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# LIVING ISLAMIC HISTORY

Studies in Honour of  
Professor Carole Hillenbrand

Edited by Yasir Suleiman



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PROFESSOR CAROLE HILLENBRAND

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*Yasir Suleiman  
King's College, Cambridge*

*July 2009*

# Professor Carole Hillenbrand: List of Publications

## Books

1. *The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate*, 1989, State University of New York Press, Albany, 273pp.
2. *A Muslim Principality in Crusader Times: the Early Artuqid State*, 1990, The Netherlands Historical and Archaeological Institute for the Near East in Istanbul, Leiden, 266pp.
3. *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 1999, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 647pp.
4. *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: the Battle of Manzikert*, 2007, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 320pp. This book has been translated into Russian and Indonesian.

## Books Edited

5. *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change, 1800–1925*, 1984, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 414pp. Co-edited with C. Edmund Bosworth.
6. *The Sultan's Turret: Studies in Persian and Turkish Culture in Honour of Professor Edmund Bosworth*, 1999, Brill, Leiden, 544pp.

## Articles Published as Sole Author

7. 'The career of Najm al-Din Il-Ghazi', 1981, *Der Islam* 58/2, 250–91.
8. 'Some Mediaeval Islamic approaches to source material', 1981, *Oriens* 27–8, 197–225.



9. 'The establishment of Artuqid power in Diyar Bakr in the twelfth century', 1981, *Studia Islamica* LIV, 129-53.
10. 'Medieval Islamic geography: the case of Merv', 1983, *Proceedings of the International Conference on Science in Islamic Polity (sic)* II, Islamabad, 338-41.
11. 'The history of the Jazira: a short introduction', 1985, in *The Art of Syria and the Jazira, 1100-1250*, ed. J. Raby, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 9-19.
12. 'The Islamic world and the Crusades', 1987, *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* VIII, 150-7.
13. 'Malazgird', 1987, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd edn), Brill, Leiden, cols 243a-244b.
14. 'Marwanids', *ibid.* cols 626a-627b.
15. 'Mayyafarikin', *ibid.* cols 930a-932b.  
*Note:* These three articles (items 13-15), which total some 8,000 words, constitute the outline of a history of eastern Turkey in the tenth and eleventh centuries.
16. 'Islamic orthodoxy or *Realpolitik*?: Al-Ghazali's views on government', 1988, *Iran* XXVI, 81-94 (13,000 words).
17. 'A Muslim success in the Second Crusade', 1989, in *Mélanges Dominique Sourdel*, ed. L. Kalus, Geutner, Paris, 165-71.
18. 'Mu'in al-Din Sulayman Parwana', 1992, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd edn), Brill, Leiden, cols 479a-480b.
19. 'Al-Mustandjid', *ibid.* cols 726a-727a.
20. 'Al-Mustansir', *ibid.* cols 727a-729a.
21. 'Al-Mustarshid', *ibid.* cols 733a-735b.
22. 'Al-Mustazhir', *ibid.* cols 755a-756a.  
*Note:* These four articles (items 19-22), which total well over 8,000 words, together represent an attempt to establish for the first time the history of the revived caliphate in the twelfth century.
23. 'Mu'in al-Din Parwana: the servant of two masters?', 1993, in *Miscellanea Arabica et Islamica*, ed. F. de Jong, Peeters, Leuven, 267-75.
24. 'Aspects of *Jihad* propaganda: the evidence of 12th century inscriptions', 1993, *Proceedings of the Conference on the History of the Crusades, University of Bir Zeit, Bir Zeit*, 53-63.
25. 'Al-Ghazali on beauty', 1994, *Festschrift Professor Annemarie Schimmel*, ed. J. C. Bürgel, Peter Lang Verlag, Bern, 249-65.
26. 'Ibn al-'Adim's biography of the Seljuq Sultan, Alp Arslan', 1995, *Actas XVI Congreso Union Européene des Arabisants et Islamisants*, Salamanca, 237-42.
27. '1092: A murderous year', 1995, *Proceedings of the 14th Congress*

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28. 'The power struggle between the Saljuqs and the Isma'ilis of Alamut, 497-518/1094-1124: the Saljuq perspective', 1995, in *Studies in Isma'ili history*, ed. F. Daftary, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 205-20.
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  33. 'Seljuq women', 2000, in *The Balance of Truth*, ed. C. Balim-Harding and C. Imber, Isis, Istanbul, 145-6.
  34. 'Some reflections on Seljuq historiography', 2000, in *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, ed. A. Eastmond, Ashgate, Aldershot, 73-88.
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  39. 'Ayyubids', 2003, in *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Macmillan, New York, 657-60.
  40. 'Some thoughts on the use of the Qur'an in monumental inscriptions in Syria and Palestine in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', 2004, in *Islamic Reflections, Arabic Musings: Studies in Honour of Professor Alan Jones*, ed. R. Hoyland and P. F. Kennedy, Gibb Memorial Trust, Warminster, 277-87.
  41. 'The legacy of the Crusades', 2004, in *Crusades: the Illustrated History*, ed. T. Madden, Duncan Baird Publishers, London, 202-11.
  42. 'A little-known mirror for princes of al-Ghazali', 2004, in *Words*,

- Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea*, ed. R. Arnzen and J. Thielmann, Peeters, Leuven, 593–601.
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52. 'Water in classical Islamic culture', 2009, in *Gardens Beneath which Rivers Flow*, ed. S. Blair and J. Bloom, Yale University Press, New Haven, 27–57.

### Review Article

53. Review article of S. G. Agadzanov, *Seljuqiden und Turkmenien im 11–12 Jahrhundert*, 1986, translated into German by R. Schletzer, Hamburg and *idem. Der Staat der Seldschukiden und Mittelasiens im 11–12 Jahrhundert*, 1994, translated into German by R. Schletzer, Berlin, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 6, part 2, July 1996, 253–7.

**In Press**

1. 'Jihad poetry at the time of the Crusades', 2007, in *Proceedings of the Crusades Conference held at the University of St Louis*, ed. T. Madden, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2009.
2. 'What's in a name? Tughtegin – the "Minister of the Antichrist"?', 2010, in *Studies in honour of Professor Farhad Daftary*, ed. O. de Onzaga, I. B. Tauris, London.

## Preface

In a long and distinguished career, Carole Hillenbrand has become best known as an Islamic historian of the Seljuks and the Crusades. For her work on the latter she won in 2005 the prestigious King Faisal Prize for Islamic Studies, the first non-Muslim to be honoured in this way. However, Carole's scholarly interests go far beyond history in the technical sense to include Sufism and Islamic thought. Carole has published in all these areas, out of conviction that the best scholarship on Islamic history and Islamic studies should view Islam not just as a religion but also as a civilisation. This is precisely how Carole has approached her teaching at Edinburgh – where I had the pleasure of working with her for over 16 years – to generations of undergraduate students as well as in her supervision of scores of postgraduates. Carole has always believed that serious teaching and research cannot but be language-based. This explains her proficiency in so many languages and her insistence on teaching the first-year Arabic course at the university for over twenty years.

The contributions in this volume reflect Carole's scholarly interests. While history, naturally, predominates, Islamic culture and Islamic studies are present in force. Some of the essays deal with the problematic nature of the sources of Islamic history; others deal with aspects of Islamic thought and culture of interest to scholars of Sunni and Shi'ite Islam. All the essays, except the last one by the editor, deal with topics and issues pertaining to classical and medieval Islam. Although the last essay deals with the modern world, it is not unconnected with Carole's scholarly interests in two ways. On the one hand, it focuses on Arabic, which is the bedrock of much of Carole's scholarly work in Islamic history. On the other hand, it highlights the socio-political importance of poetry in Islamic culture and history at moments of conflict and crisis – hence its constant appearance in her seminal book on the Crusades. As a form of cultural production in the nationalist

endeavour, poetry further resonates with Carole's interpretation of the battle of Manzikert as a founding symbol in the genealogy of Turkish nationalism.

The following paragraphs provide a set of general comments on the contributions in this volume. They are offered to help readers navigate their way through the chapters to suit their own interests. The chapters are arranged alphabetically by author, not by subject, with each standing as an autonomous piece of research. Transliteration is used only sparingly in the main text, except in Chapter 2, in the footnotes and in the bibliography.

In Chapter 1, Adel al-Abdul Jader sets out to show the evolutionary character of key Shi'ite terms and the piecemeal nature of their development in space and time. Two important factors in this process are the struggle over the caliphate and the continued conflict with the Umayyads, on the one hand, and the political imperatives surrounding the formation of Shi'ite thought and doctrine, including the divisions within this tradition, on the other. In understanding this process consideration is given to the Persian substratum in this system of thought and the attempts to counter it. Chapter 2 provides new information on various Islamic dynasties and thus expands the revised work on that subject published by Edmund Bosworth in 1996.<sup>1</sup> Much of this new information has come to light following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the consequent increased interest in the history of the republics of Central Asia. Bosworth's contribution continues his painstaking work on this topic which he has pursued over a number of decades by sifting through many rare or, because of language barriers, largely inaccessible materials.

Chapter 3 considers al-Tha'alibi's *Adab al-muluk* as a text belonging to the genre of mirrors for princes. Julia Bray makes the point that texts belonging to this genre reflect a complex relationship shaped by the author, addressee/audience and the imperatives of time and place. The content of mirrors for princes is moulded by interpretations of religious texts to yield meanings that can justify a particular mode of rule or legitimise a particular ruler. There is an acknowledgement in this genre that political legitimacy must be earned, nurtured and protected against counter-claims that might exploit the politics of differential status in society, and the hierarchical duties and obligations they encode in social interaction. The local context can indeed have a legitimating role, but this must receive theological backing to avoid the danger of corruption, which can in turn render princely rule morally bankrupt. The chapter highlights the importance of 'aristocratic elitism' and the importance of promoting culture and Arabic letters in securing princely rule.

In Chapter 4, Farhad Daftary examines the origins of the concept of *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and its practice among Isma'ilis through the

ages, and in the various geographies in which they lived as a religious minority. *Taqiyya* has two contradictory effects among Isma'ilis. Acting as a double-edged sword, it helped preserve Isma'ilis as a community in their own right, but it also fostered their assimilation into the larger and more powerful groups among whom they lived, for example Sunnis, Twelver Shi'ites or Sufis. But even when communities were preserved, they sometimes developed syncretistic belief systems, exhibiting complex hybridities created through acculturation into the beliefs of other communities. While *taqiyya* provided a measure of security against external threats, it sometimes led to internally generate threats both through syncretism and through the hybrid practices and systems of belief it helped create and foster.

Chapter 5 interrogates a set of historical reports to shed light on the associational affiliations of some of the buildings and institutions in Damascus in the late twelfth century. Anne-Marie Eddé questions the allocation of some of these reports to either Saladin or Nur al-Din and either to the Maliki or Shafi'ite schools of law. She concludes that both Saladin and Nur al-Din supported both Maliki and Shafi'ite *madhhabs*, thus challenging exclusionary readings of the historical sources in questions. In Chapter 6, Hugh Kennedy investigates the impact of the Muslim conquest on the topography and demography of Bukhara, one of the greatest cities in Central Asia. Basing itself on a number of Arabic and Persian accounts of the conquest and subsequent history of the city, the chapter paints a picture of changing fortunes, including the many political and social accommodations which the inhabitants of the city and the surrounding areas had to make in order to fit into the new Muslim order; the rivalries between the various indigenous sources of power; and the relationship in this complex situation between the city and its surrounding areas.

In Chapter 7, Remke Kruk deals with the fall of the Barmakids as a recurring narrative in the popular imagination. She does so by analysing from a comparative perspective a set of narratives of this fall, with view to isolating the similarities and differences they exhibit. These narratives highlight the interplay of power relations between the caliph, Harun al-Rashid, and the Barmakids as well as the fickle nature of power and the elaborate intrigue that so often accompanies politics in society. In Chapter 8, Gary Leiser examines the extent to which the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* can be treated as a source for the history of the Seljuks of Anatolia. Gary Leiser shows that the status of the *History* as a primary source is limited by the fact that it contains very little new information and owing to the many confusions and factual errors it contains.

In Chapter 9, Charles Melville conducts a micro-level comparison between Rashid al-Din's well-known *The Jami' al-tawarikh* and its

abridgement in *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan*. The comparison reveals that the latter is a book of genealogy whose purpose is to extol the virtues of Chengiz Khan, his pious works and the qualities of his rule. In Chapter 10, James Montgomery investigates the slippery nature of textual evidence and the importance of avoiding precise generalisations on the basis of meagre and inconclusive material. Reflecting on his own work on the Vikings and Rus in Arabic sources, James Montgomery reminds us of the importance of keeping an open mind in dealing with textual evidence. In Chapter 11, Ian Netton considers how the image of terrestrial return mirrors that of celestial return. Linking this connection to the notions of exile and diaspora, he analyses a host of texts from Western culture, both classical and modern, as well as texts from Islamic culture, including the Qur'an, poetry and prose texts to show how they fit into this framework of related ideas. In Chapter 12, Andrew Newman examines how anti-Sufi discourse in the early period of the Safavids in the seventeenth century gave way in some circles to a more moderate position that reflected the orientation of the Court on this matter. To show this, Andrew Newman uses a corpus of Imami and Akhbari *hadiths* to make the point.

In Chapter 13, Alexander Morton emphasises the importance of comparing primary sources in reconstructing historical events, genealogies and other historical facts. This micro-level analysis of data is important for the academic integrity of historical inquiry, in spite of the fact that, as he points out, this mode of conducting historical research is out of fashion in the academy. In Chapter 14, Kevin Reinhart applies the two notions of denomination and sect to interrogate the emergence of Sunni sectarianism as the 'canonical' form of Islam, showing that this process of canonisation was the product of history rather than a statement about the status of Sunni Islam in its original form. The composite nature of Sunni Islam as denominational in law and sectarian in theology renders 'Sunnism' one take among many on Islam rather than making it the point of reference in relation to which other forms of Islam are established as sectarian.

In Chapter 15, Chase Robinson investigates the notions of blood and tyranny in the context of the Abbasid revolution to show that the violence that accompanied this revolution exceeded the normal limits of Arabo-Islamic culture. The chapter shows that the Abbasid revolution was accomplished through executions, widespread blood-letting, wanton and unrestrained killings, mutilating the corpses of the caliphs and broken promises of safety, all to silence and completely dispose of the Umayyads and their supporters. In Chapter 16, Yasir Suleiman investigates the role of poetry in identity formation and nation-building in the Arabic-speaking world. Western theories of nationalism treat the novel as the locus of national narratives. The chapter argues that



this view is Western-centric and that, in the Arab context, poetry plays that role more than the novel. The chapter further deals with a corpus of poetry from the Arab lands and the Arab diaspora, *mahjar*, in which poetry, as meta-linguistic discourse, reflects on the role of language as the primary marker of Arab identity and highlights its role in overriding ethnic tensions in the Arab body politic.

These essays do not do justice to the full range of subjects in which Carole has been, and still is, interested and active, but they do offer a glimpse of the diversity of her scholarship and achievements. The contributors offer them to her in friendship and admiration.

### Note

1. This is why the chapter is formatted to correspond to the layout of Bosworth's *New Islamic Dynasties* (1996).



I.

## The Origin of Key Shi'ite Thought Patterns in Islamic History

*Adel S. al-Abdul Jader*

This chapter considers the origin of some concepts key to Shi'ite beliefs and subsequently important in the intellectual life of Shi'ite Muslims. It briefly recounts the political-religious division that arose after the killing of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, when 'Abdullah b. Saba' alleged that 'Ali would return to life to destroy his enemies. Due to the killing of al-Husayn, the Kufan Iraqi notables, who called themselves '*al-Tawwabun*' (the Penitents), began to secretly organise a movement against the Umayyads. It was after the reverse of the Tawwabun in Ramadan 65/May 685, when al-Mukhtar b. Abi 'Ubayd al-Thaqafi led a revolt against the enemies of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*).

Though al-Mukhtar was defeated, his legacy lives on in three central important Shi'ite doctrines. Firstly, he espoused the idea of *Mahdism*, which implies the concept of occultation (*ghayba*) and return (*raj'a*) of the last Imam. Secondly, he propagated the doctrine of the change in God's will or command (*bada'*). Thirdly, he supported belief in the inner meaning of sacred texts (*batin*). In effect, al-Mukhtar moved towards a more interpretative (*ta'wil*), less literal, reading of the central Islamic text, the Qur'an. Accordingly, proto-Shi'ite leaders introduced many new doctrinal terms to reinterpret previous ideas and to confirm their own beliefs and practices which differed from those of the majority of Muslims. It should be noted that the Shi'ites themselves did not introduce all these key terms; heresiographers and subsequent observers applied some of them to try to elucidate Shi'ite beliefs and their origins.

In this article, the origin of each of these terms will be examined in turn and their historical background in the first and the second centuries after the *hijra*, during the Umayyad reign until the establishment of the Abbasid state, will be clarified. The discussion will focus particularly on certain key terms: the imam and the imamate, the legatee (*wasi*) and *wasiyya*, the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*), infallibility

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(*'isma*), religious dissimulation (*taqiyya*), deserters (*rafida*), anthropomorphism (*tashbih*), transmigration or metempsychosis of souls (*tanasukh*), incarnation (*hulul*), and antinomianism (*ibaha*). As the title of this essay implies, the genesis of the research lies mainly in understanding the transformation of some technical linguistic terms into religious practice. However, as Islam does not readily divide religion from politics, these terms can sometimes have a political meaning and, in particular, Islamic Shi'ite groups and organisations claim that their legitimacy is based on some of these precepts.

## The Development of Shi'ism

To examine the origin of Shi'ism, it is useful to trace the meaning of the term Shi'ite, and the beginning of the source from which Shi'ism sprang. The term 'Shi'ite' came from the Arabic word *shi'a*, which literally means followers or supporters. The first usage of the term occurs several times in the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup> It is more appropriate here, however, to follow the later usage of the term in its applied meaning as a particular designation for the followers of 'Ali b. Abi Talib (d. 40/661) and his family as the party of 'Ali (*shi'at 'Ali*; Tabatabai 1989: 39; cf. Shahabi 1988: 15), and thereby a distinct group within Islam against the main body of the believers. Tracing the origin of Shi'ism requires a historical review of the main events which subsequently brought about the main division of the community of Islam into Sunnis and Shi'ites (Tabatabai 1989: 41).

When the Prophet Muhammad died in 11/632, he left no clear instruction about who was to succeed him as a leader (*khalifa*) of the Islamic community. On the day of the Prophet's death, the Medinese Helpers (*al-Ansar*) gathered in the portico (*saqifa*) of the Banu Sa'ida,<sup>2</sup> to choose one from amongst them to be caliph. While they were contemplating pledging their loyalty to the chief of the Khazraj, Sa'd b. 'Ubadah,<sup>3</sup> Abu Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khattab, with a group of Meccan emigrants (*Muhajirun*), interrupted them. After a long debate, both parties agreed to nominate Abu Bakr as the leader (*khalifa*) of the Islamic community.

According to the Shi'ite point of view, the *saqifa* agreement was against the will of the Prophet Muhammad, who (they claimed) appointed 'Ali b. Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, to be his successor when he was returning from Mecca and stopped at *Ghadir Khumm*.<sup>4</sup> As a consequence of this, the Shi'ites held the belief that 'Ali was designated by divine *nass*.<sup>5</sup> Some of the Prophet's companions (*sahaba*), such as al-Miqdad b. al-Aswad al-Kindi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Salman al-Farisi and 'Ammar b. Yasir,<sup>6</sup> considered that 'Ali was more qualified to succeed the Prophet and to be caliph. Originally,

it was a purely political opinion, but eventually it became a religious belief (Shaykh al-Mufid 1981: 2-3, cf. Daftary 1990: 17).

During the reign of 'Uthman b. 'Affan, there arose angry grumblings of discontent by non-organised groups protesting against the caliph's economic policy in different regions (al-Mas'udi 1938: 301; Ibn Hazm 1971: 111; Ibn Khallikan 1968-72: VII, 214; al-Zubayri 1982: 124). Mutineers came to 'Uthman demanding that he depose some governors, especially the governor of Egypt. After a long discussion between 'Uthman and the Egyptian mutineers, 'Uthman promised to do as they asked (al-Tabari 1879-1901: II, 656). It also appeared that some of 'Uthman's relatives had come to power by nepotism, such as his cousin Marwan b. al-Hakam, who wrote and received important and confidential letters as a notary for the caliph. According to al-Tabari and al-Baladhuri who follow the narrative of al-Waqidi,<sup>7</sup> Marwan used his capacity to forge a letter in the name of the caliph to the Egyptian governor 'Abdullah b. Abi Sarh commanding him to kill the mutineers. This letter, which was marked with the caliph's seal, fell into the hands of the mutineers. They returned to Medina, besieged 'Uthman's house and killed him (ibid.: II, 666; al-Baladhuri 1936: V, 60-6, 1979: II, 553-5).

### 'Abdullah b. Saba'

It is generally agreed that most of the classic Islamic historical sources which narrate the story of 'Abdullah b. Saba', depend on al-Tabari (1879-1901: II, 647), who himself quoted the story from Sayf b. 'Umar al-Dabbi (d. 200/816) the author of *al-Fitna wa waq'at al-jamal*. According to Sayf's account, Ibn Saba' was a Jew from Yemen who had converted to Islam during 'Uthman's reign. He travelled to many Islamic cities, where he succeeded in arousing people against 'Uthman and his administration, in favour of 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ibid.: II, 647). During his journey, he was preaching extreme doctrinal ideas, which he inherited from his previous culture. He interpreted some verses of the Qur'an in a way that no one had done before. Sayf adds that Ibn Saba' interprets: 'Lo! He Who hath given thee the Qur'an for a law will surely bring thee home again' (the Holy Qur'an: 85: 28), to mean that the Prophet Muhammad would be resurrected after his death, because he is more deserving than Jesus (al-Tabari 1879-1901: year 35). This makes Ibn Saba' the first to introduce the doctrine of the return (*raj'a*) of the Prophet into Islam. It is possible he adopted this doctrine from Judaism. Muslim historians and heresiographers mention that Ibn Saba' was followed by a group called '*al-Saba'iyya*'.<sup>8</sup> When 'Ali took over the caliphate, he banished Ibn Saba' to Ctesiphon, and punished some of the *Saba'iyya* by burning them alive. In his book, al-Dabbi

mentions that Ibn Saba' exaggerated in his doctrine even denying 'Ali's death (1972: 48). Moreover, al-Nawbakhti and al-Baghdadi add that Ibn Saba' held the belief that 'Ali would return to life in order to destroy his enemies (al-Baghdadi n.d.: 233; al-Nawbakhti 1984: 22). Therefore, he became a semi-legendary figure to whom the history of extremism (*ghuluww*) in Islam can be traced (*EP*<sup>2</sup>: V, 51; cf. Hodgson 1955: 6). It should be noted that the rest of the *Saba'iyya* later joined al-Mukhtar b. Abi 'Ubayd al-Thaqafi in his revolt against the Umayyads.

It may be added that two modern scholars, a Shi'ite scholar Murtada al-'Askari and a Sunni scholar 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Hilabi, suspect this narration and therefore reject Ibn Saba's existence. After referring to the early Muslim classical sources and examining selected reports of modern scholars, Murtada al-'Askari, in his book *'Abd Allah b. Saba' wa asatir ukhra*, raises doubts about Sayf's credibility. This opinion is maintained by several reliable sources. He refers to *Tahdhib al-tahdhib* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, who shows that Sayf was an unreliable source, especially in *hadith*. Moreover, al-'Asqalani mentions several well-known scholars who accuse Sayf of producing false *hadiths*. Some describe him as a *zindiq* (Ibn Hajar 1984: IV, 295-6), while al-'Asqalani in *Taqrib al-tahdhib* describes him simply as 'weak in *hadith*', but strict with his facts about history (Ibn Hajar 1992: I, 344). Additionally, al-Hilabi, in his book, *'Abdallah b. Saba'*, has concluded that the early historical reports about Ibn Saba' and his role were fabricated and that he was an imaginary person. He quotes selected views of modern scholars according to their originality, and specially examines those which show an elaborated study of the subject (Hilabi 1989: 9, 92). Al-'Askari and al-Hilabi both explain how al-Tabari is at fault when he quotes from Sayf b. 'Umar al-Dabbi and depends on his report (*riwaya*).

Regardless of the origin of the word, it seems that during 'Uthman's reign (23-35/644-56) the term *raj'a* was used by some Muslims to confirm the return of the Prophet. Later, it was used in connections with 'Ali b. Abi Talib. According to Sayf b. 'Umar al-Dabbi, Ibn Saba' was the first in Islam to use the term *wasi* (legatee), when he alleged that 'Ali b. Abi Talib was a legatee of the Prophet Muhammad (al-Dabbi 1972: 48). It seems that Ibn Saba' derived the idea that every prophet should have a legatee from Judaism and applied it to Islam.

## The Conflict

Shortly after the death of 'Uthman in 35/656, a dispute arose between the new caliph, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, and the governor of Syria, Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan. Mu'awiya had a prolonged struggle with 'Ali, who deposed all the Umayyad figures from their positions. In Safar 37/ July 657, the battle of Siffin started as the second civil war in Islam. It

lasted a hundred days.<sup>9</sup> It is at this point that the Shi'ites emerged as a political party, when they organised an army called *Shi'at 'Ali*. When 'Ali was killed in Ramadan 40/January 661, the Shi'ites of Kufa chose al-Hasan b. 'Ali to succeed his father. Al-Hasan had no power to confront Mu'awiya or his army, which forced him to cede the caliphate to Mu'awiya in 41/661 (al-Tabari 1879-1901: XVIII, 7). A form of peace treaty was negotiated between al-Hasan and Mu'awiya. The agreement between the two parties stated that Mu'awiya would rule for ten years, then al-Hasan would take over the caliphate or choose and appoint a new caliph (Shaykh al-Mufid 1981: 286). Al-Hasan did not live to accomplish this task. He died in 49/669 (Ibn Khallikan 1968-72: II, 66; al-Ya'qubi 1980: II, 225; cf. Shaykh al-Mufid 1981: 286). According to Shaykh al-Mufid in his *Irshad*, al-Hasan was poisoned. In 56/675, Mu'awiya appointed his son Yazid (d. 64/683) heir apparent and tried to have the recognition of authority (*bay'a*) from what they called 'the distinguished people' of the Prophet's Companions (Shaykh al-Mufid 1981: 183). It was too difficult for him to achieve consensus in such a *bay'a*. Opposition from the *ahl al-bayt* provided an alternative. Mu'awiya repressed every claimant to the caliphate and forced them to yield. Nevertheless, the Shi'ites continued to give the oath of allegiance to the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) and held out hopes that one of them would revoke the caliphate of the Umayyads. When Yazid succeeded his father in the caliphate in 60/680, many protests arose, especially from the people of Kufa and the people of Hijaz. Therefore, he commanded his governors to declare the *bay'a* to him. Al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, who had already rejected the *bay'a* of Yazid, received a message from the Shi'ite leaders in Kufa, asking him to lead the rebellion against the Umayyads (al-Tabari 1879-1901: XIX, 25). However, the situation was changing rapidly in Kufa. Yazid instructed one of his generals to take control of Kufa and deal harshly with any manifestations of revolt. He then assigned military units to all the routes to Kufa from the south in order to intercept al-Husayn (ibid.: XIX, 63-4; Shaykh al-Mufid 1981: 326). On 10 Muharram 61/10 October 680, al-Husayn and his companions were killed at Karbala' (al-Tabari 1879-1901: XIX, 75).

### The Movement of the Tawwabun

The killing of al-Husayn not only established Yazid and his family in power as the Muslim caliphs, but also supposedly marked the advent of Shi'ism as a religious movement. This is unclear. What is clear is that with the death of al-Husayn, Shi'ism entered a new phase. In Kufa, a group of Shi'ites calling themselves 'the Penitents' (*the Tawwabun*), who had a profound sense of guilt for not having been with al-Husayn

in Karbala', began secretly to organise a movement through which they sought God's pardon by fighting the Umayyads (al-Baladhuri 1936: V, 205). Al-Tabari considers these feelings of guilt as the origin of the practice of weeping, wailing and lamenting. At the end of the year 61/680, the leaders of the *Tawwabun* met in the house of Sulayman b. Surad, and they all swore to avenge the killing of al-Husayn (al-Dhahabi 1981-8: III, 395; cf. Hodgson 1955: 3; al-Mas'udi 1964: III, 101; Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: IV, 158-9).

### **Al-Mukhtar b. Abi 'Ubayd al-Thaqafi**

The movement of the *Tawwabun* was the first Shi'ite movement against the legitimate caliphate and the rule of the Umayyads. It materialised as an active revolt when al-Mukhtar, with whom they had refused to ally themselves, prepared himself for more organised action. It is no doubt true that the division between the Shi'ites in Kufa was a result of disagreement between two different strategies. In 63/682, when al-Mukhtar was freed from Yazid's jail, he came to Mecca. He was told that the people of Hijaz were taking advantage of Yazid's death and had paid homage to Ibn al-Zubayr. He went to Hijaz to meet 'Abdullah b. al-Zubayr and made an agreement with him. The agreement stipulated that Ibn al-Zubayr would let al-Mukhtar know about his prospective strategy, review his opinion, and take advantage of his counsel. When Ibn al-Zubayr was reticent with al-Mukhtar, not providing him with any information about his future plans, al-Mukhtar felt neglected; therefore, he decided to go to Kufa, and confirm the same deal with Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, also known as Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya (al-Tabari 1879-1901: VII, 63; Ibn Khallikan 1968-72: III, 196).

### **Al-Mukhtar in Kufa**

From the first day of his arrival, in Ramadan 64/May 684, al-Mukhtar explored the situation in Kufa. When he found out about the *Tawwabun* and their readiness, al-Mukhtar made every effort to attract the Shi'ites in Kufa to his *da'wa*. Unlike the *Tawwabun*, who did not accept an imam after al-Husayn, al-Mukhtar realised that if he was to have the support of the Kufans, he would have to provide an imam who could bring about the desired change. The legacy of 'Ali b. Abi Talib still survived among the Shi'ites, but not in Kufa. Therefore, al-Mukhtar promoted the *da'wa* among the Shi'ites in favour of Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya, who was then living in Medina. He alleged that Muhammad had appointed him as his deputy, a message which captivated a large number of the Kufans, who became his followers. When the *Tawwabun*



did not respond to his *da'wa*, he tried another approach to raise more followers; he propagated in Kufa the notion that Sulayman b. Surad had no knowledge of warfare (al-Tabari 1879-1901: XX, 93; al-Mas'udi 1964: III, 74). Thus, disagreement arose over the specific criteria for deciding who the divinely inspired leader was. The representatives of al-Zubayr by then had discerned al-Mukhtar's ambition to achieve influential power through a large number of followers. Al-Tabari states that an agreement was reached between the two representatives and some Kufan notables to restrain al-Mukhtar from his aim by imprisoning him (1879-1901: XX, 95-6; cf. Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: IV, 172-3). Thus, al-Mukhtar was imprisoned in 65/684, while the Tawwabun started their final groundwork to fight the Umayyads. However, when the Tawwabun were defeated in the battle of 'Ayn al-Warda, most of those who survived the battle were attracted by al-Mukhtar's *da'wa* to the side of Ibn al-Hanafiyya. In 66/685, the two representatives of al-Zubayr released al-Mukhtar from jail after they compelled him to swear that he would not rebel against them, and if he did, 'he would have to sacrifice one thousand livestock and manumit all his slaves'. Al-Tabari narrates this story:

After he had taken an oath and had been released, al-Mukhtar said to those whom he trusted: 'How stupid they are if they think I will fulfill those vows of theirs. As for my swearing to them before God, if I have taken an oath and I see a greater good, then I must abandon what I have sworn and bring about the greater good, and expiate my oath. That I should rebel against them is a greater good than that I should desist from it, and I will expiate my oath' (1879-1901: XX, 99).

This means that al-Mukhtar knew, when he swore, that he would break his oath to avoid punishment. It is useful at this point to mention that al-Mukhtar was the first who publicly practiced *taqiyya*,<sup>10</sup> which was later adopted by the Shi'ites in its broad meaning as religious dissimulation.

### The Revolt of al-Mukhtar

In Muharram 66/August 685, al-Mukhtar managed to gather a great number of Shi'ites in favour of Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya to start the revolt against the Umayyads. He became strong enough to seize possession of Kufa, especially after he deposed the representative of Ibn al-Zubayr from his post. He mobilised a great number of the *mawali*<sup>11</sup> to establish a newly armed group, and chose one of the *mawali*, Abu 'Amra Kaysan, as leader of the group.<sup>12</sup> Al-Mukhtar attracted every class in the society of Kufa, from the Kufan notables and tribal leaders

to every freed slave, to join his *da'wa* and become part of it (al-Dinawari 1959: 292-4). He then took control of Kufa and started to attack the Umayyads. A year after the commencement of his revolt, his army succeeded in overwhelming the Umayyad army at the battle of al-Khazir in Muharram 67/August 686. Al-Mukhtar kept his promise by killing every warrior engaged in the killing of al-Husayn and his household.

As the deputy of Ibn al-Hanafiyya, al-Mukhtar announced himself as the legatee (*wasi*) of the Imam. The success of al-Mukhtar made Ibn al-Zubayr afraid that the people of Hijaz might follow Ibn al-Hanafiyya's *da'wa*. As a result, he tried to force Ibn al-Hanafiyya to pay homage to him. Ibn al-Hanafiyya refused to obey him, and instead gave his oath of allegiance to the Umayyad caliph, with whom he lived peacefully until his death in 81/699 (Ibn Khallikan 1968-72: iv, 172; cf. Halm 1991: 18).

A comprehensive analysis of the sources may well prove that every scattered group of Shi'ites found cohesion in the movement of al-Mukhtar, including the *Saba'iyya*, who believed in the legatee (*wasi*) of the Prophet and the return (*raj'a*) of the Imam. The idea of the *wasi* and the *raj'a* increased in prevalence during al-Mukhtar's lifetime. Moreover, the meaning of *wasi* became wider, encompassing the legatee of Imam instead of the legatee of the Prophet. Likewise, the term *raj'a* included the return of the Imam, not only the Prophet. It is important to mention that al-Mukhtar was also the first to proclaim the infallibility (*'isma*) of the Imam.<sup>13</sup> Al-Baladhuri mentions that Ibn al-Hanafiyya tried to visit his followers in Kufa. This worried al-Mukhtar, because of the many proclamations he had made in the name of the Imam without getting his permission or referring to him. He thus announced to the people of Kufa and the followers of Ibn al-Hanafiyya that:

Anyone who wants to know his Imam can examine him by stabbing him. The real Imam will not die by stabbing. When Ibn al-Hanafiyya received such news, he changed his mind and never went to Kufa (al-Baladhuri 1979: V, 269).

In view of this text, one can assume that al-Mukhtar gave his people the impression that their Imam was fully immune (*ma'sum*), not only from sin and error, but that he was also receiving physical protection from God.

Furthermore, al-Mukhtar was the first to adopt the doctrine of the *bada'*.<sup>14</sup> According to al-Shahrastani, he claimed that he knew future events, either because of a prophecy he had received, or because of a message from the Imam (1975: I, 148, 160). Whenever he foretold an event to his followers, and the result was in accordance with what

he had foretold, he would make use of it as a proof of the truth of his mission. If, however, it turned out otherwise, he would say that God had changed His Will. In this matter, al-Mukhtar differentiated between the *bada'* and the so-called abrogation (*naskh*).<sup>15</sup>

### Shi'ite Terms in the Second/Eighth Century

After the death of Ibn al-Hanafiyya, a group called the Kaysaniyya (cf. al-Baladhuri 1936: V, 229, 237) introduced new doctrines, establishing the main ideas of Shi'ite eschatological beliefs about occultation (*ghayba*) and the appearance or the return (*raj'a*) of the Rightly Guided one (*al-Mahdi*), or what they termed the expected Imam (*al-imam al-muntazar*). According to the Kaysaniyya's belief, Ibn al-Hanafiyya went into occultation and one day he would reappear as the promised *Mahdi* (al-Mas'udi 1964: III, 77-9; al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 147; Ash'ari 1980: 18-23; al-Baghdadi n.d.: 38). It should be noted that all Muslims believe in the appearance of the *Mahdi* in different ways, and they all agree he will be a descendant of the Prophet. The doctrine of the *Mahdi* maintains that he will appear to destroy tyranny and establish justice before the end of the world. The name *al-Mahdi* with its messianic connotations was used by several groups among the Shi'ites, for example, the Fourers (the Kaysaniyya), the Seveners (the Ismailis) and the Twelvers. It later took on the meaning of an eschatological individual, 'the Riser' (*al-Qa'im*), who came to replace *al-Mahdi* (Corbin 1977: 68-73; Madelung 1981: 291-3). However, the eschatological sense of the term *Mahdi* still exists as 'the Rescuer' who will come sometime before the Day of Resurrection.

Practising *taqiyya* helped the Shi'ites work secretly during the Umayyads' reign. The eldest son of Ibn al-Hanafiyya, Abu Hashim 'Abdullah b. Muhammad, managed to organise a secret group. He succeeded in gathering the scattered remnants of the Shi'ites under his command. His followers, the Hashimiyya, asserted that Abu Hashim had been taught by his father the secrets of knowledge which he received from 'Ali b. Abi Talib. They alleged that he taught him the allegorical interpretation (*ta'wil*) of the Holy Qur'an, and explained the esoteric meaning (*batin*) from the esoteric text (*zahir*; al-Qummi 1963: 38; al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 150; al-Nawbakhti 1984: 29). Al-Shahrastani uses terms such as *batin*, *zahir* and *ta'wil* when he mentions the Hashimiyya in his book. This may indicate that the usage of these terms began between the deaths of Ibn al-Hanafiyya and Abu Hashim, 81-98/699-716 (al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 150). Moreover, the usage of the term *wasiyya* gained wider usage and contained, in addition to the *nass*, some eschatological knowledge of religion. According to al-Ya'qubi, the meaning of *wasiyya* included the names of some *da'is*

who cultivated the *da'wa* in the favour of Ibn al-Hanafiyya (al-Ya'qubi 1980: II, 297).

It seems that at the beginning of the second/eighth century the term *ahl al-bayt* was subsumed under the title of *al al-bayt*, when it became a slogan of both the 'Alid and the Abbasid *da'was*.<sup>16</sup> After the death of Abu Hashim, who left no male heirs, the Hashimiyya found no difficulties in shifting their allegiance from one branch of *al al-bayt* to another. They continued the secret *da'wa* against the Umayyads, which was led by the Abbasids (al-Qummi 1963: 65; cf. *EP*<sup>2</sup>: IV, 345). The Abbasids' *da'wa* contained some extremist Shi'ite groups (*ghulat*). Therefore, many extreme ideas emerged and were adopted by the *ghulat*. They began as refutations of some interpretations of certain verses of the Holy Qur'an, and later became a key doctrine. At the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries (first-second/eighth), a debate arose about Allah's names and attributes. The Shi'ites accused the Sunnis of believing in anthropomorphism (*tashbih*). For their part, the Sunnis accused the Shi'ites of stripping Allah of all his attributes (*ta'til*; al-Qummi 1963: 6, 12, 14, 136; cf. al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 103-8). It is written that Allah has a face, an eye, a hand and a leg.<sup>17</sup> The Sunnis, in their commentaries on the Qur'an, believe that Allah has corporeal attributes, but they do not resemble those of humankind. On the other hand, the Shi'ites, in their *ta'wil*, interpret those attributes as within Allah's omnipotence, for example, his hand means his capability, and his face means his unity. Both parties tried to avoid anthropomorphism in its literal meaning, and they declared Allah beyond and above human description; that is transcendence (*tanzih*).

'Incarnation' is another doctrine which has been held by some extremist Shi'ites (*ghulat*). This group believes in the infusion of the divine essence into a human body. Al-Baghdadi lists ten extreme groups who believed in *hulul*, and the Saba'iyya was one of them. They considered that the divine spirit is incarnate in some human bodies, such as prophets, imams and saints (al-Baghdadi n.d.: 233, 272). This could happen during the lifetime, or after death, so the human soul may then transmigrate to another creature's body by metempsychosis (*tanasukh*). In their view, a good soul would transmigrate to a human body (*naskh*), while an evil one would be put into the body of a hideous creature (*maskh*; al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 174).

Early Muslim heresiographers attack the *ghulat* in various ways, and they accuse some of them of practising forbidden doctrines. They also allege that the *ghulat* advocated antinomianism (*ibahiyya*), which is an external doctrine that came to Islam from Persia. It is mentioned that the leaders of these *ghulat* groups, such as Bayan b. Sam'an, al-Mughira b. Sa'id and Abu Mansur al-'Ijli (al-Tabari 1879-1901: XXV, 154; *EP*<sup>2</sup>:

IV, 441-2), tried to establish a connection with Muhammad b. 'Ali (*al-Baqir*), the grandson of al-Husayn and the fifth Shi'ite Imam, and each of them claimed to be a follower of al-Baqir. The three leaders of the *ghulat* were put to death by fire in 119-20/737-8 (al-Qummi 1963: 37; al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 152, 176-8; Ash'ari 1980: 23-5, al-Nawbakhti 1984: 28, 34, 38, 59; al-Baghdadi n.d.: 244). At any rate, it seems that al-Baqir refused to announce himself as the Imam of the Shi'ites, or even to take political leadership against the Umayyad rule. On the contrary, his half brother, Zayd b. 'Ali, led a revolt against the Umayyads. He tried to put an end to the disagreement between the Shi'ites themselves and other Muslims by presenting the following solution: though 'Ali was the most excellent (*afdal*) among the Prophet's companions, the imamate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar was allowable, since they had been accepted by 'Ali himself. He therefore declared his idea of the imamate of the inferior (*mafdu'l*). This idea, however, was rejected by the preponderance of the Shi'ites who felt alienated and as a result they withdrew their support from Zayd's revolt. Henceforth, they were called 'the deserters' (*rafida*; al-Qummi 1963: 18; Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: V, 243; al-Shahrastani 1975: I, 155; cf. Watt 1970: 288-91). Zayd fought the Umayyads. He was defeated and killed in 122/740 (Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: V, 243).

### The Continuance of some Shi'ite Doctrines

Nowadays, some Shi'ite sects hold some of the above beliefs amongst the main tenets of their faith. For example, there are the feelings of guilt as the origins of the practice of weeping, wailing and lamenting, which the Shi'ites continue to perform as a ritual observance on each anniversary of al-Husayn's martyrdom. The Shi'ites consider the present time to be a time of the triumph of evil;<sup>18</sup> therefore, they believe that danger still surrounds their faith. For that reason, they believe that they should be practising *taqiyya*, to protect themselves and their belief. The Twelvers and Ismailis, in some Arab countries, hide their Shi'ite identities as well, and they sometimes worship Allah behind Sunni practice. While the Twelvers continue to believe that all their Imams were immune of sin, Nizari (Agha-khani) and Tayyibi (Bohra and Sulaymani) Ismailis assert the infallibility (*'isma*) of their present Imams, that is the Agha Khan or the hidden Imam from the descendants of al-Tayyib. The creed of *'isma* followed with the capability of the Imam to interpret the Qur'anic text, and has been changed to conform to modern needs. Thus, Shi'ites, especially the Ismailis, believe that the Imam has the authority to renew Islamic law (*shari'a*). The Druze and the Nusayris assert that metempsychosis is an Islamic creed. They call it '*aqidat al-taqammus*'; they believe that without

this creed, human faith would not be complete. Incidentally, some Sufi *tariqas* have adopted certain of these dogmas, such as *hulul*, where we see that the high rank of the Sufi Saints (*shaykhs*) is alleged to be united with the divine spirit.

## Notes

1. See, for example, the Holy Qur'an: 9: 69, 28: 15, 37: 83.
2. The Banū Sā'ida: a branch of the Khazraj tribe of Medina. Ibn Ḥazm 1971: 365-6.
3. Sa'd b. 'Ubāda b. Dulaym b. Ḥāritha b. al-Khazraj b. Sā'ida (d. 15/636-7). Ibn Sa'd 1985: 613; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (*EI*<sup>2</sup>): VII: 31.
4. A pond or a stream situated a few miles from Mecca on the road to Medina. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī n.d.: II, 389; *EI*<sup>2</sup>: II: 993; Shaykh al-Mufīd 1981: 124-5.
5. *Nass*: lit. means 'text'. According to the Shi'ite belief, it means 'explicit designation', that is the unequivocal declaration of the succession of the imamate. *EI*<sup>2</sup>: III: 1062; Netton 1992: 192.
6. The biographies of the above names can be traced in Ibn Sa'd 1985 and Shaykh al-Mufīd 1981.
7. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823). Ibn Khallikān 1968-72: I, 640.
8. See, for example, al-Ṭabarī 1879-1901; al-Qummī 1963; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd 1965; al-Shahrastānī 1975; Ibn 'Asākir 1979; Ash'arī 1980; al-Nawbakhtī 1984; al-Baghdādī n.d.
9. The first civil war in Islam was the Battle of the Camel.
10. *Taqiyya*: comes from an Arabic verb *waqā*, which means 'to shield' or 'to preserve'. It means precautionary dissimulation of one's true religious beliefs in time of danger. The Shi'ites believe that *taqiyya* is an exceptional dispensation granted only in cases of emergency and compulsion, which are enforced, precautionary, apprehensive, arcane, and symbiotic. According to Shi'ite belief, it should be practised whenever there is danger, which would impair their faith. *EI*<sup>2</sup>: Glossary, 288; Enayat 1988: 208.
11. *Mawālī*: pl. of *Mawlā*, which means any Muslim who was not a full member by descent of an Arab tribe.
12. Kaysān is the eponym of the *Kaysāniyya*. Al-Balādhurī 1979: V, 229, 237.
13. *ʿIṣma*: lit. means infallibility or immunity from error and sin; *EI*<sup>2</sup>: IV, 182-4. A number of Shi'ite traditions relate to the sinlessness of the Imām as well as the Prophet Muhammad. There is a debate on the meaning of *ʿiṣma* of the Prophet Muhammad, on whether it put restraint on religious practice or whether it also comprises temporal things. This also applies to the *ʿiṣma* of the Imām in Shi'ite belief.
14. *Badā'*: lit. 'to manifest' or 'reveal', and it means in theology the emergence of new circumstances which cause a change in an earlier ruling or command; *EI*<sup>2</sup>: I, 850.

15. For more details, see Sachedina 1988: 26-7, 30.
16. There is an essential difference between *āl* and *ahl*: the first means 'the origin', or sometimes it is defined as the nearest relations by descent from the same father or ancestor, and the second means 'the progeny' or the immediate descendants of the family. Madelung 1984: 13-14; cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup>: I, 345.
17. The Holy Qur'ān: the face, 2: 115, 55: 27, 76: 9, 92: 20; the eye, 11: 37; the hand, 3: 37, 5: 64, 48: 10; the leg, 11: 37.
18. See Note 10.

## **Additions to *The New Islamic Dynasties***

*C. Edmund Bosworth*

### **Introduction**

*The New Islamic Dynasties. A Chronological and Genealogical Manual*, itself a much-expanded updated version of a work which had appeared over thirty years previously, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 1996. During the intervening twelve years, there have inevitably been corrections and additions which could be made to this: new information from inscriptions, coins, freshly edited and printed texts, and so on, appears almost continuously. Until a revised and corrected version of *The New Islamic Dynasties* as a whole can appear at some future date, it seems useful to give here a new and revised version of an entry, that on the Qarakhanids, for which there has been a particular spate of new information since the opening up of what was formerly Soviet Central Asia and is now a group of five independent Republics stretching almost from the lower Volga to the borders of China. It has also seemed useful to include tables of some lines of rulers in the Siberian steppes during the period from the Mongol invasions to the gradual incorporation of the Siberian lands into the Russian Empire, that is the period from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries AD, although the hard historical information on these nomadic lines is often sparse and not infrequently contradictory. Hence it is accordingly difficult to formulate coherent and fully reliable lists of rulers within these families and dynasties, and to give watertight dates; the results given below should therefore be regarded as to some extent interim ones.



## CHAPTER TEN

# The Eastern Persian Lands, Transoxania and Khwārazm before the Seljuqs\*

90

THE QARAKHANIDS

382-609/992-1212

*Transoxania, Farghana, Semirechye and Eastern Turkestan*

‘Alī b. Mūsā b. Satuq Bughra Khān (d. 388/998) and his cousin ØHārūn or Ḥasan Bughra Khān b. Sulaymān b. Satuq Bughra Khān, Ilig, Bughra Khān, Shihāb al-Dawla (d. 382/992), joint founders of the Qarakhanid confederation, with their centre in Balāsāghūn and Kāshghar

### 1. The Qaghans of the united kingdom

Ø	Hārūn or Ḥasan Bughra Khān b. Sulaymān b. Satuq Bughra Khān, d. 382/992
382/992	‘Alī b. Mūsā, Abu ‘l-Ḥasan
Ø388/998	Aḥmad b. ‘Alī, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar and Abū Naṣr, Ṭoghan Qara Khān, Quṭb al-Dawla wa-Naṣr al-Milla, Sayf al-Dawla, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq, Mu‘ayyid al-‘Adl, at Balāsāghūn until 405/1014 or 406/1015
Ø404/1013	Mansūr b. ‘Alī, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar, Arslan Khān, Qara Khān, Shams al-Dawla, Nūr al-Dawla wa-Shams al-Milla, ‘Umdat al-Dīn, at Balāsāghūn from 405/1014 or 406/1015
Ø415/1024	Muḥammad b. Hārūn or Ḥasan Bughra Khān, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar, Ṭoghan or Ṭongha Khān, Qara Khān, Malik al-Mashriq, Nizām al-Dawla, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq, at Balāsāghūn in 415/1014 or 416/1025
Ø416/1025	Yūsuf b. Hārūn or Ḥasan Bughra Khān, Qadir Khān, Malik al-Mashriq wa ‘l-Şīn, Nāṣir

\* A circle prefixed to the name of a ruler indicates, as in *The New Islamic Dynasties*, that coins minted by the ruler are extant.

- al-Dawla, Nāṣir al-Dīn, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq, known with the title of Khān from 395/1005, at Balāsāghūn from 416/1025, d. 423/1032
- Ø423-31/1032-40 Sulaymān b. Yūsuf, Abu 'l-Muzaffar and Abū Shujā', Arslan Khān, Qara Khān, Malik al-Mashriq wa 'l-Ṣīn, Sharaf al-Dawla, Fakhr al-Milla, 'Izz al-Dīn, Nāṣir Amīr al-Mu'minīn
- Ø 'Alī (? b. Ilig Naṣr), Ṭoghan Khān, a coin of his from Balāsāghūn of 427/1036 and perhaps subsequently; hence ephemeral ruler, pretender or usurper?
2. The Princes and then Qaghans of the western kingdom (Transoxania, including Bukhara and Samarkand, and at times Farghāna and the upper Oxus lands, sc. Chaghāniyān to Shughnān and Wakhsh, and Ṭukhāristān), with its centre at Samarkand
- Øafter c. 411/c. 1020, in control of Bukhara and Sogdia 'Alī Tigin b. Hārūn or Ḥasan Bughra Khān, Arslan Ilig, d. 425/1034, at first as Tigin or prince, then after 424/1032 as Khān
- Ø425/1034 Yūsuf b. 'Alī Tigin, Arslan Tigin as prince and then also Ilig, reigned from Samarkand with his younger brother
- between 430/1039 and 440/1048 Sulaymān b. Yūsuf, Arslan Khān, prince in Sogdia, d. 449/1058
- Øc. 433/c. 1042 Muḥammad b. Naṣr b. 'Alī, Arslan Qara Khān, Mu'ayyid al-'Adl, 'Ayn al-Dawla, prince at Özgend in Farghāna, d. 444/1053
- Ø431/1040 Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr b. 'Alī, Abū Ishāq, Böri Tigin, Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Bughra Khān, Qara Khān, Malik al-Mashriq wa 'l-Ṣīn, Mu'ayyid al-'Adl, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq, 'Imād al-Dawla wa-Tāj al-Milla, 'Izz al-Umma wa-Kahf al-Muslimīn, Sayf Khalīfat Allāh, victor over the sons of 'Alī Tegin, the first Khān and supreme ruler of the western Qaghanate; 460-61/1068-69 as co-ruler with his son and successor Shams al-Mulk Naṣr
- Ø460/1068 Naṣr b. Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr, Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq wa 'l-Dīn, Sulṭān al-Mashriq wa 'l-Ṣīn, Shams al-Mulk
- Ø472/1080 Khidr b. Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr, Abū Shujā', Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Khān, Burhān al-Dawla

- Ø479-82/1086-89 Aḥmad b. Khiḍr b. Ibrāhīm, Mu'ayyid al-‘Adl, ‘Imād al-Dawla, Sayf Khalīfat Allāh, first reign
- Ø482-83/1089-90 Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr, Arslan Khān, Qīlich Arslan Khān, Mu'ayyid al-‘Adl, ‘Imād al-Dawla wa-Tāj al-Milla
- ?483/?1090 Ya‘qūb b. Sulaymān b. Yūsuf, Qarakhanid of the eastern branch
- Ø485-88/1092-95 Aḥmad b. Khiḍr, second reign
- Ø488/1095 Mas‘ūd b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, Arslan Khān, Mu'ayyid al-‘Adl
- 490/1097 Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. Ibrāhīm
- Ø490/1097 Maḥmūd b. ?Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr, Abu ‘l-Qāsīm, Ṭamghach/Ṭabghach Khān, ‘Imād al-Dawla
- Øbefore 492/1099 Jibrā‘il b. ‘Umar b. Yūsuf, Qadīr Khān, Qarakhanid of the eastern branch
- Ø495/1102 Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, Arslan Khān, Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Khān, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla, after 523/1129 co-ruler with his sons Naṣr and then Aḥmad Khān
- Ø523/1129 Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, 523-24/1129-30 co-ruler with his father Muḥammad
- 524/1130 Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Mu‘min b. Ibrāhīm, Abu ‘l-Ma‘ālī, Jalāl al-Dunyā wa ‘l-Dīn, Qīlich Qara Khān, Qīlich Ṭamghach/Ṭabghach Khān
- Øbefore 530/1136 Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, Pahlawān al-Sharq, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla, Nāṣir al-Dīn, Nuṣrat al-Ḥaqq wa ‘l-Dīn (later, ruler of Khurasan after the Seljuq Sanjar, see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 91, 1)
- 536/1141 *Occupation of Transoxania by the Qara Khitay*
- Ø536/1141 Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar, Rukn al-Dunyā wa ‘l-Dīn
- Ø551/1156 Maḥmūd b. Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar, Qadīr Ṭoghan Khān, Jalāl al-Dunyā wa ‘l-Dīn
- Ø553/1158 ‘Alī b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, Chaghri Khān
- Ø556/1161 Mas‘ūd b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar, Qīlich Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Khān, Rukn al-Dunyā wa ‘l-Dīn
- ?561-62/1166-67 Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Malik al-Umarā’, Nuṣrat al-Dunyā wa ‘l-Dīn, Qarluq rebel of non-Qarakhanid origin
- Ø566/1171 Muḥammad b. Mas‘ūd b. Ḥasan, Abu ‘l-Muzaffar, Qīlich Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Khān,

- Igdesh Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Khān, Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn
- Ø574/1178 'Abd al-Khāliq b. Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, Abu 'l-Muzaffar, Qutlugh Bilge Khān, Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn
- Ø574/1179 Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn, Arslan Khān, Ulugh Sulṭān, Sulṭān al-Salāṭīn, Nuṣrat al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn
- Ø599-609/1203-12 'Uthmān b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan, Ulugh Sulṭān al-Salāṭīn, Sulṭān al-A'zam, Nuṣrat al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn, vassal on various occasions of the Qara Khitay and Khwārazm Shāhs
- 609/1212 *Occupation of Transoxania by the Khwārazm Shāhs*
3. The Qaghans of the eastern kingdom (the Syr Darya valley and the lands to its north towards the Chu valley, at times Farghāna, Semirechye, and Kāshghar and Khotan in eastern Turkestan), with its centre at Balāsāghūn until the advent of the Qara Khitay, thereafter at Kāshghar
- Ø431/1040 Sulaymān b. Yūsuf b. Hārūn or Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Muzaffar and Abu 'l-Shujā' and, Arslan Khān, Qara Khān, Malik al-Mashriq wa 'l-Ṣīn, Sharaf al-Dawla, Fakhr al-Milla, 'Izz al-Dīn, Nāṣir Amīr al-Mu'minīn
- Ø447-49/1056-57, Øprince with the title of Bughra Khān since 426/1035 Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Hārūn or Ḥasan, Bughra Khān, Qara Khān, Malik al-Mashriq, Malik al-Islām, Qawām al-Dawla, Sulṭān al-Dawla, Mushayyid al-Dawla wa-Mu'ayyid al-Milla, Zayn al-Dīn, Sharaf al-Islām, Walī Khalīfat Allāh Ṣafī Amīr al-Mu'minīn, d. 449/1057
- Øc. 449-51/  
c. 1057-59 ?Naṣr, Ṭoghan/Ṭongha Khān, Qara Khān, Zayn al-Dawla wa-Mu'īn al-Milla, Jamāl al-Dīn
- Ø449-54/1057-62 Ibrāhīm<sup>6</sup> b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, Abu 'l-Muzaffar, at Balāsāghūn after 451/1059, Arslan Khān, Qara Khān, Malik al-Islām, d. 454/1062
- Ø?460/1068 Yūsuf b. Sulaymān b. Yūsuf, in Kāshghar by 462/1070, at Balāsāghūn after ?468/1076, Ṭoghrīl Qara Khān, 'Imād al-Dawla, d. between 476/1083 and 478/1085
- 'Umar b. Yūsuf b. Sulaymān, Ṭoghrīl Tigin, Sharaf al-Dawla, Zayn al-Dīn, for two months between 473/1080 and 481/1088
- Ø?460-96/ Hārūn or Ḥasan b. Sulaymān b. Yūsuf, Abū 'Alī,

- 1068–1103 Tamghach or Tabghach Bughra Qara Khān, Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq, prince in Kāshghar by 462/1070, probably in 460/1068, at Balāsāghūn before 481/1088 till before 492/1099, d. probably in 496/1103  
Jibrā'il b. 'Umar b. Yūsuf, Tabghach or Tamghach Khān, Qadīr Khān, in Tarāz and Balāsāghūn by 492/1099
- Ø496 to between 522 and 535/1103 to between 1128 and 1141 Ahmad b. Hārūn or Ḥasan b. Sulaymān, Arslan Khān, Nūr al-Dawla
- between 522/1128 and 535/1141 till c. 553/1158 535/1141 Ibrāhīm b. Ahmad b. Hārūn or Ḥasan  
*Qara Khitay occupation of Semirechye and move of the eastern Qarakhanid capital from Balāsāghūn to Kāshghar*
- Øc. 553-c.575/ c. 1158-c. 1179 Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ahmad, Arslan Khān
- Øc. 575–601/ c. 1179–1205 607/1211 Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, Abu 'l-Muẓaffar, Arslan Khān, d. 601/1205  
*Occupation of Semirechye and Farghāna by the Nayman Mongol Küchlüg; no Qarakhanid ruler known in Kāshghar after 601/1205*
4. The Princes in Farghāna, with their centre at Özgend
- before c. 531/c. 1137 *Farghāna controlled during this time by various outside Qarakhanid rulers of the western and eastern branches, or by princes of the family as an appanage but without any hereditary succession*
- Øc. 531/c. 1137 Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan (Tigin), Toghrīl Khān, Jalāl al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn
- Ø551/1157 Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn, Arslan Khān, Nuṣrat al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn
- Ø574/1178 Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm, Qadīr Khān, Ulugh Sultān, Jalāl al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn
- Ø607–08/1210–11 or 609/1212 Maḥmūd b. Ahmad, Kuch Arslan Khān, Mu'izz al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn, Jalāl al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn, vassal of the Khwārazm Shāh and then of Küchlüg

The Turkish dynasty of the Qarakhanids acquired this name from European orientalists because of the frequency of the word *qara* 'black' > 'northern' (the basic orientation of the early Turks) > 'powerful' in their Turkish titulature; they have also been called the *Ilek* or *Ilig Khans* (*élig*, *ilig*) 'ruler over a territory'. The oriental sources contemporary with the Qarakhanids simply refer to them as 'the Khāns' or as the *Āl-i Afrāsiyāb* 'House of Afrasiyāb' because of a fancied connection with the ruler of *Tūrān* in *Firdawsī's Shāh-nāma*. It was suggested by a leading authority on the dynasty, *Omeljan Pritsak*, that the Qarakhanids sprang from the *Qarluq*, a tribal group that had formerly been connected with the *Uyghur* confederation and as such had played an important role in earlier steppe history; more recently, another scholar, *Elena Davidovich*, has suggested a connection with the *Yaghma* or *Chigil* tribes, which were in any case components of or associated with the *Qarluq* group.

The Qarakhanids became Muslim in the middle years of the tenth century, and their then head *Satuq Bughra Khān* (d. 955) assumed the Islamic name of 'Abd al-Karīm. His grandson *Hārūn* or *Ḥasan Bughra Khān* was attracted southwards from the steppes by the unsettled condition of *Transoxania* caused by the decline of the *Sāmānids*, and in 392/992 temporarily occupied *Bukhara*. A few years later, his nephew the *Ilig Naṣr* and *Maḥmūd* of *Ghazna* finally extinguished the authority of the *Sāmānids* and divided their lands. The *Oxus* became the general boundary between the two empires, although at times the Qarakhanids managed briefly to occupy *Ṭukhāristān* to the south of the river, and for the next two centuries the territories of the Qarakhanids stretched from *Bukhara* and the middle *Syr Darya* in the west to *Semirechye* and *Kashgharia* in the east.

The Qarakhanids formed a loose confederation rather than a monolithic, unitary state, with various members of the family holding appanages which, if they held more than one, were not necessarily contiguous. Internal quarrels soon appeared, and after 431/1040 the united kingdom of the Qarakhanids split into two main parts, a western Khanate centred on *Samarkand* in *Transoxania* and at times *Farghāna*, and an eastern one including the lands of the middle *Syr Darya* valley, at times *Farghāna*, *Semirechye* and *Kashgharia*, with a military capital, the Khān's *ordu* or encampment near *Balāsāghūn* or *Qara/Quz Ordu* in the *Chu* river valley. *Kāshghar* tended to be its religious and cultural capital, and after the invading *Qara Khitay* (see below) in 531/1137 took over *Balāsāghūn* and made it their own military headquarters, *Kāshghar* became the capital of the Eastern Khanate. *Farghāna*, with its centre at *Özgend*, was a substantial appanage which latterly had its own branch of hereditary Khāns. In general, the descendants of the Great Qaghan 'Alī b. Mūsā b. *Satuq Bughra Khān* (the 'Alid branch, in *Pritsak's* convenient terminology) ruled in the west, whilst those of his

cousin Hārūn or Hasan Bughra Khān b. Sulaymān (the Hasanid branch) ruled in the east. But the boundary between the two was not hard and fast, and members of each family might rule in the other parts of the Qarakhānid lands; in the later twelfth century, the Hasanids were ruling in Samarkand. The western Khanate flourished under such rulers as Ibrāhīm Ṭamghach or Ṭabghach Khān and his son Shams al-Mulk Naṣr, whilst it was to the eastern Qarakhanid ruler in Kashghar, Hārūn or Hasan Bughra Khān b. Sulaymān, that Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Hājib dedicated his didactic poem, the *Qutadghu bilig*. In the later eleventh century, the western Qarakhanids fell under the dominion of the Great Seljuqs of Malik Shāh and his successors (see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 91, 1), and were Seljuq vassals for some fifty years; even the Eastern Qarakhanids in Kāshghar for a time acknowledged them as their lords. The situation changed with the appearance of the Buddhist and animist Qara Khitay or western Liao from northern Mongolia, who in 536/1141 defeated the Seljuq Sultan Sanjar in the battle of the Qatwān steppe, ending Seljuq authority across the Oxus for ever and establishing a loose overlordship over the Qarakhanids in Transoxania and eastern Turkestan. Under these new arrangements, the Qarakhanids were left largely to their own devices; the western ones continued as vassals of the Qara Khitay, but Farghāna now became formally as well as de facto independent of them. A new, further factor appeared in Transoxania with the growing power and aggressive expansionism of the Turkish Khwārazm Shāhs of Atsīz's line (see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 89, 4), and it was the Shāh 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad who in 609/1212 killed the last western Qarakhanid, 'Uthmān, whilst the Eastern Khanate fell to the Nayman Mongol Kūchlūg just before Chingiz Khān's hordes arrived in Central Asia.

Whereas the originally Turkish Ghaznawid sultans built up a strongly centralised state on the familiar Perso-Islamic pattern, the Qarakhanids remained closer to their tribal and steppe past and had a more diffused system of authority, with subordinate members of the family allocated their own appanages and the greater part of their tribal following probably remaining nomadic. Within the ruling family there prevailed the system common amongst other Altaic peoples, of Great Qaghans and Co-Qaghans, with lesser Khāns beneath them as princes. Each had his own suitable Turkish title of office, often combined with an *onghun* or totemistic title from the names of animals, birds, and so on, significant in Turkish lore, such as *arслан* 'lion', *bughra* 'camel', *toghril* and *chaghri* 'falcon', 'hawk', and so on. To these were added honorific titles (*laqabs*) on the familiar Islamic patterns. Since members of the family were continually moving up in the hierarchy of power and acquiring new designations and titles, the task of elucidating the genealogy and chronology of the Qarakhanids is exceedingly difficult. As remarked in

the Introduction to *The New Islamic Dynasties*, Zambaur noted over eighty years ago that this was the only major Islamic dynasty whose genealogy remained obscure, and confessed that his own attempts at constructing a stemma and lists were necessarily sketchy. The historical and literary sources are not numerous, but a large numbers of coins are extant (surveyed in Hunkan, *Türk hakanlığı (Karahanlılar)*, 417-89, who also notes, 496-7, no fewer than fifty-eight places where Qarakhanid coins are known to have been minted; unfortunately, these coins present a bewildering array of names and titles that are difficult to disentangle and to set out in a coherent way). It is, however, true that there has been more research and an increasing number of coin hoards from Central Asia over the last two decades, the contents of which are increasingly ending up in the West. The tables given above follow the researches begun a century ago by Barthold, continued by Pritsak in the mid-twentieth century and now carried further by scholars and experts in Islamic numismatics within Western Europe, Russia and the Central Asian Republics, such as Mikhail Fedorov, Elena Davidovich and Boris Kochnev. It may be expected that further numismatic evidence will keep on appearing and will hopefully illuminate the many problems and obscurities which still exist.

Although this is probably legend or semi-legend, the story goes that the Qarakhanid founder, Satuq Boghra Khān (see above), was the first Muslim convert of the line, implying that Islam had been already spreading amongst the Qarluq and related tribes within the steppes to the west of the Oghuz and adjacent to Transoxania, probably from the ninth century onwards. This process perhaps involved the examples set by Muslim traders, the proselytism of dervishes and other enthusiasts for the faith. Nevertheless, this Islamisation must have been largely amongst the ruling strata of tribal chiefs, with many of the Qarakhanids' followers, and especially those from the Qipchaqs who roamed the steppes from north of the Aral Sea to the Caspian Sea and the Ural mountains, for long remaining pagan. Some of the Khāns won a reputation for piety and just government according to the model of the Perso-Islamic ideal ruler, such as Ibrāhīm Tamghach Khān b. Naṣr and his son Shams al-Mulk Naṣr, both of whom were also active in building mosques, *madrasas*, *ribāṭs* and other buildings of a religious and/or public nature in the towns of Transoxania; and similar building activities are recorded on the part of Muḥammad Arslan Khān b. Sulaymān in the early twelfth century. However, within these urban centres relations between the Khāns and the orthodox Sunni Muslim 'ulamā' were not always smooth. Under Aḥmad b. Khiḍr, Naṣr's grandson, conditions so deteriorated that the religious classes were able to procure the Khān's temporary deposition and then his downfall and death on the pretext that he had embraced Ismā'īlism. In the last century or so



of Qarakhānid power, hereditary lines of Ḥanafī ‘ulamā’, with the title of *Ṣadr* (‘eminent, outstanding person’; pl. *Ṣudūr*), achieved extensive influence within the Transoxanian towns and the most influential of these, the Āl-i Burhān, managed to preserve its power, having come to terms with its Qara Khitay suzerains, well into the thirteenth century after both Qarakhanids and Qara Khitay had disappeared under the onslaught of the Mongols.

Paucity of information makes it difficult to assess the cultural significance of the Qarakhanids, but one cannot assume that they were all unlettered barbarian chiefs. When the Khāns were in their towns, and not in the steppes at their *ordu* and nomadising with their followers, they would have had contacts with the religious classes, Ḥanafī ‘ulamā’ and Sufi shaykhs, and with the Persian poets and eulogists who were always avid for patronage and its concomitant largesse; we know that ‘Am‘aq Bukhārī, who flourished in the second half of the eleventh century, was the eulogist of Shams al-Mulk Naṣr. But throughout the dynasty’s existence, the Khāns lived in close contact with their steppe tribal followers, and despite their adopted religion of Islam and its Persian cultural embodiment, cannot have been cut off from their Turkish background. It seems that the Qarakhanid period was an important one for the development of what was the first Islamic Turkish culture, with the production of the *Qutadghu bilig* mentioned above and with a figure like Maḥmūd Kāshgharī who, having migrated from Kāshghar to distant Baghdad, put together there his Arabic-Eastern Turkish dictionary, the *Dīwān lughāt al-turk*, without which our knowledge of the language would be immeasurably poorer.

Zambaur, 206–7; Album, 34.

*EP*<sup>2</sup> art. ‘Ilek Khāns’ (C. E. Bosworth).

O. Pritsak, ‘Die Karachaniden’, *Der Islam*, 31 (1954), 17–68.

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Ömer Soner Hunkan, *Türk hakanlığı (Karahanlılar), kuruluş-gelişme-çöküş (766–1212)*, Istanbul 2007.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### Central Asia after the Mongols

#### 153a

THE SHĪBĀNIDS (SHAYBĀNIDS) OF CHIMGI-TURA/TÜMEN  
831-1007/1428-1598  
*Western Siberia*

?-872/?-1428	Hājji Muḥammad Khān, b. Maḥmūtak b. Ibāq (Ibrāhīm; or perhaps Aybāq) b. Murtaḍā b. Küchüm
831-72/1428-68 c. 885/1480	Abu 'l-Khayr b. Dawlat Shaykh Ibāq, from the line of Hājji Muḥammad, killed in 900/1495 Murtaḍā b. ?
900-01/1495-96	Mamūq b. Ibāq, temporary ruler in Kazan
.....	
972-1007/1565-98 1007/1598 1010/1602	Küchüm b. Murtaḍā b. Ibāq, killed 1008-09/1600 'Alī b. Küchüm Uga, placed on the throne after a revolt by the Tatars of Sibir
1017/1608 1031/1632 1046-69/1636-59 1069/1659	Ishim b. Küchüm Abilay Giray/Kerey b. Ishim Dewlet Giray/Kerey b. Chuvaq b. Küchüm <i>Absorption of western Sibir into the Russian empire and conquest of the eastern fringes of Sibir by the Dzungars</i>

The main part of the Horde of Shīban, youngest son of Jochi, son of Chingiz Khān, established itself in Transoxania, acquiring there the name of Özbegs (see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 153), but a part of them remained as nomads in the Western Siberian steppes from the southern end of the Ural mountains to the headwaters of the Tobol river. Hājji Muḥammad Khān, whose genealogy (with the early names somewhat obscure) is given by the eleventh/seventeenth century historian of the Özbegs, Abu 'l-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān, in his *Shajarat al-atrāk*, established his capital at Tura in 871/1427, but was killed by Abu 'l-Khayr b. Dawlat Shaykh in the following year. Abu 'l-Khayr's subsequent nomadic Özbek state was, however, more a predecessor of the Shībānid state in Transoxania mentioned above than a power in the Siberian steppes, where the Taybughids (see

below, no. 153b) established themselves in his stead. In 886/1481, Ibāq seized from these Taybughid Khāns of Sibir the settlement of Tūmen/Tiumen near the confluence of the Tura and Tobol rivers. He and his successors were henceforth unrelenting foes of the Taybughids. Ibāq attacked the Golden Horde (see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 134) and in 886/1481 killed their leader, Aḥmad b. Temür. Some seventy years later, his descendant Kūchūm was involved in warfare with the Taybughid Yādigār/Ediger, and defeated and killed the latter and his brother Bekbulād in 996/1563. Kūchūm was then able to take over the Taybughid khānate of Sibir and, it seems, extensively to propagate the Islamic faith amongst the local Turkish and Ugrian peoples who still retained many of their original animist and shamanist beliefs; hence his subsequent opposition to the Christian Russians was to take on a religious dimension. Nevertheless, he was unable to withstand the advance of the Tsars across Western Siberia. In 1579, Ivan IV ('The Terrible') sent the Cossack chief Yermak against Kūchūm, and the Russian use of firearms forced the latter, in 1581, to flee from Sibir. A successful revanche by him in 1584 killed Yermak, but the forces of Ivan's son Fedor I fortified Tūmen and then Tobolsk, near to Kūchūm's centre of Qashliq adjacent to the confluence of the Tobol and Irtysh rivers (a settlement in Russian sources called Isker). Kūchūm was defeated by the Russians in 1007/1598 and was killed two years later by the Noghay with whom he had sought refuge. Over the next sixty years, various of his sons and their descendants carried on the struggle against the Russians, often with Kazakh, Torgout and Bashkir support, although Dewlet Giray or Kerey finally made peace with the Romanov Tsars in 1645. Meanwhile, the descendants of 'Alī b. Kūchūm served the Russians as the last Khāns of Qāsimov (see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 138, 5th line of Khāns), eventually becoming Christians and members of the Tsarist administrative-military ruling strata.

R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes. A History of Central Asia*, tr. Naomi Walford, New Brunswick, NJ 1970, 489–90.

K.-H. Golzio, *Regents in Central Asia since the Mongol Empire. Chronological Tables*, Arbeitsmaterialen zur Religionsgeschichte/Materials for the Study of the History of Religions, Köln 1985, 30.

P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of Turkic Peoples*, Wiesbaden 1992, 328–29.

James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia. Russia's North Asian Colony 1581–1990*, Cambridge 1992, 25–27.

EP<sup>2</sup> art. 'Kūchūm Khān' (W. Barthold).

## 153b

## THE TAYBÜGHIDS OF SIBIR

Early seventh century–995/early thirteenth century–1587  
*Western Siberia*

early 7th/13th century	Taybugha b. On b. Khoja b. Taybugha
?–886/?–1481	Mar (‘Umar) b. Khoja Mamat (Muḥammad) b. ? b. Mar, ruled after 902/1497 Qāsim Bekbulād b. Qāsim, killed in 976/1563 Yādigār/Ediger b. Qāsim, killed in 976/1563
976–95/1563–87	Sayyidak/Seidek b. Bekbulād

The Taybughids were a non-Chingizid Turco-Mongol line who established a khānate in western Siberia and were constant adversaries there of the Shībanids of Tūra/Tümen. From their name they seem to have had some sort of link with the Turkicised Mongol Noghays of western Siberia and the lower Volga-Yayik-Aral Sea region. The semi-legendary Taybugha is variously described as the son of On, assigned by Chingiz Khān to conquer Siberia, or as the son of Mamik of Bukhara, a Kazakh ruler sent to conquer Siberia. Mamat (in Russian, Magmet, from Muḥammad), the grandson of Taybugha’s grandson Mar, founded a new encampment/settlement for his horde on the middle Irtysh river, Sibir, which henceforth became the centre of the Taybughids. The best-known member of the line was Yādigār/Ediger, who sent an envoy to Moscow in submission to Ivan IV as his suzerain, but he and his brother Bekbulād were killed by the Shībanid of Siberia, Kūchüm (see above, no. 153a). In 976/1563, Kūchüm added their lands in Sibir to his own, but the Taybughids were avenged by the last of that line, Sayyidak/Seidek b. Bekbulād, who in 992/1584 defeated Kūchüm’s son ‘Alī and retook Sibir; his rule nevertheless only lasted for three years, since in 1587 he was seized by the Russian governor of Tobolsk and deported to Moscow.

Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 489.

Golzio, *Regents in Central Asia since the Mongol Empire*, 30.

Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, 328–39.

Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 26.

Allen Frank, *The Siberian Chronicles and the Taybughid Biys of Sibir*, Papers on Inner Asia no. 27, Bloomington, IN 1994.

## 153C

### THE KAZAKH KHĀNS

Early ninth/fifteenth century to the early thirteenth/nineteenth century

*Mogholistan, from the lands around the northern part of the Caspian Sea shores to the lower Syr Darya and the Semirechye, and the steppelands of western Siberia*

#### The United Khānate

830-?/1427-?	Giray/Qaray b. Baraq
?-893/?-1488	Jānī Bek b. Baraq
903/1498	Burunduq
915/1509	Qāsīm b. Jānī Bek
924/1518	Mamash (Muḥammad Ḥusayn) b. Qāsīm
929/1523	Ṭāhir
939/1533	Buydash/Birilash, brother of Ṭāhir
940/1534	Tughum, brother of Ṭāhir
945/1538	Ḥaqq Naṣr b. Qāsīm
989/1581	Shīghay, grandson of Jānī Bek
991/1583	Tewke/Tawka/Tawakkul b. Shīghay, great-nephew of Ḥaqq Naṣr
1007/1598	Ishim/Esim, brother of Tewke
1039/1630	Jahāngīr b. Ishim, d. 1062/1652 or 1091/1680?
1091-1129/ 1680-1717	Tewke/Tawka/Tawakkul
1091/1717	<i>Division of the Horde into three</i>

#### I. Khāns of the Great Horde

1130/1718	Bulād Shemiaka b. ?
1147/1734	Abu 'l-Mamea
1162/1749	Abilay b. Walī Sulṭān, of the Middle Horde
1195/1781	'Abdallāh b. ?
1196-1234/ 1782-1819	Walī b. ?
1234/1819	<i>Effective division of the Horde's lands between the Russians and the Khāns of Khokand, with only nominal Khāns of the Great Horde for the next three decades</i>

## 2. Khāns of the Middle Horde

1146/1733	Abu 'l-Mambat b. Bulād
1185/1771	Abilay b. Walī Sulṭān
1196/1782	Walī b. Abilay
1232-37/ 1817-22	Buqay b. Baraq
1237/1822	<i>Abolition of the Chingizid Middle Horde Khānate by the Russians</i>

## 3. Khāns of the Little Horde

1130/1718	Abu 'l-Khayr b. Hājji Sulṭān
1162/1749	Nūr 'Alī b. Abi 'l-Khayr
1201-06/1786-90	<i>Interregnum</i>
1206/1790	Er 'Alī b. Abi 'l-Khayr
1209-12/1794-6	Ishim/Esim Sulṭān
1212/1796	Ay Chuvaq b. Abi 'l-Khayr
1220-24/1805-09	Jān Töre b. Ay Chuvaq
1227-39/1812-24	Shīr Ghāzī b. Ay Chuvaq
1239/1824	<i>Abolition of the Chingizid Little Horde Khānate by the Russians</i>

## 4. Khāns of the Inner or Buqay Horde, established out of the Little Horde as Russian vassals

1227/1812	Buqay b. Nūr 'Alī
1230/1815	Shīghali (Shīr 'Alī?) b. Nūr 'Alī, acting as regent
1239-61/1824-45	Jahāngīr b. Buqay
1261/1845	<i>End of the Chingizid Khāns, but further vassal non-Chingizid Khāns retained by the Russians until 1285/1868</i>

The ethnogenesis and early development of the Kazakhs (Tkish. *qazaq* 'free spirit, independent man, adventurer', with an element of rebelliousness involved, yielding also in Russian *kazak*, in Ukrainian *kozak* 'Cossack'), and their nomenclature at different times, is complex. These elements that had become largely Turkish nevertheless traced their ancestry back to the Mongol Jochi. They escaped from what they regarded as the oppressive control of the Shībānid Khān Abu 'l-Khayr (see *The New Islamic Dynasties*, no. 153) in the mid-ninth/thirteenth century and migrated to the northeastern part of Mogholistan, where Chaghatayid control had weakened. These Kazakhs were a confederation of many tribal elements, in the sixteenth century politically at odds with the Shībānids in their struggle to maintain access to

the towns of the Syr Darya valley against the Özbegs, but ethnically largely identical with these last. The vast territories over which they nomadised, in what had earlier been known as the Qipchaq steppe, came subsequently to be known as Kazakhstan, territorially what is the modern Kazakh Republic and stretching from the lower Volga region in the west to Semirechye and the fringes of Dzungaria in the east.

It seems that it was in the mid-sixteenth century that what was to be a characteristic form of social organisation amongst the Kazakhs emerged, sc. tribal unions (*zhüz/jüz*, probably from Turkish. *yüz* 'hundred' rather than from Arabic *juz* 'part, division') based on common political interests rather than on kinship. Three of these emerged, a 'Great' Horde (*Uli zhüz*) in Semirechye and bordering on the territory of the Mongol Oyrats in Dzungaria; a 'Middle' Horde (*Orta zhüz*) in what is now central Kazakhstan stretching westwards to the Aral Sea; and a 'Little' Horde (*Kishi zhüz*) in what is now western Kazakhstan, extending to the Yayik river, beyond which lived the Kalmucks, Oyrats who had migrated to the lower Volga. Internal dissensions within the United Khānate, and pressure from outside neighbours like the Dzungars in the east and the Kalmucks in the west, meant that in the early eighteenth century, after Tewke's time, Kazakh unity disintegrated and there was no longer any sort of unified Kazakh polity. Elucidation of the lines of Khāns of the various Hordes is problematic in all ages, but the situation in the eighteenth century is particularly difficult to disentangle because some of the more powerful rulers claimed authority over all three divisions, especially the forceful Abilay Khān of the Middle Horde. Moreover, the Great Horde does not seem to have been ruled by an autonomous Chingizid line of its own, finding itself under the rule of either the Dzungars or Khāns of the Middle Horde like Abilay.

In the eighteenth century, the Kazakhs were squeezed between the advancing Manchus in the east and the Russians in the west, and had perforce to negotiate with Russia from as early as 1726 seeking the Tsars' protection. In the course of the eighteenth century the Imperial government constructed forts across the Kazakh lands and Russian colonists began to settle there, with deleterious consequences to the Kazakhs' nomadic way of life. A reaction to these trends was seen in Kazakh participation in various revolts against the Imperial government, from that of the Cossack leader Pugachov in 1773–75 to the extensive Kazakh revolt of the 1830s. The 'Middle' Horde lost its nominal independence in 1822, the 'Little' Horde in 1824 (although a continuation of this, the Inner or Buqay Horde, persisted as Russian vassals until 1868) and the 'Great' Horde in 1848, with the Kazakh lands largely incorporated into the Russian Empire by the mid-nineteenth

century, a process completed in 1863–64 when Russian troops occupied towns on the southeastern fringes of the Kazakh lands, such as Aulie-Ata, Chimkent and Turkestan.

Islam had arrived in the Syr Darya region at an early age, but the faith was slow to spread amongst the masses of nomads further north. By the fourteenth century it had spread to the ruling elite, as seen in their onomastic, and proselytisation was then undertaken by Sufi preachers and Tatar merchants; but it was not until the eighteenth century, when the Russians established their protectorate over the Kazakh lands, that Islam reached down to the grass roots. Even then, as elsewhere in Inner Asia, the popular form of Islam amongst the nomads continued to contain many practices from their shamanistic and animistic past.

Golzio, *Regents in Central Asia since the Mongol Empire*, 31.

Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, 339–43.

Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 117–23.

K. M. Baipakov and B. E. Kumekov, 'The Kazakhs', in *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia. V. Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, ed. C. Adle, Irfan Habib and K. M. Baipakov, UNESCO, Paris 2003, 89–108.

## Postlude

In the vast expanse of the Eurasian steppes, there were certainly other, lesser lines of ruling khāns or princes that might merit inclusion in an expansion of *The New Islamic Dynasties*, but reliable information on the correct forms of names, let alone the regnal dates of their holders and the extent of the lands over which they held sway of some sort – these last often necessarily geographically indeterminate – is hard to find. I had hoped at least to include a table of the two Khōja/Khwāja lineages of the Khwājagān/Naqshbandī shaykhs, the so-called Āfāqiyya/Aqtaghliq or 'White Mountain' ones and the Ishāqiyya/Qarataghliq or 'Black Mountain' ones. These held spiritual and political authority, often in conjunction with such powers as the Buddhist Dzungar Khans and various Muslim Chingizid-Chaghatayid puppet rulers, in Eastern Turkestan, the later Sinkiang, from the later tenth/sixteenth century till the failure in 1878 of Ya'qūb Beg of Kāshghar's rebellion against his Chinese suzerains, the Ching/Qing Emperors.

However, it has not proved possible to construct exhaustive tables of these Khōja lineages, although this may become achievable in the future if new sources become available. Meanwhile, the enquirer is referred to the *EI*<sup>2</sup> article 'Khwādjagān' (J. Paul) and its Bibliography, which may now be supplemented by Federico de Remer, 'I Khōja del Turkestan



orientale (1678–1759). Un esempio di teocrazia', *Studi e Materiali* (July 2004), and Laura J. Newby, *The Empire and the Khanate. A Political History of Qing Relations with Khoqand c. 1760–1860*, Leiden 2005, ch. 2, with a table of the Āfāqī lineage (1461/2–1869), so far as can be reconstructed, in Appendix B, p. 261 (I am grateful for these last two references to Dr Newby).

### **Addendum**

Since the above was written, a Kazakh Turkish translation of *The New Islamic Dynasties* has appeared as K. E. Bosvort, *Müsülman ailetteri. Khronologiya men genealogiya boyınsha anıktamalık*, tr. Erlan Aben, Almaty 2008. The translator has omitted certain dynasties as being presumably of lesser interest or importance to a Kazakh readership, but has added sections on the line of Tughluq Temür in Eastern Turkestan (948–1091/1347–1680) (his no. 83, pp. 295–8) and on the Kazakh Khāns (895–1263/1470–1847) (his no. 84, pp. 299–303, with extensive bibliography); it is unfortunate that the information on the latter has arrived too late for inclusion in these 'Additions'.

3.

## **Al-Tha‘alibi’s *Adab al-muluk*, a Local Mirror for Princes**

*Julia Bray*

Most Islamic mirrors for princes rest not on projected utopias but on examples from the past. They draw upon a fund of wisdom attributed to ancient Greek and Persian as well as Muslim sages, and for all their differences of format, their guiding precepts are often expressed in ‘strikingly similar terms’.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as Louise Marlow concludes, in the most recent and wide-ranging survey of Islamic advice literature:

[Although] certain themes of advice literature have endured since antiquity in diverse cultural milieux . . . each example is strikingly individual, tailored to specific circumstances and specific writer-ruler relationships. The significance of a motif, however often it has been invoked before, is shaped with each utterance by the particularities of time, place, author, and audience. Consequently, works of advice literature resonate on several levels: they evoke and participate in a longstanding literary, cultural, and political continuum, and they carry immediate and specific meanings and implications (2007: 55).

Relevance to specific circumstances applies regardless of the language of composition of a piece of advice literature and of the linguistic politics surrounding it, which are not always easy to interpret. Thus Arabic was the Islamic language which first received the freight of ancient wisdom from the peoples conquered in the first/seventh century, and this freight passed back to, and was shared with, Persian, when the latter re-emerged as a language of high culture in the fourth/tenth century. Al-Tha‘alibi’s (350–429/961–1038) *Adab al-muluk*<sup>2</sup> was written for an Iranian prince and his entourage, on the eastern edge of the Muslim world, but in Arabic, even though Arabic was not the addressees’ mother tongue. (Was it, indeed, its author’s mother tongue? He was born in Nishapur.) In this milieu, Arabic and Persian were, however, languages of prestige, not of power: Turks such as Mahmud

of Ghazna, who is extolled in *Adab al-muluk* for repressing heresy, were increasingly dominant in the military and political balance, but had as yet no 'language', culturally speaking, of their own; they were addressed either in Arabic or in Persian.

As in many kinds of Arabic writing, constant play upon a repertoire of shared ideas (Marlow's 'motifs') is a principle of composition with al-Tha'alibi in this work; not, it must be emphasised, as a mere stylistic habit, but as a tool for thinking. In the context of the discussion of the rights and duties of princes – a subject which has little basis in the Qur'an – he follows precedent by grounding this technique in cultural eclecticism, in an attempt to legitimise thinking which derives only intermittently from religious authority. To stress the recurrence of major human truths among different races and, indeed, faiths across the ages is to suggest an analogy between human wisdom and the way in which divine wisdom has disclosed itself (as the Qur'an tells us) over and over again to different peoples through successive revelations. This suggestion, spread across many motifs, is summed up in the emphatic assertion that the command to 'know thyself' is not merely divinely inspired of old (*min al-wahy al-qadim al-nazil min Allah ta'ala*) but is the very word of God to mankind (*qawluhu li al-insan*; al-Tha'alibi 1990: 191).

An aspect of this strategy of eclecticism is the appeal to recent and sometimes personal experience to confirm the laws of political wisdom made manifest in the past and add new dimensions to old motifs. As a result, together with political theory, 'a certain amount of *information* [my emphasis] can be gleaned from [mirrors for princes] about Islamic administration, while those Mirrors that illustrate their narrative by a sprinkling of historical anecdotes . . . often supply direct historical information'. Sometimes, indeed, 'a counsel that seems theoretical or imprecise can be correlated with actual history' (Bosworth 1998: 527). This is particularly true of *Adab al-muluk*. Al-Tha'alibi was a prolific *haut vulgarisateur*, and in the bulk of his output he was a pioneer of the analysis of Arabic literary motifs. He was well placed to make them resonate anew in this work and, in addressing his prince, he made a point of adding examples drawn from local history, underlined by his own comments. What follows will not attempt to survey the whole of the work's ten carefully plotted chapters,<sup>3</sup> but will look at some of the ways and purposes for which al-Tha'alibi weaves together old motifs and recent experience.

### Knowns and Unknowns

One aspect of the historical content of *Adab al-muluk* has been discussed recently (by Crone and Treadwell 2003): its account of the

corruption of the Samanid ruler Nasr II b. Ahmad (r. 301–31/914–43) by Isma‘ili missionaries – highly trained intellectuals peddling doctrines designed to undermine allegiance to the caliphate of Baghdad, such as the seductive idea that kings were above the shared religious observance designed for the masses. Crone and Treadwell do not, however, explain why al-Tha‘alibi inserts this particular substantial chunk of recent history into a mirror for princes. The Samanids, originally Khurasanian and Transoxanian magnates who made obeisance to the early Abbasid caliphs, were the more powerful neighbours of the petty Khwarazmian dynasty to which the dedicatee of *Adab al-muluk* belonged. For some fifty years, until the mid-fourth/tenth century, their empire had been ‘the greatest power in the east’ (Bosworth 1996: 171), and this is one reason why al-Tha‘alibi often points to their example, good and bad. Another reason is that al-Tha‘alibi’s grandfather, named only as ‘Abu ‘Ali’, seems to have had some connection with their court,<sup>4</sup> and the first forty or fifty years of his own career were spent in the Samanid domains.

The Ma‘munid Khwarazm-shahs had no such venerable record. They seized power from an apparently ancient local dynasty only in 385/995, and held it for little more than twenty years; nevertheless, their rule was ‘quite glorious’, for in their capital, al-Jurjaniyya, on the left bank of the Oxus, ‘the terminus for the caravan trade across the steppes to the Volga and Russia’, they played host to ‘great scholars like the philosopher and scientist Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and the littérateur al-Tha‘alibi’ (Bosworth 1996: 179). *Adab al-muluk* is dedicated to the third and penultimate Ma‘munid Khwarazm-shah, Ma‘mun II b. Ma‘mun I (r. 399–407–8/1009–17), whose overthrow was brought about, as will be seen below, in a complex game of regional politics (Barthold 1968: 275–9), by his brother-in-law, the warrior sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 388–421/998–1030), himself a descendant of Turkish slave soldiers in the service of the Samanids but now the rising imperial power. After this, al-Tha‘alibi moved for a while to Ghazna; he had already been in contact with Ghaznavid patrons.<sup>5</sup> He himself is one of the most distinguished figures in medieval Arabic letters, and his major works have never been out of use.

This background sketch suggests a secure context for interpreting *Adab al-muluk*. Much, however, is still unknown or difficult to piece together about the history of the Samanid empire and of Khwarazm, about their institutions and their peoples, and the latter’s beliefs and ways of life, as is indicated by the most recent overviews (Marlow 2007b; Peacock 2007: 15–48). Al-Tha‘alibi too is elusive. No contemporary has left a pen-portrait of him. His background is largely a blank. The autobiographical references scattered through his writings have not been fully pieced together,<sup>6</sup> and his bibliography is problematic.<sup>7</sup>

Among other difficult attributions, it is only lately that the idea has provisionally been shelved that this non-narrative writer, 'a strident supporter of the Arabic language and its literature, [whose] works are essentially silent about the extraordinary [contemporary] efflorescence of New Persian literature' (Rowson 2000: 427), might also have been the author of a narrative history which includes a significant section on the pre-Islamic Persian kings (compare Rowson 1998). Lastly, we may ask, why was he so highly esteemed in his time? He is now viewed as a compiler, not a thinker: we are told that he 'did not aspire to contribute seriously to any of the intellectual debates of his day, either religious or secular' (Rowson 2000: 426), a view that we will question in what follows.

On a broader canvas too, there are many blanks in what we need to know in order to understand mirrors for princes and political discourse generally in the Muslim world at this period. When we ask who were the exponents of political thought and what were its boundaries, we think of those who have left written accounts of their own ideas. The broadest constituency was claimed by the conservative Traditionists, highly visible on the urban scene throughout the Muslim world and drawn from a cross-section of society, who asserted that the Muslim Community was purposeful and meaningful in itself, as a society and polity (this at a time when populations were unevenly Islamised and princely rule was the norm), and that they, the Traditionists, preservers by word of mouth of the Prophet's example, *were* the Community. The jurists, who formed a learned elite, were their allies and also competitors, for they claimed to *represent* the Community, since the Community's *raison d'être* was to live out the law, and the law could be defined, interpreted, and defended against irreligion and expediency only by trained minds. Half doers and half thinkers, the *katibs* or state functionaries, who were to be found in every local capital, calculating taxes and drawing up official documents, and among whom non-Muslims sometimes reached important positions, idealised their own role: they claimed, as administrators, to serve an ethic of social justice that transcended particular religions, and to be the interface between the people, the ruler and God.<sup>8</sup> Rulers themselves occasionally penned manifestos of the methods, objectives and – by omission – limits, of supreme power (Marlow 2007a: 40). Political philosophers and religious sectarians discussed the ruler and the state in universal terms (Daiber 1996: 844–52). Historians reflected on, or simply recorded, the results of the actual exercise of power; and to this list of political discussants we must obviously add those men of letters, *adibs*, such as al-Tha'alibi himself, who depended on the ruler's patronage, exalted him as the fount of prosperity and civilisation, and sought, from time to time, not only to please but to guide him.

A considerable number and range of literate spokesmen, therefore – albeit for the most part representing small, even tiny, interest groups – claimed to enunciate the principles of politics. Conspicuously missing from this spread of opinion are not just the mass of the population, but also the non-intellectual elites, decisive political actors, such as the ‘nobles’ of the following passage:

We find in [the Persian historian] Bayhaqī a very detailed . . . account of how Maḥmūd [of Ghazna] seized Khorezmia [from Ma’mun II], taken from al-Bīrūnī’s ‘History of Khwārazm’ . . . Maḥmūd decided to test Ma’mūn’s fidelity [and had his vizier suggest to the latter that he] should introduce the khutba in the name of the Sultan in his territories [i.e. acknowledge him as overlord at the public Friday prayers] . . . Ma’mūn summoned his military leaders and the most important representatives of the population, put before them Maḥmūd’s request and announced his intention of complying with it, as otherwise he and the country would perish. The nobles firmly refused to support such a decision, left the palace, unfurled the standards and drew their swords, uttering bitter imprecations . . . After this al-Bīrūnī ‘with a tongue of gold and silver’ persuaded them to express regret and apologize to the sovereign for their insolence . . . Immediately after this Ma’mūn received the following characteristic letter in the name of the Sultan: ‘. . . In the matter of the khutba he showed submission to our will, knowing how the matter might turn out for him; but his people did not leave him a free hand. I do not employ the expression “guards and subjects” as it is impossible to call those persons guards and subjects who are in a position to say to the king: do this, do not do that . . .’ [Ma’mūn’s army] now turned against its own sovereign. The wazīr and some other adherents of the Khwārazm-shāh were killed, the remainder saving themselves by flight; the Khwārazm-shāh shut himself up in his castle, but the rebels set fire to it, and killed the sovereign while it was burning (Wednesday, March 20, 1017) (Barthold 1968: 275–7).

What tools of interaction, other than violence or persuasion, existed between the ruler, ‘the most important representatives of the population’, who were his leading ‘subjects’, and the military leaders, who should have been his ‘guards’? What legal framework supported their respective rights, and bound them to each other or dictated the course of their antagonisms?

The answer, so far as we know, is ‘none’. Whether or not such tools and frameworks had existed in the region before Islam was adopted by the rulers and some at least of the elite, and whether or not they persisted unofficially afterwards, Islamic law recognised very few mechanisms of collective or representative responsibility, and few forms of contract that remained binding for longer than the lifetime of an individual party.

Yet the task of a self-appointed adviser to a Muslim prince and theorist of Islamic princely rule, so al-Tha'alibi seems to have felt, was to identify a coherent basis for collective social interaction and hence a rational role for the sovereign, and, as the product of the relationship between the ruler and the people, a moral good outlasting the immediate well-being of the two parties. This was an ambitious aim, given that al-Tha'alibi, who was genuinely devout, tried wherever he could to integrate intellectual, moral and historical coherence within religious terms of reference which allowed no room for the things on which he himself set the most value: the aristocratic principle and the production of the arts of civilisation.

### Social Theory and Social Practice in *Adab al-muluk*

What I have just called 'the aristocratic principle' may or may not correspond to social realities in the domains of the Khwarazm-shah. Here are some examples.

Strong drink/wine (*nabidh*) is medically recommended, and Muslim jurists allow its use in moderation, according to al-Tha'alibi, although he cites no proof texts. It is clearly too entrenched an aristocratic custom and symbol to admit of any ban, for he describes it at some length as necessary to the prince's relaxation and an essential ingredient of courtly entertainment (1990: 200-1).

Under the rubric '*On marriage alliances*', al-Tha'alibi declares it 'a very widespread and laudable custom that princes should marry their equals and lean on [their in-laws] in times of trouble. As Aktham b. Sayfi so well expressed it:<sup>9</sup> Well-born wives are the path to honour'. This may be an allusion to Ma'mun's brother and predecessor's marriage to a sister of Mahmud of Ghazna, or to his own (which took place shortly before his overthrow in 406/1015-16 – see Barthold 1968: 275 – and did not, in the end, strengthen his position). Al-Tha'alibi concedes that the equally widespread custom, among caliphs, of marrying inferiors, such as the daughters of rich viziers or vassals, can be justified on grounds of strategy or policy (it is a means of weakening mighty subjects financially); he also cites the examples of the Samanid al-Amir al-Rashid (*sic*)<sup>10</sup> Abu al-Fawaris 'Abd al-Malik b. Nuh (r. 343-50/954-61), who married the daughter/sister of Abu Sa'id Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Iraq,<sup>11</sup> and of another Samanid, al-Amir al-Radi Abu al-Qasim Nuh II b. Mansur (r. 365-87/976-97), who married the daughter of 'the commander of his army, Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Simjur'.<sup>12</sup> But to marry a commoner, let alone a slave musician, 'out of mere desire or affection . . . as has happened in cases too numerous to mention', exposes a prince to contempt (al-Tha'alibi 1990: 110-12).

The prince's chief aides should be of good family: 'All are agreed that

a ruler's vizier should be a man of birth (*asl*) as well as merit (*fadl*). If he is not, the consequences can be disastrous. The Buyid amir of Iraq, 'Izz al-Dawla Bakhtiyar (r. 356–67/967–78) made his chief cook, Abu Tahir Muhammad Ibn Baqiyya, vizier (Donohue 2003: 154–9). This brought his rule into disrepute, says al-Tha'alibi – Ibn Baqiyya's social superiors refused even to speak to him – and into confusion, and destroyed both men (al-Tha'alibi 1990: 130–1). Similarly, governors and other lieutenants of the ruler should be noblemen (*ahl al-sharaf wa-dhawi al-buyutat*), as the Barmecide patriarch, Yahya b. Khalid, taught his sons. Why, the caliph al-Mu'tasim (r. 218–27/833–42) is said to have asked, had his brother al-Ma'mun's (r. 198–218/813–33) appointments been fruitful and his own not? Because, came the reply, al-Ma'mun 'looked to good stock and employed its offshoots, and they bore noble fruit', as with the Tahirids (hereditary governors of Khurasan and military governors of Baghdad), whereas al-Mu'tasim's appointees were rootless and therefore sterile (ibid.: 135). In crises, a prince should never turn to 'commoners and riff-raff' (*al-'amma wa al-ghagha*), says al-Tha'alibi: they will only cause trouble, for they are greedy, insolent, partisan and bellicose, and prone to rioting, murder, pillage and rape (ibid.: 225). (Disappointingly, al-Tha'alibi gives no examples, local or otherwise.) Even in good times, the masses are ungrateful and fickle: 'If a king reigns for a long time, no matter how justly, wisely or uprightly, his subjects (*ra'iyya*) will criticize him, simply because he has been long in office', and this not necessarily out of malice but because, 'as the poet says', if a man gains no personal advantage from another's turn of good fortune/reign (*dawla*), he will wish for change (ibid.: 167). The people are given to slandering their betters, and to mischievous rumour-mongering: thus, if a ruler puts a man who is a threat to his regime into preventive custody and he dies of natural causes, he will be accused of having him murdered, as he will if he dies in his own house, miles away, or even if he is struck by lightning (ibid.: 167–8; again, it is disappointing that al-Tha'alibi, whose indignation seems heartfelt, gives no examples). Princes themselves, on the other hand, are constantly exposed to the danger of being poisoned by enemies, in particular 'rulers more powerful than themselves'; 'countless' princes have been murdered in this way. Poisons that are sniffed up are especially lethal, for they act directly upon the brain, and al-Tha'alibi fervently prays that God will preserve the Khwarazm-shah from such dangers (ibid.: 168), which suggests that this fear is more than a well-worn motif.

It is no doubt because the common people have so little self-command that al-Tha'alibi wishes the prince to be, in effect, their opposite: to be always impassive in public, whatever his ills or worries (ibid.: 218–19), and not to yield to bias by listening to tale-bearers, or to indulge himself in petty cruelties (ibid.: 225). For, although this is



not clearly stated, it is demeanour, not birth, that makes a prince. An example of an ephemeral ruler whose lofty conception of his duties made a surprising contrast with his origins is 'Baytuz, who was lord of Bust before [the founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty and grandfather of Mahmud of Ghazna] Subuktigin', who seized the city from him in 367/977-8. A fellow man of letters, Abu al-Fath al-Busti, who had been in Baytuz's service as a *katib* – he went over to Subuktigin when the latter took Bust (Fück 1960; Bosworth 1990) – 'translated' to him (from what, and into what, language is not said) a minimal definition of kingship, and received in reply an ambitious and orthodox princely manifesto, which he reported to al-Tha'alibi (al-Tha'alibi 1990: 215).

Although it is again not stated in so many words, it is implied that it may be easier for the prince to control himself than those around him – for example, he should not 'condone' his women interceding, or meddling in affairs of state (ibid.: 226) – and deep-seated usages may have to be negotiated rather than rooted out. Thus, while the ruler is warned against selling and permitting the sale of offices (ibid.: 226), the following custom is somewhat awkwardly legitimised, rather than forbidden, by al-Tha'alibi, even though it seems to smack of the potential buying of favours. It occurs in chapter 1, 'On the high status of princes', etc., in a section which deals with the courtesies due to 'great princes'. Is the *nithar* (largesse) described here a custom peculiar to al-Tha'alibi's part of the world?<sup>13</sup> In its usual acceptance at this period, the word refers to coins scattered by (not offered to) a grandee,<sup>14</sup> and intended to be picked up by guests and bystanders on auspicious occasions such as circumcisions and weddings:

I have heard Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Musa al-'Alawi al-Musawi al-Tusi<sup>15</sup> say that the custom of offering gifts [of coin?] (*rasm al-nitharat*) to a ruler or other great personage is modelled on God's good practice (*adab*) with regard to His Apostle: 'Believers, when you confer with the Apostle, give a freewill offering (*sadaqa*) before you confer'<sup>16</sup> (Qur'an 58: 12) [in order to show purity of intention]. Thus, in our own day, when a person wishes to find the right way to the good graces<sup>17</sup> of a ruler or person in authority, he comes to him and lays before him a *nithar*,<sup>18</sup> as it were in sincere earnest (*yusaddaqu bi-dhalika 'anhu*) of his giving thanks to God for permitting him to find him well and prosperous. He asks the grandee to do as he thinks fit with it, whether to bestow it in alms (*tasadduq*) or in some other fashion. If his act of giving were governed by need [on the part of the recipient], the proceeding might be viewed with suspicion, for 'the heart is ever divided as to the sincerity or insincerity [of a person's intentions]' (ibid.: 46).<sup>19</sup>

The prince and the aristocracy on the one hand, and the common people on the other, have been described as opposites in most of the

examples I have just cited. Nevertheless, al-Tha'alibi also expounds, on the basis of a quotation which he owes to Abu al-Fath al-Busti (see above), a social vision which ties the ruler and his people together in a virtuous circle. Rather than linking raw extremes, this vision probably tacitly assumes a kind of popular elite of the talented and meritorious among the brutal, untrustworthy masses:

Abu al-Fath al-Busti one day said to me: it is only recently that I have learned that Abu Ishaq al-Sabi' (313-84/925-94)<sup>20</sup> is the best and most eloquent of *katibs*, and, I would say, [having come across the following passage], the wisest of them, were it not for his [pagan] religion:

'It is because of the very magnitude of the differences that exist between men that they are so tightly drawn together. Each rank (*tabaqa*) has a station (*manzila*) in which it abides, and a calling (*sina'a*) which it professes. Men fill the gaps and overstep the divergences that separate them by giving each other their hands in reciprocal aid and assistance in their endeavours and their search for livelihood, so becoming equal despite their stations' disparities with regard to lack or luxury. They shelter under the shadow (*zill*) of mutual peace and conciliation, the lower reaching up to him above for what his hand can bestow, the higher inclining to those beneath them out of need of their services. Hence the need of rulers, in order to protect family and property, and of the ruled (*suqa*), in order to bring all together. Each section of society (*firqa*) is fixed in its own place: princes to command, protect and defend, viziers to run the state and gather revenue, bureaucrats to look after the administration and do the paperwork, governors to promote growth and increase the tax yield, soldiers to man the frontiers and wage holy war on the enemy, judges to uphold equity and apply religious law, merchants to export and import, and the commonalty to exercise their various crafts. From low to high and high to low, up and down, down and up, each has need of the other and cannot do without him; and so it is that this world prospers by reason of the cohesion of its parts and the rationale of its foundations and superstructure: a clear proof that God's mercy, in this wise providence and righteous provision, has been sent down universally and for all' (ibid.: 127-8).

The prince's role, according to al-Tha'alibi himself, is not merely to play an equal part in preserving a fixed social order, but rather to advance civilisation by patronising learning and technical development (ibid.: 39-40). Al-Tha'alibi depicts an idealised past in which princes freed men of learning from the need to earn their living, thus creating an elite of intellectuals who were able not only to develop the restorative arts of leisure and the directly useful arts such as medicine, but more particularly the arts and instruments of war. No sources are cited (and the weapons enumerated could as well belong to Late Antiquity

as to the fourth/tenth century); but after a transition afforded by a dictum attributed to the mother of Alexander, al-Tha'alibi asserts that the civilising mission was carried on, in due course, 'when the turn/reign (*dawla*) of the Arabs came' (reading *al-'Arab* for *al-Maghrib*), by 'Muslim princes' and their entourages, whose particular distinction was to provide a focus for the arts of language and literature, without which not only poets and men of letters but also thinkers would have had no object on which to exercise their minds, a role described as 'God's grace which He gives to whom He wills' (a phrase which properly applies to the gift of faith: Qur'an 5: 54, 57: 21, 62: 4).

The Samanid rulers were patrons, as we know, of literature, but also, al-Tha'alibi says, of courtly manners and their technical appurtenances: they provided their guests with golden spoons when 'rice with *laban*' was served (al-Tha'alibi 1990: 48). And it so happens that spoons, not golden, but with carved ivory handles, have survived in the scant Samanid archaeological record (Crowe 1995: 1030).

### The Godly Ruler: the Lessons of Local History

Among the many evils which may befall princes, which include assassination, says al-Tha'alibi, is that of, as it were, moral death. This comes about when rulers are flattered into thinking themselves not only above the common people – which, we have seen, al-Tha'alibi himself firmly believes them to be – but above the divine law. This idea is most fully set out in the long historical passage translated by Crone and Treadwell (2003), which comes immediately after that in which al-Tha'alibi describes the danger of being poisoned (see previous section). The first paragraph of Crone and Treadwell's translation seems to me debatable on some points; I will therefore re-translate it using the definitions of heresy provided by the Khurasanian heresiographer al-Shahrastani (writing in 521/1127–8),<sup>21</sup> and I shall set it in the context, not of problems of Samanid history, as do Crone and Treadwell, but of the wider question of the standing and function of the prince, as al-Tha'alibi presents and tries to resolve it in *Adab al-muluk*.

[chapter 7: *The evils that afflict princes*] include the treacherous, cunning, infidel missionaries of such free-thinking,<sup>22</sup> heretical, atheistic<sup>23</sup> sects as the Batinis, Carmathians and Isma'ilis and those who assert [the eternity of] the simple natures and the stars, denying prophecy and calling prophets nothing but prescribers and enforcers of laws.<sup>24</sup> Often they manage to insinuate themselves into the counsels of princes who have neither been taught theology by theologians nor looked into the subject for themselves. They get them alone and deceive them with their mumbo-jumbo, their showy pseudo-arguments<sup>25</sup> and counterfeit doctrines. They falsely 'deliver' them

from the 'bondage' of the Law into the 'liberty' of atheism, and 'free' them from the 'captivity' of religion, allowing them to abandon ritual prayer and all the required observances and instead follow their own desires.

Thus do [princes] become their docile creatures,<sup>26</sup> entirely led by them, [the heretics] taking advantage of the safety and ample, undisturbed leisure [afforded them by the princes' protection]. And thus [under the heretics' persuasion] do [princes] cast off restraint and behave criminally, sin, kill and steal, violate oaths and contracts and make mock of Islam (al-Tha'alibi 1990: 168-9).<sup>27</sup>

In other words, under such influences, princes will behave exactly like the 'commoners and riff-raff' with whom a prince should never ally himself (see previous section).

Princes rule by a divine mandate which al-Tha'alibi asserts vehemently in his own words (1990: 33-5), and then ties into a handful of Qur'anic phrases which in fact provide little support for it, using the same kind of associative and stylistic legerdemain as in the passage justifying *nithar* (ibid.: 35-6; see previous section). This mandate requires the ruler above all to protect life and property, and to prevent violations: violations of his subjects by his subjects, for, 'but for princes, the people would devour one another' (ibid.: 33), and violation of their peace by outside enemies. As Harun al-Rashid said to a complaining courtier, when his company toiled through the snow at night while the people slept warm in bed: 'It is for them to sleep and us to keep vigil: the shepherd must keep his flock and suffer [for them]' (ibid.: 34).

Al-Tha'alibi cites a number of commonplaces, such as the greater coercive power of the prince, as God's instrument, than the Qur'an (*ma yaza'u Allahu bi al-sultani aktharu mimma yaza'u bi al-Qur'ani*; ibid.: 41), but they are deftly, even humorously combined so as to lead into, and explore the psychology of, another question: that of the balance between the obedience and respect due to the prince, which he must take care to demand, and the fatal vanity which he must avoid. Because rulers 'have powers of life and death, some men, like the rabble (*ghawgha*'), have worshipped and still worship them as gods, and 'more than one foolish king' has been deceived into thinking himself godlike by 'infidel philosophers, debauched freethinkers' (ibid.: 36)<sup>28</sup> – the phraseology anticipates that which will be applied to the 'infidel missionaries of such free-thinking . . . sects as the Batinis', etc. The examples that follow are of figures from local history, Khurasanian or Transoxanian, and the first, that of the mysterious al-Muqanna', who claimed divinity and defied the armies of the caliph al-Mahdi but perished in 166/783, is particularly alarming, for it shows that heresy can prevail: 'To this day', says al-Tha'alibi, 'some of his followers remain in Transoxania, under the name of al-Mubayyida,

and they have governors who levy taxes (*kharaj* and *dariba*) on them' (ibid.: 37–8).

If the wicked sometimes gain a lasting foothold, there is, conversely, no guarantee that a good ruler or dynasty will endure: indeed, dynastic change is a wise provision of divine providence for the good of mankind (ibid.: 36) – although the virtuous prince can himself ensure continuity at lower levels of authority by appointing sons in succession to their fathers, as happened with the Tahirids (ibid.: 110; see previous section). Al-Tha'alibi's local examples will go on to show that new dynasties constantly emerge, and he tacitly recognises that there will be many rulers at the same time in the Muslim domain and that the caliph is one ruler among many. The diachronic problem of securing continuity of rule, when dynastic change is an inevitable part of God's plan, is thus complicated by the synchronic problem of what may, in the end, be competition between virtuous rulers.

The institution of princely rule receives its mandate directly from God; it is not derived from the caliphate and does not need legitimation through recognition by the caliph. Thus precedent – even Prophetic precedent – is no constraint on the construction of the political present and future, and, with no dearth of contenders for power, princely rule is an institution that will always be able to reproduce and legitimate itself. As against this, the vulnerability of individual rulers is a recurrent theme, and while al-Tha'alibi asserts that dynastic change is a good (without actually arguing that 'one good custom' might 'corrupt the world'), it is not an unmitigated good. The tragedy is that within this virtuous scheme individual princes must perish, and to this al-Tha'alibi has no solutions to propose, other than vigilance and a strong army (1990: chs 7 and 8).

As a political theory, this might appear lacking in elegance, for all that, or simply because, it fits with contemporary events. If, in al-Tha'alibi's account, dynastic succession seems ultimately random, rather than to be governed by constant laws, is this bad theory or good history? Is he a thinker or simply a describer of the status quo?

The answer may lie in what he omits. Al-Tha'alibi nowhere suggests that the rule of the prince is legitimated by his acceptance by the Community, or by the religious elites. The state, for him, is the prince, who springs from a self-renewing and self-legitimizing political aristocracy of merit, usually of military (often slave-military) origin, which allies itself with 'birth' (*asl*) in its choice of great officers of state, and becomes *asl* in its turn. Thus aristocratic elitism, his principle of departure, becomes dynamic. The prince, through courtly patronage, also allies himself with an intellectual aristocracy, whose origins are not discussed; together, they are the instrument of civilisation. In al-Tha'alibi's analysis, the lasting product of Muslim kingship,

the contribution to civilisation which has earned it a distinctive place in the succession of princely *dawlas*, is the promotion of Arabic letters – fine poetry and prose, not (it is conspicuously absent from al-Tha‘alibi’s list of the products of civilisation) the discourse of religious learning (ibid.: 40). Self-interested this analysis may be, and lacking in any exploration of the reasons for, and modalities of, the alliance between power and high culture;<sup>29</sup> nevertheless, it pinpoints a relationship which remained intrinsic to Islamic monarchies and central to their historical analysis until the twentieth century.

## Notes

1. Marlow 2007a: 34. Like Marlow 2007a and Bosworth 1998, I use terms such as ‘mirrors for princes’ and ‘advice literature’ interchangeably.
2. This title is scribal. Al-Tha‘alibī himself calls it *hādhā al-kitāb al-Khwārazm-shāhī* after its dedicatee; see al-Tha‘alibī 1990: 245, and editor’s introduction, 17–18.
3. In his own Introduction, al-Tha‘alibī enumerates ‘ten chapters (*abwāb*), each of which contains several sub-sections (*fuṣūl*) with rubrics indicating their contents’; in practice, he runs together chapters 7 and 8. Compare al-Tha‘alibī 1990: 31 and 284–5 of the editor’s table of contents.
4. He transmits some reminiscences of the wine butler of ‘*amīr al-mu‘minīn*’ (a misreading for al-Amīr al-Mu‘ayyad, ‘Abd al-Malik I b. Nūḥ I, r. 343–50/954–61); al-Tha‘alibī 1990: 47–8. Sadan 1986: 287 was the first to notice that *Ādāb al-mulūk* gives information on al-Tha‘alibī’s grandfather.
5. See Bosworth 1968, Introduction, 2–6, on al-Tha‘alibī at the courts of al-Jurjāniyya and Ghazna and on the works he composed for Ma‘mūn II and Ghaznavid patrons.
6. The surname (*nisba*) of al-Tha‘alibī is explained by medieval biographers with reference to the fox-fur trade. The editors of al-Tha‘alibī 1996 argue for a literal reading of his poetry, on the basis of which they believe him to have come of well-to-do landed parentage (1996: 6).
7. To the bibliographic discussions mentioned in Rowson 1998 and 2000 may be added Abū Raḥma 1986.
8. This is the burden of the much-admired ‘Epistle to the *kātib*s’ of ‘Abd al-Hamīd the *Kātib* (d. c. 132/750), which was quoted for centuries after its composition. For context and references, see al-Qadi 2005: 9–11.
9. Aktham b. Ṣayfī was a pagan Arab sage. His proverbial sayings carry particular moral weight because he died on the verge of converting to Islam.
10. Al-Amīr al-Mu‘ayyad/al-Muwaffaq ‘Abd al-Malik I b. Nūḥ I; see note 4 above. ‘During his lifetime he was called “The Divinely Assisted” (*al-Muwaffaq*) and after his death he was known as “The Upright” (*al-Rashīd*) on account of his justice’; see Treadwell 2005: 157.

11. Ruling in 356/967; see Bosworth 1996: 178. He was a Khwārazm-shāh of the Afrīghid dynasty overthrown by Ma'mūn's father.
12. See Treadwell 2005: 159; Nūḥ came to the throne as a minor, and the marriage took place on his accession. He died at the age of 17. On the ambitious Sīmjūrīds, see Bosworth 1996: 175.
13. The practice, 'an offering from an inferior to a superior', seems the same as that described in eighteenth-century India; see Yule and Burnell 1968: 364–5, under 'Nuzzer' (also nazir, nizzer, etc.), i.e. *nadhīr* or its plural *nudhūr*.
14. Al-Tha'ālibī uses *nithār* in its ordinary sense for this period elsewhere in *Ādāb al-mulūk* (1990: 112).
15. A friend cited by al-Tha'ālibī in several works, e.g. 1985: 188, 319, 498, 541, 583.
16. *Bayna yaday najwākum*.
17. *Sa'ā ilā . . . bi wasīla*; compare the use of *wasīla* in Qur'ān 5: 35 and 17: 57: 'a right path to God'.
18. *Yuqadimmu nithāran bayna yadayhi*: the last two words, meaning 'before' referring to place, deliberately echo the earlier Qur'anic quotation, see note 16 above, in which they refer to time.
19. This has the ring of a proverb, which I have not been able to trace. Al-Tha'ālibī is fond, in *Ādāb al-mulūk* as in other works, of rounding off discussions with proverbs or proverb-like pronouncements.
20. See de Blois 1995: 674; physician, astronomer, historian, and *kātib* in the bureaucracy of the Būyids of Iraq, he came of a long line of pagan intellectuals and always refused to convert to Islam, but was 'in all other respects a typically Muslim man of letters whose elegant Arabic epistles and poems were greatly admired by his contemporaries'. Al-Tha'ālibī is a major source for his epistles and poems, but this passage is not, so far as I can tell, found elsewhere in his works.
21. A historian of religious and philosophical doctrines, he was himself most probably an Ismā'īlī; see Monnot 1997.
22. *Ahl al-ahwā'* is a technical term; see Shahrastani 1986: 159–60. 'Followers of selfish whims', Crone and Treadwell 2003: 37, seems too imprecise.
23. *Dhawī al-ilḥād*. Crone and Treadwell 2003: 37 translate simply as 'heretics', but on the evolution of the term in Khurāsān, see Shahrastani 1986: 554, n. 34.
24. Crone and Treadwell 2003: 37; 'proponents of elementary qualities and celestial bodies . . . who call prophets (mere) "lawgivers (*aṣḥāb al-nawāmīs*) and (fulfillers of) needs (*al-ḥawā'ij*)"' ; compare Shahrastani 1986: 208–9, 257–8 and especially 554–7 on the materialists who teach that not God, but His creation and the order of the universe are eternal, and that the Soul, aspiring to the perfection of the Intellect, needed an instrument of movement and so generated first the celestial spheres, then the simple natures. For the unusual term *ḥawā'ij*, Daniel De Smet suggests (personal

- communication) '*les entraves liées à la loi*' (perhaps rather, 'the demands of the law'). The sacrilegious pair, *nawāmīs* and *ḥawā'ij*, would then function as a prolepsis paralleling and contrasting with the orthodox pair, *Ṣalawāt* (ritual prayer) and *ibādāt* (required observances), as one would expect of a practised rhetorician such as al-Tha'ālibī; compare Crone and Treadwell 2003: 58, n. 110.
25. For the root *sh-b-h*, see Shahrastani 1986: 115, nn. 1, 2, and index, 722.
  26. Read *yaslasu qiyāduhum* (a set expression) for *yusalsilu qiyāduhum*.
  27. In Crone and Treadwell's translation, the princes 'take the opportunity to rest in comfort' while the missionaries 'are emboldened to engage in forbidden acts', a rendering which suggests a *coup d'état*, since these acts violate the protection of life and property, which is the prerogative of the ruler.
  28. *Kafarat al-falāsifa wa fasaqat ahl al-ahwā'*; compare Crone and Treadwell 2003: 58: 'al-Tha'ālibī knows Ismailism as a philosophical rather than a messianic movement'.
  29. But see the passage on 'the rulers listening to poetry' in their own praise, which explores the psychology of its promise of 'a second life' of 'honour eternal'; al-Tha'ālibī 1990: 116.



4.

## Religious Identity, Dissimulation and Assimilation: the Ismaili Experience

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The Shi'a appeared on the historical stage in the formative period of Islam with their own distinct identity and ideas on religious authority and leadership revolving around the sanctity of the Prophet Muhammad's family or the *ahl al-bayt*. Soon after the tragedy of Karbala' where al-Husayn b. 'Ali, the Shi'i imam and the Prophet's grandson, and his small band of companions were massacred by an Umayyad army in 61/680, the Shi'a themselves split into different groups, each one recognising a different line of 'Alids, descendants of 'Ali b. Abi Talib (d. 40/661), the Prophet's cousin, son-in-law and the first Shi'i imam, or other members of the then broadly defined *ahl al-bayt*, as their spiritual leaders or imams.

Subsequently, Shi'ism evolved in terms of two main branches, designated as the Kaysaniyya and the Imamiyya, each comprised of a number of sects and splinter groups. However, both of these Shi'i branches represented minority positions within the Islamic community compared to groups later collectively designated as Sunnis. The Kaysanis, representing the politically active wing of Shi'ism, were gradually absorbed into the Abbasid movement that succeeded in supplanting the Umayyads and installing the Abbasids to the caliphate in 132/750. It was in the aftermath of the establishment of Abbasid rule that the moderate Imami branch of Shi'ism, the common heritage of the Twelver (Ithna'ashari) and Ismaili Shi'is, acquired its prominence during the imamate of Ja'far al-Sadiq, while yet another politically active Shi'i tradition found expression in Zaydi Shi'ism.

All Shi'i groups, even those belonging to the quiescent Imami branch, were severely persecuted under the Umayyads. During that period in the history of early Shi'ism, numerous ill-organised revolts launched by various Kaysani groups, and the *ghulat* or the most extremist ones among them, were equally suppressed in Kufa (the cradle of Shi'ism) and elsewhere. The persecution of the Shi'a continued unabated under

the Abbasids, who despite their own Shi'i origins, championed the cause of Sunni Islam after establishing their own caliphate.

In the aftermath of numerous defeats and tragic events in the history of early Shi'ism, the principle of *taqiyya*, precautionary concealment or dissimulation of one's true religious identity and beliefs under adverse circumstances that endangered one's life or property, was articulated by the imams of the Imami Shi'is. More specifically, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (d. 114/732) is credited with introducing this principle (Lalani 2000: 88-91). Imam al-Baqir and his son and successor Ja'far al-Sadiq were actually responsible for endowing Imami Shi'ism with a distinct identity and rituals, also adopting an apolitical strategy vis-a-vis the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers who held the actual reins of power in the Islamic community. The principle of *taqiyya*, which also allowed for dispensation from the requirements of religious compulsion and adoption of any type of religious disguise, became central to the Imami Shi'i teachings. Imam al-Sadiq refined the principle of *taqiyya* and, in fact, made it an absolute article of faith and an integral part of the Imami Shi'i creed with its central doctrine of the imamate (al-Nawbakhti 1931: 56-7; al-Qummi 1963: 78-9; al-Kulayni 1968: vol. 2, 217-26; Kohlberg 1975: 395-402; Tabataba'i 1975: 223-5; Sobhani 2001: 150-4; al-Nu'man 2002: vol. 1, 77, 136, 201).

Subsequently, *taqiyya* was variously adopted as a prudential or dissimulatory tactic by both the moderate Twelvers and the politically active Ismailis with differing consequences. Clearly it must have been dangerous for the early Shi'i imams and their followers to openly propagate their beliefs and to publicly hold that certain individuals, the Shi'i imams, other than the ruling caliphs, were the divinely appointed spiritual guides of the Muslims. The practice of *taqiyya* was, thus, meant to protect the Imami Shi'is from persecution, and serve in the preservation of their religious identity and very existence. On the other hand, the Zaydis, who essentially retained the politically militant yet religiously moderate attitude prevailing among the early Kufan Shi'a, elaborated a doctrine of the imamate that clearly distinguished them from Imami Shi'ism and its two subsequent Twelver and Ismaili branches. The Zaydis did not even recognise a hereditary line of 'Alid imams, as in the case of the Imamis, though the later Zaydi imams came to be restricted to Fatimid 'Alids, descendants of 'Ali and his spouse Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. According to Zaydi doctrine, if a person wanted to be recognised as an imam, he would have to assert his claims publicly and sword in hand if necessary, in addition to possessing the required religious knowledge or *'ilm*. Due to their emphasis on activism, the observance of *taqiyya* was thus alien to Zaydi teachings which had been largely formulated by the fourth/tenth century.

In theory, *taqiyya* tactics could take different forms, ranging from

temporary or short-term concealment of one's religious identity or belief to long-term dissimulation and disguises under various other religious identities (see Kohlberg 1995: 345-79). Traditionally the Imami Shi'is resorted to short-term or temporary *taqiyya* practices in response to immediate or specific threats without compromising or losing their true identity. However, as we shall see, the long-term adoption of *taqiyya* under Sunni, Twelver Shi'i or Hindu disguises by the later Nizari Ismailis would lead to lasting consequences in terms of their religious identity. The latter phenomenon has not been sufficiently investigated other than some cultural and social anthropological case studies in the Indian context conducted by Dominique-Sila Khan and a few other modern scholars. It is undeniable that *taqiyya* practices of the dissimulation type under any form and for extended periods, covering several generations, would produce irrevocable influences on the traditions and on the very religious identity of the dissimulating group. In time, such influences may manifest themselves in different forms, ranging from total acculturation or full assimilation of the dissimulating group in a particular locality into a dominant community or religious tradition chosen initially as a dissimulating cover, to various degrees of interfacing with 'other' traditions without the actual loss of the specific original identity of the dissimulating group. The very concept of 'acculturation' has been used by cultural anthropologists to explain how 'composite' forms of religion could emerge through mutual exchanges and influences occurring in a more or less spontaneous manner, while others have referred to the complex phenomena in question as 'syncretistic' or 'liminal' (Khan 2004: 30-93). There are also those cases of claims and counter-claims put forth by the Twelvers and Ismailis on the true religious affiliation of certain eminent individuals, such as Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 672/1274), who are said to have temporarily practised *taqiyya*.

In 148/765, on the death of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, who had successfully consolidated Imami Shi'ism on a quiescent basis, his following split into several groups. One group traced the imamate in the progeny of al-Sadiq's son Musa al-Kazim (d. 183/799) and recognised five more imams. This community, acknowledging a line of twelve imams ending with Muhammad al-Mahdi, who is believed to have gone into occultation in 260/874 and whose emergence is still awaited, became ~~designated in due course~~ as Ithna'ashari or Twelver. On the other hand, two groups of the Imami Shi'is now traced the imamate in the progeny of Isma'il b. Ja'far al-Sadiq and his son Muhammad b. Isma'il, and they became known as Ismaili. From early on the central leaders of the Ismailis organised a revolutionary movement for uprooting the Abbasids and installing the Ismaili imam to the caliphate. However, in order to protect themselves against Abbasid persecution, the central

leaders of the early Ismaili movement practised *taqiyya* and closely guarded their identity. During this so-called *dawr al-satr* or period of concealment in early Ismailism when the Ismaili imams remained hidden, they adopted code-names, such as Maymun (the Fortunate One) and Sa'id (the Happy One), rather than using their real names; furthermore, they did not openly claim the Ismaili imamate. Instead, they assumed the cover of being the *hujja*, proof or chief representative, of the absent Ismaili imam, Muhammad b. Isma'il, who had gone into hiding and whose reappearance as the Mahdi was then expected. Organising a revolutionary movement in the name of a hidden imam, who could not be pursued by Abbasid agents, while his chief representatives also maintained utter secrecy in their own operations, must have had obvious advantages. And this concealment tactic was retained by the central leaders of the early Ismailis until 286/899 when the then leader of the movement 'Abdullah al-Mahdi (the future founder of the Fatimid dynasty) felt secure enough to abandon the *taqiyya* measures of his predecessors and openly claim the imamate (al-Hamdani 1958: 9-14; Daftary 1993: 123-39). This was the earliest and simplest form of *taqiyya*-related concealment adopted by the Ismailis, a form that contributed significantly to the success of the early Ismailis without any adverse or lasting consequences in terms of their religious identity.

In 297/909, the early Ismaili *da'wa* or mission led to the foundation of the Fatimid state, which represented a new Shi'i caliphate under the leadership of the Ismaili imams. The Ismailis had now come into possession of an important state that lasted until 567/1171. The Fatimid Ismaili caliph-imams never abandoned their aspirations for ruling over the entire Muslim community. As a result, they retained the Ismaili *da'wa* organisation. The *da'wa* activities, discharged by a hierarchy of *da'is*, were propagated openly within the Fatimid state, where the Ismailis could practise their faith freely for the first time without fear of persecution. However, the success of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Fatimid dominions was both limited and transitory, as Shi'ism never acquired any deep roots in North Africa and Egypt. In fact, the Ismailis remained a minority in Fatimid Egypt with its negligible Shi'i population. Strangely, it was in non-Fatimid territories, the so-called *jaza'ir* or islands of the *da'wa*, scattered from Central Asia and Persia to Yaman and which were already well acquainted with Shi'i traditions, that Ismailism achieved its lasting success (Daftary 1999: 29-43). In these regions, outside the dominions of the Fatimid state, *da'wa* activities were undertaken clandestinely and the Ismaili *da'is* such as Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani (d. after 361/971), Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani (d. after 411/1020) and Nasir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070), were obliged to observe strict secrecy in their activities. In spite of their *taqiyya* practices, however, the Ismaili *da'is* and their followers were

periodically subject to persecution by the Abbasids, Saljuqs, Samanids and other Sunni rulers of the central and eastern lands of Islam, while the Ismailis of Yaman had prolonged conflicts with their Sunni and Zaydi neighbours.

On the death of the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Mustansir in 487/1094, the Ismaili *da'wa* and community permanently split into rival Musta'lian and Nizari factions, named after al-Mustansir's sons al-Musta'li and Nizar who had claimed to be his successor. The Musta'lian Ismailis recognised al-Musta'li and the later Fatimids as their imams, while the Nizaris traced the imamate in the progeny of Nizar who was executed in Cairo in 488/1095 after the failure of his revolt to assert his rights. The Nizari Ismailis soon found their permanent stronghold in Persia where the *da'i* Hasan-i Sabbah had already established himself at the fortress of Alamut in 483/1090, marking the foundation of what was to become the Nizari Ismaili state of Persia with a subsidiary in Syria. Hasan-i Sabbah (d. 518/1124) organised the Persian Ismailis into a revolutionary movement against the ardently Sunni Saljuq Turks whose alien rule was detested by Persians of all social classes. For 166 years Hasan and his seven successors as lords of Alamut ruled over the Nizari state, which was finally uprooted by the all-conquering Mongols in 654/1256. Within the territories of this state, the Nizaris were once again free to practise their faith, while elsewhere they continued to hide their religious identity. The Nizari imamate also emerged openly at Alamut when the Nizaris acknowledged the fourth lord of Alamut Hasan II (557-61/1162-6) and his successors as their imams, descendants of Nizar b. al-Mustansir.

The Nizari Ismaili state in Persia was a particular type of principality, carved out in the midst of the hostile Saljuq dominions. The Nizaris were, thus, isolated in their fortress communities and almost constantly struggling to survive. It was under such circumstances that the sixth lord of Alamut, Jalal al-Din Hasan (607-18/1210-21), attempted a daring rapprochement with the Abbasid caliph and the Sunni establishment, and ordered his followers to observe the *shari'a* in its Sunni form. Jalal al-Din did his utmost to convince the outside world of his new policy and to end the isolation of his community. In 608/1211, the Abbasid caliph al-Nasir acknowledged the Nizari imam's rapprochement with Sunni Islam and issued a decree to that effect (Juwayni 1958: vol. 2, 699-704; Rashid al-Din 1959-60: 174-8).

Jalal al-Din Hasan's new policy had obvious advantages for the Nizaris, who had been marginalised as 'heretics' for several decades. He changed all that by aligning himself with the spiritual head of Sunni Islam and situating his community at the very heart of contemporary Muslim affairs. Above all else, he now won territorial security for his state as well as peace for his community. It is a significant point

to be noted that all Nizaris accepted Jalal al-Din's reform without any opposition, regarding him as the imam who guided his community and contextualised the interpretation of the *shari'a* as he saw fit. The Nizaris evidently viewed their imam's declaration as an application of *taqiyya*. The observance of *taqiyya* could be taken by the Nizaris to imply any type of accommodation to the outside world as deemed necessary by their infallible 'imam of the time' (Daftary 2007: 375-7). However, the apparent adoption of Sunni practices did not have any long-term effects on Nizari traditions as the Nizaris soon dispensed with the Sunni *shari'a* and reverted back to their own teachings in the imamate of Jalal al-Din Hasan's son and successor 'Ala' al-Din Muhammad (618-53/1221-55).

In the imamate of 'Ala' al-Din Muhammad, the intellectual life of the Nizari community received a special impetus from the continuing influx of outside scholars who were then fleeing the Mongol invasions and taking refuge in Nizari strongholds, especially in Quhistan in southern Khurasan. These scholars availed themselves of the Nizari patronage of learning and their libraries. Several of the Nizari fortresses, including Alamut, thus became flourishing centres of intellectual activity. Foremost among such scholars mention may be made of Nasir al-Din Muhammad al-Tusi who spent some three decades in the Nizari fortresses, from around 624/1227 until the collapse of the Nizari state.

There is much controversy surrounding al-Tusi's religious affiliation and Ismaili connection. The medieval Twelver Shi'i scholars, who considered al-Tusi one of their co-religionists, persistently denied that he had ever converted to Ismailism, also rejecting the authenticity of the Ismaili treatises, such as the *Rawdat al-taslim*, attributed to him and preserved by the Nizaris. Later Twelver scholars, including his modern Persian biographers, such as M. T. Mudarris Radavi and M. Mudarrisi Zanjani, argue that al-Tusi, observing *taqiyya* as a Twelver Imami Shi'i, was obliged to compose these Ismaili works for fear of his life during his captivity in the Nizari strongholds of Persia. There is, however, no reason to doubt the authenticity of his spiritual autobiography, the *Sayr va suluk* (al-Tusi 1998: 3-7, 11-12, 17-18, 20-1), in which al-Tusi explains how he eventually came to realise the necessity of following an infallible teacher (*mu'allim*) who would guide reason to its perfection. Hence, he joined the Ismailis, or the *ahl-i ta'lim*, and recognised their imam. Taking into account the circumstances of al-Tusi's career, his contribution to the Ismaili thought of the period, his long and productive stay among the Nizaris, and the latter's generally liberal policy towards non-Ismaili scholars (Twelvers, Sunnis, Jews) living with them, it is safe to state that al-Tusi willingly embraced Ismaili Shi'ism sometime during his long association with the Nizaris. However, he

did revert to Twelver Shi'ism upon joining the Mongols, whose patronage he then sought, and wrote several theological treatises supporting Twelver views, and at the same time attempted to distance himself from his Ismaili past (Dabashi 1996: 231-45; Daftary 2000: 59-67).

The Mongols succeeded, with some difficulty, in seizing the various Nizari strongholds in Persia; and the surrender of Alamut in 654/1256 signalled the demise of the Nizari Ismaili state and the permanent loss of the Nizaris' political prominence. The Mongols also massacred large numbers of Nizaris in Persia. However, there were Persian Nizaris who survived the downfall of their state and network of mountain strongholds. Many Persian Nizaris now migrated to adjacent lands in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Sind where Ismaili communities had existed outside the territories of the Nizari state. Other Nizari groups, isolated in remote places or in towns outside their traditional territories in Persia, soon either disintegrated or were assimilated fully into the religiously dominant Sunni communities of their milieu.

It was under such circumstances that scattered Nizari communities outside Syria resorted once again to widespread and strict observance of *taqiyya*. It is important to bear in mind that the observance of *taqiyya* in this early post-Alamut period in Nizari history, marked by an absence of a viable central leadership organisation, was not imposed on the community. Deeply rooted in their earlier Imami teachings and communal practices, it was a measure adopted by different Nizari groups independently of one another and on their own initiative, as necessitated by the exigencies of the time. The Nizaris were rather experienced in adopting different external guises as required to safeguard themselves. For a short while during the Alamut period of their history, as noted, they had even adopted the *shari'a* in its Sunni form. Many Nizari groups in the eastern Iranian world, where Sunni Islam prevailed, now disguised themselves once again as Sunnis.

Meanwhile, Imam Shams al-Din Muhammad, son and successor of the last lord of Alamut, Rukn al-Din Khurshah (d. 655/1257), had gone into hiding. He and his immediate successors lived secretly in different localities in Persia without much contact with their followers. Furthermore, around 710/1310, a little-known dispute over Shams al-Din Muhammad's succession split the line of the Nizari imams and their followings into what became designated as the Qasim-Shahi and Muhammad-Shahi (or Mu'mini) branches. The seat of the Muhammad-Shahi line of Nizari imams was transferred to India in the tenth/sixteenth century, and, as we shall see, by the end of the twelfth/eighteenth century this line became extinct. On the other hand, the Qasim-Shahi branch has persisted down to our times, with their contemporary imams known as the Aga Khans.

It was in early post-Alamut times that the Persian-speaking Nizaris, as part of their *taqiyya* practices, disguised themselves under the mantle of Sufism, without actually establishing formal affiliations with any of the Sufi orders or *tariqas* then spreading throughout Persia and Central Asia. The origins and early development of this phenomenon remain rather obscure. But the practice soon gained wide currency among the Nizaris of different regions in the Iranian world and India. The earliest recorded manifestation of it is found in the versified writings of the Nizari poet Hakim Sa'd al-Din b. Shams al-Din, better known as Nizari Quhistani (d. 720/1320). He may have been the very first post-Alamut Nizari author to have chosen the poetic and Sufi forms of expression for concealing Ismaili ideas, a model emulated widely by many later Nizari authors in Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia (Lewisohn 2003: 229–51; Daftary 2007: 410–22). Nizari Quhistani is the first Nizari Ismaili to use Sufi terminology such as *pir* and *murshid*, terms used by Sufis in reference to their spiritual guide, and *murid*, the guide's disciple. In due course, these terms were adopted and used widely by the Nizaris; they are still commonly used by the Nizaris who also use the term *tariqa* for their particular interpretation of Islam.

It was in the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century that the Qasim-Shahi Nizari imams emerged in the village of Anjudan, in central Persia, posing as Sufi *pirs*. By that time, a type of coalescence between Persian Nizari Ismailism and Sufism was well established. While Nizari Ismailism in Persia had become increasingly infused with Sufi teachings and terminology, the Sufis themselves had begun to use ideas which were more widely ascribed to the Ismailis. As a part of this coalescence, the Nizari Ismailis now began to adopt Sufi ways of life even externally. Thus, the Nizari imams lived clandestinely as Sufi *pirs*, with names like Shah Qalandar, while their followers adopted the typically Sufi title of *murid* or disciple. The adoption of a Sufi exterior by the Nizaris might not have been so readily possible if these two esoteric traditions in Islam had not had common doctrinal grounds. It may also be added that Twelver Shi'ism developed its own rapport with Sufism in Persia during this period. At any rate, owing to their close relations with Sufism, the Persian-speaking Nizaris have regarded some of the greatest mystic poets of Persia as their co-religionists and selections of their works have been preserved in the private libraries of the Nizaris of Persia and Badakhshan, now divided between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Amongst such poets, mention may be made of Sana'i, Farid al-Din 'Attar (Landolt 2006: 3–26) and Jalal al-Din Rumi.

With their emergence at Anjudan, the Qasim-Shahi Nizari imams initiated a revival in their *da'wa* activities while still hiding their identity. They reorganised and reinvigorated the *da'wa* not only to



win new converts but also to reassert their central authority over the various Nizari communities, especially those situated in Central Asia and India. The Anjudan period in Nizari history, which lasted some two centuries until the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century, also witnessed a revival in the literary activities of the Nizaris of Persia (Daftary 2007: 422–34). However, the Nizaris still found it necessary, in predominantly Sunni Persia, to practise *taqiyya* in the guise of Sufism. For all practical purposes, the Persian Nizaris now appeared as a Sufi *tariqa*. To the outsiders, the Nizari imam living in Anjudan appeared as a Sufi *pir*, *murshid* or *shaykh*. Similarly, the ordinary Nizaris were considered as the imam's *murids*, guided along a spiritual path or *tariqa* to *haqiqa* or ultimate truth by their spiritual master, very much like a Sufi order.

By the tenth/sixteenth century, the term *pir*, the Persian equivalent of the Arabic word *shaykh*, had acquired widespread currency among Nizari Ismailis. It was applied to *da'is* of different ranks as well as the person of the imam himself. Subsequently this term fell into disuse in Persia, but it was retained by the Nizari communities of Central Asia and South Asia. The influences of some of these medieval *taqiyya* practices, as noted, have left an indelible mark on the historical development of the Nizari community. In the context of Nizari-Sufi relations during the Anjudan period, valuable evidence is preserved in a book entitled *Pandiyat-i javanmardi* (1953), containing the religious admonitions of Imam Mustansir bi'llah II (d. 885/1480), whose mausoleum known as Shah Qalandar is still in situ at Anjudan. Permeated with ideas widely associated with Sufism, the Nizari imam's sermons in the *Pandiyat-i javanmardi*, start with the *shari'at-tariqat-haqiqat* categorisation of the Sufis, describing *haqiqat* as the *batin* or inner dimension of *shari'at*, which could be attained by the faithful through following the spiritual path or *tariqat*.

Meanwhile, the advent of the Safawids and the proclamation of Twelver Shi'ism as their state religion in 907/1501 promised yet more favourable opportunities for the activities of the Nizaris and other Shi'i movements in Persia. The Nizaris did in fact reduce the intensity of their *taqiyya* practices during the initial decades of Safawid rule. The new optimism of the Nizaris proved short-lived, however, as the Safawids and their *shari'at*-minded '*ulama*' soon adopted a policy of eliminating all popular forms of Sufism and those Shi'i or Shi'i-related movements which fell outside the confines of Twelver Shi'ism. However, the conversion of Persia to Twelver Shi'ism, mainly at the expense of Sunnism, proceeded rather slowly under the early Safawids.

Engaged in more overt activities, the Nizari Ismailis now attracted the attention of the early Safawids and their Twelver '*ulama*', many of

whom had been brought in from the Arab centres of Twelver scholarship. As a result, the Nizaris, too, received their share of persecution. Shah Isma'il, the founder of the Safawid dynasty, eventually issued an order for the execution of Shah Tahir al-Husayni, the most famous imam of the Muhammad-Shahi Nizari line. Shah Tahir was a learned theologian and a poet, and he attained much popularity due to his learning and piety. He became a religious teacher at the theological seminary in Kashan and acquired many disciples and students there. Shah Tahir's success soon aroused the hostility of the local officials and Twelver scholars, who now reported his 'heretical' teachings to the Safawid monarch who agreed to have him executed. However, Shah Tahir was warned in time and, in 926/1520, he fled to India. By 928/1522, he had settled in Ahmadnagar, the capital of the Nizam-Shahi state in the Deccan, and became the most trusted adviser for Burhan Nizam-Shah (915-61/1509-54; Firishta 1822: vol. 2, 213-31; Ivanow 1938: 57-79; Daftary 2005: 395-406).

It is interesting to note that from early on in India, Shah Tahir advocated Twelver Shi'ism, which he had adopted as a *taqiyya* measure. It is certain that Shah Tahir originally propagated his form of Nizari Ismailism, whatever it may have been, in the guise of Twelver Shi'ism, which was also more acceptable to the Muslim rulers of India who were interested in cultivating friendly relations with the Twelver Shi'i Safawid dynasty of Persia. This may explain why he wrote several commentaries on the theological works of well-known Twelver scholars. Shah Tahir achieved his greatest religious success in the Deccan when Burhan Nizam-Shah, shortly after his own conversion, proclaimed Twelver Shi'ism as the official religion of his state in 944/1537. Henceforth, an increasing number of Twelver Shi'i scholars gathered at the Nizam-Shahi court. The propagation of Twelver Shi'ism by a Nizari imam, a strange phenomenon indeed, may be understood only as an extreme case of *taqiyya* practice. Shah Tahir died around 952/1545; and his successors, too, evidently observed *taqiyya* in India in the form of Twelver Shi'ism. In this connection it is noteworthy to point out that in the *Lama'at al-tahirin*, one of the few extant Muhammad-Shahi treatises composed in the Deccan around 1110/1698, the author clearly hides his Ismaili ideas under the covers of Twelver and Sufi expressions; he eulogises the Twelver imams while also alluding in a confused manner to the Nizari imams of the Muhammad-Shahi line.

The Muhammad-Shahi leadership was handed down amongst the descendants of Shah Tahir, who continued to live in Ahmadnagar and later in Awrangabad. However, these imams do not seem to have acquired any significant 'Ismaili' following apart from their Twelver Shi'i adherents. By the end of the twelfth/eighteenth century, the Muhammad-Shahi Nizaris, whatever the nature of their shifting

creed and identity, had disappeared or become fully assimilated into the Twelver or 'other' religious communities of India as a result of the dissimulating policies of their imams. Many must have abandoned their Shi'i identity entirely following the persecution of the Shi'a in the Deccan by the Mughal emperor Awrangzib. By that time, the Muhammad-Shahi Nizaris in other regions, notably Persia and Central Asia, too, had either converted fully to Twelver Shi'ism or had switched their allegiance to the more successful Qasim-Shahi line of Nizari imams. The last known imam of the Muhammad-Shahi line, Amir Muhammad al-Baqir, had his last contact with his Syrian followers in 1210/1796 and probably died soon afterwards. Muhammad-Shahi Nizaris, with an Ismaili identity, have survived as a very small community (15,000 persons) only in Syria, where they did not practise *taqiyya*. These sectaries are currently still awaiting the reappearance of their last imam, Amir al-Baqir, as the Mahdi.

Meanwhile, the second Safawid monarch, Shah Tahmasp, had persecuted the Qasim-Shahi Nizaris of Anjudan, executing their thirty-sixth imam, Murad Mirza, in 981/1574. By the time of Shah 'Abbas I (995-1038/1587-629), who led Safawid Persia to the peak of its glory, the Qasim-Shahi Nizaris of Persia had also successfully adopted the 'politically correct' Twelver Shi'ism as a second tactical disguise, while Shah Tahir of the rival Nizari branch may have been the earliest Nizari leader to have conceived of this new form of dissimulation. The Nizaris sharing the same early 'Alid heritage and Imami traditions with the Twelvers, could readily adopt this new *taqiyya* practice. Be that as it may, Shah 'Abbas did not persecute the Nizaris and their imams who continued to reside in Anjudan. The success of the Nizaris in dissimulating as Twelvers is clearly attested to by an epigraph dated 1036/1627, reproducing the text of a royal decree issued by Shah 'Abbas (Daftary 2007: 437-8). According to this decree, addressed to Amir Khalil Allah Anjudani (d. 1043/1634), the contemporary Qasim-Shahi imam, the Shi'a of Anjudan, referred to as Ithna'asharis, were exempted from paying certain taxes like other Twelver Shi'is around Qumm. The later Nizari imams in Persia, by then solely of the Qasim-Shahi line, continued to practise *taqiyya* under the double guises of Sufism and Twelver Shi'ism, though the Sufi cover was increasingly eclipsed by that of Twelver Shi'ism. By the closing decades of the eleventh/seventeenth century, when the imams moved from Anjudan to the nearby village of Kahak and then to various locations in the province of Kirman, the Anjudan revival in Nizari Ismailism had borne definite fruit. The Qasim-Shahi *da'wa* had gained the allegiance of the bulk of the Nizaris of different regions at the expense of the Muhammad-Shahis. At the same time, the *da'wa* had spread successfully in Afghanistan, Central Asia and in several regions of South Asia.

The early history of Nizari Ismailism in South Asia remains obscure. According to the traditional accounts of the Indian Nizaris, as preserved in their devotional literature known as *ginans*, the *da'wa* in India was initiated by emissaries or *pirs* dispatched by the Nizari imams from Persia, probably in the seventh/thirteenth century. The earliest Nizari *pirs* operating in India concentrated their activities in Sind, where Ismailism had persisted clandestinely in Multan and elsewhere since the Fatimid times. It was mainly Pir Sadr al-Din who organised and consolidated the Nizari *da'wa* in South Asia. Pir Sadr al-Din, who flourished in the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century, converted large numbers of Hindus from the Lohana trading caste and gave them the title of Khoja, derived from the Persian word *khwaja*, an honorary title meaning lord or master.

The specific tradition of Nizari Ismailism that evolved in South Asia became known as Satpanth (*sat panth*) or the 'true path' (to salvation), a term used by the Khojas throughout their *ginans*. In India, as in Persia, the Nizari Khojas developed a close relationship with Sufism; Multan and Uch, in Sind, in addition to serving as centres of Satpanth Ismailism, were the headquarters of the Suhrawardi and Qadiri Sufi orders. The same doctrinal affinities that existed between Persian Nizari Ismailism and Sufism also existed between Satpanth Ismailism and Sufism. As a result, Nizari Khojas were able to present themselves for extended periods as one of the mystically oriented communities of Sind, where such communities existed in both the predominantly Sunni Muslim and Hindu milieux. However, in contrast to the situation in Persia, the *pirs* and their Khoja followers may not have consciously and deliberately developed their Sufi connections for *taqiyya* purposes. The Khojas, unlike the Nizaris in Persia, were safeguarded to some extent against Sunni persecution by the Hindu elements which were an integral part of their Satpanth tradition. They also dissimulated intermittently as Sunnis. All this enabled the Khojas to blend more readily into the religious, cultural and social structure of Sind, attracting less attention as Ismaili Shi'is and escaping persecution by the region's Sunni rulers.

The origins of the particular form of Ismailism known in South Asia as Satpanth, and its religious literature, the *ginans*, remain very obscure. In particular, it is not known whether Satpanth resulted from the conversion policies of the *pirs*, or whether it represented an indigenous tradition that had evolved gradually over time, with the Nizari *pirs* or preacher-saints adapting their preaching to an existing religious situation. The weight of evidence seems to support the latter alternative. On the other hand, many modern scholars of Satpanth have generally attributed the mixed, Hindu-Muslim, interfacing or syncretism of this Ismaili tradition to the preaching strategy of the

*pirs*, who are held to have designed suitable Hindu-oriented policies for maximising the appeal of their message in a Hindu ambience of mainly rural and uneducated castes. This also explains why the *pirs* turned to Indian vernaculars, rather than the Arabic or Persian used by the educated classes, in order to further enhance the popularity of their preaching. For the same reasons, the *pirs* used Hindu idioms and mythology, interfacing their Islamic and Ismaili tenets with myths, images and symbols already familiar to Hindus. In other words, the *pirs* adopted a strategy of acculturation that proved very successful and won large numbers of converts to Satpanth (Nanji 1978: 65–96; Asani 2001: 155–68).

However it was achieved, Satpanth Ismailism does represent an indigenous tradition reflecting specific historical, social, cultural and political circumstances prevalent in medieval India. And the Hindu cover of the Khojas, as expressed by Hindu elements in the Satpanth tradition, in addition to encouraging conversion, also served *taqiyya* purposes and made the Khojas less conspicuous in their predominantly Hindu and Sunni environments. In a sense, Satpanth Ismailism represented a complex form of dissimulation and acculturation adapted to the religious, social, cultural and political realities of South Asia. In this Indo-Muslim context, *taqiyya* meant something much more than the prudential concealment of one's true religious identity, or dissimulation through superficial adoption of an exterior guise. It involved the creative application of *taqiyya* through a highly complex and organic process of indigenisation, adhesion, acculturation and syncretism (Kassam 1995: 62–74). This is why the Satpanth tradition of the South Asian Khojas differs so significantly from the other Nizari traditions elaborated in Central Asia, Persia and Syria.

It is also to be noted that Satpanth Ismailism did not always evolve coherently and smoothly in India. Recent research has shown that certain communities which originally adhered to Satpanth did revert to Hinduism. This phenomenon seems to have occurred in the case of the Kamad or Kamadiyya of Rajasthan, for instance, the untouchable worshippers of a deified saint known as Ramdev Pir (Khan 1997: 29–168). Removed from the religious centres of Satpanth in Sind, and perhaps originally converted superficially, the Kamad experienced a complex process of 're-Hinduisation', redefining and shifting their identity. In the event, they completely forgot their Satpanth heritage, while their devotional poems are permeated with Ismaili references. As a different case of shifting identities, we may reiterate that many isolated Persian groups dissimulating as Twelver Shi'is eventually became fully assimilated into the predominantly Twelver religious community of Safawid and post-Safawid Persia. For those groups, as well as for the Muhammad-Shahi Nizaris of India, dissimulation under

the Twelver exterior guise eventually led to the internalisation of that guise and a complete loss of their Ismaili identity.

Meanwhile, the Nizari imams themselves had continued to dissimulate variously in post-Safawid Persia as Twelver Shi'is. It was under such circumstances that the forty-sixth Nizari imam, Hasan 'Ali Shah (1804-81), who had received the honorific title of the Agha Khan (Aga Khan), meaning lord and master, from the Qajar monarch of Persia, settled permanently in Bombay in 1848, after earlier military conflicts with the Qajar establishment. The Nizari Ismaili imamate had now been transferred, after some seven centuries, from Persia to India. The Nizari imam, who had mainly dissimulated as a Twelver Shi'i in Persia, asserted his authority over the Khoja community with some difficulty. Satpanth Ismailism, as noted, was influenced by Hindu elements, whilst the Khojas had also dissimulated variously as Sunnis or Twelver Shi'is. In the settlement of their legal affairs too, the Khojas, like some other Muslim groups in India, had often resorted to Hindu customs rather than the provisions of Islamic law. These factors had not been particularly conducive to the articulation of a strong and distinct sense of Ismaili religious identity. In fact, dissident Khoja groups appeared periodically during the nineteenth century, claiming Sunni or Twelver Shi'i heritage and identity for their community. They even brought such claims before the Bombay High Court for adjudication. It was under such circumstances that the Agha Khan launched a widespread campaign for defining and delineating the specific religious identity of his Khoja followers. And in 1866, the Bombay High Court legally recognised the status of the Nizari Khojas as a community of 'Shia Imami Ismailis' (Fyze 1965: 504-49; Shodan 1999: 82-116). Nevertheless, groups of dissenting Khojas seceded periodically and joined mainly the Ithna'ashari Khojas of India and East Africa.

Building on the court decisions in Bombay and the work of his grandfather, the forty-eighth Nizari imam, Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III (1877-957), also devoted much energy to delineating the Nizari Khojas from those Khojas who had preferred to be Sunnis or Ithna'asharis, also separating his followers in Persia from the Twelvers there. By the early decades of the twentieth century, as a result of their *taqiyya* heritage, the Persian Nizaris normally observed their religious rituals mainly in the fashion of, and in company with, the Twelver Shi'is, with detrimental consequences in terms of their identity. It was in 1908 that a suit was filed against Aga Khan III in the Bombay High Court by certain members of his own family led by a cousin, Hajji Bibi. The litigants argued that all along they had been of the Twelver Shi'i persuasion, once again attesting to the damaging long-term consequences of the Nizaris' *taqiyya* practices. In the aftermath of the Hajji Bibi Case the Nizari imam asked his Persian followers to

set themselves apart from the Twelvers, reaffirming their own identity as a separate religious community like the Nizari Khojas of South Asia. For instance, the Nizaris now began to recite the entire list of the imams of the Qasim-Shahi Nizari line at the end of their daily prayers. Furthermore, they were required to observe only those religious prescriptions that were directly issued by their living imam (Daftary 2007: 480–96).

Subsequently, Aga Khan III promulgated constitutions which effectively represented the personal law of his community. The constitutions, which were revised periodically, revolved around the person of the Nizari imam, also articulating the Nizari beliefs and practices. Aga Khan III, who pioneered numerous reforms in his community in the areas of education and female emancipation, kept in direct contact with his followers and also guided them through his *farmans* or written directives. The modernising work of Aga Khan III was continued by his grandson and successor, Karim Aga Khan IV, the present imam, who in 1986 promulgated a universal constitution for all Nizaris scattered throughout some thirty countries as religious minorities. While sharpening the specific identity of the Nizaris, Aga Khan IV also allowed for diversity in the expression of the cultural, literary and ritualistic traditions of his followers in different regions. However, the figure of the imam, as the religious and administrative head of the community, has remained central to all the Nizari constitutions and reforms. The fact that the Nizaris have emerged as a progressive Shi'i community with a distinct religious identity, despite their centuries-old *taqiyya* practices under different guises, attests to the foresight and successful policies of the Nizari Ismaili imams of modern times.

## Saladin's Pious Foundations in Damascus: Some New Hypotheses

*Anne-Marie Eddé*

All his life, Saladin had a particular affection for Damascus. It was there that he spent much of his youth and embarked on his political career under the guidance of his father, his uncle and his master Nur al-Din. It was in that city that he liked to live between military campaigns and finally it was there that he died in 589/1193. As Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad said of him, 'He loved this city and preferred residence there over all other places' (Ibn Shaddad 1964: 241, 2001: 237). The Syrian capital in its turn wished to pay tribute to Saladin and to celebrate the decisive role he played in the history of the city, by erecting an imposing statue of the sultan below the walls of the citadel (Hillenbrand 1999: 595-600). Today, his mausoleum, situated to the north of the Umayyad Mosque, still attracts very large numbers of visitors.

The buildings constructed by Saladin in Damascus reflect the principal directions of his political thinking. In the military sphere he strengthened the city's defences with the reconstruction of one of the towers of the citadel in 574/1178 and, in Safar 589/February 1193, he restored the western gate in the ramparts known as Bab al-Jabiya. He also reopened an earlier gate situated to the south of the citadel, renaming it the Gate of Victory (Bab al-Nasr). In the religious sphere the sultan had work done on the Umayyad Mosque where the Dome of the Eagle over the central nave was restored, the marble cladding of some of the pillars was entirely renewed and the Shafi'ite *zawiya* inside the mosque was endowed with new waqfs.<sup>1</sup> The completion of a Maliki madrasa founded by Nur al-Din near the al-Nuri hospital and the restoration of a madrasa called al-Kallasa, after the name of the district where it was located, to the north of the Umayyad Mosque, are also attributed to him. Founded by Nur al-Din in 555/1160, the al-Kallasa madrasa had been destroyed in a fire in 570/1174, at the same time as the neighbouring Minaret of the Fiancée which was adjacent to it. Saladin improved its water supply, and he re-installed an imam



there to lead the prayer and a *zawiya* for the teaching of Shafi'ite law. Lastly, the house in which he lived when he was still only the head of the police in Damascus was converted into a Sufi establishment known henceforward under the name of Khanqah al-Nasiriyya. It is not known, however, if this change took place during his reign or after his death.<sup>2</sup>

These constructions were not, of course, on the same scale as those that he undertook in Cairo and Jerusalem. In fact, in the Egyptian capital, Saladin restored the Great Mosque of 'Amr, he built a vast wall and an imposing citadel, and he personally established five madrasas, a hospital and a *khanqah*. Jerusalem was also the object of his full attention; there he restored the city wall, the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and established a madrasa, a *khanqah*, a *zawiya*, a Qur'anic school and a hospital.<sup>3</sup> That Saladin should devote a large part of his energies to Cairo and Jerusalem is in no way surprising. Damascus and Aleppo had just enjoyed twenty or thirty years of rule by Nur al-Din, who had constructed a large number of religious buildings in all his territories. Cairo and Jerusalem, on the other hand, after two centuries of Fatimid rule and eighty eight years of Frankish occupation respectively, figured amongst the most glorious conquests of Saladin, who wished to transform them radically and to endow them with the Sunni institutions they lacked. Nevertheless, the works he carried out in Damascus were no less important and if in this modest tribute to Carole Hillenbrand – who has so brilliantly described the role of the foundations set up by Saladin and his successors in the political ideology of their day – I have chosen to concentrate on two monuments built or restored by Saladin in the Syrian capital, it is because it seems to me that they deserve closer scrutiny and the putting forward of some new ideas. I wish to speak here of the two madrasas, the establishing of which is generally attributed to Nur al-Din and whose restoration or completion is attributed to Saladin: they are the al-Kallasa madrasa and the Malikite madrasa.

In the first case the question I ask myself concerns the nature and function of al-Kallasa. Was it a madrasa at the end of the twelfth century – as has always been assumed until now – or was it simply an annexe of the Umayyad Mosque? The many historians and art historians who have studied the monuments of Nur al-din and Saladin in Damascus have always said that al-Kallasa was a Shafi'ite madrasa established by Nur al-Din in 555/1160 and restored by Saladin in 575/1179–80. Nothing remains of it today, but a few vestiges of it were still in existence in 1945 (the pool and some columns); this made it possible to establish its precise position near Saladin's tomb to the north of the Great Mosque, which could be reached through a communicating door.

In a pioneering study of the medieval topography of Damascus published in the *Journal Asiatique*, H. Sauvaire translated the 'Description of Damascus' by 'Abd al-Basit al-'Almawi (d. 981/1573). This work is a summary of the well-known book by al-Nu'aymi (d. 927/1521). Al-Nu'aymi (1948-51: vol. 1, 447-51) and al-'Almawi (Sauvaire 1894-96: vol. 3, 439-40, 496 n. 320) both devote an entry to what they call the 'al-Kallasa madrasa'. Thereafter it seemed natural to accept it as such. K. A. C. Creswell (1922: 27), M. Kurd 'Ali, (1924-8: vol. 6, 86-7), J. Sauvaget (1944-5: 216), N. Elisséeff (1949-51: 22, 1967: 924), G. Le Strange (1965: 247), L. Pouzet (1988: 68 n. 262, 170), D. Sack (1989: n. 1/18) and more recently L. Korn (1998: 218, 2004b: 79) have all classified it among the madrasas of Damascus.

But a closer look would seem to me to suggest that, originally at least, its function was different. If our sixteenth-century authors, al-Nu'aymi and al-'Almawi, leave no room for doubt that, in their time, this building was considered to be a madrasa, earlier sources – particularly those of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – give us a very different picture. Ibn 'Asakir (d. 572/1176) does not speak about it in his important topographical description of Damascus, but the Andalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr, who stayed in Damascus in 580/1184, gives a very detailed account of this building, which he includes in his description of the Umayyad Mosque:

On the north side of the court is a massive gateway giving on to a large oratory. In the middle of this is a court with a large round marble basin into which water continuously plays from a white, octagonal, marble bowl set in the middle of the basin on the top of a tubed column up which the water rises. This place is called al-Kallasa (the Lime-Kiln), and there today prays our companion, the jurispudent, ascetic, and traditionalist Abu Ja'far al-Fanaki of Cordova. In great numbers men come to follow him in prayers, to receive his benedictions, and to hear his fine voice.<sup>4</sup>

As we see, the term used by Ibn Jubayr is the one for an 'oratory' (*masjid*) and not for a madrasa. Al-Kallasa is described as an annexe of the Great Mosque with which it communicates and its function clearly appears to be a place to which people came to pray behind an imam. 'Izz al-Din Ibn Shaddad (d. 684/1285) says precisely that in his detailed topographical description of Damascus:

The martyr Nur al-Din – may God have mercy on him – built al-Kallasa in 555/1160. Al-Kallasa and the minaret called the Minaret of the Fiancée burned down in Muharram 570/August 1174. Al-Kallasa had this name because it was situated in the place where lime (*kils*) was made at the time when the Great Mosque was being built. It was set up as an annexe (*ziyada*)

when the Great Mosque grew too small to contain all the people. The north wall [of the Great Mosque] was also restored.<sup>5</sup>

It is true that, a little further on in his description, Ibn Shaddad also calls al-Kallasa a 'Shafi'ite madrasa', but he always locates it within the Great Mosque, just as he calls the Malikite *zawiya* in this same mosque a 'madrasa'. Elsewhere, he also speaks of a '*zawiya* al-Salahiyya at al-Kallasa' where the Shafi'ites Shams al-Din al-Kurdi al-A'raj and then Majd al-Din 'Abdullah b. al-Husayn al-Irbili al-Kurdi (d. 677/1279)<sup>6</sup> taught in the thirteenth century. Let us note finally that in his writings, he sometimes uses the words 'madrasa al-Ghazaliyya' and sometimes '*zawiya* Ghazaliyya' to indicate the place in the Great Mosque where the famous thinker al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111)<sup>7</sup> had taught. These examples show clearly that, at the time of Ibn Shaddad, the name 'madrasa' was sometimes given to something which was only a 'corner' (*zawiya*) set aside in the Great Mosque for the teaching of law, the Qur'an and the *hadiths*. Likewise, the term *halqa* was used to refer to a teaching 'circle' in the Great Mosque for the teaching of the Qur'an or the religious sciences. Ibn Shaddad mentions twenty-two teaching areas in the Great Mosque, variously called *halqa*, madrasa or *zawiya*. To these could be added, according to him, 120 circles where the Qur'an was read. In his view, al-Kallasa, called both *zawiya* and madrasa, was considered to be an integral part of the Great Mosque.

Ibn Khallikan (d. 681/1282), who was the Grand Qadi of Damascus, is also very clear about the function of al-Kallasa. In the biographical note on the Shafi'ite jurist Ibn Abi al-Saqr al-Wasiti (d. 498/1105), he writes:

I saw, at Damascus, in the Ashrafiyya library, the *diwan* of his poetical works, which collection is preserved in the mausoleum erected over the tomb of al-Malik al-Ashraf. It is situated to the north of the (edifice erected as an) addition to the Great Mosque and called al-Kallasa.<sup>8</sup>

The other Arabic sources of this period do not say more about 'madrasa al-Kallasa'. Most often, the name 'al-Kallasa' is used to refer to the district situated to the north of the Great Mosque or to recall the 'imams' of al-Kallasa, that is the religious shaykhs given the task of leading the prayer in a mosque. The imams of al-Kallasa were generally very pious men, better versed in the *hadith* than in law. Thus Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad, Saladin's biographer, says that Shaykh Abu Ja'far Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Qurtubi (d. 596/1200), the imam at al-Kallasa, was called to Saladin's bedside in the citadel of Damascus as he lay dying so that he could help him recite his last prayers and to recite lines of the Qur'an to him.<sup>9</sup> His sons, Abu al-Husayn Isma'il (d. 631/1233-34) and

then Taj al-Din Abu al-Hasan Muhammad, held this office after him.<sup>10</sup> A Hanbalite, Diya' al-Din Muhammad Abu 'Abdullah al-Maqdisi al-Dimashqi (d. 643/1245-6), then succeeded Taj al-Din (al-Dhahabi 1981-8: vol. 23, 126). The post of imam at al-Kallasa then passed to a family of Shafi'ite shaykhs originating from Armenia: Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Khilati (d. 671/1273), followed by his two sons, 'Uthman (d. 702/1302-3) and Muhammad Shams al-Din (d. 706/1307); a few months before his death, the latter was made preacher (*khatib*) of the Great Mosque.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, al-Kallasa is almost always mentioned in the narrow context of the Great Mosque. Ibn Kathir says that, in 728/1327-8, the locations where the prayer took place, facing the *qibla* wall of the Great Mosque, were reapportioned among the imams of the different schools of law. The 'new *mihrab*' was assigned to the Hanafite imam, the *mihrab* of the Companions to the Malikite imam, and the *mihrab* of the *maqsurat* al-Khidr, before which Malikites had formerly prayed, was assigned to the Hanbalites. The fourth imam – no doubt Shafi'ite – who formerly led the prayer in front of the *mihrab* of the Companions, henceforth established himself at al-Kallasa<sup>12</sup> (Ibn Kathir 1998-2001: vol. 9, 386). Similarly, it is when he is listing the imams of the Great Mosque that Ibn Battuta, visiting Damascus in the first half of the fourteenth century, speaks of the al-Kallasa imam:

The imams in this mosque: The officiating imams are thirteen in number. The first of them [to perform the prayers] is the imam of the Shafi'ites . . . When the imam of the Shafi'ites gives the salutation at the end of his prayers, the imam of the sanctuary of 'Ali begins the prayers; after him follow in succession the imam of the sanctuary of al-Husayn, the imam of al-Kallasa, the imam of the sanctuary of Abu Bakr, the imam of the sanctuary of 'Uthman – God be pleased with them all – the imam of the Malikites . . .<sup>13</sup>

Al-Safadi (d. 764/1363), who lived much of his life in Damascus, when recalling the biography of Yahya b. Ahmad al-Khilati (d. 720/1320-1), who succeeded his brother as imam of al-Kallasa in 706/1307, says that he was 'imam of al-Kallasa in the Mosque of the Umayyads' (al-Safadi, 1997-8: vol. 5, 546). Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852/1449) goes so far as to speak of the 'al-Kallasa Great Mosque' (*jami*); this is going too far but can no doubt be explained by its inclusion within the Umayyad mosque in Damascus.<sup>14</sup> In the sixteenth century, al-Nu'aymi himself, who lists this building among the madrasas, repeats Ibn Shaddad's comments about its role as an annexe of the Great Mosque. He also quotes Ibn Kathir (1998-2001: vol. 9, 191) who speaks of 'the *zawiya* al-Kallasa in the Great Mosque at Damascus'.<sup>15</sup>

So the building constructed to the north of the Great Mosque by Nur al-Din, destroyed by a fire and then restored by Saladin, was not a madrasa but a prayer hall linked to the Great Mosque by one of its northern doors. In front of the prayer hall, a courtyard housed in its centre a pool which was used for the ablutions of the faithful (al-Dhahabi 1988a: 305). Very quickly, however, shaykhs established teaching circles there, just as they were doing within the Great Mosque. In the thirteenth century, important figures such as Kamal al-Din Abu Muhammad Ibn al-Harastani (d. 624/1226-7), Shams al-Din b. 'Abd al-Kafi al-Siqilli al-Dimashqi (d. 649/1251-2) and the Qadi Baha' al-Din b. al-Zaki (d. 685/1287) taught there (al-Nu'aymi 1948-51: vol. 1, 167, 189, 222). But it took some time for the name 'al-Kallasa madrasa' to become established, and it was not until the sixteenth century that it was commonly used by authors such as al-Nu'aymi and al-'Almawi.<sup>16</sup> Damascene scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as al-Muhibbi (d. 1111/1699) and al-Muradi (d. 1206/1791) used it in their turn<sup>17</sup> and twentieth-century historians followed suit, proposing that al-Kallasa had been a madrasa since its foundation. K. Wulzinger and C. Watzinger (1924: 79), in their famous work on the monuments and topography of Damascus in the Islamic period, were the only scholars to speak of the 'al-Kallasa mosque, perhaps burned down in 570/1174-5', but without giving any further details. We are also indebted to them for the first detailed plan of the medieval district of al-Kallasa.<sup>18</sup>

The other question relating to the juridical-religious institutions in Damascus in the late twelfth century that I should like to ask concerns the founder of the Malikite madrasa erected near the hospital of Nur al-Din. Should this be seen as the work of Nur al-Din or of Saladin? The answer is of some importance, since such a foundation is an indicator of the interest shown by one or other of these two rulers in this Damascene *madhhab*, alongside the two majority Shafi'ite and Hanafite schools.

Unfortunately, Ibn 'Asakir does not describe the madrasas in his work on Damascus but, while speaking of the mosques, he says that there was one in the Nuriyya madrasa that Nur al-Din designated as a waqf for the Malikites, situated at the Stone of Gold (*hajar al-dhahab*).<sup>19</sup> This remark was subsequently repeated by Ibn Shaddad (1956: 123-4) and by al-Nu'aymi (1948-51: vol. 2, 335) in their list of the mosques of Damascus. On the other hand, the evidence of Ibn Jubayr (1184) is of particular interest since, being a Malikite himself, he assembled precise information on the situation of this school of law in the areas through which he passed. He does not point out any Malikite madrasa in Damascus, but he lays emphasis on the *zawiya* founded, according to him, by Nur al-Din in the Great Mosque:

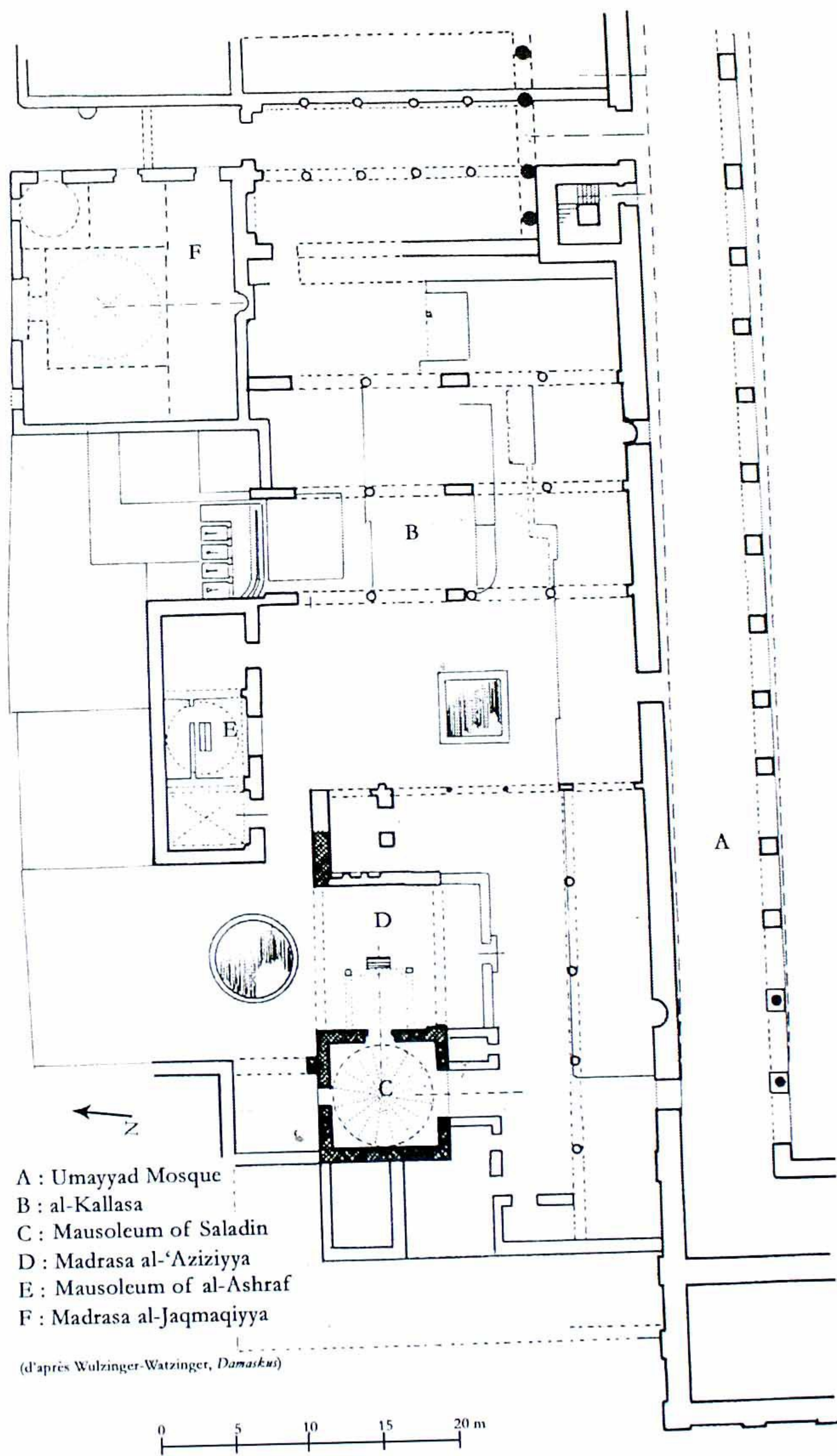


Figure 5.1 Map of al-Kallasa.

Amongst the merits of Nur al-Din – may God's mercy rest upon his soul – was his assigning to the strangers from the Maghrib who were employed in the Malikiite *zawiya* of the blessed cathedral mosque many pious endowments including two mills, seven gardens, arable lands, a bath, and two shops in the perfumers' market . . . Nur al-Din – may God's mercy rest upon his soul – showed much favour towards these people. May God reward him for the good he did.<sup>20</sup>

Although he had recopied Ibn 'Asakir's reference to the Nur al-Din madrasa in the Stone of Gold quarter, for some unknown reason 'Izz al-Din Ibn Shaddad says nothing about it in his description of the madrasas of Damascus. Instead, he attributes the only two twelfth-century Malikiite teaching establishments to Saladin: the *zawiya* in the Great Mosque and a madrasa situated 'near the hospital of Nur al-Din'.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Ibn Shaddad mentions two madrasas in the quarter of the hospital of Nur al-Din: one, Shafi'ite, was allegedly built by Nur al-Din and erroneously called al-Salahiyya; and the other, Malikiite, the name of which he does not give, allegedly founded by Saladin.<sup>22</sup>

His contemporary Ibn Khallikan appears to confirm his statements when he writes that, even though it bears his name, the Salahdiyya was not endowed with waqfs by Saladin – in other words, it was not founded by him – whereas a Malikiite madrasa was certainly founded by him:

It is remarkable that the madrasa attributed to him in Damascus, near the hospital of Nur al-Din, is called the Salahdiyya after him, though it is without an endowment, and that his Malikiite madrasa, in the same city, does not bear his name.<sup>23</sup>

In the fourteenth century an interesting story that has remained relatively neglected until now is provided by the historian al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348). According to him, in the year 554/1159, a Malikiite jurist of Maghribi origin called Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab b. 'Isa al-Yashkuri died. He had succeeded as leader of his community Yusuf al-Fandalawi, a prominent figure of Damascene Malikiism under the Burids, who had died in 1148 fighting the Franks of the Second Crusade:<sup>24</sup>

When al-Fandalawi was killed – God be merciful to him – Abu Muhammad held meetings in the Malikiite circle (*halqa*) in Damascus. Then the sultan Nur al-Din built the House of the Golden Stone near the hospital (*al-maristan*) and made it into a madrasa. He entrusted the task of teaching there to him.<sup>25</sup>

The existence of this 'Malikite circle', which, as can be seen, was not connected with one particular teacher, but which was certainly devoted to the study of Malikite *fiqh*, seems also to have been mentioned by Ibn 'Asakir in one of his biographical notices.<sup>26</sup> Its initial starting place is not specified, but there is a strong possibility that it was situated in the Great Mosque, a forerunner of the *zawiya* described by Ibn Jubayr. In addition to this *halqa*, it is interesting to note that al-Dhahabi also confirms here – independently of Ibn 'Asakir's tradition – the existence of a Malikite madrasa founded by Nur al-Din in the Stone of Gold quarter. Just as interesting is the precise locating of it 'near the hospital'. We shall return to this.

The Maghribi traveller Ibn Battuta, passing through Damascus in the first half of the fourteenth century, speaks of three Malikite madrasas in his account, two of which were built after the reign of Saladin. He attributes the third to Nur al-Din (al-Nuriyya), without saying where it is, and does not mention any Malikite madrasa founded by Saladin.<sup>27</sup>

Al-Nu'aymi reproduces Ibn Shaddad's remarks about the *zawiya* in the Great Mosque and the two madrasas (one Shafi'ite, one Malikite) situated in the district of the Nur al-Din hospital, whilst giving the name al-Salahiyya to the Malikite madrasa, which Ibn Shaddad had not named. He also says that he has read from the pen of Ibn Qadi Shuhba (d. 851/1448) that this Malikite madrasa was called Nuriyya.<sup>28</sup>

Most modern historians have concluded from this confused and contradictory evidence that there was only one madrasa, founded by Nur al-Din and no doubt completed by Saladin, situated near the Nur al-Din hospital and known sometimes as Nuriyya and sometimes Salahiyya, sometimes attributed to the Shafi'ites and sometimes to the Malikites.<sup>29</sup> It seems to me, however, that other theories might be envisaged here, as shown in Table 5.1 which summarises the evidence of the main sources on the foundation of the Malikite madrasa.<sup>30</sup>

The foundation of a madrasa by Nur al-Din in the Stone of Gold quarter is thus confirmed by two independent traditions: that of Ibn 'Asakir, taken up by Ibn Shaddad and then al-Nu'aymi; and that of al-Dhahabi. With such evidence, it seems to me that it is difficult to raise doubts about it again. There still remains the problem of the extent of the Stone of Gold quarter. Is it possible to extend it, as the majority of historians have done, as far as the al-Nuri hospital, so as to argue that the madrasa mentioned by Ibn Shaddad, Ibn Qadi Shuhba and al-Nu'aymi near the hospital of Nur al-Din is none other than the one in the Stone of Gold? If we follow al-Dhahabi ('the House of the Stone of Gold near the hospital'), one would be tempted to do so. But al-Dhahabi does not say which hospital is under discussion. The hospital of Nur al-Din is generally referred to by Arab authors as the 'maristan al-Nuri'. We know, on the other hand, that



**Table 5.1** *Foundation and location of the Malikite madrasa.*

	Stone of Gold (hajar al-dhahab)	Al-Nuri Hospital	The Great Mosque	Location not given
Ibn 'Asakir	Nur al-Din			
Ibn Jubayr	↓		Nur al-Din	
Ibn Shaddad	Nur al-Din	Saladin	Saladin	
Ibn Khallikan	↓	↓	↓	Saladin
Al-Dhahabi	Nur al-Din			
Ibn Battuta	↓			Nur al-Din
Ibn Qadi Shuhba	↓	Nur al-Din	↓	
Al-Nu'aymi	Nur al-Din	Saladin	Saladin	

there was an older hospital in Damascus, situated just at the south-west corner of the Great Mosque.<sup>31</sup> I would therefore incline to the view that al-Dhahabi is alluding to this older hospital, not to that of Nur al-Din.

The information given in the medieval sources mentioning the Stone of Gold quarter makes it possible to trace the broad outlines of it and confirms this first impression. Viewed since the Umayyad period as a residential district with some very beautiful houses, this quarter is always situated in the north-west corner of Damascus, extending from Bab al-Hadid, on the site of the present-day north gate of the citadel, to the Bab al-Barid district, along the western wall of the Great Mosque. Thus Ibn al-Qalanisi describes the fire which took hold of this north-western part of the city to which there was access through the Bab al-Hadid during the fighting in 363/974 between the local militia and the Fatimid army.<sup>32</sup> Ibn 'Asakir (1959: 238–9, 1995–2001: vol. 2, 364) and Ibn Kathir (1998–2001: vol. 5, 759) both locate the house of the famous emir al-Dahhak b. Qays al-Fihri (d. 64/684) in the Stone of Gold quarter, 'very close to the wall', according to the former, and 'in the area that runs along the al-Barada river', according to the latter. In his biographical notice on Sahl b. 'Amr b. 'Adi al-Ansari (d. between 41/661 and 60/680), al-Safadi says that the latter 'lived in the Stone of Gold quarter in the part that runs along the rampart' (1982: 7). Ibn Shakir al-Kutubi (d. 764/1363) also says that the palace of the Thaqafites (Qasr al-Thaqafiyyin) was situated in the Stone of Gold quarter 'within the Bab al-Faraj', this being a gate of the rampart opened by Nur al-Din to the north-east of the citadel.<sup>33</sup> Lastly, al-Nu'aymi places a madrasa called al-'Asruniyya 'within the Bab al-Faraj and Bab al-Nasr,<sup>34</sup> to the east of the citadel and to the west of the Great Mosque, in the Stone of Gold quarter'. It would appear then that this quarter had boundaries that were clearly defined to the

north by the wall, to the west by the citadel and to the east by the Great Mosque. Its southern boundary is more difficult to determine precisely, but it seems unlikely that it would have extended as far as the district of the Nur al-Din hospital situated further to the south.<sup>35</sup> Only one source, as far as I have found, states that the Nur al-Din hospital was in the Stone of Gold quarter. In any case this source is al-Muhibbi (d. 1111/1699), a later writer and one who may have misunderstood al-Dhahabi's comment and whose testimony cannot be enough to contradict all the others.

It seems to me that Saladin's Malikite madrasa mentioned by Ibn Shaddad and al-Nu'aymi in the district of the Nur al-Din hospital was different from the one founded by Nur al-Din in the Stone of Gold quarter. Since the foundation of a Malikite madrasa by Saladin in Damascus has also been confirmed by Ibn Khallikan in a second tradition, I do not think that this can be questioned again. In the case of the *zawiya* in the Great Mosque, the two pieces of evidence available to us, Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Shaddad, do not agree. Nevertheless, it seems difficult not to follow the evidence of Ibn Jubayr, a particularly acute observer of the situation of the Malikites no more than ten years after the death of Nur al-Din. Besides, the latter had already established a Malikite *zawiya* in the Great Mosque at Aleppo.<sup>36</sup> Even if the Andalusian traveller's silence about the Stone of Gold Malikite madrasa founded by Nur al-Din may seem surprising, it cannot call into question his description of the *zawiya* at the Great Mosque. His omission of Saladin's madrasa could be explained if it was not established until after 1184.

Finally, there is no reason to think that al-Salahiyya, the Shafi'ite madrasa mentioned by Ibn Khallikan, Ibn Shaddad and al-Nu'aymi and attributed by the two latter authors to Nur al-Din, did not exist. Near the al-Nuri hospital, therefore, there must have been not one but two madrasas, one for the Shafi'ites founded by Nur al-Din (incorrectly named al-Salahiyya) and the other for the Malikites founded by Saladin.

At the time of Saladin's death, it would thus seem that the Malikites in Damascus had at their disposal a *zawiya* established by Nur al-Din in the Great Mosque, a madrasa also founded by Nur al-Din in the Stone of Gold quarter, to the west of the Mosque, and another madrasa founded by Saladin near the al-Nuri hospital, a little further to the south. It is difficult to establish which of these three places of learning is the one referred to by Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century. But the fact that Saladin's Malikite madrasa did not immediately bear his name, that it was situated near the hospital of Nur al-Din, and that the latter had himself established a Shafi'ite madrasa near his hospital as well as a Malikite madrasa close to the old hospital is certainly at the

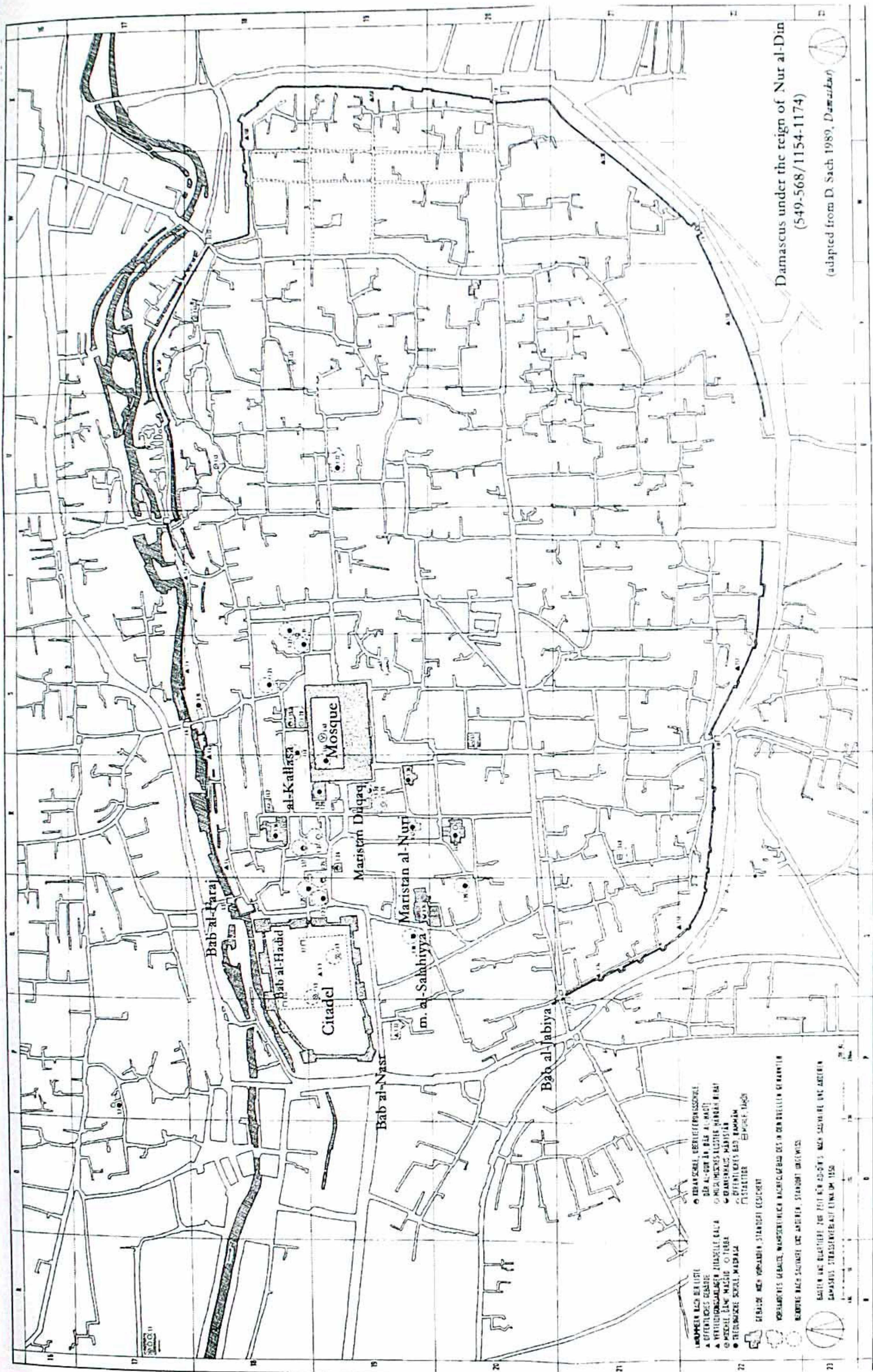


Figure 5.2 Map of Damascus. From D. Sack, Dimashq (2005). Institut Français du Proche-Orient.

root of the confusions between these foundations from the fourteenth century onwards.

While it is almost certain that al-Kallasa was established as an annexe of the Great Mosque, there are perhaps fewer pieces of irrefutable evidence to confirm that there were in fact two Malikite madrasas in Damascus, one founded by Nur al-Din and the other by Saladin. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this hypothesis is much more satisfactory than one which consists of saying that there was only a single madrasa, sometimes attributed to Saladin and sometimes to Nur al-Din, Shafi'ite according to some people, Malikite according to others. These few remarks do not fundamentally alter the view of the religious policies of these two rulers which has prevailed until nowadays, but they support the view that Saladin took as much interest in the Malikites of Damascus as his predecessor had done. He also established a Malikite madrasa (al-Qamhiyya) in Fustat, the old city of Cairo, on the site of an old covered yarn market (Dar al-Ghazl).<sup>37</sup> There is no doubt that it is this favourable treatment, which the Malikites enjoyed during his reign, both in Egypt and in Syria, that earned him the admiration of Ibn Jubayr:

Between Misr and Cairo is the Great Mosque which takes its name from Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Tulun. It is one of the old congregational mosques, of elegant architecture, and of large proportions. The Sultan made it a retreat for the strangers from the Maghrib, where they might live and receive lectures; and for their support he granted a monthly allowance. A curious thing, told us by one of their prominent men, was that the Sultan had entrusted to them their own management, and allows no other hand over them . . . They live in peace and satisfaction, devoted exclusively to the worship of their Lord, and finding, in the favour of the Sultan, the greatest help to the good on whose path they are set.<sup>38</sup>

## Notes

1. Known as the *zāwiya* al-Ghazāliyya (because al-Ghazālī taught there) or the *zāwiya* of sheikh Naṣr al-Maḡdīsī (d. 490/1097), it was located beneath the north portico of the Great Mosque. Saladin assigned to it the rents from a village in Hawran and entrusted the administration of the waqf to the jurist Quṭb al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī. See Abū Shāma 1871-5: vol. 1, 263; Ibn Shaddād 1956: 246; Elisséeff 1967: 919.
2. For all these buildings, see *RCEA*: vol. 9, no. 3335, 3343, 3344; al-Nu'aymī 1948-51: vol. 1, 447-51, vol. 2, 10, 178; Ibn Shaddād 1956: 76-7, 84, 193, 248; Ibn 'Asākir 1959: 300, n. 4; Chevedden 1986: 148-9; Sack 1989: no. 2/16; Korn 2004a: vol. 2, 106, 112.
3. MacKenzie 1992; Korn 1998: 212-16, 222-5, 2004b: 76-80; Frenkel 1999: 1-20; Barrucand 2005: 261-3.

4. Ibn Jubayr 1907: 267, 1949-65: 308, 1952: 278. 'Abd al-Latīf (1810: 417) says that the building called al-Kallāsa was swallowed up by the earthquake of 598/1202. It must have been rebuilt subsequently. See also al-Maqrīzī 1837-42: vol. 2, 287.
5. Ibn Shaddād 1956: 76. This Ibn Shaddād should not be confused with his homonym, the biographer of Saladin, Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1234).
6. For the latter, see Ibn al-'Imād 1986-95: vol. 7, 624.
7. Ibn Shaddād 1956: 84, 246-8.
8. Ibn Khallikān 1843-71: vol. 3, 148, 1968-72: vol. 4, 450.
9. Ibn Shaddād 1964: 246, 2001: 243; al-Dhahabī 1997: 230-31.
10. Al-Dhahabī 1988b: 41, 1998: 202; Ibn al-'Adīm 1988: vol. 10, 4442, 4504, 4629.
11. Al-Yūnīnī 1951-61: vol. 3, 11; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī 1966: vol. 3, 49, 424; Ibn al-'Imād 1986-95: vol. 8, 27; al-Ṣafadī: 1997-8: vol. 4, 234, 544; Ibn Kathīr 1998-2001: 286, 291.
12. The *mihrāb* of the Companions, the oldest, was in the eastern part of the mosque. The *maqṣūrat al-Khidr* was situated to the west of the mosque. See Ibn Jubayr 1907: 365, 1949-65: 305-6, 1952: 276; Ibn Shaddād 1956: 248; Ibn 'Asākir 1959: 68 n. 2.
13. Abū Shāma 1871-5: vol. 1, 18; Ibn Battūṭa 1958-94: vol. 3, 132.
14. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī 1966: vol. 3, 49.
15. Al-Nu'aymī 1948-51: vol. 1, 238, 412, 447-51.
16. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba generally calls it 'al Kallāsa'. He also speaks of a '*halqa* al-Kallāsa' and, quoting Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363), of a '*mihrāb* of al-Kallāsa' (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba 1977-97: vol. 2, 210, 611 and index). Al-Kutubī nevertheless began to include al-Kallāsa among the madrasas of Damascus (Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī 1980-4: vol. 20, 226, vol. 21, 387).
17. Al-Muḥibbī n.d.: vol. 1, 111, vol. 2, 97; al-Murādī 1874-84: vol. 2, 99, vol. 3, 30, vol. 4, 116.
18. See Fig. 5.1 and Wulzinger and Watzinger 1924: 63-5.
19. Ibn 'Asākir 1959: 137, 1995-2001: vol. 1, 307.
20. Ibn Jubayr 1907: 285, 1949-65: 332 (see also 314), 1952: 298.
21. Ibn Shaddād 1956: 253-4. The third teaching establishment mentioned, the madrasa of Nūr al-Dawla al-Sharābīshī, was not built until the thirteenth century.
22. Ibn Shaddād 1956: 245, 253-4. Ibn Shaddād does not give the name of the Maliki madrasa founded by Saladin. The name 'al-Ṣalāḥiyya' was added by the editor according to al-Nu'aymī 1948-51: vol. 2, 10.
23. Ibn Khallikān 1843-71: vol. 4, 548, 1968-72: vol. 7, 207. The Arabic phrase '*lahu bi-Dimashq*' is ambiguous; I have chosen to translate it as 'attributed to him' rather than 'founded by him' in order to make more sense of the sentence.
24. Mouton 1983: 63-75.

25. Al-Dhahabī 1995: 151.
26. See Ibn 'Asākir 1995–2001: vol. 48, 24: biography of 'Īsā b. Hārūn Abū Mūsā al-Maghribī who died in 553/1158; the word before Malikite is not clear in the manuscript but the editor interprets it as *ḥalqa* (n. 2).
27. Ibn Battūta 1958–94: vol. 3, 138.
28. Al-Nu'aymī 1948–51: vol. 1, 331, vol. 2, 3, 10. Kurd 'Alī (1924–8: vol. 6, 80) asserts that there was one madrasa called *al-Ṣalāḥiyya*, near the Nūr al-Dīn hospital, of which he says no trace is left.
29. Yūsuf Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī 1943: 95; Sauvaget 1944–5: 216; Elisséeff 1949–51: 5–43 (particularly 28), 1967: 664, 928; Pouzet 1975: 167–99 (particularly 168 and 189); Korn 1998: 218, 2004a: vol. 2, 112 no. 29.
30. See Table 5.1. The arrows indicate a single textual tradition where the author has copied an older source.
31. Hospital built in 490/1097 by the Seljuk Duqāq in the Bāb al-Barīd quarter. See Elisséeff 1949–51: 19; Sack 1989: no. 1/30.
32. Ibn al-Qalānisī 1908: 6–7, 47; Bianquis 1986–9: vol. 1, 78, 85, 232.
33. He enumerates among the buildings that had disappeared at his time: 'The Golden Stone beside the great hospital and its adjoining buildings; al-Ḥāfiẓ even thinks that the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya was part of it' (Sauvaire 1894–6: vol. 7, 378–9). This Dār al-Ḥadīth dating from 634/1236–7 is known to have been situated to the east of the citadel (Sack 1989: no. 2/29).
34. Al-Nu'aymī 1948–51: vol. 1, 398; Sack 1989: no. 1/25. Bāb al-Naṣr was the gate in the walls reopened by Saladin and situated at the south-west corner of the citadel.
35. See Fig. 5.2. Although Elisséeff extends the Ḥajar al-Dhahab quarter this far, on his plan of Damascus he situates the hospital in the al-Balāṭa district (1949–51: n. 13, 1967: 840).
36. Elisséeff 1949–51: 15, 1967: 917.
37. It was called al-Qamḥiyya (the wheat madrasa) because the four teachers who taught there received wheat sent to them from a village in the Fayyūm. See al-Maqrīzī 1880: vol. 2, 364, 2002–4: vol. IV/2, 455; Denoix 1992: 127; Lev 1999: 125.
38. Ibn Jubayr 1949–65: 56, 1952: 44.

6.

## The Coming of Islam to Bukhara

*Hugh Kennedy*

The Muslim invasions of Iran and Turkistan in the seventh century have been discussed several times in the modern literature (Gibb 1923; Bartold 1968; Daniel 1979; Kennedy 2007). The purpose of this chapter is to attempt to penetrate beyond the political narrative to examine the impact of the Muslim conquest on the topography and social structure of the city. It will consider the geography of Muslim occupation and settlement, the reactions of the local people to the invaders and the impact of the coming of Islam on the topography and built environment of the city.

The course of the military campaigns by which the Arabs achieved control over Bukhara and the rest of Soghdia is fairly well established. Although the Muslims had raided Transoxania from their base at Merv as early as the governorate of Salim b. Ziyad (681–3), they made no permanent conquests until the time of Qutayba b. Muslim (705–15). The exact chronology of the conquest is not clear and it seems as if Qutayba made a number of expeditions to the Bukhara oasis. In 710, he arrived and installed the young Tughshada as Bukhara Khudah, lord of Bukhara, the title held by the kings of the local dynasty. Each time the Muslim armies came to the city, the people made peace and agreed to accept Islamic rule but when the Arab troops left in the winter they reverted to their old ways. The religious position in Bukhara at the time of the Muslim conquests was uncertain. There were certainly Buddhists there and the references to 'idols' suggest that Buddhist images were common. However, there were also Zoroastrian fire temples and it seems as if Zoroastrianism was gradually replacing Buddhism as the major religion. There is no mention of any religious leaders, either Zoroastrian or Buddhist, attempting to oppose the establishment of Islam. In 712–3, Qutayba had established enough control in the city to be able to build a mosque in the old citadel and it can be said that Islam had finally arrived. By 715, when Qutayba was killed

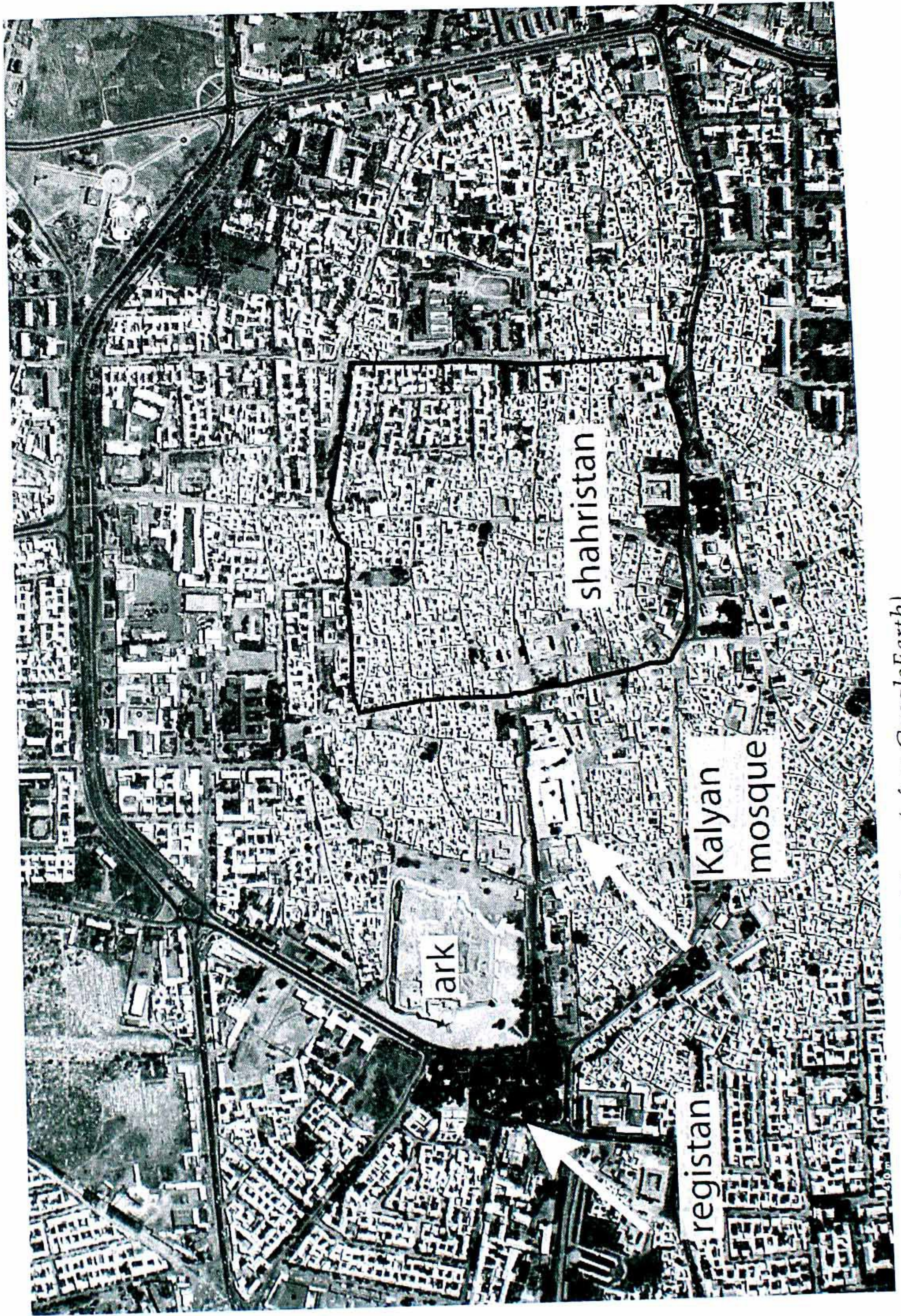


Figure 6.1 The early development of Bukhara (after GoogleEarth).



after his abortive coup against the Umayyads, the city was firmly under Muslim rule and so it remained apart from a short period in 728-9 when it fell to the Turks during the great Turkish counter-thrust against the Arabs and their allies.

The conquest does not seem to have been very violent or destructive. Unlike neighbouring Samarqand, where the existing inhabitants were ordered out of the city entirely, the local population seem to have been allowed to remain as long as they gave up some of their property to house the invaders. This may have been because the Arabs developed fairly good relations with the local prince, the Bukhara Khuda, who was allowed to retain much of his power and status, ruling alongside an Arab governor. We have already seen how Qutayba installed Tughshada as king. He seems to have maintained good relations with the Muslim rulers until he was murdered in the camp of the last Umayyad governor of Khurasan, Nasr b. Sayyar in 739 after ruling, we are told, for thirty two years. The circumstances of his death give some insight into relations between the Bukhara Khuda and the Muslim authorities. Nasr b. Sayyar treated him with respect and requested the hand of his daughter in marriage and Tughshada had given him some estates in the Bukhara area. Tughshada came to visit Nasr in his camp in Samarqand along with the Arab governor Wasil b. 'Amr. When he arrived he found two *dehqans* (nobles) of Bukhara who had converted to Islam at the hands of Nasr. They were complaining that Tughshada had confiscated estates of theirs and that he and the governor were both involved in this injustice. The two were found to have daggers on them and when questioned they explained that they did not trust Tughshada and were armed to protect themselves from him. The daggers were confiscated but they still had knives about their persons. It was Ramadan and Nasr b. Sayyar went to lead the prayers but Tughshada remained seated on his throne because, Narshakhi explains, he was still an unbeliever in secret. After prayers were over, Nasr summoned him to his curtained court (*sarapardeh*) but on his way to meet the governor, he stumbled and one of the *dehqans* seized the opportunity to stab him. His companion did the same to the governor. Further indication that Tughshada's conversion to Islam was at best lukewarm is provided by the fact that he was given Zoroastrian funeral rites. On the other hand, the fact that he called his son and heir Qutayba suggests that he and his family may have formally converted at the hands of Qutayba b. Muslim. The whole incident shows the Bukhara Khuda as an honoured ally of the governor of Khurasan, clearly, a man who had a good, perhaps even conniving, relationship with the Arab governor of the city (Narshakhi 1954: 60-2, 1972: 83-4).

When Qutayba succeeded his father, he continued the tradition and, as we shall see, served as a useful ally of the Abbasids at the time of

the rebellion of Sharik b. Shaykh al-Mahri in 750. However, he was later accused of apostasy by Abu Muslim and executed. The dynasty, however, survived and his brother Bunyat ruled until his untimely death in 782. When in 809–10 al-Ma'mun was rallying support among the nobles of Khurasan in his struggle with his brother al-Amin, the then Bukhara Khudah was one of his main allies. The fact that, at least according to al-Ya'qubi he was called Muhammad b. Khalid, suggests that he was a Muslim (Kennedy 1981: 185; al-Tabari 1991: 49–5, n. 159).

In the late eighth and ninth centuries, the family seems to have retired from Bukhara city to their country estates but it was not until the beginning of the tenth century that the Bukhara Khudahs were deprived of their lands and status by the ruling Samanids. It is perhaps significant that the local dynasty lost its power and status at the same time as the Abbasid caliphs ceased to have any influence in Transoxania: both were replaced by the Samanids.

The survival of the dynasty, often in alliance with the Umayyad and Abbasid governors is in marked contrast with what happened in Samarqand where the local princes fought tooth and nail to resist the invaders and ended up by being driven out of their city. Bukhara Khudahs continued to play an important role in the life of the city and the surrounding oasis.

Bukhara is one of the great historic cities of the Muslim world. One of the reasons for this is that the city has continued to be inhabited, on the same site, since the pre-Islamic period.<sup>1</sup> Of course much had changed and very little of the fabric of the present city, apart from the bulk of the citadel and some elements in its fortifications, date back to this early period. Nonetheless we can establish the basic topography of the early Islamic city and assign names and identities to some of its elements. Again, this is in marked contrast to Samarqand, where the street plan of the interior of the old, pre-Mongol *shahristan* seems to be lost without hope of recovery and the site seems to have been deserted since the thirteenth century. Given the antiquity and importance of urban settlement in Khurasan and Transoxania, it is remarkable that Bukhara is the only important urban site in the entire area where the pre- and early Islamic topography still defines the plan of the modern city. This physical continuity alone makes the city a suitable subject for study.

But there is another reason for choosing Bukhara as a test case for the study of early Islamic urbanism in the Iranian world. This is the survival of an important local history, the *Tarikhi Bukhara* of Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Narshakhi, presented to the Samanid Amir Nuh b. Nasr in 943–4.<sup>2</sup> This was first written in Arabic but the original text has been lost. In 1128–9, the text was translated into Persian by Abu Nasr

Ahmad al-Qubavi because people no longer wanted to read the Arabic. He also added some further details about the Samanid period down to 975. In 1178-9, this Persian text was in turn abridged by Muhammad b. Zufar b. Umar who also made some additions and brought the history down to the twelfth century. There are thus three layers of content and two different languages involved in the text and it must be used with great caution. Some passages are specifically dated but in the case of many others, it is not clear exactly which period of the city's history is being referred to. On the other hand, Narshakhi's original and the subsequent additions provide invaluable information about the topography and built environment of the city by people who lived in it and, as such, it has no parallel among the early local histories of Iran.

Narshakhi's account of Bukhara in the pre-Islamic period makes it clear that the oasis boasted a number of urban centres, of which the city of Bukhara was by no means the oldest or necessarily the most important. Archaeological evidence suggests that the approximate areas of the four largest towns in the oasis in immediately pre-Islamic times were as follows: Bukhara, thirty-five hectares, Paykand, nineteen, Varakhsha, nine, Ramitan, six (Frye 1999). Thus Bukhara city was the largest town but by no means the only urban site in the oasis. Narshakhi points out that some of the sites were considered to be more ancient than Bukhara itself. Paykand, built on rising ground between Bukhara and the river Oxus, was said to be older than Bukhara and that every ruler of the oasis made it his capital (Narshakhi 1954: 18). Ramitan also was older than the city (*shahr*/Bukhara) and in some books it was even called Bukhara (Narshakhi 1954: 17, 1972: 23). In ancient times (*az qadim*) it was the residence of padishahs (the unofficial royal title which Narshakhi gives to the local rulers) but after Bukhara city was founded, they only passed winters here. Narshakhi describes it as having a strong citadel (*kunduz*). Nearby was the village of Ramush, said to have been founded by the mythical Persian shah Kai Khusraw when he besieged the city (Narshakhi 1954: 17, 1972: 23). This seems to have been more of a religious centre. The Magians, according to Narshakhi, said that the fire temple here was older than the fire temples of Bukhara and Biruni adds that it remained a centre of religious festivals for the Zoroastrians in his time (early eleventh century; Biruni 1879: 234).

Varakhsha is also said to have been older than Bukhara and had once been larger.<sup>3</sup> It had been the fortress (*hisar*) of padishahs and had been strongly fortified by them. It had been rebuilt several times and was still used as a royal residence by the Bukhara Khudahs in Islamic times. The Bukhara Khudah Bunyat b. Tughshada was sitting in the palace at Varakhsha, drinking with his companions in 782-3 when he saw troops approaching from his observation point (*manzar*). Without

a word, they came in and chopped off his head. They had been sent by the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi (775–85) because the Bukhara Khudah had been supporting the rebellion of al-Muqanna' against the Abbasid government (Narshakhi 1954: 10–11, 1972: 13–14). The palace still existed until Samanid times when Ahmad b. Nuh dismantled it and took the wood to Bukhara to build a palace outside the gates of the citadel. It also had a market every fortnight and a market at the New Year which lasted for twenty days. The existence of a royal centre at Varakhash has been confirmed by the discovery of the remains of a palace, decorated with wall paintings (Shishkin 1963; Frye *et al.* 1990).

The importance of this semi-legendary material is that it suggests that, in pre-Islamic times, settlement in the Bukhara oasis was dispersed through a number of towns, each of which could claim an ancient past and some of which had been the seat of princes. After the Muslim conquests, it seems as if these other centres declined and Bukhara itself emerged as the only real city in the oasis.

Although it seems as if the site of the Ark (Citadel) in Bukhara itself was originally occupied from the fourth century BC to the third century of the Christian era (Nekrasova 1999), both written and archaeological evidence suggest that Bukhara as a major urban centre was a comparatively new city at the time of the Muslim conquest: Frye *et al.* notes that 'the history of Bukhara cannot be traced before the 4th or 5th century of our era' (1990: 512).

After the Muslim conquest, the city of Bukhara continued to grow at the expense of other urban settlements in the oasis: Ramitan was 'ruined and desolate' in the fourth/tenth century, Paykand fell into decay at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh. This process has parallels in other areas of Iran and Iraq, where large capital cities expanded while small and medium size ones decayed. In Isfahan, during the first three centuries of Islamic rule, the small towns and villages of the oasis disappeared or were absorbed in the developing urban agglomeration which became the centre of the old city as it exists today. In Fars, Shiraz, a Muslim new town, grew while the older centres of Qasri Abu Nasr, Istakhr, Bishapur and Jur gradually dwindled away so that they were virtually uninhabited by the eleventh century.

At the time of the first appearance of the Muslim armies, Bukhara consisted of the fortified citadel and, to the east and separated from it by about fifty metres of open space, the *shahristan* (Nekrasova 1999: fig. 3). Local tradition held that the citadel had been built by Siyavush, the legendary hero of the Shahnameh and Persian tradition, whose tomb was honoured in the eastern wall. The Persian translator of Narshakhi usually uses the word *hisar* to describe the fortress although on occasion he also refers to it as *quhandiz* and *arg*. *Quhandiz* is the Arabic form of the Persian *kuhna-diz* meaning

'old castle' and *arg* or *ark* are the two Persian words commonly used to denote castles or citadels. By analogy with other contemporary sources, Narshakhi himself, writing of course in Arabic, would probably have used *hisn* and *hisar* and *quhandiz*. The citadel was restored and a palace built in it by the Bukhara Khudah Budun shortly before the Muslim conquest. According to Narshakhi (1954: 23-5, 1972: 32-4), he attempted to build a palace (*kakh*) within the citadel but each time he did so it collapsed until some wise men advised him to build it with seven stone pillars (*sutun sangin*) in the form of the Great Bear. The citadel had a door at the east, called the Ghuriyan Gate (Gate of the Forage Sellers in the early twelfth century) and one in the west called the Registan Gate. A road ran from one gate to the other through the fortress. At the time of the Muslim conquest, the citadel seems to have been the main centre of power and government. Narshakhi records that this fortress was the residence of padishahs, amirs and army commanders (*sarhang*). This was where the prison and the divans were, and here too was the court of the harem (*sarai huram*). It was also the site of the first great mosque (*masjidi-jami*) in the city. This was built by Qutayba b. Muslim in 712-3 on the site of a temple of idols (*butkhaneh*). Although the text is not entirely clear (Narshakhi 1954: 49, 1972: 68) it seems that the old mosque was supplemented by the building of a new mosque between the citadel and the *shahristan* in 770-1, subsequently rebuilt by al-Fadl b. Yahya the Barmakid in 793-4. This building was the origin of the Kalyan mosque, still the main mosque of the city today, although the existing fabric is much later (Gaube 1999).

According to one story (Narshakhi 1954: 9-10, 1972: 13), the Khatun, the queen who ruled Bukhara at the time as widow of Bidun and mother of the young Tughshada, lived in a palace (*kakh*) in the citadel and would come out every day to review her nobles and servants and issue decrees on a throne at the Registan Gate. She would repeat the same performance in the evening. Interestingly however, there is no record of the fortress being besieged or defended during the various campaigns of the period or during the fighting in Bukhara at the time of the rebellion of Sharik al-Mahri in 133/750 when the rebels are said to have fortified themselves in the *shahr* (Narshakhi 1954: 65, 1972: 89). It looks as if it remained in use until the early Abbasid period after which it was abandoned. As we have seen, the dynasty of the Bukhara Khudahs survived until the coming of the Samanids in the tenth century but the anecdote of the death of Bunyat b. Tughshada in 783 recounted above suggests that they may have left Bukhara for Varashkha, perhaps to be further away from the seat of the Muslim governors. According to the fragmentary archaeological record, the walls of the citadel were reconstructed in the Samanid period (Nekrasov 1999) but there is no

support for this in the literary sources, which suggest that the site was not reused until the Seljuk period (Narshakhi 1954: 24-5, 1972: 35).

During the early Islamic period, the centre of power and elite residence was beginning to move out of the old citadel. Narshakhi says (1954: 23-4, 1972: 36) that already in the pre-Islamic period the courts (*sarayaha*) of the rulers of Bukhara were in the Registan, the open area to the west of the citadel (that is on the opposite side of the citadel from the *shahristan*). At the time of the rebellion of Sharik b. Shaykh al-Mahri in 750-1 (for this rebellion see Daniel 1979: 87-9), the Bukhara Khudah was living in his *kushk* in the Registan (Narshakhi 1954: 65, 1972: 89). The word *kushk* is used in Transoxania to denote a palace or country house outside the city walls and the term is ultimately the origin of the English word kiosk. During the Samanid period (tenth and early eleventh centuries), the Registan area became the setting for beautiful, fragile and highly combustible palaces but also the seat of the government machinery. The most powerful figures in the Samanid administration, the vizier, the finance minister (*mustawfi*), the chief of the guards (*'amid al-mulk*), the chief of police, the chief of the post (accepting the reading suggested by Frye; Narshakhi 1954: 24), were based there. In the same area were the offices of the chief of protocol (*divan al-sharaf*), the private lands, the *muhtasib*, the *awqaf* and the *qadi*. The Registan was also the site of the open-air festival mosque founded by Qutayba b. Muslim (Narshakhi 1954: 52, 1972: 71-2). Beyond the Registan to the west stretched the gardens of the Juyi Muliyan where the family of the Bukhara Khudahs had built their suburban residences. Interestingly, there is no evidence that this new official quarter was fortified at this stage. In this respect Bukhara resembles other major cities in the area, notably Merv and Nishapur, where the centre of government moved out of the old fortified citadel and *shahristan* into unfortified suburbs.

Following the Muslim conquest, the local Arab governors, with the title of Amir, seem to have lived not in the old citadel, but in a palace within the walls of the *shahristan* (Narshakhi 1954: 53-4, 1972: 74). The first to do so was Ayyub b. Hassan, appointed by Qutayba. His son, called Wazir, seems to have developed this 'district of the palace' (*kui kakh*), which lay on the right hand side if you entered the *shahristan* from the south gate. Each successive Amir built another *sarai* there though much of this quarter remained the property of a local Iranian family (see below). This was also the site of the mint where the local Ghitrifi dirhams were struck (Narshakhi 1954: 37, 1972: 52). Thus in the early Islamic period, there were two centres of political power, the court of the Bukhara Khudah in the Registan and the palace of the Amir in the *shahristan*. These two shared power in a sometimes uneasy coexistence.

At the time of the Muslim conquests, the urban settlement at Bukhara was confined to the area of the walled *shahristan* (Narshakhi 1954: 30, 1972: 42). It is said to have had seven gates which are duly enumerated by the geographers. Within the city, settlement seems to have been fairly scattered, with a number of kushks and the different quarters were separated from each other 'like villages' (*chun rusta*; Narshakhi 1972: 73). By the mid-tenth century this seems to have changed. Ibn Hawqal comments that the interior of the *madina* (the Arabic equivalent of *shahristan*) was heavily built up with no open spaces or ruined areas remaining and the wooden houses were all very close together (*mushtabak*; Ibn Hawqal 1939: 305). Al-Muqaddasi gives a typically double-edged view of the city in his day (1906: 281):

The foods are wholesome, the baths are excellent, the water is drinkable, the buildings are elegant and there is companionship in the eating houses and inns . . .

[but, on the other hand,]

the houses are cramped (*dayyiq*), fires are common and it is stinking and flea-ridden. There are extremes of heat and cold, salty wells, polluted rivers and noxious lavatories. The disposition of the people is repulsive, the dwellings are expensive. Dank (*ghamma*) bazaars, flagrant sodomy, this is the dunghill of the area and the most depressed city of the Mashriq.

There was a bazaar outside the Gate of the Bazaar, so called because it was the only gate with a market outside it at this stage. In the interior there was a Christian church (Narshakhi 1972: 73) and a fire temple on the site which later became the mosque of Makh. In the same area there was a market for 'idols' (*butan*) which may have been Buddhist images. According to Narshakhi, this market had been a big occasion in pre-Islamic Bukhara. The king ordered the images made of wood to be carved and painted. People whose idols were lost, broken or simply old would bring them and exchange them for new ones. The market took place in a grove of trees by the river bank and the Bukhara Khudah himself presided, sitting on his throne (*ibid.*: 29, 1954: 20-1). The descriptions of the *shahristan* suggest that settlement within the walled city became significantly denser in the two centuries between the first Muslim conquest and the writings of the geographers. It is interesting to note that the bazaar was outside the city walls.

In the aftermath of the Muslim conquest, the inhabitants of the city were obliged to give 'half their houses and fields' (*az khanha va diya' yak nimah*) to the Arabs (Narshakhi 1972: 73). Although this may have been a common feature of surrender agreements elsewhere

in Iran, Narshakhi's account is the only source which gives us a clear idea of what might have happened. The Arabs were settled in tribal groups within the city. One part was assigned to Mudar and Rabi'a and another to Yaman. In a pattern found in other cities of early Islamic Iran, different tribes had their own mosques named after them<sup>4</sup> and, in Bukhara, city gates. So we find the mosque of the Banu Hanzala, which had been a church, and the gates of the Banu Safid and the Banu Asad.

Of particular interest is the account given by Narshakhi of the Kashkatha clan (1954: 30-1, 1972: 42-4). He said they were not *dehqans* (nobles) and were originally foreigners but they had become a rich and respected group in the city. When they were ordered to hand over half their property to the Arabs, they simply abandoned the *shahristan* altogether and went and settled in 700 kushks which they built outside the walls. Around each kushk were dwellings for servants and followers (*chakiran ve itba'*) as well as gardens and parks.

Not all the inhabitants of Bukhara gave up their ancestral possessions so easily. Before the coming of Islam, a *dehqan* called Kadrai Khina had owned the whole of the district known as the Quarter of the Palace (*kuwi kakh*) where the Amirs subsequently lived. The property was taken by the conquerors but in 767 his descendants went to the caliph al-Mansur (754-75) in Baghdad to appeal to have their lands returned. As evidence they presented a deed (*qabala*) to the caliph which described the boundaries of the property which included 1,000 shops (*dukkan*) in the city and seventy-five villages in the oasis, and witnesses: 'The first side ran along the city walls by the green grocers' stalls, the second was also along the walls beside the pistachio sellers, the third along the road which led from the Gate of Nun to the centre of the city'. Altogether the property was said to amount to a quarter of the entire area of the *shahristan*. The caliph ordered that the property be restored to them and that a document (*sijill*) should be prepared for them to confirm their legal rights. The property was later sold piecemeal by their descendants (Narshakhi 1954: 54, 1972: 74-5). This is a remarkable and, as far as I am aware, unique story of the descendants of people whose lands were confiscated at the time of the Muslim conquests, suing to have them returned. Even more remarkable is the fact that they were said to have been successful. It would be fascinating to know more about this case: was this testimony to the even-handed nature of caliphal justice or an example of al-Mansur doing favours to leading members of a local elite to keep them loyal? We can never know.

The early Islamic period saw the development of high status residences within the *shahristan*. Narshakhi describes the kushk of Hasan b. 'Ali Sughdi in around 825 which was so valuable that no king had one like it. He developed his compound (*hazira*) and the whole district



up to the Gate of 'Ali and derived an income of 1,200 dinars a month from it. As often, however, the possession of a magnificent property led to trouble. Hafs b. Hashim, vizier to one of the Tahirid rulers, wanted to buy the estate but the owners refused to sell. They were all arrested and kept in prison for fifteen years. Despite severe ill-treatment, they held out and in the end the Tahirid died and the vizier was forced into hiding. Hasan and his brothers returned to Bukhara in triumph.

The Arab domination of the *shahristan* becomes apparent in the account of the rebellion of Sharik b. Shaykh al-Mahri. Sharik had originally been a supporter of the Abbasids but shortly after the revolution which brought the dynasty to power, he became disillusioned and launched a rebellion with the aim of handing power to the descendants of 'Ali b. Abi Talib. He seems to have attracted numerous supporters including the Arab amirs of Bukhara and Khwarazm. Abu Muslim, who was then governing Khurasan for the Abbasids, sent a large force to suppress the revolt. The bulk of the people of the city (*jumle'i ahl-Bukhara*) seem to have gone over to the rebel cause and to have taken over the *shahristan*, apparently without serious resistance. Sharik, who was campaigning elsewhere in Transoxania, decided to come and join his supporters in the city. Meanwhile, Abu Muslim's general, Ziyad b. Salih, arrived to try to prevent this and camped with his army outside the city walls.

Ziyad was immediately joined by the then Bukhara Khudah Qutayba with a force said to have numbered 10,000 men. He then called on the people of the 700 kushks which lay outside the city to support him and raise the black banners as a sign that they supported the Abbasids. The author explains that there were more inhabitants in these kushks than there were in the city but that the people of the city were Arabs and that there was not a single Arab in the kushks. The Bukhara Khudah then ordered the people of the kushks and the villages (*ahli rusaa ve ahli kushkha*) to lock their gates against the army of Sharik and not give them food or fodder. Instead supplies should be taken to Ziyad's army.

The Abbasid forces, led by Ziyad and the Bukhara Khudah, were now between Sharik's advancing army and the city held by the rebels. The Abbasid forces fought hard to prevent Sharik's men joining up with their allies in the city but in the end it was lack of supplies and the death of their leader in battle which ensured the defeat of the rebel army. Ziyad went to the mosque of Maghak and ordered the city to be set on fire. He offered an amnesty but the people of the city remained resolutely hostile. Ziyad joined the Bukhara Khudah in his palace in the Registan. After three days, there was a fierce battle by the Gate of the Spice Sellers and Ziyad's men prevailed. Anyone from the city who was captured was hanged at the gate.

The story of Sharik's rebellion makes two fascinating points. The first is a political one: we can clearly see how the native Iranian elite, led by the Bukhara Khudah, supported the Abbasids against the Arab rebels. The second is the light the account sheds on the population of the city. At the time of the Muslim conquest the *shahristan* was the only urban area. The Arabs settled mostly within the walls of the city. The city did expand beyond the walls in the early Islamic period, but this was largely the result of non-Arab local people moving out into the surrounding oasis and building kushks, rather than the Arab invaders building new quarters. By 750, the *shahristan* seems to have been predominantly Arab but there was little, if any, Arab settlement outside it. This process of urbanisation seems to be in marked contrast with other examples of urban change in the aftermath of the Muslim conquests. In Syria at Hadir Qinnasrin and Hadir Halab, the Arab settlement seems to have been outside the walls of the pre-Islamic city. The same was true of Fustat in Egypt and, nearer home, Merv in Khurasan.

The process of Islamisation meant the dismantling of the old religious institutions. The conversion of the city to the new religion was conducted with vigour and a deliberate attempt was made to extirpate the practice of the old religion: 'He (Qutayba) built mosque and destroyed the traces of unbelief and Zoroastrian custom, using great force. Anyone who fell short of the provisions of the Shari'a was punished. He built a *masjidi jami*' and ordered people to attend' (Narshakhi 1954: 48-9, 1972: 66-7). He also had to resort to bribery, offering two dirhams to anyone who attended Friday prayer, with the result that poorer people converted while the rich, who had no need of the two dirhams, stayed away. When they had assembled, a man stood behind them giving instructions in Persian as to when they should make their prostrations. The Qur'an was also read in a Persian version in these early days. In many areas of the Muslim world, the conquerors were prepared to be tolerant of the old religions and there was little pressure to convert the 'People of the Book' in the Fertile Crescent and Egypt to Islam. It also seems that in many remote and rural areas of Khurasan and Transoxania conversion was actively discouraged. There are two reasons why such tolerance was not permitted in Bukhara. The first was theological: the status of the Zoroastrians as 'People of the Book' was problematic and it was easy to see them as no more than idol worshippers who could be converted by force. The second reason was much more practical. The Muslims in Bukhara were a small and alien minority. Qutayba seems to have seen that it was necessary to Arabise and Islamise the fortified enclosures of the ark and *shahristan* for security reasons and he was prepared to do so with great vigour. There does not seem to have been a similar campaign in other areas of the oasis, where traditional practices may have been allowed to survive.

The sources give little information about either fire temples or Buddhist shrines in the city. The only information we have about a fire temple *intra muros* concerns the mosque of Makh just south of the river (Narshakhi 1954: 20-1, 1972: 29-30). The site was originally a grove of trees where there was a market for painted images which people came to every year, buying new images and throwing away the old ones. This sounds as if it was originally a Buddhist festival but Narshakhi then continues to say that a fire temple (*atishkaneh*) was founded and that all the people would go into the temple to worship the fire. After the Muslim conquest, the temple was confiscated and converted into a mosque which became 'one of the most revered (*mu'tabar*) in the city'. It was burned down in a great fire in 973 (Narshakhi 1954: 96). The market of images survived the loss of the main cult place and Narshakhi notes with some surprise that it was still flourishing in his day.

We have seen how the first mosque of Qutayba b. Muslim had been built on the site of a temple in the heart of the citadel. The Muslims also appropriated some of the materials. In a very interesting passage, Narshakhi recounts how he was curious to see that many of the doors of the mosque had images with their faces defaced (1954: 48-9, 1972: 66-7). When he asked his teacher for an explanation, he was told that the doors came from the 700 kushks which had been built outside the city where the rich people lived. Each one had the image of his idol (*surati buti khwish*) carved on the door. At this stage the Muslims were paying people two dirhams to come to the mosque and worship. The poor accepted because they needed the money but the rich stayed at home. One Friday, the Muslims went out to encourage them to attend the mosque but the inhabitants threw stones at them from the roofs of the kushks. The Muslims were victorious in the ensuing conflict, and the doors were carried off and, with the images erased, they were installed in the mosque. The story illustrates clearly how material inducements were used to aid conversion and suggests that conversion may have been more rapid among the poorer people of the city than among their more prosperous neighbours. It is also interesting because of the light it throws on the use of spolia, and particularly of doors, to emphasise the triumph of Islam over Buddhist or pagan beliefs.

In the *shahristan*, it seems clear that the fire temple in Makh had become a mosque by the time of the revolt of Sharik al-Mahri. There were other mosques within the walls named after the Arab tribes or individuals who had established them. In Narshakhi's time, there was the mosque of the Banu Hanzala which had previously been a Christian church (*kilisya*; 1954: 53, 1972: 73), the mosque of the Banu Safid (Narshakhi 1954: 54, 1972: 75) and the mosque of the Quraysh, founded by Muqatil b. Sulayman al-Qurashi (Narshakhi 1954: 58,

1972: 80) soon after the conquest. By the early third/eighth century, Bukhara had acquired its first Muslim saint. Outside the New Gate were the mosques and oratories (*sawma'at*) of Khwaja Abu Hafs (d. 832) and place 'where prayers were answered' where Muslims were buried (Narshakhi 1954: 58, 1972: 80).

Another building which may have been constructed by the new Muslim authorities was the *bayt tiraz*, the government textile workshop, which lay between the citadel and the *shahristan*, near the new mosque (Narshakhi 1954: 19-20, 1972: 28-9). It is very rare to find the precise locations of such workshops in the topography of early Islamic cities and the use of the word *kargah* to describe it makes it clear that it was a single factory rather than a collection of shops. Cushions, prayer rugs and hazel-coloured robes were made for the caliph's use. Each year a separate *'amil* (fiscal agent) would arrive from Baghdad to collect the produce and it was said, no doubt with some exaggeration, that a single door-hanging from the factory would pay all the *kharaj* tax of the city. In the time of the compilation of Narshakhi's text, the factory was ruined and the craftsmen deserted. The collapse of the *tiraz* workshop should probably be connected with the disappearance of direct caliphal government in this area at some point in the third/ninth century. It would be very interesting to know whether the Tahirids continued to send robes to the caliphs; it is most unlikely that the Saffarids or Samanids who followed did so. The story is an interesting illustration of the reach and power of caliphal government in the early Abbasid period and the effect that the demand of the court for luxury goods could have on the local economy of a city a thousand kilometres away. It also shows how the collapse of caliphal rule had a very significant effect on local industry.

By the third/ninth century, if not before, the topography of the *shahristan* seems to have been thoroughly Islamised but the previous native inhabitants did not give up without a struggle. We can also detect the development of a new Muslim quarter between the *shahristan* and the citadel. At the centre of this lay the new mosque and it was also here that the *bayt tiraz*, the textile workshop, was founded.

The picture of conversion and social change which emerges from Bukhara is extremely interesting. The coming of the Arabs resulted in massive changes; the building of mosques, the take-over of the *shahristan* by the Arabs, the displacement, voluntary and involuntary, of many of the inhabitants to the kushks in the countryside were among them. But there is also continuity: the Bukhara Khudahs still enjoyed their courts and their great wealth, the old religions were still practiced discretely and the market for idols still did good business outside the south gate of the *shahristan*. The urban landscape was still dominated by the ancient citadel, the old walls still protected the densely

populated *shahristan*. But there were changes too, the development of the quarter around the new mosque and settlement of many more people in the oasis were typical of these.

## Notes

1. For a general introduction to the history and topography of the city, see Bartold 1968; Petruccioli 1999.
2. Narshakhī 1972; English translation Narshakhī 1954; the reprint of Frye's translation (Narshakhī 2007) has the text but none of the original scholarly notes and the 1954 version is to be preferred.
3. Narshakhī 1954: 17–18, 1972: 24. For a full account of Varakhsha and the genealogy of the Bukhara Khudahs who lived there, see Naymark 2003.
4. On this pattern, see Bulliet (1994: 73–5) where he notes a similar process in Jurjan.

## A Barmecide Feast: the Downfall of the Barmakids in Popular Imagination

*Remke Kruk*

The Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid and his entourage have always had a strong appeal to the imagination. Accordingly, they figure in a wide range of literature, ranging from scholarly history, such as Tabari's *Tarikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, to popular storytelling. The caliph himself, his executioner Masrur, the poet Abu Nuwas and Ja'far al-Barmaki are the subject of many a tale in the *Thousand and One Nights*. Apart from that, a special genre of trickster-like anecdotes has sprung up featuring Abu Nuwas. The Barmakid family, too, has taken up a role in popular tales, where ample attention is usually paid to the history of their dramatic downfall. Extensive work has already been done in this field, most recently by Sadan (1998) and Abouel-Lail (2007), and it is not my intention here to give an exhaustive overview of all the material. My aim here is to analyse how the account of the Barmakids' downfall as depicted in one particular branch of popular literature, namely that of popular epic (*sira sha'biyya*), is related to other parts of the literary tradition.

The downfall of the Barmakids, which took place in January 803, is often referred to in Arabic sources as the *nakbat al-Baramika*. It has never ceased to stir the imagination of historians as well as of the wider public. What could have incited the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid to bring down this family, with whom he had such close political and personal ties, in such a sudden and utterly ruthless way? Speculation started almost immediately, and found its way into a variety of Arabic and Persian sources.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the classical Arab historians try to find the explanation in a single event that had offended the caliph, while others see it mainly as the result of a growing discomfort with the power and riches of the Barmakids on the caliph's part. Modern historians equally differ in their views, although most of them tend to see it as a deliberate and well-prepared action, caused by a growing irritation about the Barmakids'

tutelage, and also by their 'overweening pride and immense riches' (Bosworth 1989: 201, n. 697). Accusations against the Barmakids of 'Alid and Zoroastrian sympathies are also occasionally brought in. To the latter belongs the story, mentioned below, that Ja'far had wanted to place a certain kind of incense burners in the Ka'ba, which had angered the caliph.

Then there is a theme that figures especially prominently, namely the romantic and colourful story about the supposed love affair between Ja'far al-Barmaki and Harun's half-sister 'Abbasa (in other versions, Maymuna or Fakhita), which is suggested to have led to Ja'far's, and subsequently all the Barmakids', downfall. The historical veracity of this account has been doubted from the very beginning. It was already dismissed as nonsense in some ninth century sources, such as the historian al-Jahshiyari, who reports a conversation where Masrur, who in most accounts of the affair (not, however, in Mas'udi's and Ibn Khallikan's) figures as Ja'far's executioner, is asked for the reasons of the execution. Masrur's reaction is:

'It seems that you want to hear the tales which the common people tell, that it was about a woman, and about the incense burners that Ja'far had chosen to be put in the Ka'ba?' 'Yes, that is what I wanted'. 'Know then that those stories are completely unfounded. It was all the consequence of the fact that our masters were fed up with them and envious of them' (Jahshiyari 1938: 254).

Most modern scholars do not believe in the veracity of the story either, on a variety of grounds. Among the exceptions is Julie Scott Meisami (1989), who argues that some of the arguments against the probability of the affair lack solid foundation, such as the argument that 'Abbasa, thrice widowed, must have been middle aged at the time of the supposed affair. She undoubtedly has a point: we only need to think of Ibn Battuta's adventures on the Maldives, where the grand vizier Jamal ad-Din offered him the hand of his daughter. This girl, although very young and still a virgin, had already been widowed twice (Ibn Battuta 1853-8: IV, 143-50).

Meisami makes a case for serious analysis of the reasons why the 'Abbasa story is included by certain historians, and of the context in which they place it. This may throw light on their views concerning the matter. In her article, she sets out to do this for Mas'udi, arguing that the discussions about love which precede Mas'udi's account of the affair indicate the nature of his perspective on it, namely that 'the ultimate cause of the catastrophe might be seen as Harun's failure to govern his appetites by reason, and Ja'far as a martyr, not to love, but to royal injustice' (Meisami 1989: 269).

The topic of the Barmakids and their downfall lent itself particularly to the *adab* genre, including postclassical *adab*. There, the story of the love affair, in various forms and putting various names to the princess involved, was highly popular. Joseph Sadan (1998) analysed a number of these late *adab* works, some of them unedited, in 'Death of a Princess'. Especially relevant for the present chapter, as we will see, is *al-Ihtiraz min maka'id al-niswan* of the fifteenth-century author Ibn al-Batnuni. The love affair between Ja'far al-Barmaki and a sister of the caliph (here called Maymuna) is a prominent part of the account given in this text, as is the caliph's subsequent cruel dealing with his sister and her offspring. This is not surprising, given the high narrative potential of the love story, which was even included, with other Barmakid lore, in some versions of the *Thousand and one Nights* (Sadan 1998: 148, n. 43, with extensive references).

As recent research by the Egyptian scholar Khalid Abouel-Lail has shown, it does not stop there. Barmakid lore is not just a thing of the past. Stories about Harun ar-Rashid and the *nakbat al-Barmakia* continue to be part of oral storytelling, as several of the stories which Abouel-Lail (2003) collected in the Egyptian oasis of Fayum demonstrate. Abouel-Lail (2007) has analysed them in a recent article. There, too, a love affair leads to the death of Ja'far al-Barmaki. Not, in this case, a variant of the 'Abbasa affair, but the love between Harun and a girl called Hamamat al-Liqa', whom he met in a curious and intriguing way, and subsequently married. They deeply loved each other. Some time afterwards, the caliph received a prophecy that he would lose his royal power for seven years, after which he would be reinstated. So he left his palace to roam about in destitution for seven years. Then a new prophecy announced the reversal of his fortune, meaning that he would regain his former position and would be blessed with seven years of prosperity and good fortune. Returning to his former abode as a vagrant (one is reminded of Odysseus here), he spoke to a palace gardener, who told him that the Barmakids had unjustly taken over power. Having recognised the caliph by the sign of the crescent between his shoulder blades, the gardener consented to hide him in a basket of roses, which he then hid under the bed of Hamamat al-Liqa', who had meanwhile been forced into marriage by Ja'far al-Barmaki.

When Harun heard Hamamat al-Liqa' recite a poem in which she bewailed her lost love, he spoke up from his hiding place with an answering line. This was overheard by Ja'far, who reacted with mockery. Upon this, Harun drew his sword and killed Ja'far. In the morning he took up his place on the throne again, and commanded the hanging of all the Barmakids, men, women and children, with the exception of the old and frail Yahya al-Barmaki and the daughter who



looked after him. A noteworthy aspect of this story is that the narrative focus, and also the sympathy, is on Harun, unlike in many other stories.

What has been said so far demonstrates how prominently the love element figures in accounts of the fall of the Barmakids. It is all the more surprising, then, to see that it is absent from the account given in *Sirat al-amira Dhat al-Himma* (or *Sirat al-Mujahidin*), one of the Arabic popular epics, in spite of the fact that its narrative material is closely related to that of Ibn al-Batnuni, mentioned above.

*Sirat al-amira Dhat al-Himma* (or *Sirat al-Mujahidin*) is one of the *siras* of which the narrative material is connected to historic events, just as is the case with other popular *siras*. Wars between Muslims and Christians, including the Crusades, for instance, have left ample traces in this literature, and Carole Hillenbrand has rightly made use of it in her *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (1999).<sup>2</sup>

In *Sirat al-amira Dhat al-Himma*, the scene is set by the wars and skirmishes between Arabs and Byzantines. Prominent figures from Umayyad and Abbasid history play major roles within the narrative. The romantic setting of the Abbasid court frequently is a stage of events, and actual historical developments and personal feuds have also left their traces in the *sira*. The caliph Harun al-Rashid plays a very prominent role, which repeatedly brings him into conflict with the leading heroes and heroines. Harun is in evidence from volume 2, part VIII: c. 45–50 until part XXIX: 47 (*Sirat al-amira Dhat al-Himma* n.d.; cf. episode 28–83 of Malcolm Lyons' summary; Lyons 1995: II, 160–80). When he first makes his appearance, we are told that a note from his predecessor al-Hadi had advised him to trust and respect the *qadi* 'Uqba. 'Uqba, who secretly converted to Christianity, is the villain of the *sira*. He is the arch-enemy of the Kilabi tribe led by Princess Fatima Dhat al-Himma and her son 'Abd al-Wahhab.

Not surprisingly, the affairs of the Barmakid family, whose power, riches and generosity had such a strong appeal to popular imagination, have also left their traces in the *sira*, including the history of their dramatic downfall.

We will here analyse the latter episode, and see which elements from Barmakid lore have been used and how they have been adapted to fit the narrative framework of the *sira*. As we will see, this also gives us some idea of the way in which the *sira*'s material is related to other parts of the written literary tradition, a topic that is of some relevance within the discussion about the nature of *sira* literature in general. Most *siras* show evidence of having been composed by people who were well rooted in the elite literary tradition, even though the improvisations of individual storytellers added many elements. Accordingly, the gap between *sira* literature and elite culture is not

nearly as wide as traditional Arab scholars, and in their wake many older Arabists, have wanted us to believe. Modern *sira* scholarship has emphasised this point, most recently Thomas Herzog (2006: 11), where he repeats, again, that 'popular' not 'folk' literature is the appropriate label for *sira* literature.

Analysis of a small sample from *Sirat Dhat al-Himma*, in this case the episode of the downfall of the Barmakids, may serve to support this view. For, as my comments will make clear, a substantial part of the narrative material is rooted in the written literary tradition, with slight adaptations to fit the narrative purpose of the composer, or composers, of the *sira*. Special attention will be paid to one of the texts studied by Sadan, namely Ibn al-Batnuni's *al-Ihtiraz min maka'id al-niswan*, dating from the fifteenth century.<sup>3</sup> As Sadan has shown, Ibn al-Batnuni's material is extensively reproduced in later seventeenth-century works such as al-Itlidi's (or al-Atlidi's, as Sadan argues) *I'lam al-nas lima waqa'a li'l-Baramika ma'a Bani 'Abbas*.

To start with the way in which the story is incorporated in the events: this is done by allotting a crucial role to the major villain of the *sira*, the (fictitious) crypto-Christian *qadi* 'Uqba. 'Uqba is the chief *qadi* at Harun's court, and a great favourite of Harun's wife Zubayda. In this episode, the treacherous *qadi* teams up with the historical figure of Harun's chamberlain al-Fadl b. al-Rabi', the successor of Ja'far al-Barmaki in the vizirate and, according to historical accounts, instrumental in bringing about the Barmakids' downfall. In the *Sirat Dhat al-Himma*, 'Uqba and al-Fadl manage to cast suspicion on Ja'far's loyalty to the caliph, which finally leads to his execution and the downfall of all the Barmakids.

Summarised, the story as told in *Sirat al-amira Dhat al-Himma wa-waladiha al-amir 'Abd al-Wahhab* runs as follows (vol. 2, part XII, 25-36):<sup>4</sup>

The caliph Harun (al-imam al-Rashid), having rebuilt Malatya, arrives in Baghdad and holds a *majlis*.

*Comment:* In actual history, it was not Harun who rebuilt Malatya, but Salih, the father of 'Abd al-Malik (see Kennedy 1981: 75).

*Continues:* 'Uqba, in his role as the chief *qadi*, is present, as is Ja'far. 'Uqba, who is jealous of Ja'far's popularity and the respect he receives from everyone, decides to bring about the downfall of all the Barmakids. He gets in touch with al-Fadl b. al-Rabi', who also is eager to see Ja'far fall from grace. Together they craft a letter in Ja'far's handwriting and bribe one of Ja'far's servants, who is in love with a Baghdadian girl, with promises of riches and independence to hide the letter in one of Ja'far's turbans.

*Comment:* This is not the first time that al-Fadl b. al-Rabi' makes his appearance in the *sira*, and also not the first time that he is cast in a negative role. In an earlier episode (*ibid.* II, ep. 39), al-Fadl supported 'Uqba when he tried to convince Harun that Hayyaj al-Kurdi, one of the Kilabi heroes, had planned to kill the caliph. It was also at the instigation of al-Fadl b. al-Rabi' that the caliph formed an alliance against the Kilabis with the Byzantine emperor Manuel (*ibid.* II, ep. 40). In the story, 'Uqba will continue trying to set the caliph against the Kilabis until Harun's death.

*Cont.:* After the servant has done so, they kill him with poisoned food and throw his body into a well already amply filled with bodies ('more than a thousand Muslims') that 'Uqba had earlier wanted to dispose of. 'Uqba then rides to the caliph's court and asks for a private audience, during which he informs the caliph that the Barmakids (four thousand of them) have secretly sworn allegiance to al-Zafir b. al-Rida in Khurasan. They have promised to depose the caliph and hand his palace and his wife Zubayda over to al-Zafir, who has confessed his passion for Zubayda to Ja'far.

The caliph explodes upon hearing this ('the blood flew from his nose') and says that he will extinguish all the Barmakids if this rumour proves to be true. 'Uqba says that for proof he only has to look for Ja'far's answering letter to al-Zafir, which is hidden in a turban. So they go together to the room that the Barmakids used to divest themselves from their clothes and turbans, and 'Uqba brings out the letter. Having read it, the caliph trembles like a leaf and swears 'Uqba to secrecy. Then they go back to the *majlis*. The caliph sits there silently, not reacting to anything that is being said to him. After a while Ja'far goes home. 'Uqba goes to the house of al-Fadl b. al-Rabi' to inform him of the fact that their ruse has been successful.

*Comment:* The story so far is well-told and coherent, and most likely the product of the *sira*'s composer. The figure of al-Zafir is somewhat problematic. Is he a fictional character? I have not so far been able to connect him to a historical figure. The name suggests an 'Alid, which would fit in with the accusation of 'Alid sympathies often uttered against the Barmakids.

The text then continues with a few loosely connected statements that have evidently come from other sources. Parallels to some of them could be traced.

*Cont.:* First, a brief statement is made to the effect that the caliph had given to Ja'far the governorship of Khurasan, giving him a free hand in dealing with it as he saw fit.

*Comment:* That the caliph gave Khurasan to Ja'far has a parallel in Ibn al-Batnuni (1989: 250, l. 9). The remark has a basis in historic reality (see

Sourdel 1959: I, 149): Ja'far was appointed as governor of Khurasan in 180/796, after his successful campaign in Syria. The appointment, however, was cancelled after twenty days and Ja'far was put in charge of the caliph's guard.

*Cont.:* 'Abd al-Malik b. Salih said that he saw those gifts as the end of the Barmakids' favoured position and good fortune. In spite of all that, however, the caliph did not change his behaviour towards Ja'far, continuing to bestow favours on him.

*Comment:* I have not succeeded in tracing the reference. This 'Abd al-Malik was a prominent Hashimite prince, a poet, son of al-Salih (the man who rebuilt Malatya), who had taken over most of the Umayyad lands in Syria and had built up a powerful position there. 'Abd al-Malik represented the 'Syrian interest' at al-Rashid's court (Kennedy 1981: 74-5, 118). He later fell into disgrace with the caliph (Sourdel 1959: I, 168-9; see also Bosworth 1989: 231, n. 805).

*Cont.:* Sahl b. Harun, who said that he was very close to Ja'far, reported that on a certain occasion Ja'far had told him that he thought that their reign was at an end, because a strange voice (*hatif*) had told him so, adding (XII, 28, l. 1) a verse to the same effect. Sahl tried to reassure him, saying that these voices were messengers from the Devil. Ja'far refused to let Sahl go away, keeping him up talking all night. Finally Ja'far fell asleep with Sahl keeping watch over him, until Ja'far was startled up from a nightmare in which another voice had recited a verse to him about the downfall of the Barmakids. Sahl tried in vain to reassure him.

*Comment:* On Sahl b. Harun, well-known man of letters and translator of Persian texts, see Mohsen Zakeri in *EI*<sup>2</sup>: VIII, 838-40. He was Yahya al-Barmaki's secretary, and in that capacity he was in charge of certain public payments. After the fall of the Barmakids he became *sahib ad-dawawin*. Stories about supernatural predictions and premonitions of their downfall are a prominent element of Barmakid lore (see Sourdel 1959: I, 156, also n. 4). They may take the form of voices, dreams or astrological predictions. In the *Dhat al-Himma* account given here, this element continues in the next part, where another prominent element of Barmakid lore about the downfall episode is introduced, namely that of the hunting party, which occurs in many variants.

*Cont.:* The *rawi* continues with a story about how Ja'far went out one day to hunt near the diwan. Following a gazelle, he became separated from his hunting party. At that point a mysterious voice (*hatif*) recited

a verse to the effect that although Ja'far might hunt as he pleased right now, Fate would eventually hunt him down and he would end up friendless, crucified on the bridge of Baghdad. Aghast, Ja'far leaves the place, convinced that nobody has heard the mysterious voice. Shortly after, the caliph summons Ja'far to accompany him on a hunting party, but he excuses himself on the ground of illness.

*Comment:* In scholarly historiography, such as Tabari, Jahshiyari and the *K. al-Aghani* (see Sourdel 1959: I, 152) there is also a reference to a hunting party, but of a somewhat different nature. There it is told that the day before Ja'far's execution the caliph had been out with him to hunt. After that, he had sent Ja'far home, because he (the caliph) wanted to spend the night with his women. During the night he kept sending presents to Ja'far.

*Cont.:* The caliph then rides out with a party of a hundred horsemen from his nobles. They successively pass a lush garden and a palace, and the caliph asks *qadi* Yahya, the *katib* of the diwan, to whom these belong.

*Comment:* It may seem a bit of a puzzle which one of the many historical Yahyas figuring at Harun's court might be behind this figure, if a historical figure lies behind him at all. It is, however, fairly obvious where this '*qadi* Yahya' originates from: he must be Yahya b. Aktham al-Qadi (d. 258/871-2; see *EP*<sup>2</sup>, s.v.) whose reports have been a source for later writers on the Barmakids. Bouvat (1912: 76-9) cites from Yazdi's *Tarikh Al Barmak* (begun in 1390) a story transmitted by this Yahya al-Aktham, in which a certain Isma'il b. Musa al-Hashimi tells about a hunting party with the caliph, during which the latter becomes more and more vexed by confrontations with the wealth and splendour of the Barmakids, especially Ja'far's. A version of the same story is found in Ibn al-Batnuni (1989: 248ff.). Here, too, al-Mubarrad reports, on the authority of al-Maristani and Yahya b. Aktham al-Qadi, the story told by Isma'il. It is this latter version that turns out to contain all the basic elements of *Qadi* Yahya's account as it is given in *Sirat Dhat al-Himma*. There, *Qadi* Yahya, the transmitter, has supplanted his informant Isma'il. In Ibn al-Batnuni's version, the story starts with the caliph's hunting party, during which he encounters Ja'far's much larger and more splendid party, while, moreover, Ja'far avoids meeting the caliph's party.

*Cont.:* (from here on the story continues in the first person, told by *qadi* Yahya). These estates belong to Ja'far al-Barmaki, I answered. The caliph gets the same answer when he asks about prosperous villages and lush meadows that they pass. Other estates that they see turn out to belong to Ja'far's brother al-Fadl and to Ja'far's son Musa. Then they

pass some poor and rundown, depopulated villages, which are reported to belong to Harun's sons al-Ma'mun and al-Mu'tasim, and to the caliph himself. All this angers Harun.

The caliph then starts wondering about Ja'far's absence from the hunting party on account of indisposition. *Qadi* Yahya, still speaking in the first person, tries to defend Ja'far, saying that he personally observed that Ja'far looked ill. Subsequently they pass a large and richly attired hunting party, reported to be Ja'far's. The caliph considers this unacceptable, since it is Ja'far's duty to accompany the caliph if so bidden.

The *qadi* continues to provide excuses, saying that Ja'far possibly was not aware of the fact that the caliph was setting out to hunt. The caliph agrees, but it is obvious to the *qadi* ('me') that Rashid's feelings towards the Barmakids have basically changed. And indeed, when the caliph returns to the palace, he does not send for Ja'far to join him, as used to be his custom.

'The next morning', the *qadi* continues, 'a servant arrived to summon me to the caliph's presence.' He finds the caliph on the roof of his palace. The caliph tells him to keep silent to everybody about what he is going to say. How is it possible, he asks, that Ja'far takes out a hunting party of a thousand riders, and the caliph only a hundred? Have you not noticed, *qadi*, what the Barmakids have contrived?

(The next sentence is in the third person): He (i.e. the *qadi*) said: I hear and obey.

(Here the *qadi* speaks again in the first person): The *qadi*, however, goes to Ja'far, who receives him very cordially. The *qadi* suggests that since Ja'far is setting out for Khurasan it might be a good idea if he gave the caliph's sons some of his estates, since this would be a sure way to please the caliph. 'When he heard my words', the *qadi* said, 'he became very upset and asked whether the caliph had his eye on his, Ja'far's, possessions while these were *waqfs* for the poor and the people of the chancellery.' No, I have heard nothing of the sort, I said. Ja'far says that if the Abbasids start to have their eyes on their servants possessions he no longer sees fit to serve them, for then it is better to seek the company of the common people and to become a tradesman. The *qadi* ('I') says that he only said this from his own accord, because he knew how much Ja'far loved the caliph's sons.

*Comment:* This part, with the exception of Ja'far's pretended illness, contains all the elements found in the corresponding part of Ibn al-Batnuni, in a slightly different order and phrased differently. Isma'il, in Ibn al-Batnuni's version, also speaks in the first person, which is an appropriate form to convey personal involvement, doubts and worries. In his attempts to persuade Ja'far, Isma'il/*Qadi* Yahya plays the part that in other sources is

filled either by an anonymous Hashimite prince (al-Jahshiyari 1357/1938: 227/291, taken over by later sources) consulted by Yahya al-Barmaki or an uncle of Rashid (Mas'udi 1966-79: IV, para. 2612) who goes to Yahya and says that the caliph is much interested in wealth and possessions and has many sons, so that it would do no harm to present these sons with some estates. Yahya, however, refuses to do so.

*Cont.:* *Qadi* Yahya ('I') left and was summoned by the caliph next morning, who received him most friendly, and suggested that old age had obviously muddled the *qadi's* brain. He denied this. How, then, says the caliph, could he have thought that the Abbasids had their eyes on estates that they only ten years ago gave to their servants? So *qadi* Yahya ('I') realises that the caliph has spies with Ja'far. Then, looking from the roof to Ja'far's stables, the caliph asks how it is possible that these are laid out in such a way that the horses stand with their hind quarters in the direction of the caliph's dwelling? He would not dare to do so if his neighbour were a simple soldier! And how come that Ja'far has far more horses than the caliph himself? 'But he is just your servant, and only obtained all this because of you', I said. The caliph remains silent.

There follows an explanatory aside of the storyteller: The caliph had a Byzantine slave, Qamar, of whom Ja'far was very fond. He told this man that he would give him to Ja'far for a particular purpose, namely to get close to Ja'far in order to be able to spy on him and his relatives. This is how the information about *qadi* Yahya reached Rashid.

*Comment:* In Ibn al-Batnuni, the slave has no name; he is just a slave of Zubayda. Adding the name is a typical storyteller's addition.

*Cont.:* (again in the first person). When *qadi* Yahya sat with the caliph, a letter from Qamar arrived. When the caliph had read it, he got into a bad mood and ordered the *qadi* to leave the house before he was kicked out. So he left, not knowing what was in the letter.

*Comment:* Until here, the story is roughly identical to that found in Ibn al-Batnuni. From here on, however, they differ. The story about the gazelle, told below, is not found in Ibn al-Batnuni, while the latter continues with a variant of the 'Abbasa (here called Maymuna) affair and the fate of her sons.

*Cont.:* This happened on Wednesday. Meanwhile Ja'far had pitched his tents near the river, ready to leave for Khurasan. On Thursday the caliph tells Masrur to go and fetch Ja'far. The caliph makes Ja'far sit close to him and embraces him, and then asks him why he had not joined the hunting party. On account of illness (*kasl fi badani*), says

Ja'far. The caliph then orders the reluctant Ja'far ('I have never before done such a thing') to slaughter the gazelle which the caliph had caught during the hunt. A drop of blood spatters on Ja'far's cheek. The caliph gets up to wipe it off, and kisses the spot where it has been.

*Comment:* This narrative turn is clearly intended as a prelude to the execution; it also brings into focus the caliph's ambiguous feelings about it. I have not, so far, found this story anywhere else.

*Cont.:* Ja'far then asks whether the caliph is aware of the fact that he will depart tomorrow. The caliph asks him to postpone his departure. Ja'far agrees and the people disperse. When it is dark the caliph calls Masrur. This happened on Thursday night (Arabic: Friday night, i.e. the night preceding Friday).

*Comment:* In Ibn al-Batnuni, the caliph calls in his astrologer to see whether the day is auspicious for departure. The answer is negative. Ja'far does not believe this until he has taken the astrolabe himself and made his own calculations. As to 'Thursday night': this is not the usually accepted date. Ja'far's execution took place on Saturday night, 1 Safar 187/28–9 January 803 (Sourdél 1959: I, 152).

*Cont.:* Masrur, speaking in the first person, finds the caliph in full armour, seated on his horse, surrounded by a hundred *khawass* and a hundred Turks, all heavily armed. 'When I entered I kissed the ground. This spectacle frightened me and I could not utter a syllable.' He is told to pitch a leather cupola in the middle of the palace and to surround it by three hundred armed servants. Masrur ('I') obeys. Then he is told to go and fetch Ja'far, under the pretence that a message has arrived from Khurasan that the caliph wants him to look at. Masrur, however, is not to lead Ja'far to the caliph, but to bring him straight to the leather cupola, to decapitate him forthwith and to bring his head to the caliph. Masrur ('I') went and found Ja'far asleep, the Byzantine slave next to him. Having woken him, he tells him to come and see the caliph.

*Comment:* The Byzantine slave sleeping next to Ja'far is not included in any other accounts I have seen.

*Cont.:* Ja'far exclaims that he feels like one of Solomon's *jinn*s, having to be available day and night. Masrur ('I') tells him about the message from Khurasan. Ja'far gets dressed, but stumbles three times, which he considers a bad omen. When he arrives at the palace and is led to the cupola, Ja'far realises what is in store for him. He refuses to enter,



appealing to Masrur and their long friendship, and even offering him money. Finally he suggests that Masrur first go to the caliph, tells him that the deed is done, and if the caliph insists to see the head Masrur can come back and behead him. But if the caliph shows regret and wishes that Masrur had not been so fast, because he meanwhile has repented his decision, no harm will have been done. The caliph, however, asks for the head, and Masrur ('I') returns to find Ja'far praying. Approaching him from behind, he waits till he lifts his head from prostration, strikes off his head and faints.

*Comment:* Ja'far's beseeching Masrur to postpone the act is a familiar element. The fainting of Masrur after having struck off the head, however, is a detail particular to this account.

*Cont.:* When Masrur ('I') comes, he puts the head in a bowl and brings it to the caliph. Harun screams, faints, and when he comes to, he starts addressing the head, reproaching Ja'far for the treacherous way in which he has repaid the caliph's favours. Then the caliph orders Masrur to fetch successively his sons Amin, Ma'mun and Mu'tasim. Amin receives the house of al-Fadl, Ja'far's brother, with everything it contains. Ma'mun receives Yahya's house with everything that is in it, and Mu'tasim the house of Ja'far with all its contents.

From here on, the story continues in the third person. Al-Fadl and Yahya are then put into prison, heavily chained and fettered. Then the caliph orders Masrur to confiscate all Ja'far's possessions and to kill all the Barmakids. Meanwhile Harun dispatches letters all over the realm with orders to kill all the Barmakids living elsewhere in the realm. When Friday arrives, they are all dead or have fled and hidden. The caliph orders Ja'far's body to be crucified on the bridge, guarded by soldiers.

*Comment:* Here ends the part that roughly agrees with Ibn al-Batnuni (1989: 247-60). In the comments given above, I have already indicated the differences in content between the Ibn al-Batnuni and the *Dhat al-Himma* version; their number is not very large. Both these accounts have much in common with the material found in the Persian branch represented by Yazdi's *Tarikh*, but in Ibn al-Batnuni and *Dhat al-Himma* nothing is said about execution of the guards assisting to the execution of Ja'far, as opposed to Yazdi's report (Bouvat 1912: 89; Sourdel 1959: I, 153), where they are thrown into the Tigris.

*Cont.:* In *Dhat al-Himma*, the story continues with the sending out of heralds to forbid mourning. An account is then given of the imprisonment of al-Fadl and Yahya. They are heavily fettered. They persuade

the guard to cook them some *sakinbaj*, but they cannot eat it because of their fetters. Yahya asks for paper to write to the caliph, beseeching him to relieve them from their chains and to allow him to live in a mosque. He also writes a second letter, which he gives to his son, to be delivered to the caliph after his own death. The caliph refuses the request and tells Masrur to return the letter. Yahya dies after four days, and is buried in chains. The caliph then summons al-Fadl to ask him about his father's last bequest (*wasiyya*). Al-Fadl produces the letter from his pocket, which is almost impossible for him because of the chains. It contains a poem chiding the caliph for his despicable behaviour. In anger he orders Masrur to take al-Fadl outside and behead him, but 'Abd al-Malik b. Salih (see above) implores him not to do this. So al-Fadl is sent back to prison, where he dies three days later.

*Comment:* The part about the *sakinbaj* could not be located elsewhere. About Yahya's attempt to gain the intercession of al-Amin (see Hamori 1994: 96): with the help of al-Amin and Zubayda, Yahya sends a conciliatory poem to the caliph, without success. On the point of death, Yahya writes a last letter from prison, a *wasiyya*, conveyed by the jailers to Harun. Hamori's source is Ibn Qutayba, *Imama* (1967: 166–73). The story is also found in Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's *Iqd* (1940–53: V, 58–65, 69–70). According to Arab chronicles, Yahya was not initially imprisoned, but just put under surveillance. Later on, at his own request, he shared the imprisonment of his sons. Yahya died on the 3 Muharram 190/29 November 805. Al-Fadl died three years later, in Muharram 193/November 808 (Sourdel 1959: I, 155).

*Cont.:* (36–46): The people of Baghdad do not venture to mourn, with the exception of a venerable shaykh who trots up with his mule to Ja'far's remains and laments him, chiding his executioners. Of course he is dragged off by the guards. Brought before the caliph, he says that he has accepted the fate awaiting him. The caliph asks to hear his story, which turns out to be a tale of Ja'far's boundless generosity. The man had married a slave-girl whom Ja'far coveted, but Ja'far generously gave her up to him. The caliph is moved, and orders Ja'far's burial. A second story about Ja'far's generosity is added, this one about a poet who every year composed a *qasida* for Ja'far and was recompensed with 1000 dinars. After Ja'far's death, the poet recites a dirge on his grave, and sleeps there. Ja'far appears to him in a dream. The dream results in great wealth for the poet.

Thus runs the account of the Barmakids' fall in *Sirat Dhat al-Himma*. Of course the audience, or readership, would not have been satisfied if the deceit of 'Uqba and al-Fadl b. al-Rabi' had remained undetected. So Princess Dhat al-Himma and her trickster-hero companion al-Battal, having grown suspicious of 'Uqba, obtain the caliph's

permission to interrogate 'Uqba. They have him tied to a ladder and beaten till he confesses that al-Fadl b. al-Rabi' had forged the letter and that he himself had taken it to the caliph. Al-Fadl is then fetched and subjected to the same treatment until he produces an identical forgery. So the caliph is convinced. He has them put in chains and imprisoned in the house of Masrur. 'And then al-Rashid sat with bowed head, pondering, and regretted that he had killed Ja'far' (*Sirat Dhat al-Himma* n.d.: vol. 2, part XII, 52-4).

### Concluding Remarks

It will be obvious from the above that the narrative material of this episode in *Dhat al-Himma* is closely related to that of Ibn al-Batnuni. They represent a tradition about the *nakbat al-Baramika* which clearly was well known in the fourteenth/fifteenth century, when these texts were composed.<sup>5</sup> Yazdi's *Tarikh al-Barmak*, written around 1400, also demonstrates this. Most of the elements found in this tradition go back to the early historiographical and *adab* tradition. Noteworthy is that the 'Abbasa (or Maymuna) affair, which is included in Ibn al-Batnuni, does not play a role in *Dhat al-Himma*, in spite of its narrative attraction. It is also obvious from the differences that there is no direct interdependence between the two texts, but that they represent different strands of the same narrative tradition.

What implications does all this have for our views on popular epic, or 'historical romance', as it has also been called? It may be interesting here to see that De Slane, in his catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Parisian Bibliothèque Nationale, insightfully says about al-Itlidi's work, a seventeenth-century offshoot of Ibn al-Batnuni's, that it is '*du genre des romans historiques*', while Bouvat considers it a work without interest (Bouvat 1912: 21). Yet texts such as these are of crucial interest for our understanding of the literary background of *sira* literature, as the small sample from *Sirat Dhat al-Himma* makes clear. For we see that although the *Dhat al-Himma* version of this episode shows clear evidence of having been worked over by professional storytellers, possibly in the course of oral performances, it also demonstrates how directly this type of literature is rooted in the literary tradition of the educated Arab elite.

### Notes

1. Sourdél, in *Le vizirat abbaside*, has given an extensive overview (Sourdél 1959: I, 156-81). For Persian sources, especially the later ones, Sourdél makes use of Bouvat's work (1912). A further exhaustive list of sources about the affair is given in Bosworth's translation of the episode in Tabarī

- (Bosworth 1989: 201–26, especially n. 697), and also by Sadan (Sadan 1998: 134, n. 4).
2. Recently Thomas Herzog (2006), laying down his massive research of *Sīrat Baybars*, analysed parts of the vast amount of semi-historical narrative material, often related to the Crusades, of which this *sīra* consists.
  3. My sincere thanks to Dr Camilla Adang for providing me with a copy of this text.
  4. Used here is the edition *Sīrat al-amīra Dhāt al-Himma wa-waladihā ‘Abd al-Wahhāb wa’l-amīr Abū Muḥammad al-Battāl wa-‘Uqba shaykh al-dallāl wa-Shūmadris al-muḥtāl* (n.d.). Where relevant, references to the episode numbers of Lyons’ summary of *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himma* are included (Lyons 1995: vol. II and III).
  5. Ibn al-Batnūnī lived in the fifteenth century; he died after 1494. The oldest text fragments of the *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himma* date from the fourteenth/fifteenth century. The oldest actually known dated ms. of the *sīra* (ms. Paris 3890) is from 834/1430 (Ott 2003: 67ff.)

8.

## ***The History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church as a Source for the History of the Seljuks of Anatolia***\*

*Gary Leiser*

In 1968, C. Cahen, a Western pioneer in the study of the Seljuks of Anatolia or Rum, published *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, a provisional history of that subject to which he appended an extensive bibliographical survey. In 1988, he published a somewhat revised and reorganised French version entitled *La Turquie Pré-Ottomane*, in which the bibliography was also revised and reorganised.<sup>1</sup> In the bibliography of the French book, but not in the original English, Cahen included *Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie* (Paris/Alexandria, 1943-74) – or, as it is called in the combined Arabic edition and English translation, *The History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* – in the section on primary Arabic and Persian sources.<sup>2</sup> As far as I know, this work is not included in the bibliography for any other monograph on the Seljuks of Anatolia.<sup>3</sup> Nor does the *History of the Patriarchs* appear in any strictly bibliographical compilation.<sup>4</sup> Why, therefore, did Cahen mention it as a primary source? Does it in fact shed light on the history of the Seljuks of Anatolia? Has it been overlooked, or is Cahen's reference an oversight? In this contribution we shall answer these questions.

*The History of the Patriarchs* (hereinafter cited as the *History*) is the most important source for the history of the Coptic Church of Egypt. It consists of extensive biographies of most of the patriarchs of the Church from the first century to 1243. Very abbreviated biographies are continued up to 1942, but the work proper ends in 1243. It was begun, according to tradition, by Bishop Sawirus Ibn al-Muqaffa', who lived in the tenth century. His contribution is, however, somewhat unclear. From the tenth century, the *History* was continued by a series of writers most of whom are known.<sup>5</sup>

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\* I would like to thank S. Redford for his constructive comments on an earlier draft of this contribution.

In addition to providing an account of the life and achievements of each patriarch and of matters of importance to the Church, the biographies often include an abundance of extraneous information that helps to illuminate the contemporary social, economic and political life of Egypt. Although the geographical focus of the *History* is Egypt, where the Church was rooted, events in regions outside Egypt are frequently mentioned as well, especially if these regions, such as Syria, were parts of empires ruled from Egypt. On rarer occasions, events beyond the frontiers of these empires also find their way into the *History*. Several such events concern the history of the Seljuks in Anatolia between 456/1064, when the Great Seljuk sultan Alp Arslan first invaded Anatolia from the East, and 641/1243, when the Mongols defeated the Seljuk sultanate of Rum. These events are: (1) Alp Arslan's siege of Edessa probably in 463/1071; (2) the battle of Manzikert in 463/1071; (3) the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa in 586/1190; (4) the Khwarazm-Shah's invasion of Anatolia in 623/1226; (5) al-Malik al-Kamil's campaign against the Seljuks of Anatolia in 631/1234; (6) 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad's campaign in Eastern Anatolia in 632/1235; (7) the peace treaty between the Seljuks and Ayyubids in 634/1237; and (8) trade between Muslim Anatolia and Egypt around 641/1243. Let us examine the *History's* account of these events in order to determine its value as a historical source for the Seljuks of Anatolia.

### **Alp Arslan's Siege of Edessa c. 463/1071**

In 456/1064, shortly after his accession as the second sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire centred on Iran, Alp Arslan led a campaign against Georgia and Byzantine Armenia. In 463/1070-1, apparently intent on marching all the way to Egypt, he swept across eastern Anatolia and northern Syria. In the course of the latter campaign he besieged the important city of Edessa in the northern Jazira. The *History* gives a long account of this siege. It reports that, in the year 788 of the Martyrs (1071-2 CE), Alp Arslan arrived from the east with an army of 600,000 horsemen and soldiers, not to mention their 'companions'. He conquered much of eastern Anatolia and northern Syria and caused alarm in Egypt. After his initial successes, he was advised to attack Edessa. The governor of that city was Basil, the son of Asar, the son of the king of the Ghuzz (?), a duke who had been appointed to his post by the Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes IV. Within the city walls were 8,000 Armenians, 20,000 Syriac Christians (Suryani, i.e. Nestorians, also called East Syrian Christians or Assyrians), 6,000 Greeks, and 1,000 Franks. Alp Arslan sent the inhabitants a message saying he wanted only a fixed sum of money, not conquest, and that upon receipt of the money he would depart. But while the inhabitants

began collecting the money the Sultan began digging under the city walls. After seven days, a Syriac Christian in the Sultan's army sent a message to the city by arrow stating that the Sultan's demand for money was a trick and that he was already digging beneath the city. The message went on to describe where the sappers were located. The governor took a 'trumpet' and, placing its mouth to the ground and its tip to his ear, found the tunnels. The inhabitants then breached the tunnels and killed or captured the sappers; the captives were executed and their heads were hurled over the wall with catapults. From the walls the inhabitants reviled the Sultan who then launched a frontal attack that lasted thirty-eight days. He used elephants on which were men clad in armour. But when the elephants approached the walls, the inhabitants killed many with large stones. The Sultan then approached the walls with seven huge siege towers, but the defenders repelled them with long poles and used naphtha to set them on fire and kill the men on them. At least part of the city walls was surrounded by a ditch. The Sultan ordered it to be filled with wood so his soldiers and horsemen could better approach the walls, but the defenders reached the ditch via tunnels and set the wood ablaze. At that point, Alp Arslan again demanded money in order to raise the siege. He sent a messenger to the governor of the city to negotiate an agreement. The governor showed hospitality to the messenger and then had him depart the city through the main gate while walking between two rows of young warriors, 10,000 men, clad in armour. The governor then rejected the Sultan's offer and taunted him by leaving the gate open. At the same time, the inhabitants jeered the Sultan from the walls. Then, after forty-five days, Alp Arslan broke camp and departed. He besieged, unsuccessfully, Saruj and Aleppo where the inhabitants were buoyed by his failure at Edessa. Afterwards he returned to the east, pausing for four days at Edessa en route without fighting (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 2, pt 3, 304-8, English).

The account of the siege of Edessa appears in the biography of Christodoulus (1047-77), whose reign fell within that of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir (r. 427-87/1036-94). The author of Christodoulus' biography was his contemporary Mawhub b. Mansur b. Mufarrij (fl. c. 1025-1100). Mawhub was a layman in the church and had extensive connections throughout the Coptic community as well as in the church hierarchy. He was also a high official in the financial and commercial apparatus of the Fatimid state. Indeed, he, and probably other members of his family, was well connected with the Fatimid government. For a while he was in the service of the Muslim governor of Alexandria, where he owned some kind of an inn.<sup>6</sup> At the time of the siege of Edessa, the Fatimids controlled a number of towns along the Mediterranean coast of Syria. Mawhub gives no hint of the source

of his information on the siege of Edessa. Nevertheless, because of his government post and business interests in Alexandria, which had direct commercial relations with Syria by sea, and his connections in the Fatimid government, where Copts held many important offices, he was in a position to acquire rather directly and quickly information on affairs in Syria. In other words, he personally met people who travelled between Egypt and Syria; and he had access, directly or indirectly, to government reports concerning that region. We should also mention that his account of the siege of Edessa is immediately preceded by a report on relations between the Syriac and Melkite Christians in Antioch. There are, in fact, many reports in the *History* on activities of various Christian churches in Syria. The Copts were in close contact with the Christians in that country and there were members of the Coptic clergy who knew Greek, Syriac and Armenian.

The only historian who provides an account of the siege of Edessa that resembles that of Mawhub is his near contemporary Matthew of Edessa, whose *Chronicle*, written in Armenian, ends in 1136. He states that when Alp Arslan marched against Edessa in 1069-70 (*sic*), he surrounded the city and his army covered a great area around it. The season was winter, 8 May (*sic*). The duke of the city was Basil, the son of the Bulgar king Alusianus. When the Christian inhabitants of the city saw the vast number of Muslim troops, they were struck by great fear. The Sultan waited there for eight days without fighting while the people of the city were so bewildered that they were not able to take defensive measures. One of the Sultan's troops who saw this stupefied reaction of the people of the city contacted them in secret, saying 'Why are you bewildered? Strengthen your walls and saddle your horses.' The people came to their senses and began to place soldiers around their walls and take other steps to defend themselves. Every man was prepared to fight bravely. Basil, the duke of the city, who was a courageous warrior, began to fortify every part of the city. When the Sultan saw this, he became angry. He ordered trumpets to be sounded calling for an assault. He made a ferocious attack. With terrible screams, the Muslim soldiers threw themselves at the walls from every direction. A great and terrible battle raged that day. The Persians, that is, the Turkish troops, passed most of the day attacking, but they were not able to accomplish anything. Consequently, the Sultan set up catapults and other siege engines against the walls. He destroyed all vineyards and gardens and filled the ditch around the city with wood. Then, as part of his strategy to capture the city, he built a tower of timber resting on ten carts. When the carts were rolled to bring the tower to the walls, it unexpectedly fell over and was demolished. The inhabitants of the city dug a mine on the east side of the city that led them into the ditch. They threw the wood that had been piled up there



into the city and set the remainder on fire. In order to bring down the walls, the Muslims opened deep holes at seven places in the ditch. But the inhabitants of the city opened mines in the opposite direction and captured and killed the enemy who were digging underground. The Sultan spent fifty days ferociously attacking Edessa, but he accomplished nothing. He promised great rewards to anyone who could break off a stone from the walls as a souvenir to take back to Iran. After that, the *amir* of Dvin Abu al-Uswar said, 'Well, there is a temple (church) near us and there is no one inside who will oppose us.' This was the temple of St Sargis which was east of the city. The Muslims made a great effort to pull it down, but they could not take out a single stone. The Sultan saw this and was greatly humiliated. Then Khuraysh, who was a leading Arab *amir*, took the entire Persian army and Sultan Alp Arslan and marched against Aleppo. In this way the people of Edessa were saved and that day was a day of great joy and celebration.<sup>7</sup>

These two descriptions of the siege of Edessa are distinct enough to be independent accounts of the same event.<sup>8</sup> They are also the most detailed descriptions of it that have come down to us. Writing long after the siege, Muslim historians, with the exception of Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 654/1256), who relied on the lost work of Ghars al-Ni'ma (d. 481/1088), say little or nothing about it. Sibt simply states that the Sultan descended upon Edessa and its people fought him. He filled the ditch with trees and other things. Then the people gave him 50,000 dinars and he departed and the fighting stopped. But the people of Edessa said to him, 'We shall not give you the money until you destroy the engines of war and burn them.' He ordered that they be broken up and burned. After he did so, they reneged on their payment. He threatened to kill their envoy but was restrained by his vizier Nizam al-Mulk. After he departed, the people of Edessa cut off the heads of the dead Turks and sent them to the Byzantine Emperor.<sup>9</sup> Typical of the other Muslim historians who mention this event is Ibn al-Athir (d. 630/1233), who simply says Alp Arslan laid siege to Edessa but without success (Ibn al-Athir 2002: 169). The siege of Edessa was clearly a major defeat for Alp Arslan. While Sibt might have tried to put the best face on it, other Muslim historians mentioned it curtly or not at all.

As we have seen, Mawhub's account of the siege of Edessa differs in many respects from that of Matthew. We learn from Mawhub, for example, that a large number of camp followers accompanied Alp Arslan, that Edessa was a large city of 35,000, if this number can be believed, most of whom were Syriac Christians, that there were Syriac Christians in Alp Arslan's army, that Alp Arslan's army included elephants, and that he employed many siege engines, some of which were destroyed by naphtha. The ethnic mix in Edessa is noteworthy, especially the large number of Franks, and reveals that it was an important

commercial centre. Curiously, no other source mentions elephants in the Sultan's army. This does not necessarily cast doubt on their presence. Alp Arslan himself encountered elephants in the Ghaznavid army a few years earlier and Timur used them in the battle of Ankara in 804/1402.<sup>10</sup> In any case, the *History* proves to be an important source for Alp Arslan's siege of Edessa and seems to have escaped the notice of modern historians, including Cahen.

As mentioned above, Alp Arslan's failure before Edessa was a serious setback for him. He lost many men, elephants and much equipment, including most, if not all, of his siege engines. Furthermore, his defeat stiffened the resistance of the people of Aleppo and thus contributed to the failure of his siege of that city as well. Matthew reports that when Emperor Romanus Diogenes learned the news of 'this recent calamity', he roared like a lion and collected his forces to march against the Turks. In his translation of Matthew's history, A. Dostourian interprets the 'calamity' to mean the Sultan's invasion of Armenia. But one wonders if Matthew meant that the failed siege of Edessa was a calamity for the Sultan. Certainly the failed siege was a great victory for the Christians. Moreover, it could surely have made the Emperor roar like a lion. In any case, we know that the Emperor was overconfident when he set out in pursuit of Alp Arslan and that when Alp Arslan learned that Romanus was on the march he withdrew, indeed virtually fled, to the east to Manzikert probably, in part, to lick his wounds. The *History* states that he even had to plead for horses, mules and food from Edessa on the way. When the Emperor appeared, the Sultan did not want to fight. Instead he offered him a treaty, but in one of the greatest military blunders in medieval history the Emperor rejected it. Alp Arslan's defeat before the walls of Edessa clearly helps to explain the behaviour of both the Sultan and the Emperor in the lead up to the battle of Manzikert.

### **The Battle of Manzikert in 463/1071**

Mawhub immediately follows his description of the siege of Edessa with a report on the subsequent battle of Manzikert, which occurred in Dhu al-Qa'da 463/August 1071. This report, which seems to be the earliest report in Arabic on this battle, is much briefer than that on the siege despite the greater significance of this battle. Perhaps this was because the battle, unlike the siege, was a Muslim victory, or, from Mawhub's perspective, a victory for the enemies of the Fatimids. Mawhub says the Emperor reached Khilat (Akhlāt on the western shore of Lake Van) near the town of Manzikert. He marched down the river of Manzikert with an army of 600,000 horsemen and warriors. The two kings (the Emperor and Sultan) clashed in May/June. The leaders of the

troops of the Emperor conspired against him through a plot by Michael Ducas (in Constantinople). When the Emperor charged the Turks, his troops deserted him, but he continued to fight until he was captured. His troops fled, some to Manzikert. The Emperor was brought before the Sultan who asked him what he should do with him – sell him, kill him or set him free. The Emperor replied, 'if you are a butcher, kill me; if you are a money lender, sell me; if you are a king, set me free'. The Sultan was pleased with this answer and embraced him. The two conversed for three days and arranged an alliance. Then the Sultan sent the Emperor back to Constantinople with an escort of 3,000 horsemen who accompanied him as far as Massisa. Mawhub then gives an account of the ultimate fate of the Emperor (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 2, pt 3, 308-9, English).

Compared to what we know from other sources, above all the Greek work of Michael Attaleiates who was present at the battle (his *Historia* covers the period 1034-79), Mawhub's description of it and its aftermath is basically correct but greatly oversimplified and muddled. It does not exactly parallel the reports in other sources, Christian or Muslim. Moreover, it adds nothing very reliable to the information that they provide.<sup>11</sup> The conversation that Mawhub recites between the Sultan and the Emperor falls into the realm of folklore.

### The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa in 586/1190

As is well known, in response to Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in 1187, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa took the Cross as part of the movement known today as the Third Crusade. He set out overland for Palestine in the spring of 1189. In March 1190, he crossed the Dardanelles at Gallipoli and began to march east across Anatolia. By the end of April, he had entered the territory of the Seljuks of Anatolia, who were then ruled by Kilich Arslan II (r. 551-88/1156-92). In May he sacked Konya, the Seljuk capital, and slaughtered its population. He then travelled southeast and entered Armenian Cilicia. On 10 June 1190, under somewhat unclear circumstances, he drowned in the Calycadnus (Göksu River). His army subsequently disintegrated, although some men reached Palestine.

In the *History*, Frederick's Crusade falls into the biography of Mark III (r. 1167-89). The author of his biography and that of his successor, John VI (r. 1189-1216), was one Ma'ani Abu al-Makarim b. Barakat, a resident of al-Mahallah, a town in the Nile Delta west of Damietta. He wrote over a long period, completing the first biography in 1207 (den Heijer 1991: 1240). Unfortunately most of his description of Frederick's Crusade is garbled. He states that the German king had an army of 600,000 lances. They passed through the defile of al-Darundan

that led to Konya. The land of the Turks was ruled by Mas'ud (rather, Kılıç Arslan b. Mas'ud) whose subjects were mostly Greeks. These Christians enjoyed his justice and fair treatment. Then he marched to the land of the Armenians, the impedimenta and provisions of his troops being carried in carts drawn by horses, mules, oxen and other animals. Finally he reached Antioch. The writer then states, 'some of those present of his troops informed us that when he wished to pass over the sea to Constantinople' the Byzantine Emperor prevented him from doing so. This source, the only one cited for Frederick's Crusade, goes on to describe Frederick's confrontation with the Emperor in rather confusing fashion (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 3, pt 22, 147-8, English). The author clearly gets a number of facts wrong and gives a disjointed account of the march across Anatolia. Moreover, he does not mention such major events as Frederick's sack of Konya and his death by drowning. Far more extensive and accurate information on Frederick's Crusade is found in other contemporary Arabic sources, notably in the work of Ibn Shaddad (439-632/1145-1235). Compared with these sources, the *History's* account of Frederick's Crusade is of virtually no consequence.<sup>12</sup>

### The Khwarazm-Shah's Invasion of Anatolia in 623/1226

In 618/1221, Jalal al-Din, the last ruler of the dynasty of Khwarazm-Shahs, was driven from Khwarazm by the Mongols. After many adventures, he invaded Anatolia with a large army in 623/1226 and besieged, unsuccessfully, Akhlat. This city was then within the territory of al-Ashraf, the Ayyubid ruler of Damascus and brother of the Ayyubid sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Kamil. In 627/1230, Jalal al-Din returned to capture the city. Thoroughly alarmed, the Seljuk sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad (r. 616-34/1220-37) and al-Ashraf united to defeat him later in that year and drove him east into Azerbaijan (Humphreys 1977: 218-19; Turan 1984: 363-74; Cahen 1988: 80-4).

In the *History*, the invasion of the Khwarazm-Shah falls within the biography of Cyril III. Cyril actually reigned as patriarch between 1235 and 1243. The patriarchate was vacant from the death of John VI in 1216 until the consecration of Cyril. Nevertheless, the author of his biography, Yusab, continues the *History* from 1216, focusing on various aspects of church history and events in Egypt. Yusab was the bishop of Fuwwah in Lower Egypt and a contemporary of Cyril. Nothing else is known of him (den Heijer 1991: 1241).

There are only three brief references to the Khwarazm-Shah in the *History*. Yusab first simply states that messengers of the Khwarazm-Shah, 'the king of Persia', arrived but it was not known why. Presumably, they arrived in Egypt. The last date given in the *History*

before mentioning this was 1225. We know that in 1225, prior to his invasion of Anatolia, Jalal al-Din sent envoys to 'Ala' al-Din and to the Ayyubid princes of Syria. He may have demanded funds and other assistance to fight the Mongols (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 1.91, English; Gottschalk 1958: 127; Humphreys 1977: 176; Cahen 1988: 81-2). If so, he would certainly have wanted to include al-Kamil (r. 615-35/1218-38) among his allies. This is not clear from other sources. We do not know what the response was to any of these embassies.

A few pages later, Yusab goes on to say that right after a messenger arrived from the Abbasid caliph al-Zahir (r. 623-40/1226-42), bearing robes of honour for al-Kamil, another arrived from the king of the Seljuks, who held Konya and Aksaray, another from the Georgians, and many more from other rulers. They brought the alarming news that Jalal al-Din had invaded Georgia and conquered Tiflis, its capital, and (the region of) Abkhaz (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 1.93, English).<sup>13</sup> Yusab again does not give a precise date for the arrival of these messengers. The last date given in the *History* before their arrival is again 1225 and the next date given afterwards is 1227. We know from another contemporary Coptic historian, al-Makin b. al-'Amid (602-72/1203-73), however, that al-Zahir's messenger arrived in 623/1226, the year he became caliph (Cahen 1955-7: 118, 135).<sup>14</sup> We also know that the Khwarazm-Shah took Tiflis in March 1226 (Ibn al-Athir 1997: vol. 10, 408; Minorsky and Bosworth, 'al-Kurdj', *EI*<sup>2</sup>). Thus the messenger from the Seljuk sultan, 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad, would have arrived after the latter date. No other source seems to mention an envoy from 'Ala' al-Din to al-Kamil after the fall of Tiflis. He was no doubt seeking an alliance.

Finally, Yusab says that in 629/1232 an enemy, known as 'Kaqir Tark', invaded Persia and Iraq with a great army, defeated the Khwarazm-Shah, and reached the environs of Baghdad (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 1.121, English). The translators of the *History* interpret 'Kaqir Tark' to be a corrupt form of Kai-Qubad. As mentioned above, 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad and al-Ashraf united to defeat the Khwarazm-Shah in 627/1230. Subsequently, in 628/1231, a Mongol force from the east defeated him again and afterwards he was killed (Ibn Wasil 1953-77: vol. 4, 320-9; Cahen 1955-7: 119, 139; Boyle, 'Djalāl al-Dīn Khwārazm-Shāh', *EI*<sup>2</sup>).<sup>15</sup> Thus, Yusab is clearly speaking about the Mongol defeat of the Khwarazm-Shah, although his date is wrong. 'Kaqir Tark' may simply be a corruption of 'Kafir-i Turk', meaning 'infidel Turk', a euphemism for the Mongols.<sup>16</sup>

As was the case with the Crusade of Frederic Barbarossa, much more information is found on the Khwarazm-Shah's invasion of Anatolia in other Arabic sources, especially the works of Ibn al-Athir, al-Nasawi (d. 647/1249-50), the biographer of Jalal al-Din, and Ibn Wasil.<sup>17</sup> The

only unique information in the *History* appears to be the reference to 'Ala' al-Din's messenger to al-Kamil.

### Al-Kamil's Campaign against the Seljuks of Anatolia in 631/1234

In early 631/early 1234, al-Kamil invaded Anatolia. For some time the Seljuks and Ayyubids had been contesting the fortresses and towns in the Jazira. Their alliance in the face of the threat from the Khwarazm-Shah did not last beyond his defeat in 627/1230. At the end of 630/late 1233, the Seljuk sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad captured Akhlat from his former ally al-Ashraf. This provoked al-Kamil into mounting a large-scale campaign against 'Ala' al-Din. More than a punitive action, his invasion of Anatolia was meant to expand the Ayyubid realm in addition to retaking territory recently seized by the Seljuk ruler. However, it proved to be a failure and a few months later al-Kamil returned to Cairo.<sup>18</sup>

As for the *History*, Yusab states that in 631/1234 news arrived in Cairo that al-Kamil had entered the territory of the Seljuks of Anatolia (Rum), that he had seized Hisn Mansur, passed the village of Ra'aban, transited the mountain pass called al-Darabandat (Persian *darband*, Turkish *derbend* = mountain pass), which the Arabs called *al-durub* (the narrow passes), and then reached a third pass.<sup>19</sup> He arrived with 27,000 troops and camp followers, the like of which had not been assembled before, including slaves (*ghilman*), attendants (*atba'*) and Bedouin. Food was scarce and expensive. Logistical difficulties and the fact that 'Ala' al-Din was before him, compelled al-Kamil to withdraw, crossing from a place called Jisr al-Khashab and heading east. With al-Kamil was the (Artuqid) ruler of Khartpert. He told al-Kamil that the route from Khartpert to the heartlands of the Seljuks was easy but his guide misled him. Then 'Ala' al-Din, the ruler of Konya and Aksaray, learned of the Sultan's intention at Khartpert. The Sultan (who was withdrawing) then sent his nephew al-Muzaffar, the ruler of Hamat, along with other leading *amirs*, such as al-Banyasi and Sawab al-Khadim, to the relief of Khartpert. They arrived before 'Ala' al-Din, but 'Ala' al-Din attacked and defeated them, being no more than 3,000 horsemen; and those who could, including the ruler of Khartpert, took refuge in the city. Many were captured or killed. There were few provisions in the city. Finally, after about twenty days they sent *amir* Baha al-Din Ibn Malkishu (?), who had been governor of Cairo, to negotiate with 'Ala' al-Din. The Seljuk ruler gave them their freedom in return for abandoning the city. He also bestowed robes of honour on al-Muzaffar and Sawab al-Khadim. On their way back to Egypt, they passed by the Syriac monastery of Barsuma, whose monks brought

them provisions. Those who had participated in this campaign suffered great hardship. Some lost fingers to frostbite by the time they returned. Many died from the cold. One, al-Akram Ibn Zanbur, lost both his fingers and toes before he died.<sup>20</sup>

Apart from the *History*, we are rich in contemporary accounts of this campaign in Arabic sources. Sibṭ (d. 654/1256) states that in 631/1234 al-Kamil, his brothers, Asad al-Din the ruler of Hims, and the Syrian and Egyptian armies joined forces. They set out to invade the land of Rum by crossing the al-Nahr al-Azraq (Göksu River, between Bahasna – modern Besni in Adıyaman Province in Turkey – and Hisn Mansur, not to be confused with the Calycadnus which had the same name in Turkish). They soon discovered, however, that the Seljuk troops were guarding the main pass al-Darband and held the high points of the mountains. They blockaded the roads through the pass with stones and timbers preventing the allied army from marching through. Al-Ashraf became angry with al-Kamil because he had demanded al-Raqqa from him as the price for providing fodder for his animals when he crossed the Euphrates. But he refused saying, 'The throne of the Umayyads would not satisfy him.' Asad al-Din met with al-Ashraf and said, 'If he takes control of Rum he will take all that we possess.' So they held aloof from al-Kamil. When he saw this he crossed the Euphrates and camped at al-Suwayda'. The ruler of Khartpert, who was from the Artuqid family, came to him and said, 'We have an easy route by which you can enter Rum.' Al-Kamil equipped and sent ahead his son al-Salih Ayyub, al-Nasir Da'ud and Sawab al-Khadim. But 'Ala' al-Din surprised them with his troops. Al-Nasir was late while Sawab advanced at the head of 5,000 men. The opposing forces clashed. Sawab, al-Muzaffar, the ruler of Hamat, and those with him were taken prisoners. Many of the Ayyubid troops were killed. The rest of them were defeated. Al-Kamil returned to Amid and never went further into Rum. 'Ala' al-Din released Sawab and his *amirs* and was charitable toward them and they went to Amid (Sibṭ 1951-2: vol. 8, pt 2.684).

Kamal al-Din Ibn al-'Adim (d. 660/1262), who resided at the Ayyubid court at Aleppo and had direct personal knowledge of these events, reports that in 631/1234 al-Kamil set out from Egypt after agreeing with his brother al-Ashraf to invade the land of Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad. This was because 'Ala' al-Din had seized the region of Akhlat from the representatives of al-Ashraf. The brothers marched from Damascus accompanied by al-Mujahid Asad al-Din, the ruler of Hims, and al-Muzaffar, the ruler of Hamat. Al-Nasir, the ruler of Karak, also joined them. They reached Manbij with the permission of Sultan al-'Aziz (the ruler of Aleppo) who sent to Manbij a great headquarters pavilion, an armoury and his troops, led by his uncle al-Nasir. They were joined by al-Mufaddal Musa, the ruler of Samosata, al-Salih b.

al-Zahir, the ruler of Ayntab, al-Muzaffar Shihab al-Din b. al-‘Adil, his brother al-Nafiz, and other kings (*maliks*). Their troops totalled 16,000 men.

The King of Rum sent a message to al-‘Aziz saying ‘I accept your giving him (al-Kamil) troops and supplies on condition that you do not personally join him.’ And al-Kamil excused him from participating. Each *malik* was satisfied with this.

Al-Kamil departed with his army at the beginning of 632/late 1234. They marched to the river called al-Nahr al-Azraq in the territory of Rum. Meanwhile, the army of Rum had marched south of Zilla – between it and al-Darband – and the Sultan was with them. They went on foot to the entrance of al-Darband near Nur Kaghah and built a wall there. They fought from it and prevented al-Kamil from ascending to it. Provisions for the Syrian army began to run low. As a result of all this, al-Kamil retreated. He entered the town of Bahasna and reached the small sea (lake) of Anzanit (Hazar Gölü). The ruler of Khartpert met him and entered his service. He pointed out to him how to enter (Rum) from Khartpert. Then al-Kamil marched toward Khartpert. A contingent of soldiers from Rum clashed with a contingent of al-Kamil’s men, among whom was al-Muzaffar, the ruler of Hamat, and Shams al-Din Sawab. Al-Kamil’s troops were defeated and those who could took refuge in Khartpert. The King of Rum besieged them until they surrendered; then he let them go free. ‘Ala’ al-Din took control of Khartpert and pardoned its ruler and compensated him with lands in Rum (Ibn al-‘Adim 1997: vol. 2, 675–6).

Ibn al-‘Amid (d. 672/1273), our other contemporary Coptic historian, who held high offices in Egypt and later in Damascus and also had personal knowledge of these events, provides a somewhat more detailed account than Ibn al-‘Adim. He says that in 631/1234 al-Malik al-Ashraf, the ruler of Damascus, went to Egypt in the service of his brother al-Kamil and incited him to invade Rum and take possession of it. He made this proposal as attractive as possible to al-Kamil and informed him of what he had personally learned of the condition of the Seljuk troops when he had been allied with them against the Khwarazm-Shah. So al-Kamil made preparations and set out for Damascus. He wrote to all the Ayyubid kings and ordered them to prepare their troops for an invasion of Rum. From Damascus he went to al-Bira on the bank of the Euphrates. All the *maliks* joined him there. They numbered thirteen, all from the Ayyubid family. The troops paraded before al-Bira displaying their arms. Al-Kamil reviewed the troops and became proud and said that such an army had never been assembled for a Muslim *malik*. He entered al-Darbandat and was about to enter Rum. He did not doubt that he would conquer it. Al-Mujahid Asad al-Din, the ruler of Hims, rode to al-Ashraf, the ruler of Damascus, and met with him. He said,



'I learned that after al-Kamil takes the kingdom of Rum he will take all the kingdoms in our possession in Syria and incorporate them in his country and compensate us with the lands in Rum.' Al-Ashraf had suspected this. All the *maliks* then agreed to abandon al-Kamil and they wrote to the ruler of Rum, 'Ala' al-Din, concerning what they had agreed on, but their letters fell into the hands of al-Kamil. He immediately withdrew from al-Darbandat and returned to al-Suwaida' and set up camp there. At the time that al-Kamil had entered al-Darbandat, he had sent al-Muzaffar, the ruler of Hamat, al-Tawashi Shams al-Din Sawab, and a group of *amirs* and their men to Khartpert so they could capture it and use it as a base from which to invade Rum because of the restricted access via al-Darbandat. At Khartpert were many troops from the army of Rum. These troops attacked and defeated al-Kamil's men and took al-Muzaffar, al-Tawashi Sawab, and many *amirs* prisoners. They took them to 'Ala' al-Din who bestowed robes of honour on them, treated them well, and released them. Al-Kamil returned to Egypt. Ill feeling arose between al-Kamil, al-Ashraf, al-Mujahid and all the *maliks* who had corresponded with the ruler of Rum. When he returned to Egypt, he arrested al-Mas'ud, the ruler of Amid, concluding that he was among those who had corresponded with the ruler of Rum (Cahen 1955-7: 141).

The most detailed description of al-Kamil's campaign is given by the Syrian historian Ibn Wasil (d. 697/1298), who was in al-Kamil's service.<sup>21</sup> He states that the reason for the campaign was that 'Ala' al-Din went to the province of Akhlat with the intention of seizing it. Al-Kamil and his brother al-Ashraf decided to take from him what he had captured. Al-Kamil set out from Egypt with a large army. Ibn Wasil saw him and his army arrive in Damascus. It was a magnificent sight. Then al-Kamil headed for Rum. He went first to Salamiyya near Shamimish (?), a fortress built by al-Mujahid, the ruler of Hims. There al-Nasir briefly joined him. The army was enormous, the like of which had never been assembled for a Muslim king. The army went to Salamiyya in Ramadan. Then al-Kamil and his troops went to Manbij in the territory of al-'Aziz, the ruler of Aleppo. Many Ayyubid princes joined al-Kamil with their troops. Then they went to Tell Bashir. Ibn Wasil gives the names of the princes who participated. He says he was told there were sixteen war tents (*dihliz*) for sixteen *maliks*.

The same writer goes on to say that al-Kamil went toward al-Darband. 'Ala' al-Din had placed troops along the route of the narrow pass to harass him and make his passage difficult. Al-Kamil crossed the river called al-Nahr al-Azraq, which marked the beginning of the territory of Rum. 'Ala' al-Din reached a place south of Zilla, between it and al-Darband. Some of his men went to the entrance of al-Darband near

Nurkaghal (or Nur Kaghal?). There his men built a wall and fought al-Kamil's troops and prevented them from going further.

Food began to run short and, to make matters worse, there was a falling out among the Ayyubid princes. It was reported to al-Ashraf and al-Mujahid that al-Kamil had said, 'If the empire of Rum becomes ours, we shall divide it among the princes of Syria and the Eastern Territories instead of what they now possess; and Syria and the Eastern Territories we shall add to the kingdom of Egypt.'

As a result, many princes decided to stay behind. Al-Kamil learned of this while confronted with the high cost of the campaign and lack of provisions, and his inability to get through al-Darband. Thus he set out with his troops for Bahasna and reached Lake . . . (Anzanit). He sent some troops to Hisn Mansur and they raised it. Then the ruler of Khartpert entered his service and pointed out to him the route from Khartpert into the land of Rum. Al-Kamil crossed the Euphrates at Jisr al-'Adil. It took some time for all his troops to cross. Then he marched to al-Suwayda' in the territory of Amid. He ordered al-Muzaffar (the ruler of Hamat) to take his troops to Khartpert and sent with them al-Amir Shams al-Din Sawab al-'Adili. He ordered them to continue to march into Rum. They were 2,500 horsemen. With them were Fakhr al-Din al-Banyasi, one of the leading *amirs* of Egypt, and other *amirs*. They went toward Arqanayn, then to al-Bahrman, then to the small sea (or lake, *al-buhayra al-saghira*, Anzanit), then to Khartpert.

At dawn the troops of 'Ala' al-Din approached. They were 12,000 horsemen led by al-Qaymari (probably Qamyar). They fought for a full day. The troops of al-Kamil were routed. Al-Muzaffar fled to the fortress of Kharpert together with its ruler and Sawab and al-Banyasi. The rest of the troops remained in the outskirts of Khartpert. 'Ala' al-Din attacked them and took control of the area surrounding Khartpert. He took many of al-Kamil's men prisoners. Some threw themselves at the gate of the fortress and climbed in.

Then 'Ala' al-Din arrived with the rest of his troops. They surrounded the fortress of Khartpert. They erected nineteen siege engines (*manjaniqs*) against it. The siege lasted twenty-four days. The besieged suffered from a lack of water and great hunger which could not be described. There were (virtually) no provisions inside the fortress, which held 12,000 troops and ordinary people. Al-Muzaffar expelled about half, but the situation became desperate. It was said that only about 500 *makkuks*<sup>22</sup> of grain remained.

When al-Muzaffar saw what had happened and that the remaining troops of al-Kamil were left in dire straits, he decided that his only course was to seek quarter for himself and his men. So, he sent the *amir* Baha' al-Din Malkishu, one of al-Kamil's *amirs*, to 'Ala' al-Din to seek quarter and surrender the fortress to him. 'Ala' al-Din replied

positively. The ruler of Khartpert was included in the agreement. 'Ala' al-Din granted them free passage to depart with their possessions and companions and swore an oath to this effect. Al-Muzaffar, the *amirs* and their companions who were with him, went to 'Ala' al-Din's tent. The Seljuk ruler received al-Muzaffar very well, enjoyed his company, and bestowed a robe of honour on him. 'Ala' al-Din took possession of Khartpert and its surrounding fortresses, which numbered seven. Its ruler was from the Artuqid kings. 'Ala' al-Din compensated him with lands in Rum, namely Akshehir and other places.

Al-Muzaffar departed the fortress of Khartpert on Sunday 23 Dhu al-Qa'da 631/21 August 1234. 'Ala' al-Din gave the ruler of Khartpert land grants (*iqta's*) on which he could live. He went with him to his country and remained in it until he died. Al-Muzaffar left 'Ala' al-Din's camp two days later with his companions and the remaining troops of al-Kamil. They reached al-Kamil while he was residing at al-Suwayda'. He was pleased with the terms of the withdrawal (Ibn Wasil 1953-77: vol. 5, 74-82).

Compared with these reports, the one in the *History* seems to be an independent account of al-Kamil's campaign, albeit one that adds only a few details to the information found in these other contemporary sources. Indeed, it needs to be corrected and clarified in light of these works.

### **'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad's Campaign in Eastern Anatolia in 632/1235**

After his victory at Khartpert, and after al-Kamil had returned to Egypt, 'Ala' al-Din went to Antalya on the Mediterranean coast of Anatolia for the winter. The following spring, in 632/1235, he collected his forces in Kayseri and sent them on a campaign to the east to wrest Harran, Saruj, Edessa, Suwayda', Raqqa, and Amid from the Ayyubids (Gottschalk 1958: 218-19; Turan 1984: 381-2).<sup>23</sup> Yusab merely mentions this in passing, saying that news arrived in Egypt that the army of Rum had marched east, had attacked Harran, and burned a place outside it called Dar al-'Afiya, which was probably a monastery. The Seljuks pillaged and took many captives. Then they returned (to Rum) and (later) besieged Amid (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 2.154, English). Except for the curious reference to the Dar al-'Afiya, the *History* adds nothing to the information found in other contemporary sources.<sup>24</sup>

### **Peace Treaty between the Seljuks and Ayyubids in 634/1237**

Faced with an imminent threat from the Mongols, the Abbasid caliph al-Mustansir sent an embassy led by Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Jawzi to

reconcile 'Ala' al-Din and al-Kamil and seek their assistance. This embassy arrived in Egypt in late 634/early 1237.<sup>25</sup> In the *History*, Yusab relates that in this year an envoy from the caliph, one of the greatest jurists in Baghdad, arrived in Egypt and met al-Kamil in Damietta. The envoy proposed making peace between al-Kamil and the King of Rum ('Ala' al-Din). Al-Kamil agreed and sent his own envoy with the jurist to Kayseri, the capital of the Kingdom of Rum. However, the King of Rum died (4 Shawwal 634/31 May 1237) before they arrived. His son and successor (Ghiyath al-Din Kai-Khusraw II) set free the Ayyubid troops from Egypt and Syria whom his father had taken prisoners. In turn al-Kamil released the captives he had taken from the fortresses that he had recaptured from the Seljuks (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 2.156-7, English).

Apart from the *History*, the only contemporary source to refer to these events is Ibn al-'Amid. But he only mentions the embassy to Egypt, not the prisoner exchange. Much later, the Egyptian historian al-Maqrizi (d. 845/1442) mentions both events in his history of the Ayyubids. His report closely follows the information in the *History*, which was probably his source. The *History* appears therefore to give the fullest, and almost the only, account of these activities.<sup>26</sup>

### Trade between Muslim Anatolia and Egypt around 641/1243

Finally, the *History* provides some rare evidence of trade between Muslim Anatolia and Egypt in the early thirteenth century. As mentioned above, the authors of the *History* took a special interest in economic matters. In particular they recorded exchange rates and the types of coinage in circulation in Egypt. Thus Yusab states that, around the middle of 1243, news arrived that the Mongols (Tatars) had invaded Rum, which included the districts of Konya, Aksaray, Sivas and Malatya, and that Rum was a great land possessing numerous troops. He goes on to say, in somewhat confused fashion, that Rum was a region of Constantinople and that a Turkmen named Kilich Arslan had been taken in by a ruse, and that its (current) king had spent a great sum and struck *dinars*, the like of which had not been seen. He adds that merchants had come from Rum and brought with them some of these *dinars*, some of which weighed 450 *mithqals*<sup>27</sup> and some of which were between 50 and 450 *mithqals*. They were of very high purity and drove down the value of Egyptian gold coins.

A few lines later, Yusab states again that merchants arrived from the Muslim land of Rum bearing *dinars* from that country. Some of them weighed less than an Egyptian *dinar* but some weighed 450 or 205 *mithqals*. The writer says he had not seen the latter two but he had heard about them. He did see a *dinar* of 102.5 *mithqals*. On one side

of it were the Muslim confession of faith and the name of the caliph. On the other was the name of King Kai-Ka'us, the son of Kai-Qubad. Its date was 635/1237-8 and it was struck in Konya (Sawirus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 2.292-3, English).

Apart from the account of Alp Arslan's siege of Edessa, these economic data are, to my mind, the most important information in the *History* on the Seljuks of Anatolia. They are important, above all, because of the scarcity of references to any kind of trade between Muslim Anatolia and Egypt during the Seljuk period. Not even the renowned Cairo Genizah documents shed any light on this.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, like the account of the siege of Edessa, this information has escaped the notice of all modern historians of the Seljuks of Rum, including Cahen.<sup>29</sup>

It is not possible to determine if the merchants who brought the aforesaid gold coins to Egypt were Muslims or non-Muslims, nor can we be absolutely sure that they were natives of Rum. Furthermore, it is not possible to say for certain if they arrived by land or sea, but the latter is more likely. The overland journey through Syria would have been long and dangerous. Conditions there were generally unsettled, especially in light of the marauding Mongols. In 603/1207, the Seljuk ruler Kai-Khusraw I captured Antalya from an Italian adventurer who had close relations with the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus and was perhaps acting on behalf of the Laskarids of Nicaea. We know that prior to his conquest of this city Egyptian merchants were present there. Indeed, their complaints to Kai-Khusraw about the treatment of one of their caravans spurred him to conquer it.<sup>30</sup> A few years later, however, the inhabitants revolted. Kai-Ka'us I, Kai-Khusraw's successor, captured it once and for all in 612/1216. This conquest gave the Seljuks their first port on the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, in 611/1214, the same ruler had captured Sinop on the Black Sea. The permanent capture of Antalya allowed the Seljuks to establish a direct and secure trade route across Anatolia connecting the Mediterranean with the Black Sea. This route was meant, in part, to siphon off some of the sea traffic that passed through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus and was controlled by the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople or the Laskarids of Nicaea. Although not without its hazards, the sea route from Egypt or Syria to Antalya was much shorter than that to the Dardanelles. The *History* may therefore be providing us with the earliest known evidence of direct sea trade, without transiting Christian territory, between Muslim Rum and Egypt, that is, between Seljuk Antalya and Alexandria.<sup>31</sup> We should add that the *History* mistakes 'King Kai-Ka'us' for Kai-Khusraw II (r. 634-44/1237-46). He was 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad's successor, and is known to have minted exceptionally large gold *dinars* in 635/1237-8 as described by the *History*.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

After closely examining the information found in the *History* on the Seljuks of Anatolia, we can now easily answer the questions posed at the beginning of this contribution. Why did Cahen mention this work as a primary source? Because the *History* provides contemporary reports on a number of events related to the Seljuks of Anatolia, and because these reports seem to be independent accounts of these events, it can certainly be classified, at least technically, as a primary source. And Cahen, being a thorough researcher, would have recognised it as such.

This leads to the second question. As a primary source, to what extent does it in fact shed light on the history of the Seljuks of Anatolia? The *History's* important and independent description of Alp Arslan's siege of Edessa and its short and muddled version of the battle of Manzikert actually fall outside the history of the Seljuks of Anatolia, the roots of whose sultanate were only established afterwards by Sulayman b. Qutulmish upon his capture of Nicaea around 467/1075. As for the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa in 586/1190, the *History* has little to say and adds nothing to what can be found in other sources. This is also true of the references in the *History* to the Khwarazm-Shah's invasion of Anatolia in 623/1226, except for the note that 'Ala' al-Din Kai-Qubad sought al-Kamil's help against him in 1226. Much more detailed is the *History's* report on al-Kamil's campaign against 'Ala' al-Din in 631/1234. Although this is a fairly long and independent account of this campaign, it adds only a few minor facts to what is known from other contemporary sources. Indeed these other sources are needed to clarify the information in the *History*. With respect to 'Ala' al-Din's campaign in eastern Anatolia in 632/1235, the *History's* brief report provides nothing significant compared to other sources. Its discussion of the peace treaty between the Seljuks and Ayyubids in 634/1237 contributes only a few noteworthy facts not found elsewhere: that the Abbasid caliph attempted to make peace between 'Ala' al-Din and al-Kamil because of the Mongol threat, that al-Kamil sent an envoy with the caliph's ambassador to 'Ala' al-Din for this purpose, and that there was a prisoner exchange. Finally, the *History* provides a few intriguing and unique references to trade between Muslim Anatolia and Egypt around 641/1243.

Altogether, the *History* may be classified as a primary source for the Seljuks of Anatolia, but it is of only marginal significance. It provides no information on their domestic affairs and only a few facts on their external relations not found in other sources. Indeed, it is worthy of note that although Cahen first brought the *History* to the attention of scholars as a primary source for the Seljuks of Anatolia, he almost completely ignores it.

## Notes

1. P. Holt published an English translation of the French as *The Formation of Turkey*. Holt reduced the bibliography to a very brief summary of primary and secondary sources and rather inexplicably deleted almost all of Cahen's footnotes.
2. For this study I have used the edition and English translation of Sāwirus 1948-74: vol. 2, pt 3, vol. 3, pt 2, and vol. 4, pts 1 and 2. The English translation is somewhat quirky and some mistranslations are remarkable. 'Kurj' (Georgian) is repeatedly translated as 'Kurd' (e.g. vol. 4, pt 1.93), and Rūm, which of course means Rome in reference to the Roman or Byzantine Empire, is translated as 'the Grecian Lands' (e.g. vol. 4, pt 1.128). The editors and translators of the *History of the Patriarchs* made no attempt to compare it with other relevant works, especially contemporary histories. Indeed, the lack of an *apparatus criticus* is especially regrettable because the information contained in this work was compiled unsystematically. The dates for events, in either the Coptic or Muslim calendar, are often lacking. Furthermore many events are described vaguely or erroneously. In some cases they are run together. In short, the text and translation can be confusing.
3. As we shall see below, Turan (1984), in his voluminous *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*, which is probably the most authoritative book on the Seljuks of Anatolia, did not include the *History of the Patriarchs* in his bibliography, but he did cite it in several footnotes albeit in slapdash fashion. Holt even deleted it from his translation of Cahen.
4. It is not mentioned, for example, in Köprülü's (1943), 'Anadolu Selçukluları tarihi'nin yerli kaynakları', translated by Leiser (1992) as *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Their History and Culture according to Local Muslim Sources*. The emphasis here is clearly on works written in Anatolia, but Köprülü also speaks very generally on the need to consult sources beyond Anatolia, including Christian sources and the chronicles of Egypt (p. 2 of translation). The *History of the Patriarchs* is not included in the Turkish Ministry of Culture's 1971 bibliography of Seljuk history.
5. For an overview of the *History*, see den Heijer 1991.
6. On the life of Mawhūb, see den Heijer 1989: 86-91.
7. Matthew of Edessa, *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*: 1993, English trans. by Dostourian, pp. 131-2; cf. 1962, Turkish trans. by Andreasyan, pp. 139-40. The Turkish translation is not based wholly on Dulaurier's French translation, *Chronique de Matthieu d'Édesse* (Paris 1858), as Dostourian states, but on the Armenian text published in Jerusalem in 1869.
8. In his history of Edessa, Segal (1970) relied chiefly on Matthew of Edessa for his description of the siege (pp. 220-1). He did not know of the account in the *History*. It is surprising that Michael the Syrian, who was the

- Jacobite patriarch of Antioch from 1166 to 1199, did not mention this siege in his great Syriac *Chronicle*. Aktok-Kaşgarlı (1981) believes that Matthew's account of the siege of Edessa is fabricated and that Alp Arslan actually took the city or, at least, it submitted to him, 608-11. Her view cannot be maintained in light of the *History*.
9. Sibṭ 1968: 144. The account in Bar Hebraeus' (d. 1286; 2003: vol. 1, 219) is almost exactly that found in Sibṭ.
  10. On the war elephants of the Ghaznavids, see Bosworth, 'Fīl', *EP*<sup>2</sup>; on those of Tīmūr at the battle of Ankara, see *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger* 1879: 21. India was, of course, the source of these elephants. Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349) describes the war elephants of the Sultan of Delhi. See Quatremère's French translation of his *Masālik al-abṣār* 1838: 181, 188-9, 202-3. Abū Shāma (1974) reports that in 610/1213-14 the Ayyūbid ruler of Egypt al-'Ādil sent an elephant bearing gifts to Georgia and it attracted crowds of spectators in Syria (p. 83).
  11. On Attaleiates account, see Vryonis 2005: 49-69, 2000: 439-50. On the sources for the battle, see also Vryonis 1992: 125-40. With one or two exceptions, including the *History*, the Arabic sources have been collected and translated into Turkish by Sümer and Sevim (1971) as *İslam kaynaklarına göre Malazgirt savaşı*. For English translations and commentary, see Hillenbrand's important (2007) book, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: the Battle of Manzikert*. An outline of the battle is also found in Hillenbrand, 'Malāzgird, 2. The Battle', *EP*<sup>2</sup>.
  12. See Ibn Shaddād 1964: 123-8; cf. Ibn Wāṣil 1953-77: vol. 2, 318-22. See also, Sibṭ 1951-2: vol. 1, 403-4 (this is an edition, in 2 vols, of sections 1 and 2 of part 8 of this work); Ibn al-'Adīm 1997: vol. 2, 590-1; Ibn al-Athīr 1997: vol. 10, 81-2. See also the contemporary Latin sources epitomised by Ansbert 1964.
  13. In the *History* the word Abkhāz lacks diacritical points and has an *alif* after the last letter. The translators thought this word might be Ancyra, but this is impossible. See Ibn Wāṣil 1953-77: vol. 4, 189, who says Jalāl al-Dīn went from Tiflis to the country of Abkhāz.
  14. Ibn al-'Amīd's history, or *al-Majmū' al-mubārak*, was a universal chronicle covering the period from creation to 658/1260. It is important only for the period of his life from 602/1205 to 658/1260.
  15. In his edition of Ibn al-'Amīd, Cahen cites the *History* in ms. as referring to the Mongol defeat of Jalāl al-Dīn.
  16. According to Yūṣāb, in 629/1232, just before al-Kāmil laid siege to Āmid in an attempt to overthrow its Artuqid ruler, he made for 'al-Kāfir', where he was repulsed. The translators of the *History* interpret 'al-Kāfir' to mean Kai-Qubād, which makes no sense (Sāwīrus 1948-74: vol. 4, pt 1.122, English). I have not been able to identify 'al-Kāfir', but many place names in northern Syria began with Kafr or Kafar, meaning 'small village' in



- Arabic. On al-Kāmil's siege of Āmid, see Gottschalk (1958: 206–7), where there is no mention of his being repulsed anywhere beforehand.
17. See Ibn al-Athīr 1997: vol. 10, 408–10, 416–17; al-Nasawī 1365 Sh./1986, especially chs 52, 83–6, 89, 97–102 (in none of which is there mention of an envoy from Jalāl al-Dīn to al-Kāmil); Ibn Wāṣil 1953–77: vol. 4, index. Also important is the Persian work of Ibn Bībī (1959), written from the Seljuk perspective (pp. 162–4, 166–71).
  18. For accounts of this campaign, see Gottschalk 1958: 208–17; Humphreys 1977: 224–7; Turan 1984: 379–81. Gottschalk describes the main sources for it on p. 216, n. 1, except for Ibn al-'Amīd. Cf. those of Turan, p. 381, n. 86, who includes Ibn al-'Amīd in manuscript. Humphreys cites only Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Wāṣil. Gottschalk does not directly cite the *History* anywhere. Turan mentions the *History* in his account of this campaign, and subsequently in four other notes related to 'Alā' al-Dīn. He gives only page numbers without identifying which text he used, although it was presumably the Paris ms. He does not, however, include the *History* in his bibliography. It is worthy of note that he includes the Paris ms. of this work in the bibliographies of his articles 'Keyhusrev II' and 'Keykubād I' in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Unlike Turan, Gottschalk does not take Ibn Bībī's work on the Seljuks fully into consideration here. Curiously, Gottschalk mentions Duda's German translation of Ibn Bībī a year before it was published (p. 15). Ibn Bībī describes al-Kāmil's campaign in some detail and says it was mindless and sheer folly (pp. 184–7 of the German translation). Cahen (1988) includes the *History* in his account of al-Kāmil's campaign (pp. 87–8).
  19. As will be seen below, the sources vary considerably on al-Kāmil's invasion route. Many of the places mentioned on his route are far apart. See Map II in Honigmann 1935.
  20. Sāwīrus 1948–74: vol. 4, pt 1.129–33, English. Gottschalk (1958), citing Blochet's 1903–4 note on the *History* in the fourth part of his translation of the section on the Ayyūbids in al-Maqrīzī's *Kitāb al-Sulūk* 1980: 273, n. 1 (detailed summaries of Ibn Wāṣil's and the *History*'s accounts of al-Kāmil's campaign), says that it is almost literally in agreement with Ibn Wāṣil's account of events at Kartpert, which we shall describe below, so the author of this part of the *History* must have used him – 'Blochet . . . gibt einen Bericht der Gesch. d. Patr. (Ms. Par. arab. 302, p. 364 seq) über den Feldzug von Ḥartabirt, der fast wörtlich mit dem Bericht Ibn Wāṣil's übereinstimmt. Daraus ergibt sich, daß Gesch. d. Patr. die mufarriğ al-kurūb benutzt hat' – p. 217, n. 1. We shall see, however, that this was not the case.
  21. It should be noted that, according to Gottschalk (1958: 8), Ibn Wāṣil's major sources up to 628/1230 for the life of al-Kāmil were Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn al-'Adīm. Afterwards he himself is the primary source of his work. And according to Cahen ('Makīn b. al-'Amīd', *Et*), Ibn Wāṣil or a common

- source was the primary source of Ibn al-‘Amīd up to the death of Saladin (d. 589/1193). Then he himself becomes the primary source of his work.
22. A dry measure, which varied from region to region and could be as much as 18.8 litres. See Hinz 1970: 44-5.
  23. Cf. Humphreys 1977: 227; Cahen 1988: 88.
  24. The translators of the *History* translate Dār al-‘Āfiya as ‘hostel’. On this campaign, see especially Ibn Wāṣil 1953-77: vol. 5, 98-9; Cahen 1955-7: 141; Ibn Bibī 1959: 190-2 of the German translation; Ibn al-‘Adīm 1997: vol. 2, 678.
  25. Gottschalk (1958: 225) mentions it in passing; Turan (1984: 405) gives a few more details. Gottschalk cites al-Maqrīzī (see below, note 26) while Turan cites the *History*. Kaymaz (1958: 36-9) cites the Paris ms. of the *History* in his description of the joint embassy from the caliph and al-Kāmil to ‘Ala’ al-Dīn. He does not, however, list it in his bibliography. Neither Humphreys nor Cahen mention this episode.
  26. Cahen 1955-7: 120, 143. Cahen says, erroneously, that Ibn al-‘Amīd is the sole source of information on this embassy (p. 120). Cf. al-Maqrīzī 1980: 224-5. It is worthy of note that neither Ibn Wāṣil (1953-77: cf. vol. 5, 124) nor Ibn al-‘Adīm (1997) mention the joint embassy and prisoner exchange. This is especially puzzling with respect to the latter who was on the scene at the Seljuk court as the ambassador from Aleppo (Ibn al-‘Adīm 1997: vol. 2, 682).
  27. On the weight of the *mithqāl*, which varied, see Hinz 1970: 1-2.
  28. Most Genizah documents date before the sixth/thirteenth century. See for example, Jacoby 1998: 83-95.
  29. Cahen (1951) does not mention it, although he may not have known of the *History* before he published this article.
  30. Turan 1984: 283-4. For further details, see the monograph by S. Redford and G. Leiser (2008) on the Seljuk conquest of Antalya and the inscriptions on its citadel walls.
  31. The earliest known reference to sea trade between the Gulf of Antalya while under Muslim control, specifically the town of Alanya, and Egypt is apparently that of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1958-94). He mentions seeing merchants from Alexandria and Cairo there around 1332 (ibid.: vol. 2, 417). They were exporting lumber to Egypt. On the international trade of the Seljuks, see Kayaoğlu (1981: 368), where he cites Ibn Baṭṭūṭa as the earliest reference concerning sea trade between Seljuk Anatolia and Egypt.
  32. Leiser 1998: 104. It has been assumed that these exceptionally large gold coins were made for special presentation purposes, but judging from the *History*, they entered, perhaps willy-nilly, international trade.

## Genealogy and Exemplary Rulership in the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan*\*

Charles Melville

A manuscript now entitled *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* may be found in the Saint Petersburg University Library, no. OP. 950 (B).<sup>1</sup> It was catalogued by A. T. Tagirdjanov (1962: 116–18), who correctly identified the work and the disorder of its contents and established the proper sequence of the text, which unfortunately has several lacunae and ends abruptly in mid-sentence.<sup>2</sup> The fragment, on folios 9–88, is bound together with two other texts, to which it has no relation, either in terms of subject matter, calligraphy or paper, in a small volume of 133 folios.<sup>3</sup> The page size of the *Tarikh* is 230 x 160 mm and the text block is 176 x 100 mm, within a margin ruled in blue, black and gold. The manuscript is in poor condition, being not only well worn and soiled by age, but having suffered water damage that has affected the bottom line of text on each page; possibly a victim of the flood of 1924. Furthermore, it has undergone the indignity of being used as a drawing pad for a childish hand, in which various doodles can be found at different points in the text, apart from the fly-leaves, especially on the first page (fol. 9r.) and beside the paintings (see esp. fols 39r., 45r.).

Unfortunately, being defective at the end, the copy is undated, and it might be attributed, in its present state, to more than one phase of production, as will be discussed below.<sup>4</sup> The *terminus ante quem* is

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16 Safar 1100 (10 December 1688), inscribed in a later hand on fol. 37v. The volume is certainly of Central Asian provenance, being typically bound in olive green covers, with a central multi-form medallion and two pendants stamped in red on the front and back, and green paper doublures. It was acquired for the library in 1888 by E. F. Kahl (1861-91), who worked most of his short life in Tashkent.<sup>5</sup>

Although the first cataloguers considered the work, with some justification, to be an abridgement of the *Tarikh-i Jahangusha-yi Juvaini*,<sup>6</sup> it is in fact based on the celebrated *Jami' al-tawarikh* of Rashid al-Din Fadl-Allah Tabib Hamadani. My original interest in the text was to see how Rashid al-Din's history was modified or adapted for a later audience, but it rapidly became apparent that the author had merely put together a set of extended excerpts, using Rashid al-Din's words verbatim. The main point of interest thus becomes what exactly he chose to include and what to omit, and why.<sup>7</sup>

The manuscript is interesting for various reasons: when and for whom it was written, when it was copied, and not least, for the eleven paintings it contains, which might provide some evidence of the original cycle of illustrations for Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-tawarikh*.

Before examining the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* in more detail, it will be useful to recall briefly the chief features of the work that it abridged (Melville, 2008b). Between c. 1300 and 1310, Rashid al-Din, the famous vizier of Ghazan Khan, wrote what is often called the first world history, his *Jami' al-tawarikh* ('Compendium of Chronicles'). The first part, known as the *Tarikh-i mubarak-i Ghazani*, records the origin and early history of the Mongols, the rise of Chingiz Khan and his conquests, followed by the fortunes of his successors, including those in Iran. This was later supplemented (in the reign of Öljeitü) by a history of the Islamic world before the coming of the Mongols, and sections on the people they came into contact with: the Chinese, Turks, Indians, Jews and Franks.

The history of the Mongols is written according to a clear and deliberate pattern, of which Rashid al-Din reminds the reader at several points in the text (1994: 37, 306, 617, etc.) Each reign, starting with that of Chingiz Khan, is ordered in three parts. The first gives biographical details of the ruler at the time of his accession, his wives, sons and daughters and sometimes the senior figures of his reign. The second is a narrative history of the events of the reign. Finally, the third gives examples of the good deeds or qualities of the ruler, and other information that has been omitted from the first two sections.

This large and authoritative official chronicle has received a lot of attention, but mainly for its factual contents rather than its purpose. This was at least partly as a 'lieu de mémoire' to preserve the Mongols' own history, in danger of becoming forgotten, as noted by the author

himself (Rashid al-Din 1994: 36): 'for in this age no-one is informed or aware of those matters. . .'.

Finally, we should remember that Rashid al-Din's work was copied and illustrated under the supervision of the author. This was a new and important development, and one that was matched by the illustration of other historical texts at around the same time: notably Bal'ami's *Tarjuma-yi Tabari* (as well as the *Shahnama* of Firdausi), inaugurating a trend that continued in certain historiographical contexts to the early nineteenth century. There are no surviving examples of the original illustrations for the history of the Mongol Khans in copies dating from Rashid al-Din's lifetime, but it is clear from the text where the author intended images to go; this scheme is partly reflected in the St Petersburg manuscript.<sup>8</sup>

As noted above, the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* reproduces passages from the *Jami' al-tawarikh* verbatim. Indeed, it is striking how close the text is to Rashid al-Din's work as we know it now. What were these passages? The Appendix to this article provides a concordance between the two texts; here we need only to draw attention to the main features.

The author starts by giving the contents of his work, which consists of two chapters (*fasl*). The first, containing the history (*dastan*) of each Chingizid ruler, is in sixteen sections, as follows: (1) Chingiz Khan, (2) Ögedei, (3) Jochi, (4) Chaghatay, (5) Tolui, (6) Güyük, (7) Möngke, (8) Qubilai, (9) Temür, (10) Hülegü, (11) Abaqa, (12) Tegüder, (13) Arghun, (14) Gaikhatu, (15) Ghazan and (16) Öljeitü (*sic*; *TCK*: ff. 101r.-111r.). The inclusion of the latter seems to provide evidence that this section of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* did once exist. However, if so, the author does not seem to have seen it himself, for in fact he ends with the reign of Ghazan Khan, as do all the surviving texts of Rashid al-Din. Many of these reigns, in addition to Öljeitü's, are missing entirely, namely from most of Jochi (3) to the start of Möngke (7), Tegüder (12), and Gaikhatu (14),<sup>9</sup> apart from other lacunae.

Chapter 2 contains the names of the Turkish nomadic peoples (*aqvam-i atrak-i sahara-nishin*) descended from Dib Baqui son of Japheth, of the right hand and the left hand, starting with the descendants of Oghuz. This remains just a list, omitting the legends associated with these times, and the author does not return later (so far as can be determined, at least) to deal with the history of the tribes. He mentions (fol. 16r.) that full details can be found in the *Jahangusha* (i.e. Rashid al-Din) and abbreviates his source to explain simply that after several generations, the Mongols came to acquire total dominion (cf. Rashid al-Din 1994: 62).

The author then returns to chapter 1, with an account of the early history of Chingiz Khan, initiating a new era that culminated in the

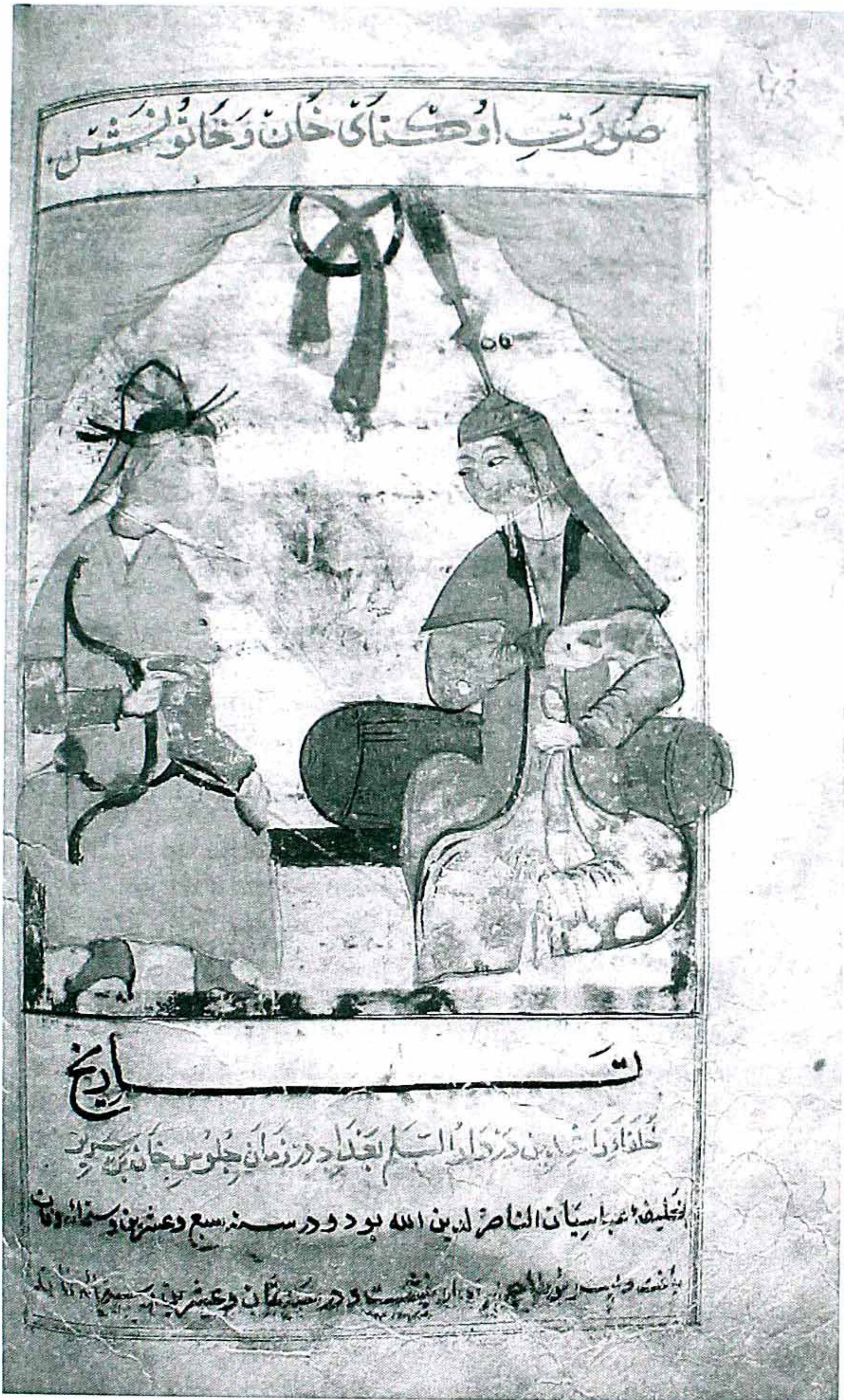
conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam. He omits all the previous history of Chingiz's ancestors, though he lists them in the first section, back to Alan Qo'a, before mentioning Chingiz Khan's main wives and children, abbreviating Rashid al-Din's text, notably in the brief description of the birth of Jochi, 'while his mother was on a journey' (fol. 80r.). The *Jami' al-tawarikh* at this point anticipates a picture and a family tree: *va surat-i chingiz khan va jadval-i sha'b-i farzandan-i u bar in hay'at-ast*. It is evident that the picture of Chingiz Khan with his wife (Börte) that is found on fol. 45r. should follow in the text at this point.<sup>10</sup> This is the first of such instances.

The following section, on the caliphs in Baghdad at the time of Chingiz's birth, is the only part of the text of the manuscript as it survives today that is a composite section compiled from different passages of Rashid al-Din; as such, it covers events in a very sketchy way up to the death of the Eldigüzid Qutlugh Inanch in c. 1198. These sections that punctuate the narrative of the reigns of the Great Qa'ans are also the least satisfactory parts of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* itself, being often repetitive, confused, or lacking the intended factual information.

The author then moves straight to the death of Chingiz Khan, which is illustrated by a painting of his funeral cortège (fol. 78v.). There follows a chapter on his life (*sirat*) and good qualities, which is largely taken up with his sayings (*bilig*), illustrated by a picture of Chingiz Khan hunting (fol. 26v.). This can be taken to represent an essential aspect of his kingly virtues. The horse and rider has been pounced – either traced directly from another manuscript, or itself used as a model by a later artist. The former is more likely, as it is quite different from the style of the other paintings in this copy.

In recounting what is contained in the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan*, it is easy to lose sight of what is omitted: namely, the whole of Chingiz Khan's career and conquests, both in detail and in the annalistic summary provided by Rashid al-Din. All that remains is material from the first and third chapters of the reign: the persistently relevant and important question of genealogy (wives and sons), some brief effort to link the reign with events in the Muslim world, and the edifying anecdotes and wisdom about statecraft, which therefore gives the work the air of a manual in the genre of a 'mirror for princes'.

The same pattern continues with the reign of Ögedei, which contains a chapter on his genealogy, wives and children, followed by a picture of the Qa'an and his wife (fol. 30v.; Fig. 9.1). This is followed without a break by a very brief statement about the caliph in Baghdad at the time of his succession, an account of the Qa'an's death, and of the caliph at the time of his death (fol. 31r.), all extracted from different passages of Rashid al-Din. This very cursory treatment of the reign is followed by an extended section (equivalent to Rashid al-Din's chapter 3), reporting



**Figure 9.1** Ögedei Qa'an enthroned with his wife, *Tārīkh-i Chingīz Khān*, St Petersburg State University Library, ms. OP. 950 (B), fol. 30v. The numeral 43 is the page number. © Oriental Faculty, St Petersburg University, 2007; reproduced by kind permission of the Dean of the Department of Asian and African Studies.

Ögedei's generosity and kingly actions, with a handful of the stories omitted.

As noted above, most of the account of Jochi is missing, a large lacuna in the text ending with a very abbreviated section on Tolui's son Möngke and his death (fols 37r.-v.), omitting the whole of his reign, but ending with the name of the caliph in Baghdad and apparently culminating in a painting of Möngke enthroned with his wife (fol. 38r.), which should have come at the start of the reign.

The account of Qubilai that follows is marred by lacunae, but on previous evidence, probably not much more is missing than the completion of the passage about his sons, the contemporary ruler in Baghdad and perhaps something of his character, before his death is reported (fol. 44r.), followed by a half-page notice of the reign of Temür Qa'an (fol. 44v.). The painting evidently intended from the concluding phrases and from the catchword *surat*, to illustrate Temür Qa'an enthroned, is missing. There is an example of Temür Qa'an enthroned in the Raza Library manuscript.<sup>11</sup>

Turning to the history of the Ilkhans and the history (*dastan*) of Hülegü, the author states that 'the aim in this book is to give pleasure (*maqṣud ba-lazzat-i u-st, sic?*). We will start with the story of his reign and also refer to something of the justice and fairness of Sultan Ghazan, and will conclude the book with that' (fol. 44v.). This notice of the contents of the final portion of the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* allows us to feel confident that the surviving text more or less reflects the author's original intention and that little of significance is lost by the various lacunae that occur.

The text resumes at the end of the account of Hülegü's wives, and a list of his sons and daughters, with some abbreviation, and is followed by a picture of the Il Khan and his wife (Doquz Khatun; fol. 50r.), as anticipated in the text (fol. 49v.). The author does now include the history of Hülegü's conquests and victories, omitting only the campaign against the Isma'ilis and going straight to the assault on Baghdad. A few lines are missing between fols 63v. and 64v., presumably intended to be included around the picture of the battle scene on fol. 64r., which has become too big for the space allocated to it. The author follows Rashid al-Din without a break until the description of the construction of the observatory at Maragha for Nasir al-Din Tusi, thus ending the account of the reign on this positive note. He then concludes with the narrative of Abaqa's expedition to Khurasan and Hülegü's death. In other words, the author omits the details of Hülegü's invasion of Syria and defeat at 'Ain Jalut, the campaigns in eastern Anatolia and Mosul and the conflict with Berke Khan, all of which might be sensitive matters for his patrons; but otherwise he gives a very full account of the reign of the first Il Khan and the establishment of the dynasty in Iran.



The treatment of Abaqa's reign (from fol. 74r.) contains several omissions but no lacuna, and once more concentrates on his genealogy and offspring – with a space left blank for a painting of the ruler and his throne (fol. 75v.) – his accession, and the invasion of Syria that ended in defeat at the battle of Homs, and his death.

There is a lacuna for the whole of Ahmad Tegüder's reign and the start of Arghun's, although the pattern set for Abaqa is repeated once the text resumes, with an account of Arghun's offspring and accession (fol. 39r.), one or two highlights of the reign, such as the fall of Sa'd al-Daula, and the events surrounding Arghun's death.

Gaikhatu's reign is omitted. Although the narrative moves directly (fol. 42v.) to the reign of Ghazan without a break, it is possible that a lacuna occurred before the manuscript was paginated; not only is a chapter on Gaikhatu anticipated in the list of contents (see above), but the painting on fol. 42r. must be a representation of his accession. The catchword (*dastan*) on fol. 41v. could as well refer to the anticipated history of Gaikhatu as to that of Ghazan, which in fact follows.

A question remains whether there is a lacuna in the text of Ghazan Khan as it has come down to us. As it stands, the section on Ghazan's genealogy and wives, followed by the painting of his throne (fol. 43v.), precedes the account of his conversion to Islam and then, without a break, the chapter enumerating his good deeds, ending abruptly in the middle of his endowment of religious establishments in Tabriz and Syria. As such a selective treatment of the reign is entirely in keeping with the way in which the author has chosen to represent the reigns of earlier Mongol Great Qa'ans and Il Khans, there is no reason to suppose that much if anything is missing from the text.

In short, this is a radical abridgement of Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-tawarikh* and the choice of what to include and omit must reflect the author's concept of what best puts across his message. Despite the fragmentary survival of the text, the undisturbed sections that remain concentrate in every case on the genealogy of the Mongol khans and recording their wives and children. There is almost no account of the actual events of the reigns of Chingiz Khan or his successors, until Hülegü's invasions of Iran, the capture of Baghdad and inauguration of the Ilkhanate. Furthermore, when more extended passages are reproduced from Rashid al-Din, these invariably consist of edifying material that reveal the positive and inspirational aspects of the rulers' legacy, from the reported *dicta* of Chingiz Khan and anecdotes of Ögedei's liberality, to the conversion of Ghazan and his pious works. It is obvious that these aspects are presented as a role model for the rulers to whom the work is addressed, and that the author is going beyond his explicit model (*Jami' al-tawarikh*) in his manipulation of the past, to preserve an image of Chingiz Khan and his successors that was helpful to the



Figure 9.2 *Tārīkh-i Chingīz Khān*, ms. OP. 950 (B), fols 9v.–10r., identifying the author, patron and date of composition. © Oriental Faculty, St Petersburg University, 2007; reproduced by kind permission of the Dean of the Faculty of Asian and African Studies.

current purpose of legitimising Mongol rule in the areas brought under their control. Who were these rulers and who was exhorting them in this way?

The *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* was compiled by a certain Sati b. Husam al-Din al-Hasan b. Mahmud, who interestingly describes himself as al-Qunavi by origin but al-Arzanjani by birth, al-Hanafi by *madhhab* and al-Maulavi (Mevlevi) by formation. He wrote the work, unusually, for a female patroness, named as Khuvand Islamshah Khatun, the 'Banu of this hereditary land, oyster pearl of the highest, adornment of the howdah of the noble, the Bitlis of the time and age, Khadija of the era and epoch, Immaculate one of the world and the faith, and Queen of queens in the two worlds'.<sup>12</sup> The work was started on 1 Rajab 779/1 January 1378 (see Fig. 9.2; *TCK*, fols 9v.–10r.).

The author can be identified as the Amir Sati al-Mevlevi b. Husam al-Din Hasan, who is otherwise known as the patron or dedicatee of several manuscripts connected with the Mevlevi sufi order.<sup>13</sup> The

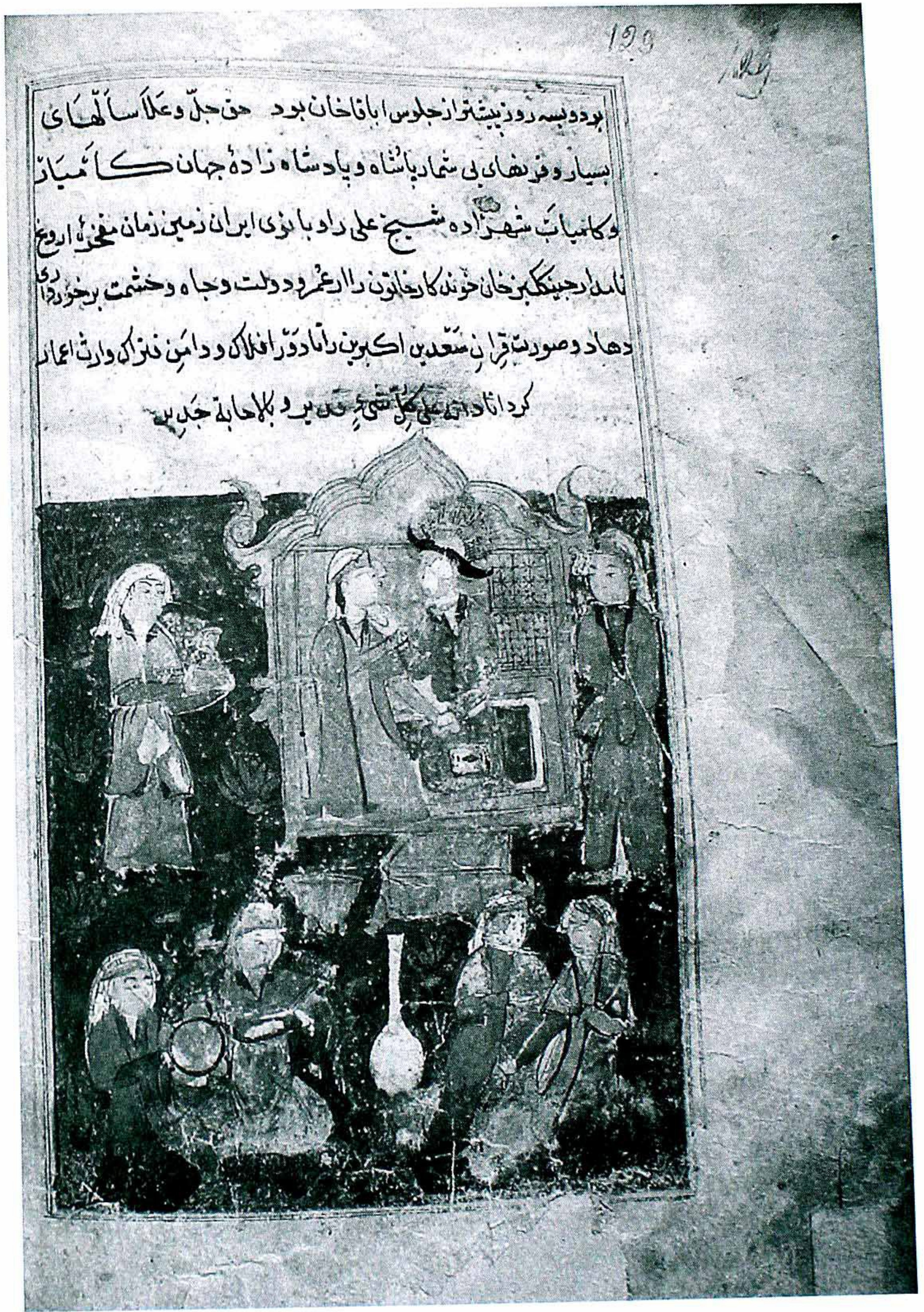
first is a copy of the *Masnavi-yi Veledi* (*Ribab-nama* and *Intihan-nama*), dated to the end of Jumada II, 767 (18 August 1366), now in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (ms. Mixt. 1594). The second is a two-volume copy of Jalal al-Din Rumi's *Divan-i kabir*, in Konya Mevlana Müzesi, no. 69, dated according to several inscriptions between 2 Shawwal 768 (1 June 1367) and 1 Rabi' II, 770 (13 November 1368); this was illuminated by Sati's son, Mustanjid. The third manuscript is a copy of Rumi's *Masnavi*, in the same museum, no. 1113, completed during Rajab 773 (January 1372). Sati's death is recorded on 5 Jumada I, 788 (4 June 1386).<sup>14</sup> The coincidence of the dates of these manuscripts leave no room for doubt about the identity of the compiler of the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan*, and reveal his involvement in considerable artistic activity in the Erzinjan region in the late fourteenth century.

Somewhat earlier in his career, Sati evidently held the citadel of Bayburt, together with Malik al-Din Hasan Janbeg and 'Ala al-Din 'Ali, for the castle was captured from them after a thirty-two-day siege by Pir Husain Beg, on 21 Dhu al-Qa'da 763 (11 September 1362).<sup>15</sup>

The patroness, Khuvand Islamshah Khatun, had apparently ordered a copy (?) of the '*Tavarikh-i Jahangusha-yi Ghazani*' and since her request could not be opposed, the author had hastened to offer a summary abridgement of it, not out of neglect for this well-wisher, but in the desire to have a speedy outcome, so that it may be the clearer for the seekers [of knowledge] (fols 9v.-10r.).

Islamshah Khatun was clearly a woman of importance. At this period, regrettably poorly documented, only the Eretnid regime seems to have had the sufficient significance (and one might add cultural aspirations) to be considered as plausible patrons. It is possible that Islamshah Khatun was the mother or more likely the wife of Shaikh-'Ali, the last Eretnid (Sultan 'Ala al-Din 'Ali, 767-82/1365-80).<sup>16</sup> This is made more plausible by the fact that on more than one occasion the author refers also to the Shahzada Shaikh-'Ali, in terms of the highest praise, as the ruling monarch and in hopes for the prosperity of his rule (fols 18r., 19v.), especially as the '*Shahzada-yi Jahan*' in conjunction with Khuvandegar Khatun, 'the Bilqis of the age and time', 'may their dominion live on and their majesty be eternal' (fol. 82v.). Elsewhere (fol. 73v.), she is referred to as the 'Banu of Iran-zamin of the time' and 'pride of the illustrious family (*urugh*) of Chingiz Khan'.<sup>17</sup> The picture that follows these words may be intended to illustrate the patroness and her husband enthroned (fol. 73v.; Fig. 9.3). So far, I have been unable to find any other reference to Islamshah Khatun.<sup>18</sup>

The Eretnids were based at this time in Sivas and Kayseri, while Konya was occupied by the Qaramanids, in the person of the long-lived and successful 'Ala al-Din Beg (c. 762-800/1361-98). The latter is described



**Figure 9.3** Tārīkh-i Chingīz Khān, ms. OP. 950 (B), fol. 73v., depicting the patrons of the work, namely Shahzada Shaikh-‘Ali and Islamshah Khatun. The numeral 129 is the page number. © Oriental Faculty, St Petersburg University, 2007; reproduced by kind permission of the Dean of the Department of Asian and African Studies.

as an educated ruler, and he commissioned Yarjani's *Shahnama* on the Qaramanids, which was the main source for Shikari's later history of the dynasty (Sümer 1978: esp. 622–3; Köprülü 1992: 17, 20–1). It is possible, if Sati is to be associated with Konya rather than Erzincan, that his patrons were the Qaramanids, but this is not so likely.

Neither the Qaramanids nor the Eretnids could claim to be Chingizids, although an unrecorded marriage to a descendant of the great conqueror might still have brought kudos to their reigns. Sati also refers to Shaikh Uvais (757–76/1356–74), who died only three years before the book was started, as the only prince to compare with Ghazan Khan.<sup>19</sup> Shaikh Uvais was clearly still fresh in the author's mind, no doubt because of his celebrated patronage of artists and his own skill as a painter and calligrapher.<sup>20</sup> As it happens, he too had a son called Shaikh-‘Ali (cf. Bayani 2003: 49), but this is surely just a coincidence. As with Azhdari's *Ghazan-nama*, there is a certain inevitability about the identity of the patrons and parties interested in such works; in the latter case, it was dedicated to Shaikh Uvais and the only known manuscript was made for Uzun Hasan Aq Qoyunlu (Melville 2003: esp. 142).

If the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* was composed for ‘Ala al-Din ‘Ali the Eretnid and his Chingizid wife, that is consistent with what we know of the nature of the Eretnid regime as a genuine successor state to the Ilkhans in northwest Iran and eastern Anatolia, and their likely interest in imperial history and genealogy, quite apart from the legitimising purpose that commissioning such a work would entail. There remains the related question of when and where the manuscript was actually copied.

Unfortunately, the current state of the manuscript gives few precise clues about its production. It must have been a handsome copy, written in a fine professional *naskh* in an attractive *mise-en-page*, with rubrics in black and red ink (see Fig. 9.2), similar to known texts of the *Jami‘ al-tawarikh* or early Timurid replacement copies (e.g. Soudavar 1992: 64–5, no. 22). Very possibly this is the original text made in the 1370s along with other fine manuscripts produced in Erzinjan at that time. If so, it was clearly left unfinished, for the illustrations are of a later date.

Unfortunately, the paintings, too, are unfinished and equally difficult to date with any precision, but they do give some clues to locating the manuscript in its artistic context. As is consistent with its subject matter, while including hunting and battle scenes, the abridgment chiefly contains paintings of the rulers enthroned, as anticipated in Rashid al-Din's text by the formulaic phrases that also refer to genealogical charts.<sup>21</sup> Here, at least, some points of comparison are available. The nearest example of such pictures from the *Jami‘ al-tawarikh*

contemporary with the time of Rashid al-Din are probably those in the Diez Albums in Berlin, which include not only large-scale depictions of the ruler surrounded by the court,<sup>22</sup> but also smaller scenes of the Khan and his consort enthroned together, which were designed to stand at the end of a genealogical table (Rührdanz 1997: esp. 297–8, figs 1–2; Komaroff and Carboni 2002: 114).

Apart from the Paris manuscript *supplément persan* 1113, dating from c. 1430,<sup>23</sup> which Karin Rührdanz has fruitfully drawn upon in identifying such scenes from the Diez albums, the Tashkent manuscript no. 1620 of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* is important in showing how the small pictures of the Khans and their wives were placed in the text (see Figs 9.4 and 9.5). The manuscript is defective at the beginning and end, but is generally dated to the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup> It is not clear to what extent this dating depends on the illustrations, only three of which are genuinely part of the manuscript but seem to be of a later date (at least, not before the Timurid period).<sup>25</sup> The painting of Bartan Bahadur and his wife (fol. 49v.) has been pasted into the text,<sup>26</sup> and it is this picture, rather than the other three, rather more elaborate paintings (fols 108v., 167r. and 190v.), that the pictures in the St Petersburg abridgement most closely resemble.<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that the Tashkent manuscript contains several spaces left blank for paintings that were not executed: for example, fol. 87v. (under a heading concerning the death of Chingiz Khan), fol. 211r. (for the enthronement of Abaqa) and fol. 238v. (for Gaikhatu). Some of the large blank spaces have later pencil doodles on them (fols 57r., 87v.). If nothing else, this Tashkent manuscript mirrors the fate of the abridgement now in St Petersburg: a text of rather high quality (see Fig. 9.6), dating from the fourteenth century, with its illustrative programme unfinished, and only partly achieved, in Central Asia at a later date.

A clue to what that date might be is found from other manuscripts of similar subject matter and of Central Asian origin. First is the Eastern Turkish *Tarikh-i Guzidā-yi Nusratnama*, a history of the Mongols from Chingiz Khan to the Uzbek Shaibani Khan, with a preamble on the Turko-Mongol tribes. This also contains several scenes of ruler and retinue, with a simplified depiction of the throne; the Khan is seated alone, without his consort. The manuscript is placed in the mid-sixteenth century by Barbara Brend (1994). She draws attention to certain characteristics in another copy of the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, in the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, which can be dated to a similar period and was probably produced in India.<sup>28</sup> It is interesting to note a distinction here between pictures of the ruler seated on his own (e.g. fols 53r., 89r.) and those showing him next to his wife (e.g.

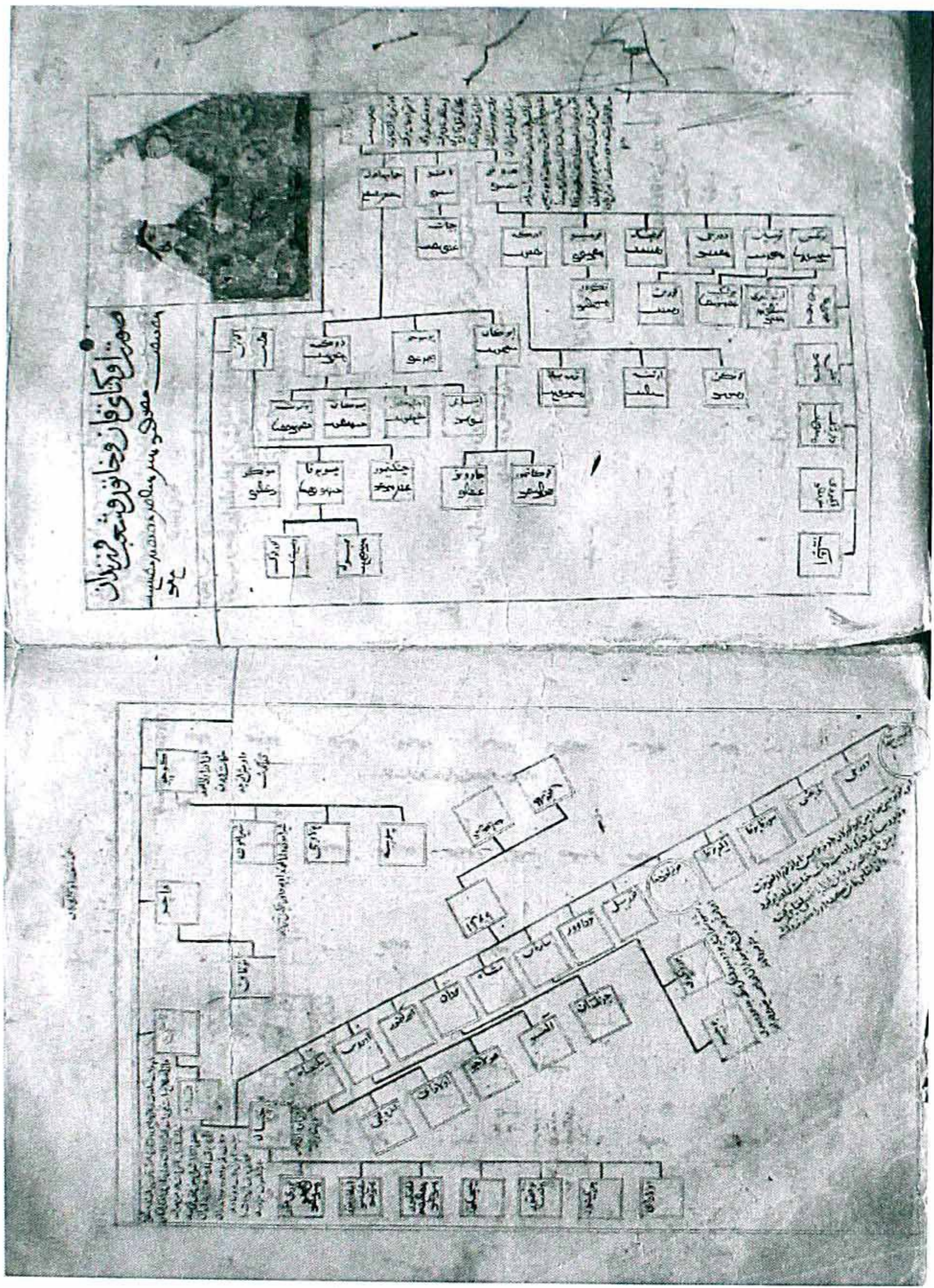


Figure 9.4 Ögedei Qa'an enthroned with his wife, Jami' al-tawarikh, Tashkent, Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, ms. 1620, fols 108v.-109r., reproduced with permission. Cf. Rashid al-Din 1994: 633. Note the use of the Uighur script in the rubric and the genealogical chart.

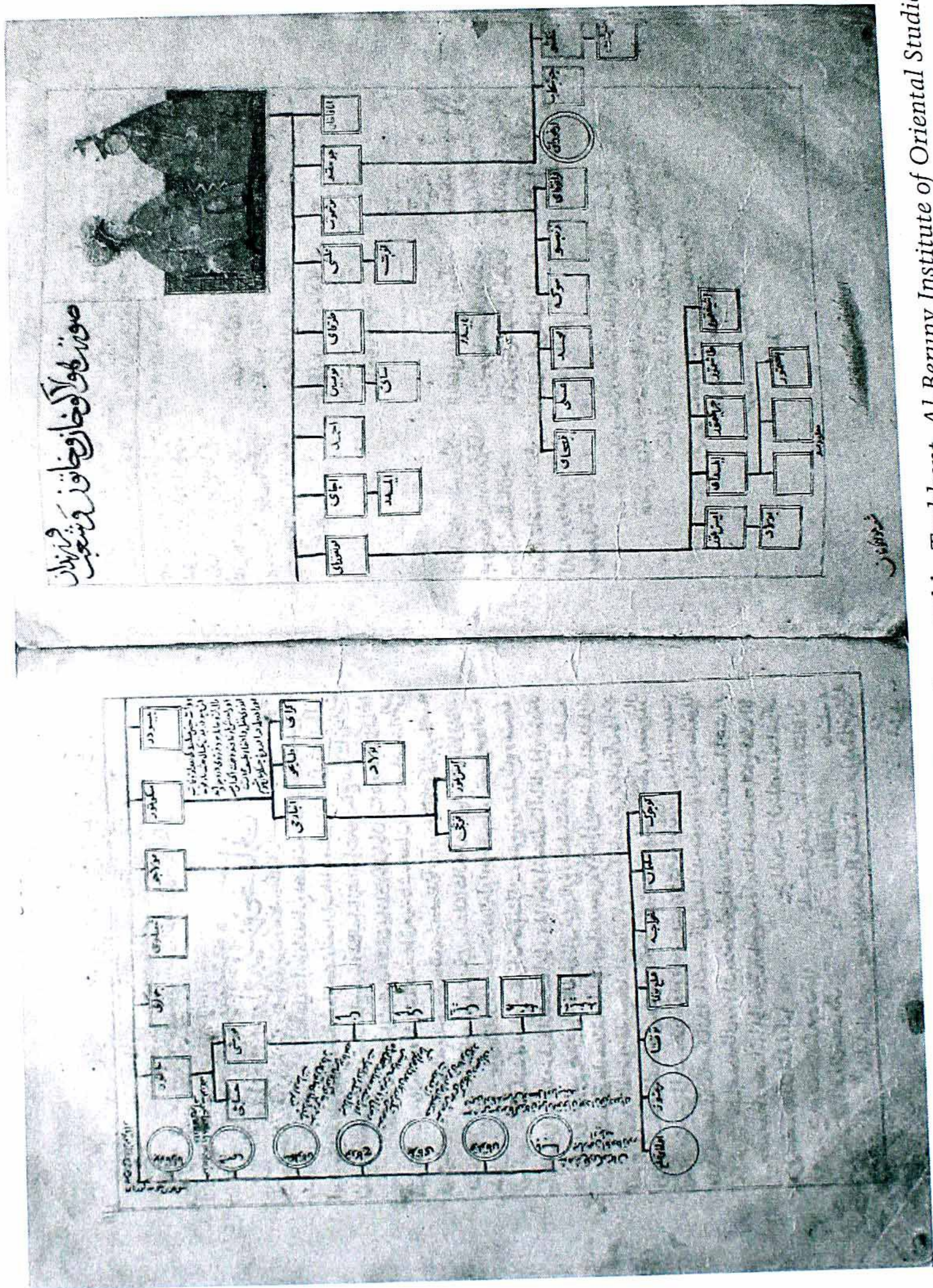


Figure 9.5 Hülegü Khan enthroned with his wife, Jami' al-tawarikh, Tashkent, Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, ms. 1620, fols 190v-191r., reproduced with permission. Cf. Rashid al-Din 1994: 973.



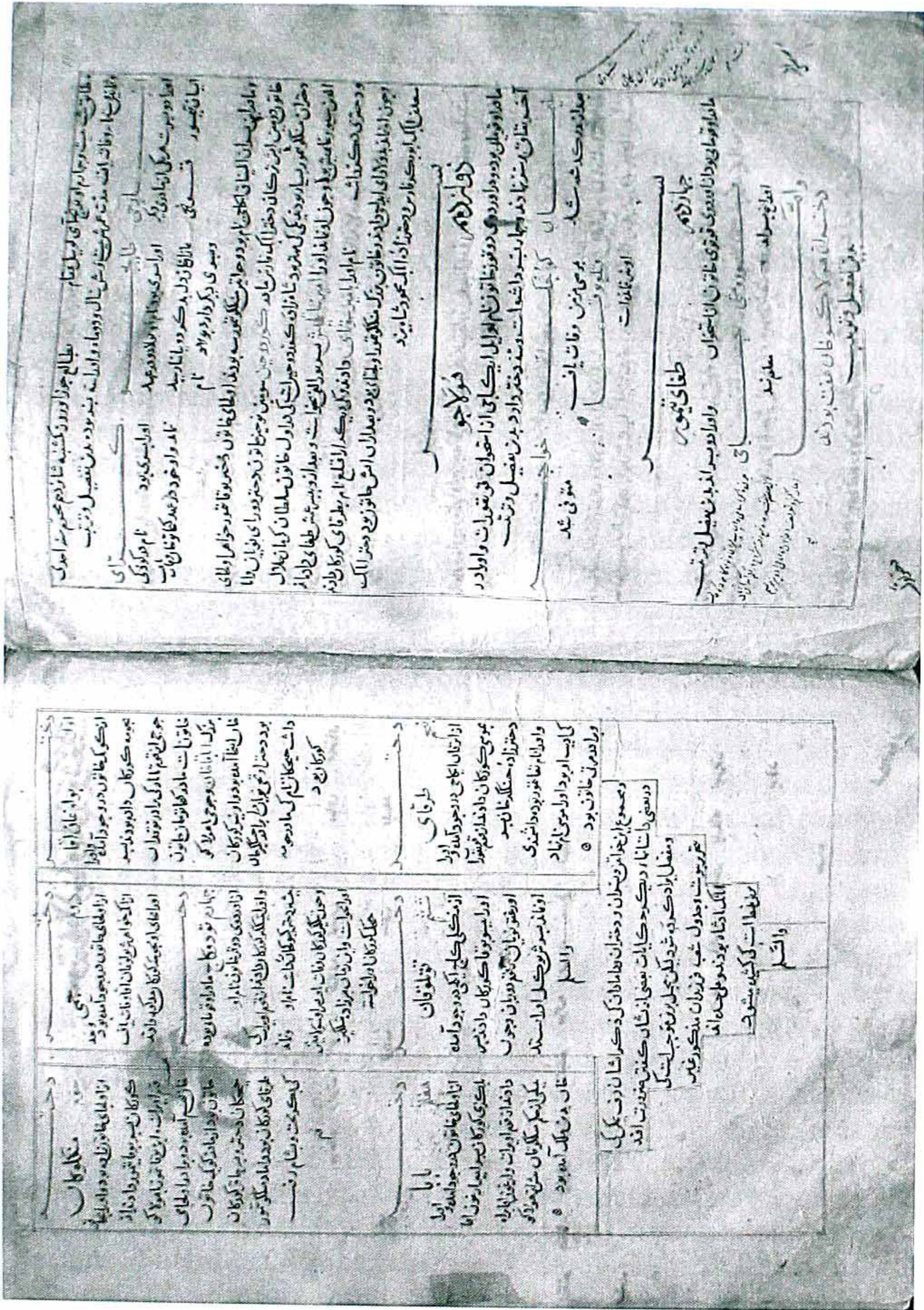


Figure 9.6 Jāmi' al-tawārīkh, Tashkent, Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, ms. 1620, fols 189v.-190r., showing the page and text layout; reproduced with permission. Cf. Rashīd al-Dīn 1994: 969-73.

fol. 22v., 56v., 58v.), the latter being much closer to the illustrations in the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan*.<sup>29</sup> The Calcutta manuscript in turn shares some features with an earlier copy of the Rashid al-Din, now in the Raza Library, Rampur, and contains several copies of its paintings. The text of the Rampur manuscript was probably again of fourteenth-century origin, and includes a few illustrations of this date, altered and supplemented in two separate phases, first in late Timurid Herat (c. 1470–90) and secondly in Mughal India, about a century later (c. 1595). It also contains some larger paintings of the ruler and his wife surrounded by the court, as well as smaller ones with the Qa'an alone.<sup>30</sup> Finally, one might also notice an illustrated copy of the *Tarikh-i Abu al-Khair Khan*, a general history down to the time of the eponymous Uzbek ruler (d. 1468) and his descendants in Samarqand and Khurasan, commissioned by 'Abd al-Latif Bahadur Khan (d. 1551; Storey 1970: I, 110–11, no. 128; Mas'udi, Tashkent ms. no. 9989; Yusupova and Dzhaliilova 1998: 145–6, no. 373). This contains several ruler and courtier scenes, such as pictures of Abaqa, Arghun and Ghazan Khan enthroned (without their wives), which have at least some generic resemblance to other historical paintings of the period.<sup>31</sup>

By way of contrast, we may note that the manuscript of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* made and illustrated in Jumada II, 935 (February 1529), probably in Shiraz, is entirely different in its iconography and style, though once more emphasising the regal and dynastic aspects of Mongol rule in the choice of paintings it contains: several enthronement scenes, images of royal birth and death, and edifying episodes such as Ghazan's conversion to Islam and consultation with *qadis* and shaikhs.<sup>32</sup>

We thus find a relatively significant cluster of illustrations of enthroned Mongol rulers (some without their consorts) incorporated into historical works on Mongol history, mainly Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-tawarikh*, which can be dated to late Timurid Herat (late fifteenth century) and the first half of the sixteenth century in Transoxiana. This gives rise to two main questions: first, whether these can be taken as examples of the type of model that may have been available to the painter of the St Petersburg abridgement, and second, if so, how can we reasonably associate a manuscript written in Anatolia with illustrations made in Transoxiana?

The paintings in the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* certainly bear a superficial resemblance to the other pictures in the Diez Albums, the Paris supplément persan 1113, and the Rashid al-Din manuscripts in Tashkent, Calcutta and Rampur. Particular points of similarity are the exotic Mongol headdresses especially of the Khatuns, and the background of cushions or carpet rather than a throne, shared particularly with the Tashkent manuscript 1620. Confronted with the blank spaces left in the text – whether intended for both a small image of the ruler

with his wife and a genealogical tree, or simply for a large court scene, cannot now be certain – the painter must have drawn on existing images in copies of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* or have been aware at least of their general appearance and of the well-developed tradition stemming back to Rashid al-Din's own atelier. Where might the very derivative work on the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* have been done?

Barbara Brend has discussed the question of transmission of fourteenth-century manuscripts to Central Asia (and, maybe from there, to India in some cases), either taken by the Shaibanid Uzbeks at the start of the sixteenth century by the 'classic route' via Herat, or possibly carried directly there in the time of Timur. The question is relevant to the St Petersburg abridgment too, of course, assuming that it was actually written in Anatolia. In favour of the 'Herat route' is the obvious fact that it was the main centre of artistic production in the fifteenth century, and sketches for the paintings might have been made there even if not fully carried out. Some elusive evidence that another abridgement of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* was made from a manuscript in Herat in 1454 might seem relevant,<sup>33</sup> but this is counterbalanced by the intriguing coincidence that the *Tarikh-i Guzida-yi Nusratnama* mentioned above was apparently partly based on an abridgement of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* made for Ulugh Beg, the ruler of Samarqand.<sup>34</sup> This at least confirms that there was still a certain interest in the work in the mid-fifteenth century, in both Herat and Samarqand.

A more compelling argument for the direct transmission of the manuscript to Timurid Transoxiana is the fact that we can identify a ready means of transmission. Sati's son, Mustanjid, was taken by Timur on his return to Samarqand after his Anatolian campaign in 1402, and perhaps he took the unfinished manuscript with him. If so, he must have left it there when he came back to Anatolia in 1406.<sup>35</sup> The period of the fragmentation of Timur's empire after his death was not a good time for artistic patronage. Maybe later the book resurfaced in Samarqand and was the basis for the abbreviation made for Ulugh Beg. A possible alternative is that the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* is a copy made entirely in Central Asia from an original brought by Mustanjid son of Sati.

In summary, the manuscript of the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan* in St Petersburg is an abbreviation of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* by Rashid al-Din, concentrating on listing the wives and children of Chingiz Khan and his descendants, and on the good deeds and edifying words of the Mongol Qa'ans and Il Khans. The work was compiled in late fourteenth-century Anatolia, almost certainly in Erzinjan, for the last ruler of the Eretnid dynasty and his Chingizid wife, who both died in the 1380s. The manuscript itself may date from this period; if not, it may be a copy made in Central Asia in the fifteenth century. Either

way, the illustration of the text, with a cycle of paintings intended to depict the rulers enthroned with their consorts, as in Rashid al-Din's chronicle, was not achieved until later, most probably in the early sixteenth century. Even then, the paintings that now exist are incomplete and do not make full use of the space allocated for them, which was possibly intended also to display a genealogical tree, as would have been consistent with the main focus of the work, and as found in the Tashkent manuscript 1620.

In view of the considerable uncertainties that still surround it, the St Petersburg manuscript clearly does not provide the sort of firm evidence for the appearance of the model from which it was derived, and especially of the original relationships between text and image in Volume One of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* that one might have hoped for at first sight. Nevertheless, like any manuscript, it carries its own intrinsic interest: it reveals a small part of the reception of Rashid al-Din's great chronicle and the uses it could serve, both in post-Mongol Anatolia and Central Asia. It provides another example of the evolution of the iconography of the Khans and their Khatuns by the sixteenth century, and suggests that even though the Shaibanid Uzbeks were from a separate line of descent from Chingiz Khan than their cousins and rivals in the Ilkhanate, there remained a general interest in Chingizid legitimacy and portraying the beneficial side of Mongol rule as an exemplary model.

## Notes

1. Hereafter cited as *TCK*. The ms. itself gives no evidence of the title of the work. Thanks to the staff of the University Library for making me a microfilm and to F. Abdullaeva for drawing the ms. to my attention. I have also relied on her help with all the Russian works noted below.
2. He refers also to the listing by Salemann and Von Rosen (1888: 49, reprinted 1889: III, 221). Cf. Storey 1970: II/2, 264; Bregel 1972: I, 311.
3. Preceded by a poem called *Kalimat-i Rūḥiyya*, apparently by the same hand and within similar margins (on ff. 1-8), but followed by a *Risālayi Siyar al-Ṭālibīn* in a neat *nasta'liq* (ff. 89-100) and a fragment of the *Tuḥfa-yi Sāmī* of Sam Mirza, in an execrable hand (on ff. 101-33), both in an entirely different format.
4. Tagirdjanov (1962: 117) dates it to the sixteenth century.
5. Salemann and Von Rosen (1888: 49) refer to its acquisition after the production of their handlist. For Kahl, who was Rosen's student in St Petersburg, see e.g. Krachkovskiy 1958: 103.
6. Storey no doubt relied on the title given by Salemann and Von Rosen (1888: 49), reflecting the author's own statement (see below); cf. Bregel 1972: 311. For Juvaini's work, see Melville 2008a. The text does actually

- mention Juvaini's history once (f. 31r.), confirming that it is a separate work (were further confirmation needed).
7. See also Melville (2007), for a view of the use made by later authors of Rashid al-Din's chronicle.
  8. With the possible exception of some pictures in the Diez albums, see below. All the surviving illustrated copies from the lifetime of the author only contain part II of the work.
  9. As in Rashid al-Din, Baidu is not treated as a separate ruler.
  10. Rashid al-Din 1994, hereafter cited as *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī: TMG*, 304–5; cf. *TCK*, f. 81v. The bottom line, which begins at *TMG*, 304, line 22, is illegible because of water damage.
  11. Rampur, ms. 1820: 154–5; Blair 1995: 97, figs 60–1.
  12. These epithets make it rather odd that Tagirdjanov (1962: 116) says the patron was a man.
  13. For the following, see the important work of Tanındı 2000. I am grateful to Dr Tanındı for an offprint of this article, and to Drs Michele Bernardini and Kate Fleet for help with the Turkish. See also Çağman and Tanındı 2005: esp. 506–8.
  14. Tanındı 2000: 530, citing Gölpınarlı, 1971: II, 173.
  15. *Tarihî Takvimler* 1954: 80–1. Evidently, Sati and other amirs had been evicted from Erzincan a few months earlier. Thanks to Andrew Peacock for drawing this to my attention. For Pir Husain Beg, see Tanındı 2000: 521, n. 6. For 'Ala al-Din 'Ali, see below.
  16. See Astarābādī 1928: 45, for a princess of perhaps the wrong generation, but with similar attributes (but not a Chingizid background).
  17. For the term *urūgh*, see Doerfer 1965: 47–52.
  18. The only possible candidate recorded on inscriptions at this period, Khuvand Khatun, in 782/1380, evidently died of plague and the tomb at Bafra near Sinop is too modest; see Oral 1956: 390–2, 406. Thanks to Judith Pfeiffer for suggesting a check on inscriptions.
  19. Author's interjection on f. 17v.
  20. See Tanındı 2000: 532ff. for the involvement of Shaikh Uvais in the region.
  21. See note 10, and *TMG*: 238, 247, 249–50, 272, 285, 305, 633, 730, 761, 783, 821, 868, 946, 972, 1215, etc.
  22. Reproduced on many occasions, e.g. Komaroff and Carboni 2002: 80, 82, 188.
  23. See esp. Richard 1997a: 312–13, 1997b: 76; reproduced in b/w at the end of the edition of Rashid al-Din 1994: vol. IV, without proper identification and not in order.
  24. The rather brief description in Yusupova and Dzhalilova (1998: 34, n. 41) puts it not later than the fifteenth century; Thackston (1999: vol. I, xiii, n. 6) appears to date it seventeenth century, but this might be a misprint.

25. See Ismailova: 1980, figs 1–2; Madraimov 2001: 30–2; Karin Rührdanz, pers. comm.
26. As has the unfinished sketch of Dobun Bayan and Alan Qo'a on f. 45v. See f. 49r. for the rewriting of the text behind the painting. The picture also does not fit the space given to it. Unfortunately, it is always reproduced out of its context; see Ismailova 1980: fig. 1; Poliakova and Rakhimova 1987: fig. 8; Madraimov 2001: 31; and the cover of *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 11/4 (Rezvan 2005: pl. 1). The unorthodox pagination of the ms. gives rise to the variety of ways the page is referred to. It is on the right (verso) side of the open page 49v.–50r.
27. All but f. 167r., of Qubilai Qa'an and his wife, which is badly damaged, are reproduced in Poliakova and Rakhimova 1987: figs 6–8.
28. See Gray 1954. Brend 1994: 108–9, proposes the period 1550–60; Schmitz and Desai 2006: 174, propose late fifteenth–early sixteenth century. See also, Blair 1995: 112, n. 54.
29. Gray 1954: figs 21, 11, 1, 22, 15, respectively.
30. See detailed discussion by Schmitz and Desai 2006: 171–9, esp. pl. 254.
31. Ismailova 1980: nos. 24–6, ff. 163a, 165b, 171a, following her citation. Also noted by Rührdanz 1997: 296, n. 5.
32. St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, ms. Dorn 289, with twenty nine pictures, among which are Oghuz Khan (fol. 8r.), Chingiz Khan (95v.), Ögedei (153r.), Berke Khan (182r.), Möngke (198r.), Hülegü (242r.), Abaqa (261r.), Arghun (287r.) and Ghazan enthroned (322r.); the birth of the sons of Alan Qo'a (49v.) and of Ghazan (296v.), the death of Ögedei (164r.), and Ghazan's conversion to Islam and discussion with the religious leaders (316r., 354r.): that is, half the scenes depicted.
33. Blair 1995: 31, citing Morley and Forbes 1841: 19, which gives no further details; the *hijrī* year is 858.
34. Brend 1994: 103; cf. Rieu 1888: 276b–277a; perhaps the same as noted by Morley and Forbes (1841), see above, note 33, though this is said to have been done from a copy in Herat, dated 1454.
35. He was in Otrar on the death of Timur in 1405 and returned to Ercinzan in Rajab 808 (January 1406); see Tanındı 2000: 522; Çağman and Tanındı 2005: 507. It is interesting, if perhaps coincidental, that the *Guzīda-yi Nusratnāma* opens with quotations from Jalal al-Din Rumi on the Mongol invasions and their conversion to Islam.

## Appendix

**Table 9.1** *Concordance of the contents of Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan (TCK) and Tarikh-i mubarak-i Ghazani (TMG), providing the correct order of folios in TCK.*

TMG	TCK	Observations
41-5	11v.-13v.	Chapter 2, list of Turkish nomadic tribes
58-62	14r.-16r.	Names of the sons of Oghuz
287-90	16v.-18r.	Beginning of the History of Chingiz Khan
292-3	18r.-18v.	Genealogy of Chingiz Khan
299-304	18v., 80r.-81v.	Wives and children of Chingiz Khan
317-19, 342, 401	45r.-46r.	Brief survey of rulers in western Islam, taken from various sections of <i>TMG</i>
540, 538-9	46r.-46v.	Chingiz's testament to his sons; one fol. lacuna follows
540-1	78r.-78v.	Sickness and death of Chingiz
541-2	19r.-19v.	
581-91	20r.-26v.	The good qualities of Chingiz, his sayings ( <i>bilig</i> )
617-23, 631-2	27r.-30r.	Greatly abbreviated account of Ögedei's sons
650	30v.-31r.	
674, 676, 684-705	31r.-35r.	Several of the stories of Ögedei are omitted in the final section
709-27	35v.-36v.	Story of Jochi Khan; greatly abbreviated account of his sons. Followed by long lacuna
821	37r.	Information on Tolui's son Möngke
852-3	37r.-37v.	Death of Möngke
856	37v.	Caliph in Baghdad in Möngke's reign
864-8	38v.	Sons of Qubilai; very abbreviated. Followed by a lacuna
931	44r.	Death of Qubilai Khan
946	44v.	Reign of Temür Khan
963-71	47r.-49v.	Death of Doquz Khatun; children of Hülegü
973-80	50v.-54r.	Part II of reign of Hülegü Khan
994-1025	54v.-71r.	Flood in Baghdad and the end of the Caliphate
1048-62	71r.-77r.	End of the reign of Hülegü
1116	77v.	Abaqa's expedition to Syria
1117-18	82r.-82v.	Death of Abaqa, followed by a lacuna
1152-4	79r.-v.	to the accession of Arghun. Probably a lacuna follows
1164-6	39v.-40r.	The start of the fame of Sa'd al-Daula

*Table 9.1 (continued)*

<i>TMG</i>	<i>TCK</i>	Observations
1179-84	40v.-41v.	Arghun's final illness; abbreviated slightly
1206-7	42v.	Start of the reign of Ghazan Khan
1215	43r.	Wives and children of Ghazan; abbreviated. Possibly followed by lacuna, but maybe goes straight on to:
1253-6	83r.-85r.	Ghazan's conversion to Islam; then straight to:
1375-85	85r.-88v.	Ghazan's good works, omitting a few paragraphs from <i>TMG</i> , 1384. Ends abruptly, <i>TMG</i> , 1385, line 11.



## Vikings and Rus in Arabic Sources\*

*James E. Montgomery*

The title I have chosen is intentionally precise and imprecise, as a brief comparison with the titles of some recent treatments of this subject will reveal. Take, for example, the title of Wladyslaw Duczko's recent book (2004), *Viking Rus*; or the title of chapter 9 of Pavel Dolukhanov's *The Early Slavs: 'The Vikings and the Rus'*, with its sub-headings, 'The Vikings in Europe', 'The Scandinavians and the Slavs' and 'The Beginnings of Russian Statehood' (1996: 173-7, 177-93 and 193-7 respectively). My title's precision is both instructive in that it rules out of consideration the other terms found in the Arabic sources for Norsemen, that is, *Majus* (Zoroastrians) and *Warank* (Varangians), and deceptive, as my avoidance of the definite article indicates – I want to avoid the universalising of these groups which the definite article imposes – to say nothing of its imprecision in my avoidance of a distinction between Scandinavians, Vikings or Varangians.

I want to suggest the possibility that in the Arabic written sources from the ninth to eleventh centuries, we might find evidence of (1) Vikings (broadly conceived), (2) of Rus, (3) of Viking Rus and/or (4) Rus Vikings. I also want to highlight the hegemony, in discussions of these and other ethnonyms, of an astonishing nominalism, an index of what Dolukhanov (1996: 6) has referred to as the 'cultural-ethnic paradigm'. My title also acknowledges that written sources are highly unreliable and deceptive. It is precisely here, in their beguiling deceptiveness, that their immense value lies. They are valuable, in my opinion, because they are unreliable. This unreliability forces us to confront the limits of our knowledge, to acknowledge the temporariness and

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contingencies of our readings and interpretations: it urges us in a word to revisit them, with a zetetic zeal of which Socrates might have been proud.

This chapter is an opportunity to retrace some of the steps of my earlier work, to pick up on trails which I now with hindsight think that I missed, and to suggest paths which other scholars may wish to follow. I will concentrate on the following topics:

1. philological essentialism, or *nomen est omen*;
2. the Peace of Kallias and the Radhaniya;
3. Odin's death-cult;
4. the 'Varangian' guard of the Khazars.

### **Philological Essentialism, or *nomen est omen***

Ethnonyms are dangerous substantives.<sup>1</sup> They claim a direct referent, though reveal nothing in the process. Rather, they entice us to desire to objectify, to identify the essence of Scottishness or Swedishness, for example. A natural way of achieving such objectification is through ethnonymical etymology. Now, the etymology of many ethnonyms is a subject of considerable interest from a historical linguistic point of view, but for many scholars, especially the nineteenth-century philologists on whose work so much of modern scholarship is predicated (and please note that I include within 'philology' disciplines like narrative history), the etymon of an ethnonym enjoyed an almost fetishistic power, seducing them into believing that identification, that ethnic identity, could be established through correct linguistic explication. Many will be familiar with the vast expenditure of intellectual energy and nationalistic fervour which went into determining the etymon of the word 'Rus' as part of the 'Normanist' controversy.

Why do we persist with our essentialist projects? Consider the following statement, one which is representative of the position which has found favour with many who have grappled with Rus identity on the basis of etymology:

The Finnish name for the Swedes, *Ruotsi* . . . appears to derive from a Scandinavian/Germanic root *rod-*, implying 'to row [a boat]', so to the earliest inhabitants of the area of the Gulf of Finland – and by extension to the Slavs whose migrations took them to the same area – Swedes or Vikings were perceived in their role of 'rowers' . . . or water travellers. 'Rus', in short, when the term arose some time before the mid-ninth century, seems to have had dynamic connotations as a cooperative venture of Vikings, Slavs and Finns – later some Turkic people too – who had come together to exploit natural resources and trading (to some extent colonizing) possibilities on

the eastern side of the Baltic: it meant the establishment of a new kind of political entity in early medieval Europe. At its very inception, then, Rus was multi-ethnic . . . (Milner-Gulland 1997: 55).

The postulation of the creation of 'a new kind' of 'multi-ethnic' 'political entity' in 'early medieval Europe' seems a huge claim to make on the basis of a single etymology, however much I agree that polyethnicity should be implicated in any conjectured meaning of the term Rus.

This quotation also displays a cognate reflex of philological essentialism, the 'cultural-ethnic paradigm', the notion that, on the basis of the direct equation of cultures with ethnicities, 'we cannot', in the words of the Ukrainian archaeologist Braichevsky, 'identify as a culture an assemblage which does not correspond to a direct ethnic entity' (Dolukhanov 1996: 5). But if we do not know what the 'direct ethnic entity' is, how can we identify the culture? In confronting this conundrum, the etymology of ethnonyms becomes so pressing a need, for if we cannot identify the culture from the label which is affixed to a given ethnos, the paradigm is defunct. If we can identify it, however, the culture thus identified is endowed with the aura of objectification which the ethnonym confers on it: ethnicity becomes as static and atemporal as its designation. Whence, in our case, we have the clamour to explain the word Rus.

The cultural-ethnic paradigm is not a modern phenomenon. It is the dominant paradigm in the Arabic geographical and ethnographical (and heresiographical) texts of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. These thinkers viewed ethnicity, especially of the non-Muslim varieties, as stable, fixed, unchanging and static: they did not admit readily of any room for change over time. Therefore, their accounts, even when we can chart over time successive additions through incorporation from earlier authors, and even when they are tied to a specific date or event, seem to be somehow above and beyond temporality, despite being themselves the product of growth over time, in accordance with their vision of scientific progress as a series of incremental but inclusive accretions to the work of their predecessors. So we are encouraged to adopt the ethno-cultural paradigm by the very sources which we wish to study.

I have already averred that these sources are highly unreliable, so let me suggest a different way to approach ethnonyms and the peoples they identify. I propose firstly that we view ethnonyms as a contact zone, as a 'nexus of copresence and improvised identities', as 'the locus of contiguity' (Montgomery 2007: 165)<sup>2</sup> characterised by semantic slippage and instability. In the words of Mary-Louise Pratt (1992: 6-7), from whom I have borrowed the notion of the 'contact zone':

A 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations . . . not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.

I propose, secondly, that we think of the cultures which our texts represent as 'neither structures, nor plural amalgams, but as [a] continuum or set of intersystems' (Drummond 1980: 352). In short, we should in fact be surprised, were we to discover the very thing that we are looking for – a unique, distinct and fixed ethnic group, a composite picture of which can be built from an amalgamation of our sources taken as a whole. In other words, in our case, there are as many Rus as there are textual accounts of them. Note, however, that this does not mean that identification is impossible on the basis of the sources at our disposal, but rather that fundamental to any identities which we may discern therein will be 'diversity and divisiveness', for the 'creole metaphor of culture' employed by Drummond (1980: 353), 'places primary emphasis on internal variation and diachrony or change within the cultural system' (ibid.: 352).

That this is not as easy to achieve as it is to promise is revealed by my erroneous attempts to solve the identity of Ibn Fadlan's *Rusiyā* in an article published in 2000, a subject to which I shall presently turn.

### **The Peace of Kallias and the Radhaniya**

In brief, the Peace of Kallias is an agreement reached between Persia and Athens and the Delian League in 449 or 450 BC. Its very occurrence is the subject of a long-standing debate in early Greek history, and much depends on whether a stone epigraphon, which is broken and is therefore incomplete, should be read with the Greek word for 'not' added or with some other word. There is a further problem in the silence of Thucydides on the matter for those who believe that it must have taken place. My point of introducing it here is simply to say that a measure of guarded caution is required when the evidence will not allow us to commit ourselves either way. The Peace of Kallias and the earliest Arabic texts on the Rus should be treated with exactly the same degree of caution and with a precise openness of mind.

The earliest reference, then, to the Rus in an Arabic text which is as good as fully extant is that contained in Ibn Khurradadhbih's *Treatise on the Highways and the Kingdoms*. Ibn Khurradadhbih, of Persian descent, was the head of intelligence and postal communications in an eastern province of the Islamic Empire (the Jibal) and was a prominent member of the Baghdad court famous for his expertise in music. His

work (which is an account of the territories of the caliphate dedicated to the ruler presented according to the Iranian tradition as the Just King) was written before AD 850 and then rewritten some thirty years later. It is available in two different recensions.

The passage on the Rus is found in the recension which antedates AD 850.<sup>3</sup> The following is a rudimentary translation:

The route of the Jewish Radhanite Merchants who speak Arabic, Persian, Greek (*rūmiyya*), Frankish (*ifranjiyya*), Andalusī and Slavic (*saqlabiyya*): [1] they voyage from east to west and from west to east by land and by sea, bringing from the west eunuchs, concubines, slave-boys, embroidered brocade, skins of beaver (*khazz*), sable (*sammūr*) and *fara*, and swords. From Firanja they set sail on the Western Sea (the Mediterranean) and emerge at al-Farama. They carry their merchandise by land for 25 *farsakhs* as far as al-Qulzum. Then they set sail on the Eastern Sea (the Red Sea) from al-Qulzum to al-Jar and Judda, then they pass to al-Sind, al-Hind and al-Sin. From al-Sin they take musk, aloes wood, camphor, cinnamon and other [goods] such as are brought from those regions, until they return to al-Qulzum. Then they carry them to al-Farama and set sail on the Western Sea. Sometimes they take a detour with their wares to al-Qustantiniyya and trade them with the Rum; sometimes they take them to the King of Firanja and sell them there. [2] Should they wish, they carry their wares from Firanja by the Western Sea and emerge at al-Antakiyya, then journey by land for three stations to al-Jabiya (?), where they sail on the Euphrates to Baghdad.<sup>4</sup> Then they sail on the Tigris to al-Ubulla, from al-Ubulla to 'Uman, al-Sind and al-Hind and al-Sin, all of which are connected, one region with the other (Ibn Khurradadhbīh 1967: 153.9–154.8).

[3] As for the route of the merchants of the Rus (who are a class of the Saqaliba), they carry beaver (*khazz*) and black fox pelts and swords from the farthest reaches of Saqlaba to the Rumi Sea, where the Lord of the Rum imposes a tithe on them. If they travel by the Tanays, the river of the Saqaliba (the Don), they pass Khamlij, the city of the Khazar, and its lord tithes them. Then they proceed to the Sea of Jurjan (the Caspian) and disembark on any of its shores, at will. The diameter of this sea is five hundred *farsakhs*. Sometimes they bring their goods by camel from Jurjan to Baghdad, and the Saqlab eunuchs translate on their behalf. They claim that they are Christians and pay the *jizya* (poll-tax) (ibid., 154.9–16).

[4] Their Land Route: those on a expedition emerge from al-Andalus or from Firanja and cross to al-Sus al-Aqsa, then proceed to Tanja, Ifriqiya, Egypt, al-Ramla, Damascus, Kufa, Baghdad, Basra, al-Ahwaz, Fars, Kirman, al-Sind, al-Hind, and [finally] to al-Sin. [5] Sometimes they take [the route] behind Rumiyya (Rome?), in the territory of the Saqaliba, on to Khamlij, the city of the Khazar, then by the Sea of Jurjan, to Balkh, Transoxania, the Wurut (the grazing lands, the *Ust-Yurt*) of the Toghuzghuz, and to al-Sin (ibid.: 154.17–155.6).

This passage accords the Radhanites two routes, from Francia to the Red Sea and overland to Turko-China (indicated as no. 1 in the text); and from Francia to Antioch and overland to Turko-China (no. 2). The fascinating passage on the Rus provides three itineraries through which these 'Slav' traders with their furs and swords came to Muslim lands: firstly, from the North (their maritime and riverine route; indicated as no. 3 in the text); secondly, via al-Andalus or Francia and North Africa (their terrestrial route) to Turko-China (no. 4); and thirdly, via Rome (not Constantinople as some have supposed, because in the section of the Radhanites this is referred to as al-Qustantiniyya) and the Khazars to Turko-China (no. 5). In these last two cases, then, the Rus are said to travel as far as al-Sin (Turko-China), while the destination of the first group is Baghdad. The author notes that this group claims to be Christian.

The second itinerary, via al-Andalus and Francia, has been assimilated by most scholars with the fabled and oft-disputed Jewish trading federation, the Radhanites (Ar. *Radhaniyya*).<sup>5</sup> This move is driven by a desire to firm up the exiguous textual evidence for the Radhanites and impelled by the essentialist equation of Rus with Viking. Having examined all three manuscripts of Ibn Khurradadhbih's work, I can see no evidence to suggest any scribal confusion of Rus with Radhanite, or any reason to suggest with Pellat that this is an interpolation or revision by Ibn Khurradadhbih (Pellat 1995: 364). On the contrary, if there is any scribal irregularity it pertains to the Radhanites (see de Goeje's note *k*, Ibn Khurradadhbih 1967: 153).

In 903, a quarter of a century or so after the second recension of this work, Ibn al-Faqih of Hamadhan completed his *Treatise of the Accounts of the Regions*. In a municipal eulogy, the author rings the praises of al-Rayy as the 'bride of the earth', the destination of mercantile goods from all around the world: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Khurasan, Khazaria and Burjan, brought there by the 'merchants of the sea', that is the Jewish trading confederation of the Radhanites. To their merchandise is to be added that of the 'merchants of the Saqaliba', presumably the Rus of Ibn Khurradadhbih, who bring fox and beaver pelts from the furthest reaches of Saqlaba to the Mediterranean or who sail down the 'river of the Khazar', the Volga, to the Caspian (here, the Khurasanian Sea). Their wares, having been sold in Jurjan, are then taken to al-Rayy. On account of their similarities, this report is thought to be one of Ibn al-Faqih's many borrowings (both avowed and unavowed) from his predecessor or at least to share a common source, though there is a reluctance to suggest that Ibn al-Faqih may have had a source *other than* Ibn Khurradadhbih or one unavailable to him (Pritsak 1970: 245-8). It is also unclear whether the route used by these Saqaliba to reach the Mediterranean is identical with that of the Rus merchants of the earlier text.

What we learn from the Peace of Kallias is that scholarly enthusiasm is often not commensurate with the evidence on which this enthusiasm depends. The vast majority of those who are interested in the Radhanites, as you will see, for example, if you 'Google' the word or consult either the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* or *Wikipedia*, have devised mighty narratives on these slender pickings. To my knowledge, no scholar has yet fully pondered the prominence of the Khazars in Ibn Khurradadhbih's account of the Rus, or wondered what the implications of his two types of Rus might be, for example, for the oft-discussed account of the visit of the Rhos in 839 to the court of Louis the Pious at Ingelheim in the *Annals of Saint Bertin* written in 861 by Prudentius, Bishop of Troyes (Riasanovsky 1962; Golden 1982: 96; Nelson 1991: 44).

### Odin's Death-cult

Ibn Fadlan was a member of the caliphal embassy dispatched from Baghdad in 21 June 921 by Caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908–32) in response to an epistolary petition requesting assistance from Al mush b. Yiltawar (Elteber), the king of the Volga Bulghar and the self-styled King of the Saqaliba (Slavs), who had converted to Islam. Note that, as with the phrase Khaqan of the Rus, the King of the Slavs need not himself be ethnically consanguineous with his subjects. The embassy reached Bulghar on the Volga-Kama confluence on 11 May 922.

Little is known but much has been speculated about Ahmad b. Fadlan b. al-'Abbas b. Rashid b. Hammad. The Mashhad manuscript discovered by Zeki Validi Togan in 1923 tells us (though the passage is *not* by Ibn Fadlan himself) that he was the client of the commander and functionary Muhammad b. Sulayman, presumably the successful officer who died in the siege of the city of al-Rayy in 919. His function in the embassy (the exact composition of which is far from clear) was to read out the letters to the King of the Slavs in Volga Bulgharia and to ensure that appropriate gifts were rendered to him and to supervise the religious instructors, whose duties he was constrained to assume after they had abandoned the embassy en route. This led the geographer and lexicographer Yaqut (d. 1229), prior to 1923 our only source for Ibn Fadlan's work, to refer to him as a jurisconsult (*faqih*); philosophers and scholars, for example, often accompanied embassies. Yet it is just as probable that Ibn Fadlan was a soldier, albeit a reasonably educated one. I do not know what authority one scholar has for identifying him as a Greek convert to Islam. Whatever the worth of such speculations, the important point to realise is that his account of the embassy is very vague on the actual and precise composition of the embassy.

The manuscript itself is lacunose: it ends with the description of the

Khaqan of the Rus and a short passage on the Khazar (thus it does not contain the section on the Khazar quoted by Yaqut) and there is no mention of the return to Baghdad, and while it is by no means certain that the return would have featured as part of the work, the return is alluded to in Ibn Fadlan's account of the Bulghar marvels, in the section where he discusses meteorological phenomena. In the Arabic tradition, the work disappears without a trace for about three centuries, until the Mashhad manuscript was compiled in the thirteenth century, where it is juxtaposed with two epistolary travel accounts by Abu Dulaf al-Khazraji (fl. mid-tenth century), and a more complete version of portions of the *Kitab al-Buldan* of Ibn al-Faqih. Indeed, Yaqut, when travelling in the erstwhile Samanid domains, mentions a proliferation of manuscripts. The two late Persian 'translations'-cum-quotations of Ibn Fadlan require further study. Curious texts often lead curious lives: the fictional 'completion' of Ibn Fadlan imagined by Michael Crichton (1976) as *Eaters of the Dead: the Manuscript of Ibn Fadlan, Relating his Experiences with the Northmen in AD 922* (and filmed in 1999 as *The Thirteenth Warrior*) has been translated back into Arabic as a fortuitous discovery of the rest of the account, though Crichton's whimsy went undetected by the translator.

Too much has been made of the text's status as an 'official' chancery report of the embassy, which is just wishful thinking. Among the several astonishing accounts of the various peoples through whom the embassy travelled, the passage on the Rus, and especially its weird account of a horrific cultic marriage and magnificent ship burial, has been especially prized but it has not, despite repeated attempts, been satisfactorily explained. I argued (in Montgomery 2000) that it represents a 'snap-shot' of the Viking Rus at a stage of the ethnogenesis which would lead to their emergence as the Rus who created Russia, though most recently several resolutely Vikingist readings of these Rus have been offered.

One of the most interesting of these is Tim Taylor's study (2002). In this unusual investigation of the human encounter with death, and with apotropaic rituals designed to contain the potential maleficence of the disembodied soul, he devotes two chapters to Ibn Fadlan's passage on the Rus: chapter 5, 'Welcome to Weirdworld' and chapter 7, 'Annihilation'. Tim and I met on three occasions during late 2001 and early 2002. I learned much from discussions with him about the importance of detail in both rituals and their descriptive accounts. The case of the *rayhan*, the sweet basil, which I had failed completely to appreciate, stands out in my memory (Taylor 2002: 178). Tim was very keen that these Rus be understood as exclusively Viking. This was a position which I had been loathe to espouse and which I was steadily moving away from. Central to his interpretation is Odin as the god of



deception and we both agreed that Ibn Fadlan was 'deliberately misled by the Rus'.<sup>6</sup> According to Tim,

We have all been misled, not just Ibn Fadlan. The rite was not, principally, a funeral at all. It was an act of ritual killing for which the earlier slaying of the chieftain – in circumstances that may have precipitated little genuine grief – was the pretext. The highly ritualized death of the slave-girl required complicity. The multiple rapes and the fire-setting by the whole gathering communalized her killing. Like execution by firing squad, responsibility was taken by everyone and no one. It was an assertion of human power in the face of disempowerment by death in general, and it served to create group solidarity. Groups are defined by what they exclude.

The slave-girl remained a slave. By brutally dashing her aspiration to belong, the Rus defined their society (2002: 192).

I do not intend to discuss the interpretation of the events which Ibn Fadlan witnessed. I wish rather to concur with Tim, in his identification of this ritual killing as an expression of identity, one characteristic of 'a *Männerbunde* society – a mobile, military and male elite owing a kind of allegiance only to one another through the cult of Odin, which they entered by taking a secret ring oath' (ibid.: 174). As a prelude to an appreciation of the precise allegiance of this *Männerbunde* society, let me just note that Ibn Fadlan's book is framed entirely by the presence of the Khazars, be it as the scourge of the Bulghar king against whom he wishes to construct his fortress and for which he petitions the caliph, be it as Ibn Fadlan's 'ultimate' destination, one which he has no intention of reaching but with whom his book concludes (however we use later sources to reconstruct it). I include a translation of Ibn Fadlan's account of the Khaqan of the Rus, a classic statement of the regal *comitatus*, and his account of the Khaqan of the Khazar as preserved in the geographical lexicon of Yaqut:

*Ibn Fadlan on the King of the Rus:* One of the customs of the King of the Rus is that in his palace he keeps company with four hundred of his bravest companions and those whom he trusts the most. They die when he dies and they are killed to protect him. Each of them has a slave-girl who waits on him, washes his head and provides him with his food and drink, and another slave-girl with whom he has coitus. These four hundred [men] sit below his couch, which is huge and is studded with precious stones. On his couch there sit forty concubines who belong to him. Sometimes he has coitus with one of them in the presence of those comrades whom we have mentioned. He does not come down from his throne. When he wants to satisfy an urge, he satisfies it in a salver. When he wants to ride, he has his horse brought up to the throne whence he mounts it and when he wants to dismount, he

brings his horse up to the throne so that he can dismount there. He has a vice-gerent who leads the armies, fights against the enemy and stands in for him among his subjects (Ibn Fadlan 1959: 165.5-166.4).

*Ibn Fadlan on the Khaqan of the Khazar as quoted by Yaqut:* As for the King of the Khazar, his name is Khaqan. He only appears in public every four months, in the distance. He is called the Great Khaqan. His vice-gerent is called Khaqan Bih. It is he who leads and commands the armies, who manages and conducts the affairs of the kingdom and who appears in public and leads the raids. The kings who live on the borders of his territory obey him. He enters the presence of the Greatest Khaqan every day, abasing himself and displaying humility and meekness. He will only ever enter into his presence barefoot, with a piece of firewood in his hand. When he greets him, he ignites that piece of firewood in front of him, and when he has finished igniting it he sits on the couch with the king, at his right hand. He is represented by a man called Kundar Khaqan, and this man is also represented in his turn, by a man called Jawshighir. It is the custom of the Greatest Khaqan that he does not sit before the people, or speak to them: no one apart from those whom we have mentioned is admitted into his presence. Gubernatorial matters concerning the dissolution and contractions of agreements, punishments and management of the kingdom are the responsibility of his Vice-gerent, Khaqan Bih. It is the custom of the Greatest Khaqan, when he dies, that a large domicile is constructed for him, which contains twenty houses, in every one of which a grave is dug. Stones are smashed until they become like kohli and they are spread on the ground there. On top, lime is thrown. Under the domicile is a river, and the river is a mighty, flowing river and they place the grave above that river, saying, 'So that no satan, man, worm or vermin can reach him'. When he is buried, the heads of those who bury him are struck off, so that no one may know which of these houses is his grave. His grave is called 'the Garden', and they say, 'He has entered the Garden'. All of the houses are spread with silk woven with gold. It is the custom of the King of the Khazar that he possess twenty-five women, each of whom is the daughter of one of the kings who surround him, and whom he takes either with compliance or forcibly. He has sixty concubines for his bed, each of whom is surpassingly beautiful. Each of the free-born women and the concubines lives in a different palace, has a tent covered with *saj* wood, with a courtyard around every tent. Every one of them has a eunuch who acts as her chamberlain. When he wants to have coitus with one of them, he sends for the eunuch who is her chamberlain and he brings her, quicker than the wink of an eye, and puts her in his bed. The eunuch stands by the door of the tent of the King. When he has had coitus with her, he takes her by the hand and leaves, without leaving her there for a single instant after that. When this Great King goes out riding, all of the armies go out riding with him. There is a mile between him and the retinues, and all his subjects without exception who see him lie down

on their faces, prostrating themselves before him, without raising their heads until he has passed. The extent of his kingship is forty years. When he has gone one single day beyond forty his subjects and his elites kill him, and say, 'His intellect is defective, his judgement has become commoted'. When he sends forth a squadron, it will not turn back and retreat for any reason or cause. If it is routed, all who have returned to him from it will be killed. When his leaders and Vice-gerent are routed, he has them, their women and their children brought into his presence and he bestows them on someone else while they watch. So too with his horses, belongings, weapons and domiciles. Sometimes he cuts each of them in twain and crucifies them. Sometimes he hangs them by their necks from a tree. Sometimes he makes them stable-hands, if he means to be kind to them (Ibn Fadlan 1959: 169.1-172.13).

### The 'Varangian' Guard of the Khazars

The geographical scientist al-Mas'udi (d. 956) took an especial interest in the riverine topography of the Caspian Sea, which he himself visited and about which he quizzed the merchants and travellers whom he met. This desire to revise the theories of his predecessors concerning whether the Caspian was land-locked or not led him to investigate the peoples of the Caspian. The results of this in large part empirically conducted research are an invaluable account of the Rus, second only to Ibn Fadlan's more famous (and more dramatic) description.

Of al-Mas'udi's works, only two have survived: *The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Jewels*, written originally in 943 (only the author's revision of 947 is extant: it was revised by him once more in 956; *MDH*); *The Treatise of Reference and Supervision*, his last work written in 955-6, a reformulation of many of his earlier works (*TI*).

Al-Mas'udi describes two groups of Rus. I provide a digest of his major descriptions of the first group:

1. On the authority of Ptolemy and Marinus, the Island of Thwly is the most northerly inhabited region of the earth (*TI*), and it forms part of Brytanya (*MDH*), situated in a lake, the Mayts (the Azov). Lake Mayts is connected with the Bnts (i.e. the Pontus, the Black Sea), the sea of the Bulghar, the Rus (*TI*), the Petchenegs and the Bashjirt (*TI* and *MDH*). The Bnts Sea stretches from the lands of al-Ladhqa,<sup>7</sup> and is fed by the Tnys (Don), the river along which many of the descendants of Yafith b. Nuh live: they include the Franks, the pre-Islamic Andalusians and the Rus (*MDH*).
2. Al-Mas'udi suggests that some of his predecessors may have confused the Rus with the Khazar, because the Rus vessels use the River Atil as their sole means of access to the Caspian (*MDH*). The

Rus, along with the Bulghar, the Ifranja and the Saqaliba, inhabit the vicinities of al-Qabq Mountains (TI); the Rum (Byzantines) call them Rusiya, meaning 'red' (TI), and have built a settlement on the Black Sea and forts along the Hellespont to repulse the vessels of al-Kwdhkana<sup>8</sup> and other types of al-Rus (TI and MDH); in the 950s the Byzantines used the Rus who had settled in their lands to garrison the fortresses along their northern marches (TI).

3. According to the MDH, the Rus have a sea which only they use (the Baltic?); they are a mighty, pre-scriptural people with no revealed law, and do not recognise the sovereignty of any king; their merchants frequent the King of the Bulghar; they have a silver-mine in their territory; they are made up of many kinds, the most numerous among whom are al-Lwdh'ana who frequently sail to al-Andalus, Rome, Constantinople and Khazaria; around the year 912-13, the Rus raided the Caspian Sea: al-Mas'udi notes that after the wholesale slaughter of these raiders on their return journey up the Volga, the Rus have not dared to return.

It is the second group which will occupy us, that of the Saqaliba and the Rus who serve the Khazar king as slaves or soldiers, living in the capital Atil on one bank of the Volga:

The Saqaliba and the Rus form classes of pagans living in their territory. They live on one of the banks of this city. They cremate their dead, their horses, their accoutrements and their jewelry. When the man dies, his wife, though she is still alive, is cremated along with him, but when the woman dies, the man is not cremated. If one of them dies a bachelor, he is married after his death. The women desire to cremate themselves in order for their souls to enter the Garden (reading: *li-dukhuli anfusi-hinna al-jannata*). This is practised also by the Hind, as we have mentioned earlier, although it is not the business of the Hind to cremate the woman unless she sees fit to . . . (al-Mas'udi 1966a: 212.2-7, §449).

It is the custom of the Abode of the Kingdom of the Khazars that it house seven judges, two for the Muslims, two for the Khazar who pass sentence according to the laws of the Torah, two for the Christians who live among them, who pass sentence according to the laws of the New Testament, and one for the Slavs, Rus and the rest of the non-scripturalists (*sa'ir al-jahiliyya*) who passes sentence according to the law of the non-scripturalists: these are judgements based on reason . . . (ibid.: 214.1-4, §451)

The Rus and the Slavs whom we have said are non-scripturalists are the soldiers of the King and his slaves . . . (ibid.: 214.8, §452)

We do not intend the information we have provided concerning the King of the Khazars to apply to the Khaqan . . . (ibid.: 214.13, §453)

According to al-Mas'udi, therefore, they are a pre-scriptural people who cremate their dead, along with their horses, equipment and jewellery; a man's wife is burned along with his body, but he is not burned when she dies; if one of them dies a bachelor, he is married after his death; the women believe that by sacrificing themselves thus they will enter the Garden (i.e. Paradise); they have a judge in the Khazar imperial administration who judges in accordance with reason (and not revealed law); the King of the Khazar is not to be confused with the Khaqan.<sup>9</sup>

This passage covers all of the principal features of the Rus as described by Ibn Fadlan, though it is not in any way indebted to Ibn Fadlan's account: for example, Ibn Fadlan does not make the observation concerning conjugal disparity in the matter of cremation. It explains the nature of the cultic marriage which Ibn Fadlan describes, confirms his association of the Rus with the Saqaliba in a very precise manner and indicates why the Rus should have a king who bears all the traces of a Turkic Khaqan.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, I can discern no linguistic echo or allusion in al-Mas'udi's description to Ibn Fadlan's work. This is completely consonant with the remarkable absence of any traces of Ibn Fadlan's book in al-Mas'udi's *Meadows*. The passage strongly suggests, therefore, that if we interpret the earlier text on the basis of the later work, Ibn Fadlan's Rus in Volga Bulgharia are mercenaries or slave-soldiers who originated from Khazaria and not from Gorodische or Ladoga or further to the north. They would be to the Khazars what the Varangian guard were later to become to the Byzantine Basileus.<sup>11</sup>

Let us now revisit Louis's court at Ingelheim:

Theophilus also sent with them certain men who said they were called Rhos, and that their king, also known as chaganus . . . had dispatched them to him [Theophilus], for the sake of friendship, as they had asserted. He [Theophilus] asked . . . that the Emperor [the Frankish Louis the Pious] allow them to return home across his possessions since the roads by which they had come to Constantinople were cut by wild and ferocious tribes and he [Theophilus] did not want them to face danger in case of returning by the same route. The Emperor [Louis] investigated diligently the cause of their coming and discovered they were Swedes by origin (Nelson 1991: 44).

Who was the *chaganus*, the Khaqan of the Rus? In my opinion, based on these shaky testimonials, the answer is the most obvious: he is the Khaqan of the Khazar.<sup>12</sup> These texts are unreliable as much for what we bring to them as for what they fail to tell us. The Rus, we have presumed, because they were either Vikings or Slavic Rus, could not presumably have had much to do with the Khaqan. In making this

presumption, we have missed what the texts seem to be telling us all along: that the Rus, from the moment they appear in the written sources of the ninth century, appear in contact with the Khazars<sup>13</sup> and then under the overlordship of the Khazar Khaqan. As Milner-Gulland blandly but aptly remarks, 'either they were in the service of the Khazar ruler, or their own ruler had adopted a Khazar title'.<sup>14</sup> The most obvious conclusion is the former, though it is by no means the simplest or the easiest option to explain. It remains for us now to investigate not only when this might have happened, or how this might be so, but also (and most importantly) what it might mean.

And this brings me back to the precision and imprecision of titles. The title of the conference, for which I wrote the original version of this piece, was *Baghdad – Byzantium – Birka: At the Fringes*. At the centre of these texts stand the Khazars. They should now dominate our readings of these texts just as they did the landscape of the eighth to the tenth centuries through which some of our authors travelled. This contribution is the product of much error and bemusement by an academic who does not consider himself a historian, though I consider it appropriate for a volume entitled *Living Islamic History*, as I have, on and off, been working on these Arabic sources for more than a decade and a half, when I taught at the University of Oslo in the 1990s and first began to live with them. Living with classical Arabic texts is always challenging and occasionally exciting, but can be frustrating, an activity often characterised by misreadings and conjectures: with texts, just as with human beings, one has to engage in an open-ended conversation, following the example set by the dedicatee of this volume, in her patient, protracted and perceptive engagement with the Arabic texts on the Crusades.

## Notes

1. My remarks on ethnonyms also apply, *grosso modo* and *mutatis mutandis*, to heresionyms, those designations applied with taxonomaniacal fervour, in the Arabic heresiographical writings, to sects, schools, and other dogmatic configurations.
2. This approach has been pioneered by the anthropologist Lee Drummond (1980) as a way of studying the 'symbolic processes associated with ethnic categorisation in Guyana'.
3. I have argued at some length for the existence of two distinct recensions of the work, following the postulation of de Goeje (Montgomery 2005: 177–230). See Pritsak who concurs with A. D. P. G. Bulgakov's theory that only one recension existed (1970: 243–4); Marquart 1903: 390–1; Dunlop 1971: 150–1, 163–70. It will be clear that I do not accept Pritsak's restoration of this text (1970: 253–7). For the predominance of multiple

over single recensions in the first three centuries of Islam, see Schoeler 2006.

4. Of course, Baghdad is situated on both banks of the Dijla, the Tigris. I leave it to the reader to decide whether this detail undermines the validity of Ibn Khurradādhbih as a source.
5. A dissonant voice is Anon. 1937: 429.
6. On Odin, see Taylor 2002: 190; on the misleading of Ibn Fadlan, see *ibid.*: 185ff.
7. A plethora of suggestions exist: it is orthographically cognate with Wdh'ana/Lwdh'ana, and may be a scribal corruption of al-Kwyāba, Kiev.
8. Another scribal corruption of al-Kwyāba, Kiev?
9. Golden discusses this passage (1982: 80).
10. Golden suggests plausibly that 'the Rus' Qagan may have been a *Baz Qagan* ("vassal Qagan"), the head of his own political organization, but now incorporated into the larger Qazar confederacy' (1982: 88).
11. Blöndal presumably referring to al-Mas'ūdī's passage, though he does not give any source, notes that 'the Khazar kings on the north side of the Black Sea are also said to have *Rusi* (Varangians) and *Slavi* (Russians) in their service' (1978: 7). Boba argues against a 'sizable' presence of Slavs in the Khazar army during the eighth century (1967: 59–63). (He takes the ethnonym *al-Ṣaqāliba* to mean Volga Bulghār.) This view is not, of course, at variance with the existence of a Khazarian Varangian guard.
12. Golden notes that 'in the 871 letter of King Louis the German to the Byzantine Emperor Basil I, the rulers of the Avars, Qazars, Bulgars and *Nortmanni* bear the title *Qagan*. The *Nortmanni* here undoubtedly refer to the Sclavo-Scandinavians of Rus' (1982: 82).
13. See Vitestam 1975: especially 16–17; Noonan 1987–91.
14. Milner-Gulland 1997: 54. The fullest expression of the Rus adoption of a Khazar title is Golden (1982: 97) who argues that 'the Rus' Qaganate appeared under the Qazar auspices as a vassal Qaganate of the Qagans of Atil, perhaps connected by matrimonial ties'. See further his survey of earlier views on the issue: *ibid.*: 83–4. Duczko (2004), following Golden, locates the khaqanate of the Rus in Staraja Ladoga.

## Qashani and Rashid al-Din on the Seljuqs of Iran

*Alexander H. Morton*

In spite of its importance and interest the detailed examination and comparison of texts is not at present valued highly by academic review bodies and policy makers. It is a particular pleasure to submit a chapter belonging to this unfashionable category in honour of Carole Hillenbrand who is not only a friend of long standing but also a scholar in whose work, beginning with the doctoral thesis based on the *History of Mayyafariqin*, close and careful attention is given to textual matters. It is a revised version of a talk delivered under her chairmanship at a panel of the Conference of the International Society of Iranian Studies held in London at the School of Oriental and African Studies in August 2006.

Since the later nineteenth century scholars had appreciated that the *Saljuqnama* of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri was the main Persian source of the information on the Seljuqs of Iran that was available to later Persian chroniclers. For a long time the work was only known from references in later histories. As it happens, a manuscript of the original had entered the library of the Royal Asiatic Society early in the nineteenth century and, though not identified as such, had been described as a history of the Seljuqs in a catalogue published in 1854, but, for reasons that need not be told here, it eluded rediscovery until recently. In preparing an edition,<sup>1</sup> I found that evidence from a number of later histories which exploited the *Saljuqnama* not only helped to establish that it was the original work of Nishapuri but also made it possible to check and correct readings of the manuscript. The picture of the transmission of the text that emerged had some surprising features but a by-product of the investigation was that it became easy to perceive what additions the later writers made to the material they found in the *Saljuqnama*. While previously its precise contents were uncertain, speculation on that point can now be abandoned. The factual additions in the later accounts of the Seljuqs still invite investigation and the



purpose of this article is to give an introductory account of this situation, with respect to the two Ilkhanid historians, Rashid al-Din, who took responsibility for the great general history the *Jami' al-tawarikh*,<sup>2</sup> and Abu al-Qasim Qashani, who, among other works, wrote his own general history. This remains largely in manuscript but the section on the Seljuqs was published in 1332/1953. However, the editor mistakenly identified this as Nishapuri's original work and his identification has been accepted without much question.<sup>3</sup> The two historians were of course contemporaries and in those parts where it is possible to make the comparison, we find that their versions of history are quite closely related. For the Seljuqs, both relied very largely on Nishapuri's work up to the point where it ended early in the reign of Tughril III. Its division into chapters was retained and nearly all its contents reproduced. A high proportion of the verbal alterations and factual additions that are found in the two texts are common to both. The reason for this would seem to be that Qashani himself was largely responsible for an initial version of the Seljuq section of the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, and this is likely to be true for other sections too. He himself tells us that Rashid al-Din had taken his work and cheated him of the promised rewards, and there is confirmation of this. However, though clearly related, the two versions do differ. The one appearing under Qashani's own name retains on the whole rather less of the actual wording of the *Saljuqnama* than does the *Jami' al-tawarikh*. On the other hand, the latter has rather more factual additions.

Before proceeding to examine these additions some further introductory remarks are needed. Zahir al-Din's *Saljuqnama* was dedicated to Tughril III, the last Seljuq to reign in Iran, and completed in about 1178. Rashid al-Din's historical works were composed during the reigns of the Ghazan and Uljaitu, early in the fourteenth century. Qashani was active at the same time but continued to write during the reign of Abu Sa'id. We have two much earlier accounts of the Seljuqs which are also largely based on Nishapuri's work, that in the *Rahat al-sudur* of Rawandi, and an unpublished history of the Seljuqs lacking a title which I have argued is an earlier work by Rawandi and propose should be called the *Tarikh-i Saljuqiyan*.<sup>4</sup> These were written not long after the final collapse of Seljuq rule in western Iran, around the turn of the twelfth century. They too show alterations and additions to the *Saljuqnama*, but the Ilkhanid historians made no use of them. The fact that there are two independent branches of indirect transmission makes it a straightforward task to establish what was not in the original. An item occurring in the Ilkhanid histories but absent from Rawandi's works and the manuscript of the *Saljuqnama* can be taken to be an addition.

Rawandi's factual, as opposed to decorative and moralising, additions

are few. Those of the Ilkhanid historians are numerous. Many are quite small. One recurrent type is the geographical expansion, a descriptive comment on a place name, some lines for instance, on the castle of Diz-i Sifid in Fars or on Firuzkuh and other castles in the Elburz north-east of Rayy.<sup>5</sup> Whether these derive from written sources, or a vague general knowledge is uncertain. Others supplement or are intended to clarify Zahir al-Din's words. Some of them are certainly incorrect. A Shah of Mazandaran, left unnamed by Nishapuri, is identified as Ardashir son of Babak.<sup>6</sup> There was a ruler of Mazandaran in the twelfth century called Ardashir but, unlike the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, he was not the son of a Babak and his reign began long after the event described at this point. Similarly, an unnamed Khwarazmshah is identified as Tikish b. Arslan, but at the pertinent date Tikish's father, who is normally called Il-Arslan, was Khwarazmshah.<sup>7</sup> In the *Jami' al-tawarikh* the tribal name Kharluq, used twice by Nishapuri, has been changed to that of a quite different group, the Ghuzzan.<sup>8</sup> According to Nishapuri, the Byzantine Emperor, after the battle of Manzikert, paid in *jizya* a thousand dinars per day. This is changed to a million dinars per year in the later works (Qashani 1332: 32; Rashid al-Din 1960: 47; Nishapuri 2004: 29). Other additions may provide authentic supplementary information, though this should not be taken for granted. For instance, Nishapuri places a battle between Sultan Muhammad b. Mahmud and his uncle Sulaiman Shah by the river Araxes. Here the Ilkhanid historians add precision, Qashani putting it in the region of Bailaqan, while the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, even more precisely, says that it took place below Bailaqan at the Nawaghush (?) ford (Qashani 1332: 70; Rashid al-Din 1960: 148; Nishapuri 2004: 95). Sanjar's daughter Mahmalik Khatun, the wife of Sultan Mahmud, may have been seventeen when she died, as the later authors inform us, but Nishapuri is silent on the point (2004: 70; Qashani 1332: 53; Rashid al-Din 1960: 106). Many more examples could be given.

Of the sources that contributed to provide this material, one was identified some time ago by Affan Seljuq. He noted that certain passages in Qashani were paralleled in the *Zubdat al-nusra wa nukhbat al-'usra* of Bundari, completed in 1226 (Seljuq 1971: 91-6, 1977: 176-7). The same passages are found in the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, and there are in fact many additional ones in both works. Bundari's book is an abbreviated version of the *Nusrat al-fatra wa 'Usrat al-fitra* of 'Imad al-Din al-Isbahani, an important early source for the Seljuqs.<sup>9</sup> Which of the two was used for the Ilkhanid histories is uncertain, though Bundari seems the most probable. Although in their histories of the Isma'ilis both Qashani and Rashid al-Din cite the great general history of Ibn al-Athir *al-Kamil fi al-tarikh* as a source,<sup>10</sup> it does not appear that it has made any contribution to their treatment of the Seljuqs. Nor, although

I could not claim to have checked exhaustively, have I managed to find traces definitely deriving from any other source.

The use of multiple sources can lead to confusion. One instance is the account of the entry of Caliph al-Qa'im into Baghdad after his release from captivity in the region of 'Ana. According to the *Saljuqnama*, Tughril had the Caliph brought back to Baghdad.<sup>11</sup> This is said to have occurred in Dhu al-Hijja 451 (early in 1060). When they reached the gate of Baghdad, Tughril dismounted and walked in front of the Caliph's litter (*mihaffa*). The latter said to him, in Arabic, 'Mount, O Rukn al-Din', giving him a title superior to his previous Rukn al-Dawla, and praised him (Nishapuri 2004: 17). This account appears nearly verbatim in the Ilkhanid histories, but there is inserted in the middle of it, after the date, some lines containing a conflicting account of the entry into Baghdad. In this, Tughril entered the city before the Caliph and sat at the Bab al-Nubi, one of the gates of the palace, in the place where the chamberlain (*hajib*) was accustomed to sit. When the Caliph arrived he took the bridle of his horse and led him to the Hujra, an audience hall within the palace. So the Caliph was restored to his rightful place. The date of this is given as Monday 25, of Dhu al-Qa'da, 451 (18 January 1060) in the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, while Qashani gives the month as Dhu al-Hijja (1332: 20; Rashid al-Din 1960: 24-5). In fact this episode is taken out of a more detailed account and can be taken to derive here from 'Imad al-Din, whose date agrees with that of the *Jami' al-tawarikh*.<sup>12</sup> It would seem that Qashani had noticed the discrepancy with the *Saljuqnama's* date and made an attempt at reconciliation. However, the other contradictions of the two versions are simply left to stand. For instance, the Caliph is at one point riding a horse and at another in a litter.<sup>13</sup>

Of particular interest are two conspicuous sets of additions that evidently come from written sources that are not known to survive. The first of these shows an interest in the early history of the branch of the Seljuq family from which the Seljuq rulers of Rum descended, that of Isra'il, eldest of the sons of Saljuq and uncle of Tughril and Chaghri.<sup>14</sup> Near the beginning of the original *Saljuqnama* there is a long account of how Isra'il was imprisoned and kept in confinement in India by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (Nishapuri 2004: 5-8). The moral is explicitly drawn in a speech made by Isra'il: the treacherous action of the son of a slave helps justify the rebellion of the nobly born Seljuqs and their subsequent conquests, begun at the expense of the Ghaznavids. Otherwise, Nishapuri shows almost no interest in this branch of the family, and in fact the story is a little awkward for the Seljuqs of Iran, where supreme power was taken by Tughril and Chaghri, the sons of Isra'il's younger brother Mika'il, who, not without difficulty, sidelined the senior branch of the family. Towards the end of the story of Isra'il it

is mentioned that his son Qutlumush<sup>15</sup> was himself incognito in India, hoping to help his father escape, and, when Isra'il died, returned to join his other relations. It is later stated that when Tughril at Rayy was placing members of the family over various provinces Qutlumush was sent to Gurgan and Damghan (Nishapuri 2004: 14). Nishapuri has no more to say about Qutlumush or any of his descendants. The Ilkhanid historians include the story of Isra'il, with alterations to be discussed below, and also insert several items. They relate that later in his reign Tughril sent Qutlumush to the west to conquer Syria and other provinces and also made him Malik of Tabaristan and Mazandaran.<sup>16</sup> They also provide an account of how, on Tughril's death, Qutlumush, claiming that his father's seniority entitled his descendants to rule, rebelled and was defeated by Alp Arslan's forces and killed (Qashani 1332: 22; Rashid al-Din 1960: 27-8). Whatever the details, Qutlumush did rebel and meet his death, in 456/1054 (Bundari 1889: 28; Husaini 1933: 30-2; Cahen 1964: 24-5; Sibt 1968: 110-11). Nishapuri says nothing about this. The inserted account continues. Alp Arslan wished to put the members of the Seljuq family who had been with Qutlumush to death, including his little son Sulaiman. He was dissuaded by Nizam al-Mulk who proposed that they should be sent to guard the frontiers of Islam in a position where they could not aspire to become princes and would live in misery and poverty. A place was assigned to him on the frontier of Diyar Bakr and Ruha and we are told that he was the ancestor of all the (Seljuq) Sultans of Rum.

These last two items are also found almost verbatim in another later source independent of Rashid al-Din and Qashani, the fourteenth-century *Musamarat al-akhbar* of Aqsara'i, mainly a history of Seljuq and Mongol rule in Anatolia, but briefly covering the Seljuqs of Iran.<sup>17</sup> There can be no doubt that they have a common origin. With this in mind, it is worth taking a closer look at the versions of the imprisonment of Isra'il. Those of Rashid al-Din and Qashani differ in some respects from that of Nishapuri.<sup>18</sup> They say, for instance, that Qutlumush was imprisoned together with his father and that Mahmud informed the other Seljuqs that Isra'il, ignorant of the behaviour appropriate to a court, had drunkenly misbehaved in such a way that honour required that he should be confined. He would, however, shortly be treated with favour and released. These features are also found in Aqsara'i (1944: 10-13). It is evident that the Ilkhanid versions are a clumsy combination of that in the *Saljuqnama* and that found in Aqsara'i. The actual wording corresponds now to one and now to the other. In all versions Mahmud confirms his fears of Seljuq potential by asking Isra'il how many men he can summon to reinforce the Sultan in case of need. In response to a series of questions he explains dramatically with the help of his bow and arrows

that by sending these as tokens he can call upon tens of thousands of warriors from the different regions inhabited by the nomad Turks. In the *Saljuqnama* he has the bow on his arm and two arrows stuck in his belt. In Aqsara'i he takes the bow and then three arrows from his arms-bearer (*salahdar*). The Ilkhanid historians have the arms-bearer and the three arrows, but in the details of the sending of the tokens they follow Nishapuri. In the Ilkhanid histories Qutlumush, who has been imprisoned with his father, is nevertheless in India later, hoping to rescue Isra'il, as stated by Nishapuri. Aqsara'i varies on this point, saying that Qutlumush was still in confinement when his father died, poisoned by Mahmud's son Mas'ud, but was later released by Mas'ud (1944: 14).

In the account of the reign of Alp Arslan the later versions make unusually extensive additions and alterations to Nishapuri's original, which is wretchedly brief. The items to be considered here come in the account of the famous battle of Manzikert, which took place in 1071.<sup>19</sup> A number of emirs are named as forming the Seljuq army and most of the names are those of the ancestors, founders or leading figures of independent dynasties known to have existed later in Diyar Bakr and eastern Turkey, among them Artuq, Danishmand, Saltuq and Mangujak. After the battle, and the failure of the Emperor Romanus to pay the sum agreed before his release, the Seljuq Sultan sends them to seize whatever Byzantine territory they can, which they and their descendants can possess henceforward. They at once proceed to do so and the territories of most of them are listed. We are then informed that later, in the reign of Malikshah, with the approval of Nizam al-Mulk, Sulaiman the son of Qutlumush was sent to Rum to rule over these emirs and put an end to their quarrels. The potential benefits of this *démarche* are noted. If Sulaiman is successful, a new clime will be added to Malikshah's dominions; if he is killed, a thorn will be removed from the foot of the dynasty, that is, they will be rid of Sulaiman (Qashani 1332: 25, 27-8; Rashid al-Din 1960: 33, 38-9). The problem with the presence of the emirs is that so far as they can be identified the principalities with which they are said to be connected belong to later, in most cases considerably later, periods. Artuq, perhaps the earliest of them, who is said in these accounts to have taken control of Diyar Bakr and its dependencies after Manzikert and whose descendants did later rule there, was in western Anatolia not long after Manzikert and at one stage briefly in Diyar Bakr in a subordinate capacity but died much later as governor of Jerusalem. It was his sons who first gained control in the area, in the last decade of the eleventh century (Cahen 1988: 11-12; Hillenbrand 1990: 29-30). Danishmand also makes his appearance in the last decade of the eleventh century; Mangujak and Saltuq well into the twelfth (Cahen 1988: 16-19, 49-51). The despatch

his place. Before he arrived in Hamadan, Muhammad had agreed with Khassbig's rivals to eliminate him without delay. The accounts of how this was done in the Ilkhanid histories combine elements taken from Nishapuri with others deriving from 'Imad al-Din, some details which I presume to come from the postulated alternative account, and, in the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, an additional measure of confusion (Qashani 1332: 67-8; Bundari 1889: 229-31; Rashid al-Din 1960: 140-3; Nishapuri 2004: 89-91). For instance, Rashid al-Din and Qashani when describing the death of Khassbig and his fellow-tribesman Zangi Jandar follow the *Saljuqnama* in saying their heads were thrown down from the upper part of the pavilion outside Hamadan where the killing took place but add that this was done at the suggestion of Muhammad's vizier, Jalal al-Din Dargazini, who is not mentioned here in the *Saljuqnama* but in Bundari's account, in which it is the bodies of the dead men that were thrown down from the pavilion, advised Muhammad throughout the affair. A detail that comes from neither 'Imad al-Din or Nishapuri is the statement that the new Sultan, who, on the day of the murders, had received a *pishkish* of unprecedented richness from Khassbig, regretted agreeing to his destruction, but too late. This, I suggest, comes from the alternative source for the career of Khassbig, from which the other variants came. So far as this work can be perceived it is on the whole less reliable as a historical source than 'Imad al-Din and even the *Saljuqnama* but it does demonstrate a considerable knowledge of and interest in the not very significant activities of a rather minor polity. This suggests that it was written at a relatively early date, in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century perhaps. The treatment of the relationship of Mas'ud and Khassbig is sympathetic, even sentimental, and one can perceive the work as a romanticised version of the political history of the period in which the relationship occupied a prominent position. The love of a king and a male favourite was nothing exceptional in the military courts of medieval Iran. Celebrated in literature is that of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna and the slave soldier Ayaz. A grim side of such affairs is revealed in 'Imad al-Din's account of the loves of Sanjar, Mas'ud's great-uncle, who used to shower the current favourite with wildly extravagant gifts and honours, but when his passion cooled would arrange to have him murdered (Bundari 1889: 271-4). That the story of Mas'ud and Khassbig, like that of Mahmud and Ayaz, could be perceived as a romance is shown by its appearance in the unusual early sixteenth-century collection of stories of love of assorted kinds, the *Majalis al-'ushshaq* (Gazargahi 1375: 306-9). This recounts the story of their first meeting substantially as given above, though the favourite's name has mysteriously become Fitna-angiz, which may perhaps be translated 'Trouble'. Not much more is said but it is implied that Mas'ud's death is caused, in appropriately romantic fashion, by grief

at separation from Fitna-angiz, whom the hostility of the other emirs has forced him to send to Baghdad. The same work contains a remarkably similar story of the love of the great Sultan Malikshah for a nomad boy, whose original name, Big, becomes Khassbig when he enters the king's service (ibid.: 294-7). Fanciful as these stories are, there are in both of them a few phrases and dates which ultimately derive from the *Saljuqnama*.

The treatment of Khassbig's end in the *Jami' al-tawarikh* shows again the confusion that can arise in combining disparate sources. Besides the account of the overthrow of Khassbig under Sultan Muhammad, the *Jami' al-tawarikh* has another one which has somehow been misplaced in the previous reign, that of Malikshah II (Rashid al-Din 1960: 137-8). This is an abbreviated version deriving from 'Imad al-Din, in which it is the bodies, not the heads, of the slain emirs that are thrown down from the palace, while the two heads are sent to the great emirs of Azerbaijan, Ildigiz and Arslanapa in the vain hope that this would discourage them from rebellion. In the *Jami' al-tawarikh* the part of this passage describing the sending of the heads to Azerbaijan occurs again virtually word-for-word at the end of the account of the fall of Khassbig given in its proper place, in the reign of Muhammad. The duplication has not escaped attention, for, at the second occurrence, in what is clearly a scribal comment, it is noted in the two earliest manuscripts that it has appeared in the previous chapter and is evidently repeated. Nevertheless it was in the original (*asl*) and is duly copied. This comment is actually inserted in the middle of a sentence taken from Nishapuri; presumably it stood in the margin of an earlier draft and then intruded into the text. There are one or two other instances of duplicate passages. Considering such features as these, and the body of additions and corrections as a whole, it can be seen that the Ilkhanid historians used the *Saljuqnama* as the basis of their accounts and supplemented it with a method like that which, in the days of word-processors, can be called 'cut and paste' instead of the old 'scissors and paste'. It was not very carefully employed. To give one final example, in both histories the section on Tughril III uses present tenses implying that he is still alive. This is adopted without thinking from what Nishapuri had written over a century before, when Tughril was still a boy (2004: 120-2, editor's introduction 25, 31; Qashani 1332: 83-4; Rashid al-Din 1960: 177-8). That the *Jami' al-tawarikh* shows more signs of confusion in some ways than Qashani's history can be taken to be due to the fact that the former was the work of a team, probably including not only Rashid al-Din and Qashani but others too.

## Notes

1. Cited as Nīshāpūrī. The English introduction contains a full account of the sources for the text of the edition.
2. For the account of the Seljuqs, see Rashīd al-Dīn 1960 and for an English translation, often inaccurate, Rashīd al-Dīn 2001.
3. This publication is here cited as Qāshānī 1332 but the work appears in bibliographies and elsewhere as Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūqnāma*.
4. Rāwandī 1921; for the *Tārīkh-i Saljūqiyān* the Paris manuscript.
5. Qāshānī 1332: 57, 61; Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 117-18, 125. The position of Firūzkūh is defined a second time: Qāshānī 1332: 79; Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 168.
6. Qāshānī 1332: 80; Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 171n. Ateş omitted the name from his text. As he notes, 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥasan was the Bāwand ruler at the time.
7. Qāshānī 1332: 79; Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 168n, where the editor records that he has replaced the reading of the manuscripts with *il Arslān*.
8. Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 83-5; Nīshāpūrī 2004: 57-8. The reading in Qāshānī 1332: 46, is '*irāq*', probably representing an intermediate stage of the corruption.
9. 'Imād al-Dīn's work is unpublished but preserved in an apparently unique ms. in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Since Houtsma's time it has been generally assumed that the date 579 (1183-4) mentioned as the present in the text of Bundārī (1889: 136) shows when 'Imād al-Dīn's book was completed. However, sections covering later events are introduced by *qāla*, i.e. as quotations, indicating that 'Imād al-Dīn took his account up to the death of Ṭughril in 1194 and the extinction of the dynasty. Thanks to Dr David Durand-Guédy, I have seen copies of the final pages of the Paris manuscript which does include all the final sections marked as quotations by Bundārī. Cf. Durand-Guédy 2005.
10. Ibn al-Athīr is cited for the same Fatimid genealogy in Rashīd al-Dīn (1338: 26) and Qāshānī (1366: 45), and is the source for many passages in this section of their works.
11. Typical of the unreliability of the *Saljūqnāma* is its placing of the Caliph's return to Baghdad after the defeat of Basāsīrī, who had been responsible for his imprisonment. There is no doubt that the Caliph's return took place first.
12. Bundārī 1889: 17-18. 'Imad al-Dīn's version of the return of the Caliph consists of a number of items selected from a more detailed account based at least in part on contemporary evidence, and embellished by 'Imād al-Dīn. The long account is preserved in Ibn al-Jawzī (1992-3: xvii, 49-52) and Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī (1968: 58-62).
13. In Bundārī and the other sources mentioned in the previous note the Caliph rides a mule. Evidently the Ilkhanid writers did not appreciate that a mule was an appropriate mount.



14. On Isrā'īl, known as Arslān in some sources, and his descendants, see Cahen 1964.
15. Cahen's form of the name is adopted here. The evidence is conflicting but it may be noted that Qutulmush, or a metrical equivalent, is attested in a *qaṣīda* written not long after his death. See Lāmi'ī 2535 Shahinshahi: 142.
16. Qāshānī 1332: 21; Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 26. For a time in the reign of Ṭughril Qutlumush is known to have been active in Azerbaijan and Armenia, but he later appears in rebellion, basing himself at Girdkūh in Qūmis, bordering on Mazanderan, and it was in this region that he met his death. For this, see Cahen 1964.
17. Āqsarā'ī 1944: 15–16. Āqsarā'ī's main source for the Seljuqs of Iran is the meagre account in the *Nizām al-tawārīkh* of Baidāwī. (See Turan's introduction: 41–2, 54.) This last itself derives mainly from the *Saljūqnāma*. However, the passages under discussion are not in the *Nizām al-Tawārīkh*.
18. Qāshānī 1332: 10–13; Rashīd al-Dīn 1960: 6–11. There is another version of Isrā'īl's imprisonment in Shabānkāra-ī 1363: 58–9 (cf. 79, 97). The earliest references to it are brief: Jūzjānī 1342–3: 247, deriving from Baihaqī; Gardīzī 1347: 189.
19. The battle of Manzikert is discussed in detail in Hillenbrand 2007.
20. Āqsarā'ī 1944: 27. The beginning of the account of the dynasty given here connects with the material from the postulated source. Dānishmand, threatened by the Emperor Romanus (who had died long before), called upon Qilij Arslān, son of Sulaimān, who was leading a nomadic life in the region of Bīra, Ruhā, Diyār Bakr and the upper Euphrates, to provide assistance. The latter obliges and in a great battle, reminiscent of Manzikert, the Byzantines are defeated.
21. Zangī Jāndār, involved with Khāṣṣbig in the murder of 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Taghāyarak, and the actual killer, is described as Khāṣṣbig's *khailtāsh*, fellow tribesman. See al-Qummī 1363: 145. When Khāṣṣbig himself was murdered Zangī was with him and shared his fate. They were accompanied to the meeting by another Turcoman, the Afshār Aidughdī, known as Shumla, who fled to pursue a long career as an independent tribal leader. That Khāṣṣbig's family was quite important is shown by occasional references to his relations, his father Palangirī (al-Qummī 1363: 119; Bundārī 1889: 161) and a nephew, Rawwādī (Bundārī 1889: 232).
22. Bundārī 1889: 224. A letter written to the Caliph from near Asadābād reports the Sultan's return from visiting his uncle. This is preceded by another by the same scribe mentioning his employment in Khāṣṣbig's Dīwān. See *Al-Mukhtārāt min al-Rasā'il* 1977: 25.

## Exile and Return: Diasporas of the Secular and Sacred Mind

*Ian Richard Netton*

### Procession and Return, Exile and Return

Down the ages diverse thinkers and scholars, from the Neoplatonist Plotinus (AD 204/5–70) to the Victorian Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89), have identified a flow of procession and return, working, as it were, like a kind of natural law within the universe (McGinn 2007: 46–7ff.). Bernard McGinn, in a succinct recapitulation, put it like this:

The master paradigm of *exitus* and *reditus*, the procession out and return to God, is perhaps natural to the religious mind as it reflects upon the nature of the universe. In Western thought the evolution of this dynamic paradigm was shaped by the way in which Neoplatonic thinkers, both pagan and Christian, sought to express how the First Principle overflows into the universe while at the same time drawing all things back to Itself (ibid.: 46).

In a masterly exposition McGinn shows how 'pagan Neoplatonic thinkers brought the paradigm of emanation and reversion to a new level of sophistication by their analysis of the three stages of reality' (ibid.: 47) and how the fundamental 'triadic paradigm' at the heart of Neoplatonism could have become 'Christianized' in terms of Christian Trinitarian theology (ibid.: 47). The articulation, however, was within a framework which acknowledged the inadequacy of human words confronted by an ineffable mystery (McGinn 2007: 49).

The basic Plotinian triad of The One, Intellect and Soul (Plotinus 1966–88: *passim*), and the various triads which developed from it, thus 'spoke' to a nascent mediaeval Christian theology and could be used to intellectual effect. But what did this paradigm of procession and return have to say to broader intellectual arenas such as those of the intellectual development of Islam, the proliferation of various world diasporas

or the efflorescence of certain leitmotifs in world literatures? To paraphrase A. N. Whitehead's (1861–1947) famous dictum (to the effect that the whole history of philosophy was just a series of footnotes to Plato; Lacey 1982: 10), could it be that the motifs of *exile and return*, *procession and return*, and the intellectual developments thereof with which we shall concern ourselves in this essay, were also footnotes to the complex corpus of Plotinus?

How is Plotinus' intriguing paradigm reflected in, or paralleled by, such areas as the politics of the diaspora, diverse world literatures and various Islamic theologies? All this will be surveyed in the remarks which follow. It is recognised, of course, that the twin motifs of *procession and return* and *exile and return* reflect a slightly different dynamic: the first is a fundamentally Neoplatonic theological motif; the second may be both theological and terrestrial in its essence and impact. Furthermore, in Neoplatonism, emanation from The One is involuntary (Plotinus 1966–88: V.1.6, V.2.1); in diaspora politics, exile may be voluntary but it is often forced.

### Into the Diaspora

The diaspora model for Judaism is basically tripartite in that it reflects three major events: the Babylonian exile, the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the Holocaust. In 587/6 BC the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BC) besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. J. R. Porter questions the reliability of 2 Kings 24: 14 and 2 Kings 25: 12 which give the impression of a mass deportation of the population and prefers to trust Jeremiah 52: 28–30 which indicates 'that three thousand twenty three Judeans were deported in BC 597, but only eight hundred thirty two after Jerusalem's final fall and destruction' (Porter 1995: 110–11). //

Regardless of the figures, however, and discounting the Exodus under Moses, this constitutes the first major diaspora in Jewish history. Exaggerated or not, rhetorically inflated or not, the account in 2 Kings 24: 14 is powerful and heart-rending in its creation of a diasporic atmosphere:

And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths; none remained, save the poorest sort of people of the land (King James Edn: 323).

And, from the depths of their yearning, the exiled Jewish people in Babylon sat down and wept by its rivers and hung their harps on the willow trees which they found there (Porter 1995: 112; Psalm 137: 1–2).

Yet, if this may be designated 'an age of sorrow', the Return to Jerusalem in c. 539–38 BC, after the defeat of the Babylonians by the

Persian King Cyrus II (550–29 BC; Porter 1995: 114), inaugurated 'an age of joy' as well as reconstruction. All is recorded in *The Book of Ezra* (ibid.: 114–17, esp. Ezra 3: 11–13). And an arch-paradigm of *exile and return* is established which runs Jerusalem-Babylon-Jerusalem. That said, it is worth noting with Lavinia and Dan Cohn-Sherbok that 'after the return to the land, many Jews, who had prospered, remained behind and by the 1st century BCE, there were Jewish communities in most urban areas around the Mediterranean coast' (1995a: 37–8, 1995b: 49–50; Cohn-Sherbok 1992: 115). Robert North observes, furthermore, that 'the Jews in Babylon had already prospered because of their facility in the Aram chancery language. Their usefulness as undercover agents in the chanceries was doubled when Persia conquered Babylon' (1990: 386).

The second major event in the diasporic tripartite model for Judaism is the siege and capture of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70 (Porter 1995: 145). The horrors of that siege and the resulting diaspora of many of the Jews are vividly recorded by Joseph ben Matthias who came to be known as Flavius Josephus (AD 37–100; Josephus 1971). A second revolt under Rabbi Aqiba, Eleazar the priest and Simon ben Kosibah (Bar Cochba) in AD 132–5 culminated in Jerusalem being razed by the Emperor Hadrian (AD 117–38; Fitzmyer *et al.* 1990: 1251–2). Between the two revolts, 'both in Palestine and in the Diaspora a yearning for "the restoration of Israel" was fed by the recollection of how restoration followed the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC' (ibid.: 1252). Rabbinic eschatology, then as now, fostered the idea of an 'ingathering of exiles' (Cohn-Sherbok 1992: 147; Cohn-Sherbok and Cohn-Sherbok 1995: 50) in a Messianic age, however far they may be perceived to have spread (Josephus 1971: 233).

The third leg in our tripartite Judaic model is the Holocaust, known also in world history as the Shoah or Calamity (Cohn-Sherbok 1992: 229; Cohn-Sherbok and Cohn-Sherbok 1995: 78). Six million Jews were slaughtered during the Holocaust and the antique foundations of Eastern European Judaism were irretrievably wrecked. Yet some did manage to escape in time from this and other pogroms, thereby creating the basis of the Jewish diaspora with which we are familiar today (Davies 1997: 842–3, 845–8; Taylor 2000: 364). And 'since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the ingathering of the exiles (Hebrew 'kibbutz galuyyot') has come to mean the immigration of diaspora Jews to Israel' (Cohn-Sherbok 1992: 147; Cohn-Sherbok and Cohn-Sherbok 1995: 50).

The diasporic model for twentieth century Islam and the Arabs, by contrast, is univocal in emphasis and focuses upon Palestine. Babylon, for the displaced Palestinians of 1948 and their exiled descendants, is all the land outside the land of Palestine, for many truly a *dar al-harb*

(land of war) or, at the very least, 'a land of exile'. Return to the land of their forefathers is a complex, half-fulfilled and, at the time of writing, fear-fraught dream.

There had, of course, been previous exiles for Arabs in history, whether they were Muslim or Christian. There was that which became characterised in Arabic literature as the *Mahjar* (Emigration; Nijland 1998c: vol. 2, 492-3), embracing such literary luminaries as Mikha'il Nu'ayma (1889-1989; Nijland 1998d: vol. 2, 588-9; Nu'ayma 1962: vol. 1, esp. 273-83), Jubran Khalil Jubran (1883-1931; Nijland 1998b: vol. 1, 415-16) and Iliya Abu Madi (1889-1957; Nijland 1998a: vol. 1, 38-9). All these migrated from the Lebanon to the USA and some, at least, returned at various times; but their experiences of 'procession', migration and occasional return can hardly be compared to those of contemporary Palestinians, whatever the hardships suffered by the former.<sup>1</sup> For the exilic experiences of Nu'ayma, Jubran and Abu Madi may be characterised ultimately as 'exiles of the soul'; within their individual financial constraints they were free to return and 'possess' their land according to inclination and choice.

Palestine (Arabic *Filastin*, Greek *Palaistine*, Latin *Palaestina*) has been inhabited and ruled inter alia by Philistines, Jews, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans and the British (Sourdel and Minganti 1965: 910). It is a truism to say that the land has been much fought over. After the First World War 'the policy of the British Mandatory government in Palestine was from the beginning influenced by the promises made by Britain to the Jews to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine' (ibid.: 913).

Britain relinquished her mandate on 15 May 1948 but 'the day before, David Ben Gurion had proclaimed the birth of the State of Israel' (ibid.: 914). The aftermath in the decades which have followed is too well-known to require repetition here. However, 'the flight of the native population was a cataclysm so deeply distressing to the Arabs that to this day they call it, quite simply, *al-Nakba*, the Catastrophe' (Hirst 1977: 136). This *nakba* was – and is – the Palestinians' Babylon Event. The events of Deir Yassin provided further fuel for the catastrophe (ibid.: 138, for Deir Yassin 124ff.). By early 1949, David Hirst estimates that of 1,300,000 Arab inhabitants of Palestine, nearly 900,000 had been displaced (ibid.: 142). Yet, if Deir Yassin and other episodes provided the angry fuel and motor for the *nakba*, 'the Vision of the Return' as David Hirst calls it, a vision powerfully and evocatively articulated in poetry and prose, was its immediate and dynamic offspring (ibid.: 265-9; Fisk 2005: 491).

After the first exile of the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon under King Nebuchadrezzar, the exiled people are portrayed by the Psalmist, as we have seen in Psalm 137, to devastatingly emotional effect,

hanging up their harps and weeping by the waters of Babylon. David Hirst cites the Palestinian scholar, Dr A. L. Tibawi in 1963 who, after 'examining the growing literature of The Return . . . concluded that such feelings were no less intense than those of the Psalmist: "Should I forget thee, O Jerusalem"' (1963, 508, cited in Hirst 1977: 269, 287, n. 22), in Psalm 137. Here we have a notable confluence of exilic feelings felt by both Jews and Arabs and it is these feelings which we shall now explore in a little more depth in the section which follows. They are framed by the *possibility* of Return. In David Hirst's prescient words once again, 'it was after all from such powerful emotions, seemingly visionary at first, that great upheavals spring' (1977: 269). The passages which follow present not just the Vision and the emotion but also the possibility – sometimes the reality – of The Return as well.

### A World of Feelings: the Terrestrial Paradigm

To enter the world of *exile and return* is to enter a world of feelings. Zahia Salhi powerfully articulates this sensitive world:

However, regardless of the reasons that make exiles live far from their homelands and regardless of whether they escaped prosecution or chose to live far from home, they all keep an *idealised image of home as a paradise they were forced to flee*, and never manage to entirely adopt their new dwellings. As such they share feelings of solitude, estrangement, loss and longing (Salhi and Netton 2006: 3; my italics).

The selection of texts which follows is not intended to be comprehensive but merely illustrative; it is, however, designed to highlight those exilic feelings of 'solitude, estrangement, loss and longing'. Such feelings may be said to be paralleled by that great Neoplatonic 'yearning' for Return (Plotinus 1966–88: VI.9.9) to which we alluded earlier. Later, we will examine, in a specifically Islamic context, Salhi's reference above to the 'idealised image of home as a paradise they were forced to flee'. For here, in this phrase, merge a diversity of Biblical and Qur'anic motifs of innocence, expulsion, procession, exile and longed-for return, underpinned by a weighty theological orchestra to be led by the trumpet of Israfil on the Last Day, but, potentially, paralleled earlier on earth in real time by every return to a yearned-for homeland. Every r/Return is thus a minor resurrection for the spiritually inclined, Muslim and Jew alike. And every yearned-for land provides a terrestrial foretaste of the Paradise Garden itself, *al-Janna*.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus yearns to return to his native island of Ithaca in the Ionian Islands after the lengthy and wearisome Siege of Troy. The war at Troy is traditionally reckoned to have lasted ten

years; having left behind both Penelope, his wife, and Telemachos, his young son, in his island kingdom of Ithaca in order to fight in the Trojan War, Odysseus, not always of his own volition, spends another ten years trying to return home, according to the tradition (Severin 1987: 54–5; Homer 2007: 1–2). The theme of Return is thus a very powerful one; indeed the whole of the *Odyssey* may be characterised as ‘an epic of return’ and one which is sieved through a very lengthy journey. As Michael Silk puts it: ‘in the most literal sense, the *Odyssey* is the story of a wanderer, even an explorer. “Many men’s cities he saw, many men’s minds he discovered” (1.3)’ (2006: 39). And the motif of yearning is present from the start:

Now all the rest, as many as had escaped sheer destruction, were at home, safe from both war and sea; but that man alone, *filled with longing for his return and for his wife*, did the queenly nymph Calypso, that beautiful goddess, keep prisoner . . . (Homer 1995: book 1, 12–13, lines 11–14, my italics; Silk 2006: 35).

The Return is fulfilled, the yearning is quenched, by Odysseus’ ingenuity. Indeed, Nancy Felson and Laura Slatkin observe: ‘A poem that celebrates ingenuity, the *Odyssey* might be read as a series of ingenious plans, their collisions and their unfolding’. Thus they draw attention to the way in which Odysseus fools the Cyclops, his dealings with the witch Circe and the test set by his wife Penelope (Severin 1987: 26; Felson and Slatkin 2006: 103). Eventually, as Book XIII shows, Odysseus is returned to Ithaca and wakes, in solitude, estranged, unrecognised and unrecognising, in his own native land from which he has been absent for so long (Homer 1995: book 13, 14–17, lines 185–99). The land which he lost for so many years as a result of participating in a foreign war is now lost to him – at least temporarily – again, through lack of recognition and the machinations of the goddess Pallas Athene. Finally, after a series of trials and tests, Odysseus is recognised and accepted by his faithful wife Penelope, and the longing and yearning are fulfilled and quenched, both physically and emotionally (ibid.: book 13, 398ff., lines 205ff.).

In Plato’s *Symposium*, as in some of his longer Dialogues like ‘the Protagoras, Meno, Gorgias, Phaedo . . . and Phaedrus . . . the Socratic puzzles about the virtues are discussed more deeply and connectedly . . .’ (Hare 1982: 21). Here, as Bryan Magee stresses, we find Plato writing ‘at the height of his powers’ (1987: 23). In response to Magee’s question as to why such Dialogues are also regarded as ‘supreme works of literary art’, Myles Burnyeat replies succinctly: ‘They are so alive . . . Where Plato is concerned, we have to add his great mastery and range of language, from high-flown, imaginative descriptions to austere

analysis or jokes and witty repartee. Add that he is terribly good at making crystal clear the most difficult thoughts' (ibid.: 23-4).<sup>2</sup>

Such observations may be borne in mind as we survey how Plato, and the Arab historian al-Mas'udi (c. 896-956 AD) after him, handle our key exilic themes of solitude, estrangement, loss and longing in relation to the concept of love.

Bernard Williams provides us with a useful thumbnail sketch of what the *Symposium* is all about:

The participants in the dinner party which the *Symposium* describes, talk about what *eros* is, what it is to be a lover. The lover and his desires have some relation to beauty, or beautiful things: in particular, beautiful young men. We learn more precisely what these desires are. His desire is not a desire for the beautiful, at least in an obvious sense . . . This desire itself turns out to be an expression, or form, of a desire to be immortal (Williams 2000: 69-70).

During the meal the doctor Eryximachus proposes that the guests entertain each other with speeches which will sing the praises of love, rather than just listening to the usual flute players. Socrates seconds this proposal and all the others agree (Plato 1972: 40-1).<sup>3</sup>

It is the contribution by the great Greek comedy writer and poet, Aristophanes (c. 448-380 BC), author of *The Birds* (c. 414 BC), which concerns us here. Walter Hamilton tells us that Aristophanes begins by reminding his audience that they should not take him too seriously

but, as he continues, a vein of seriousness and almost of pathos begins to mingle with the humour . . . Aristophanes recognizes that love is a need . . . *love is also a longing to regain a lost happiness* . . . The ultimate object of love is the vision of absolute beauty which man's soul once enjoyed before it was incarnate . . . (Plato 1925: 132ff., 189Bff., 1972: 16-17, my italics, 58ff.).

Aristophanes puts it thus to his assembled audience at the meal: mankind originally comprised three sexes, male, female and hermaphrodite. Their strength, vigour and massive pride made them appear a threat to the gods:

Each human being was a rounded whole, with double back and flanks forming a complete circle; it had four hands and an equal number of legs, and two identically similar faces upon a circular neck, with one head common to both the faces, which were turned in opposite directions. It had four ears and two organs of generation . . . (Plato 1925: 134-7, 189D-190B, 1972: 59).

Zeus solves the problem by deciding to weaken the human race and bisects each of its three forms with the aid of Apollo (Plato 1925:



136-9, 190C-E, 1972: 60). 'Man's original body having been thus cut in two, each half yearned for the half from which it had been severed' (Plato 1925: 138-9, 191A-B, 1972: 61). Later, the plan is refined by Zeus whereby the reproductive organs in each bisection are moved from the side to the front of the body to enable male-female sexual intercourse (Plato 1925: 138-41, 191B-C, 1972: 61-2). Aristophanes' conclusion is that from this distant era dates 'the innate love which human beings feel for one another, the love which restores us to our ancient state by attempting to weld two beings into one and to heal the wounds which humanity suffered' (Plato 1925: 140-1, 191D, 1972: 62).

Two *topoi* coalesce in Aristophanes' vivid tale: a yearning, consequent upon loss, solitude and estrangement, to be reunited with one's 'other half' - 'Each of us is perpetually in search of his corresponding tally' (Plato 1925: 140-1, 191D, 1972: 62). Men who are halves of the original hermaphrodites seek out women with whom to mate, while women who are bisected from the original female sex are lesbians, seeking other women, and the male halves similarly seek out other males (Plato 1925: 140-3, 191D-192A, 1972: 62). Love then, reflected in what I will term here a 'lesser yearning' is the result of the meeting of two bisected halves.

However, all this mirrors a 'greater yearning' - a key theme in the Platonic corpus. We note, once again, Walter Hamilton's words in his Introduction to his translation of *The Symposium*: 'Love is also a longing to regain a lost happiness, and this too is characteristic of Platonic love at its highest. The ultimate object of love is the vision of absolute beauty which man's soul once enjoyed before it was incarnate ...' (Plato 1972: 17).

In the medieval Arab historian al-Mas'udi's *Muruj al-Dhahab* (Fields of Gold), a species of *adab* (belles lettres) more than pure *ta'rikh* (formal history), we encounter a similar symposium or *majlis*, convened by a member of the powerful Barmakid family, Yahya b. Khalid b. Barmak (AD 735-805; Barthold and Sourdel 1960: 1033-6), and a similar discussion of love. The Arabic word used in the *majlis* is *'ishq*, passionate love, a direct equivalent of the Greek *eros* (al-Mas'udi 1966b: vol. 3, 371ff.). And it is clear from the context that the original source is Plato.

Here we find the same initial characterisation of the soul as being round when it is created. God then divides each soul and each half is put into a completely separate body. Love necessarily results when one half of a soul, enclosed within a human body, meets its original other half enclosed in another. It is noted in the debate that this doctrine has even been accepted by some Muslims, and they try to justify this Platonic, but certainly un-Islamic, belief by reference to such Qur'anic verses as 89: 27-30, suggesting as exegesis that *return* to an initial state

logically implies that there must have been prior existence *in that state before*:

O (thou) soul,  
 In (complete) rest  
 And satisfaction!  
 Come back thou [*irji 'i*]  
 To thy Lord –  
 Well pleased (thyself)  
 And well-pleasing  
 Unto Him!  
 Enter thou, then,  
 Among my Devotees!  
 Yea, enter thou  
 My Heaven! (al-Mas'udi 1966b: vol. 3, 373-4)<sup>4</sup>

The logic of this interpretation of the Qur'an may seem to be semantically irrefutable, depending on the emphasis or twist one gives to the Arabic imperative *irji 'i* (come back! return!); the theology of such a *tafsir* however, is clearly Platonic. In a passage which parallels numerically, even though it does not reflect, Plato's famous tripartite division of the soul (Hare 1982: 53-4), Yusuf Ali comments on Q. 89: 27 as follows:

In Muslim theology, this stage of the soul is the final stage of bliss. The unregenerate human soul that seeks its satisfaction in the lower earthly desires is the *Ammara* (xii.53). The self-reproaching soul that feels conscious of sin and resists it is the *Lawwama* (lxxv.2)' (*The Holy Qur'an* 1984: 1735, n. 6127).

However, to judge from the evidence of this *majlis*, it is clear that not only had such Platonic ideas of the pre-existence of the soul endeared themselves to some in Abbasid Islam, but these ideas had a certain antique currency among the Arabs. The famous seventh-century AD Arab protagonist of the 'Udhrite School of Poetry, Jamil b. 'Abdallah b. Ma'mar al-'Udhri, is quoted with reference to the great love of his life, Buthayna: the latter's parents would not allow her to marry Jamil and instead married her off to another. Gabrieli tells us that Jamil 'was the first to speak of love as an ever-present cosmic force which attracts a person from the moment he is born, and lives on after his death' (1965: 427-8).

In the simple and very poignant lines quoted by al-Mas'udi in the *majlis* there is reference both to existence of the soul before this earthly life and existence after death: the poet glories in the idea that

his soul and that of his lover cleaved to each other before any earthly creation, that their loves have grown as they grew and that even death cannot destroy this love. Love is anthropomorphised and, contrasting vividly with the horrendous visitation of the soul in the grave by the Angels of the Grave, Munkar and Nakir, will visit the terrestrial lovers in the darkness of the tomb itself (al-Mas'udi 1966b: vol. 3, 374).

Here, for the poet then, love is eternal, having not only a reach beyond this earthly life but, bound up with the pre-existent soul, a pre-existence for itself as well. The loving soul, exiled temporarily on this earth from the sublime object of that love, Jamil from Buthayna, will return to the object of that affection in the grave and, I am sure we are intended to understand, in Paradise itself. Exile, solitude, loss, estrangement and yearning will be wiped out for the Arab poet in the bliss of an afterlife with the earthly beloved and the eternal Divine Beloved. Again, we may insert our own *tafsir* here: there is the 'lesser yearning' of Jamil for Buthayna which mirrors the eternal 'greater yearning' of the Islamic soul for Allah.<sup>5</sup>

It is intriguing that the modern Shakespeare scholar, Dr Wendy Macphee, founder of an itinerant Shakespeare company called Theatre Set-Up in 1976 and administrator of that company since that date, has used stories such as we have surveyed from Plato's *Symposium* to interpret the works of the Bard himself. Thus, Macphee writes, interpreting *The Comedy of Errors*:

This story presents a classic blueprint of the Platonic scenario: in which Love is described as originating from Chaos, represented by the storm and ship-wreck; in which the twin-born Love is characterised into two kinds, the heavenly (the Antipholus twins) and the earthly (the Dromio twins); in which the divided soul, when it reaches early maturity, (Antipholus at the age of eighteen), seeks its other half; and in which, through Love (implied by the meaning of Antipholus' name), the soul seeks to be reunited with the divinity from which it fell into a human body. Just as the divine soul is imprisoned in the human body, so Egeon is imprisoned for the course of the play' (2007: sv 'Different levels of meaning of the story: Renaissance Platonism', col. 4).

While 'it has long been agreed that Shakespeare's principal source for *The Comedy of Errors* was the comedy called *Menaechmi* by Plautus, the third-century BC Roman dramatist' (Shakespeare 2003: Introduction, 17), it is fascinating to note how Macphee's interpretation perpetuates and re-energises Plato's original story of the bisection of the soul in the *Symposium* of Plato, a story found no less entrancing by the medieval Arabs like Jamil and al-Mas'udi. And, citing Murray J. Levith's *What's in Shakespeare's Names*, Macphee notes that the

name of two of the main protagonists, Antipholus of Ephesus and his twin brother Antipholus of Syracuse, means 'one who returns another's love' (2007: n.p.). Once again appears our cardinal leitmotif of 'return'!

The twins motif is, of course, a particularly powerful vehicle with which to portray the Platonic myth of the bisected soul. And even the briefest of glances at the text of *The Comedy of Errors* unveils all our principal themes in this essay of exile, loss, estrangement, yearning and – finally – *Return*. It is a multifaceted return, ranging from the return of the twin sons to their father, the return of one under sentence of death to life through pardon, the return of a diamond ring and the return of a husband to his rightful wife (Shakespeare 2003: Act 5, Scene 1, lines 331ff to the end of the play).

In the *Two Islands Story*, narrated by the tenth/eleventh-century AD Arab philosophers of Basra, known to us as the Ikhwan al-Safa', in their *Rasa'il*, the shipwrecked mariner recalls, and yearns for, his former home. Indeed, it is interesting how often in world literature a shipwreck, or near-shipwreck, serves as a vehicle, prelude or catalyst to a story of exile and estrangement. It was clearly a favourite narrative engine of William Shakespeare, for example, as we see from both *The Comedy of Errors* (2003: Act 1, Scene 1, lines 60–119) and *The Tempest* (1961: Act 1).

In the Ikhwan's tale (1957: vol. 4, 37–40) some inhabitants from an idealised mountain city set sail, only to be shipwrecked on an inhospitable island whose native inhabitants are monkeys. The latter are subject to frequent attack by a monstrous bird of prey. The shipwrecked mariners are forced by physical circumstance to remain in exile on the island where they mate with the monkeys, forget their noble homeland and indulge in much warfare and quarrelling. After some years clouded by feelings of loss and estrangement, which gradually fade, one of the shipwrecked men returns *in a dream* to his native land which makes him most welcome. Awakening from the dream, he is filled with yearning and sadness: the exile is still a reality and his old feelings are revived. At the dreamer's instigation a valiant attempt at boatbuilding is attempted in an effort to return. But while all this is going on, the monster bird seizes one of the men and drops him in flight over his native city. Return has become a reality.

As part of their homespun *tafsir* for this tale, the Ikhwan explain that our own terrestrial world (*al-dunya*) is like the island of the shipwreck, while the great mountain dwelling, whence the shipwrecked people originally came, is an image of Paradise (*Dar al-akhira*) itself (Ikhwan 1957: vol. 4, 40). 'Here', it is clear, 'knowledge of reality is indeed recollection . . . Behind all this lies the common Platonic theme of the soul having had a previous existence to which it eventually returns' (Netton 2005: 84).<sup>6</sup> And the Ikhwan's tale encapsulates, once again,

all our major themes of procession, exile, solitude, loss, estrangement, yearning – and final return.

A plethora of other literary and fictional narratives of exile and return spring readily to mind, all imbued with the leitmotifs to which we have constantly referred. In Arabic literature we recall, for example, the profound sadness and loneliness of the North African traveller Ibn Battuta (AD 1304–1368/9 or 1377) as he begins his famous *Rihla*, and the joy he exhibits when his lengthy – admittedly self-inflicted – exile is over and he returns home to Morocco (Ibn Battuta 1964: 14, 17, 657).

One thinks of the best-selling novel *The Alchemist* (1999) by the Brazilian Paulo Coelho, whose protagonist Santiago embarks on a long journey seeking a treasure but in whose exile is always the promise of return. This is a story of transformation achieved through exile and return.<sup>7</sup>

One thinks of the equally popular *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (1994) by Louis de Bernières in which the young Italian officer and mandolin player, Captain Antonio Corelli, finding himself stationed on the Greek island of Cephallonia during the Second World War, falls in love with a local girl, Pelagia. In a chapter poignantly entitled 'Every Parting is a Foretaste of Death' (pp. 428–37), he is forced by circumstance to exile himself from the island; it is noteworthy how frequently in our examples 'the island' serves as the *locus* of exile or return. And in his old age and that of Pelagia, Captain Corelli *does* return to Cephallonia and his former love. The bitter exile is over (pp. 518–33).

Our final literary illustration of that Terrestrial Paradigm which is 'A World of Feelings' will be taken from the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's (1828–1906) *Peer Gynt*. Intertextually, we may relate it to the stories of the *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rip Van Winkle* and even the Qur'anic *Sura of the Cave* (*Surat al-Kahf*; Netton 2000: 67–87). In terms of style and content it is every bit as picaresque as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, with locations moving from Norway's mountains to Morocco, the Sahara desert and Cairo (Ibsen 1970: 22). As John Northam comments, '*Peer Gynt* explodes, from small farm to wide world, from fact to fantasy, in a prodigal variety' (2004: 37).

Yet, after all his adventures, 'Peer comes home' (Northam 2004: 44), having travelled all over the world in search of himself and home. Like Santiago in *The Alchemist* he has gained in self-knowledge – and perhaps more (ibid.: 45). But the Return is painful at first. More than forty years separate Acts One and Five in Ibsen's dramatic poem (1970: 186, n. 1). Peer Gynt suffers shipwreck and is later encountered as a stranger (ibid.: 174–5, 184); he is told by 'an Elderly Man' that Peer Gynt 'went overseas to foreign parts, and came to grief, as you might have expected. It's years now since he hanged himself' (ibid.: 188).

He returns finally to the now nearly blind Solveig who tells him he

has not sinned, characterises him as 'my only love' and cradles him to sleep (ibid.: 221(n. 1)-3). His exile, wanderings and yearning are finally assuaged in the arms of Solveig. *She* is his final home.

### The Islamic Model of Return: the Eschatological Celestial Paradigm

This essay has sought to identify some of the key aspects of our principal theme of *exile and return*. We may now link these, intertextually, to Islamic eschatology itself: to the exile on earth after the fall of Adam (Q. 2: 35-9, 7: 19-25) and the Return to the Paradise Garden (*al-Janna*) of the believers. The microcosm of each individual 'return' mirrors the greater eschatological Return. The Arabic word *al-ma'ad* means both 'the return' and 'the Hereafter'. The whole theology of the Islamic *topos* of 'Return' is encapsulated in the Qur'anic verses 6: 60, 10: 46 and 96: 8 and, in particular, in the traditional words of condolence: *Inna li-llahi wa-inna ilayhi raji'un* (We belong to God and to Him we return). There are 'lesser' flights into exile and returns implicit here as well, ranging from the flight of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in AD 622 and his later Return in triumph to Mecca, and the return of the Twelfth Imam for the Shi'a to the reappearance of 'Isa at the end of time (Q. 43: 61; al-Bukhari 1994: 1022-3 Kitab al-Fitan, 84:10 #2198). And the Return of the Hero, after exile and much questing and testing, is a common motif in world literature, mirroring in a terrestrial fashion the cosmic Return of the Soul to God, the entry into the bliss of the Paradise Garden for the believer, as well as the Neoplatonic Return to The One.

The Eschatological Celestial Paradigm in Islam reflects a universal paradigm of exile and return whose literary parallels are to be found in Homer, Plato and Plotinus as well as Shakespeare, Ibsen and Coelho. The terrestrial mirrors the celestial; and, as literature and politics show, every longed-for 'return' starts in the Paradise garden of the human imagination.

### Notes

1. 'The romantic stream was generously fed from afar by Lebanese émigrés to the United States, now known as the Syro-American school. These were mostly Christians, and *as such they fitted easily into a Western environment* and readily absorbed its dominant tastes and perceptions. Their high priest was Jibrān [*sic*] (1882-931), who in the last ten years of his life wrote only in English . . .' (Cachia 2002: 157; my italics).
2. We note, also, Stone's comment: 'Plato is the only philosopher who turned metaphysics into drama' (1988: 4).

3. For the original Greek text, see Plato 1925: 95–101, 176E–178B.
4. The Holy Qur'an 89: 27–30 is translated here by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1984: 1735).
5. Gabrieli notes that only fragments of Jamil's *Dīwān* have survived (1965: 427–8) but several are to be found, inter alia, in al-Iṣfahānī (1926/7: vol. 8, 90–154); see Gabrieli 1965: 428 Bibliography.
6. See also *passim* for this narrative survey.
7. Compare *The Pilgrimage* (Coelho 2003).

## Clerical Perceptions of Sufi Practices in Late Seventeenth-Century Persia, II: Al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1693) and the Debate on the Permissibility of *Ghina*

*Andrew J. Newman*

The anti-Sufi polemic that marked Iran’s spiritual discourse during the seventeenth century was no mere esoteric discussion. While visible during the century following the 1501 establishment of Twelver Shi‘ism by the Safavid dynasty as the realm’s official faith, beginning in the seventeenth century attacks on Sufism and, increasingly, on such alleged Sufi practices as singing (*ghina*), were a marked feature of the religious landscape. Indeed, scholars who arrived in Iran beginning in the middle years of the second Safavid century faced a well-developed anti-Sufi discourse that had already erupted out of the mosque/*madrasa*, as it were, into the street.<sup>1</sup> Shaykh ‘Ali b. Muhammad, al-‘Amili (d. 1691–2) and Muhammad Tahir (d. 1687), both of whom arrived in Iran from the Arab West during the reign of Shah Safi (reg. 1629–42), became active participants in the anti-Sufi campaign, charging Sufi elements, past and – especially – present with the most extreme, heretical beliefs and practices (see Newman 1999a, 1999b, 2006).

By contrast, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1693), who arrived in Iran in the early 1660s and is best-known as compiler of the multi-volume *hadith* collection *Wasa’il al-shi‘a*, avoided open identification with the worst excesses of the anti-Sufi discourse. Al-Hurr’s interest in the *hadith*, his commencement of *Wasa’il* in these same years and his decision to settle in Khurasan, far from the Safavid capital of Esfahan – the apparent home of the worst excesses of the anti-Sufi campaign – further encouraged, and were encouraged by, the manner in which he chose to participate in the anti-Sufi polemic.

Although al-Hurr’s *al-Ithna ‘ashariyya fi radd al-sufiyya* (n.d.) is certainly the work that comes to mind when discussing his anti-Sufi tendencies (Arjomand 1984: 153; Gleave 2007: 161–3), in fact the Shaykh made at least three contributions to the anti-Sufi polemic.



In comparison with the substance and style of other works in the anti-Sufi polemic, the decidedly moderate tone that al-Hurr adopted in each – to be shown in the present chapter – can only have been an important factor in his appointment as Mashhad’s *Shaykh al-Islam* by Shah Suleiman (reg. 1666–94), echoing as it did the court’s own efforts to tread a path between pro and anti-Sufi factions. These forays also reveal something of the nature of al-Hurr’s commitment to the Akhbari understanding of Shi‘i jurisprudence.

### Al-Hurr’s Early Career

Al-Hurr was born in south Lebanon in 1624. By his own account in his well-known 1685 biographical dictionary *Amal al-‘amil* (1965), al-Hurr spent his formative years in Lebanon, commencing his education, twice performing the hajj – in 1647 and 1651 – and twice visiting the Shi‘i shrine cites in Iraq. Following a further visit to the shrines he continued into Iran and arrived in Tus in 1662, during the last years of the reign of ‘Abbas II (1642–66). He remained based there until his death in 1693. In 1674, in Tus, al-Hurr received an *ijaza* from Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (d. 1699), who would be appointed Esfahan’s *Shaykh al-Islam* in 1687. Three years later, in 1677, also in Tus, after some twenty years of work al-Hurr completed his multi-volume *hadith* compilation *Wasa’il al-shi‘a*. During this period also al-Hurr undertook two further pilgrimages – the second in 1676–7, when he witnessed an outbreak of anti-Shi‘i hostility in Mecca – and made two further visits to the Iraqi shrines. Al-Hurr’s own appointment by Suleiman as Mashhad’s *Shaykh al-Islam* seems to date to the mid-1670s. In 1679 al-Hurr was in Shiraz and in 1687 he was again in Tus.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Hurr’s three works on Sufism, all finished after his arrival in Iran, include his 1662 essay ‘Risala fi al-Ghina’, in twelve sections, attacking singing; his *al-Ithna ‘ashariyya*, in which he referred to the 1662 essay (n.d.: 3), and which, although undated, may have been completed in 1665, most likely in Tus; and two sections of his *al-Fawa’id al-Tusiyya* – a collection finished by 1679, also in Tus (2008).

### Setting the Historical Context

By al-Hurr’s arrival in Iran the seventeenth-century phase of the anti-Sufi polemic was in full swing, having commenced taking its toll on lives and careers earlier in the century. Already c. 1606 Shaykh Baha’i, Baha al-Din al-‘Amili (d. 1621), had resigned from his post as Esfahan’s *Shaykh al-Islam* owing at least in part to accusations of Sufi connections.<sup>3</sup> Mulla Sadra, Sadr al-Din Muhammad al-Shirazi (d. 1640), was forced to withdraw to the village of Kahak, near Qum, his overt

interest in philosophy leaving him also vulnerable to charges of interest in Sufism.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning in the late 1620s, a series of essays appeared attacking the messianic veneration of Abu Muslim (d. 754), the Iranian 'Alid agent of the Abbasid movement in Khurasan. Mir Lawhi (d. after 1672), a prominent anti-Sufi propagandist, claimed he was physically attacked by followers of Taqi al-Majlisi (d. 1659-60), Muhammad Baqir's father, following Mir Lawhi's public allegations as to Taqi al-Majlisi's veneration of Abu Muslim.

In 1632, shortly after the ascent of Shah Safi (reg. 1629-42) to the throne and following the 1631 messianic rising of Darvish Rida, an internal coup brought to power at court a new elite configuration that included anti-Sufi elements. Soon thereafter 'Abbas I's philosophically minded grand vizier, Sayyid Khalifa Sultan (d. 1654), was dismissed, his four sons were blinded and Habiballah al-Karaki, a noted critic of Sufism, was made *sadr*. Not surprisingly, Safi's early interests in philosophical inquiry and his association with such prominent clerics of that tradition as Mir Damad (d. 1631) and Fayd al-Kashani (d. 1680), were checked (Newman 2001: 34-52).

In 1644, two years after the ascension of 'Abbas II (reg. 1642-66), yet another political configuration assumed power at court. Khalifa Sultan returned as vizier and the court embarked on a policy of seeking a middle path between 'Sufi' interests and their detractors, which policy predominated until the end of the Safavid period.

The continued high profile of such critics of Sufism as al-Karaki, who remained *sadr* until his death in 1652-3, and Alinaqi Kamrai (d. 1650), a known opponent of singing who was appointed the capital's *Shaykh al-Islam* in this period (Babayan 1993: 317; Newman 1999a: 143), ensured the continuation of the anti-Sufi discourse.

In this period, however, the polemic increasingly focused on alleged extremist Sufi doctrines and practices. Works produced in this genre included the Persian-language *Hadiqat al-shi'a*, attributed to Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Ardabili (d. 1585) but completed between 1648 and 1650; the 1650 Persian-language *Salvat al-shi'a*, likely by Mir Lawhi; the Persian-language *Radd-i sufiyya*, Muhammad Tahir's attack on Taqi al-Majlisi, written before the latter's 1659 death; Muhammad Tahir may well have authored those sections of *Hadiqa* that focused on Sufi doctrine and practice. That Persian was the language of choice for these works suggests that the urban 'lay' audience was perceived as a key 'target' in the battle for 'hearts and minds'.

Contemporary clerics were also a 'target' audience, however, as suggested by the several Arabic language works of this genre produced in the period, including *al-Durr al-manthur*, dating to 1662, and 'al-Siham al-Mariqa', completed between 1659 and 1662.<sup>5</sup> Both of

these were composed by Shaykh ‘Ali al-‘Amili – a descendant of both Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-‘Amili, al-Shahid al-Thani (‘the second martyr’, d. 1559), who had avoided contact with the newly established Safavid state, and ‘Ali al-Karaki (d. 941), himself one of the earliest Arab clerics to serve the Safavid throne.

In 1654, following the deaths of Kamrai and al-Karaki, the court tried to redress the polemic’s balance: ‘Abbas II invited Fayd to assume the post of Friday prayer leader in Esfahan and commissioned Taqi al-Majlisi to translate into Persian *Man la yahdaruhu al-faqih*, the *hadith* compilation of the Buwayhid-period Twelver scholar Ibn Babawayh (d. 991–2).

Nevertheless the anti-Sufi campaign continued apace. Khalifa Sultan’s 1645 closing of taverns and banning of certain forms of coffee house entertainment, foci for the capital’s ongoing ‘popular’ spiritual movements, was certainly a response to the continued strength of the anti-Sufi polemic (Matthee 1994: 29–30, 1999: 323–5, 2000: 146). Fayd’s composition of essays in 1660–1 and 1672 distancing himself from ‘popular’ Sufism attest to his being censured for associations therewith, as was his father-in-law Mulla Sadra (Newman 2001: 43–4).

As part of court efforts to effect a balance between the conflicting parties, Muhammad Baqir al-Sabziwari (d. 1679), a student of Baha’i and a close associate both of Fayd and Khalifa Sultan, was appointed to the post of Esfahan’s Friday prayer leader and the city’s *Shaykh al-Islam*. Sometime before 1662, Sabziwari penned an essay on singing which rebutted Shaykh ‘Ali’s attacks but also offered a middle position between the positions of opponents and practitioners.<sup>6</sup>

### Al-Hurr’s 1662 Essay on Singing

The year Shaykh ‘Ali completed the relevant sections of *al-Durr*, al-Hurr – either already in Tus or on his way East – completed his ‘Risala fi al-Ghina’, attacking singing. As evidence that he was fully aware of the anti-Sufi polemic then raging, al-Hurr cited portions of ‘al-Siham’ with approval, referred to *Hadiqa* and its author as Ardabili and cited Sabziwari’s essay on singing.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, al-Hurr opened the essay saying he had been asked to parse a statement of the sixth imam, Ja‘far al-Sadiq (d. 765), in which the Imam condemned the raising of one’s voice while reciting the Qur’an. The text in question was one of many from *al-Kafi* of Muhammad b. Ya‘qub al-Kulayni (d. 941) that had been cited both by Shaykh ‘Ali and Sabziwari.<sup>8</sup>

Al-Hurr organised his essay into twelve sections (*fusul*), over the course of which he argued that the texts on all aspects of the issue were

clear and offered exactly the sort of *ilm* required to prohibit all aspects of singing. In order, al-Hurr argued that:

- Usulis and Akhbaris agree the text in question was weak, as did such Sunnis as Abu Hanifa (d. 767), Malik (d. 796) and al-Shafi'i (d. 820) – all founders of their eponymous Sunni schools of law – and that it violated the principle of caution (*ihtiyat*);
- al-Kulayni had cited many texts on the issue, on all of which there was consensus that included the Imam;<sup>9</sup>
- another text on the issue found elsewhere in *al-Kafi*<sup>10</sup> was accepted by such scholars as Shaykh Baha'i;
- the *sanad* of this latter text was as sound as the text itself;<sup>11</sup>
- the absolute interpretations of the text were correct;
- it was not possible to act on the text without these interpretations – here al-Hurr specifically referred to chanting (*tarji*) and the raising of one's voice (*madd al-sawt*), disallowed in *Hadiqa* and by Mir Lawhi, who had cited statements by the Imams, and by Shaykh 'Ali but prohibited by Sabziwari if it only brought about rapture (*tarab*) (al-Hurr 1997: 135, n. 4);
- there were further texts condemning singing and rulings affirming this ban from such scholars as Muhammad b. Makki, al-Shahid al-Awwal ('the first martyr', d. 1384), al-'Allama al-Hilli (d. 1325), 'Ali al-Karaki, Ibn Idris (d. 1202), Sayyid Murteda (d. 1044), Ardabili and Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-'Amili as well as Sunni commentators – including al-Zamakhshari (d. 1143) – a Hanafi – and Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) – which affirmed the absolute ban;<sup>12</sup>
- these texts serve as a general prohibition against singing, and this ban extended to such actions as audition (*al-sama*), playing instruments and associated commercial activities;
- the presumption of permissibility in instances not addressed in these texts and rulings is false, as the texts condemn any sort of innovation (*al-bida*);
- Akhbaris and Usulis agree that Imamis cannot cite Sunnis on this issue;
- anyone who presumed singing is permissible was following al-Ghazali (d. 1111) or other Sunnis, and al-Ghazali was clearly an enemy of the Imams and their followers;
- and, finally, this behaviour stemmed from following (*taqlid*) those who are in error (*ahl al-dilal*).

In the same section, section twelve, al-Hurr noted that the latter behaviour had only recently to be found among the Shi'a because the Imams had been clear in their dislike for Sufism and cautioned against following Sufis, as had such scholars as Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 1022) and

Ahmad Ardabili in *Hadiqa*. Ibn Babawayh had cited numerous statements from the Imams to this effect and these statements apply today.

How, continued al-Hurr, can their beliefs and actions be permissible when these include incarnation (*hulul*), unitive fusion (*ittihad*), the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*), as well as mystical illumination (*kashf*), abandoning the religious obligations, and swooning and falling on the ground, and dancing.<sup>13</sup> These people, he continued, prohibit what is permissible, condemn seeking a living, devote themselves to singing and other entertainment, assist Allah's enemies and follow the Imams' enemies. Their beliefs and actions clearly are opposed to the Shi'a and their Imams, their hostility to the Imami scholars is well-attested, the opposition of such scholars as al-Mufid and others to them is well-known and the Imams were explicit in their condemnation of their orders and leaders.

### **Al-Hurr's *al-Ithna'ashariyya fi radd al-sufiyya***

Three years later, in 1665, al-Hurr opened his book-length *al-Ithna* by noting that, having himself seen people turning to Sufism, he had been asked about the text in *al-Kafi* on Qur'an chanting. He noted that he had addressed the subject but, he continued, when someone saw the first essay he had asked al-Hurr to compose another, more general work.

Al-Hurr based *al-Ithna's* chapter titles on the beliefs and practices he had listed in the twelfth and last section of the 1662 essay. Also, as suggested by the title 'The Twelve, on the Refutation of Sufism', al-Hurr organised the present essay as he had the 1662 essay, into twelve chapters (*abwab*), suggesting that, in fact, he was quite comfortable with the genre. These, in order, addressed the falsity of:

- the Sufi connection;
- mysticism (*tasawwuf*);
- incarnation, unitive fusion, and the unity of existence;
- mystical illumination and the rejection of its use as a 'proof';
- the belief that the religious obligations (*al-takalif al-shar'i*) have lapsed;
- the belief as to sitting in seclusion, the 'innovation' at the basis of forbidden ascetic practices (*al-riyada*) and the abhorrence of meat;
- the belief in such practices as falling on the ground;
- dancing, handclapping and crying out;
- the rejection of seeking to earn a living;
- the declaration of the legality of singing;
- the recourse to invocation (*dhikr*);
- associating with the enemies of Allah and their enmity for His followers.

The most obvious point of interest for the purposes of the present essay may well be *al-Ithna's* second chapter. Indeed, having addressed the attribution *Sufi* in the brief first chapter, chapter 2 arguably began the treatise proper.

Al-Hurr opened the chapter – entitled 'On the Falsity (*ibtal*) of Mysticism and Censure generally' – by saying that 'first' he must address 'their sects (*madhahib*)'. Al-Hurr stated that were twelve such 'sects'. The Samarqandi Najm al-Din al-Nasafi (d. 1142), al-Hurr continued, was among those who have addressed this issue and 'has given insight as to the realities of their sects'. Al-Hurr then cited al-Nasafi's *Bayan madhhab al-tasawwuf*, wherein al-Nasafi himself said there were twelve such groups, one of which was 'on the true course (*'ala al-haqq al-mustaqim*)' while the remainder were on that of 'innovation and error (*al-bida' wa al-dalala*)'.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, al-Hurr might have referred to and, moreover, quoted verbatim from the detailed, and oftentimes lurid, descriptions of the doctrines and practices of twenty-one named Sufi groups in *Hadiqa* – whose attribution to Ardabili he had accepted in his earlier essay – and/or to al-Qummi's similar, if briefer, list of the doctrines and practices of twenty Sufi groups in *Radd*. An appendix to the present essay compares the listings of Sufi groups across *Hadiqa*, *Radd* and *al-Ithna*.<sup>15</sup>

Most obviously, al-Nasafi's list, as cited in *al-Ithna*, omitted eight of *Hadiqa's* twenty-one groups and nine of *Radd's* twenty groups. Those not named in *al-Ithna* included:

The *Ittihadiyya*, mentioned in *Hadiqa's* introductory remarks and in *Radd* as one of the two original groupings of Sufis from which all later groups were descended.

The *Wasiliyya*. In its published edition the entry in *Hadiqa* for this group ran to forty lines. There they were said to be a branch of the *Ittihadiyya* and to maintain that daily religious obligations such as prayer were no longer incumbent on them as they had achieved the status of 'connecting (*wasil*)' with Allah. As a result, everything forbidden to others was permitted to them. The prominent Iranian scholar Mirza Jan Shirazi (d. 1586), in fact a Sunni (Newman 2006: 174, n. 93), was one of their leaders. In nineteen lines, al-Qummi repeated all *Hadiqa's* allegations against the group and added to the list of names of prominent Shi'i scholars who had denounced the group's beliefs and practices, but excised the reference to Shirazi.

The '*Ushshaqiyya* who, in *Hadiqa's* seventeen lines, were said to promote sexual relations between master (*pir*) and disciple (*murid*). Most of *Radd's* five-line entry came from the last few lines of *Hadiqa*.

The *Jumhuriyya* who, in *Hadiqa's* twenty-nine lines, were said to comprise the majority of those Sufis seen at that time. They were

said to eat pork, to sit in self-imposed seclusion for forty days and to condone sexual relations with children. *Radd's* four lines omitted mention of any contemporary presence but reiterated their belief that all was good and that nothing could be rejected: thus unbelief and Islam were adjudged 'good'.

The *Taslimiyya* who, in *Hadiqa's* ten lines, were said to promote sexual relations between the Sufi master and his disciple. This and other charges were repeated in *Radd's* seven lines.

The *Talqiniyya*. In sixteen lines, 'Ardabili' referred to 'most Sufis' of *Hadiqa's* twenty-first group and *Radd's* twentieth, the *Zarraqiyya*, as really being *Talqiniyya*. In *Hadiqa* the group was said to believe that no religious books were to be consulted except 'Sufi' books. Affinities with the Batini Isma'ilis were also noted. *Radd's* eight lines, almost a neat copy of *Hadiqa*, included the reference to most members, as other Sufi groups, dressing in rags and sitting in seclusion for forty days.

The *Musharikiyya* who, in *Hadiqa's* nine lines, were said to claim partnership with the prophets but to maintain that Allah held them more dear because there were no intermediaries between Him and them. The *Wala'iyya* were said to make a similar claim. *Radd's* seven lines reproduced all the key points from *Hadiqa*, including identification of their claims as similar to those of the group he called *Awa'iliyya* (i.e. *Hadiqa's* *Wala'iyya*) in this entry and his own second entry on that group.

The *Kamiliyya*. *Hadiqa's* thirty-one lines noted that members condoned dancing and sexual relations with boys and girls and forswore earning a living and instead ate in peoples' houses. *Radd's* nineteen lines dropped references to their contemporary presence, including members' frequenting of the bazaar and distracting traders.

The *Batiniyya*. *Radd's* eight-line entry condensed the first section of *Hadiqa's* very long (two-and-a-half page) entry on its eighteenth group, the *Juriyya*. However, al-Qummi's description paralleled *Hadiqa's* own *Batiniyya*, the seventeenth group, in mentioning a similarity with the *Habibiyya*. *Hadiqa's* entry for the first group claimed members associated with the insane, as the *Habibiyya* and *Wala'iyya*, and doctrinal affinity with the Batini Isma'ilis. *Hadiqa's* entry on the *Juriyya* cited sessions involving music, wine and the recitation of stories they claimed were from the *Shahname* in violation of statements from Imam 'Ali and the Imams. Many were said to call themselves *Malamatiyya*, *Hadiqa's* eighth entry. *Radd's* short, amalgamated entry retained the reference to story-telling and association with the insane, as the *Habibiyya*.

The *Nuriyya* who, in *Hadiqa's* eleven lines, were said to be two groups, the *Nuriyya* and the *Hululiyya*, though some Shi'i scholars said they were really the *Hululiya* and *Ittihadiyya*. The group was said

to focus on the two barriers of light and fire, as the Magians. *Radd's* entry of ten lines reproduced the entry.

The *Zarraqiyya*, whose entry in *Hadiqa* was more than eight pages long. Members were said to wear felt hats, yellow clothes like the Magians (*Majus*), and otherwise to dress like Sunnis and heretics (*mulhad*), to recognise each other. They promoted dancing and audition. Their beliefs combined those of other Sufi groups such that they form their own unique group, as did the *Jumhuriyya*. Their masters, well-known among the people, censured the ulama and those who did not like Sufis. Members were said to claim miracle-working powers (*karamat*) and divine illumination, to deceive the foolish and to enjoy singing popular tunes (*tarannumat*), melodies, musical entertainment (*mutrib*), singing and songs (*surud*). They were said also to chant the profession of faith, to sing popular melodies (*naghmat*), to read poetry, to condone sexual relations with boys, girls and men and to frequent the bazaar and deceive merchants there. *Radd's* similarly long entry referred to activity of the group in al-Qummi's own time, members' love of audition, dancing and other forms of musical expression and their wearing of felt hats and honey-coloured shawls. Al-Qummi also referred to members' claims to *kashf* and *karamat* and their dislike of the ulama.

Nevertheless, al-Hurr was clearly not unaware of either *Hadiqa* or al-Qummi's *Radd*. In both his 1662 essay and further on in *al-Ithna* he referred to the former and Ardabili as its author. As to *Radd*, of the twelve Sufi groups that al-Hurr did list in *al-Ithna*, numbers one through six in fact appeared in the same numerical order as in al-Qummi's list of twenty such groups in *Radd*.

The descriptions of these groups in *al-Ithna*, however, were shadows of those in *Hadiqa* and *Radd* and certainly offered scant 'new' detail on their alleged doctrines and practices. Gone, also, were overt references to the contemporary presence of these groups on offer in the earlier works.

The *Habibiyya*, *Hadiqa's* third entry, merited twenty lines and in *Radd* nine manuscript lines. Al-Qummi dropped *Hadiqa's* reference to their rejection of fasting and their declaration as *halal* things considered *haram*. Both earlier works noted that members consorted with the insane. In *Hadiqa* the author had cited several *hadith* on the insane and noted that this group and the *Wasiliyya* (his next group and *Radd's* ninth, but left out by al-Hurr) were counted as one. In *al-Ithna* al-Hurr gave them four lines and noted simply that members refrained from praying and fasting and did not hide their nakedness, points made in *Hadiqa*.

The *Wala'iyya*, *Hadiqa's* fourth, was rendered in both *Radd* and *al-Ithna* as the *Awa'iliyya*. *Hadiqa* allotted this group six lines and *Radd*



six. *Al-Ithna's* one and-a-half lines noted, in line with the two earlier descriptions, that members believed the devotee could attain *walaya*, though al-Hurr did not note – as had the two earlier works – that this entailed partnership with Allah. Al-Hurr also omitted references to members' opposition to relations with women and their association with the insane, noted in both earlier descriptions.

The *Shamrakiyya*, the third group in *al-Ithna* and *Radd*, were *Hadiqa's* sixth group. The latter devoted nineteen lines to this group; in *Radd* they were given five. In *al-Ithna* they received just over three. *Radd's* entry was the first seven lines of *Hadiqa's*, on deviant sexual practices. In *al-Ithna* by contrast, their affinity for tambourines (*al-daf*), drumming (*al-tabl*) and the *mizmar* was noted. In *al-Ithna* members were also said to believe that 'women are like basil and smelling basil is permitted', a paraphrase of a similar statement in *Hadiqa* reference to which was omitted in *Radd*.

The *Abahiyya* were *Hadiqa's* seventh group but there and in *Radd* they were called the *Mubahiyya*. This group received nearly six lines in *Hadiqa* and *Radd*. *Radd's* entry deleted *Hadiqa's* mention of a similarity to the *Wasiliyya* but mentioned their wearing of wool. *Radd's* entry was otherwise a virtual copy of the earlier entry. Both condemned members' sexual licence and permitted cursing and killing members of this group. *Al-Ithna* omitted the last point, but stated these were 'the most evil . . . on the face of the earth'. Al-Hurr repeated members' belief in the communality of property and women and in the lapsing of the injunction to 'command what was good and forbid what was evil'.

The *Haliyya* were *Hadiqa's* ninth group. There and in *Radd* they received ten lines and two in *al-Ithna*. Both earlier entries noted members' participation in handclapping, audition, dancing, playing instruments and swooning, as did al-Hurr.

Al-Hurr's and *Radd's* sixth group, the *Hululiyya*, was mentioned only in *Hadiqa's* introduction as one of the twenty-one groups. Al-Qummi's initial remarks in *Radd*, that members claimed Allah was incarnated in them, echoed *Hadiqa's* description. However, *Radd's* five-line entry then noted a penchant for pleasure, including sexual licence, not noted in *Hadiqa*. The latter had focused on the implications of their incarnation for 'ilm. *Al-Ithna's* three lines noted their sexual licence and added that dancing played a prominent role therein.

Having followed al-Qummi's order to this point, *al-Ithna's* list now diverged and groups appeared that were not mentioned in *Hadiqa* or *Radd*.

*Al-Ithna's* seventh and eighth groups were *Radd's* eighth and tenth, and *Hadiqa's* tenth and eleventh, respectively. *Hadiqa* devoted five lines to the *Huriyya*, and *Radd* three-and-a-half. The descriptions in

*Hadiqa* and *Radd* referred to audition, swooning, and sexual intercourse with the Hurris who appeared from Paradise during the group's 'performances'. In his two-and-a-half lines al-Hurr equated them with the *Hululiyya* and then paraphrased the description of these sexual unions.

*Hadiqa* devoted eleven lines to the *Waqifiyya* where *Radd*'s eleven lines named them as the *Tawaqufiyya*. In *al-Ithna*'s three lines – including a line of Persian poetry – the group's name was that given in *Hadiqa*. *Radd*'s entry was the second half of that of *Hadiqa*, that this group had abandoned adherence to the law and acquiring any knowledge of the 'religious sciences' because Allah could not be seen and, therefore, not be known. Al-Hurr simply noted the group believed Allah was unknowable.

Al-Hurr's ninth group, the *Mutajahilla*, did not appear in either *Hadiqa* or *Radd*. These, said al-Hurr, are a group in 'the clothes of the godless (*al-fasiqin*)'.

The tenth group, the *Mutakasila*, was also not mentioned in either *Hadiqa* or *Radd*. These, al-Hurr/al-Nasafi said, have abandoned earning a living (*al-kasb*) in favour of begging (*al-kudya*) and receive *al-zakat* without being entitled to it.

Al-Hurr's eleventh group was *Radd*'s seventeenth and *Hadiqa*'s fifteenth, the *Ilhamiyya*. In *Hadiqa*'s seven lines they were said to exchange the teaching of *'ilm* for instruction in heretical poetry, musical entertainment, singing, popular melodies and the like. Good and evil were the same for them. *Radd*'s six lines are a near perfect repetition of the first lines of *Hadiqa*. *Al-Ithna*'s three lines noted only that, instead of acquiring *'ilm*, members favoured study of the books 'of philosophers (*al-hukama*) and innovators', because the Qur'an was a barrier along the path. 'The philosophers and their poetry are the Qur'an'.

The twelfth and last group, *Ahl al-Haqq*, also had not appeared in either previous work. In a four-line entry, as long as the entries for each of the first, third and fourth groups, these were said to be adherents of the *sunna*, to pray at the same time as Sunnis, and to be wary of drinking, adultery, audition and dancing.

Al-Hurr said that al-Nasafi then began to praise this group and to command that they be followed until the point where he said this group is wary of the other eleven.

Al-Hurr himself then noted that the list of another, unnamed scholar comprised twenty Sufi groups. This reference was also, clearly, not to al-Qummi and his list of twenty in *Radd*. The unnamed scholar's list – which, as cited by al-Hurr, included no information on doctrines and practices – follows the order given in *Hadiqa* up to number eight. Missing from this list but cited in *Hadiqa*, *Radd* and *al-Ithna* are

the *Haliyya* and the *Waqifiyya*. Also missing is the *Ittihadiyya*, who feature in *Hadiqa*'s introduction as a separate group in *Radd*.

The *Jumhuriyya*, the *Musharikiyya*, the *Batiniyya*, the *Nuriyya* and the *Zarraqiyya* are cited in *Hadiqa* and *Radd* but not in *al-Ithna* or in this list.

The *Dhawqiyya*, the *Jamaliyya* and the *Khuriyya* appeared in this list but not in *Hadiqa*, *Radd* or *al-Ithna*.

Among those mentioned in *al-Ithna* but not in this list are the *Haliyya*, the *Waqifiyya*, the *Mutajahila* and the *Mutakasila*. *Ahl al-Haqq* are also not on this list.

Finally, fourteen groups on the unnamed scholar's list are not named in *al-Ithna*. These are the *Wahdatiyya*, the *Wasiliyya*, the *Musharikiyya*, the *Malamatiyya*, the *Jamaliyya*, the *Taslimiyya*, the *Kamiliyya*, the *Talqiniyya*, the *Khuriyya*, the *‘Ushshaqiyya*, the *Jumhuriyya* and the *Zarraqiyya*.

Al-Hurr then cited Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-‘Amili as having named the *Karamiyya* as another Sufi group. Several pages on, he referred to *Hadiqa*, and Ardabili as its author.

The remainder of the chapter, as with the remainder of this chapter itself, is devoted to citations of statements of the Imams interspersed with references to the statements of well-known Twelver scholars – including al-Mufid, al-Murteda, al-Tusi, al-‘Allama al-Hilli and such more recent figures such as ‘Ali al-Karaki and his son, Shaykh Baha’i (from his *al-Kashkul*, a work alleged earlier in the century to have been in the Sufi tradition) and al-Hurr's own father, and Sunni scholars – condemning broader aspects of Sufi doctrine and practice. In the process, also, consensus is frequently invoked.<sup>16</sup>

*Al-Ithna*'s chapter 10, refuting singing, rehearses key aspects of his 1662 anti-singing polemic, even to his appeal to *Usulis* and *Akhbaris*. It includes a section rejecting the validity of the text from *al-Kafi* with which discussion al-Hurr had commenced his 1662 essay, as he notes. Herein al-Hurr even rejects an *Akhbari* effort to accept the text, owing to its having been cited in *al-Kafi* (al-Hurr n.d.: 138–42).

### **Al-Hurr and Singing: *a-Fawa'id al-tusiyya***

Al-Hurr's third contribution to the anti-singing discourse of this period were *Fa'ida* ('benefit'/'beneficial comment') 27 and 28 of 102 *Fawa'id* on what al-Hurr termed 'problematic *hadiths*' about which he had been asked in *Tus*; indeed, the work was entitled *al-Fawa'id al-Tusiyya*. The sections in question cannot be dated but the entire collection was completed by 1679, still during the reign of Suleiman, by which time he had completed his own *Wasa'il al-shi'a* (al-Tehrani 1934–77: 16, 347–8; al-Hurr 1965: (intro) 29, vol. 1, 145).

Al-Hurr opened 27 by citing the same text from *al-Kafi* with which he had commenced the 1662 essay. He then offered twelve reasons for rejecting the text as 'invalid (*batil*)'; all, despite a few additions, had been given in the same order in the first section of the 1662 essay. These included repeated appeals to Usulis and Akhbaris, such Sunnis as Abu Hanifa, Malik and al-Shafi'i, and named Usuli scholars including – again – such recent scholars as Shaykh Baha'i and *al-Kashkul*, all by way of noting that the text violated the principle of caution.

Al-Hurr then noted it was odd that Ardabili, in his commentary on al-Allama's *al-Irshad*, had appealed to consensus to condemn singing, rather than the statements of the Imams of which there were a plethora condemning the practice. He then repeated section six from the 1662 essay, again with a few minor additions.

He then jumped to that part of section seven of the earlier essay in which he had cited statements by such earlier scholars as al-'Allama, al-Shahid al-Awwal and Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-'Amili on singing, as well as al-Zamakhshari and such grammarians as al-Jawhari (d. 1002–10) – whom, in fact, Sabziwari had cited in his essay.<sup>17</sup>

The very brief *Fa'ida* 28 simply restated al-Hurr's rejection in *al-Ithna* of a text from Ibn Babawayh, in which the Imam had stated that whoever does not 'sing' the Qur'an is not a Muslim.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

Al-Hurr's response to the anti-Sufi polemic which he encountered when he arrived in Safavid Iran was, by contrast with that on offer in *Hadiqa* and the works of Mir Lawhi, Shaykh 'Ali and Muhammad Tahir, a distinctly moderate one. In all three works cited above, al-Hurr pointedly avoided association with that polemic as it had come to focus on heretical doctrines and practices and, especially, references to these in their contemporary setting: Al-Hurr's 1662 essay, though it addressed singing, consigned the very brief references to doctrine and practice to the last section, with scant reference to the contemporary. Basing his discussion of Sufi doctrine and practice in *al-Ithna* on the work of a non-Shi'i twelfth-century scholar similarly denigrated the importance of doctrine and practice and, especially, any contemporary manifestation thereof. *Al-Fawa'id* contained no references to doctrine and practice at all.

Each of the three, and *al-Ithna* in particular, was also notable for the lack of reference to and, especially, citation from any of the contemporary essays attacking alleged Sufi doctrine and practice, although al-Hurr was clearly very familiar with all of them. If in *al-Ithna* al-Hurr's citation of al-Nasafi did preserve something of the essential extreme 'flavour' of the descriptions of Sufi doctrines and practices on offer in

*Hadiqa* and *Radd*, the very minimal attention al-Hurr devoted to both questioned the immediacy of 'the threat' posed by such groups betokened by the extreme rhetoric used in the attacks on these groups by his contemporaries. Further allusions to another untitled essay by an unnamed author whose list also varied greatly from his own list and those in *Hadiqa* and *Radd* only further muddied the waters. Clearly al-Hurr did not mean to make it easy to identify his critique of Sufi doctrine and practice with the extreme nature of those others available at the time.

The extent to which his later efforts simply recycled points available in his earlier works is also impossible to miss. In *Fa'ida* 27, rather than strike out on a fundamentally new track of critique and/or in the process finally choose to identify himself with 'Ardabili' and al-Qummi, al-Hurr simply recycled material from two sections of the 1662 essay. Chapter 10 of *al-Ithna* had also been based on the 1662 essay, just as the subject headings of *al-Ithna's* chapters had their roots in the very brief points on doctrine and practice in section twelve of that earlier essay.

What is also notable about each of these forays is, in fact, al-Hurr's reliance on the *hadith* and his occasional references to such stated Akhbari principles of jurisprudence as *ihtiyat* and the need for inclusion of the Imam in any consensus, in the 1662 essay. At the same time, however, those Shi'i scholars whom he cites as supportive of his arguments, including Safavid-period scholars, are usually identified as having had distinctly Usuli proclivities although, interestingly, on the occasions cited by al-Hurr, all were seen to be referring to statements of the Imams. Al-Hurr also went so far as to cite a number of known Sunni scholars in support of his arguments and, in *al-Ithna*, even reject an Akhbari effort to parse a text in a manner with which he disagreed. Al-Hurr's repeated appeals in all three works to both Usulis and Akhbaris to his arguments are also noteworthy.

Taken together, al-Hurr's active avoidance of the extreme anti-Sufi polemic which marked the middle years of the century, the basing of his arguments on the *hadiths* of the Imams and his numerous appeals to Usulis and Akhbaris to accept understanding based thereon point to an effort to tread a middle ground based in the *hadith* to which opposing sides might be reconciled. Such an effort exactly paralleled the effort of the court itself. This approach, similar to that taken by Taqi's son Baqir al-Majlisi, can only have facilitated al-Hurr's appointment by Suleiman as Mashhad's *Shaykh al-Islam* just as the same ruler appointed Baqir to that same post in the capital itself (Newman 2006: 98f). Likewise, al-Hurr's approach, and approaches, to Usulis and Usulism explains his being classified as a 'moderate' Akhbari by al-Samahiji in his essay on the differences between Usulis and Akhbaris penned in 1712-13, penned just two decades after al-Hurr's death (Newman 1992: 49).

## Notes

1. Essential reading on this topic includes the following works by K. Babayan (1993, 1994, 1996, 2002).
2. For some basic, if occasionally problematic, biographical information, see G. Scarcia, 'al-Hurr al-'Āmili', *EI*<sup>2</sup>; M. Bar-Asher, 'Horr-e Āmeli', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. See also al-Hurr's autobiography in his biographical dictionary (1965: 1, intro (16) 141–54). Therein al-Hurr says he spent 40 years based in Lebanon – an account accepted in the primary and secondary sources although if, as he also says, he was in Tus in 1662, the dates are not reconcilable. On *Āmal*, see Agha Buzurg Muhammad Muhsin al-Tehrani (1353–98/1934–77: 2, 350); M. T. Danishpazhuh 1335/1956: 5, 1232f, 1234. On *Wasā'il*, see *ibid.*: 5, 1234, who gives the start date of the project as 1655. Later, and secondary, sources suggest al-Majlisi gave an *ijāza* to al-Hurr in Esfahan and link al-Hurr's presence there with a visit with Shah Suleiman; the account of al-Hurr's meeting the Shah in Esfahan dates apparently from al-Khwansari (d. 1895). See Muhammad Baqir al-Khwansari 1390–2/1970–2: 7, 99. In fact, other sources note al-Majlisi issued several *ijāzāt* in Mashhad in 1674, including one to al-Hurr. See Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (1983: 107, 103–6). Al-Hurr might well have visited Esfahan again on his way to or from the Hijaz, which he visited in 1676–7. If so, this suggests that the date for his appointment by Suleiman as *Shaykh al-Islām* was between 1674 and 1677, a decade or more after his arrival in Iran.
3. See Newman 1986: 188–90. See also the references to Baha'i's *al-Kashkūl* below.
4. Hence the defensive tone underlying Sadra's 1617 *Kasr al-Iṣnām* and especially his denunciation of Sufism. That the work was composed in Arabic attests that his main audience – i.e. his main critics – was the educated clerical class.
5. In Newman (1999a: 148, n. 21), we had suggested the date for the latter, an essay, as between 1659 and 1664, but al-Hurr (1997: 106) referred to it in his 1662 singing essay.
6. Newman 1999a: 154f. Al-Hurr's reference to Sabziwari's essay (1997: 135) allows a more accurate dating of Sabziwari's essay, which we had suggested (Newman 1999a: 156, n. 43) was completed only by 1676–7.
7. Al-Hurr al-'Āmili 1997: 131, 135, 150, 71. See also p. 152, where al-Hurr refers to a further, genuine work of Ardabili, though without naming him as author.
8. See Newman 1999a: n. 27, 44. The text appeared to sanction certain forms of recitation of the Qur'an. See al-Kulayni 1957–60: 2, 616/13.
9. Here he cited al-Kulayni, 6, 431–5 (123, n. 2), as had Sabziwari (Newman 1999a: 157, n. 44). That such consensus must include the Imam according to the Akhbaris, see Newman 1992: 40, 50–1.

10. See al-Kulayni 1957–60: 2, 614/3, the text cited by Shaykh ‘Ali at the opening of his ‘al-Sihām’ (note 8, above).
11. This section (128–30) was largely based on Shaykh ‘Ali’s earlier works.
12. Among those cited by both al-Hurr (1997: 138f) and Sabziwari are al-Kulayni 1957–60: 6, 434/23, 433/13, 433/12, 431/2, 431/3, 433/16, 434/19, 432/9, 434/18, 435/25, 435/2, as well as texts from 5, 120/5, 120/4, 120/6, 119/1, 120/7. Al-Hurr also cited other texts from al-Kulayni (1957–60) not cited by Sabziwari, texts from collections of Ibn Babawayh, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, Shaykh Tusi (d. 1067), and works of the grammarians. Shaykh ‘Ali had cited 6, 432/10, for example (Newman 1999a: n. 29).
13. My thanks to Leonard Lewisohn for his assistance with the translation of many of these terms, as used in Newman 1999a, which I use again here.
14. The Shaykh is noticed as ‘Abu Hafs ‘Umar Najm al-Din’ in ‘al- Nasafi’, *EP*<sup>2</sup>, but absent in any reference to this essay. But, see also [www.alukah.net/Articles/Article.aspx?CategoryID=188&ArticleID=526-40k](http://www.alukah.net/Articles/Article.aspx?CategoryID=188&ArticleID=526-40k), wherein a copy of this essay, in Persian, is said to be extant in Istanbul; this was not available to the present writer. My thanks to R. Ja‘farian for this reference.
15. For a fuller discussion of these earlier essays, these groups, and their beliefs and doctrines, see Newman 1999a, 1999b.
16. Al-Hurr n.d.: 23–8, 51, 101. Herein also (30f.) he makes a spirited defence of Ardabili as *Hadiqa*’s author. The Sunni scholars cited include al-Zamakhshari (d. 1143; p. 54). The bulk of the texts cited appear to come from al-Kulayni (1957–60), one of many early collections of the Imams’ *hadīth* ‘rediscovered’ in the second Safavid century; in his ‘Risala fi al-Ghina (p. 121) al-Hurr dubbed al-Kulayni’s (1957–60) compiler, ‘trustworthy (*thiqa*)’. For examples of consensus, see pp. 112, 121, 123.
17. Cf. al-Hurr 1997: 111–20, 148–53. Only the citation of Ibn al-Athir is missing in *al-Fawā’id*.
18. Cf. al-Hurr n.d.: 147. The text may be found in Ibn Babawayh 1982: 279.

## Appendix

*Table 13.1 The Sufi Groups as listed in al-Qummi's 'Radd', Hadīqat al-Shī'a and al-Ithnā 'ashariyya.*

	al-Qummi's 'Radd'	Hadīqat al-Shī'a	al-Ithnā 'ashariyya
Habibiyya	I	3	I
Walāviyya	II	4 (Awāviliyya)	2 (Awāviliyya)
Shamrākhiyya	III	6	3
Mubāḥiyya	IV	7	4 (Abāḥiyya)
Hāliyya	V	9	5
Hulūliyya	VI	—	6
Ittiḥādiyya	VII	—	—
Hūriyya	VIII	10	7
Wāṣiliyya	IX	2	—
Wāqifiyya	X	11	8
'Ushshāqiyya	XI	19	—
Jumhūriyya	XII	20	—
Taslīmiyya	XIII	12	—
Talqīniyya	XIV	13	—
Mushārikiyya	XV	5	—
Kāmiliyya	XVI	14	—
Ilhāmiyya	XVII	15	11
Bāṭiniyya	XVIII	17(18)	—
Nūriyya	XIX	16	—
Zarrāqiyya	XX	21	—
Waḥdatiyya	—	1	—
Malāmatiyya	—	8	—
Al-Mutajāhila	—	—	9
Al-Mutakāsila	—	—	10
Ahl al-Ḥaqq	—	—	12



## On Sunni Sectarianism \*

A. Kevin Reinhart

At best, the term *Sunnī* is confusing, for it has been used, from the beginning, in special ways by those who wanted to use it exclusively for their own brand of orthodoxy. Some used it for those devoted purely to the use of ḥadith-reports (*sunnah*), without speculative discussion (*kalām*). It was used later, among those who were willing to accept *kalām* discussions at all, for the Ash‘arī or Māturīdī schools of *kalām* as against the Mu‘tazilī; it was used by *sharī‘ah*-minded zealots to distinguish *sharī‘ah*-minded people from the Ṣūfī mystics, and generally as the equivalent of the English ‘orthodox’ ... (Hodgson 1974: I, 278)

### The Problem

Forty years after Hodgson wrote these words, Islamic studies scholars still use the term *Sunni* often (1) to mean whatever is not Shi‘i (or worse, whatever is not ‘Alid); and (2) to mean something like ‘orthodoxy’, that is, ‘mainstream’ Islam.

Other forms of Islam are hyphenated Islams – Shi‘i-Islam, Sufi-Islam, and so on. Aside from the unscholarly taking sides that this usage represents, using *Sunnism* as a default term for Islam, and *Islam* to mean *Sunnism*, not only hides the diversity of Islam but it obscures the fact that *Sunnism* too has a history that does not merely coincide with the history of ‘Islam’. *Sunnism* is a religious movement and, as such, it has a history *within* more general Islamic religious history.

The formation of what eventually becomes *Sunnism* has been

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\* With this contribution I would like to thank Carole (and Robert) Hillenbrand for the many happy occasions on which we’ve met and argued about Islam in the spirit required by al-Ajurī (see below). This is also the place to thank my colleague M. C. Gaposchkin for her friendly dialectics as we’ve taught the Crusades period together. The core of this paper arose from discussions with her.

imagined in various ways. The traditional Muslim view is that *ab initio* what we know as Sunnism – dogmas, *hadith*, and *hadith*-criticism, Qur'anic interpretation and the rest – was there from the beginning, or at least from the Farewell Pilgrimage. Another view that has found recent advocates might be called the 'Big-Bang' theory, in which, within an astonishingly short period of time, all the ideas and apparatus of essential Islam are present in the ideas of one party – the people of *hadith*, who form soon after the Prophet's death and constitute 'proto-Sunnis', a strand that is eventually recognised as 'the real Islam'.<sup>1</sup>

Yet a careful reading of the early literature has demonstrated that while there are persons and movements that are significant in the formation of full-blown Sunnism, there is no single thread that can be traced from the 'Big Bang' – the Prophet's death – straight through to Saljuq-period Sunnism. As Juynboll has shown, even terms like *sahib hadith* and *sahib sunna* are unstable and mean different things to different communities.<sup>2</sup>

It is useful to begin ambitiously with a description of 'full blown' or fully realised Sunnism. Sunnism as we know it is not altogether in place, in my view, until around the Saljuq period and the period immediately subsequent, a view that our *honoranda* has done much to establish (Berkey 2003: 200–2). This Sunnism has: (1) two Scriptures – the Qur'an, and *Hadith* embodying the *Sunna* of Muhammad;<sup>3</sup> (2) a founder-figure, and intercessor (Muhammad); (3) importantly, a limited variety of dogmatic approaches in support of positions that essentially disdain disputational theology; (4) a moral-legal system (*fiqh/shari'a*) theoretically grounded in Scripture, and institutionally mostly distant from the State; that is intellectually central, while theology is peripheral; (5) an elaborated myth of early communal history that justifies elements 1–4; (6) a piety and spirituality sometimes augmented by a still nascent theosophy and technology of interior life (Sufism); (7) institutions for the production of Sunni legists, and Sunni legal texts (the *madrasa*); (8) and – of most interest to us here – conceptual resources for disdain, suspicion, and institutionally expressed hostility to other forms of Islam, and other religious traditions (so-called 'enemies of Islam') together with resources that allow for a live-and-let-live pragmatism with space for variant forms of Islam and for non-Muslim identities to those not born Muslims (ibid.; Hillenbrand 2000: 116ff.). The full apparatus for thinking about the 'Other' is not, as Carole Hillenbrand and others have shown, firmly established as part of Sunnism until the Saljuqs, Zengids and Ayyubids; and the *madrasa* is not fully the institutional expression of Sunnism until the same dynasties put it to that use.

This paper is about the development of the disdain for disputational theology (3) and the development of resources for an anti-pluralist understanding of Islam (8). The two moves are, I believe, linked. Before

I examine a small part of those developments, however, I would like to mention the conceptual framework that justifies the term 'sectarian Sunnism' that I will use throughout this chapter.

### ◀ The Taxonomy of Muslim Religious Communities

The classical taxonomy of religious bodies has, since Weber and Troeltsch, been based on the distinction between 'Church' and 'Sect'. Without bushwhacking through the forest of literature to which these concepts have given rise, it is fair to say that, whether by source of membership (birth/conversion), degree of integration with the state (high-cooperative/low-resistant) or other methods, these sociological categories (together with the concept of the 'cult') take Christianity and new religions in the US and Europe as data and, mostly, as norm.

For our purposes I want to distinguish between two forms of Islam, indexed by its attitude toward pluralism towards the 'Other' – whether Islamic or otherwise. One form I will call 'denominationalism'. I use the term 'denomination' on the model of the early Methodist church which sought to describe itself as a 'denomination' of the Church of England: they were in communion with them, recognised their legitimacy, but wished to maintain a non-exclusive identity within the larger community. 'Denominations' have a catholic, inclusive, 'big tent' approach to religious identity and practice, which is often joined to a cheerful majoritarian triumphalist view of the world. Denominations have broadly-drawn doctrinal and praxic group boundaries and they tend to set the bar for entry rather low. Barnes, a nineteenth-century Methodist says denominationalism is opposed to 'all attempts to "un-church" others' (Hudson 2005). Wesley includes all Christians who-soever, and, similarly, Muslim denominationalists have, at the most general, included 'all the people of our *qibla*'.

The question of membership in the early community was of course a brutally contentious issue and many positions on membership could be described as 'denominationalist' – groups that deferred judgment on controversial matters to God's judgment, groups that defined Islam by a simple form of faith and minimal social and cultic norms, and so on (*EP*<sup>2</sup>: s.v. 'Murdji'ah'; Reinhart 2001). It would seem that, structurally, such a big-tent approach might come from the Islamic understanding of religious history that views Islam's origin as a reform movement not apart from Christianity and Judaism – and that consequently accommodated People of the Book in Islamdom without requiring them to convert to the Islamic 'Church'. Such a view regards Islamic unity as requiring a degree of forbearance among Muslims (Donner 2002–3). There is no space here to discuss the textual resources for this view. It is sufficient to note the plurality of legal *madhhabs*, the mutual

co-existence, mostly non-violent, of Shi'i and Sunni Muslims, and of course the concept of *dhimmiyya*.<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, the term 'sect' has been used commonly by sociologists of religion, since Weber and Troeltsch, to refer to religious communities that are exclusive, inward-looking and have a heightened sense of group boundaries. Sects have narrowly drawn boundaries defined by dogmas that purport to be inflexible and of divine origin. Sects view the world or other religious possibilities through a lens of suspicious besetment. As I will use the term here, Islamic sectarianism is characterised by a self-view as a besieged religious majority, holding to the truth despite hostile pressures from powerful elites. Consequently, the Islamic sectarian view of the 'Other' is hostile, suspicious and inclined to exclusion. It sees intermingling as an occasion for temptation, seduction and loss of rigour. It may be marked by a heightened attention to the boundaries of the body politic. Denominationalists see boundary definitions of whatever sort as a less pressing matter. It needs hardly be said that, following Weber and Troeltsch, these two conceptual tools are 'ideal types' that can hardly represent the complexity of a religion stretching from (at the time we are concerned with) China to France, across five or six centuries.

While sectarian Islam may have begun with Meccan or Jewish resistance to the Prophetic summons, it began in earnest with 'Alid and Hashimi partisanship, and indeed their sectarianism stimulated the origination of a number of features of Islam that were soon incorporated into non-Shi'i Islam – concepts like the Mahdi, religious charisma as the source of leadership legitimacy, esotericism in general, and many other matters not yet sufficiently studied. Already by the late 700s, however, several non-Hashimi, non-'Alid forms of sectarianism had developed – among them various groups that called themselves 'people of *hadith*' and/or 'people of the [Prophetic] *sunna*'.<sup>5</sup>

### The Domains of Theology and Law

Why is it that sectarian Sunnis generally differentiate between the domains of law and theology? It is a conspicuous feature of mature Sunnism that plurality in law is perfectly acceptable while plurality in theology is not. There are four legal *madhhabs*, but no possibility of more than a single creed. The sectarian-Sunni approach to legal disagreement is very close to the modern idea of tolerance, but to theological difference it is unyielding.

Disagreement in matters of practice seems to have been as much a part of early Islam as disagreement about politics and theology. As I have shown elsewhere, even those who are said to 'deny the importance of works' in fact had a set of irreducible practices that, if denied, indeed put one outside the Muslim faith (Reinhart 2001). Yet

the domains of theology and law are seen as distinct, as we see in *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, from the second half of the Islamic 300s (Ess 1991–: 1, 207–11). ‘Insight (*fiqh*) in religion (theology?) is better than insight in transmitted knowledge (*ilm*) [and normative practice (*wa al-sunnan*)]’ (al-Maturidi [?] 1368/1948: 5; Wensinck 1965). So, it seems that every legal source, and indeed the *hadith* works as well, are filled with examples of disagreement, but in method and practice these are merely the bases of the different *madhhabs*. In the domain of law, the dictum *al-ikhtilaf rahmah* – difference is a mercy – seems to hold. In dogmatics, however, this is not the case.

If we are asked about our *madhhab* and a *madhhab* that differs from ours in a matter of detail, we are required to say that our *madhhab* is correct, though it is possible it is mistaken, and the other *madhhab* to the contrary is mistaken, though it is possible it is correct . . . Whereas if we are asked about our creedal position we are required to say: the truth is what we hold and the false is that to which our disputant adheres.<sup>6</sup>

A useful text for at least stating – if not clarifying – the differences is the *Ta’wil mukhtalif al-hadith* of Ibn Qutayba (n.d.: 13–14). He points out that the rhetorical ‘instruments’ of the theologians, unlike the legitimate instruments of the geometricians and physicians, yield difference and incoherence, whereas those of scientists yield single answers and agreement (ibid.: 12–13). Then he says:<sup>7</sup>

If [the rationalist theologians’] differences were in the derivative questions of practice (*furu’*) and norms (*sunan*), they could be excused, in our view – though there is no excuse for them, given what they allege about themselves – just as the people of *fiqh* [in legal practice] are excused, and they could constitute a model for them. However, [the rationalists’] differences as to God’s unicity, the attributes of God most high, His capacity (*qadar*), the bliss of the People of Paradise and the punishment of the People of Hell, the trial of Barzakh, the Tablet, and other matters – these are things that [even] a Prophet doesn’t know except through revelation from God the most high.

So, it might seem that for the people of *hadith* the theologians’ offence is their trespass into the domain of the unknowable, pretending to knowledge and consequently certainty, when in fact only Revelation can provide knowledge of these matters. Yet it is not unreliability that is truly at issue, but the failure to arrive at a single position on these matters that indicts them, as Ibn Qutayba clarifies:

This fact [i.e. of their differences in this crucial realm] is not annulled by references to bases (*usul*) like preference, or debate, or what reasoning compels

one to, because of differences among the intellects, desires, and preferences of people. You are not about to see two men agree so that each of them prefers what the other prefers and scorns what the other scorns, save from imitation (*taqlid*). The One who distinguished [them from one another] in form, shape, color, in language, voice and handwriting and gaits – so that a tracker can distinguish between one set of footprints and another – and between women and men, also caused their opinions to differ.

Mere difference is not a flaw in creation; it is a meaningful and even helpful feature of it.

The One who caused their opinions to differ is the One Who willed their differences for them. Wisdom and capacity would never be perfected except by the creation of a thing and its opposite, so that each of them is known by what is juxtaposed to it. Thus light is known by darkness, and knowledge by ignorance, the good by evil and the useful by the harmful, and the sweet by the bitter . . .

Therefore it is not only that disputation leads to disagreement but that the other method – confining one's opinions to plain textual citations – leads to unity and consequently to truth.

Had we wished, God save us, to go from the partisans of *hadith* . . . to the partisans of *kalam* and to go with them, we would have departed from uniting to dispersion, from order to disorder, from amity to brutishness, and from agreement to disagreement, since the partisans of *hadith*, all of them, agree that what God wills is, and what he did not will is not; that He is Creator of good and evil; that the Qur'an is the speaking of God, uncreated; that God most high is seen on the Day of Resurrection; on the precedence of the two shaykhs; on faith in the trial of the grave – they do not differ on these basic dogmas.

Yet, why is it that for Ibn Qutayba, in 'derivative matters of practice (*furu'*) or *sunan*, differences 'can be excused (*ittasa'a lahum al-'udhr 'indana*) and [pardon] is extended to the people of *fiqh*' and 'what is the case for [the people of *fiqh*] is a model (*uswa*) for [the people of *kalam*]?'

Though quite different in his theory of knowledge, and more than 200 years later, al-Ghazali may help clarify what is at stake, to some extent. In his *Mustasfa*<sup>8</sup>, al-Ghazali addresses the stock problem of whether every *mujtahid* is correct in his *ijtihad*, whether he can be said to err, whether he can err, and whether in doing so, he sins (Zysow 1984: ch. 5; Hallaq 1997: 119ff.). In the course of his argument he distinguishes between decisive matters (*qat'iyyat*) and suppositional

matters (*zanniyyat*). There are decisive and suppositional matters in theology (*kalam*), jurisprudential principles (*usul*), and jurisprudential derivatives (*furu'*). The theological certainties pertain, he says, to matters that are 'known by pure rationality', and 'the truth in these matters is one' (al-Ghazali 1995/n.d.: 2,207/2,357).

Such matters include the origination of the world, the existence of an Originator, the necessary, possible, and impossible attributes [of this Originator], that He sends Messengers, the confirmation of their veracity through miracles, [but also] the possibility of the vision [of God], the creation [by God] of human acts and the volition of creatures, and everything with which there are theological disputes with the Mu'tazilah, the Khawarij, the Rawafid, and the Innovators (ibid.: 2,207/2,357).

Pure *kalam* questions are defined as

those whose truth an inquirer can grasp by the intellect before the arrival of Revelation. These are matters for which there is only one truth; who errs on this matter is a sinner. If he errs about what is connected to faith in God or His messenger he is outside the community of Muslims (*kafir*); if he errs on what does not prohibit him from the knowledge of God and knowledge of His messenger, as concerning the ocular vision [of God] and the creation [by God of human] acts and the volition of creatures he is a sinner, inasmuch as he has equivocated between truth and error; he has erred inasmuch as he is mistaken about unequivocal truth; he is an innovator inasmuch as he has made a statement at odds with the widely shared opinion of the pious forebears (*al-salaf*); but he is not thereby excluded from the Muslim community (ibid.: 2,207-8/2,358).

The theological decisive matters about which, according to al-Ghazali, one must not disagree are precisely those matters that are at issue among the various theological groups, even in al-Ghazali's time. Even for obscure matters that do not put one outside the community, disagreement is still sin, error and blameworthy innovation. Yet these controversial topics are arrayed in parallel to the notion that Consensus, Analogy, and Unique *hadiths* are legal proofs in *usul al-fiqh* or that one must pray five times daily and avoid adultery – matters on which by al-Ghazali's time and for centuries before there had been no dispute. In other words, al-Ghazali and those he represents exclude practically the entire domain of theology as illegitimate by fiat, pretending that these matters are as settled as the standard legal methodology. This is already the audacious strategy of the *hadith*-folk early in the fourth century, when the theological field was far less settled than it was in al-Ghazali's day.

The people of *hadith* flattened out Islamic intellectual history and imagined a harmonious unity among their predecessors. Their unity both proved and guaranteed the truth of the *hadith*-folk's position. Ibn Qutayba again:

As for whom to emulate – it is the foremost scholars and the earliest (*al-mutaqaddimin*) legal scholars and the striving pious folk who are matchless and whose level we cannot hope to attain: for instance Sufyan al-Thawri, Malik b. Anas, al-Awza'i, Shu'bah, Layth b. Sa'd, and the scholars of the garrison cities like Ibrahim b. Adham, Muslim al-Khawas, Fudayl b. 'Iyad, Dawud al-Ta'i, Muhammad b. Al-Nadr al-Harthi, Ahmad b. Hanbal, Bishr al-Hafi and the likes of those who are our contemporaries. But as for the predecessors (*al-mutaqaddimin*), they are more than can be numbered.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of presenting themselves as a small group of rigorists turning their backs on an entire field of Islamic intellectual endeavour, in this mythic historiography it is everyone else who is the marginalised sub-group, the outliers from a majoritarian consensus. If this is their strategy, their immediate tactics, in the Islamic intellectual milieu, are stark and uncompromising.

### Marginalising Debate

Ibn Qutayba:

Whosoever does draw apart on these [matters] in a single item, we part ways with him, despise him, declare him a blameworthy innovator and leave him. There is some disagreement about the articulation of the Qur'an because of the obscurity of the subject. Yet all [of us] agree that the Qur'an in every state – recited, written, audited, and memorized – is not created. And there is Consensus on this.

It is important to recognise that this does not mean that among themselves the *hadith*-party were in lockstep and stifled all intellectual inquiry. It simply means that they drew back from the treacherous quagmire of disputes about belief, and turned to disputes about practice that have less potential for fundamental error. This is precisely because Islamic legists had long agreed upon the fundamentals necessary for the law's operation: the right of God to make demands of Creatures, the transmission of those demands through the data of the two Scriptures, and a more-or-less agreed-upon hermeneutic for applying those texts. The rationalist practitioners of *kalam* – enthralled by the claims of Hellenistic reasoning – claimed apodictic certainty for the results of their inquires while demonstrably failing to convince



even their colleagues in the enterprise. It seems obvious that certainty should compel agreement (as opposed to mere conviction). Certainty should be shared. Diversity in the context of theology felt like unreliability. In jurisprudence, by contrast, the distinctly Sunni view (al-Qadi al-Nu'man 1973: ch. 7) was that the jurisprudential hermeneutic produced only probability, suppositional truth – good enough to act upon with confidence in the results – but without the metaphysical claims that were, in effect, self-refuting because they gave rise to disagreement.

It is this 'parting ways with, denouncing and leaving' that is a crucial step in the development of Sunni sectarianism, and in the marginalisation of disputational theology and its replacement by catechetical dogmatics (*usul al-din*).

Several later texts (from the late 300s and early 400s) compile the *hadith* and other religious lore generated and collected earlier to help force their opponents from the Islamic fold. We have here not so much historical accounts but prescriptions for conduct toward the 'Islamic enemy'. Their primary tactic was to boycott not just the errant, but theological disputation altogether. Many of these accounts are ascribed to heroes of early *hadith*-folk piety. Some predictably are linked to the Prophet himself. In one collection of early creeds we read that, according to Mus'ab:

The people of Medina forbade disputation (*al-kalam fi*) religion (*din*). It has reached me that Malik b. Anas used to say: I hate all disputation in religion and the people of my region have always hated it – capacity (*al-qadar*), the opinions of Jahm, and everything that resembles them. I don't like disputations except when they have implications for action (*illa fima tahtahu 'amalin*) (al-Lalka'i 1415/1994: 168).

The debate of the dialecticians is depicted as mere wrangling. Debate is part of the Innovators' apparatus and entails spending time in their company – a dangerous endeavour. Ibn Hanbal made it among the principles (*usul*) of the *sunna* that

one hold fast to what the Companions of the Messenger of God had and follow them, and avoid blameworthy innovation since every innovation is a wandering-astray. And leaving off wrangling (*al-khusumat*) and being in assembly with the People of Caprice and avoid debate and dialectics and disputing in religion (ibid.: 176) . . . Do not dispute with anyone or debate him and do not study dialectics . . . (ibid.: 177).

Al-Ajuri, a *hadith*-oriented Shafi'i, in two of his works, explicitly gathers the material regarding debate and for the most part that

evidence is against debate in the strongest terms. While the literature in biographical dictionaries is filled with particularly effective retorts in debate, the *hadith*-folk record instead particularly forceful refusals to debate at all.

One of the people of Caprice came up to Ayyub al-Sakhatyani and said 'O Abu Bakr, can I ask you about a word?' He turned toward him and gestured to him with his finger, [and said] 'Not about half a word' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 57).

For the *hadith*-folk, in addition to the intellectual fragmentation to which debate inevitably leads, debate can also insidiously corrupt the faith of even the most devout.

Abdullah b. Mas'ud is reported as saying, 'Avoid discussing with people who are blameworthy innovators. Religion does not leave the mind (*qalb*) all at once. Rather, Satan discusses with him in an innovating way so that faith leaves his mind and he hurries to divert himself (*yada'u*) from the duties God has made incumbent upon them in worship, fasting, and what is permitted and forbidden and they dispute with (*yatakallimuna*) their Lord. Let one who gets to that point flee'. He was asked: 'Whither?' To no place; rather to his mind and his religion. No one should be in an assembly of the People of Blameworthy Innovation (al-Lalka'i 1415/1994: 136-7).

God likewise in the Torah ordered Moses to avoid discussion and debate (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 57). Debate is seductive, but leads inexorably to repudiation of what every Muslim knows to be obligatory for a Muslim. The rightly trained mind (*qalb*) and true religion (*din*) are the antithesis of the blameworthy assemblies of the innovators, which are Satanic snares.

Sa'id b. Musib says, 'If people do disputational theology concerning their Lord and Angels, Satan appears to them and conducts them to the worship of idols' (al-Lalka'i 1415/1994: 137). From Muslim b. Yasar: 'Beware of wrangling; it is the hour when the learned man is ignorant; and by means of it Satan tempts him to slips of the tongue'. (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 56). Such slips of the tongue can be reprehensible. In the heat of a debate one might even find oneself saying that a well-established *sunna* of the Prophet is invalid (al-Ajuri 1428/2007: 87). Says Abu Qulabah,

Do not assemble with the People of Caprice. Do not engage in dialectics with them. For I am not certain but that you might be immersed in error or they might confuse you in religion in some of the things they are confused about (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 56).

The theme of the debate assembly as an arena for seduction is a recurring one. Al-Ajuri claims that 'among the philosophers (*al-hukama*) it is believed that lots of disputation can change the minds (*qulub*) of the Brethren' (1428/2007: 83). 'Attending assembly with Men of Caprice (*ahl al-ahwa*) – their assemblies sicken the mind' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 61).

Yet it is not just Satanic seduction that inclines the sectarian Sunnis to avoid debate. 'By this [process of] proof, the enemy enters the soul following passion' (ibid.: 82). Debate can leave behind 'a legacy of separation where there had been intimacy, and anger where there had been amity' (al-Ajuri 1428/2007: 82). Debate leads to lack of the self-control that is the ideal of the *shari'a*-minded Muslim. It stirs up enmity between brethren. And its legacy is uncertainty (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 55).

The Prophet is repeatedly recorded as disparaging dispute. For instance:

'Nothing leads a people astray after they have been guided save that they engage in dialectics'. Then he recited the aya (43: 58): They do not attack [a Revelation] except for argument (*jadalan*); they are indeed a contentious people.

The *hadith* records the Prophet saying that after worshipping idols and drinking wine 'the first thing my Lord forbade me was [engaging in] dispute (*al-mira*)' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 55).

The risk to the debater has no corresponding reward, it was supposed. Debate itself has no positive effect.

The Qur'an-commentator Wahb b. Munabbih observed 'you can't [win in dispute with] either of two [sorts of] men: a man who is more learned than you are – how can you dispute and engage in dialectics with someone more learned than you? [The other kind] is one than whom you are more learned; and how are you to dispute or engage with dialectics with someone than whom you are more learned; you can't. So cut that out (ibid.: 60).

They debate out of competitiveness and, in that, they reveal their uncouthness. Al-Hasan al-Basri is reported as saying 'a characteristic of someone who is ignorant is dialectics, dispute, and competitiveness. We take refuge in God from one who has this intent' (al-Ajuri 1428/2007: 87). Moreover, to argue as a regular undertaking subverts the sectarian commitment to the idea that being a Muslim means a commitment to a single stable truth.

A man confronted Malik b. Anas and [Malik] said, 'Sir [ya 'Abdullah]: let me tell you something: I will speak to you about [this matter], I will offer proofs,

and I will give you information through argument (*akhbaruka bi-ra'i*). [The man said,] 'if you persuade me?': [Malik said,] 'If I persuade you, then follow me.' [Then Malik said,] 'but if someone else came, and spoke to us, and persuaded us?' [The man said,] 'we would follow him'. Then Malik said, 'Sir: God sent Muhammad with a single religion, but your opinions wander from religion to religion'. And 'Umar b. 'Abdal'aziz says, 'one who makes his religion the object of disputes, ends up unstable (*akthara al-tanaqqul*)' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 56-7).

There is no question of being humiliated by refusing to debate, since the pious Muslim, they believe, does not care about those who reject his piety.

They'll say, 'if you don't debate and engage in dialectics you'll not come to understanding (*lam tafqah*)' and he makes this the occasion for engaging in forbidden dialectics, dispute, and from which it is feared will come evil [consequences]. [It was] against [this that] the Prophet warned us, as the scholars who are leaders of the Muslims have warned us. It is related from the Prophet: 'Who avoids dispute when he is in the right (*sadiq*), for him God will build a house amidst the Garden'. And from Hasan [al-Basri], 'a member of the faith knows and does not dispute: he broadcasts the wisdom of God. If it is accepted, he praises God; if it is rejected he praises God' (al-Ajuri 1428/2007: 83-4).

Hence, and this is the key to the construction of a sectarian posture, the disputants, especially in *kalam*, are presented as being not real Muslims. There are various degrees of emphasis on this, some of which are relatively mild.

Sufyan al-Thawri, for instance requires that one pray behind whatever imam one encounters for the public prayers of the two feasts and Fridays. But otherwise, 'you are free to choose to pray only behind one in whom you have confidence and whom you know to be of the people of the *Sunna* and community' (al-Lalka'i 1415/1994: 173). Ibn Abi Kathir said, 'If I encountered an Innovator on the road, I'd choose another [road]' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 64).

Yet other positions are more severe; for example, Al-Hasan al-Basri: 'An Innovator's prayer is not accepted, nor his fast, nor *hajj* nor *'umra* nor *jihad* – neither what he spends nor his deeds [at war]'.<sup>10</sup> Abu Thawr tells Muslims not to pray behind Qadaris, nor to visit them in their illnesses nor to attend their funerals. Indeed, 'If they do not repent, strike their necks [cut off their heads]' (al-Lalka'i 1415/1994: 193). And finally, Abu Qulaba: 'a man who innovates deserves the sword' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 64).

Yet there remains a lingering sense, perhaps a socially shared

sentiment, that the dialectic process – at least in the domain of law – can lead to the discovery of truth and arrive at legitimate conviction. Some reject even this:

The question is posed: Suppose there is some item of uncertain religious lore (*ilm*) that one wants to know about, one about which scholars differ. Surely one has to join scholars and debate with them till one knows the truth of it and is able to safeguard knowledge of it (al-Ajuri 1428/2007: 18).

◀ Muhammad b. Al-Husayn was asked about debating about only *fiqh*:

regarding legal rulings, such as purification, or worship, or welfare tax, or fasting or pilgrimage or marriage or divorce and what is like that, is it permitted to debate about it, and engage in dialectics, or is it proscribed to us?

...

One should say to him 'you have mentioned the debate that is least acceptable (*aqallu min salam*) so do not thereby adhere to disorder nor to sin, for thereby Satan is victorious'

How so?

It is said to him: These [legal debates] have multiplied among the people a great deal. Among the people of learning and *fiqh* in every region man debates man and wants thereby to vanquish him and raise his voice and demonstrate his case to him with proofs. [In the process] thereby his face reddens and he flies into a rage, and he raises his voice. Each of them wants to prove his opponent wrong; this idea that both of them hold is powerfully wrong. Its results are not praiseworthy. Scholars should not prevail over other scholars because the intent to catch your opponent in a error is an error on your part, a great insubordination . . . And if one says, 'we debate only for a benefit'. The reply is, 'this is the overt statement; and in debate [one sees] something else' (al-Ajuri 1403/1983: 66).

For the people of *hadith*, the only positive instance of debate was the time of the *Mihnah*. The '*ulama*'

sought to protect the religion. And they wanted thereby to define for the laity the true from the false. So they debated [their opponents] under duress, not by choice. God established the truth with Ahmad b. Hanbal and those who went along with him, and God abased the Mu'tazilah and abased [their sympathizers]. The laity learned that the truth was what Ahmad b. Hanbal and those who followed him [said], until the Day of the Resurrection. And we hope that the Generous God will spare the People of Learning among the People of Prophetic Precedent and Community from any inquisition happening ever (ibid.: 62).

Al-Ajuri attempts therefore to construct tests for conduct in debate that allow the pious debater to measure his opponent's attitude as they discuss matters that require confrontational discourse. Al-Ajuri's ideal, the 'reasonable man of knowledge' (*al-'alim al-'aqil*), if confronted by someone whom he knows wants to debate with him

by dialectics and dispute and in the spirit of competitiveness (*al-mughaliba*), should not accept to debate with him, since he knows [his opponent] wants only to defend what he says, and establish the superiority of his school of thought (*yunsar madhhabuh*) (al-Ajuri 1428/2007: 85-6).

He provides a script for terminating a contentious and unworthy debate.

If there is someone who wants to debate in the spirit of competitiveness and dialectics, one should say to him: 'Tell me: If I were a Hijazi and you were an 'Iraqi and we had a certain controversial problem, in line with my *madhhab* I would say "It is permitted" and in accord with your *madhhab* you would say, "It is forbidden". You would challenge me to debate about it. Yet your intention in your debate is not to retreat from your position and the truth, as far as you are concerned, is that I [should] say what you say; [and vice-versa]. My intention in debate is not to repudiate what I hold; my intention is only to refute your statement, and your intention is to refute my statement, so there is no basis for our debating. The best thing for us is silence about what you know concerning your position, and about what I know concerning my position: this is best for us (*aslam lana*) and closest to the truth that we ought to be employ' (ibid.: 86). If he says how so? One says to him, 'because you wish that I should be wrong about the truth [of the matter] (when [in fact] it is you who are wrong, and I shall not agree that [your position] is correct). Thereupon, you'll be glad of that and rejoice, while my intention is similar. But if we are thus, we are an evil folk who do not accept guidance. And the [religious] facts are against us. Someone who is ignorant is more easily forgiven than we [are<sup>s</sup>forgiven]' (ibid.: 86-7).

Al-Ajuri says

the attribute a reasonable scholar (*'alim 'aqil*) whom God has given understanding in religion and whom God has graced with knowledge (*'ilm*) is that he does not engage in dialectics nor does he debate. He vanquishes with knowledge only those who are worthy to be vanquished with the healing knowledge. If it should happen that he is pressed at some time to debate one of the People of Deviance so as to defend his claims against one of the vain people who oppose the truth and who have left the community of Muslims, and if he supposes his victory in debate might bring his blessing to the

Muslims . . . because one of the characteristics of the reasonable scholar is that he does not join assemblies of the People of Caprice and does not debate them. But in matters of religious lore (*ilm*) and legal scholarship (*al-fiqh*) regarding other practical assessments (*ahkam*) – this does not apply (*ibid.*: 80–1).

The attribute of the reasonable man of knowledge, according to al-Ajuri, is sincerity (or ‘a seeking of fraternal mutual correction’; *munasiha*) in his debates, and seeking benefit for himself and others. God has multiplied the scholars who are like this, and benefited them with knowledge, and adorned them with forbearance (*al-ilm*) (*ibid.*: 87).

So, al-Ajuri constructs, or reports, an elaborate ritual that allows for respectful disagreement in the interest of eliciting truth. Note, however, that his interlocutor must first share almost all of the *hadith*-party’s assumptions about procedures and proper subjects for debate.<sup>11</sup>

If, then, one wants to extract knowledge about lore concerning which there is uncertainty, let him repair to a scholar who is one of those who, by his knowledge, seeks God, one whose knowledge and understanding and intellect (*‘aqlih*) he finds acceptable. Let him jointly study as one does when seeking benefit, and let him inform [the expert]: ‘My debate with you is the debate of one who seeks the truth; it is not the debate of one who seeks to vanquish’. Let him then adhere to fairness in his debate, that is, he must love the correct in his debate partner and abhor error as he loves that for himself, since among the attributes of the faithful scholar (*al-‘alim al-mu‘min*) is that he loves for his brother what he loves for himself, and abhors for him what he abhors for himself. He should inform [this debate partner] also: ‘If your desire in debating me is that I should be wrong about what is true and that you should be correct, or if I should desire [the same thing], shame on us if we do it’. This is because this character-trait (*khuluqun*) on our part displeases God. It is incumbent on us to repent of this.

How then shall we debate? Sincerely. Sincerely, how? . . . When there is a matter between us I shall say ‘It is permitted’ and you shall say ‘It is forbidden’. Then we shall judge its merits jointly (*hakamna jami‘an*) so that when we dispute (*natakallim*) concerning it, it is disputation (*kalam*) in search of accord (*al-salama*). My desire is that by your tongue the truth may be revealed to me so that I move toward what you say; or that my tongue shall reveal the truth to you so that you move toward what I say in – accord with the Book and the Sunna and Consensus. If this is our desire, I am hopeful that the results of this debate will be praiseworthy, and we will agree on what is correct and Satan will have no part in it (*ibid.*: 84–5).

## Conclusion

One part of the sectarian strain of Sunnism originates in their attitude toward debate – an attitude at odds with most Sunni scholars' attitudes towards debate in the realm of law, and one at odds with many scholars' attitude toward debate in the realm of *kalam*. Further work would be necessary to determine if the culture of legal debate remained robust after the sixth Islamic century, but the career, at least, of Fakhraddin Razi suggests that debate was a part of scholars' careers into the seventh century at least (Kholeif 1966). Yet the production of *kalam* texts diminishes within this same period, to judge from manuscript holdings in the various libraries I have surveyed. It would seem that the sectarian Sunnis succeeded in marginalising theology precisely by their refusal to debate the premises of the theological enterprise. Theology was simply illegitimate. We might say in general that *'ilm* went from being a verbal noun (knowing) to being a noun (knowledge), as the lore of the *hadith*-scholars became the model for knowledge in what had been theology and became catechesis: truths to be memorised, positions to be committed to. While on al-Ghazali's account a similar situation obtained in law as well – the basic methodological principles limned by Shafi'i were no longer debatable (Hallaq 1993; Lowry 2007) – the ongoing novelty of the realm of life regulated by the law meant that controversy, debate, in short, vigorous intellectual life, continued in *fiqh* for at least another half millennium after it had come to a halt in theology. But *kalam* was precisely about fundamentals. There were few practical questions at issue. Once the basics are fixed, and debate is proscribed, all that remains is the sterile scholasticism of *usul al-din*. Metaphysics does not disappear – it is displaced to the theosophical extravagances of *'irfan* and later philosophy. Yet knowledge in this domain is not public knowledge (*'ilm*) but experiential knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and speculative insight. Denominationalism wins out over sectarianism in law, but it is sectarianism that determines Sunni norms toward theology. The tactic of refusing to debate accomplished the strategic goals of the sectarian pietists.

This chapter has sketched part of the way in which sectarian Sunnis made their version of Islam 'orthodoxy' – or at least an important component of it. Reading 'against the grain', however, it is clear that until the Islamic 500s or so this was only one position on theology and disputation among many. Certainly in the domain of law, but perhaps even in theology, this sectarian Sunni disdain for dispute was often flouted (Kholeif 1966; Makdisi 1981: 105–11). It is time to view 'Sunnism' as a 'take' on Islam, not as Islam, to recognise Sunnism's plurality, and to study its distinctive history as a religious movement within Islam.



## Notes

1. Lucas 2004; but also I think to some extent Zaman (1997) with his notion of a 'proto-Sunnī elite' that emerges very early and is a continuous thread through Islamic intellectual history. To the extent that Berkey (2003) embraces this notion, he too belongs to the 'Big-Bang' theory of Sunnī origins.
2. Juynboll 1983: index s.v. '*Ṣāhib sunna*', '*Ṣāhib al-ḥadīth*', 2007: index s.v. '*Ṣāhib. . .*'.
3. The *Ḥadīth* are found in their most canonical form in the *Ṣaḥīhayn* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. See the excellent study, Brown 2007. The corpus of *ḥadīth* was more usefully and more inclusively in the 'Six books'; but it remains, in theory and practice a somewhat open body of material, as one can see in collections like the much expanded, but still respected work of al-Hindī (1391/1971).
4. See the concluding remarks in Melchert 1992.
5. The best analysis since Hodgson by far of the *ḥadīth*-folk as a religious movement is Melchert 2002. For some additional useful material see also Melchert 2006.
6. Ibn Nujaym 1418/1998: 418, quoting al-Ghazālī's *Mustasfā*. I am unable to locate this quote in either of my copies of the *Mustasfā*.
7. Subsequent quotations from Ibn Qutayba are from n.d. 13-14.
8. Al-Ghazālī 1995, n.d. (henceforth, cited as 1995 edition/n.d. [Bulāq] edition).
9. I re-encountered this text in Calder (2003: 148-9) where it is translated with some differences.
10. *Wa lā sarf wa la 'amal* corrected from *lā 'adl*; al-Ajurī 1403/1983: 64.
11. For another account of this debate procedure, see al-Ajurī 1403/1983: 66.

## The Violence of the Abbasid Revolution

*Chase F. Robinson*

'It was not to shed blood and act unjustly that we followed the Family of Muhammad' – so proclaimed Sharik b. Shaykh when he rebelled against Abu Muslim in 133/750. Or at least that is what al-Tabari reports that he said, since here he follows the historiographic convention of ascribing motivation through the direct speech of the figure in question. Al-Ya'qubi has a variant: 'It was not to shed blood and act unjustly that we gave the oath of allegiance to the Family of the Prophet.' *Precisely* what Sharik b. Shaykh actually said or thought, we shall never know; nor, for that matter, can we say much about his movement in Bukhara beyond that it apparently fizzled out quickly, despite what Narshakhi reports as some broad support.<sup>1</sup> But whatever the precise depth and breadth of that support, we can be sure that others felt the same way. The blood-letting of the Abbasid Revolution had gone too far, and one set of tyrants had been replaced by another: in the eyes of Sharik and those like-minded, the principles for which the Hashimiyya had fought – just rule under a member of the Family of the Prophet, in accordance with God's Book – had been betrayed.

The two ideas – blood and tyranny – are neatly combined in two lines of poetry, which were reportedly inscribed on a sword that had killed innocents in the wake of that Revolution:

When the amir and his two retainers commit tyranny  
 and the earthly judge exceeds all limits in decreeing (*asrafa fil-qada'*)  
 Then woe, upon woe, upon woe  
 from the Heavenly judge upon the earthly one.<sup>2</sup>

There is no question about the identity of the 'earthly judge' in the lines of poetry: it had to be the caliph himself, at this point (133/750-1) Abu al-'Abbas; as will become clear from the discussion that follows, the reader was almost certainly to identify the 'amir' in question as his

uncle, ‘Abdullah b. ‘Ali, and his ‘two retainers’ (*hajibahu*) as Yahya b. Muhammad, the caliph’s brother and governor of the city that was put to the sword, and Muhammad b. Sul, his sub-governor or successor. What is clearer is the Qur’anic echo in the first line, for the Qur’an rails against those who ‘exceed [the limits]’ (*al-musrifin*), specifying the archetypical tyrant, Pharaoh himself (Q. 10: 83). It similarly instructs Muslims to ‘fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits, for God does not love those who do so’ (*wa lā ta‘tadū inna Allāh lā yuḥibb al-mu‘tadīn*; Q. 2: 190). Precisely where those limits were to be drawn naturally depended on who was drawing them and when, but while the Umayyads were certainly considered to have ‘fought’ their subjects, it seems that the Abbasids’ critics held that in removing them from power, the Abbasids had overstepped those limits. They had spilt too much blood.

It is scarcely surprising. Revolutionary social change – and despite all the continuities, there is no question that the shift from Marwanid to Abbasid rule was that<sup>3</sup> – necessarily involves a measure of violence, and sometimes the violence is so intense or systematic that it exceeds the cultural limits (Qur’anic or otherwise) that normally prevail. In fact, it is often said that ‘revolutionary terror’ has discernible patterns: executions multiply as scores are settled and hatchets unburied; sporadic violence gives way to wide-spread bloodletting as order dissolves, and non-combatants are targeted or caught up in the fray; deliberate or systematic campaigns of terror are waged in order to annihilate the representatives and supporters of the *ancien régime* or at least stun them into silence and submission. Society is re-ordered: ‘Turned upside down, later rolled in sometimes different directions, things will have settled differently than before’.<sup>4</sup> Why should Islamic history be different, especially given the scent of vengeance that was in the mid-eighth-century air? Sharik’s words suggest that it is not and, as I shall try to demonstrate, the historical record documents that it was not. We shall see that many accounts are problematic for one reason or another, but taken as a whole, the tradition leaves no doubt that the period beginning in mid-132 and ending in mid-133 (roughly, the calendar year of 750 CE) witnessed the kind of ferocious violence that revolutions typically have a way of generating. How much of it resulted from a programmatic attempt to exact vengeance and destroy the Umayyads is a question I shall try to answer.

Because my interests lie in violence that was considered extraordinary in cultural terms, I shall leave aside conventional military engagements – in other words, battles that took place between publicly and mutually acknowledged combatants, no matter how unequal the forces and great the mortality – on the grounds that they were ordinary. When Sharik b. Shaykh lamented the shedding of blood, there is no

reason to think that he had in mind the tens of thousands of Syrian and Jazirans who were apparently killed at the Battle of the Zab, be they struck down, drowned or trampled under foot and hoof. As soldiers in armies fighting on behalf of tyrannical Umayyads, they had forfeited what we would regard as their right to life, even if Umayyad poets lamented their deaths in much the same way that they lamented the deaths of those Umayyads who had been clubbed to death by the Hashimiyya, as we shall see. In culturally specific terms, 'their blood was licit'. The concern that drove Sharik to rebellion was not the shedding of blood *per se*, but rather the avoidable or unjust shedding of blood, such as that produced by the inscribed sword. One set of unjust killers had been replaced by another set of unjust killers, and Sharik wanted no part of it. 'He ['Abdullah b. 'Ali] used violence against the people of Syria in a tyrannical and oppressive fashion, and behaved in a savage way such as no-one previously had ever done', as al-Maqrizi put it centuries later.<sup>5</sup> For related reasons, I shall also mostly leave aside examples of violence that were extraordinary, but only singularly so – that is, incidents of extreme torture or execution – though there are plenty of examples of that too. What I shall focus upon instead is establishing a reasonably reliable record of what presumably caused Sharik the greatest alarm – that is, wanton or at least unrestrained killing, especially of those who had been granted *amans* or of non-combatants, be they 'civilians' or unarmed soldiers, Umayyad or otherwise.

A celebratory volume may strike the reader as a curious place to explore the problem of Abbasid Revolutionary violence, but because exploring it means tackling knotty problems of both Islamic history and historiography, I trust that this article is a fitting gesture of appreciation to Professor Hillenbrand, who has tackled many such problems.

### The Nature of the Evidence

How are we to know what happened in 132? Of all the discussions of Revolutionary-era violence, the most careful and thorough belongs to Moscati, whose interests lay in establishing a historical and literary record of what he called the Umayyad massacres – that is, the massacres in which members of the ruling house were specifically and more or less systematically targeted.<sup>6</sup> It is an impressive piece of work, not merely because of his wide reading in the published and unpublished Arabic sources, but also because of the patient sifting he carried out so as to distinguish between accounts that appear to record, however imperfectly or incompletely, authentic echoes of the events in question, and, on the other hand, those accounts that appear to be the product of secondary development. Although some partisan defenders of the early tradition

see things otherwise, all serious Islamicists know that the characteristic features of this development – confusion, contradiction, cross-contamination and the duplication of *akhbar* – result not from collusion or a conspiracy by a cabal of eighth- or ninth-century Iraqis, but rather from the elaboration of narrative according to the procedures and practices of the period. ‘Le massacre des Umayyades après la grand victoire ‘abbāside près du fleuve Zāb . . . est un episode confus et embrouillé dans les sources’, is how he begins his examination of the sources. ‘Il faut avouer toutefois que plusieurs episodes, comme celui de la fin des Umayyades, ne nous montrent pas parmi ces défauts la marque d’une doctrine officielle, ne un déguisement systématique des événements’, is how he finishes it (Moscati 1950: 88, 106; Wellhausen 1902: 343ff., 1927: 55 1ff.). In the light of the great number and wide diversity of the accounts – mostly historical and literary compilations, but also geographical and biographical, the earliest dating from the ninth century, the latest the thirteenth – one can hardly find fault with that.

It is true, as noted by Wellhausen over a century ago, that al-Tabari is strikingly uninterested in the most infamous of the Umayyad massacres, which took place at Nahr Abi Futrus in Dhu al-Qa‘da in 132. Since he wrote in 1902, more sanguinary details of this and other incidents have come to light, all of which make his silence all the more conspicuous: we learn about as much about the fall of Damascus in the laconic Khalifa b. Khayyat and al-Ya‘qubi as we do from the voluminous al-Tabari.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, we can only discern what must have been a deliberate indifference on his part because other sources describe events at Nahr Abi Futrus, Damascus and other massacres, sometimes in very considerable detail. There is no question of any conspiracy of silence, then; al-Tabari’s apparent prudence is an exception that still needs explanation, but the rule is a proliferation of accounts. In fact, given the multiplicity of conflicting and overlapping massacre reports, I regard the prospect of an incomplete record of at least the major incidents as less likely than the possibility of a confused one. ‘Abu Ja‘far besieged him [Ishaq al-‘Uqayli in Sumaysat], but some say that Abu Ja‘far did not besiege him, but rather ‘Abdullah b. ‘Ali did’ (al-Ya‘qubi 1883: ii, 425), al-Ya‘qubi writes, thus making explicit what usually remains an unspoken inability on the part of our extant sources to pin down exactly who perpetrated what to whom, where he (or they) did it, and when. To give one of many possible examples of overlapping coverage: Ibn Qutayba’s report of the massacre at Nahr Abi Futrus has Abu Ja‘far, accompanied by the poet ‘Abdi, invite eighty Umayyads, whom he proceeds to slaughter; in both details and structure, the account resembles the much more common reports that have ‘Abdullah b. ‘Ali, the victor of the Battle of the Zab, do the same (Lassner 1980: 34; cf. Moscati 1950: 98).

What explains these and other conflicting and apparently hybrid reports? To begin with, we must allow for the confusion that was the inevitable product of the serial transmission of free-floating *akhbar* (the great majority of our reports were probably set down in writing no earlier than two generations after the events in question), just as we must accommodate the drift of themes and *topoi* from one *khbar* to the next. Another good example is the issuing and subsequent breaking of *amans* offered to the hapless – or, one might say, hopelessly naive – Umayyads, as well as their gruesome murder at mealtime: ‘The murder of enemies at the feast is a ubiquitous motif’, as Wellhausen put it (1902: 345, n. 2, 1927: 553, n. 2). When numbers of victims are given (typically 72 or 80, but occasionally 83 or ‘80 or thereabouts’), it is impossible to know how they are reckoned, and in any event they may well be stereotypical (al-Tabari 1879–1901: iii, 51; Moscati 1950; Conrad 1988: 51). (It almost goes without saying that stereotyping and drifting are systemic features of the early tradition as a whole; from that point of view, we should *expect* them to appear in these accounts.)<sup>8</sup> At perhaps an even deeper level, we must also account for the influence of what might be called a monotheist template. Wellhausen, who obviously knew his Bible better than most, alludes (but does not explore) the parallels of 2 Kings 9: 1–10: 31, where the blood-thirsty king Jehu massacres the kinsmen of rival kings, Ahab and Ahazia; here we have several narrative elements (such as the treacherous invitation and the dispatch of severed heads) that reappear across the Arabic massacre accounts of years 132 and 133. The author of 2 Kings has dogs lick the blood of Ahab and eat the flesh of Jezebel; *apud* al-Isfahani’s *Aghani*, al-Mu‘ayti reports that dogs tug at the legs of Umayyad corpses that have been tossed into the streets (apparently in al-Hira or Kufa; al-Isfahani 1961: iv, 347; Ibn al-Athir 1965–6: v, 431).

A related (but nonetheless distinctive) feature of this template is a cluster of apocalyptic ideas, expectations and images, which seem to have exercised a deep influence upon narratives of the Revolution. The issue is extremely complex because the influence of these ideas, expectations and images was probably as profound as their origins are murky; the Syriac sources sometimes explicitly state that the violence of the period fulfils Biblical prophecies (thus Jeremiah and Lamentations; Chabot 1933: 207f.; Harrak 1999: 190), but most of our texts leave it to their readers to read between the lines. Suffice it to say here, narrative details that we might otherwise regard to be historical memories (such as the razing of city walls and the deposit of bodies into rivers) form part of eschatological or millenarian dramas that resonated widely in the middle of the eighth century. ‘The span of Umayyad rule to the point at which Abu al-‘Abbas, al-Saffah, was given the oath of allegiance was 1,000 complete months, no more, no less’, al-Mas‘udi

claims (1979: iv, 73). History had taken a decisive turn, our sources frequently remind us – and they reconstruct it accordingly. The Abbasids' claim to rule was naturally expressed in terms that made men instruments of God's plan (He had brought 'our era', *dawlatana*, to the Kufans, as Abu al-'Abbas told them in 132; al-Tabari 1879–1901: iii, 30), and the plan called for the laying low of the tyrannical Umayyads. The events were neatly fitted into an epochal scheme laid out in the Qur'an itself: the Umayyads are cast as the 'people of Pharaoh', so the defeat at the Battle of the Zab leads 'Abdullah b. 'Ali to recite Qur'an 2: 50 ('We divided for you the sea, saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh, and you were seeing'; Ibn A'tham 1975: viii, 184; al-Baladhuri 1996: vii, 652; cf. al-Tabari 1879–1901: iii, 50; al-Azdi 1967: 130); the caliph's demise in Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs, is as fitting an end as one could imagine. (I leave aside accounts that have him proposing to write to the Byzantine emperor to allow him to withdraw into Byzantine territories and that place the remnants of his family in a church.) Already by the time of Nu'aym b. Hammad – and probably much earlier – Nahr Abi Futrus had established itself on the map of apocalyptic dramas to come (Cook 2002: 103). 'While the strong men of the sons of Kedar are still with him', a Jewish apocalypse reads, 'a north-east wind will rebel against him and many armies will fall from him: the first on the Tigris, the second on the Euphrates, the third in between. He flees before them, and his sons will be captured and killed and hung on trees' (Lewis 1950: 313). We should not be surprised when we read that Umayyads were indeed crucified, as we shall see.

In addition to all of this – what might crudely be called the literary patterning and re-shaping of our reports – we also have the question of inter- and intra-Abbasid polemics. Where did responsibility lie? Who was in charge? There is a parallel with the history of a century earlier, when Muslim armies also swept across Syria. Conquest narrative addresses these questions by prescribing chains of command (typically through outlining putative itineraries and transmitting a putative superior's orders to subordinates); massacre narrative addresses them as well. In virtually every case of killing – be it in Mosul, where civilians fall in great numbers, in Wasit, where Mudaris are targeted, in Damascus (where narratives of Abbasid conquest are strikingly reminiscent of those of its Islamic conquest), at Nahr Abi Futrus and in the caliph's final stand at Busir – there are signs of controversy. We have already seen the conflicting reports that put either Abu Ja'far or 'Abdullah b. 'Ali in charge. 'O Umayyads, I have annihilated a host of you', begins a set of verses that appear in several sources, and these Moscati quite reasonably credits to 'Abdullah b. 'Ali (Moscati 1950: 10; Ibn al-Athir 1965–6: v, 431). (That 'Abdullah b. 'Ali is given to crow about the cold-blooded murder of unarmed 'guests' says something

about our sources' sangfroid; it was obviously reckoned a feather in his cap.) Moscati is probably correct, but it is difficult to be sure. As Lassner and others have shown, the historical memory of 'Abdullah b. 'Ali – glorious victor at the Zab and conqueror of Syria turned disgraced rebel – is nothing if not complicated (Lassner 1980, 1986: especially 39ff.; Marsham and Robinson 2007). The fact is that there is simply no way to control our evidence from within. To make the case on circumstantial grounds – that is, by identifying him as the commander of the Zab armies and commander-governor of Jazira and Mesopotamia – is to rely upon the very sources that (usually) hold him responsible for the killing.

For these and other reasons, Moscati's method – what may be called logical exclusion on literary and historical grounds – is almost certainly inadequate for the *detailed* reconstruction of the events in question: it may account for the spread of motifs and *topoi*, but not for the expectations, polemics and politics that gave rise to them (or breathed new life into them). So too, it must be admitted, is probably any other method. There is too much material that is too late. In some of the Islamic sources we do have what appears to be some eyewitness accounts, such as those that belong to Mus'ab b. al-Rabi' al-Khath'ami, a *katib* of Marwan II who, unlike the more illustrious 'Abd al-Hamid b. Yahya, did not allow his loyalty to Marwan II to prevent him from saving his own skin; Mus'ab, who fathered a son named Musa who would serve in the Abbasid administration, secured an *aman* from the Abbasids and so survived the Revolution. But all of these contemporaneous or eyewitness accounts survive only as transmitted by late eighth- and ninth-century compilers, al-Haytham b. 'Adi (d. c. 822) and Abu al-Hasan al-Mada'ini (d. c. 845) figuring especially prominently.<sup>9</sup> Put another way, whatever the reliability of eye-witness accounts to such gruesome events is held to be, by the time that most of the accounts reach us in the late ninth and tenth centuries, they have passed through so many hands that such shape as they originally possessed has probably been lost. Sifting can only take us so far.

To make more progress, we must lower our expectations and broaden our base of sources. In what follows I accordingly pose what I regard to be answerable questions by adducing sources that were familiar to Moscati, others that were unavailable to him, and also some long-neglected ones. Amongst those that were not available to him are Khalifa b. Khayyat, Ibn A'tham al-Kufi, Ibn 'Asakir, al-Azdi al-Mawsili and an edited *Ansab al-ashraf* by al-Baladhuri. Amongst the long-neglected ones are several Christian sources, principally in Christian Arabic and Syriac, which can be shown to include material that is earlier, and possess clearer transmission histories. Here it is particularly important to note that a single witness-source lies behind



several of these sources' material on the period of the Revolution. Directly after a report on the Battle of the Zab, we read the following in the tenth-century *Kitab al-Unwan* by Agapius (Mahbub) of Manbij:

The astrologer Theophilus, from whom I have taken these accounts, said: 'I myself was a witness of these wars, and I would write things down so that they wouldn't escape me'. He has [written] many books about this, but I have [merely] summarized from them, and added that which I regarded as essential, avoiding prolixity (Agapius 1912: 525).

The Theophilus in question is Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785), the Maronite astrologer-translator-historian and courtier of al-Mahdi's, traces of whose now-lost work of history surface in Syriac, Christian Arabic and Greek, providing a great deal of material until about 754, the relevant passages here showing no signs of clear dependence upon the Islamic historiographic tradition.<sup>10</sup> What we have is a contemporary and well-placed source *who wrote things down*. His accounts, in addition to other promising ones, will appear in what follows as frequently as possible.

### What was the Scale of Violence?

The list that follows is nothing more than a skeletal outline of what appear to be the most salient events; deeper and wider reading, especially in the biographical literature, would uncover more incidents, perhaps especially single or minor killings. Most important, it would document in greater detail the number of non-combatant and non-Umayyad victims, a group that may be under-represented in the historical sources, interested as their authors were in the drama of the Umayyads' fate. I shall return to this point in my conclusion.

Although the list provides several cases of non-combatant and non-Umayyad victims, three examples may be usefully adduced in advance, if only because so little is known (or knowable) about them and the circumstances of their deaths. The first is 'Abd al-Hamid himself, Marwan II's loyal *katib* and advisor, who was tracked down by the Abbasids in either Syria or Egypt, and whose death was especially subject to legendary elaboration. As we have already seen, his fate contrasts with that of another of Marwan II's scribes, Mus'ab al-Khath'ami.<sup>11</sup> The second is 'Abda, a grand-daughter of Yazid I and a wife of Hisham, who was slaughtered in Hims; one unlikely story is that she refused to divulge the secret location of an Umayyad treasure, and another is that she refused the overtures of none other than 'Abdullah b. 'Ali himself.<sup>12</sup> The third is 'Umar b. Abi Salama b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf, mediocre traditionist, *qadi* of Medina, and grandson of the famous Companion,

whom 'Abdullah b. 'Ali is said to have killed (along with a sister) in either 132 or 133; one account has 'Umar seized when he was with unidentified Umayyads, and it is tempting to speculate that these were fleeing the executions that were being carried out by Dawud b. 'Ali in the Hijaz, as we shall see.<sup>13</sup> What is clearer is that none of the three bore a sword or could inspire counter-revolutionaries. The killing was broader than that.

1. *Harran (late Jumada II or early Rajab 132/February 750)*

After his defeat at the Zab late in the second week of Jumada II, 132, Marwan II made his way via Mosul to his former capital at Harran, where, according to Theophylus, he gathered kith and kin and left the city for Syria, reportedly with 3000 camel-loads of possessions; 'Abdullah b. 'Ali was in hot pursuit.<sup>14</sup> Details are too sketchy to allow one to square accounts that have the Umayyad governor of the city, Aban b. Yazid b. Muhammad b. Marwan, 'go black' and arrange a *sulh*, with those that have walls of the city razed. (The Mosuli elite had taken the same decision, and it was in the aftermath of the massacre of 133 that their walls are said to have come down too, just as they did a generation later after rebelling against Harun.) Marwanid palaces in Harran are also said to have been destroyed, and '[all] traces [that is, progeny (*athar*)] of him [Marwan] extinguished'.<sup>15</sup> At least some of the confusion about Harran probably results from subsequent history: the following year Muhammad b. Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik led a rebellion from Harran, and at this point its walls were clearly standing, since Musa b. Ka'b has to marshal mangonels and torch its gates; that he chose to rebel from here can reasonably be taken to suggest the survival of Umayyad sympathisers and maybe even some Umayyads (al-Tabari 1879-1901: iii, 45; al-Ya'qubi 1883: ii, 425; Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: v, 424; al-Azdi 1967: 139f.; Ibn A'tham 1975: viii, 186). One assumes more killing took place during this return visit. It can hardly be coincidental that a second focus of Umayyad power, Damascus itself, also went into rebellion after its initial capitulation. Here it is worth pointing out that the 'razing of walls' may frequently have amounted to the symbolic demolition of a single section; the oft-repeated phrase may otherwise function as a literary topos, presumably inspired by Jeremiah 50: 15 or the like, which signalled the punishment meted out by God (and His agents).<sup>16</sup>

Be this as it may, we also know something about the fate of a non-combatant who was killed in Harran, and this undoubtedly for the company he had kept: the traditionist Salim al-Aftash, a *mawla* of Muhammad b. Marwan b. al-Hakam, who is said to have been originally captured and enslaved, along with the better-known Syrian

traditionist, Makhul, in campaigns in Kabul. It appears that Salim was individually targeted for execution in Harran: 'he was with the Umayyads, and when the Abbasids began to reign, they sent men to him, while he was in the [congregational] mosque of Harran, took him out through its gates, and executed him'. (The mosque was presumably considered inviolate; the account offers a believable snapshot of the protocol of execution; similar protocols are respected elsewhere.) Such as they are, the sources connect Salim's killing with the fact that the martyred *imam* Ibrahim had been 'staying' – that is, incarcerated – at his house; it is also stated that the man giving the order for his execution, 'Abdullah b. 'Ali, had himself occupied that house. Here it is worth noting that amongst those who transmitted *hadiths* from Salim was the altogether more famous Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 778), who was lucky enough to survive the Revolution, spending the rest of his life evading Abbasid capture. Others, such as al-Awza'i (d. 774) bought himself some peace of mind by confronting 'Abdullah b. 'Ali and al-Mansur, the former at Hama, apparently shortly after Nahr Abi Futrus. There, in the presence of soldiers bearing *kafir kubat* ('infidel-bashing' clubs or maces; see below), he was pointedly asked whether Umayyad blood was licit. He equivocated.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. *Balis and Na'ura* (mid- to late 132?/early to mid-750?)

As we just saw, Muhammad b. Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik raised a rebellion in Harran, presumably because some kinsmen and supporters had survived the Abbasid takeover of the city. What is clearer is that by the time of the Revolution, the northern Syrian towns of Balis and Na'ura, which lay on the al-Raqqa-Halab-Qinnasrin road, were both closely associated with Maslama himself, who had used the former as a base for his campaigns against the Byzantines, as well as with his kinsmen, who had settled there. Descendants, who had inherited the lands, carried on living there after his death in 738. A century later, Mus'ab al-Zubayri (d. 850) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) tell us that Maslama's progeny were very numerous (al-Baladhuri 1866: 150f.; Ibn Qutayba 1960: 358; al-Zubayri 1982: 165), but their forefathers must have regrouped outside of Balis and al-Na'ura because its Umayyad history seems to end in 132. For we read that a group of some 150 soldiers was dispatched by 'Abdullah b. 'Ali to the two towns; the unidentified commander occupied Maslama's *qasr*, which is presumably the same *qasr* that Yaqut described as well suited for defence (stone-built and spring-fed); there was resistance and a battle ensued, which the Abbasids naturally won; it is not clear how many were killed or how. (The account apparently survives because it helps to explain the rebellion led by Abu al-Ward, a commander of Marwan's who had earlier

reached terms with the Abbasids.) Be this as it may, one wonders if the Abbasids had dispatched the force to extirpate Maslama's kin, much as they no doubt also wished to take possession of his property, which al-Saffah would grant to his uncle, Muhammad b. Sulayman.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. *Damascus (Ramadan 132/April–May 750)*

Moscatti deduced that Damascus fell before the massacre of Nahr Abi Futrus, and he must be correct: several sources confirm that sequence, and al-Ya'qubi and Ibn al-Athir date the conquest of Damascus to Ramadan, while virtually all the sources date Nahr Abi Futrus to Dhu al-Qa'da.<sup>19</sup> Marwan II had made Harran his capital, but it is unthinkable that the Abbasids would have failed to move on Damascus – symbolic heart and ritual centre of the Syrian kingdom (Marwan himself had received the oath of allegiance there), not to mention the residence of (probably) hundreds of Umayyads – at the earliest possible moment.

In any event, we read that Marwan left command of the city's defence in the hands of al-Walid b. Mu'awiya b. Marwan, his son-in-law ('Abd al-Jabbar b. Yazid b. 'Abd al-Malik is also sometimes mentioned alongside him), commanding a force that one account puts at 50,000 men. The Abbasids lay siege, and although how the defences were breached is told in several manifestly legendary ways, it is clear that the city was taken by force, and that a period of fierce fighting took place within the city, not only between Abbasid and Umayyad forces, but perhaps also between different factions of Umayyad forces, Mudaris against Yamanis. Theophylus describes the conquest of the city in some detail, including al-Walid's defence, the fighting of the city-folk on his behalf, and the betrayal of the city to the Abbasids. According to him,

'Abdullah b. 'Ali's men entered [the city], and put [people to] the sword: they spent three hours lopping heads in the markets, streets and houses, and they seized their money. When 'Abdullah performed the afternoon prayer, he ordered the killing to stop. Al-Walid was amongst those killed, and on that day a great number of Christians and Jews were killed.<sup>20</sup>

The order for the end of the killing may correspond to what al-Ya'qubi presents as the announcement of the second of two *amans*: the first, which came only after lots of killing had taken place, offered sanctuary only to those who gathered in the residence of Yahya b. Bahr, the man who is said to have negotiated the city's *aman*; the second seems to have been a general clemency that pointedly excluded five Umayyads.<sup>21</sup> What was the scale of the killing? 'Abdullah b. 'Ali killed a great many people in Damascus', al-Mas'udi says tersely; al-Dinawari says much the same, adding that eighty Marwanids were

killed; according to al-Maqrizi, 'Abdullah b. 'Ali 'slaughtered the people of Damascus and destroyed their city walls', and we read elsewhere that the victims numbered in the thousands.<sup>22</sup> Once captured, the Umayyad commanders were sent to Abu al-'Abbas for execution and crucifixion. Buried Umayyad caliphs were disinterred.

In what seems to have been a separate event, Sulayman b. Yazid b. 'Abd al-Malik is said to have been killed in the nearby town of Balqa', which is also connected to the incarceration of Ibrahim, the Imam. His head was then sent to 'Abdullah b. 'Ali, at this point perhaps in or near Damascus.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. *Nahr Abi Futrus (mid-Dhu al-Qa'da 132/late June 750)*

Here we reach the most infamous episode in the systematic killing of the Umayyads of Syria (some seventy or eighty are said to have died), and this in circumstances that in many respects are patently legendary (*aman* and invitation are followed by brutal betrayal and killing; the meal is served over still-expiring bodies). If the dates in our sources are to be believed, five months separate Marwan II's catastrophic defeat on the Zab and the massacre of Nahr Abi Futrus, the Arabic name given to the Antipatris of Herod, which lay about five kilometres north of present-day Jaffa. One is entitled to infer that the settlement was indeed swollen with Umayyads – not only those who had survived and fled the Battle of the Zab, but also those who had abandoned Harran, Mosul, Damascus and other residences in the Jazira and Syria. If further details are accepted as authentic, we happen upon the clearest indication of the symbolic use of the 'infidel-bashers', the (usually wooden) clubs wielded by the Revolutionaries. Thus we read that all the Umayyads were bashed to death, with the notable exception of al-Ghamr b. Yazid who, sharing *mahabba* with 'Abdullah b. 'Ali, was granted the dignity of dying by the sword instead.<sup>24</sup> According to Ibn Hazm, no fewer than eighteen sons of Rawh b. al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik died here (1948: 81f.).

According to Theophilus of Edessa, many Christians did too: 'In this year the new masters slew the greater part of the Christians, whom they treacherously arrested at Antipatris in Palestine, because of their being related to the previous rulers'. So writes Theophanes (d. 818; 1997: 590, AM 6243), from whose work Wellhausen knew it, but which he rejected as 'an error or interpolation'; Moscati was unhappy with the passage too, and although he allowed that Kalbis might have been killed, he also seems to have thought that it was mistaken (Wellhausen 1902: 345, n. 3, 1927: 554, n. 1; Moscati 1950: 95). There is no question of an interpolation in Theophanes, however, since Theophilus' view resurfaces in the Syriac *Chronicle of 1234* and

Michael the Syrian, as well as in Agapius of Manbij. The *Chronicle of 1234* has the most detailed coverage: it knows the place, the number of victims (seventy), and the dispatch of Marwan II's head to Abu al-'Abbas.<sup>25</sup> Why should it surprise that non-Muslims, still vastly in the numerical majority in Syria and Palestine in this period, were caught up in the violence, especially as we know that Umayyad caliphs bore sons with Christian mothers?<sup>26</sup> It is not hard to imagine that the sad band of refugees included Christians, perhaps both those already attached to the Umayyad court and locals who had been induced to do so. As we have already seen, Christians and Jews seem to have been killed already in Damascus. Besides, the Islamic sources do not insist that the victims were exclusively Umayyad.<sup>27</sup>

5. Wasit (late Dhu al-Qa'da 132/July or early August 750)

The events in Wasit – an eleven-month siege by Abbasid forces, which probably ended in Dhu al-Qa'da of 132 with Yazid b. Hubayra's agreement to an *aman* guaranteed by the caliph himself – have been carefully analysed by Elad.<sup>28</sup> Suffice it to say here, this *aman*, like so many others of the period, was broken by those who granted it; once again we have signs of confusion about ultimate responsibility, here for issuing the order for Ibn Hubayra's death. In any event, what resulted was a mass execution, whose faint outlines can be drawn from the Islamic (al-Tabari 1879–1901: iii, 68ff.; al-Ya'qubi 1883: ii, 424; al-Azdi 1967: 140; Khalifa 1977: 399ff.; al-Baladhuri 1996: iii, 162ff.) and Christian sources, the latter sometimes showing an impressive command of the protracted events.<sup>29</sup> How many died is hard to know. Many of Ibn Hubayra's men had deserted him during the course of the long siege, but what had been a force that numbered in the thousands (al-Ya'qubi estimates 20,000) remained fairly large, no doubt well over a hundred, and perhaps as many as 500, if one follows Khalifa. Family members (including at least one, and perhaps two, sons, Dawud and Muthanna), as well as many clients and soldiers, apparently all disarmed and bound, were put to the sword in the courtyard of Ibn Hubayra's fortified compound. Two non-combatants are specifically mentioned: one, an unidentified cupper who had been called (no doubt to treat a wound), and the second a scribe, 'Amr b. Ayyub, who 'made to escape, but was killed, some saying that they pulled him off his horse by his legs and then killed him'.<sup>30</sup> Al-Mada'ini uses the stereotypical number of forty to describe those killed, but the number could have been significantly higher, especially since the number of 'leaders' amongst those killed is sometimes put at fifty.<sup>31</sup> Given that mention is made of a second *aman* that was issued after the executions, as well as of follow-up killings, we may have to do with a fairly complicated set of events.

6. *The Hijaz (late 132 and Muharram, Safar or Rabi' I 133/late May to mid-October 750)*

Dawud b. 'Ali, 'Abdullah's brother, was appointed governor in Arabia (Mecca, Medina, al-Ta'if and Yemen) by Abu Ja'far at the beginning of year 133, but served only briefly because he died at the beginning of Rabi' I. According to Waki', he appointed no judges. This may have been because he was otherwise engaged during his short tenure: Dawud is said to have killed many Umayyads, al-Mas'udi going as far as to say that as many died there as died at Nahr Abi Futrus (al-Mas'udi 1894: 329; Waki' 1947: i, 200; al-Isfahani 1961: iv, 330; Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: v, 448; al-Baladhuri 1996: iii, 96). There is no mention of the events in the Christian tradition – nor should we expect there to be, since the events took place in Arabia instead of Syria, Northern Mesopotamia or Palestine. Besides, what happened here is altogether more poorly reported in the Islamic historical tradition than what happened in Syria and Iraq.

What we lack in non-Islamic corroboration, however, we seem to have in the biographical tradition. Several Umayyad descendants of 'Amr b. Sa'id (al-Ashdaq, 'Abd al-Malik's rival for the caliphate, who was killed by 'Abd al-Malik himself) were executed, and these included the traditionist 'Imran b. Musa b. 'Amr.<sup>32</sup> An uncle of 'Imran's, the traditionist and ascetic Isma'il b. 'Amr, who lived a few miles to the east of Medina, 'never became involved in Umayyad rule' (*lam yatalabbas bi-shay' min sultan bani Umayya*), which is why he 'was not targeted' (*lam yuta'arrad*) and so had no need to go into hiding (Ibn Hazm 1948: 81; al-Zubayri 1982: 182; al-Mizzi 1992: iii, 158ff. (470)). By contrast, his nephews, Isma'il b. Umayya b. 'Amr, 'the jurist of the people of Mecca', and Ayyub b. Musa b. 'Amr were imprisoned by Dawud b. 'Ali, the former (perhaps), but certainly the latter, dying while in captivity.<sup>33</sup> Another who was killed was 'Abdullah b. 'Anbasa b. Sa'id b. al-'As.<sup>34</sup> Khalifa dates these executions to 132, but at least some fit neatly into the first two months of 133 since at least some of the killing is said to have started with the arrival of news of the death of Marwan II, which took place late in Dhu al-Hijja of 132; Dawud's appointment seems to have come at or about the new year. Where did the killings take place? Sometimes Batn Marr, an oasis settlement of some size that lay sixteen or so *mils* from Mecca, is mentioned; so too are al-Ta'if and al-Ruwaytha, which lay a night away from Mecca, apparently on the road to Medina.

7. *Egypt and Palestine (late Dhu al-Hijja 132 through early 133/late July to late 750)*

According to the Arabic sources, Salih b. Ali, 'Amir b. Isma'il, who narrates at least one account of the event itself, and Abu 'Awn, a client

of the Azd, led the forces that pursued Marwan II into Egypt; there are ample signs of controversy and confusion about who deserves credit, such as whether it was Abu Ja'far or Muhammad b. 'Ali who ordered the pursuit. The Christian sources are a particularly mixed bag here.<sup>35</sup> The caliph was apparently travelling with a large party of daughters, women-folk and many Umayyad men, including two sons and heirs-apparent, 'Abdullah and 'Ubayd Allah, the names varying from one account to the next. According to the accounts, Marwan II, along with several other Umayyads, was killed in Busir al-Ushmunayn at the end of Dhu al-Hijja 132/late July or early August 750; the identity of the Khurasani who landed the fatal blow is the predictable source of contradiction. Be this as it may, we seem to have a battle followed by a massacre (al-Tabari 1879-1901: iii, 46; al-Mas'udi 1894, 329f., 1979: iv, 87f.; al-Kindi 1912: 96f.; al-Isfahani 1961: iv, 343; Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: v, 427f.; Ibn Taghribirdi 1972: i, 316f.; al-Baladhuri 1996: vii, 654f.). According to al-Kindi, Salih returned to Fustat early the next month, and sent the slain caliph's head to Iraq. Others (kinsmen, clients, retainers and even some Khurasani partisans of the Umayyads) survived Busir, and this explains why the killing did not end there, but continued in the Sa'id, where more were tracked down and killed; still others fled.

The following month, Muharram of 133 (August-September 750), Salih was made governor of Egypt, and he is said to have flogged several men who had served as Umayyad governors or functionaries; they had already been imprisoned and sent to Fustat. These included at least three Lakhmis (descendants of Musa b. Nusayr, who is sometimes said to be a client of the Umayyads), a Kindi/Tujibi (Hassan b. 'Atahiya) and a Khath'ami ('Uthman b. Abi Nis'a), who was executed. 'Shall I let you live?', Salih mocked Hassan b. 'Atahiyya, as he flogged him, to which he responded, 'after this, there's no good in carrying on'; Salih did the flogging, but apparently in at least this case he has someone do the actual killing (Ibn 'Asakir 1996: xii, 436f. (1266)). At perhaps about the same time, several descendants of 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Marwan, who had governed Egypt for some twenty years, were sent from Egypt to the village of Qalansuwa, which lay near al-Ramla in Palestine. Amongst them were at least five from the line of Abu Bakr b. 'Abd al-'Aziz and six from the line of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. Along with other Umayyads, they were all executed, presumably including 'Abd al-Wahid b. Sulayman b. 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>36</sup>

#### 8. Basra (late 132?/mid-750?)

Very little can be said about events in Basra beyond the claim that Sulayman b. 'Ali, the governor of the city until his removal at some



point in 133, executed a number of Umayyads. The account conflicts directly with claims that because of his forbearance, he left the Umayyads of Basra alone; 'in no land did they secure the safety that they had in Basra' (al-Isfahani 1961: iv, 347; Ibn al-Athir 1965-6: v, 431; cf. al-Baladhuri 1996: iii, 100).

9. *Mosul (133/August 750-July 751)*

Al-Tabari ignored it, but a fairly wide range of sources, both Islamic and Christian, are familiar with the dreadful massacre of Mosulis in 133, including Theophilus and the anonymous monk-chronicler from Zuqnin; the former is familiar with many of its gruesome details.<sup>37</sup> Al-Azdi (d. c. 945), the mid-tenth-century historian of the city, preserves several eye-witness accounts that describe the events – three or four days of killing, looting and raping, it seems – in a quite extraordinary series of *akhbar*, all transmitted by local sources. We can confidently say far more about what happened here than we can anywhere else.

That we have narratives that are presented as eye-witness testimony does not mean, of course, that we have access to unmediated perception, much less the unvarnished truth or a full understanding of the causes of the violence. For one thing, many accounts were apparently chosen not to explain the massacre, but to illustrate the scale of the killing, especially of non-combatants. For another, here, as elsewhere, we have several *topoi*, some of which appear in Islamic and Christian accounts alike: the *aman* that is granted and then brutally betrayed; the razing of walls; the reckoning of '80' victims (here men, women and children); even the striking marriage of eating and killing, in this case illustrated not by the Abbasids' banqueting on covered corpses, but by the delivery of severed heads on covered serving trays. As the *Chronicle of 1234*, drawing on Theophilus of Edessa, puts it:

He [Ibn Fadl, an error for Muhammad b. Sul] went up to them [the city's *rishane*, 'notables] one after the other, and cut them down like sheep. He put their heads on platters, covered them with cloths and sent them to Yahya [b. Muhammad] . . . with swords drawn, they went out and mercilessly killed wives, virgins, young men and infants.

Or, as Agapius summarises him crisply, 'He had them slaughtered together, and he killed their children and women'.<sup>38</sup> It appears that authentic history mixes with legend.

Some things are clear enough. One is that the killing was in two stages, which the sources generally present as sequential and, in some instances, causative. First presumably came the execution of city worthies, which was ordered by Yahya b. Muhammad and/or Muhammad

b. Sul; the former was a brother of the caliph, and the latter a Khath'ami tribesman who had joined the Abbasid cause, whose rule the Mosulis apparently resisted. The second was the indiscriminate slaughter of thousands of its inhabitants – men, women and children, Arabs, slaves and clients. There is no sign that the executions, which, in al-Azdi's view led to the resistance that ultimately triggered the slaughter, were part of any programmatic attempt to kill Umayyads. It is true that there had been an Umayyad presence of some size in the city, which was most potently symbolised by the ostentatious palace of an Umayyad governor, al-Hurr b. Yusuf; but to judge from their absence in the early Abbasid period, it appears that members of the family itself had apparently fled before the massacres of 133, if not earlier, such as in 128/745–6, when Mosulis first invited the Kharijite al-Dahhak b. Qays to rule the city, and then embraced his successor, Shayban b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. To a man, those executed are all said to have been Mosulis.

Several of these victims are identified by name. They include men who, like Salim in Harran, apparently belonged to the town's religious establishment, and who were thus unequipped, either temperamentally or literally, to put up a fight; one example is an ascetic ('*abid*) curiously named Ma'ruf b. Abi Ma'ruf, who was executed in one of the city's palaces. It is tempting to infer that they and other non-combatants were too close to the Umayyads, an inference that makes some sense of the view, preserved by al-Azdi, that the Mosulis were 'inclined' towards the Umayyads, a fact otherwise belied by their embrace of Kharijite rebels during the Third Civil War. How much of the mass killing that apparently followed the executions was indiscriminate is harder to tell; Theophilus (as preserved by the *Chronicle of 1234*) appears especially keen to place blame at the door of Yahya b. Muhammad, and in so doing may over-simplify. The extraordinarily well-placed al-Azdi preserves account after account that illustrate (and in some instances, assume) a different set of circumstances – several days of widespread killing, looting and raping by soldiers who are running amok. So ill-disciplined were at least some of the men, we read, that 4,000 *zanj* soldiers were executed. In these respects, the accounts probably preserve some sense of what had happened in Damascus the previous year, when Abbasid troops rampaged, killing indiscriminately and forcing people to try to find shelter in their homes.

#### 10. Hira/Kufa (133)

Adducing several Islamic sources, Moscati is at pains to demonstrate that a massacre of Umayyads took place at the hands of Abu al-'Abbas and, following al-Isfahani, that it took place in al-Hira (1950: 97, 100:

Ibn Qutayba [pseudo] 1967: i, 123). The accounts of the caliph's killing describe a large number of Umayyad victims, of whom Sulayman b. Hisham was one; they also have it that only 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, having secured an *aman*, survived the carnage. There is no reason to doubt that a massacre did take place, but Moscati's job would have been considerably lightened had he consulted a contemporary Syriac source, which is commonly called the *Zuqnin Chronicle*, after the presumed place of composition, the author's home monastery near Amid (Amida). Writing no later than 775, our monk usually has little to say about events outside of Syria, but he reports the following from northern and southern Iraq:

The year one thousand and sixty-three: the Persians returned to the country with many forces. They fought and vanquished all those who resisted them in war. They carried out a great massacre amongst the Arabs (*tayyaye*) of Mosul and 'Aqula [Kufa], killing the great as well as the small.<sup>39</sup>

Since our monk-chronicler pairs Kufa with Mosul, where we know there occurred a massacre of the civilian population in 133, it may be reasonable to think something similar happened here, though whether 'here' was Kufa or al-Hira forces a choice between al-Isfahani's source and the *Zuqnin Chronicle*. There is no obvious way of narrowing down the date (the Seleucid calendar year of 1063 began on about 1 October 751 or the middle of Jumada I, 133) or the place, though my presumption would be that al-Hira is more likely. The signs of the killing of non-combatants – 'slaying the great as well as the small' – can also be found piecemeal in the Islamic tradition, as we have repeatedly seen.

## Conclusions

What has this brief catalogue of ugliness taught us? It may be useful to posit first- and second-order conclusions. The first concerns the general historicity of the events; the second concerns the sense that we can make of them, and necessarily turns on details of a more controversial nature.

(1) Lassner was curiously hesitant in 1980 to accept one of Moscati's main conclusions – that there was a series of massacres, rather than a single, murderous paroxysm at Nahr Abi Futrus – but Moscati had made a strong case in 1950, which Elad justifiably accepted in 1995 (Lassner 1980: 34; Elad 1995: 92ff.). The case can now be said to be overwhelming, and to doubt that a series of executions and massacres took place in 132 and 133 would be perverse. For even the most robust historiographic skepticism cannot sustain the weight and spread of the evidence: the killing of too many people by too many Abbasids (or those

allied with them) in too many places is described by too many independent sources; in addition to Abu al-‘Abbas himself, several Abbasid commander-governors (Abu Ja‘far, ‘Abdullah b. ‘Ali, Sulayman b. ‘Ali, Dawud b. ‘Ali and Salih b. ‘Ali) appear in our sources, either overseeing or directly ordering executions that took place in Iraq, Northern Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Arabia. Sometimes, as in the case of Mosul where Yahya b. Muhammad and Muhammad b. Sul are implicated, we have other figures entirely.

What was the shape of this violence? At one extreme we can put targeted killings – especially of the Umayyads in general and the Marwanids in particular, sometimes from the ruling line that descended from ‘Abd al-Malik, but often not. Non-Umayyads who were closely associated with the *ancien régime*, including, of course, the Mudaris in Wasit, were also targeted. Here we have cases of individual and mass executions, the former exemplified in Harran and perhaps several spots in Syria, the latter exemplified in Nahr Abi Futrus and Arabia. Combatants and non-combatants alike were executed. At the other extreme is the indiscriminate killing that is described most clearly in Mosul, where it was associated with (and perhaps triggered by) the discovery of mass executions, a pattern that may lie behind our fragmentary account of Kufa/Hira. Unlike the massacres of Mosul, it seems likely that the massacres in Damascus flowed more or less directly from the violence of its conquest. There are indications of *amans*, but in both Mosul and Damascus the violence seems to have been as unrestrained as it was unorganised.

(2) According to al-Mas‘udi (and others), it was upon the death of Marwan II, which took place late in Dhu al-Hijja of 132 – that is, a little over a month after the massacre of Nahr Abi Futrus – that the Umayyads dispersed with their families, clients and retinues in tow (al-Mas‘udi 1894: 329f.). This is at best an oversimplification: it strikes me as far more likely that for many the flight would have begun with Marwan II’s catastrophic defeat on the Zab, which took place in Jumada II, if not earlier. For the news reaching the Jazira and Syria from the east would have told not only of a string of bloody defeats (most infamously at Marv, Jurjan, Isfahan and Shahrzur), but also of the targeting of Arabic-speakers. ‘When you alight upon them [the enemy], make a massacre of the killing’, Abu Muslim wrote to Qahtaba in 130.<sup>40</sup> Marwan’s scribe, ‘Abd al-Hamid, certainly recognised the danger posed to the Umayyads by *al-fi’a al-‘ajamiyya*; and elsewhere we read of a confidant of Sulayman b. Hisham’s who never left his side because the Hashimiyya (here called *musawwida*) ‘had appeared in Khurasan and the East, approached from Iraq and had come close to Iraq. Malicious talk was intensifying, and the enemy was saying what he wished about the Umayyads and their clients’.<sup>41</sup> The devastating

Umayyad defeats, which culminated in the Abbasid takeover of Kufa about a month or two before the Battle of the Zab, triggered a succession of blood-curdling threats that were made by the likes of Qahtaba and Abu Muslim himself – promises to wreak vengeance and annihilate the Umayyads. No doubt news of these also travelled quickly up the Tigris.

If there had been a doubt of the easterners' resolve or blood lust, it was removed on the Zab. As the Khurasanis shouted when they crashed into Marwan's men, 'For Muhammad, for the Redeemer, and to avenge the Imam, Ibrahim!' (*ya Muhammad ya Mansur ya la-tharat Ibrahim, al-Imam*); or 'To avenge Ibrahim, the Imam, for Muhammad, for the Redeemer, to avenge Husayn and Zayd and Yahya, for the Redeemer, kill!' (al-Azdi 1967: 130; al-Baladhuri 1996: vii, 651). 'Take revenge on the Banu Umayya', Abu Ja'far is said to have instructed his uncle, 'Abdullah b. 'Ali, who was now lording over a newly conquered Damascus, where what appears to have been indiscriminate killing was already well underway; on this occasion, and in many other accounts, 'Abdullah does not fail to remind the Umayyads of *their* murder of al-Husayn (al-Ya'qubi 1883: ii, 427). Ibn Qutayba does one better: here al-Mansur, having lured some eighty Umayyads with false promises of gifts, has a retainer pose a series of questions that are as menacing as they are rhetorical:

When they had sat down, a messenger of al-Mansur's left [the seated group] and shouted at the top of his voice: 'So where's Hamza b. 'Abd al-Muttalib? Let *him* enter!' The group realized that they were doomed. Then another left and said: 'So where's al-Hasan b. 'Ali? Let *him* enter!' Then a third left and said: 'So where's Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn?' Then a fourth, who said: 'So where's Yahya b. Zayd?' . . . (Ibn Qutayba 1925: i, 207).

In the face of an enemy as fierce as this, it is probably little wonder that Marwan's army disintegrated and was routed on the Zab. For what they are worth, reports describe Marwan II's army (100,000, 120,000 and 150,000 men are mentioned) as huge by Umayyad standards;<sup>42</sup> but whatever caused the premature severing of a pontoon bridge that stranded much of it on the southern side of the river, the panic that ensued was lethal: it is said that more men drowned than were struck down. According to a source of al-Azdi's, al-Walid's son, Ibrahim, drowned, a fact that led 'Abdullah b. 'Ali to order that divers recover his body in the river, and there they found many kinsmen of his. Al-Baladhuri reports that no fewer than sixteen Marwanids died by drowning, but takes the view that rather than dying here, Ibrahim was killed by 'Abdullah b. 'Ali; according to al-Mas'udi, the number of drowned Umayyads was actually 300, and he is not sure what to do with Ibrahim

either.<sup>43</sup> The accounts leave what happened next unsaid, but there can be no doubt that the purpose of this recovery was not proper burial, but the same fate that awaited the corpses of those Umayyads who would later be disinterred in several sites in Syria (Damascus, Dabiq, Rusafa and Qinnasrin are mentioned by name): flogging, burning and probably other forms of abuse as well, the punishment being meted out according to the state of the corpse, which naturally depended on the date of decease. According to several accounts, Hisham's corpse had the misfortune to survive nearly completely intact, and it was flogged, or beaten with a staff, and then burned; of Maslama, only his skull remained, so it was burned; it seems that too little was left of Yazid b. Mu'awiya to do anything other than burn it.<sup>44</sup> In disinterring graves and desecrating corpses, the Abbasids were not innovating – upon the accession of Marwan II, the grave of Yazid II was dug up and his body crucified – but they certainly were more thorough and theatrical about it (Ibn Qutayba 1960: 367).

The theatre points us in the direction of an accounting for the ferocious violence directed towards the Umayyads. We can begin by excluding one possibility. The Abbasids would have appreciated more clearly than we that the task of extirpating the Umayyad house in its entirety was impossible in practice: no matter how hard they tried, there was no question of actually tracking them *all* down. For by the middle of the eighth century, the Marwanids alone would have conservatively numbered in the many hundreds: al-Hakam's sons are numbered at twenty one, Marwan b. al-Hakam himself seems to have had ten, 'Abd al-Malik twelve, al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik reportedly had eleven (or fourteen or nineteen), his son al-'Abbas thirty, and the latter's brother, 'Umar b. al-Walid, some sixty – and that, of course, is just to follow one line down the generations.<sup>45</sup> To judge from the genealogies, it seems to have been that rare Marwanid who lacked ninth-century descendants. In fact, not only did many Umayyads survive, but many thrived; as Elad has put it, 'hundreds of Umayyads lived in different cities under the reign of the Abbasid caliphs, and scores of them filled important positions in the Abbasid caliphate as judges, governors, 'ulama' and *muhaddithun*'.<sup>46</sup> It follows that the goal could not have been extinction of the Umayyad house, whatever the deep hatred that was directed at it. After all, some Umayyads were granted *amans* that *were* respected, and some of these subsequently found employment in Revolutionary state service; incarceration was not a death sentence, as one of Salih b. 'Ali's captive's in Fustat had the good fortune to learn; and in the right circumstances, the right descent (such as that from 'Umar II) could deliver one from Abu Ja'far's clubs, although it did not necessarily guarantee safety.<sup>47</sup>

It almost goes without saying that there were plenty of good reasons

to kill Umayyads, if only selectively. One was to preclude counter-revolution, and another was to confiscate the prime lands that they owned and, in many cases, were held to have unjustly and greedily exploited. The former obviously goes some way towards explaining why the Marwanids were apparently targeted (or at least died in greater numbers), along with those of their retainers and administrators who were unable or unwilling to pull the strings necessary to arrange a durable *aman*. (Here it may be noted that the disinterring seems to have been limited to dead caliphs.) They may have been failures, but Umayyad counter-revolutions were certainly attempted, and one Marwanid who fled Syria for the west, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Mu‘awiya b. Hisham, obviously had some success reconstituting Umayyad power there. The second reason – confiscating lands – should not be underestimated: we saw how the extended family of Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik lost their properties in Syria. ‘Dawud b. ‘Ali governed Mecca and Medina for Abu al-‘Abbas and distributed land-grants’, al-Baladhuri reports: governing meant not only appropriating lands for one’s own sake, but also distributing favours to favourites, and there was a finite supply of such favours (1996: iii, 95). On these readings, the disinterring of Umayyad corpses and dislocation of Umayyad from their lands and strongholds could be read as an attempt to remove potential centres of inspiration and resistance. I see no reason to doubt that such considerations must have played a role in the killing.

Nor do I doubt that they are insufficient to explain the spectacular scale or showy nature of the killing. Here it might be pointed out that even ascetically inclined Marwanids were executed, and that confiscation hardly required murder.<sup>48</sup> The killings cannot be explained within a crude economy of pragmatism – in terms of perceived threat or potential spoils. If any one thing was intended, it probably was the symbolic decapitation of the tyrannical Umayyad state, which was usually effected through the literal smashing of their skulls by club-wielding avengers; disinterred corpses that could bear thrashing and beating were pressed into service for the gruesome spectacle because the point, at least in part, was the spectacle. The killing was spectacular, and the results were made public – that is, paraded around – there being a virtually constant circulation of disembodied heads, many prominently exhibited. The head of the caliph himself was spared the club, and sent from Egypt to Kufa and exhibited there, ‘and so the hope of the partisans of the B. Umayya was extinguished’ (al-Azdi 1967: 138; Ibn A‘tham 1975: viii, 193; Khalifa 1977: 404). (In the interim, a cat had *literally* got the caliph’s tongue, we read in several accounts.)<sup>49</sup> According to the *Akhbar majmu‘a*, the caliph ordered the amputation of Aban b. Mu‘awiya’s arms and legs, and had him paraded around Syria until he expired, accompanied all the while by a crier who called out ‘This is

Aban b. Mu'awiya, the heroic horseman (*faris*) of the Umayyads" (1867: 46). One wonders how long the spectacle could have lasted. If one is inclined to see an organised campaign in the series of killings – and, given the spread of the evidence, surely this is a reasonable assumption – one can find caliphal sanction for it in an order dispatched by the caliph from Kufa/al-Hira. Al-Mada'ini, *apud* Ibn A'tham, has Abu al-'Abbas direct Dawud b. 'Ali, now ruling the Hijaz, to kill Umayyads wherever he can find them, as he has 'Abdullah b. 'Ali in Syria do the same. An account preserved by al-Baladhuri (amongst others) shows such a policy in action: 'Abdullah b. 'Ali enters Damascus, arrests Mu'awiya b. Marwan b. 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-Jabbar b. Yazid b. 'Abd al-Malik, and sends them on to the caliph, who crucifies them (1996: vii, 664).

Still, it may be that 'policy' is too strong a word and we need not envision an organised campaign as such. Syria and Iraq had been brutalised during the Third Civil War – sieges laid, walls razed, Umayyads murdered (including minors) and Yamanis massacred: the Islamic and Christian sources alike make it abundantly clear that Marwan II's rise to power was especially brutal, and that it anticipated the Abbasid Revolution in its targeted killings and massacres. During 126 and 127, 'Abd al-'Aziz b. al-Hajjaj b. 'Abd al-Malik murders the two minor sons al-Walid b. Yazid, 'Uthman and al-Hakam, in addition to al-Walid himself; when Marwan II takes power, 'Abd al-'Aziz is then set upon by the Damascene supporters of al-Walid, brutally slain, and his head is exhibited in the mosque.<sup>50</sup> Revolutions always generate violence, and the Abbasid Revolution thus generated it in provinces where blood was already flowing freely. During the birth-pangs of the Abbasid state, we are probably well served by thinking not in terms of a brutally efficient project directed by Kufa, but rather a highly charged, millenarian-infused atmosphere, where Umayyad blood was one currency for Abbasid status. It was not just a matter of taking bloody revenge for revenge's sake. What better way for an uncle or nephew to gain Revolutionary credibility than to have ordered and organised the spectacle of their brutal demise?

## Notes

1. See al-Ṭabarī 1879–1901: iii, 74; al-Ya'qūbī 1883: ii, 425; Narshakhī 1972: 86ff., which is translated by Frye as Narshakhī 1954: 62f.
2. See al-Azdī 1967: 152, and, for a variant, Ibn 'Asākir 1996: lxiv, 367; cf. Q. 20: 72; for the circumstances in which the verses appear, see Robinson 2000: 127ff. and the discussion that follows below.
3. See, Bligh-Abramski 1988; Elad 1995.
4. O'Kane 1991: 5. The bibliography is predictably large.
5. Al-Maqrīzī 1988: 98f., which is translated by Bosworth as al-Maqrīzī 1981:



- 91f.; on the sources for al-Maqrīzī on this event, see Robinson 2000: 141, n. 79.
6. For discussions, see Wellhausen 1902: 343ff.; 1927: 551ff.; Moscati 1950; Lassner 1980: 32ff., 'Abbās 1992: 10ff.
  7. Cf. Wellhausen 1902: 343, 1927: 551; Moscati 1950: 92; for the accounts, compare Khalīfa 1977: 403f.; al-Ya'qūbī 1883: i, 425f.; al-Ṭabarī 1879–1901: iii, 45f. This is not the only occasion where al-Ṭabarī is economical with unpleasant truths; see also Elad 1986: 74.
  8. The literature is large, but see Noth and Conrad 1994; Donner 1998; Robinson 2003, 2004.
  9. For Muṣ'ab, see al-Ṭabarī 1879–1901: iii, 46f.; al-Jahshiyārī 1938: 7; al-Azdī 1967: 126f.; Ibn 'Asākir 1996: lviii, 210 (7446); Robinson 2000: 156ff.; on 'Abd al-Hamīd, see below.
  10. On Theophilus, see Conrad 1990; Hoyland 1997: 401ff.
  11. On 'Abd al-Hamīd's execution, see al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 184 (where his Umayyad clientage is disputed), and, much more thoroughly, 'Abbās 1988: 45.
  12. On 'Abda, see Ibn 'Asākir 1981, *Tarājim al-nisā'*: 224ff.; cf. the *Akhbār majmū'a* 1867: 47 (where she is misidentified as Hishām's daughter), and al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 229.
  13. On 'Umar b. Abī Salama's, see al-Azdī 1967: 140; Khalīfa 1977: 410; al-Sakhāwī 1980: iii, 334; al-Mizzī 1992: xxi, 375ff. (4247); Ibn 'Asākir 1996: xlv, 70ff. (5220).
  14. See Agapius 1912: 526; *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937: 328ff./256ff. (very detailed); Michael the Syrian 1924: xi, xxii (this and subsequent references to Michael will follow the convention of 'livre', 'chapi-tre'; detailed and especially polemically inclined – not merely against Islam, but also other Christians).
  15. Cf. al-Mas'ūdī 1979: iv, 86, who not only notes the destruction of his palace, but also its reputed cost (ten million dirhams). Elsewhere we read that when Marwān II's women returned to Harrān after his death, they wept upon seeing [what remained] of his dwellings; see Ibn al-Athīr 1965–6: v, 428.
  16. See especially the *Zuqnin Chronicle* in Chabot 1933; Harrak 1999: 207/190.
  17. Thus Ibn al-Athīr 1965–6: v, 425; al-Azdī 1967: 134, 139; see also Khalīfa 1977: 206, 405; al-Mizzī 1992: x, 164ff. (2156); on Sufyān and al-Awzā'ī, see Judd 2002.
  18. Yāqūt 1873: i, 478, iv, 732; al-Ṭabarī 1879–1901: iii, 52; Ibn al-Athīr 1965–6: v, 433; al-Azdī 1967: 134 has him issue the order while still in Mosul; see also Cobb 2001: 43ff. Cf also al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 190.
  19. See, for example, al-Azdī 1967: 137f., 144 (which has 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī giving credit to the Muḍarīs for delivering Damascus into their hands); al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 116, vii, 653 (which has echoes of the resistance in Damascus).

20. Agapius 1912: 527; see also the *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937: 331/258 and Michael the Syrian 1924: xi, xxii.
21. Namely, al-Walīd b. Mu'āwiya, Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, Abān b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad and Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā'; see al-Ya'qūbī 1883: ii, 426f. Cf. Cook 2002: 351 (a massacre prophesied in Damascus, which is perpetrated by those carrying black banners, chanting 'kill, kill'.)
22. Al-Mas'ūdī 1979: iv, 86; al-Dīnawarī 1888: i, 364, where Abū 'Awn, rather than 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī, is given to lead the Revolutionary forces, but there are several signs of confusion in this part of the text; for a body count of 4,000, see Ibn 'Asākir 1996: xl, 415; see also al-Maqrīzī 1988: 98f., 1981: 91f. The colourful narrative of Severus 1910: 158, appears to capture an echo.
23. See, for example, al-Azdī 1967: 107; al-Mas'ūdī 1979: iv, 87.
24. On the location, see *EP*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. 'Nahr Abi Fuṭrus' (Sharon); for al-Ghamr, see al-Azdī 1967: 135; for many more details, Moscati 1950. Cf. the case of 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik, who was similarly singled out for beheading, at least according to the *Akhbār majmū'a* 1867: 46 – apparently by Ṣāliḥ b. 'Alī; his residence was in Damascus, and he had served as governor of Mecca and Medina; see Ibn 'Asākir 1996: xxxvii, 238ff. On the 'infidel-bashers', see Elad 1995: 288f.; Crone 2000. As we shall see below, even corpses could be bashed symbolically.
25. See the *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937: 333/260; Agapius 1912: 529 suffers from a dittography and so reads Ṣāliḥ.
26. Examples are al-'Abbās b. al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik and Sa'īd b. Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik; see Ibn Qutayba 1960: 359, 365.
27. See, for example, al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 116 (Umayyads and *ashyā'ihim*).
28. See Elad 1986; on the *amān*, cf. Marsham and Robinson 2007: 275ff.; on the events more generally, Wellhausen 1902: 343f., 1927: 550f.; Crone 1980: 107.
29. See Agapius 1912: 527f.; the *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937: 328/256, 332/259; Theophanes 1997: 588 (very briefly).
30. Thus al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 165.
31. Ibn A'tham 1975: viii, 205; al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 166. Distinguishing those killed during the siege from those executed after it ended is probably impossible.
32. Al-Azdī 1967: 141; Khalīfa 1977: 410 (with which al-Azdī was working).
33. See Ibn Hajar 1909: i, 412f. (457); al-Azdī 1967: 141; Khalīfa 1977: 410; al-Zubayrī 1982: 182; al-Mizzī 1992: iii, 45ff. (426); al-Balādhurī 1996: vii, 666. Ibn Hazm 1948: 82, has Ismā'il killed by Dāwūd, but this appears to be a mistake.
34. See al-Iṣfahānī 1961: iv, 347f.; Khalīfa 1977: 410; the parallel text in al-Azdī 1967: 141, which lists an 'Abdullāh b. 'Abdullāh b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, is a corruption of Khalīfa's account, from which it came. It is one of the edited text's many errors.
35. See Agapius 1912: 528f.; the *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937:

- 331f./258f.; on the face of it, Severus 1910: 158ff. is hopelessly confused and impregnated with legendary details.
36. See Yāqūt 1873: iv, 166f.; al-Kindī 1912: 98f.; Ibn Taghribirdī 1972: i, 301f., 316f., 323f.; on 'Abd al-Wāhid, see above, note 24.
37. The principal Islamic sources are al-Ya'qūbī 1883: ii, 428f.; al-Azdī 1967: 145ff.; al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 320; the principal Christian ones are Agapius 1912: 532; *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937: 338f./264; *Zuqnin Chronicle* in Chabot 1933: 206; Harrak 1999: 188f. For a more thorough discussion, see Robinson 2000: 127ff., to which can be added Ibn 'Asākir 1996: lxiv, 366f. (8203); on al-Azdī and his sources, see Robinson 2006. Khalīfa 1977: 411, mistakenly dates the events to 134.
38. Agapius 1912: 532; the *Chronicle of 1234* in Chabot 1920 & 1937: 338f./264; Robinson 2000: 142. For the parallel to the platters, see al-Azdī 1967: 147.
39. The ms. itself reads 'one thousand and sixty two', but apparently in order to avoid duplication with an earlier entry (p. 196) Chabot (1933: ii, 206) emends to 'sixty three', and he is followed by both Hespel (1989: 160) and Harrak (1999: 188). The text appears to be dishevelled here.
40. *Fa-akhthin fī al-qatl*; see al-Ṭabarī 1879-1901: ii, 2005.
41. For the phrase as it appears in 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's letters, see 'Abbās 1988: 289, for a discussion 39f.; for the seditious talk, see al-Mas'ūdī 1979: iv, 63.
42. And it may very well be that they are worth only the dramatic effect produced by the contrast with the much smaller Abbasid army; for the Biblical template ('one man, if God helps him, shall put to flight a thousand, and two shall terrify a host') made explicit, see Severus 1910: 152.
43. For the numbers, see al-Ṭabarī 1879-1901: iii, 45; al-Azdī 1967: 126; Ibn A'tham 1975: viii, 182; Kennedy 2001: 50f.; on the divers and deaths, see al-Azdī 1967: 131f.; al-Mas'ūdī 1979: iv, 85f.; al-Balādhurī 1996: vii, 651f. A poet elegizing the dead Umayyads pairs those killed at the Zāb with those killed at Nahr Abī Fuṭrus; see al-Azdī 1967: 141f.
44. See, for example, al-Ya'qūbī 1883: ii, 427; al-Azdī 1967: 138; al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 116f.
45. Ibn Ḥazm 1948: 81f.; Ibn Qutayba 1960: 353, 359. Note, for example, that 'Abd al-Malik's nephew, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abān b. Marwān, is said to have produced many descendants; see Ibn 'Asākir 1996: vi, 158ff. (344).
46. Ibn Qutayba 1960: 361; al-Zubayrī 1982: 167 (for the rare Marwānids who were without 'aqib); see also al-Mas'ūdī 1894: 330; Elad 1995: 93; Cobb 2001: 44. Husaynī 1990 is unavailable to me.
47. See, for example, al-Kindī 1912: 98; al-Iṣfahānī 1961: iv, 346.
48. Ibn Ḥazm 1948: 81; an illustration of Sulaymān b. 'Alī's *hilm* comes in a story about the confiscation of the lands owned by the Banī Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān; see al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 100.
49. See, for example, al-Balādhurī 1996: iii, 111, vii, 656.
50. For one version of the events, see Ibn 'Asākir 1996: xxxvi, 269ff. (4093), xl, 40f. (4647).

## Nationalist Poetry, Conflict and Meta-linguistic Discourse\*

*Yasir Suleiman*

### Nationalist Poetry: a Methodological Dilemma

Over the past three to four decades the study of the nation and nationalism has become the preserve of the historian, the political scientist and the sociologist. Witness the dominance of historical, political and sociological perspectives in the two popular Oxford readers on the topic by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith: *Nationalism* (1994) and *Ethnicity* (1996). In constructing general theories about the historical rise and course of nationalism scholars from these backgrounds have focused on the political and socio-economic processes at work in nation formation and state building. References to culture in this work acknowledge the role of language and literary production in nation formation; attention to these areas has been allied in recent years to the burgeoning interest in the social semiotics of the nation, including its symbols and rituals, sports and tourism, cuisine and dress, museums and architecture, landscape and cartography, art and music, and onomastics and commemoration. The coupling of literary production with the nation in the West has, however, been predominantly associated with prose literature, particularly the novel which, following Anderson (1991) is considered the major literary genre in nation formation. In contrast, the role of poetry in the development of the nation has been assigned to the margins of nationalism as a field of enquiry, in spite of the fact that poetry in some socio-cultural contexts has played the leading role in cultural nationalism, as in pan-Arab nationalism. In his study of the poetry of nationalism, Aberbach comments on the neglect of this genre in the study of nationalism, although he considers

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\* I would like to thank Paul Anderson for reading and commenting on this chapter.

poetry, through the influence of the Hebrew Bible in the Western and Hebrew contexts (2005), as the 'midwife to nationalism' (2003: 271), highlighting the role of the national poet in the 'moral regeneration' of his people by inspiring them with 'memories of a heroic past, real or imaginary, and with myths unique to the nation' (ibid.: 268). What, therefore, are the reasons behind the marginalisation of poetry and literary production more generally in the study of nationalism?

For a start there is the shift, initiated by Gellner and his disciples in the second half of the twentieth century, from the cultural to the political in the study of nationalism, with its emphasis on the role of socio-economic and political modernisation as the main factor in the rise and development of nations and nationalism. For these modernist scholars, national culture in all its facets is considered as a product of wider material forces in society which are ultimately rooted in the politics and economics of the emerging national states in the nineteenth century. For the anti-modernists, those who posit the roots of the nation in pre-nineteenth-century societies, cultural formations are important as part of the continuity of the nation, but they are not sufficiently invested with constitutive nationalist impulses to serve as an ideology of nation formation. As Leerson (2006: 561) notes for European nationalisms, the most studied of all national formations, modernists and anti-modernists tended to 'locate "culture" outside the nationalist ideology, as a general, external ambience which was invoked or influenced, rather than analysing cultural rhetoric as an intrinsic part of, and commitment within, the nationalist agenda'.

This is particularly true of modernism which held a dismissive attitude towards cultural nationalism. In his study of the 'Gaelic revival and the creation of the Irish nation state' (the subtitle of his book), Hutchinson sums up this dismissive attitude in four assumptions (1987: 8-9): '(1) [cultural nationalism] can be conflated with political nationalism; (2) it is primarily a linguistic movement; (3) it is a "regressive" response to modernisation; and (4) it is a transient phenomenon, destined to disappear with full modernisation'. Clearly the modernist approach to nationalism implies that cultural nationalism is respectively ancillary to nation formation, restricted in scope, fleeting in nature, and, finally, anti-modern and anti-historical. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in some cases, cultural nationalism has been held in some contempt, described as a phenomenon peddled by literary men who 'had never exercised power, and appreciated little the necessities and obligations incidental to intercourse between states' (Kedourie 1966: 70-1). Culture for the modernists is best treated as background in the study of nationalism. Leerson (2006: 562) captures this by saying that, in this paradigm, 'culture is a flavour, not a thing'. He further argues that the denial of the importance of culture in the

rise and progress of nationalism in the European context amounts to the imposition of a 'rearview mirror perspective' on the topic, of reading the present into the past in light of the economic, political and social factors that the modernists consider to have become the dominant forces in nation creation and state building. In the enterprise of the nation, culture does not surrender its role to other forces even when it is used as a proxy for debating other issues that are politically or legally 'out of bounds'. This chapter will provide evidence in support of this view.

This attitude towards cultural nationalism applies most critically to nationalist poetry which, among nationalism scholars, is considered to be 'less rational' than other phenomena of the nation because of its attention to feelings and emotions that straddle the personal and the national (Guirbernau 1996: 65). The association of poetry with the German Romantics through the poet Arndt, whose essentialising views of the nation have been linked to the rise of Nazism and its terrible consequences, has given nationalist poetry a 'bad' name. Nationalist poetry has thus been associated with xenophobia as an instrument of setting the nation against others who are regarded as its enemies. Thus, in spite of his generally positive evaluation of the role of poetry in nation building, Aberbach (2003: 255) acknowledges that 'there is . . . a dark side to some national poets, particularly in their glorification of violence and lust for revenge against oppressors'. Finally, as a phenomenon of nationalism poetry is considered as a fickle and unreliable form of knowledge and as a kind of ideological advocacy that is not consistent with the weakest understandings of 'objectivity as neutrality' in historical research (Whooley 2008: 1367). Accepting poetry as data for the study of the nation and its pedigree would, therefore, raise serious methodological issues for the historians, political scientists and sociologists. These methodological issues cannot be easily reconciled to the acceptable norms of knowledge production and validation that define these disciplines and set them apart from those fields of enquiry, such as literary and critical analysis, that deal with 'softer' forms of data.

The issue here, therefore, is one of boundary setting in the study of nationalism in disciplinary terms, of defining (1) what data count as legitimate in the study of nationalism; (2) who can speak with authority in the discourse on nationalism; and (3) from which professional background can this 'scholarly engagement with authority' be conducted. Interpreted differently, the issue is equally about, firstly, what and who can be excluded from the purview of nationalism studies on the grounds of producing interested knowledge for advocacy purposes (the national poet and nationalist poetry); and, secondly, what forms of 'second order' knowledge may be assigned to the soft margins of

nationalism studies as opposed to its core, in this case the sociology of literature to which this chapter belongs. At a deeper level, therefore, three points frame the discussion about nationalist poetry and its place in the study of nationalism: (1) the nature of evidence, which in mainstream history, politics and sociology tends to be linked to a positivist interpretation of objectivity as neutrality; (2) the belief in a reality 'out there' which the student of nationalism can capture, describe and explain 'objectively' within the professional norms of an institutionally recognised discipline that is beholden to peer review procedures of validation and legitimation; and (3) working against these two points, the counter-belief in the situatedness of knowledge, its rootedness in social and institutional power relations and the positionality of the researcher, all implying that 'depictions of "reality" and "truth" are constructed through relatively persuasive, but ultimately unstable discourses' (Sutherland 2005: 187).

As an exercise in hyphenation, nationalist literature, therefore, falls between two stools. On the one hand, it is viewed with suspicion by the students of nationalism who are liable to treat it as form of advocacy that is parasitic on the socio-political forces in nation and state building. On the other hand, the literary critic may sometimes treat this literature as a form of propaganda (which is sometimes the case; see Köroğlu 2007), a kind of pamphleteering that undermines the artistic values of serious literature which, therefore, must treat it at arm's length. Being on the outside of so many disciplines and fields of enquiry, nationalist literature thus emerges as an 'in-between' form of knowledge production which is equally shunned, or ignored, by the student of nationalism and the serious literary critic. This is particularly true of poetry because of its rarefied image and highly restrictive norms. Aberbach (2003: 256) sums up the dilemma of nationalist poetry well when he says

none of the disciplines in which nationalism is studied – politics, history, anthropology and sociology – addresses the dynamics of creativity and destruction in national poetry. The internal contradictions of national poetry are ever-present, in its psychology, its use of history and myth, its ideals and its frequent proximity to crisis and failure: How can poetry be both personal and national, internal and external, lyrical and programmatic, provincial and universalistic, liberal and fanatical, creative and destructive?

Regardless of where and how nationalist poetry fits in the study of nationalism, there is no doubt that it is an important element in nation formation and state building. Most nationalist movements have their national poet or poets who are revered by their people for instilling in them a sense of pride in their past achievements and the necessary

belief in their future destiny. Some of the poets were/are politically active, and some had paid the ultimate price for their nationalist convictions. Their poetry is often part of the school curricula and is sometimes set to music to give it wider popular appeal and mnemonic resonance. Streets are named after them and their statues are erected in public places of great visibility. Literary prizes are named after them and annual celebrations eternalise their names, for example the celebrations among Scottish communities worldwide of the memory of Robert Burns on 25 January each year. Some nationalist poets are invested with an iconic status in their national culture and acquire influence that extends beyond the nation's borders, a prime example of this being the German poet Goethe whose encounter with the work of another poet, the Persian Hafiz, shows how foreign literature can be used as a tool to create an imperially situated cultural identity for the nation (see Fennell 2005). Nationalist poets use the national language to celebrate the beauty and sacredness of the national landscape, the courage of the nation's heroes, its triumphs and victories, and, more poignantly, to remind their people of the painful memories of weakness, defeat and humiliation, for it is these memories that, with constant nurturing, remain indelibly marked in the psyche of the nation as open wounds, acting as a spur in nationalist mobilisation. In the Middle East, it would be difficult to imagine a Kurdish national movement without the active participation of poets and poetry (see Allison 2007). The same is true of Palestinian nationalism and pan-Arab nationalism (see Suleiman 2006) as well as Hebrew nationalism (Hutchinson and Aberbach 1999). Nationalist poetry can, therefore, be a useful tool in conceptualising the nation vertically as it relates to its past, imagined or real, and of bounding it horizontally as it is circumscribed in the present. It is also an effective instrument in the struggle for national liberation and independence because of its ability, through oblique expression and the use of symbolism, to circumvent official censorship and to offer an alternative arena through which the politics of nationalism can be indirectly practised. Poetry in these cases is not just a medium, an addendum or background to politics: it is politics.

In her study of Sudanese nationalism under British rule, Heather Sharkey (2003: 107) tells us how the official crackdown on political activity in Sudan 'pushed politics outside the public arena' causing the Sudanese nationalists to '[turn] to literature instead', thus making of 'literary activity the political ground par excellence' in the years between 1919 and 1925 which witnessed heightened political agitation by the Northern Sudanese elite. Sharkey (ibid.: 109) describes how the 'delivery of incendiary nationalist poetry at public events was a prominent feature' of these years and beyond. Sometimes poets would use the new communication technologies of the period to spread their



messages across the Sudan; thus, Sharkey (ibid.: 109) tells us that the 'sending [of] telegrams in verse was fairly common among Northern Sudanese poets' who served in different parts of the vast expanse of a country they increasingly imagined as their national home. The authorities took these political activities through the medium of poetry seriously and imposed different forms of punishment on the perpetrators, including job transfers, the blocking of promotions in the civil service and the imposition of hefty fines. However, nationalist poetry in Sudan did not always express itself in avowedly anti-colonialist terms. It was also wielded as an instrument in advocating social progress in education and health practices as well as in celebrating modern developments, for example paved roads, railway and air travel, radio broadcasting, dam construction, health clinics and the delivery of running water to parts of Khartoum, the capital city (Sharkey 2006).

Sharkey points to the significant role poetry played in the rise of Sudanese nationalism to comment on the differences between English- and Arabic-based studies of nationalist literature, highlighting some of the points I have made earlier on the place of nationalist poetry in the study of nationalism. In particular, she stresses how, in contrast to English-language-based scholarship,

history, poetry and politics have co-existed in the Arabic language scholarship [on the topic], which has recognised poetry not only as a *source* of history, yielding insights into the intellectual development and concerns of its authors, but also as a *force* of history, capable of exhorting and arousing audiences through reading or recitation (2003: 14, emphasis added).

It is this recognition of 'source' and 'force' in evaluating the role of nationalist poetry in nation creation that makes Sharkey's study of Sudanese nationalism particularly pertinent for our purposes here. The present author has made a similar observation in his study of the nationalist poetry of the Iraqi poet Nazik al-Mala'ika (1921–2007): 'Western studies of Arabic poetry pay little attention to its rich national content . . . By contrast, the "national in the poetic" is the subject of great interest in the Arab literary polysystem' (Suleiman 2006: 212). A similar situation is said to obtain in Turkey (Köroğlu 2007: xv–xvi).

So, what role does nationalist poetry play in nation creation? Using as a general framework Coakly's (2004) analysis of the mobilisation of the past in nation formation, we may point to three functions of nationalist poetry: *reinforcement*, *legitimisation* and *inspiration*. Reinforcement relates to the past by mining its achievements and lessons, imagined or real, and using these in literary compositions that give the nation pride in itself. Although it is past oriented, reinforcement is 'part of a psychological search for symbols of confidence

in the present' (Rustow 1967: 42). Legitimation 'serves the aim of validating the nationalist genealogy that links the past to the present in literary production' (Suleiman 2006: 211). Inspiration is 'forward looking and mission oriented [i.e. related to task-orientation or mobilisation]; it relates to the [future] destiny of the nation and aims to underline the message in the nationalist literature of the inevitability of a bright future for the nation, provided that it lives up to its reputation in the past' (ibid.: 211). In performing these goals, nationalist poetry has its own horizons of validation: it aims at *affect, impact* and *resonance*, and does not consider itself to be bound by the standards of truth or veracity as defined by professional historians, sociologists or political scientists. It is precisely this fact that causes nationalism scholars to veer away from nationalist poetry as valid evidence in their disciplines.

It is, however, possible to argue that nationalist poetry speaks to a different truth, a psychological kind of truth that resonates with some members of the nation who empathise with the poet in his fight for justice, liberation and independence. Reacting to a public reading of Mahmud Darwish's (1941–2008) poetry in Ramallah, Palestine on 1 July 2008, which drew thousands of Palestinians to the venue and millions of viewers more through a televised broadcast on Aljazeera, two attendees described the popularity of Mahmud Darwish as the Palestinian national poet par excellence in terms that resonate with this alternative understanding of the truth: 'Darwish's power lies in his ability to describe the Palestinian feelings in a way they themselves cannot'; and 'his poetry is complicated and full of contradictions. It brings out the contradictory side of us' (*Haaretz* 2 July 2008). Reactions of this kind exemplify what is meant by 'affect, impact and resonance' above and they do justify the widely held view in Arab culture that the poet speaks for his group, in this case the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and in the diaspora.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, had I been writing this chapter in Arabic for an Arabic-speaking audience, I would have taken many of the arguments I have made above about the importance of poetry in studying nationalism as axiomatic. This is an important observation in two ways. On the one hand, it shows the situatedness of knowledge; in particular, it acknowledges the role of the background knowledge – assumed or real – of the target readership in determining what counts as relevant or valid in the discourse on nationalism. On the other hand, it suggests the need to limit the explanatory power of Western-based theories of nationalism in ways that take account of their own empirical situatedness, the fact that these theories are themselves epistemologically bounded by their socio-historical milieux, which makes them restricted theories as I have argued elsewhere (see Suleiman 2003).

## Nationalist Poetry and Conflict: the Israeli–Palestinian Dispute as a Case Study

Nationalist poetry comes into its own in moments of national crisis or, literally, in the heat of the battle, when the nation is fighting for liberation and independence from a foreign aggressor/occupier or during major conflicts that are thought to threaten the independence or territorial integrity of the state. According to Natter (1999: 36), more than one million poems were published in Germany during the first months of the First World War in defence of the nation. In the Palestinian situation, the living reality of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands gives the above responses to Mahmud Darwish's poetry their poignancy and resonance, even among those Palestinians who cannot understand the complexity and layered sensibility of this poetry. The fact that a leading Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, reported on the public reading of Darwish's poetry in Ramallah is in itself indicative of the newsworthiness of this event and of the standing of Mahmud Darwish as his people's national poet par excellence. Listening to Mahmud Darwish reading his poetry at a public event under Israeli occupation does not just call forth a response to the content of what he reads but, perhaps more importantly, signals an encounter with the poet in a public sphere in which he performs, iconically, as a symbol of and for his own people.<sup>2</sup> The poet, his poetry and the nation fuse into a kind of unity that seeks to challenge the humiliation and oppression of the Palestinians. Poetry in this case seeks to inspire and give confidence to the people in their national struggle for liberation and independence.

As happened with the British in Sudan, the Israeli occupation authorities in the Palestinian territories have shown themselves to be very aware of the importance of poetry in the Palestinian national struggle and fully adept at putting in place measures to counter its influence. Soon after the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the Israeli authorities subjected the school curricula in the territories to a cull to remove from them what these authorities thought might be construed as anti-Israeli material. This cull included a well-known poem by the Palestinian poet Ibrahim Tuqan (1905–41) by the title *al-habashiyy al-dhabih* (The Christmas Turkey). The present writer remembers studying this poem as a school boy in Jerusalem, which was under Jordanian rule at the time, and how it was read as a metaphor for the Palestinians who were likened to the Christmas Turkey that had to be sacrificed by the British authorities in Palestine (1917–48) in pursuit of their imperial designs. The poem does not contain any reference to Jews, Zionism or Israelis: Israel was not in existence at the time. The Israeli occupation authorities must, therefore, have censored it because they thought that its old meanings might be given a new twist that equates

British imperialism with Israeli occupation. If true, this signals the ability of nationalist poetry to free itself from the immediate history of its own composition through the regeneration or re-inscription of new, emergent meanings. Reading the old into the new or the past into the present is a recurring theme in nationalist literature, a fact which the Israeli authorities were aware of and, therefore, determined to eradicate from the curriculum through stringent censorship. This use of censorship to silence the message of Palestinian nationalist literature continued earlier practice inside Israel, wherein the poems of the national poets Mahmud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim (1939–) and others had been subjected to cuts of material the authorities regarded as nationalist in nature. Rather than adjust the shape of these poems to convey a seamless continuity, Mahmud Darwish and Samih al-Qasim used to publish them in their 'mutilated' form to signal to the reader the interference of the government censor, as well as to impress on both the Israeli censor and the Palestinian readership the futility of the censor's hegemonic practices and the power that resides in making the absent present or of reading political meaning into the blank spaces on the page. The actions of the Israeli authorities, whether inside Israel or in the Occupied Territories, testify to the importance of nationalist poetry in the struggle for liberation and independence.

Let us pursue this theme of the importance of nationalist poetry at times of conflict by considering a more recent episode in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. In 2000, the then left-of-centre Israeli Minister of Education, Yossi Sarid, in the Labour-led coalition government of Ehud Barak, suggested including some of Mahmud Darwish's poems in the Jewish secondary schools curriculum: there was some hope at the time, some would say delusion, that peace might be achieved between the Israelis and the Palestinians.<sup>3</sup> Being aware of Mahmud Darwish's reputation as the Palestinian national poet par excellence, and of the fact that his poems do express a strong love and yearning for Palestine as a homeland for his people, which undermines the Israeli claim to the same territory, Yossi Sarid sought to pre-empt serious objections from Israeli Jews by naming some of Mahmud Darwish's so-called 'personal poems' – those in which he talks about his childhood or that are addressed to his mother – for inclusion in the curriculum, although in fact these poems are never far from the poet's nationalist concerns (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, 3 March 2000). As an extra precaution, Yossi Sarid proposed including in the curriculum works by Arab poets whom he knew would be more acceptable to the Israeli Jewish public to make his suggestion palatable at least to the waiverers: these included the (male) Druze Na'im 'Araydi and Siham Dawud, a female poet, both of whom write in Arabic and Hebrew (see Elad-Bouskila 1999), unlike Mahmud Darwish who writes in Arabic only, although he was fluent in Hebrew.

The reactions to this suggestion in Israel varied. Some people supported it as an exercise in bridge building with the Palestinians, for example the journalist Gideon Levy who wrote an article in *Haaretz* describing Mahmud Darwish as the greatest lover Palestine had ever known. Levy also believed that Mahmud Darwish's poetry could provide a much needed antidote to the strong xenophobic feelings against Israeli Palestinians among Israeli Jews (see Smootha 1999 on this xenophobia). This article was translated into Arabic and published in the London-based newspaper, with strong Palestinian leanings, *al-Quds al-Arabi* on 8 March 2000, a fact that testifies to the importance this issue raised across the conflict divide. However, Yossi Sarid was opposed by a coalition of political forces, including members of the Likud and the National Block parties who accused Mahmud Darwish of being anti-Semitic/Zionist and of writing poetry that was in fact no more than a reiteration of the Palestinian National Charter which, they said, called for the destruction of Israel. Others said it was a disgrace that Palestine's national poet was going to be taught to Israeli Jewish students alongside Chaim Nachman Bialik, the Zionist national poet and author of the Israeli national anthem. Public opinion polls on the matter showed that 53 per cent of the Israelis opposed Yossi Sarid's suggestion, 37 per cent were in favour (but they seem to have been mostly silent in the debate) and 10 per cent were undecided. Yossi Sarid's enemies in the Knesset called for a vote of no confidence in the coalition government of the then Labour Prime Minister Ehud Barak who, in the heat of the debate, declared that the 'time was not ripe' – a statement of multiple meanings – for such a change in the Israeli curriculum. The debate was in fact regarded as important enough in the international news media for the *New York Times* and *Le Figaro* to report on it in their issues of 7 March 2000.

The Arab press took an interest in this debate in Israel. Strong voices were raised to the effect that Israel was not yet ready for a historical settlement with the Palestinians in which it would recognise its role in creating the Palestinian tragedy of dispossession and continued diasporisation (Ibrahim Darwish, *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 3 March 2001). Those opposing cultural normalisation (*tatbi'*) with Israel until the Palestinian problem was completely settled on a historically just basis pointed to this incident as yet another example of how peace with Israel was a one way process. They cited Israel's insistence that all Jordanian and Egyptian curricula be 'purged' of any material that may be construed as anti-Israeli, as a condition for signing peace treaties with these two countries in 1978 and 1994 respectively, without, however, subjecting the Israeli curriculum to a similar purge to make it 'Arab friendly'.

Mahmud Darwish himself contributed to the debate by making

two important points through an article in *al-Quds al-Arabi* on 10 March 2000. First, while accepting that his poetry was rooted in the Palestinian national experience in all its complexities, he argued that this poetry was not nationalist in the narrow sense because of the universal messages it contains. This contribution could not have assuaged the fears of the anti-Yossi Sarid camp in Israel. They would of course accept that Mahmud Darwish's poetry was constantly evolving and that it was not nationalist in the jingoistic sense, but they could not but see in it an attempt to embed the national in the universal, thus universalising it. From their perspective, this was a dangerous move intended to garner international support for Palestinian nationalism in its struggle for liberation and independence. Second, Mahmud Darwish insisted that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not just a conflict over land but also one over the *rhetorical resources* the two peoples deploy to express their love for the land of historical Palestine, its landscape and its flora and fauna.<sup>4</sup> Again, this contribution could not have assuaged the fears of the anti-Yossi Sarid camp: to admit that the Palestinians can equally love the historical land of Palestine as the Israeli Jews and, therefore, that they would be entitled to share the same rhetorical space in expressing this love would be a compromise too far for them. The fact that Yossi Sarid wanted to bring this nightmarish vision closer to home by injecting it into the Israeli Jewish curriculum would have been regarded by his opponents as an act of treachery and *rhetorical surrender* for which, they argued, he should be made to recant or, preferably, be removed from office.

I have cited this example to highlight a few issues in the role of poetry, and by implication literature and culture, in the study of nation creation, state building and international politics. Poetry and its enveloping culture are not a flavour in nationalism but a real thing that can animate political activity at a variety of levels in the body politic of the nation. Culture and literary production are part of the politics of the nation rather than a sideline issue in that politics. *The cultural sphere is a political sphere* and vice versa. Culture, through poetry in this case, can be newsworthy and its importance as politics in nation creation and state building can transcend its immediate locality and regionality to reach international audiences. In the case in hand, poetry is read in three contradictory ways: (1) as an instrument of resistance, liberation, and independence on the Palestinian side; (2) as a form of agitation and unlawful activity on the Israeli Jewish side; and (3) as a bridge for understanding and possible reconciliation and peace between nations on both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides. In situations of heightened conflict, all three perspectives are always present, although the first two tend to dominate and act as two sides of the same coin. Poetry and culture cannot, therefore, be excluded from

the field of nationalism studies without resulting in a loss of evidence and meaning for this field. We must, however, not exaggerate the role of poetry and culture in nationalism: they are one dimension among a variety of dimensions in the interplay of factors whose influence in any historical situation ebbs and flows contextually.

### **Nationalist Poetry as Meta-linguistic Discourse**

Poetry has occupied a place of honour in Arabic culture since pre-Islamic times. The Arabs regarded poetry as one of their greatest cultural achievements (*al-shi'r diwan al-'arab*), a fact which the anti-Arab *shu'ubiyya* movement in the eighth and ninth centuries used to belittle their contribution to human civilisation, in comparison with those of the Persians and others. Even when the Qur'an (24: 26) censures poetry and the poets for their 'errant' ways, it does so against an acute understanding of their ability to influence people in society, even in matters of faith, thus seeing it as a rival. This in itself is a testimony to the power of poetry as a means of communication and influence in Arab culture. The involvement of poetry in modern nationalist movements, particularly pan-Arab nationalism, represents continuity with this past. In fact, it would have been very strange indeed, even a cultural aberration, if Arabic poetry in the modern period had not been used in the struggle for nation creation as envisaged by the pan-Arab nationalists, or state building as promoted by state nationalists as in Egypt, Lebanon or Tunisia. It would not be an exaggeration to say that nationalism without poetry in the Arabic-speaking context is just unimaginable.

Language is another factor that is highly prized in Arabic culture. I have dealt with this issue at length in *The Arabic Language and National Identity: a Study in Ideology* (2003). In particular, I discussed a set of socio-cultural traditions in the early Arabic sources that treat the language as evidence of the wisdom (*hikma*) and superiority of the Arabs, and as the marker that sets them apart from non-Arab Muslims and others in their environment. Such is the importance of language in Arabic culture, the great writer Jahiz (773-869) treats linguistic prowess, *bayan*, as the basis of a taxonomy that gives the Arabs their unique place among other nations (see Suleiman 2001). This attitude acquires its heightened meaning against the background of inter-ethnic strife (*shu'ubiyya*) in the early centuries of Islam. Pan-Arab nationalism has considered *fusha* Arabic as the most important marker of Arab national identity, building in this regard on this early conceptualisation of the language. The same is true, albeit not universally, of state nationalisms in the Arabic-speaking world. In this section, I plan to deal with some of the ways in which Arabic poetry has been used to talk

about Arabic as the symbol of group, ethnic or national identity of the Arabs in both their home countries and, tangentially, in the diaspora. I propose to call poetry used in this capacity as *meta-linguistic discourse*: it is a discourse in poetry about language. The deployment of poetry to talk about Arabic as a marker of identity in the Arab context testifies to the importance of both poetry and language in the Arab nationalisms of the Middle East. Although the phenomenon of using poetry to extol the virtues of the national language is not restricted to Arabic culture (see McClure 2000), there is, to the best of my knowledge, little that rivals Arabic culture in this respect. Composing poetry in which the main topic is the Arabic language is not a new phenomenon in Arab culture, a factor that allows the modern poet who wishes to follow a similar route to exploit the power of inter-textuality in his or her poetry as will be discussed later. The fact that Arabic poetry about Arabic is a living phenomenon in Arab/ic culture helps create a network of compositions with historical depth and a vast synchronic range that keeps a set of nationalist themes in focus.

Poetry is second to the Qur'an only as a source of Arabic grammatical theory (see Suleiman 1999). The Arabic intellectual tradition has preserved for us examples of poetry in which the main theme is the Arabic language itself. In the early periods of Islam this poetry dealt with the onset and spread of linguistic corruption (*lahn*) in Arabic-speaking societies. This output included poetry by the grammarian Al-Kisa'i (d. 803/4) and, reputedly, by the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph 'Ali b. Abi Talib (d. 660) who is credited with instituting the first major attempt at reforming the Arabic script (see al-Tufi 1997). This poetry points to the importance of grammar as a bulwark against linguistic corruption, as an antidote in a moral economy in which faulty speech was considered a major social blemish among the elites. In this early period, poets were careful not to turn grammar into an obsessive preoccupation in the fight against linguistic corruption.

In later centuries, grammar became such an obsessive preoccupation for the pedant and the pedagogue, making the grammarians the target of criticism because of the excessive complexity of their work (Nyazi 2008). Teachers who inflict these complexities on their students are also criticised, a recent example of this being a humorous but elegant poem by the Saudi diplomat, poet and novelist Ghazi al-Qusaibi (see Khalifa 2008). The complaints against linguistic corruption are the subject of poetic compositions in the modern period too. One such example is by the Palestinian Ibrahim Tuqan (1905-41) whom we met earlier. In his poem *al-Sha'ir al-mu'allim* (The Poet and Arabic Language Teacher), Tuqan reflects on his bitter experience as a teacher of Arabic in Palestine, deploring the very poor standards in the language and using poetic imagery that, in some respects, is highly



reminiscent of the compositions of Al-Kisa'i and Caliph 'Ali b. Abi Talib (Tuqan 1984: 148-9).

### *Language defence as nation defence*

One of the poems on the deplorable status of the language in Arabic-speaking countries is by the Egyptian poet Hafiz Ibrahim (1871-1932). This poem, published in 1903, has achieved canonical status, making it known to educated Arabs with an interest in the state of the language to this day (1953: 202-4). The poem details a series of challenges and accusations regarding Arabic, chief among which are the following: (1) the encroachment of the colloquial dialects on domains that were in the past the preserve of *fusha* Arabic, a theme which the Syrian poets Mahmud Ghanayim (1901-72) and Abu al-Su'ud Murad wrote about, the latter in a poem full of sarcasm which he published in 1908 (see Suleiman 1994: 10); (2) the accusation that the language was incompatible with socio-economic modernisation and unsuitable for science and modern education; (3) the disenchantment of the Arabs with Arabic and their preference for European languages; and (4) code-switching with, and unnecessary borrowing from, the European languages (*lawthat al-ifranj*). The poet responds to these challenges and accusations by invoking the distinguished pedigree of the language through its association with the Qur'an; its vast lexical resources which he likens to an inexhaustible source of pearls; and the fact that it was in the past able to rise to the challenges posed by the explosion in knowledge the Arabs had to face in the first few centuries of Islam, a feat it could perform afresh if the will was there. Hafiz Ibrahim then concludes by saying that the fault is not with Arabic but with its speakers, a theme which the Lebanese Khalil Mitran (1871-1941) and the Egyptian Ahmad Zaki Abu-Shadi (1892-1955) reiterate in their poetry (al-Daqqaq 1985: 233).

Although these and similar poetic compositions do not have an avowedly nationalist content, even in Tuqan's case who is known for his nationalist poetry, still they are important because they exemplify how varied, thematically, these compositions are. In addition, this poetry is written with the aim of exhorting the reader to act in defence of the language, first by eliminating any linguistic corruption in his own speech and, secondly, by opposing this same corruption in the speech of others. This defence of the language lends itself in other compositions to a strong nationalist interpretation in that one of the principles of Arab-based nationalisms, as of other nationalisms, revolves around the notion that language defence is nation defence. An example of this language-cum-nation defence in the Arabic-speaking world occurred in 1918 when Gibran Khalil Gibran (1883-1931),

Mikhail Naimy (1889–1998) and Nasib 'Arida (1887–1946), who were living in the North American diaspora (*mahjar*) at the time, formed the Committee for the Liberation of Lebanon and Syria. They used this as a platform to call on the European powers meeting at Versailles in 1918 to establish local governments in these two areas under French protection (al-Daqqaq 1985: 123–4). In arguing their view, the Committee members claimed that the Lebanese and the Syrians were not racially Arab and that Arabic was not their original language, but that it was imposed on them by the invading Arab armies at the beginning of the Islamic era. These claims enraged some local poets, for example Khalil Mardam Beik (1895–1959) and Qistaki al-Himsi al-Halabi (1858–1941), who argued in poetry that Arabic was not a foreign language in Lebanon and Syria, but a defining attribute that marks the Syrians and the Lebanese as members of an Arab nation.

Arabic poetry in the ninth and tenth centuries contains compositions that can be construed as ethnically oriented. In one such well-known poem that is taught to the present day, the famous poet al-Buhturi (821–97) declares that the Arabs are the sons of (the mythical) Ya'rub, and that their language is the most eloquent and pure of all languages. The more famous poet al-Mutanabbi (915–65) invokes language as an identity element in reflecting on his journey through the Bawwan mountain path near Shiraz in modern day Iran. He laments the fact that as an Arab he felt himself to be a linguistic alien who would not have been able to find his way through the area even if he had been as linguistically gifted as King Solomon – who according to the Qur'an could communicate with all creatures – or had the services of a gifted dragoon. Al-Mutanabbi links this sense of alienation to ethnicity directly when he says an 'Arab would find himself [in the area of Bawwan] a stranger in [his ethnic] physiognomy, actions and speech' (*gharib al-wajh wa-al-yad wa-al-lisan*; 1938: vol. 4, 486–503 for the full text of the poem). It is interesting that this same part of the poem was used verbatim in a well-known poem by the Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan (1917–2003), Ibrahim Tuqan's sister, after she visited Jaffa in 1967 in the wake of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Intertextualising with al-Mutanabbi, Fadwa Tuqan describes how she found herself in Judaised Jaffa, following its occupation in 1948, a stranger because of her [national, for the context now is no longer an ethnic one] physiognomy, because of what she could and could not do and, most importantly for our purposes because of her speech. The loss of Arabic in Jaffa in the twentieth century as in the Bawwan path in the tenth century orients the group towards the weakness of the Arabs now and then which, as I have pointed out earlier, can be more effective in spurring them towards future-oriented action than their forgotten victories. Fadwa Tuqan uses language symbolically to paint a picture of

loss as al-Mutanabbi had done a millennium before her. It is, therefore, not surprising that Mahmud Darwish picks up this same theme of language loss as symbolic of national loss and humiliation in responding to Fadwa Tuqan's poem, when he says that Jaffa was translated to the core (*wa-Yafa turjimat hatta al-nukha* ; 1981: 347). Translation, which in its narrowest interpretation is a process of transferring content from one language to another, is used here as a metaphor for the replacement of Palestine by Israel, the disaporised Palestinians by the Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arab national identity by a Zionist one in Jaffa and the rest of historical Palestine.

During the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and beyond, poetry was used to advocate an Arab nationalism that sought a degree of autonomy or independence from the ruling Turks. This poetry circulated through the press, in cultural clubs and elite gatherings, secret societies, youth organisations and on placards that were clandestinely distributed in Damascus, Beirut and other cities of the Levant (see Suleiman 2003). Some of this poetry was meta-linguistic in the sense used here. This poetry had two major themes. On the one hand, it extolled the beauty of the Arabic language and its place in history as the language of the Qur'an. On the other hand, this poetry highlighted the role the language plays in setting the Arabs apart from the Turks, the other major national/ethnic group in the Ottoman Empire. For these poets Arabic is the common denominator which unites Muslims and Christians against the Young Turks who sought to impose their Turkification policies in the linguistic as in other spheres on the Arabs. The Palestinian poet Suleiman al-Taji al-Faruqi (1882-1958) addressed one of his poems to the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad Rashad (1848-1918) in which he expressed his pride in the achievements of the Arabs throughout history, coupling this with the onslaught against Arabic by the Young Turks who neglected it and, in fact, sought to replace it with Turkish as the medium of instruction in the state schools in Greater Syria. These measures, the poet tells the Sultan, weakened the language and warns that, if left unchecked, they would lead to its death and the demise of its speakers as an identifiable group (see al-Afghani 1971: 44). The Syrian poet Fu'ad al-Din al-Khatib (1879-1957) called on the Ottoman authorities to make Arabic the official language of the empire. In this respect he reiterated a similar call by the reformist thinker Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97) who, for political reasons no doubt, argued that the Ottomans should establish Arabic as the language of the state to unite all Muslims inside and outside the empire who would identify with it as a bond by virtue of its being the language of the Qur'an (ibid.: 44-5). The Lebanese poet 'Abd al-Hamid al-Rafi'i (1859-1932) accused the Young Turks of fighting the Arabs by fighting their language, reminding his readers that the

Arabs would never achieve their national goals as long as they lived under the rule of the Turks, whom he calls *'ajam* (bloody foreigners), a derogatory ethnic label in Arab culture to this day (see al-Daqqaq 1985: 224). The Lebanese poet Amin Nasir al-Din (1880–1953) responded to the attacks on the Arabs in the Turkish language newspaper *Iqdam*, which was known for its anti-Arab editorial line, by repeating the theme of the superiority of the Arabs over the Turks because of the unquestioned superiority of Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an, over Turkish (ibid.: 224).

### *Language, faith and identity*

This linking of language with the nationalist struggle for independence continued after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the onset of colonialism in the Levant. The Syrian poet Khayr al-Din al-Zirikly (1893–1976) wrote in praise of the Arab fighters who fell in battle resisting the French occupation of Syria and defending the Arabic language. This theme of linking language with martyrdom is reiterated by other poets. The Lebanese poet Ilyas Tu'ma (1886–1941), who changed his name to Abu al-Fadl b. al-Walid upon converting to Islam from Christianity, composed poems in which he promoted the inter-religious unity of the Arabs. In one poem he refers to Arabic as the 'radiant language' (*al-lugha al-zahra'*) in an obvious reference to Fatima al-Zahra', the Prophet's daughter and 'Ali's wife. This inter-textual connection invokes the theme of martyrdom, linking the Arabic language to the violent death of Caliph 'Ali, as well as his wife Fatima (d. 632) and their two sons Hassan (624–70) and Hussein (625–80), especially that of Hussein who was murdered in cold blood at Kerbala in Iraq (Muraydin 1973: 349). In other poems, al-Fadl b. al-Walid used the special place of Arabic in Islam to argue that true Islam should lead to Arabisation, by which we assume he meant linguistic *Arabisation* and cultural *Arabisation*. The fact that a true Islam is treated as a route to Arabisation in the above two senses is significant: it underlies the importance of Arabic as a foundational principle in Arabic culture, almost privileging it over Islam in this case. Furthermore, it emphasises the Arab character of Islam as religion and civilisation.

These views on Islam and Arabisation may be considered an outcome of the poet's conversion to Islam, but we must proceed carefully here as this conversion may in fact have been a 'cultural conversion' to Islam as civilisation rather than strictly to Islam as religion. The evidence, in fact, speaks against treating conversion as a prelude to the poet's compositions on Arabic even if this conversion was a strictly doctrinal one. First, al-Walid expressed his views in poetry on the relationship between Islam and Arabisation before his formal conversion to Islam.

Second, it is highly probable that it was the poet's love of Arabic and the majesty of its realisation in the Qur'an that led him to Islam rather than the other way round. Third, this appreciation of the language in its Islamic context was a feature of the work of other Christian poets in the Levant who continued to profess Christianity all their lives.

The following examples help us make this point. Al-Sha'ir al-Qarawi (Rashid Salim al-Khuri, 1887-1984) composed a poem under the title the 'Feast of Sacrifice' (*Id al-adha*) to celebrate the feast that marks the end of the pilgrimage season in the Islamic calendar. However, the poet plays on the root meaning of the word *adha* (sacrifice) in Arabic to link this annual occasion to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as the ultimate sacrificial offering a person can make. Combining these two events into one composition enables the poet to address Christians and Muslims as two faith communities that, the poet argues, are united into one inclusive national identity under the 'banner of Arabic' (Muraydin 1973: 358). He further plays on the root meaning of the verb *adha* to link the language, national identity and martyrdom into one theme as we have seen earlier, but goes a step further by making Jesus Christ the national symbol of this trinity of language, identity and martyrdom. This is an imaginary link, a piece of deliberately concocted mythology or invented tradition, that has no basis in history, but the poet is not interested in historical truth here: his main focus is resonance and impact as the features of a cultural nationalism which he believes should override the divisions that the differences of belief could create. In this he is at one with the poet Michel Mughrabi who, as a Lebanese Christian, wrote a poem to celebrate Prophet Muhammad's birthday; in this poem, the Prophet is described as the master of all the Arabs, regardless of their religion, without whom Arabic could have never attained the status it has achieved in history (ibid.: 361). The ability of Arabic to act as a force of national unity that can override or neutralise the divisions of religious doctrine is seized upon by the Lebanese poets Anis al-Khuri al-Maqdisi (1885-1977; see al-Daqqaq 1985: 235) and Fawzi al-Ma'luf (1899-1930; see Zalat 1972: 130). The latter says that the Arabs will not become a force in modern history until their minarets and spires unite under the banner of Arabic.

Lest this insistence be seen as an activity exclusively practised by Christian poets, I will cite two examples of Muslim poets reiterating the same themes. One is the Lebanese poet Mustafa al-Ghalayini (1886-1944) who considers Arabic as the banner under which the Christians and Muslims in the Levant can unite in a national identity that is theirs equally (al-Daqqaq 1985: 236). Writing under French occupation, the Syrian poet Fakhri al-Barudi (1889-1966) believed that the Christians and Muslims of the Levant must locate their unity in Arabic which, as a language, links them to their ancestors

in pre-Islamic times (*lisanu al-dadi yajma'una bi-Ghassanin wa 'Adnani*; Sharara 1988: 22). This line of poetry achieved canonical status in the twentieth century: it served as a locus of inter-textual variations on the same theme. Furthermore, when pan-Arabism was in full sway in the twentieth century, the poem that contained it was part of Arab school curricula in many Arab countries. This has helped create a readily recognisable poetic trope that could be exploited to counter existing/emerging faith-based fault-lines in society as well as to guide future action.

I had evidence of this in 1999 on a visit to Nazareth in northern Israel. In April of that year, violent clashes took place between the Christian and Muslim residents of the city, caused by a dispute over a piece of land in a sensitive location in front of the city's main church, which each community claimed as their own. These clashes came as a shock to the residents of the city and to Palestinians everywhere. On a visit to meet Father Ilyas Chacour with a group of British university students (a well-known Greek Melchite community leader, peace activist and educationist) on 15 April at his college in Ibillin, Israel I was surprised to see the above line of poetry by al-Barudi glued to an electricity post on the outskirts of the college. This fact testifies to two things. First, it provides evidence of the canonicity of this line of poetry, for those who used it on their poster would not have chosen it had they thought that it would not be recognised by any of those who might read it. Second, the inter-textuality of this line of poetry re-enacts the theme it conveys, that of uniting all Palestinians, regardless of their religious beliefs, under Arabic and under one Palestinian national identity. The fact that this line of poetry and its message were offered at a time of crisis must have reflected the belief in its reparative capacity on the part of those who re-authored/re-inscribed it. Having seen this poster, I was not, therefore, surprised when the Nazareth-based newspaper *Fasl al-Maqal* carried the following day (16 April) a full poem by Dawud Turki, a Palestinian poet from Haifa in Israel, in which he calls on the Palestinians to unite under the banner of Arabic (*liwa' al-dad*) which, alone, can override their religious differences. The poet reminds his Palestinian readers that Israeli oppression does not differentiate between Palestinians on religious grounds; for those who practise this oppression a Palestinian is a Palestinian regardless of whether he is a Muslim or a Christian. The poem consists of forty lines. I will give below a free translation of nine lines that directly bear upon some of the themes discussed above:

LI. Raise the banner of Arabic, stand upright,  
let it lift you to the sky and the stars.

- L6. Go forward, hand in hand,  
with Arabic the weakest of all nations can gain strength.
- L7. The speakers of Arabic, all of them, are oppressed,  
their concerns can no longer be ignored.
- Lh. Religion does not divide us, we are united  
in language on a land that rejects the outsiders (reference to Israeli Jews).
- L15. The most eloquent of all languages: that is our national tongue.  
With it our people have been elevated, heads-butting the cloud.
- L16. The West fell in love with its dulcet tones  
listening intently when hearing it.
- L17. The Franks coveted it voraciously.  
They conspired to take it by force.
- L26. Raise the banner of Arabic, stand upright,  
raise your cup and drink with pride to all free people.
- L40. Raise the banner of Arabic and celebrate,  
the sword of justice will be victorious.

The above lines are interesting because they create a series of equations: language equals land; language equals identity; and the Crusader Franks equal the Israelis, the implication being in this case that Israeli rule over Palestine will come to an end as did the rule of the Crusader Franks before. This last equation is a negative one in the Palestinian context. In contrast, the poet treats the link of language with land and identity as positive values in Palestinian political and inter-communal life in Israel, and uses this triad as a reparative formula in trying to bring about a renewed sense of harmony between Christians and Muslims in Nazareth.

This theme of language, land and identity as a triad of affiliation emerges at times of crisis or grief in the Arab context. The Egyptian poet Ahmad Shawqi (1868–1932) used it in a poem he wrote in 1923 to mourn the death of the son of Imam Yahya, the ruler of Yemen at the time. In this poem, Ahmad Shawqi describes the Arabic language, which he says unites him with Imam Yahya, as their common homeland (*wa ma al-‘arabiyyatu illa watan*; 1992: vol. 3, 169). The Syrian poet Badawi al-Jabal (Muhammad Suleiman al-Ahmad, 1900–81) repeats the same message when he says that Arabic is the father and mother of all the Arabs, overriding any genealogy that may be posited to set them apart (see al-Daqqaq 1985: 236). This formula is similar to the one used by the journalist, essayist and German romantic poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), who lived in Paris, that the German language was his ‘portable fatherland’ (quoted in Leerson 2006: 565). The idea that the homeland is co-extensive with the spread of Arabic is a strong message in a well-known poem by the Lebanese poet Khalil Mitran (*ibid.*: 237).

*Occupation, diaspora and language loss*

This association of language with homeland is strongly present in Palestinian poetry because of the special circumstances Palestine and the Palestinians live under. We have seen before how both Fadwa Tuqan and Mahmud Darwish equated the loss of Palestine with the loss of the Arabic language in parts of historical Palestine that came under Israeli control in 1948. In a different poem, *Matar na'im fi kharif ba'id* (Soft Rain in a Distant Autumn), Mahmud Darwish (1981: 258–60) describes the loss of Palestine as a case of dialect amnesia, which implies the possibility of both the recovery of the land and the full revitalisation of the indigenous mother tongue at some future point. Samih al-Qasim, another celebrated Palestinian poet of Druze background, asserts that Palestine will live as long as the Arabic language continues to be spoken in it, the implication being that the loss of Arabic as the national language of the Palestinians in Israel will signal the complete and, perhaps, irrecoverable loss of that part of Palestine in which they live. This explains why Samih al-Qasim associates the Palestinian landscape with Arabic in his poetry: to ensure that this landscape continues to 'communicate' in the language that is most indigenous to it. This is why he also considers the linguistic hybrid of Arabic and Hebrew spoken by the Palestinians in Israel to be one of the most palpable dangers facing the Palestinians and Palestine. Palestinian resistance must, therefore, include both resistance to occupation and resistance against language loss and language hybridisation, which for the poet are two sides of the same coin (al-Qadi 1982: 172). Tawfiq Zayyad (1929–94), another celebrated Palestinian poet of Christian background and three times Mayor of Nazareth (1975–94), reiterates the same theme, declaring that as long as Arabic is spoken in Palestine, Palestine will not be lost to the Palestinians. The idea that language loss is equivalent to land and nation loss is a powerful theme in Palestinian life and society. Furthermore, the notion that language defence is nation and homeland defence is another important trope in this literature. In these two respects, Palestine and the Palestinians may represent an *accentuated* case of these ideas in cultural nationalism; this is understandable because of the special nature of the Palestinian situation as one of the last colonial conditions of modern times.

In the remaining part of this section, I would like to deal very briefly with the relationship between home, diaspora and language maintenance as these are expressed in poetry. As an immigrant language, Arabic came under extreme pressure in the Latin American diaspora (*mahjar*) in the first half of the twentieth century, a pressure not unknown among immigrant communities in similar diasporic settings.



The main problem was language attrition among second and third generation immigrants. Having observed this phenomenon closely, some Latin American *mahjar* poets exhorted their compatriots to hold on to their language to guard against their complete assimilation in the host communities and cultures. For these poets the loss of Arabic was considered as a loss of identity. In Brazil, Ilyas Farhat (1893–1976) composed poems to impress upon his compatriots that the loss of Arabic among the younger generation would inevitably lead to severing their links with their countries of origin and their cultural roots. Some of his poems deplore the fact that the younger generations act like linguistic parrots, repeating what they hear without fully understanding its cultural connotations. By preferring the host languages (Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese) over their heritage languages members of the second and third generations had become *'ajam*, a strongly derogatory term in Arabic as we have seen above (see al-Daqqaq 1985: 231). In his poetry, Ilyas Farhat is at pains to tell his compatriots that Arabic is the only safe haven they have in the diaspora against assimilation, the loss of Arab cultural identity and the termination of their link with the homeland; his message in this respect is similar to that of the German poet Heinrich Heine who, as pointed out above, described German as a 'portable fatherland'. The poet George 'Assaf holds similar views, as does al-Sha'ir al-Qarawi (see Muraydin 1973). In his desperation to encourage the second and third generation immigrants to speak Arabic, George 'Assaf relates in one of his poems how he tolerated the insults hurled at him by members of these generations simply because they did so in Arabic (ibid.: 232). When insults in the heritage language become a cause for celebration in the diaspora we know that language attrition has progressed to a point of no return.

The theme of language, home and diaspora is still alive in the Arab context. The Palestinian American poet Naomi Shihab Nye reflects on this issue in the following poem which she wrote while in Amman, Jordan one winter (see Handal 2001: 243–4).

The man with laughing eyes stopped smiling  
to say, 'Until you speak Arabic –  
– you will not understand pain.'

Something to do with the back of the head,  
an Arab carries sorrow in the back of the head  
that only language cracks, the thrum of stones  
weeping, grating hinge on an old metal gate.  
'Once you know,' he whispered, 'you can enter the room  
whenever you need to. Music you heard from a distance,  
the slapped drum of a stranger's wedding,

wells up inside your skin, inside rains, a thousand pulsing tongues. You are changed.'

Outside, the snow had finally stopped.  
 In a land where snow rarely falls,  
 we had felt our days grow white and still.  
 I thought pain had no tongue. Or every tongue  
 at once, supreme translator, sieve. I admit my  
 shame. To live on the brink of Arabic, tugging  
 its rich threads without understanding  
 how to weave the rug . . . I have no gift.  
 The sound, but not the sense.

I keep looking over his shoulder for someone else  
 to talk to, recalling my dying friend who only scrawled  
*I can't write*. What good would any grammar have been  
 to her then? I touched his arm, held it hard,  
 which sometimes you don't do in the Middle East, and said,  
*I will work on it*, feeling sad

for his strict good heart, but later in the slick street  
 hailed a taxi by shouting *Pain*. And it stopped  
 in every language and opened its doors.

This poem in English about Arabic makes the fundamental point that pain is a universal experience that is not language specific: all languages can express the feelings of pain and suffering. But in making this claim, the poem gives expression to two subverting themes which, once released or said, cannot be withdrawn or unsaid. On the one hand, it articulates the conception that, for an Arab, Arabic is the language of pain par excellence. No understanding of pain can, therefore, be complete if an Arab does not gain this understanding through Arabic. The poet's interlocutor insists on this: 'Until you speak Arabic, you will not understand pain', and the poet seems, initially, to accept this assertion. In fact the poem suggests that Arabic, uniquely, can unlock the secrets of pain in a life-transforming way, the implication being that no other language can do the same for a diasporised Arab like Naomi Shihab Nye. I would like to suggest here that the presumed unique connection of pain to Arabic has strong group overtones. The pain being talked about here is felt and experienced at the personal level, but it is a group pain arising out of the humiliations of the present, whether externally or internally inflicted. By reminding the reader that pain and Arabic are inextricably and uniquely connected with each other at the group level, the poet takes us closer to the nationalist idea

that weakness, defeat and humiliation can play a role in spurring the nation towards a more promising future, a point of great importance in cultural nationalism.

On the other hand, the poet, who has a precarious control over the mechanics of Arabic, is uneasy about her linguistic situation. She commands the sounds of the language but the meanings these sound make elude her; she can concatenate sounds and put words together, but she cannot craft meaning in a creative way, a matter which must weigh heavily on her as a poet who, we have to assume, may be aware of the place of poetry in Arab culture: 'tugging its [Arabic's] rich threads without understanding how to weave the rug'. The poet clearly laments the language loss which the diaspora has inflicted on her, capturing her experience in a memorable phrase 'to live on the brink of Arabic' as if the language had become an abyss she must learn to manage, even avoid. Naomi Shihab Nye captures well the sense of frustration and inadequacy of the diasporised person who wants to retain and enhance that feeling of belonging to her heritage language and culture but finds herself unable to do so fully because of her limited linguistic competence. There is no doubt that the poet experiences language loss as some sort of loss in her ability to be a fully functioning member of her heritage community to which, nevertheless, she belongs symbolically. While it would be wrong to impose an explicitly nationalist meaning on this loss there is no doubt that this loss has strong group-identity overtones; if true, this suggests that the heritage language is important for the way the diasporised person conceptualises her sense of group identity, without which the completeness of the self as it straddles different sites of belonging and loyalty cannot be fully realised.

## Conclusion

This chapter argues for the importance of literary production, especially poetry, in understanding nationalism in its cultural-cum-political mode. The marginalisation of nationalist poetry in the study of nationalism is ascribed to the methodological norms of the disciplines that engage with it. History, politics and sociology consider poetry a soft form of data that is subject to manipulation. Critical theory tends to consider this poetry a form of propaganda or mundane literature and, thus, devoid of the qualities that are said to characterise serious literature. While acknowledging the importance of these two criticisms of nationalist poetry, this chapter argues that they miss the point: nationalist poetry does not aim at capturing the truth about the nation as the historian, political scientist or sociologist might understand 'truth'; nor does it aim at producing disinterested literature that excavates deep into the human psyche and captures its essence and moods

in forms of the highest literary quality. Its truth is psychological and social – as distinct from sociological – and it aims at resonance and impact rather than objectivity as neutrality. Nationalist poetry is task-oriented: it aims at reinforcement, legitimation and inspiration in nation building. Rather than being a flavour, nationalist poetry is a thing. It may in some cases act as background to the politics of nationalism, but in other cases it is a form of politics, as the examples from Sudan, Israel and Palestine reveal. The full force of nationalist poetry comes to the fore at times of crisis and conflict.

Poetry has a special place in Arab culture, as does language, but when poetry is used to talk about language in thinking ethnicities and the nation, the outcome becomes doubly significant: poetry assumes the status of a meta-discourse about language. In the Arab context poetry of this kind communicates a set of messages. It is used to link language to identity, whether ethnic or national, and to press the point in nationalist discourse that the loss of language is symbolic of the loss of land and identity. This symbolism further explains the link in this discourse between language and martyrdom, which in the Levant is sometimes linked to the Crucifixion as the ultimate act of martyrdom in a land that is fighting for liberation and independence. The appeal to language through poetry as the primary bond of identity is intended to privilege the nation over religion, thus overcoming the religious differences between Christians and Muslims in the body politic. Nationalist poetry in this vein *nationalises religion* rather than religising the nation. Arabic in this enterprise is often posited as the language of the Qur'an, but the Qur'an is considered here as a foundational text in an inclusivist civilisation that is not hemmed in by doctrine alone. The defence of language in poetry as nationalist discourse thus emerges as a defence of the nation morally, culturally and geopolitically. Instead of serving as the medium of expression, language in nationalist poetry may in fact emerge as the subject and centre point around which a number of nationalist messages coalesce. These messages may embody a real or mythical content. In some cases they form inter-textual networks that connect the present to the past, imparting continuity to the nation to give it depth and pedigree, even when the inter-textual thread is woven out of the painful memories of weakness, humiliation or defeat. The concern with language and identity applies in diaspora settings where language loss and language maintenance are linked to issues of identity and belonging. In this respect diaspora acts as an extension of the homeland though in fact the link between the two is on the wane as time progresses.

This chapter further argues that theories of nationalism positing the novel as the nationalist literary form par excellence are blind to the importance of poetry in nation building. This is probably because they

are rooted in European cultures in which the novel is the dominant form of literary production and the one whose readership grew with the expansion in nationalism and print capitalism in the European cultural-cum-economic sphere. The various nationalisms in the Arab sphere provide ample evidence of the importance of poetry over the novel in nation formation, thus suggesting the need to situate the claims made in nationalist theories in their original empirical domains; in other words, making them context-bound. Hence my reference in this study to the theories of nationalism as restricted, rather than universal, constructs. Theories of nationalism can, of course, be extended beyond the empirical domains that gave rise to them at their point of development and initial elaboration, but such extensions must not be done in a Procrustean manner: they need to be open to the possibility of mutation and change to incorporate new 'facts' that are substantially different from their original points of empirical departure. The case of Arab nationalist poetry provides a strong example of how theories of nationalism have to be adjusted to water down the claim about the link between the development of the nation and the novel.

## Notes

1. Mahmud Darwish passed away on 10 July 2008, as I was revising this chapter. The Palestinian National Authority declared a three-day national mourning to mark his death.
2. Reacting to his status as symbol for the Palestinian, Mahmud Darwish once said in an interview with the Israeli journalist Dalia Karpel of *Haaretz* newspaper (13 July 2007): 'The symbol does not exist either in my consciousness or in my imagination. I am making efforts to shatter the demands of the symbol and to be done with this iconic status; to habituate people to treat me as a person who wishes to develop his poetry and the taste of his readers'. (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/881350.html>, accessed 10 July 2008). Mahmud Darwish was not able to shed the status of symbol and icon in his life. Now that he is dead he will become an even bigger symbol and icon.
3. In its report on Mahmud Darwish's death, the BBC mentioned this proposal; this is an indication of the importance of this proposal ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/news/newsid\\_7551000/7551765.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/news/newsid_7551000/7551765.stm), accessed on 10 July 2008).
4. In an interview with Dalia Karpel of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, on 13 July 2007, Mahmud Darwish describes his work in a way that touches directly on this issue of rhetorical resources: 'I am a worker of metaphors; not a worker of symbols; I believe in the power of poetry, which gives me reasons to look ahead and identify a glint of light. Poetry can be a real bastard. It distorts. It has the power to transform the unreal into the real,

and the real into the imaginary. It has the power to build a world that is at odds with the world in which we live. I see poetry as spiritual medicine. I can create in words what I do not find in reality. It is a tremendous illusion, but a positive one. I have no other tool with which to find meaning for my life or for the life of my nation. It is in my power to bestow on them beauty by means of words and to portray a beautiful world and also to express their situation. I once said that I built with words a homeland for my nation and for myself.' (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/881350.html>, accessed 10 July 2008)

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# LIVING ISLAMIC HISTORY

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Professor Carole Hillenbrand

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