ʿUthmān combined with a condemnation of rebellion—and to a
certain extent this is what we can note.

   However, the range of emphases within this framework suggests
that the narrative had not become stagnant or irrelevant. Through
his selecting and editing of sources, al-Dhahabī presents ʿUthmān as
an example of the consequences of incompetent and weak leader-
ship—namely a divided community. Using the same editing process,
Ibn Kathīr implies the principles of obedience and unity are con-
tingent upon a ruler's justice and piety. Moreover, al-Dhahabī appears
to disregard the compilations of the 9th and 10th centuries and relies
on a wide range of early *akhbār*. In contrast, Ibn Kathīr's narrative
is composed of lengthy accounts that have clearly been developed
and stylized in the intervening centuries. Finally, Ibn Bakr relies
almost exclusively on the interpretation of events presented by Sayf
ibn ʿUmar—a source that was marginalized after al-Ṭabarī—to write
a virtual hagiography of ʿUthmān as the idealized Muslim ruler.

   Through this comparative textual analysis the nature of Arabic
historical writing as a process of creative editing is clearly revealed.
We hear the authors' voices through their predecessors' words. There
is dynamism in the historical narrative as the writers uphold the

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[60] Such a shift in emphasis is also reflected in Abou El Fadl's analysis of the
legal discourse (n. 10).

authority of earlier sources while at the same time giving their own interpretation of events. Moreover, the variety of interpretations of the revolt against 'Uthmān suggests the presence of an on-going dialogue over how to find a workable balance between the ideals of unity and justice embodied in the early Islamic community and the political realities of the Mamlūk period. The ability to trace such discourses through the historical literature is noted by another Mamlūk historian, al-Maqrīzī. After giving an account of a different, though related, contentious event, he provides the following editorial comment:

> In addition to this one, other traditions are related which, if they are sound, are irrefutable. Even if they are later inventions, they are nevertheless an indication in this matter concerning which dispute has raged and controversy has been prolonged.[61]

What more can we learn from the "indications" of contemporary controversies that we find in the historical literature? Is it possible to learn more about the debates of the Mamlūk period and the role of the *'ulamā'* within them based on the ways in which Mamlūk historians constructed their narratives to emphasize various religio-political principles? Put in another way, what is the relationship between the text, the author and his contemporary context? Just a few details from the lives of the authors in this study affirm L. Wiederhold's assertion: "in order to understand the functioning of Mamlūk society in general and the relationship between Mamlūks and *'ulamā'* and between individual members of the learned elite in particular, it seems essential to analyze the close link between religious doctrinal convictions and particular socio-political motives."[62] Such a view is supported, for example, by Ibn Kathīr's involvement in 755/1354 in the council that condemned to death a Shiite of Ḥilla, who, passing through Damascus was accused of having publicly insulted at the Umayyad mosque the first three caliphs, Mu'āwiya, and Yazīd.[63] Furthermore, it seems likely that Sunnite-Shiite tensions in the region must have struck Ibn Bakr's Andalusian sensibilities and encouraged him to write his lengthy biography of 'Uthmān and dedicate the second half of it to anti-Shiite polemics.[64]

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[61] Al-Maqrīzī, *Book of Contention and Strife* (1980), 75.
[62] Wiederhold, Legal-Religious Elite 226.
[63] Wiederhhold, Blasphemy 48.
[64] In the year 698/1298, the year before Ibn Bakr wrote his text, Ibn Kathīr mentions in his chronicle that a shrine to 'Uthmān was opened in Damascus after

Thus far, studies on trends within the literature of the period have remained largely isolated from studies about Mamlūk society itself. This is no doubt due in large part to the fact that so little was known about either. But a number of recent studies now make such an attempt seem well worth the effort.[65] Combining literary analyses with their historical context offer elusive, but potentially significant insights into the relationship between the views of the *ʿulamāʾ* reflected in their writings and their role in Mamlūk society. Due to the combination of flexibility and authority in the *khabar-isnād* format, historians could claim "symbolic capital" in Mamlūk society as the transmitters of the sacred past as well as the shapers of the contemporary imagination.

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it had been renovated and expanded, a small prayer room added, and a *shaykh* appointed to it. The passage adds that a similar shrine was opened shortly thereafter to al-Ḥusayn's son.

[65] Cf. M. Chamberlain and J. Berkey's works on the *ʿulamāʾ*, as well as two articles by L. Weiderhold, and Abou El Fadl's work on the legal literature and M. Cooperson's on the biographical literature (see bibliography).

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE SWORD AND THE PEN IN THE PRE-MODERN ARABIC HERITAGE: A LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP

Adrian Gully

The so-called "literary debate" in Greek, Latin and many Near Eastern languages is a well-developed genre. In his 1987 article, Geert Jan van Gelder surveyed its background more than adequately,[1] and very few details of that paper need to be repeated here. He assessed thoroughly the historical contribution of numerous poets to the relationship between "the sword and the pen," and also analyzed various aspects of this relationship in a few prose texts.[2]

1 *Focus of the study*

The main objective of this essay is to revisit and examine in more detail a small group of texts from the later medieval Islamic period

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[1] G.J. van Gelder, Conceit of Pen and Sword, in: *Journal of Semitic Studies* 32.2 (1987), 329–360; esp. 329–335 and 336–47. This topic has certainly captured the imagination of scholars of the classical and vernacular languages. See, for example, the collection of essays in: G.J. Reinink and H.I.J. Vanstiphout (eds.), *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East*, Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1991. See also Clive Holes: The Dispute of Coffee and Tea: A Debate-Poem from the Gulf, in: J.R. Smart (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature*, London: Curzon Press, 1996, 302–315.

[2] A substantially different version of this chapter was presented at the 2001 meeting of the American Oriental Society. My research on primary materials on the subject up to that time had been based purely on manuscripts, and at the point of presentation I was unaware of the existence of Van Gelder's article on this subject, as well as the published versions of the texts by Ibn Nubāta and Ibn al-Wardī. Upon acquiring Van Gelder's article it became clear that we had both been attracted to this topic by our reading of very similar sources. After lengthy consideration I decided that this essay could provide a suitable complement to Van Gelder's, as well as a challenge to some of his views in that article and an opportunity to raise new issues.

I would like to thank my colleague Dr. ʿAbd al-Salām Nūr al-Dīn Ḥāmid for his assistance in reading some of the manuscripts, and also the anonymous reviewer who raised some essential points.

that feature the sword and the pen as their protagonists. It focuses
on three pieces of Mamlūk prose written in the 8th century A.H.
(14th century C.E.). Two of these pieces were studied by Van Gelder
in his informative, but selective, textual analysis of four prose texts
on this subject. One of the two texts assessed by Van Gelder, namely,
Risāla fī l-Sayf wa-l-qalam ("A Treatise on the Sword and the Pen"),
is ascribed to Abū Bakr Ibn al-Khaṭīb 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn Nubāta
(686–768/1287–1366), a poet and prose writer who was appointed
Secretary of the Dīwān al-Inshā' (Chancellery) in 743/1342. The
exact attribution of the other text entitled *Risālat Mufākhara bayna
l-sayf wa-l-qalam* ("A Treatise on a Competition of Self-Glorification
between the Sword and the Pen"), however, presents a fascinating
problem, for there appear to be two variant versions of the same
text. Van Gelder understandably follows Louis Cheikho in ascribing
the published text to Ibn al-Wardī (689 or 691–749/1290 or 1292–
1349)[3] who was a colleague and sometimes a rival of Ibn Nubāta.[4]
But a separate manuscript version bearing some variations to that
of Cheikho's published recension is attributed to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl
ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (696–764/1297–1363), a philologist and literary
critic who held several senior positions in government service includ-
ing that of the *kātib al-sirr*, "the confidential secretary." The manu-
script in question is located in a collection of miscellaneous texts
(*rasā'il*) by various authors entitled *Manhaj al-tarjīḥ wa-l-tajrīḥ* ("The
Model of Preference and Defamation") by Tāj al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad
al-Madanī (d. 1066/1655).[5] Although Brockelmann concurs with
Cheikho and Van Gelder[6] in their attribution of the text to Ibn al-
Wardī, the existence of this variant recension represents a significant
addition. There is adequate evidence in the unpublished version for
us to accept it as a variant of Ibn al-Wardī's (as we shall see in sec-
tion 4.5). Furthermore, al-Ṣafadī also produced a work entitled *al-
Muntaqā min al-mujārāt wa-l-mujāzāt* ("Selections from the Competition
and Contention Literature").[7] The treatise attributed to him would
seem to fit very neatly into a work of that title, but with no physi-

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[3] Cheikho, *Majānī l-adab* vi, 81–87.
[4] Rawwāy (ed.), *Sharḥ al-tuḥfa* 81–82.
[5] Ms. British Library Or. 5406, 170 fols. The text attributed to al-Ṣafadī can be
found on fols. 164–166.
[6] Brockelmann gives the text the alternative title of "Iṣṭilāḥ al-Khaṣmayn;" see
GAL Suppl. ii, 174–175.
[7] *GAL* Suppl. ii, 29, no. 35.

cal record of al-Ṣafadī's collection one can only speculate about this. There is no doubt, however, that the notions of *mujāzāt* and *mujārāt* encapsulate the rhetoric of self-glorification, incitement, vilification and light-hearted word-play that is so evident in his text.[8]

It is important to understand the relationship between the three scholars associated with the treatises under review here. We know that al-Ṣafadī was a student of both Ibn al-Wardī[9] and Ibn Nubāta, and that although he was an outstanding scholar he was also well known for his activities as a copyist, which included the copying of one of Ibn Nubāta's own manuscripts.[10] It is also conceivable that al-Ṣafadī took Ibn al-Wardī's treatise and made some appropriate changes in retaliation for Ibn al-Wardī's attack on some poetry of al-Ṣafadī's in which he made changes without consulting him.[11] At any rate there seems little doubt that Ibn al-Wardī did write a treatise on the sword and the pen because al-Ṣafadī himself refers to a text by him on that theme in one of his non-extant works.[12] It is our contention on the evidence of the unpublished manuscript recension that al-Ṣafadī reproduced Ibn al-Wardī's text with some significant changes and additions (which are described below in section 4). There is even one piece of evidence in both recensions that tempts us to ascribe the original authorship to al-Ṣafadī. In the pen's first speech reference is made to the importance of the secretary's role through an almost mystical emphasis on the number seven."[13] Al-Ṣafadī wrote a monograph on the number "seven" which might explain the reference that is not found in Ibn Nubāta's text. But this one piece of evidence is inconclusive.

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[8] The full title of al-Ṣafadī's work, *al-Muntaqā min al-mujārāt wa-l-mujāzāt fī mājarayāt al-shuʿarāʾ* ("Selections from the Competition and Contention Literature on the Events of Poets") (see Sulṭānī 84), suggests that the emphasis of his work was on poetry. However, the tendency for prose writers to incorporate the framework of certain poetic devices into their writings developed within a few centuries after the advent of Islam. Some writers included examples of prose and poetry within a discussion of a given device, so it is not inconceivable that al-Ṣafadī would have used poetry and prose as evidence of this particular genre of literature.

[9] See Rawwāy 100. Rawwāy argues that the style of the (published) text is unmistakeably that of Ibn al-Wardī's (p. 157).

[10] See F. Rosenthal, art. "al-Ṣafadī," in: *EI*[2] viii (1993), 759–760.

[11] Rawwāy 79–80. But we should not overlook the fact that there was also a great deal of mutual respect between al-Ṣafadī and Ibn al-Wardī.

[12] Ibid. 193.

[13] Cheikho 82; al-Madanī, fol. 164 recto.

At all events the influence of one text on another is very clear.
Van Gelder argues that Ibn Nubāta's text "is obviously an attempt
to surpass Ibn al-Wardī whose text is echoed in many passages and
phrases."[14] The issue of chronology is important here. The three
scholars in question were true contemporaries and almost certainly
aware of each other's work. We believe, however, that it is more
likely that Ibn Nubāta wrote the original which was subsequently
followed by the other recension(s). Not only was Ibn Nubāta the
teacher of al-Ṣafadī whose work clearly had a great influence on
him,[15] but there is evidence that Ibn Nubāta's version was elaborated
upon by Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī, especially by the latter. More
will be said on this below. It is also worth reminding ourselves that
al-Ṣafadī was a forthright and contentious scholar who was never
afraid to challenge the views of well-known intellectual figures.[16]

There is at least one further important difference between Ibn
Nubāta's text and the other two under discussion here that assists
us in our attempt to determine the chronology of these texts. Ibn
Nubāta interrupts the dialogue between the pen and sword from
time to time with some authorial commentary. However, in the other
texts the dialogue between pen and sword is direct, with the only
authorial interpolations being the introduction and the conclusion.
The technique employed in the texts by Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī
is highly effective since it permits a flowing uninterrupted dialogue
that reaches an inevitable climax. We would argue that such a tech-
nique is likely to have developed out of a sense that authorial com-
ment, as employed by Ibn Nubāta, fails to penetrate the audience
in the same way as direct dialogue.

Although there are some significant differences of detail between
the three texts under review here, the general structure of each one
is essentially the same. Van Gelder offers a very useful account of
some of the noteworthy aspects of the texts by Ibn Nubāta and Ibn

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[14] See his Conceit of Pen and Sword 356.
[15] See, for instance, J. Rikabi, art. "Ibn Nubāta," in: *EI*² iii (1971), 900, where
we find that al-Ṣafadī even wrote a whole treatise on Ibn Nubāta's use of *tawriya*,
"hidden meanings."
[16] See, for example, his stimulating and challenging work entitled *Nuṣrat al-thāʾir
ʿalā l-mathal al-sāʾir* ("An Aid to the attacker of the work entitled *al-Mathal al-Sāʾir*"),
ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī Sulṭānī, Damascus: Dār al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, n.d., a tren-
chant critique of the highly esteemed work of literary criticism by Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Ibn
al-Athīr.

al-Wardī,[17] so it is not necessary to describe the fundamentals of each one here. In general each of the texts begins with an acknowledgement by the author of the importance of each of the instruments to matters of state, and a description of the terms of the "competition." In turn the sword and the pen assumes a personified status, recounting the usefulness of its own position, indulging in self-glorification, and vilifying its adversary through the employment of subtle literary allusion, powerful images, and an erudite exhibition of cultural and historical knowledge. The exchange normally concludes with a partial reconciliation after the sword has threatened the pen with injurious deeds. In the case of Ibn al-Wardī's text he explicitly states in his introduction and conclusion that he, as viceroy of a judge or ruler, will be the arbiter of the contest.

2 *Nature of the texts*

Disputation in medieval Islamic society was a well-established part of intellectual life. It was the celebrated Andalusian grammarian and philosopher Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī (d. 521/1127) who, with specific reference to the *ʿulamāʾ*, said that "controversy and disputation are embedded in our nature, an intrinsic element of our being."[18] Therefore, that such a genre of literature as the one under discussion here developed from this standpoint is hardly surprising.

The texts on the sword and the pen seem to be much more than a literary debate, however (pace Cheikho who classifies it as a *munāẓara*, "debate," and Van Gelder who uses the term "debate" throughout his article, seemingly more interested in whether it is truly literary rather than a true debate, although he does acknowledge that it represents a form of competition).[19] They do indeed bear all the qualities of a competition of erudition, underpinned by a boastful exposition of "self-glorification" (*mufākhara*), but equally important is that they also represent documents of genuine socio-historical importance which sets them apart from some of the other types of

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[17] See his Conceit of Pen and Sword 353ff. for a summary of these two texts.

[18] Al-Baṭalyawsī, *al-Inṣāf* 19.

[19] Van Gelder 342. Al-Qalqashandī appears to avoid the use of the term *munāẓara*, opting instead for the titles employed by the authors of these texts, i.e., *rasāʾil mufākhara* ("treatises of self-glorification"). See al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* i, 45.

so-called literary debates. Mattock makes some pertinent compar-
isons between *mufākhara* in early poetry and *munāzara* in prose trea-
tises. He notes that "the idea that the *munāzara* is to be seen primarily
as a parody of the *mufākhara* is implausible."[20] Although Mattock
appears to be trying to underline the uniqueness of the former genre
rather than the perceivable differences between the two—for instance,
he refers to the sword and pen text by Aḥmad ibn Burd, which is
also one of the texts discussed by Van Gelder, as a "genuine *munā-
zara*,"[21]—his view inadvertently supports our hypothesis that the texts
under discussion here are at the very least part of a sub-theme of
the *munāzara* genre, and deserve to be examined on their own terms.

   Heinrichs argues that "it seems preferable to identify various types
of *munāzara* on the basis of certain isoglosses" they share."[22] This is
most definitely a constructive and intelligent way of examining this
complex issue because it attempts to provide a topology for the texts
that appear to fall within the domain of "debate" literature. Further-
more al-Ṣafadī himself seems to have referred to the debate of Ibn
al-Wardī's as a *munāzara*![23] However, Heinrichs' classification still
does not explain why different authors chose to call their texts of
disputation by other, more specific, terms such as *muḥāwara* ("debate
for superiority") and *mufāḍala* ("competition for precedence"), not to
mention *mufākhara* ("self-glorification contest").

   Ibn Nubāta's text was included by the famous poet and prose-
writer of the Mamlūk period, Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434),
within a category of literary device called *taghāyur* and *mughāyara* (lit.:
"regarding something from an opposite viewpoint,"[24] more specifically
a form of *talaṭṭuf*, "literary subtlety," in which something is praised
or criticized in a manner contrary to its previous representation).
The notion of *mughāyara* captures the essence of opposition and com-
petitiveness between the sword and the pen in the texts under review
here, and adds yet another possible sub-classification to the genre.

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[20] J.N. Mattock, The Arabic Tradition 153–163, specifically 155. This is an oppor-
tunity to pay tribute to Professor Mattock who sadly died recently. He is remem-
bered as a man of true erudition and incisive wit.
   [21] Ibid., 157.
   [22] W. Heinrichs, Rose versus Narcissus 180.
   [23] Rawwāy 193.
   [24] Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī, *Khizānat al-adab* i, 230–231; also Cheikho 68, who classifies
the text as *nukhba min mughāyara bayna l-sayf wa-l-qalam*, i.e. "a selected passage from
the opposition between the sword and the pen," but still includes it within the sec-
tion of literary debates (*munāzarāt*).

Significantly it seems to complement perfectly the notion of *mufākhara* as it was used in pre-Islamic times i.e., "boasting of the merits of one tribe to the detriment of another."[25] There is one further point to mention in this connection. While we would concur to a degree with Mattock that most of the true *munāẓara*s appear to be "exercises in scholarly frivolity," and "entertainments,"[26] there appears to be much more at stake in the treatises on the sword and the pen. The following sections are part of an attempt to sustain this claim.

One final point worth mentioning here is that none of the above-mentioned accounts of the literary exchanges between the sword and the pen has taken fully into account the wealth of allusions to quranic verses that are to be found in the texts under discussion here, particularly in those of Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī. It is one of our objectives during this essay to highlight some of those apposite, often subtle, references to the quranic text, although we are well aware that to identify all of them requires a very specific skill and knowledge.

3   *Socio-historical background of the Men of the Sword and the Pen*

During the first few centuries of Islam, the sword and the pen were instruments that symbolized, in very broad terms, two social and ethnic groups; the sword representing the military and the pen symbolizing administrators of the state; in other words, the bureaucrats. Al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* is a particularly rich source of information on this subject, offering many scattered details about the role and status of the "men of the pen/sword" (*arbāb al-aqlām/al-suyūf*) as officials of the State. The many diverse references may be exemplified by how each group dressed,[27] or the pragmatics of address where we find various models for the sword and the pen as part of some possible foundations for a diachronic reconstruction of epistolary protocol.[28]

The extent to which the literary representations of the sword and pen are always a metaphorical portrayal of the real conflict between the men of the sword and pen is, indeed, debatable. Van Gelder

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[25] Mattock 154.
[26] Ibid. 163.
[27] Al-Qalqashandī v, 93.
[28] Al-Qalqashandī viii, 192–94.

acknowledges that at some point in time the literary expression of the issue was founded on a genuine conflict of interest. But he also states the following: "Other themes may have had their origin in a real conflict, but, living a life of their own, may have become commonplaces in the genre, having lost any connection with this conflict, which may even no longer exist . . . a case in point is the contest of pen and sword."[29]

We believe that the socio-historical significance of the texts under review here should not be underestimated. There are unequivocal references to important elements of the relationship between the men of the sword and the pen in that text that are essential for its literary success. It is also not accidental, we would argue, that al-Qalqashandī wrote what appears to be a definitive version of the sword vs. pen literary contest and concluded it with a true conciliation of peace between the two instruments that is not present in any of the other prose texts on this subject.[30] Although the tension between the two groups had not fully subsided by that time there is evidence that the strands of incompatibility were beginning to disperse as greater numbers of military personnel began to receive a scholarly education.[31] According to the sources al-Qalqashandī does appear to have had the last word on this theme.

The fact that the sword and the pen issue occupied the minds of poets and prose writers for several centuries is testimony to its enduring importance. It is essentially a metaphor for the relationship between the intellectual and authority (al-muthaqqaf wa-l-sulṭa), an issue that has continued to stimulate debate among Arab intellectuals. That is not to say that authority in this context has always reflected military might. Indeed, the balance of power frequently fluctuated in medieval Islamic society between the military and the bureaucrats, as al-Qalqashandī often notes.[32]

Whilst the personification of the pen and sword in the manner to be discussed below may be unique in Arabic literature the tension between the two instruments as metaphors for largely irreconcilable

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[29] See his Conceit of Pen and Sword 337.
[30] Al-Qalqashandī xiv, 231–40, and especially 237.
[31] C.E. Bosworth, A Janissary Poet of Sixteenth-Century Damascus 451.
[32] For instance, al-Qalqashandī iii, 485; v, 449; and xi, 148–49. Given al-Qalqashandī's predilection for writing we should not be surprised when he concludes that the state was more often ruled by the men of the pen than by those of the sword.

social groups is clearly mirrored in antiquity. In the preface to his discussion of military issues in selected Greek texts, Spaulding quotes Thomas Churchyard from 1579:

> [B]ut under correction, if a man maie bee plaine, the Pen and Sworde can neuer agree, because the Penne standes in such fear of the Sworde, it would not come under the blow of the blade; and the Sworde is in such doubte to bee moiled with ynke, by the dashe of a Penne, that it loues not to come where the Penne maie annoye it. And so the dissention and quarrell between the Penne and the Sworde, is neuer like to bee taken up; the harmes are so great that growes on their amitie and meetyng, and the aduantage of them bothe is so muche when thei bee kept a sonder.[33]

But there is also a paradox in this relationship. Many handbooks for secretaries, especially those written during the first few centuries of Islamic society, were compiled by secretaries who were, of course, "men of the pen." These works were essentially drill-books in their own right, setting out the rules of civil society in an orderly fashion. Ibn al-Mu'tazz blended the metaphors perfectly when he said that "the pen is the outfitter of the troops of speech" (*al-qalamu mujahhizun li-juyūshi l-kalāmi*).[34] Ironically, the role of the military was to function more as an instrument of civil policy, a role that one would naturally prefer to associate with the bureaucrats.

Notwithstanding their different roles al-Qalqashandī acknowledges that on balance the military and the bureaucrats were equally worthy as "pillars and bastions of the state" (lit.: "pillars of the state and its bastions;" *arkān al-dawla wa-qawā'iduhā*).[35] But various historical descriptions of their position in court suggests that the men of the pen fared better than their counterparts. For example, when the *wazīr* at a given time was one of the "men of the sword" he would stand (*qā'im*) in the council of the ruler amongst the standing princes; but when he was from the bureaucrats he would sit as all "men of the pen" sat.[36] Similarly, when the *wazīr* was from the "men of the pen" he would position himself very close to the Ruler in the Ministry of Justice, between him and the *kātib al-sirr* who was one of the highest ranked court officials. However, if he were from the "men of the

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[33] O.L. Spaulding, *Pen and Sword in Greece and Rome*, preface.
[34] Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-Ādāb wa-Thamar al-Albāb*, i, 430.
[35] Al-Qalqashandī i, 60.
[36] Ibid. xi, 149.

sword" he would "stand at a distance" with other professionals.[37] There is also some evidence that the "men of the pen" received a more stable form of income than their military counterparts.[38]

Moreover, al-Qalqashandī hints that the spirit of rivalry between the two groups extended to the domain of honorifics prescribed by the secretaries. He tells us how the honorific *Rukn al-Islām* ("The Pillar of Islam", *viz.*, that without which something is not complete), for example, which was regarded as the highest possible honorific,[39] was exchanged at some historical point in time by the secretaries for *'Izz al-Islām* ("The Might of Islam")[40] as an honorific for the "men of the sword," although he suggests later that this was merely a result of the term *'izz* containing some of the properties of "strength" and "might" associated with *rukn*.[41]

One further issue merits brief discussion here. There is a general sense among contemporary scholars that in texts of the type being assessed here the pen had an unfair, and perhaps insuperable, advantage over its adversary. Van Gelder states that in the case of Ibn Burd's text "the outcome of the debate was obvious from the start." He goes on to discuss the disadvantage facing the sword, adding that "not only is eloquence the domain of the pen, the text itself is a creation of the pen."[42] Al-Qalqashandī appears to support this notion:

> [T]here is nothing more honourable one can say about the profession of the secretary than that the man of the sword has to compete with the secretary on [the subject of] his pen, but the secretary does not need to compete with him on [the subject of] his sword.[43]

It should also be remembered that Bulwer-Lytton's immortal words "beneath the rule of men entirely great, the Pen is mightier than

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[37] Ibid., iv, 44.
[38] Ibid., iv, 426.
[39] Ibid., vi, 112.
[40] Ibid., vi, 102.
[41] Ibid., vi, 113. One of the inherent difficulties in using al-Qalqashandī's invaluable work is that of assessing chronology accurately. On the issue of honorifics it seems likely that he is referring to a more recent period of history when such distinctions appear to have taken on greater significance, as evidenced in al-Mawṣilī's work (see n. 46).
[42] Van Gelder 351. For a view that generally supports Van Gelder, see also Mattock (n. 20) *passim*.
[43] Al-Qalqashandī i, 38: *wa-kafā bi-l-kitābati sharafan anna ṣāḥiba l-sayfi yuzāḥimu l-kātiba fī qalamihi wa-lā yuzāḥimuhu l-kātibu fī sayfihi.*

the Sword" were influenced by his position not only as a politician but also as a prolific scholar and literary figure. Bulwer-Lytton was a Secretary of State for Colonies in the 1850s, combining a literary career with British imperialist activities. Similarities may be drawn between Bulwer-Lytton's dual role and the function of the Secretary in medieval Islamic society, particularly from the time of the Fāṭimids. The Secretary was not only a scholar of considerable erudition, but also a figure whom it seems had an increasing influence on the affairs of state. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the role of the pen in various cultures was often championed over that of the sword.

But we would also argue that in the three texts on which this article focuses the background of the author is not as important as many would believe. There is no outright victor in them. In al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's texts it is true that the pen appears to have the upper hand for much of the time as it draws the sword into losing control of its rational line of argument. Ironically, al-Ṣafadī was the son of a Mamlūk, and we might reasonably have expected him to show more allegiance to the sword than the pen. In Ibn Nubāta's text, the pen even decides to take on the sword on its own terms, addressing it early on with a number of military metaphors.[44]

By contrast the texts by Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī in particular leave us in no doubt about the physical and intellectual prowess of the sword. It is also clear from the opening gambit of Ibn Nubāta's treatise that he intends them to be viewed on an equal footing.[45] In

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[44] Van Gelder 357 and Cheikho 68–70. In some senses this turns al-Qalqashandi's view (see previous note) upside down, which might have been Ibn Nubāta's intention, i.e., the audience for whom this was written would probably have been surprised, but thoroughly engaged, by this unexpected volte-face.

[45] For more on this see below section 4. Van Gelder's point, in support of his view of the superiority of the pen, that in the Quran "swords are wholly absent" (see his Conceit of Pen and Sword 338) is not upheld by the evidence in Ibn Nubāta's text, repeated in part in the recensions by Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī. In fact, it is the unique equilibrium of the quranic citations about the sword and the pen that led Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī to cite these references as an example of one of the finest "allusive openings" (barāʿat al-istihlāl) in the whole of Arabic literature. The effectiveness of this device depends on the subtlety of the opening and its relationship with the rest of the text; see P. Cachia, The Arch Rhetorician 8. The full use of this device here by Ibn Nubāta is, we would suggest, further proof of his text's antedating that of Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's. See Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī's Khizānat al-adab i, 45.

fact, it is the pen in Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's texts that pro-
poses conciliation.

In sum we would maintain that these texts are too rich in word
play and allusion, and references to historical truth to be assessed
in an *a priori* manner. Thus there is less to be gained from a theo-
retical judgment about which instrument should take precedence than
by a detailed analysis of some of the text. It is this task that awaits
us now.

4   *Textual analysis*

In the initial public presentation of this study the emphasis was in
many respects different from that of Van Gelder's, even though we
had consulted similar sources. This section continues to complement
Van Gelder's findings while reinforcing the main objective of this
paper which is to shed new light on the depth and significance of
the texts themselves.

One of the more noticeable aspects of the texts by Ibn Nubāta
and Ibn al-Wardī/al-Ṣafadī is the natural, doubtless intentional, pro-
gression through the text from a third person singular to a first and
second person singular address. All three texts begin with an indi-
rect reference by each instrument to its own merits, and also to its
adversary. It is interesting to note that as part of the pragmatics of
address in the later medieval period, namely, by the 8th century
A.H. at least, rulers would use the third person singular in their
epistles when replying to subjects.[46] Thus an air of formality and dis-
tinction of rank was preserved that is also appropriate to this con-
text. As the texts progress the pace of self-glorification becomes more
intense, and the vilification and lampooning of the opponent become
more direct, indicated by the switch to the first and second person
singular and the increased pace of the text, often in the form of
shorter incisive sentences. In al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's texts this
technique culminates in the sword losing its self-control and releas-
ing a viputerative outburst upon its adversary. In contrast it is the
pen that becomes agitated and resorts to abuse in Ibn Nubāta's
text.[47] The second important point to note here is that the differences

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[46] See al-Mawṣilī, *al-Burd al-muwashshā* 127.
[47] Cheiko 73.

between the text of Ibn al-Wardī and that attributed to al-Ṣafadī are small but significant. Al-Ṣafadī's general objective appears to have been to increase the element of satire and humour within the text, and to increase the level of irreverence for popular appeal. These additions and subtle changes leave us in little doubt that we are in fact dealing with a variant recension. More will be said on this shortly.

4.1 *Intertextual elements*

The general flavour of Ibn Nubāta's and Ibn al-Wardī's recensions has been recorded by Van Gelder. He summarizes both texts, drawing attention to the introductions and conclusions, as well as giving some idea of the textual content such as the exchange of insults between the two instruments in both texts. However, one of the striking features about the three texts under consideration here is that they contain many of the requisite components that illustrate the art of the true "man of the pen," the secretary or *kātib*. The secretary was required to be conversant in a whole range of skills, which included a profound knowledge of the Quran, Prophetic Tradition, proverbs and poetry, as well as an all-embracing erudition in language and grammar.[48] Not only are many of these skills manifested in the texts under discussion here, but they are often displayed through subtle usage and incorporation of what we might call intertextual elements of other well-known texts.

A secretary appears to have been judged more and more on how well he achieved that objective.[49] Appropriate quotational borrowing (*iqtibās*) or direct citation (*istishhād*) of religious texts were acceptable and revered; rephrasing or allusion, however, were deemed unacceptable by some writers by at least the 5th/11th century.[50] Regarding the use of poetry in the texts under review here it is worth noting Heinrichs' comments on the so-called literary debate of this period.

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[48] See, for example, the long section in al-Qalqashandī i, 148ff., or Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mathal al-sāʾir* i, 28ff.

[49] For the secretary it was particularly important that he should be able to master the use of the sacred texts in his writing since these intertextual elements were specific to prose, not poetry. The Quran and Prophetic Traditions were, of course, viewed as the "source par excellence of eloquence and good style" (*maʿdin al-faṣāḥa wa-l-balāgha*); see Ibn al-Athīr i, 89–90.

[50] For this, see A. Sanni, *The Arabic Theory* 7–8.

He says that "the most typical form of the *munāẓara* in the later Middle Ages is the *risāla* or *maqāma* (i.e. a treatise) written in rhymed prose, normally interspersed with poetry."[51]

In Ibn Nubāta's text on the sword and the pen there are several direct citations of poetry. However, in Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's treatises there is only indirect reference and citation. Within the context of this discussion we would argue that the decision not to cite poetry directly is quite intentional. By this period in history it seems very plausible that a secretary was judged according to the level of subtlety with which he could demonstrate his powers of erudition. We would maintain, therefore, that the employment of intertextuality was one of the principal ways in which this was achieved. It is no coincidence that quotational borrowing of the sacred text came to be preferred to direct citation;[52] indeed, the appropriate choice of material was something that could lead to "divine benediction," as A. Sanni puts it.[53] But although rephrasing of the sacred texts does not appear to have been an option for the secretary, this was not the case for other intertexual elements such as proverbs and poetry. Thus when Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī "borrow" from Abū Tammām's famous line

> *al-sayfu aṣdaqu inbā'an min al-kutubi*,
>
> the sword brings more accurate tidings than the books [of the astrologers]

and replace *al-kutub*, "the books [of the astrologers]," with *ḍiddihi*, "its opponent," they are drawing on a well-known verse and adapting it to the context—i.e., when the sword is glorifying itself—without needing to acknowledge its source.[54] The same may be said for the famous proverb

> *lā taṭlub atharan baʿda ʿaynin*,
>
> *lit.*: do not seek a [lasting] impression after a sighting,

used when an opportunity has been missed. During one point of self-glorification the sword says the following [in al-Ṣafadī's text]:

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[51] Heinrichs 181.

[52] Al-Qalqashandī i, 194.

[53] Sanni 8.

[54] The second hemistich of this famous line is used elsewhere in the text, *viz.*, *wa-fī ḥaddihi l-ḥaddu bayna l-jiddi wa-l-laʿibi*, "since in its blade is the fine line between earnestness and sport."

kam li-qāʾimihi l-muntazimi[55] *min atharin fī ʿaynin aw-ʿaynin fī atharin,*

what a lasting impression the piercing sword makes on the eye, or how many spies does it have following the tracks [of its enemies].[56]

Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī employ the framework of this well-known proverb to skilful effect, and then increase that effect by inverting it to achieve a slightly different sense.

It is clear, then, from the texts under discussion here that the authors have intentionally given the sword the faculty of erudition, as well as the pen. The attainment of such a level of knowledge may also be witnessed in the ability of each to cite the religious texts. In Ibn Nubāta's text, for instance, the pen begins with a mortal blow to the sword by citing the first two verses of Sūrat al-Qalam ("The Pen," Q 68):

wa-l-qalami wa-mā yasṭurūn . . . / mā anta bi-niʿmati rabbika bi-majnūn

By the pen and what they write . . . / You are not, By the grace of your Lord, mad nor possessed.[57]

It continues with the following, a summary of the above in its own words:

al-ḥamdu li-llāhi llādhī ʿallama bi-l-qalami wa-ʿazzamahu bi-l-qasami

Praise be to God who taught with the Pen and glorified it using it in an oath.

But in verse 25 of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd ("The Iron," Q 57), the sword responds with equal measure:

wa-anzalnā l-ḥadīda fīhi baʾsun shadīdun wa-manāfiʿu li-l-nāsi

And we sent down Iron, in which is material for mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind.

Then it goes on in its own words:

al-ḥamdu li-llāhi llādhī jaʿala l-jannata taḥta zilāli l-suyūfi wa-sharaʿa ḥaddahā fī l-ṭughāti fa-aghaṣṣathum bi-miyāhi l-ḥutūfi

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[55] Ibn al-Wardī gives *al-muntazari* according to Cheikho 83. Cheikho's reading, however, does not seem wholly appropriate for the context.

[56] Al-Ṣafadī's recension (n. 5) 164 verso.

[57] The latter is clearly a refutation of the idea that the Prophet was either mad or possessed; rather he spoke words of power and truth; (this and other direct translations from the Quran are taken from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's version).

Praise be to God who placed Paradise under the protection of the
Sword, and pointed its blade at tyrants, choking them in the waters
of death.[58]

These two citations and their subsequent clauses were held by Ibn
Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī to be sublime examples of prose writing, almost
certainly because of the relationship between the original quranic
citation and the subsequent prose from the mouth of each instru-
ment, and the way this relationship sets the tone for the rest of the
text.[59] It is significant once more, however, that neither al-Ṣafadī nor
Ibn al-Wardī chose to quote so extensively from the Quran; rather,
the use of intertextual elements appears to be more than adequate
for the purpose. The pen, in fact, merely cites one short line from
Q 96:4:

[alladhī] ʿallama bi-l-qalami

He who taught the use of the Pen.[60]

This concise, yet incisive, quotation from the sūra with which the
revelation of the Quran began immediately gives the pen the upper
hand over its adversary. That Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī did not
feel the need to cite more than this also gives further credence to
the suggestion that Ibn Nubāta's text, which contains fuller quranic
citations and references than the other two treatises on the whole,[61]
came first.

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[58] Cheikho 68–69.
[59] See n. 44.
[60] Al-Ṣafadī's version (n. 5) 164 recto.
[61] Several other instances of subtle quotational borrowing may be found else-
where in Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's texts, such as when the sword acknowl-
edges that "paradise is under its protection" (al-jannatu taḥta ẓilālihi), or when it
accuses the pen of spreading falsehoods (an allusion to Quran 113:4, Sūrat al-Falaq):
aṣbaḥta min al-naffāthāti fī ʿuqadika yā miskīn, "[you have become] one of those who
practise witchcraft, [you wretched thing]," lit.: "those who blow on ropes." By the
same token the pen paraphrases, for instance, Quran 47:15 (Sūrat Muḥammad):
wa-sūqū māʾan ḥamīman fa-qaṭṭaʿa amʿāʾahum, "and (they) be given to drink, boiling
water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)" with the following, in which al-
Ṣafadī seems to personalize the torture quite deliberately to make it more imme-
diate and horrifying (unlike Ibn al-Wardī who retains the quranic third person
address): wa-suqīta māʾan ḥamīman fa-qaṭṭaʿa amʿāka, "and you were given boiling water
to drink which split your bowels." There are many other examples of quotational
borrowing, some of which are very explicit, in Ibn Nubāta's text. More will be dis-
cussed below, especially in sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5.

4.2   *Sexual allusion*

Van Gelder pertinently notes a number of antithetical concepts from
Ibn Nubāta's treatise that reflect the positive qualities of the pen
vis-à-vis the sword; for example, joining vs. severing, building vs.
destroying. Ibn al-Wardī (and al-Ṣafadī) also use this technique but
to a lesser extent;[62] for instance, life vs. death (maybe better described
as the giving and taking away of life), purity vs. impurity. However,
what van Gelder appears to overlook is a subtle, but powerful, allu-
sion to the sexuality of the pen in particular. He even goes so far
as to say that "any conscious phallic allusion, though frequent in
obscene invective poetry, is absent from this and other debates of
pen and sword." In all three of the texts under discussion here there
seems little doubt that the sword intends to undermine the pen's
sexuality. In Ibn Nubāta's treatise the sword leaps up after a series
of affronts from the pen and says the following:

> *a lasta llādhī ṭālamā arʿasha l-sayfu li-l-haybati ʿiṭfak[a] wa-nakkasa li-l-khid-*
> *mati raʾsaka wa-ṭarfak[a]*

> are you not the one whose flanks the sword has made tremble out of
> fear, and has turned your head and eye upside down for pleasure (lit.
> "service.").[63]

This image is echoed in Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's texts:

> *mā huwa ka-l-qalami l-mushabbahi bi-qawmin ʿurrū ʿan lubūsihim* [al-Ṣafadī
> gives *malbūsihim*] *thumma nukkisū ka-mā qīla ʿalā ruʿūsihim*

> it [the sword] is not like the pen which resembles a people who have
> been stripped of their clothes and turned, as it has been said, upside
> down.[64]

In these images the sword is intimating that the pen is merely an
object of its desire. In the first quotation we witness the subtle, but
irreverent, allusions to the head and the eye of the penis. The image
of the pen is particularly apposite for this description because it has
a body in the form of a stem, and a head in the form of a nib.
The "eye" is almost certainly a reference to the very center of the
nib. In the second quotation the image is even more explicit. The
sexuality of the pen is clearly being undermined as the sword suggests

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[62] Van Gelder 354 and 357.
[63] Cheikho 75.
[64] Ibid., 83.

that it has been turned upside down with its nib in the air. Descriptions of the shape of the nib and how it was hued were in themselves very detailed, and an integral part of some of the earlier medieval handbooks for secretaries. Therefore the image of the pen, with its nib split precisely down the middle, would have represented a very vivid reference to the buttocks. In this connection perhaps the sword goes on to say that unlike himself the pen can be bought cheaply (*lā yushrā ka-l-qalami bi-thamanin bakhs*).[65]

Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī sustain the image with other references. Prior to this there had been a mention of the "fingertips," an allusion to the effeminate nature of the pen:

> *wa-lā yatanāwaluhu ka-l-qalami bi-aṭrāfi l-anāmili*
>
> and he [the bearer of the sword] does not carry it like the pen in the finger tips.[66]

To understand the full significance of this image one needs to be aware that poetry had been written on this subject some centuries previously in which the beautiful, elegant image of the finger tips of the secretary on the pen was compared to the pen itself.[67] The sword, however, appears to have other ideas, viewing the image as one of effeminacy in which the pen is held delicately between the fingertips, unlike the sword which "the bearer does not mess around with" (*lā yaʿbathu bihi l-ḥāmilu*).[68] By contrast, the sword can state with confidence that it was carried by the Prophet Muḥammad in preference to the pen (*ḥamalathu dūna l-qalami yadu nabiyyinā*).[69]

Now we arrive at a most interesting discrepancy between the texts of al-Ṣafadī and Ibn al-Wardi. After the pen has finished a haughty criticism of the sword the latter, in al-Ṣafadī's recension only, states the following:

> *a anfun fī l-samāʾi wa-stun fī-l-arḍi*
>
> [there you are] . . . nose in the air and arse on the ground.

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[65] This is another of the many allusions to quranic text in these debates, namely, *bi-thamanin bakhs* "for a miserable price," which occurs in Q 12:20 (Sūrat Yūsuf).

[66] Ibid. 83. This is in contrast to the positive references to the same image regarding the pen in Ibn Nubāta's text—e.g., p. 68 and p. 80. This supports our contention that Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī developed some of the ideas and images put forward by Ibn Nubāta to enhance the popular appeal.

[67] Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAskarī (4th/10th cent.), *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* 526.

[68] Cheikho 83.

[69] Al-Ṣafadī's recension (n. 5) 164 verso.

This is further proof that al-Ṣafadī set out to increase the popular appeal of this treatise, and that he was almost certainly the last of the three authors being discussed here to compose his text. A few further differences between his and Ibn al-Wardī's texts will be noted shortly.

4.3   Word-play on the nature of the instrument

Much of the appeal of the treatises on the sword and the pen originates from the word play and allusion which gives detailed insight into the micro-world of each instrument. Only a couple of examples can be noted here. In Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's recensions there is a neat exchange between the sword and the pen when the pen claims it is of pure quality and fine lineage:

> ammā anā fa-bnu mā'i l-samā'i
>
> as for me I am the son of the water from heaven.

This section culminates in the sword finally exploding with rage and retorting with

> yā bna l-ṭīni
>
> oh [you] son of clay.

There is a historical background to both of these expressions that pertains to the physical nature of the pen. It was said in some circles that the finest pens were made of reed that grew in good fertile land, nurtured by the pure water of the sky.[70] The sword's reply, then, is most appropriate, for not only does it demonstrate its erudition and obvious awareness of this historical wisdom but it employs a metaphor of similar kind that totally undermines the pen's proud self-image. In addition to the sense of "clay," ṭīn was also one of the many words for "ink" in the early medieval period,[71] a further

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[70] See Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/947): *Adab al-kuttāb*, ed. Muḥammad Bahjat al-Atharī, Baghdad: [al-Maṭbaʿiyya al-Salafiyya], 1922, 71. The image of the pen's irreproachable stock is also underlined by the words *mā' al-samā'*, "water of heaven," a reference to the name of a king of the pre-Islamic Arab Lakhmid dynasty of Iraq which ruled for approximately 300 years from 300–600 C.E.

[71] ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawarī (3rd/9th century): *Risālat al-khaṭṭ wa-l-qalam* 27. It is worth noting a plausible play on words that follows this in al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's texts when the sword says: *a lastu ḍāmiran wa-anta baṭīn*, "here I am, slim, whilst you are fat," i.e., full of yourself, but also note the possible reading of *bi-ṭīn*, "[full] of clay."

echo of the appropriateness of many of the metaphors and images
relating to the physical substance of the pen. One even senses here
an allusion to Quran 7:12 (Sūrat al-Aʿrāf) in which Iblīs is in con-
versation with God about why he refused to bow down to Adam.
Iblīs puts himself above man, stating: "I am better than he: Thou
didst create me from fire, and him from clay". In the example above
the sword would appear to be placing himself in the same elevated
position over the pen.

   The pen is often exposed by the sword for its physical shortness
in comparison to the length of its adversary. The sword begins one
of his retorts in Ibn Nubāta's text by saying:

   ayyuhā l-mutaṭāwilu ʿalā qiṣarihi

   O he who is so long-winded in spite of his shortness.[72]

As part of one of its threats in Ibn al-Wardī's and al-Ṣafadī's recensions,
it says:

   fa-alin khiṭābaka fa-anta qaṣīru l-muddati

   so soften your speech for you have little time [at your disposal].

However, an alternative sense here for *qaṣīr al-mudda* is "[you] have
only a small supply of ink," a suggestion that the pen is inadequate,
unable to sustain its purpose of writing adequately.

   These illustrations, together with some of the less subtle allusions
such as the reference to the sword's severing capabilities, leave us
in no doubt that the physical appearance and properties of the two
instruments are an integral component of the appeal of these texts.

4.4   *Socio-historical evidence in the texts*

Earlier in this article we discussed some of the socio-historical back-
ground to the sword and the pen treatises in a more general sense.
But there is also much to be learned in this connection from the
textual contents that reflect the authors' concern with the background
to the relationship between the men of the sword and the men of
the pen. In all three texts the pen says of the sword:

   yufākhiru wa-huwa l-jālisu ʿan-i l-shamāli wa-anā l-jālisu ʿan-i l-yamīni

   he boasts yet sits on the left while I sit on the right.

_____
[72] Cheikho 7.

In the first instance the pen is invoking Quran 56:27 (Sūrat al-Wāqiʿa), underlining that he is like the Companions of the Right Hand who are effectively in Paradise, while the Companions of the Left Hand dwell in Hell, or even Quran 50:17 (Sūrat Qāf) in which an angel is appointed to the Right Hand and the Left Hand, one to watch over good deeds and the other to observe bad deeds. But more than that it is also surely a reference to the fact that the sword is held in the scabbard on the left side of the body, which in the pen's view is a place where it lies idle and sleepy.[73]

There is a section in al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's texts leading up to the point where the sword explodes with rage in which the pen accuses its adversary of a series of inhuman acts. What appears to be most injurious to the sword in these accusations is the way in which the pen undermines its status as a "good Muslim." This strike by the pen is even more incisive given the sword's attempts earlier in his speeches to show his erudition, and in particular, his knowledge of the religious texts. The pen begins by using an active participle, "destroyer of lives" (nāṭiru l-aʿmāri), to emphasize the enduring nature of the sword's iniquities against mankind, and then describes him as "a traitor of brethren" (khawwān al-ikhwān), using an emphatic adjectival form. Having prepared the ground for accusations of infidelity it moves forward with a series of verbs that strike at the very heart of good Islamic practice, i.e., love of family and kin:

> tafṣalu mā lā yufṣal[u] . . . [wa-]taqṭaʿu mā amara llāhu bihi an yūṣal[a]
>
> you break off what should not be severed . . . [and] you cut off what God commanded to remain unbroken.

This particular diatribe ends with a crushing blow to the sword, again on a similar theme:

> kam afnayta wa-aʿdamt[a] . . . wa-armalta wa-aytamt[a]
>
> how often you have destroyed and annihilated . . . and made widows and orphans.

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[73] There are several such images in these texts; for example, in Ibn Nubāta: hayhāta . . . anā l-sāhiru li-l-duwali wa-qad muhhida laka fī l-ghamdi maḍjaʿun, "how preposterous . . . I am the one who stays awake, watching over nations, whilst a bed has been prepared for you in the scabbard." The quotation in the main text could also be an allusion to the possible favourtism shown towards the men of the pen in their physical placement amongst the entourage of the ruler. For this, see al-Qalqashandī iv, 45.

But the sword also has its cultural weapons. On at least two occa-
sions in al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's texts it strikes at the pride of
the pen by alluding to the social status of the "men of the pen." As
part of its opening speech the sword says:

> *fa-in kāna l-qalamu shāhidan fa-l-sayfu qāḍī* (sic)
>
> if the pen is a witness then the sword is a judge.

It is our contention here that these words undermine the pen's claim
to be equated with the higher echelons of the legal profession. In
later medieval Islamic society at least the men of the pen were often
mentioned in the same context as judges. We also know that they
were given such honorifics as *al-qaḍā'ī* and *qāḍī l-ḥukmi l-ḥākimi*.[74]
On another occasion the sword accuses the pen of illicit tax dealing:

> *taṣarrafta fī maksin*
>
> you have played around with taxes.

This is clearly a reference to the pen's questionable involvement in
financial administration of the state. Although the art of correspon-
dence (*inshā'*) was deemed by the time of al-Qalqashandī to be the
finest form of writing (*kitāba*),[75] financial secretaryship (*kitābat al-amwāl*)
was also a very important aspect of the running of affairs of state.
In fact, in Egypt the term *kātib*, when pronounced unqualified, only
referred to the secretary of finances.[76] By implicating the pen in illicit
financial activity the sword is undermining its other major role as
an instrument employed for administration of the state.

   Another instance is where the sword accuses the pen of falsifying
and lying. He says:

> *wa-zawwarta wa-ḥarrafta*
>
> you have said false things and been devious.

Again we need to look at the relevance of the verb *ḥarrafa—yuḥarrifu*,
verbal noun: *taḥrīf*, within the context of the pen. In the medieval
period *taḥrīf* had a very strong technical meaning of "corruption of
the Revelation by Christians and Jews."[77] The inference here by the

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[74] Al-Qalqashandī viii, 179.
[75] Ibid. i, 54.
[76] Ibid. i, 52.
[77] See also S.T. Keating's contribution to this volume.

sword is that the pen is responsible for this corruption because of
its control of the written text.

    There is one further allusion that should also be noted here. Early
in al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's texts the sword appears to abro-
gate the pen's ability to record the events of history:

> *in-iqtaranat* (*iqtarabat* in Ibn al-Wardī's recension) *mujādalatuhu bi-amrin
> mustaqbalin qaṭaʿahu l-sayfu bi-amrin māḍī* (sic)

> if his (scil. the pen's) discourse is linked to a future command the sword
> cuts it off with a past (or: "sharp, incisive") command.[78]

Aside from the obvious play on grammatical terminology here[79] the
sword would seem to be removing from the pen any aspirations to
continue as God's "divine gift" to man for all time.[80] What the sword
would like to believe, one assumes, is that the pen only acts retro-
spectively whereas the sword directs the events that the pen records.[81]

4.5   *Textual variance*

Before concluding, here are a few further remarks on some of the
textual differences between al-Ṣafadī's and Ibn al-Wardī's treatises
which, for the most part, seem to be significant:

i) Ibn al-Wardī: *fa-ʿazzama bihā ḥurmata l-jarḥi wa-āmana khayfata l-ḥayfi*,
"in it (scil. the verse about the sword) He glorified the unlawfulness
of wounding and gave security to the knife of injustice;" cf. Cheikho
(n. 3) 82 who gives *khīfata l-ḥayfi*.[82]

    Al-Ṣafadī: *fa-ʿazzama bihā ḥurmata l-ḥarami wa-āmana bihā khayfa
l-khayfi*, "in it He extolled the inviolability of the Sanctuary [at Mecca]
and by it He gave security to the land at Minā;" cf. al-Madanī (n. 5)
164 recto.

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[78] Al-Ṣafadī's recension (n. 5) 164 recto.
[79] These are just some of the many double entendres relating to language and
grammar in these texts, a fact which is acknowledged by Van Gelder 354, n. 91.
For an extensive treatment of this subject see A. Gully, Epistles for Grammarians
147–166.
[80] For this idea, see Cl. Huart, art. "Ḳalam," in: *EI*² iv (1978), 471.
[81] This would certainly appear to be the way the relationship was viewed in
Persian poetry. Glünz notes that the pen writes "the history of the past" and the
sword writes "the history of the future." See M. Glünz, The Sword, the Pen and
the Phallus, specifically 236–237.
[82] This and similar examples raise the legitimate question of variant readings of
the texts, as well as the issue being considered here of intentional variations.

Al-Ṣafadī has intensified the stylistic effect of the two pairs of annexed nouns (*ḥurmata l-ḥarami* and *khayfa l-khayfi*) by employing paronomastic forms (Arab.: *jinās*), and has possibly also raised the level of sanctity expressed in the quranic verse about the sword. This acknowledgement of the sword's power at this stage should not surprise us, since the text is still under the "neutral" authorial control of al-Ṣafadī and has not yet become part of the dialogue between the sword and the pen themselves.

ii) Ibn al-Wardī (Cheikho 84): *wa-li-mā ḥamluka l-ḥaṭaba badalī*, "so why do you carry the firewood and not me?"[83]
Al-Ṣafadī (al-Madanī 164 verso): *wa-li-mā lā ḥamalaka l-khaṭību badalī*, "so why did the orator not carry you instead of me?"
Ibn al-Wardī's text is almost certainly a reference to Quran 111:4 (Sūrat al-Masad): *wa-mra'atuhu ḥammālata l-ḥaṭabi*, "His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood as fuel." Abū Laḥab was one of the most vehement enemies of early Islam, and so was his wife. It is said that she was hostile towards the Prophet Muḥammad and that she used to throw bundles of thorns with ropes of twisted palm-leaves into his path in order to harm him. Therefore, the sword is associating the pen here with the malevolent wife of Abū Laḥab, who was, inadvertently, storing up for herself the "Fire of Punishment and the Rope of Slavery to Evil."[84] At the same time it is perhaps alluding to the pen's physical mortality as a piece of firewood, namely, something that can be consumed with ease. But there is also a third possible meaning in this, since the expression "to carry firewood" was also used as a euphemism for the act of spreading gossip and inciting people against one another. Of course, the pen was, by its very nature, always susceptible to the charge of slander and gossiping.[85]
Al-Ṣafadī's version is also intriguing, if syntactically problematic like Cheikho's reading of Ibn al-Wardī's text. It fits in very appropriately with the sword's argument that it is the one that goes onto the platform or pulpit with the orator, in his scabbard, not the pen.

iii) Ibn al-Wardī (Cheikho 84): *lā jarama shummira l-sayfu wa-ṣuqila qafāh[u]* "inevitably the sword has become a shadow of its former

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[83] The vowelling of Cheikho's text is rather problematic, although there are very few feasible alternatives if his reading of the original ms. was incorrect.
[84] For all this, see *The Glorious Qur'an*, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (transl. and commentary), 1804.
[85] Ibid., 1804.

self and been beaten around the neck;" or: "inevitably the sword has been gathered up and the flat of it polished."

Al-Ṣafadī (al-Madanī 164 verso): *lā jarama samirta wa-ṣuqila qafāk[a]*, "inevitably you have become tawny and been beaten around your neck;" or: "inevitably you have become tawny (scil. bloodstained) and the flat of you has been polished."

While a variant reading of al-Ṣafadī's text of *shummirta* is possible on the basis that the dots of the consonant *shīn* have been omitted in the manuscript, this is unlikely since there are no other such examples in the script. Moreover, the implication that the pen resorts to racism in one possible reading of al-Ṣafadī's script, suggesting that the sword has become a very lowly figure, fits in neatly with the contempt shown by the pen towards the sword in many aspects of this recension.[86]

5   *Conclusions*

It is not surprising that treatises in the medieval Arabic sources presenting the pen and the sword as the protagonists of a literary exchange have generally been viewed more within the context of a genre than as a unique representation of an important historical relationship. This essay has set out to complement existing work on the subject by taking a fresh look at the significance of some of the texts that help to make up this genre. There is no doubt that these texts can stand on their literary excellence alone. An assessment of their linguistic style, for example, would merit a separate study, not only for the abundance of punning on Arabic grammatical terminology, a device that was very common in the later medieval period as we have already noted, but also for the rhyming and rhythmical elements as well as the obvious colloquial elements in al-Ṣafadī's text

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[86] One further clear variant in the two texts occurs in the following examples: Ibn al-Wardī (Cheikho 83): *wa-lā yablā ka-mā yablā l-qalamu bi-sawādin wa-ṭamsin*, "and it [the sword] does not wear out as the pen does with making rough drafts and crossing out."

Al-Ṣafadī (al-Madanī 164 verso): *wa-lā yablā ka-mā yablā l-qalamu bi-sawādi l-ṭirsi*, "and it [the sword] does not wear out like the pen does with writing over paper which has already been used." However, it is very difficult to ascertain in this particular example what, if anything, al-Ṣafadī was attempting to achieve by these changes. The differences in the two texts might simply be attributable to variant readings.

in particular. The material is indeed full of word-play and verbal artifices (Arab.: *badāʾiʿ*) that were characteristic of literary style for many centuries in later medieval Islamic society. The style and pace of the texts, the rhetoric, and the sardonic and censorious manner of the personified sword and pen create a highly entertaining atmosphere that would have been appreciated by audiences of the time.

But it has been our contention throughout this essay that two important aspects of these texts—two "sub"-texts, if you like—have generally been underestimated. The first of these is the socio-historical foundation on which the material was based, not just as an abstract foundation, but as a skillfully integrated element that enhances the literary value of the text. The second "sub"-text manifests itself in the unity of these treatises—especially the ones by Ibn al-Wardī and al-Ṣafadī—in which the key elements are brought together around the erudition of the author, founded in a manifestation of his all-round acumen as a secretary. A particular skill that these authors appear to have developed by this period at least is the ability to make reference to the quranic text through a pertinent allusion to a verse which reflects the sentiment of either the sword or the pen.

The inclusion of an alternative manuscript attributed to al-Ṣafadī has also brought to light some invaluable additions to the history of the genre. If our understanding is correct, it has also raised the issue of literary "borrowing" of that period, a practice that was widespread and partially acceptable, but which could have significant consequences as this paper has shown. Such borrowings could be seen, and often were, as worthwhile contributions to artistic prose, which was a highly fertile branch of Arabic literature from the 4th/10th century onwards.

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[1] In this index, the word *kitāb* ("book") is omitted except in a few cases where it is abbreviated as *K*.

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