Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam

Volume 1

Islamic History and Civilization

STUDIES AND TEXTS

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Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam

Religious Learning between Continuity and Change

VOLUME 1

Edited by

Sebastian Günther

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Cover illustration: Religious dispute between the scholar and mystic Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) and the jurist, logician and diplomat Sirāj al-Dīn Urmawī (d. 681/1283), taking place in a madrasa. MS Morgan 466, folio 38r, *Tarjuma-i Thawāqib-i manāqib* (A Translation of "The Loadstars of the Virtues"), in Turkish; Iraq, Baghdad 1590s, 190 × 120 mm. Reproduced with kind permission of The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

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Foreword

This extraordinary collection of studies spans centuries, touches a far-reaching range of topics, and showcases a stellar group of scholars. Collectively, these chapters capture a world distant from us in time and yet one concerned with questions about the acquisition and transmission of knowledge that continue to engage us today.

Because my own professional life has combined academic research and teaching with many years of university leadership, I read this manuscript from two angles. One part of me simply enjoyed, and found considerable intellectual enrichment in, the superb scholarship presented here. The other part kept returning to the present day and to our contemporary worlds of knowledge and education, especially higher education.

Centuries, and in some instances, more than a millennium, separate us from the Muslim authors and intellectuals whose writings constitute the primary sources for this set of studies. Ours is such a different context; our systems of education operate at a level of complexity that would baffle notable names found in these volumes, figures like al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Rūmī (d. 672/1273), Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048), Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (fl. tenth/sixteenth century), and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406).

Of the 42 scholars who have contributed to this anthology, more than half hold appointments at European universities. North American scholars represent the next largest percentage, but there are also colleagues from China, Russia, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, and Turkey. Despite the variety of our educational environments, all of our universities participate in the global network of twenty-first-century higher education, and the faculty, students, and administrators of our institutions will doubtless recognize the issues upon which I will focus this brief foreword.

Sebastian Günther, the excellent editor of these volumes, made a fortuitous choice in putting the humanities first, since one of these twenty-first-century issues is the *diminished student interest in the humanities* that many of today's universities must confront. Wadad Kadi's keynote address and inaugural essay compares humanistic scholarly endeavors in the early centuries of Islam with the *studia humanitatis* that flourished in Renaissance Europe. She demonstrates how the humanistic impulse emerged within the God-centered religious disciplines of a developing Islamic civilization. The chapters by Gregor Schoeler and Paul Heck also draw compelling connections between Muslim intellectuals and European thinkers, pointing to the work of Bede the Venerable

(d. 736) and Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464), respectively, and extending the insights of such cross-cultural comparisons.

If I may speak specifically about the United States, it is clear that the academic humanities are currently under siege. Concentrations in disciplines like history, philosophy, modern and ancient languages, literature, and religious studies attract fewer students, and these enrollment drops prompt administrations to close or amalgamate departments. As a related concern, funding for humanistic research has become ever more difficult to secure, and the federal agencies responsible for research support in the arts and humanities find themselves, at least in the United States, under near-constant threat of foreclosure.

While relentless budget cutting must share part of the blame for the downsizing of humanities departments, another factor exacerbates and accelerates the decline—controversy and *confusion about the purpose of postsecondary education*. There is more and more demand for higher education in the twenty-first century, yet there is less and less agreement about its aims and intents. The consequent questions are multiple: Is tertiary education a public good or a private benefit? Should it focus only upon intellectual development, or should it include civic and moral (and spiritual) formation? Should its principal purpose be workforce development, fitting students for specific industries or for particular professional careers? In the minds of many students (and their parents), linking schooling to job securement has never seemed more pressing. Elected officials and legislators who vote on university appropriations frequently argue that producing a workforce that can spark economic advancement should be the primary goal of publicly funded postsecondary education.

The *growth in size and number* of universities and other postsecondary institutions, a trend that began after World War II, continues to intensify in the twenty-first century. Some scholars have dubbed this the "massification" of higher education. Population growth, as well as major political, social, and economic shifts, have stimulated this expansion. Most nations now consider higher education an essential element in their efforts to spur social mobility and economic growth, creating the need for many more educational institutions. Yet the quality of national educational systems can vary considerably, and comparisons between countries surface substantial disparities.

Expansion has also engendered diversification. Since the nineteenth century, research-intensive universities have become the global gold standard, a European and North American model that has been exported worldwide. Yet contemporary postsecondary institutions now range from such research-intensive institutions, to liberal arts colleges, to technical institutes, to community colleges. In rapidly modernizing countries, recently established private institutions, most of them for-profit, are assuming an ever-larger share of the student population.

The growth of university populations, coupled with sharply rising economic inequality, generate problems of *access and equity*. Efforts to increase enrollment from underrepresented populations have prompted the use of affirmative action policies, quota systems, and reservation programs. Nevertheless, challenges of cost and financing remain. Even public universities are becoming more expensive, and governments are shifting the financial burden of higher education to students and families, many of whom lack the resources to respond. Statistical studies repeatedly reveal the gap in university completion rates between wealthier students and those from less advantaged backgrounds. Active efforts to foster diversity in university admissions redress these imbalances to some extent but do not erase them.

The last 50 years has also witnessed an extraordinary change in *women's educational opportunities*. Universities and colleges that had been closed to women, or had offered them very limited access, suddenly opened their doors in the final quarter of the twentieth century. In contemporary North America and Europe, women not only have achieved parity in undergraduate populations but also, in most universities and colleges, have assumed the majority position. This pattern repeats itself in nations with more recently developed systems of higher education, such as the Gulf states. Yet, as coeducational institutions increase their proportions of female students, single-sex universities, such as Ewha in Korea, Tsuda in Japan, Effat in Saudi Arabia, and Lady Sri Ram in India, continue to hold a prominent place in the higher education ecosystem. As recently as 2008, students from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka formed the inaugural class of the Asian University for Women, a new multinational venture to educate young women from underprivileged backgrounds.

Among the many forms of globalization that mark the recent decades of our contemporary world, we can count the *increasing internationalization of higher education*. Year after year student flows across the globe surge, triggered by the continuing growth of short-term study abroad and exchange programs, as well as by a boom in students seeking full degree programs beyond their own national borders. In the last decade, universities in Europe, North America, and Australia have welcomed an exponentially larger number of Asian students, with those from China forming the largest bloc. Since 1987 the Erasmus Programme and its successors have fostered student exchanges, teacher mobility, and cross-border internships within the European Union. A very recent report numbered the student beneficiaries of Erasmus at more than five million.

The repercussions of these student and faculty flows fall unevenly on developed and less developed countries. The latter suffer a significant brain drain as wealthy nations seek to hold onto the talent being educated within their borders, often by modifying immigration laws and offering other incentives to retain foreign graduates. With English becoming the lingua franca of the global scientific community, universities in many parts of the world now offer degree programs taught in English as yet another way to increase their intake of international students.

In what can be called institutional internationalization, universities themselves have reached across national boundaries to create research partnerships, bilateral faculty and student exchanges, and even branch campuses. Some prominent North American and British universities have replicated themselves in other parts of the world, building branch campuses of the parent operation. Prominent examples include the campuses of New York University in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, the consortium of American universities that offer degree programs in Qatar, and the liberal arts college in Singapore that Yale has set up with the National University of Singapore.

Within North America a different kind of internationalization—curricular internalization—builds on shifts in domestic demography. While there are various antecedents, one important stimulus was the change in immigration law enacted in both the United States and Canada in the 1960s. Within a few generations, both nations became much more “multicultural”—to use the Canadian term—and the student populations of major universities, particularly in large urban areas, grew far more diverse. Curricular adjustments quickly followed these demographic shifts. Attention to the literature, art, and religion of the Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American countries from which these new North Americans had arrived added depth and richness to the humanities and social science “area studies” curriculum fostered by postwar foreign policy interests.

A final matter worth noting in this discussion of contemporary higher education is the complex interplay of *secularization and religious pluralism*. The earliest universities in North America were founded to foster religious ends. Harvard College, established by the Massachusetts Bay colonial legislature in 1636, began as a training ground for Puritan ministers. Similar efforts followed—Yale College in 1702, King’s College (later called Columbia) in 1746, and the College of New Jersey (later called Princeton) in 1747. Even as these colleges attracted non-ministerial students, their curricula continued to emphasize classical and biblical languages, ancient history, logic, theology, and moral philosophy, all of which were considered appropriate preparation for civic participation and successful professional life. The founding of land-grant universities—schools that specialized in agriculture and engineering—in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the importation of the German model of graduate education in that century's closing decades, began to push the academic ethos from the sacred to the secular.

This trend accelerated throughout the twentieth century as many religiously founded schools severed their denominational connections. By the final decades of the century, American higher education was largely secularized, and social scientists were regularly insisting that modernization inevitably entailed the diminished impact of religion and the expansion of a secular mindset. Counter trends emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, as the changes in US and Canadian immigration laws began to transform the continent's religious demography. As noted above, Asian religions started to assume a greater presence in the North American religious landscape, just as they were doing in Britain and Europe. This soon had curricular and programmatic impacts. Religious studies departments multiplied at North American universities, supplementing more established programs in Near and Middle Eastern studies, South Asian studies, and East Asian studies. As these newer departments matured, the theoretical discussion of concepts like secularism and religious pluralism themselves became a focus of study.

To conclude this brief survey, I will recap the topics upon which I have touched: diminished attention to the humanities, confusion about the purpose of postsecondary education, growth in the size and number of universities, problems of access and equity, the change in women's educational opportunities, the increasing internationalization of higher education, and the interplay of secularization and religious pluralism. While this is by no means an exhaustive list—I have said nothing, for example, about the transformative effects of technology—these seven subjects represent important issues and challenges with which our contemporary worlds of knowledge and education must grapple. All the authors who have contributed to this anthology (and, I suspect, most of its future readers) will recognize them. I hope that they will bring that recognition to their appreciation of these pages.

In my own reading of these broad-ranging studies, the twenty-first-century issues that do not map to the medieval period of the Islamic world would be those of (1) the exponential growth in both numbers of students and numbers of institutions, (2) the social and economic quandaries that create inequities of access, and (3) the confusion about the purpose of advanced education. Certainly, institutions of learning proliferated throughout the classical and medieval periods and student populations expanded. Nevertheless, advanced education, however defined, remained an advantage of the elites. Nowhere did mass education become an active political aspiration, nor did questions of access gain significant public attention. Yet a conceptual coordinate of the elite/non-elite dichotomy certainly surfaces with those philosophers and theologians who argued that some forms of knowledge and learning could be available to all while others were suited only to the capacities of the intellectual (and spiritual) aristocracy.

Similarly, higher learning proceeded within well-understood and well-travelled pathways. And it was largely what we might today call pre-professional. Whether situated in a *masjid*, *madrasa*, or *majlis*, advanced instruction prepared students to assume the roles and functions of their teachers, be that as jurisprudents, or exegetes, or philosophers, or scientists. Even the preparation of rulers and military leaders can be considered a variant of this master-disciple model. While intellectual exposure to a number of disciplines—Arabic philology, logic, rhetoric, history, arithmetic—provided a foundation for more specialized study, the notion of a broad "liberal arts" curriculum that would suit all students for civic engagement and cultural enrichment did not exist. Yet it can be argued that given the Quranic stress on learning and the repeated scriptural injunctions to increase one's religious knowledge and experience, an encouragement for "lifelong learning" was prominent and persistent.

As I turn to other issues outlined above, I do find some intriguing connections and parallels. Starting with one that is dear to my heart, I applaud the attention that this anthology has given to women's intellectual contributions to the medieval Islamic world (and to its inclusion of so many female scholars among the list of contributors). Asma Afsaruddin's chapter, for example, sketches the impressive scope of such female involvement, although she acknowledges that no manuscripts authored by women have survived (or yet been discovered). While no one will claim that academic equity was either a goal or an accomplishment in classical Islam, highlighting women's achievements in several fields argues for a cultural continuity with the remarkable educational advances that women have made in recent decades across the contemporary Muslim world.

If I may mention one recent instance of this: A few years ago, I spoke at an extraordinary commencement ceremony in Jeddah. To the invigorating beat of Saudi drums, hundreds of young women marched into the graduation arena. Smartly attired in caps and gowns, they filed to the front of the stage, as proud parents, relatives, and friends clapped and cheered. The memory of that event remains vividly with me, both as record of the progress that has been made and as a promise for the future.

The internationalization of advanced education constitutes a second connection. Just as it is a distinguishing characteristic of our twenty-first century, so it marked higher learning in the world of classical Islam. The *ḥadīth* that exhorts and celebrates the search for knowledge "even unto China" attests to a medieval Muslim perspective that perceived the places where knowledge could be acquired to be coextensive with the expanding *umma*.

These two volumes chart both geographical and intellectual internationalism on many fronts. Yassir El Jamouhi's article on Miskawayh, for example, notes that "a particular feature of the educational discourse in classical Islam is its reception of the ancient Greek, Syrian, Christian, Jewish, Iranian and Indian intellectual heritages that became accessible through Arabic translations." My dear departed Georgetown University colleague, Barbara Stowasser, reminds us that "the stability of the Islamic cultural system, also rested on community-wide educational institutions that bore strong transregional similarities. Initially these were the mosque schools and colleges, joined in the fifth/eleventh century by the *madrasa* educational system."

Such "transregional similarities" certainly rested on institutional resemblance, but more basically, they grew from the shared thought world, the common intellectual discourse of religious belief. Here, we can find the biggest contrast between the world of classical Islam and our own. While there is a common intellectual discourse in twenty-first-century higher education, one that has a global reach and impact, it is the language of science not the language of religion. As university rankings annually demonstrate, whether the London-based THE and QS or the Shanghai-based AWRU, science dominates our contemporary research universities, creating global scholarly networks and supporting collaborative endeavors of enormous scope and scale. In the world of medieval Islam, the cohesion created by a common religious faith fueled intellectual and cultural development and created the institutions that sustained educational endeavors over many centuries. Every essay in this collection reflects the binding force of this enduring belief system and its power to preserve "religious learning between continuity and change."

Jane Dammen McAuliffe
Library of Congress
Washington, DC

Acknowledgments

The international conference Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam: Historical Foundations, Contemporary Impact was held at the University of Göttingen from October 1 to 5, 2011. It welcomed more than one hundred active participants, renowned scholars from Europe, the Middle East, and North America, along with a number of talented junior scholars and graduate students, who contributed by way of individual papers, panels, and thematic discussions, all leading to the success of this unique forum of expertise. In addition, several religious dignitaries and other eminent guests honored the audience with their presence at the opening ceremony. The conference was convened at the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Göttingen in close collaboration with Ali Shaban, professor of African Studies and former dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Translation at al-Azhar University, who was also the director of the Islamic Studies in Foreign Languages Program at Al-Azhar at that time.

The conference was dedicated to two major objectives: first, a scrutiny of the origins, ideals, theories, practices, and institutions of Islamic learning and teaching in the formative and classical periods of Islam (i.e., the seventh to fifteenth centuries CE),[1] and their interdependence with non-Muslim educational activities and developments, as well as their reception and transformation up to the present. The second objective concerned a critical analysis of the challenges and opportunities that arise from classical Islamic concepts of knowledge, knowledge acquisition, and education. As is known, the latter is particularly important since the respective classical educational issues are often directly relevant to contemporary communities and societies in the increasingly multicultural context of modern "global" civilization, both Eastern and Western.

Thus, in retrospect, this meeting of experts in 2011 offered unique opportunities for the exchange of ideas and academic collaboration on issues of crucial importance, not only for the history of Islamic education but also for contemporary discourses on learning in general. In this regard, the active involvement of distinguished scholars from both the Orient and the Occident corresponds to the aims and trajectories of inter- and transdisciplinary research in contemporary Arabic, Islamic, and education studies.

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[1] For the use of the term "classical" as both a chronological and qualitative label in the context of Islam's intellectual history, see Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought in the classical period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xi; Sebastian Günther (ed.), *Ideas, Images, and methods of portrayal: Insights into classical Arabic literature and Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), xvii–xx; and Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität: Eine andere Geschichte des Islams* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2011), 14.

The collected volumes now in hand are the main result of the Göttingen conference, and the editor is delighted to present in the following pages the formal and often significantly expanded versions of the scholarly presentations given there.

In order to keep this substantial publication structurally manageable and thematically focused, the present two volumes incorporate only the conference presentations and studies directly concerned with knowledge and education in the formative and classical periods of Islam. Not included here are those conference papers and thematic discussions that dealt with issues of learning in the contemporary Arab and Muslim world.

The editor wishes to warmly thank Professor Dr. Ali Shaban of Al-Azhar University for his significant contribution to making this meeting successful in terms of its thematic and logistic organization. Without his help, it would not have been possible for many of the participants from Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries to attend this academic meeting in Germany in person. Special thanks go also to the members of the 2011 Conference Advisory Board: our colleagues and friends Professors Asma Afsaruddin, Indiana University in Bloomington; Lale Behzadi, University of Bamberg; Maher Jarrar, American University of Beirut; Todd Lawson, University of Toronto; and Jens Scheiner, University of Göttingen.

For setting the stage for this meeting with their truly inspiring distinguished lectures, the editor is most grateful to Professor Emerita Wadad Kadi, University of Chicago, and Professor Peter Heath, former chancellor of the American University of Sharjah, who unfortunately passed away much too early in 2014. My heartfelt thanks also go to Professor Jane McAuliffe, the inaugural director of national and international outreach at the Library of Congress, for generously agreeing to enrich this publication with her thought-provoking foreword.

Particularly warm words of thanks go to Dr. Dorothee Pielow (Lauer) and Jana Newiger, members of the Göttingen Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies academic staff, whose careful and efficient work has been invaluable throughout the preparation of these diverse but deeply related individual studies for publication in ways that deserve special recognition and gratitude here. Likewise, our copy editors, Rebekah Zwanzig, Louisville, Kentucky, and Daniel Sentance, Brill's copy editor, are to be sincerely thanked for their significant editorial expertise in bringing these two volumes to fruition. I am similarly grateful to Brill's typesetter, Cas Van den Hof, and our indexer, Jacqueline Pitchford, for their highly professional work.

With gratitude, acknowledgment of generous financial support to the Knowledge and Education conference by a number of foundations and research centers is due here as well. These words of appreciation go to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Göttingen Courant Research Centre "Education and Religion" (EDRIS), Germany's Federal Foreign Office, and the Ministry for Science and Culture of the Federal State of Lower Saxony.

Last but by no means least, I cordially thank the anonymous reviewer for critically reading the complete manuscript draft and for their helpful comments. In addition, I am grateful to Professors Wadad Kadi, University of Chicago, and Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt, University of Bochum, for accepting this publication in Brill's Islamic History and Civilization (IHC) series, and to Kathy van Vliet and Teddi Dols at Brill Academic Publishers for their support in publishing these collected studies.

The Editor
Göttingen, August 2019

Notes on Transliteration and Style

Throughout the volumes we adhere to the following transliteration system for Arabic script, which is based on the scheme used in Brill's *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*:

Consonants

ʾ	d	ḍ	k
b	dh	ṭ	l
t	r	ẓ	m
th	z	ʿ	n
j	s	gh	h
ḥ	sh	f	w
kh	ṣ	q	y

Vowels

Long vowels	Short	Diphthongs
ā	a	aw
ū	u	ay
ī	i	

-a (-at in *iḍāfa*)
bi-l-kitāb *but* lil-masjid
b. and bt.
iyy (final form ī)
no initial hamza, e. g., *al-amr*

al and (-)l- (e.g. *al-kitāb*; *wa-l-kitāb*; no sun letters)
Abū l-Walīd; fī l-Qurʾān
ʿAbdallāh *but* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
uww (final form ū)
baytuhu, only in poetry, if desirable, *baytuhū*

Proper names, technical terms, and geographic designations that are common in English are either not transliterated or used in simplified transliteration. Examples of such words include Cairo, Baghdad, Kufa, Sunni and Sunnites, as well as Quran (not Qurʾan) and Sura. Examples of words in simplified transliteration are: ʿAbbasids, Ismaʿili and Ismaʿilis, Shiʿi, Shiʿite, Shiʿites.

Quranic references are noted thus: Q 50:1 or Q 73:2–6, i.e., the number of the Sura in Arabic numerals, followed directly by a colon, which is followed by the verse numbers in Arabic numerals. Quranic verse numbering follows the text now generally known as the "Cairo" or "Egyptian" official version of 1342/1923–1924.

The standard system of dating all post-Hijri events is Hijri/Christian, e.g., 786/1384–1385 and 786–796/1484–1493. Pre-Islamic dates, if not made obvious by the context in which they are used, are indicated by "CE" or "BCE."

References in the footnote apparatus are given, from their very first appearance on, in brief form. The full bibliographical data of all publications cited may be found in the bibliography included at the end of each contribution. Note that the Arabic article "al-" is disregarded in the alphabetical ordering of the bibliographical entries, while "ibn" is taken into account. For typographical reasons, the names of books and articles in English are written in lower case. For abbreviations of frequently cited periodicals and reference works, see the following list of abbreviations.

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Abbreviations

ActaAntHung	*Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
AHR	*The American Historical Review*
AI	*Annales Islamologiques*
AIUON	*Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*
AJISS	*American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
AO	*Acta Orientalia*
AO-H	*Acta Orientalia* (*Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*)
Arabica	*Arabica: Revue d'Études Arabes*
ARW	*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*
AS	*Arabian Studies*
ASP	*Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*
ATS	Arabistische Texte und Studien
AUU	*Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*
BEO	*Bulletin d'Études Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas*
BGA	Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum
BI	Bibliotheca Islamica
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*
BJMES	*British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BSA	*Budapest Studies in Arabic*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BTS	Beiruter Texte und Studien
BzI	Beiträge zur Iranistik
CER	*Comparative Education Review*
CRAI	*Comptes-rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
DA	Diskurse der Arabistik
Der Islam	*Der Islam. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients*
DIR	*De Institutione Regia*
EI^1	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., Leiden 1913–1938
EI^2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., Leiden 1954–2004
EI^3	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., Leiden 2007–
EIr	*Encyclopaedia Iranica*, London 1982–
EQ	*Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Leiden 2001–2006

ER	*Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, New York 1986
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*
FCIW	The Formation of the Classical Islamic World
FIS	Freiburger Islamstudien
GAL S	*Brockelmann, C., Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, 2 vols. + 3 suppl. vols., Leiden 1937–1943
GAS	*Sezgin, F., Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vols. i–ix, Leiden 1967–1984, Frankfurt/M. 2000–2015
GMS	Gibb Memorial Series
HCMR	History of Christian-Muslim Relations
HMEIR	*Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
IA	*İslâm Ansiklopedisi*
IBLA	*Revue de l'Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes, Tunis*
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IHC	Islamic History and Civilization
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
ILS	*Islamic Law and Society*
IOS	*Israel Oriental Studies*
IPTS	Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science
IQ	*The Islamic Quarterly*
Iran	*Iran. Journal of the British Persian Studies*
IU	Islamkundliche Untersuchungen
JA	*Journal Asiatique*
JAH	*Journal of Asian History*
JAIS	*Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*
JAL	*Journal of Arabic Literature*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JCLS	*The Journal of Catholic Legal Studies*
JE	*Jewish Encyclopaedia*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JHI	*Journal of the History of Ideas*
JIS	*Journal of Islamic Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*The Jewish Quarterly Review*
JQS	*Journal of Quranic Studies*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
MFOB	*Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale de l'Université St. Joseph de Beyrouth*

MIC	Makers of Islamic Civilization
MIDEO	*Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire*
MO	*Le Monde Oriental*
MSOS	*Mitteilung des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, Westasiatische Studien*
MSR	*Mamlūk Studies Review*
Muséon	*Le Muséon. Revue des Études Orientales*
MUSJ	*Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*
MW	*The Muslim World*
NKJV	*New King James Version of the Bible*
OC	*Oriens Christianus*
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OOM	Oxford Oriental Monographs
Oriens	*Oriens. Zeitschrift der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Orientforschung*
Orientalia	*Orientalia. Commentarii Periodici Pontifici Instituti Biblici*
PEW	*Philosophy East and West*
Qanṭara	*al-Qanṭara. Revista de Estudios Arabes*
QSA	*Quaderni di Studi Arabi*
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
RCEA	*Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe*
REJ	*Revues des Études Juives*
REI	*Revue des Études Islamiques*
REMMM	*Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*
RHR	*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*
RIMA	*Revue de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes*
RMM	*Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée*
RO	Res Orientales
ROC	*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*
ROr	*Rocznik Orientalistyczny*
RSCL	Routledge Studies in Classical Islam
RSO	*Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
RSQ	Routledge Studies in the Qur'an
SALL	Studies in Arabic Language and Literature
SGKIO	Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients
SI	*Studia Islamica*
SIr	*Studia Iranica*
SRSME	SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East
TRE, ThRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
WI	*Die Welt des Islams*

WKAS	Wörterbuch der Klassischen Arabischen Sprache, Wiesbaden 1970–
WO	*Welt des Orients*
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
ZAL	*Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZfDA	*Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*
ZGAIW	*Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*
ZMR	*Zeitschrift für Missions- und Religionswissenschaft*
ZS	*Zeitschrift für Semitistik*

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Islamic Education, Its Culture, Content and Methods: An Introduction

Sebastian Günther

> Few issues are of greater immediate concern for the Islamic world than education, for it is through the kind of education given or not given to the young that the future of the Islamic community shall be to a large extent determined.

⁂

These observations, by Seyyid Hossein Nasr, professor emeritus of Islamic studies at George Washington University and a highly respected specialist of Islamic philosophy,[1] seem to express, in a nutshell, the crucial significance "knowledge and education" have held throughout Islam's history, and continue to increasingly hold today. One reason for this state of affairs resides in the fact that a lifelong pursuit of learning is a fundamental ideal of Islamic piety; indeed, it underlies the concept of Islamic education. The other relates to the circumstance that, while the primary focus of this concept is the nurturing of religious belief and godly behavior in the individual, its scope is broadened to incorporate various so-called secular disciplines, both literary and scientific, since it aims to develop fully integrated personalities that are grounded in the virtues of Islam within the community. This religiously motivated and, to a large degree, ethically framed approach relates to both the theory and practice of primary and higher education in Islam. It is evident not only in the Quran and the literature of prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), but also in countless proverbs, aphorisms, and wisdom sayings, as well as in the poetry and prose texts of Middle Eastern literatures including, in particular, the numerous medieval Arabic works devoted to pedagogical and didactic issues.

Notably, the complex interrelation of "education and religion" in Islam is not a matter of concern that is confined to discourses in Muslim-majority countries or "the East," to use this somewhat stereotypical expression. In view of the challenges contemporary democracies are facing due to the effects of global-

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[1] Nasr, *Philosophy* 1.

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ization and migration, questions relating to Islamic education have also come to be major topics of scholarly and public debate in "the West." Indeed, in a number of European and North American countries, the content, objectives, and mechanisms of Islamic learning are major topics in current discussions at both the public and political levels. In Germany, for example, the controversial and sometimes emotionally charged discussions on establishing faith-based instruction on Islam in German public schools, or the decision of the government to launch faith-based programs in Islamic theology at several German universities, are revealing in relation to this thematic context. However, these developments are by no means the only examples of the types of questions with which we currently have to deal within the European and North American educational systems.

Given these premises, it is somewhat puzzling that—on the one hand, in spite of a visibly growing societal interest in Islamic concepts of knowledge and education in the West and, on the other, the growing amount of exciting, new, and original research conducted in Arabic and Islamic studies in this regard (we will review some of it below)—the classical foundations of Islamic learning have so far not been studied as systematically as, for example, have been their Jewish and Christian counterparts. This fact is also noteworthy because a significant number of classical Muslim thinkers anticipated in their works ideas about education that could justifiably be called "humanistic" in our contemporary context.

Therefore, taking a firm step toward changing this situation and coming to a fuller and more academically sound assessment of classical Muslim concepts of teaching and learning are major objects of the present publication. More specially, this means the contributions in these collective volumes aim to undertake:

- analytical appraisals of the foundational theories, practices, and virtues of knowledge and education in classical Islam, including such specifics as educational institutions, educational philosophies that had developed within the framework of different scholarly disciplines, and the relation between Islamic education and Muslim identity, as well as the impact of "great scholars" on Islamic learning;
- explorations of issues concerning the reception, transformation, and recontextualization of earlier (Greek, Persian, Indian, or Jewish and Christian) educational ideas in classical Islam;
- examinations of the interaction between Islamic educational systems and non-Islamic educational ideas and practices relevant to the Middle East in medieval times; and, in certain cases, and
- critical appraisals of the role and impact classical Islamic education may have on contemporary societies, both in the Middle East and the West.

This strategic outline perhaps warrants a few remarks on two key words in the present publication's title.

1 Knowledge, Education and Related Terms

"Education," in the general sense of the word, denotes the act, process, and result of imparting and acquiring knowledge, values, and skills. The expression applies to early childhood instruction as well as basic and higher learning, and thus aims to provide individuals or groups of people with the intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual qualities that help them to grow, develop, mature, and become productive members within their community and society. The term "education" is also applicable in areas that denote more purely spiritual or religious dimensions.

In pre-modern Islam (until ca. 1800),[2] the concept of education was expressed through a variety of Arabic (and Persian) terms, and most of them appear to have been used in that sense as early as in the Quran (and, in some instances, in pre-Islamic poetry). The most important are *taʿlīm* and *taʿallum* ("teaching" and "learning"), *tadrīs* ("[more advanced] instruction"), and *taʾdīb* ("tutoring," "educating"), which leads to *adab* ("cultural and intellectual refinement through education"). In the contemporary Arab world, *tarbiya* (from *rabbā*, "to make grow, rear, teach, nurture") is the word most commonly used to denote "education."[3]

The content, objectives, and details of classical Islamic learning are the subject of numerous proverbs, aphorisms, and wise sayings that are found in the different forms of literature produced in Islamic lands from the second/eighth to the ninth/fifteenth centuries. Scholarly discussions on learning and teaching are most often found in Arabic and Persian writings on philosophy and theology, but also in many historical, literary, and mystical texts. Furthermore, a central characteristic of these medieval Muslim deliberations on teaching and learning is that they are often clearly, even if not explicitly, derived from principles stated in the Quran and prophetic traditions. At the same time, however, classical Islamic educational thought was also deeply influenced by the paradigms of the ancient Greek *paideia* ("rearing," "education"), which was creatively adapted and further developed by Muslim scholars, especially during the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, despite the almost exclusively philosophical nature of educational thought in classical antiquity.

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[2] For the use of the term "pre-modern" (or "*Vormoderne*") in the context of European history, see, e.g., Müller, Archäologie 381, with more references; Drews and Oesterle, Transkulturelle Komparatistik 41–56; for the Islamic context, see Bennison and Gascoigne, *Cities* i (roughly defined as until Ottoman times). See also fn. 1 in the Acknowledgments for references on "classical" and related terms.

[3] For the connections between *rabb*, *rabbā*, *adab*, and *tarbiya*, see also Neuwirth's and Patrizi's contributions to the present publication.

The other term featuring prominently in the title of this publication is "knowledge." The Arabic word that is often translated into English as knowledge, or science, is *ʿilm*. Throughout the history of Islam, this term has acquired a spectrum of connotations and meanings, depending on the epistemological context in which it occurs. Thus, *ʿilm* came to express both sacred and secular concepts, and it may also express factual or emotional content. Contextualized within a chronological framework, *ʿilm* essentially conveys three ideas:

1. the informal acquisition of physical data in order to attain certainty in understanding the world and insight into "a higher and truer form of reality"[4]—an idea already expressed in the Arabic term before the rise of Islam;
2. divine knowledge, in the sense of truth and the unity or interconnectedness of all that can be known—a concept advanced in the Quran and further developed in the prophetic traditions, thus providing sacred ground for the notion of a comprehensive, lifelong quest for learning and human growth; and
3. an individual branch of knowledge or a scholarly discipline, from which the plural form of the word *ʿulūm* ("sciences" or "the sum of all knowledge") derives.[5]

Therefore, in Islam the expressions *ʿilm* and *ʿulūm* came to designate (a) the religious disciplines concerned with the preservation and study of the divine revelation and the development of religio-political regulations for the Muslim community, and also (b) the sciences concerned with the study of the world in general, including natural phenomena, as well as related philosophical problems. While the former disciplines were based on the Quran and the literature of prophetic traditions (and were thus called *al-ʿulūm al-Islāmiyya*, "Islamic sciences," or *al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya*, "transmitted sciences"), the latter accelerated through the Muslim creative adaptation and incorporation of the ancient Greek, Persian, and Indian intellectual heritage into Islamic culture and civilization (and were thus called *ʿulūm al-qudamāʾ*, "sciences of the ancients," or "foreign sciences"; or *al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*, "rational sciences"), including reason-based philosophy and the natural sciences in particular.

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[4] Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant* 18.

[5] Cf., above all, ibid. 41–45; Biesterfeldt, Hellenistische Wissenschaften, esp. 22–37; Günther, Education, and Daiber's contribution to this publication.

While *ʿilm* seems to denote "the highest quality of [knowledge] because it is that which [the classical Arabic lexicographers] allow to be an attribute of God,"[6] there are a number of synonyms for this term, each expressing a specific connotation or nuance in meaning. Most notably, there are *maʿrifa* ("knowledge [acquired through reflection or experience]," cognizance; also gnosis), *ʿirfān* ("knowledge," "cognition," often used in the Irano-Shiʿi context as gnosis), *fiqh* ("understanding," "intelligence"; also jurisprudence), *ḥikma* ("wisdom"; also philosophy) and *shuʿūr* ("realization or cognition," resulting in knowledge; with *shiʿr* meaning poetry).

Furthermore, relevant within the context of the Quran are the derivatives of the verbs *yaqina* ("to be sure," "to know something with certainty," including the theologically charged *yaqīn*, "certainty"), *ẓanna* ("to think" or "to assume"), and, as some exegetes suggest in order to explain Q 13:31, *yaʾisa* ("to know," although it usually means "to give up hope").[7]

It is worth recalling Johann Fück's (d. 1974) short but particularly insightful article *Das Problem des Wissens im Qurʾān* (posthumously published in 1999). Here, he notes that in the Quran knowledge is portrayed as closely connected with and, in fact, derived from divine revelation. Consequently, knowledge and faith, objective cognition and inner conviction, came to be viewed by Muslim theologians as two sides of one and the same coin—an understanding that clearly differs from, for instance, the respective views of Christian theologians. Fück then also states,[8]

> [The Prophet of Islam] had great respect for knowledge, and to this day a certain intellectual disposition has remained a characteristic feature of the religion he founded. Islam knows no peace, which surpasses all understanding,[9] and no beatitude for the poor in spirit.[10] This religion does not ask of those who wish to enter paradise that they become like

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[6] Lane, *Arabic-English lexicon* v, 2138.

[7] Ibid.; Fück, Problem 12–19; Walker, Knowledge 100–104.

[8] Fück, Problem 30–31. Transl. S. Günther.

[9] Cf. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:6–7, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Trans. NKJV.

[10] Cf. Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is in the New Testament the opening verse of the *Sermon on the Mount* and the section of the sermon known as the "Beatitudes." Transl. NKJV. Here, Fück obviously understands "poor in spirit" as intellectually limited or inferior with regard to the application of reason.

> little children.[11] It knows nothing of those who do not understand and yet believe.[12] Indeed, a Muslim theologian would never have thought that his faith could be viewed as folly by the ancient Greeks; nor would he have adopted the paradox *credo quia absurdum*.[13]

It was this kind of emerging intellectualism, as Fück maintains,

> that gave Islam a firm inner strength vis-à-vis all other confessions. [Moreover,] it was highly instrumental for this new religion as it met Oriental Christendom with a welcoming attitude toward progress and with confidence in the future, thus swiftly eclipsing its elder sister, exhausted as she was from centuries of dogmatic battles. At times [this intellectualism] humbly expressed itself in a high esteem of knowledge and insight; while on other occasions it promoted rationalism.

The perception of "Islam" and "reason" as complements rather than opposites gained ground in classical Islamic learning in numerous ways, and was further developed by generations of Muslim scholars; the Andalusian thinker Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) is perhaps the best-known representative from the classical period, while the liberal Moroccan critic and philosopher Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī (d. 2010) is the most prominent in the contemporary Arab world.

This pivotal interplay and tension between religion and faith in Islam is of major concern in several of the following chapters. Yet, before providing brief summaries of these contributions, a few comments about the state of Western research on knowledge and education in classical Islam may provide useful context for the studies included in these two volumes.

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[11] Cf. Matthew 18:2–6, "Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.'" Transl. NKJV.

[12] Cf. John 20:29, "Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" Transl. NKJV.

[13] A Latin phrase meaning, "I believe because it is absurd," (mis-)attributed to the prolific early Christian author Tertullian (ca. 155–ca. 240 CE) in his *Treatise on the Incarnation, De Carne Christi*. The original phrase, "It is certain because it is unfitting," was changed through Protestant and Enlightenment rhetoric against Catholicism to "I believe because it is absurd" and used in more personal, religious contexts.

2 Literature Review

During the last ten to fifteen years, several comprehensive works have been published in major western languages on topics central to knowledge and learning in pre-modern Islam. These publications deal with issues such as the development, nature, and mechanisms of teaching and learning; the classification and Islamization of knowledge; institutions of basic and higher education; the material, legal, and organizational foundations of institutionalized education; the social stratification of instruction and human upbringing; the educational concepts and practices of individual scholars and their impact on Muslim societies; and issues in Islamic ethics, which both result from and influence the relationship between education, religion, and politics. On the one hand, these studies attest to contemporary Islamic studies scholars' keen interest in reaching a fuller appreciation of the complex historical developments and details of educational theory and practice in Islam. On the other, they document the serious attempts made in Western academia to look—through the lens of critical historical and cultural studies—for answers to important challenges contemporary societies, in both the East and West, are facing due to globalization and increasing cultural and religious diversity in Europe and North America.

2.1 *Previous Research*

Western scholarship's interest in issues central to Islamic education, however, stretches back at least a millennium, as a few examples illustrate. In the eleventh century, Constantinus Africanus (d. before 1089/99), a Christian from Tunis who was in the service of Robert Guiscard (d. 1085), the Count of Apulia and Calabria and the Duke of Sicily, rendered the works of Greek and Muslim physicians into Latin, an achievement that significantly stimulated the Medical School of Salerno and scholarship in the Occident in general. This was also a time when the Latin Church was increasing their missionary activities, of which the Crusades in the Holy Lands (1095–1291) were the most visibly political and military expressions, while the famous first Latin translation of the Quran, by Petrus Venerabilis (d. 1156), the abbot of Cluny Abbey, France, which was published in 1143, provides prominent scholarly evidence of these developments.[14]

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[14] Fück, *Arabischen Studien* 4.

Around the same time, awareness of the rapidly advancing sciences in the Muslim lands increased in Europe considerably. This, among other things, apparently was the reason why Gerhard of Cremona (d. 1187) travelled from his native Italy to Toledo in al-Andalus. It is there, in medieval Muslim Spain, that he learned Arabic and eventually became one of the most important translators of scientific and medical books from Arabic into Latin. Among his numerous translations, *De scientiis* (*On the sciences*), his Latin rendering of *Kitāb Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm* (*The enumeration of the sciences*) by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), stands out because, in this work, al-Fārābī not only enumerates the sciences but also outlines their significance for the purposes of learning.[15]

Western studies of Islamic education were motivated by other impulses in the early stages of the Age of Enlightenment, because European scholars began to view reason as the primary source of understanding, knowledge, and insight. An example from the seventeenth century is the theologian and philologist Abraham Ecchellensis (Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāqilānī, d. 1664). A Maronite, he was educated in Rome and later appointed professor of Syriac and Arabic at the Collège de France in Paris. He translated the treatise *Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim ṭarīq al-taʿallum* (*Instructing the student in the method of learning*), a pedagogical treatise by the philosophically inclined theologian and legal expert Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī (fl. at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century), into Latin. Al-Zarnūjī's manual was widely read in the Arabic-speaking Middle East and was already famous in medieval times, as the work's numerous manuscript copies that are preserved in Oriental libraries suggest. Apparently, this Muslim author was prompted to write his treatise because, as he states in the opening paragraph of his book, in his day "many students of learning [were] striving to attain knowledge but failing to do so and … [were] thus barred from its utility and fruition"; thus, it was the author's "desire to elucidate the proven methods of study" that he himself "had either read about in books or heard from [his] learned wise teachers."[16] The Latin translation of al-Zarnūjī's *Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim* was published in 1646 as *Semita sapientiae, sive ad scientias comparandas methodus* (*The path to wisdom*, or *The method of acquiring the sciences*). Remarkably, in his introduction to the translation, Abraham Ecchellensis makes a strong plea for European Christians' obligation to read and learn from the works of the Arabic philosophical tradition. He supports his point by stressing that the culture of the Arabs had much to offer intellectually and that the advice to students from a Muslim philosopher comes from someone "who writes in the trust of God."[17]

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[15] Schupp, *al-Fārābī*, and Galonnier, *Gérard de Crémone*.

[16] Engl. tr. von Grunebaum and Abel, *Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim* 1.

Barthélemy d'Herbelot (d. 1695), the French orientalist, made significant information about the culture, history, and literature of the Muslim world known and accessible to a European readership through his monumental *Bibliothèque orientale, ou dictionnaire universel contenant tout ce qui regarde la connoissance des peuples de l'Orient* (1697). The material in this *Bibliothèque orientale*—which is, in some way, the predecessor to our present-day *Encyclopaedia of Islam*—is largely extracted from the great Arabic encyclopedia *Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn* (*Removing the doubts concerning the names of the books and the arts*) by the celebrated Ottoman scholar Kātib Çelebi, "the gentleman scribe," also known as Ḥajjī Khalīfa (d. 1069/1657). D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* was posthumously published by Antoine Galland (d. 1715), the scholar, traveler, and professor of Arabic at the Collège de France, who fascinated and excited European readers with his *Les mille et une nuits* (*One thousand and one nights*, published in 12 volumes between 1704 and 1717, and translated soon afterward into German and English). These scholarly and literary activities contributed to significant changes in the views of learned Europeans, who now began to see the Islamic Orient no longer as the place of the Anti-Christ and heresies, but as a place of fairytale-like riches and colorful beauty and, importantly, a deep culture of knowledge and learning.[18]

In the spirit of the Enlightenment, at the beginning of the eighteenth century another Latin translation of al-Zarnūjī's *Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim* was published, by Adriaan Reland (Adrianus Relandus, d. 1718), professor of Oriental languages at Utrecht in Holland. This publication was titled *Enchiridion studiosi* (*Handbook for students*, 1709), and contained both the Arabic original and the Latin translation of al-Zarnūjī's treatise. The Arabic text was based on a transcript prepared in 1691 in Paris by Salomon Negri (Sulaymān b. Yaʿqūb al-Shāmī al-Ṣāliḥānī, known also as Sulaymān al-Aswad, d. 1729), the Damascene Arabic teacher of a Danish scholar by the name of Frederic Rostgaard (d. 1745).[19]

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[17] *Sed in Deo omnem ponat fiduciam*, see Ecchellensis, *Semita sapientiae*, 58. See also Rietbergen, Maronite mediator 13–41.

[18] Fück, *Arabischen Studien* 100–101.

[19] Interestingly, Negri also taught Arabic at Halle/Saale, where Christian Benedikt Michaelis (d. 1764), father of Johann David Michaelis (d. 1791), the famous Göttingen theologian and orientalist, was among his students. Cf. Fück, *Arabischen Studien* 96–97, 102. See also *Salomon Negri and the "Marvels of creation,"* Cambridge University Library Special Collections, https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=13807.

Rostgaard had studied Arabic in Giessen, Germany, before moving to Leiden, Oxford, and Paris to continue his legal and philological studies. And it was Rostgaard who rendered the Arabic into Latin in Rome, with the help of the Maronite scholar Joseph Banesius.[20]

Likewise illustrative for our outline is the European reception story of one of the most brilliant Arabic novels about autodidactic learning, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān: Fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqiyya* (*Living, son of wakeful: On the secrets of Oriental wisdom*). This book by Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185), the prominent physician and philosopher who lived in Marrakech and Granada, was translated into Hebrew very early on and was published in 1349 with a commentary by Moses ben Joshua of Narbonne (d. 1370). The first Latin translation, *Philosophus autodidactus, sive Epistola Abi Jaafar ebn Tophail de Hai ebn Yokdhan* (*The autodidactic philosopher, or The treatise of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān by Abū Jaʿfar ibn Ṭufayl*), was undertaken by the English orientalist and biblical scholar Edward Pococke (d. 1691) and published by his son in 1671,[21] followed one year later by a Dutch translation, as well as two English translations shortly thereafter. The first two German translations were published in 1726 and 1783, followed by further renderings into Spanish, Russian, and other languages.[22]

Last on our list is Henri Sauvaire (d. 1896), a French scholar who served as a consul in Damascus and Casablanca, and who began in 1864, with his *La description de Damas*, the magnificent project of an abridged translation of *Tanbīh al-ṭālib wa-irshād al-dāris* (*Instruction for the seeker* [*of knowledge*] *and guidance for the student*) by the Damascene scholar ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ al-ʿAlmawī (d. 981/1573–1574). This French rendering, first published in several volumes in the *Journal Asiatique* (1894–1896), to date represents a rich primary source on classical Islamic learning and its institutions, now available in a European language.[23]

Among the first Western studies on Islamic education, which today can justifiably be considered "classics" in the field, are *Die Akademien der Araber und ihre Lehrer* (1837) and *Geschichte der arabischen Ärzte und Naturforscher* (1840) by the Göttingen orientalist Ferdinand Wüstenfeld. Also of note is *O Kind!*

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[20] Fück, *Arabischen Studien* 102. See also Larsen, *Frederik Rostgaard* 150 (English summary).

[21] While the initial translation seems to have been made by the famous scholar Edward Pococke, it was his son, of the same name, who completed and published it, including a preface by his father in the published book. Cf. Fück, *Arabischen Studien* 90, and Nahas, Translation of Hayy B. Yaqẓān 88–90.

[22] Günther, Glimpse 259.

[23] Reprint of the ed. Paris 1894–1896 by Fuat Sezgin 1993.

Die berühmte ethische Abhandlung Ghasali's. Arabisch und deutsch, als Neujahrsgeschenk (1838), the earliest German translation of al-Ghazālī's famous *Ayyuhā l-walad* (*Letter to a disciple*), by the Austrian diplomat and orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Around the same time, Daniel Bonifacius von Haneberg, a German Catholic bishop and orientalist, first wrote his *Abhandlung über das Schul- und Lehrwesen der Mohamedaner im Mittelalter* (ca. 1850), a short and nearly forgotten study on Islamic schooling, which is still worth reading when placed in its historical context; a decade later, he published his *Zur Erkenntnisslehre von Ibn Sina und Albertus Magnus* (1866).

Ignaz Goldziher's famous treatise *Die Stellung der alten islamischen Orthodoxie zu den antiken Wissenschaften* (1916) appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century. In it, the author assembled the main objections and resentments certain medieval Muslim religious scholars leveled against the Hellenistic sciences, especially the philosophical ones, because they considered this kind of knowledge "useless" or even "dangerous" for pious Muslims. Khalil A. Totah published *The contribution of the Arabs to education* (1926; 2002), a well-documented introduction to the subject. *The Islamic book: A contribution to its art and history from the VII–XVIII century* (1929) by Sir Thomas W. Arnold and Adolf Grohmann is another important early study that highlights the impact written culture had on Islamic learning. Oskar Rescher's German rendering of *Adab al-dunyā wa-l-dīn* (*Proper conduct in matters of the world and religion*) by the legal scholar and political theorist Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), published in three volumes (1932–1933), made an important text on secular and religious education and ethics available in a European language. In 1910–1911, Carlo-Alfonso Nallino presented the first detailed Western analysis of the word *adab* in a series of lectures at Cairo University. These lectures were published in an edited Italian version by Nallino's daughter (1948) and translated into French by Charles Pellat and published as *La littérature arabe* (1950).

Written in the years of hardship during World War II, Ignatij Krachkovkij's *Nad arabskimi rukopisjami* (*Bent over Arabic manuscripts*; 1946) offers a beautiful account of an early twentieth-century Russian orientalist's humanism. This special, sensitively written book on the love and care for books and people associated with the Arabic manuscript tradition was translated into several European languages, including German and English, and it is not surprising that it is still today, at least at some universities, recommended reading for students of the Arabic-Islamic heritage.

Furthermore, Ahmad Shalaby's *History of Muslim education* (1954), Bernard Dodge's *Muslim education in medieval times* (1962), and Abdul Latif Tibawi's *Islamic education* (1972) are very useful guides on medieval Muslim learning, its institutions, and its curricula. Franz Rosenthal's *The technique and approach of Muslim scholarship* (1947) and *Knowledge triumphant: The concept of knowledge in medieval Islam* (1970, 2007) are two publications on the concepts of knowledge and the culture of teaching and reading in Islam that are indispensable to anyone working on these topics today. This is especially true in light of how the latter elucidates the large extent to which *ʿilm* ("knowledge") and its pursuit ("learning," "knowing") have shaped medieval Muslim society. Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (1967–2016, 18 vols.), covering both the religious and the non-religious sciences in Islam up to the fifth/eleventh century, is a well-known and indispensable reference work in the field. Sezgin's introductions to Quranic exegesis, the prophetic tradition, historical writing, cultural and literary history, Islamic law, dogmatics, and mysticism in the first volume in particular have shaped the scholarly discourse on the transmission of knowledge and learning in early Islam in significant ways. Based on a close study of primary sources, Johannes Pedersen's classic *The Arabic book* (originally published in 1946 in Danish and in an English translation in 1981) offers unique insights into the physical production of Arabic books in the realm of Islam and also outlines the roles that literature and scholarship played in medieval Islamic society.

2.2 *Current Studies*

More recently, Stanislav M. Prozorov offered an erudite survey, in Russian, of Shiʿi historical, Arabic writing in Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia, from the first/seventh to the middle of the fourth/tenth century (1980), including biobibliographical case studies of 70 important early Shiʿi scholars, as well as a wealth of other information on Shiʿi learning in terms of Quran commentaries and *ḥadīth* transmission unavailable in other handbooks. Similarly insightful bibliographical surveys of classical Muslim scholarship were published by Konstantin Boiko on the formation of Arabic historical writing in al-Andalus from the second/eighth to the first third of the fifth/eleventh centuries (1977) and in Egypt between the first/seventh to the first half of the fifth/eleventh centuries, as well as, in another volume, on Egypt in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries (1983, 1991). Furthermore, Malaké Abiad's *Culture et éducation arabo-islamiques* (1981, 2014) is also of note, as she traces Islamic learning in Greater Syria (*Bilād al-Shām*) during the first three Islamic centuries. Her study is based on information included in *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (*The history of the city of Damascus*) by the prominent Damascene historian Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 499/1105). Furthermore, Dimitri Gutas's *Classical Arabic wisdom literature* (1982) and *Greek thought, Arabic culture* (1998) tackle questions central to knowledge and learning in Islam, and from amongst George Makdisi's pioneering works, *The rise of colleges: Insti-*

tutions of learning in Islam and the West (1984) prominently traces the development and organizational structures of educational institutions in Islam while, at the same time, reassessing contemporary scholarship on the origins and growth of the *madrasa*. Ira Lapidus's *Knowledge, virtue, and action* (1984) contains a very helpful overview of the classical Muslim concepts of *adab* and their relationship with religion, while the first part of her *A history of Islamic societies* (1988) offers insight into the Islamic religious, artistic, and intellectual culture. The concise *Bibliographie systématique sur l'éducation islamique* by Abdelwahab Belambri (1988) provides systematic data on survey studies, as well as case studies of institutions, representatives, theories, and regional specifics of Muslim schooling. *Religion, learning and science in the ʿAbbasid period*, edited by M.J.L. Young et al. (1990), with its specific chapters on different scholarly disciplines and major Muslim thinkers, has meanwhile become a standard reference work on Islamic education. Regional specifics within Islamic learning are exemplarily scrutinized in Jonathan Berkey's *The transmission of knowledge in medieval Cairo* (1992), Michael Chamberlain's *Knowledge and social practice in medieval Damascus* (1994), and Maria Eva Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov's *The curriculum of Islamic higher learning in Timurid Iran* (1995). The collection of studies *Centres of learning: Learning and locations in pre-modern Europe and the Near East*, edited by Jan W. Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (1995), includes at least three studies important in our context: Fred Leemhuis's "The Koran and its exegesis: From memorising to learning," Geert Jan van Gelder's "Arabic didactic verse," and Wolfhart Heinrich's "The classification of the sciences and the consolidations of philology in Islam." *The classification of knowledge in Islam* is also the topic of Osman Bakar's volume, which contains a foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1998). It focuses on the concepts of three thinkers, al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 710/1311), while M. al-Naquib al-Attas's *The concept of education in Islam* (1999) examines the philosophical framework of Islamic education.

Adam Gacek's "trilogy" on the *Arabic manuscript tradition* (2001–2009) offers rare and learned, analytical insights into the technical idioms, processes, and peculiarities of Arabic writing materials and the professionals associated with them in medieval Islam. Fundamental topics in the history of more explicitly religious Islamic learning have been assessed by Gregor Schoeler in several cutting-edge studies that examine the interplay of oral and written components in the transmission of knowledge in early Islam. His central findings were first published in a series of articles written in German and later incorporated into two books, *The oral and the written in early Islam* (2006) and *The genesis of literature in Islam* (2009). Heinz Halm published *The Fatimids and their traditions of learning* (1997), and Josef van Ess's multivolume *Theologie* *und Gesellschaft* (1992, especially volume four) has specific chapters on the organization of teaching and learning, the culture of debates, and the relationship between faith and knowledge in early Islam. The topics of debate, disputation, argumentation, and quarrel are pursued also in Jane D. McAuliffe's "Debate with them in the better way" (1999) concerning the Quranic text and context.

Daphna Ephrat's fresh outlook in *A learned society in a period of transition* (2000) explores the medieval Muslim world of learning beyond its legal and institutionalized confines. By making the Sunni *ʿulamāʾ* of fifth/eleventh-century Baghdad her focus, she exposes the social networks and shared values of religious Muslim scholarship at that time. Habib Affes's *L'éducation dans l'Islam durant les deux premiers siècles* (*Ier et IIe/VIIe et VIIIe siècles*) (2002) offers a three-volume major study of educational ideas in the Quran and the prophetic traditions and traces their development in classical Arabic-Islamic civilization. The study focuses on (1) the formation of educational thought in the first/seventh century; (2) its growth in the second/eighth to sixth/ twelfth centuries; and (3) the period of "stagnation," as he calls it, in the seventh /thirteenth to eighth/fourteenth centuries. Within this framework, he discusses several prominent Muslim scholars who wrote on education and explores the methods, means, and objectives of classical Muslim learning. This offers him the opportunity to deal with the educational approaches taken in the legal, traditionalist, mystical, philosophical, and theological (here: Ashʿari) traditions.

The volume *Judíos y musulmanes en al-Andalus y el Magreb* (2002), edited by Maribel Fierro, studies the intellectual and cultural contact between Muslims and Jews in the medieval Islamic West, including, for example, important questions about how language functioned as an identity marker in these cultural encounters. Mention needs to be made of Paul Heck's *The construction of knowledge in Islamic civilization* (2002), along with several related articles by him that explore the construction, hierarchy, and transmission of knowledge. Along these thematic lines, in a series of journal and encyclopedia articles (2002–2018), Sebastian Günther offers insights into pedagogical issues involving the Quran, the prophetic traditions, the development of the *madrasa* as the preeminent institution of higher religious learning in Islam, and on what he calls "Islam's classical pedagogical tradition." Furthermore, Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt's deeply perceptive studies *Arabisch-islamische Enzyklopädien: Formen und Funktionen* (2002) and his *Hellenistische Wissenschaften und arabisch-islamische Kultur* (2003), along with *Philosophy, science and exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin commentaries* (2 vols., 2004), edited by Peter Adamson et al.—including, especially, Robert Wisnovsky's *The nature and scope of Arabic philosophical commentary in post-classical* (*ca. 1100–1900 AD*) *Islamic intellectual his-*

tory (2004)—are of great interest. *Law and education in medieval Islam*, edited by Joseph Lowry et al., *Reason and inspiration in Islam* (2005), edited by Todd Lawson, and *Islamic science and the making of the European renaissance* (2007) by George Saliba are other examples of highly informative Western publications on the complex themes of knowledge and education in Islam. Gerhard Endress's edited volume *Organizing knowledge* (2006) analyzes what he calls pre-modern Muslim "knowledge societies" in connection with issues related to religious and legal learning, as well as the rational sciences and their Greek roots, while *Writing and representation in medieval Islam* (2006), edited by Julia Bray, including in particular her own study on the littérateur Abū ʿAlī al-Tanukhī (d. 384/994), open fascinating windows onto medieval learning ideals and reality. *Islam and education: Myths and truth* (2007), edited by Wadad Kadi and Victor Billeh, combines nine comparative studies, which explore questions of learning in Islam from medieval times until today, covering different geographical areas of the Muslim world, from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Pakistan to Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and Morocco. Devin Stewart's *Islamic legal orthodoxy* (2007) investigates Twelver-Shiʿi responses to the Sunni legal system and is an important study of certain Shiʿi scholars who lived and studied among Sunnis. G.H.A. Juynboll's large *Encyclopedia of canonical Ḥadīth* (2007), the result of the author's lifelong preoccupation with Islam's literature of prophetic traditions, offers unique access to key components of classical Islamic knowledge and education as contained in the six collections most esteemed by the majority of Muslims and therefore termed "canonical" by Western scholars.

The issue of learning is approached from another angle by Lale L. Behzadi in *Sprache und Verstehen* (2009), a study addressing the communication theory of the virtuous classical littérateur al-Jāḥiẓ and its role in learning. Both Samer M. Ali's *Arabic literary salons in the Islamic Middle Ages* (2010) and Behzadi's *Muslimische Intellektuelle im Gespräch* (2012) highlight the role literary assemblies have played in classical Arabic-Islamic culture, not only for literary discourse but also for learning more specifically.

Bülent Ucar's article "Principles of Islamic religious education" (2010) and Michael Merry and Jeffrey Milligan's (eds.), *Citizenship, identity, and education in Muslim communities* (2010), also deserve mention, while *Classical foundations of Islamic educational thought* (2010), published by Bradley J. Cook, is an accessible handbook, with parallel English and Arabic texts, that introduces pre-modern Muslim educational thought and practice to the Western reader on the basis of select primary sources.

The fourth part, "Learning, arts and culture," of *Islamic cultures and societies to the end of the eighteenth century* (2011), edited by Robert Irwin, presents several important chapters on education, the role of the sciences in Islamic societies, the occult sciences and medicine in particular, and literary and oral cultures, as well as Islamic art and architecture, and music. Martin van Bruinessen (ed.), in *Producing Islamic knowledge* (2011), explores the influence medieval Muslim and Christian scholars appear to have had on the development of European educational thought, and Konrad Hirschler's richly documented book *The written word in medieval Arabic lands* (2012) offers a social and cultural history of reading practices in Islam.

Ulrich Rudolph's first volume of *Philosophie in der islamischen Welt* (2012, English 2016), which promises to be four tomes in total, is an important new reference work that comprehensively surveys the historical developments and characteristics of Islamic philosophy in the second/eighth to fourth/tenth centuries, while also mirroring the respective findings of modern scholarship since the 1980s. It also provides helpful insight into the specifics of learning and teaching of both major and minor classical Muslim thinkers and into the framework of their divisions of the sciences into logic, epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, natural philosophy, and the natural sciences (especially mathematics, physics, and astronomy). Hans Daiber's important *Islamic thought in the dialogue of cultures* (2012) highlights the pluralism of educational values in medieval Islam and their significance for modernity, while Doris Decker's *Frauen als Trägerinnen religiösen Wissens* (2012) deals with the possibilities and limitations of female education in classical and postclassical Islamic traditions. The latter author essentially takes up a line of thought evident in Wiebke Walther's *Die Frau im Islam* (1980) and Manuela Marín's *Writing the feminine*: *Women in Arab sources* (2002).

Whereas Ahmad S. Dallal's sophisticated *Islam, science, and the challenge of history* (2010) studies the significance of scientific knowledge in relation to other cultural activities in Muslim societies, two innovative examinations of learning activities under the Mamluks (1250–1517 in Egypt) were undertaken by Christian Mauder in *Gelehrte Krieger: Die Mamluken als Träger arabischsprachiger Bildung* (2012) and the monumental publication *In the sultan's salon: Learning, religion and rulership at the Mamluk court of Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī* (*r. 1501–1516*) (2 vols., forthcoming).

Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki's *The quest for a universal science* (diss., 2012) and Noah Gardiner's *Esotericism in a manuscript* (2014) offer unique insights into the development of the occult sciences in Islam—a topic explored already in Emilie Savage-Smith's edited volume *Magic and divination in early Islam* (2004). These researchers have further published a number of important articles on related topics. In addition, in *Education and learning in the early Islamic world* (2012), we have reprints of key studies in the field, which were collected and annotated by Claude Gilliot. Similarly, the anthology *Von Rom nach Bag-*

dad (2013), edited by Peter Gemeinhardt and Sebastian Günther, documents the current interest in the history of Islamic and other religiously based educational traditions. This topic is also taken up by Jens Scheiner and Damien Janos (eds.) in *The place to go: Contexts of learning in Baghdād, 750–1000 C.E.* (2015), a book that introduces the reader to education and religion before the rise of the *madrasa*. In *The heritage of Arabo-Islamic learning* (2015), Maurice A. Pomerantz and Aram Shahin (eds.) present 25 studies that illustrate the extent to which Islam was born from a culture that highly valued teaching and education. *The study Quran: A new translation and commentary* (2015), published by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (editor-in-chief), is noteworthy here, as it offers a thorough, scholarly understanding of this holy text through an analysis of its theological, metaphysical, historical, and geographical teachings and contexts, alongside its accessible and accurate English translation. Sonja Brentjes and J. Renn's (eds.) *Globalization of knowledge in the post-antique Mediterranean, 700–1500* (2016) offers insight into the sophisticated ways of knowledge production in the late antique period in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, while Konrad Hirschler's *Plurality and diversity in an Arabic library* intriguingly explores the content, structure, and organization of the Ashrafiya Library, a large Sunni place of knowledge and learning in the center of medieval Damascus. Todd Lawson's *The Qur'an, epic and apocalypse* (2017) explores how literary categories and genres, when applied to Islam's Holy Scripture, have facilitated people's understanding of the Quran as divine revelation throughout history. The Madrasa-yi Sulṭānī and other mosque-*madrasa*s built in Safavid Iran (1588–1722) are the focus of Maryam Moazzen's *Formation of a religious landscape* (2017), a study of Shiʿi higher learning. Insightfully, Sabine Schmidtke and Hassan Ansari's *Studies in medieval Islamic intellectual traditions* (2017) revisits educational phenomena within the framework of classical Islamic thought through a close examination of manuscript material. Alexey A. Khismatulin's "Text-books for students by Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali" (2018), published in Russian, is devoted to two works by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghāzalī, the eschatological *Zād-i ākhirat* (*Provisions for the journey to the hereafter*, written in Persian), conceived by the author as a textbook on religious education for non-Arabic beginners—perhaps, those of his own circle at Ṭūs—and the *Bidāyat al-hidāya* (*The beginning of guidance*), which he prepared earlier in Arabic, apparently as a religious handbook for *madrasa* students.

The volume *Die Geheimnisse der oberen und der unteren Welt* (*The secrets of the upper and the lower world*, 2018), edited by Sebastian Günther and Dorothee Pielow, offers important new insights into "magic" as a cultural feature of the Islamic world. It identifies and problematizes numerous related subtopics, key practitioners, and theoreticians in the Arabo-Islamic context, which makes this book a reference work for both specialists and a broader readership interested in these still understudied aspects of classical Islamic learning. Last on our list, Sonja Brentjes's *Teaching and learning the sciences in Islamicate societies* (*800–1700*) (2018) is a recent example of a highly perceptive study that specifically looks at the mathematical and occult sciences, medicine, and natural philosophy.

To conclude this preliminary and necessarily incomplete survey of Western literature on classical Islamic learning,[24] we offer a few brief remarks on current projects on Islamic education. To begin with, at Princeton we have Sabine Schmidtke's long-term endeavor to study the rich intellectual tradition of the Zaydi community. In Göttingen, Sebastian Günther is working with Dorothee Lauer (Pielow) on a database of classical Islamic pedagogy, which serves as the main resource for his handbook *Medieval Muslim thinkers on education*. Another major Göttingen research project Günther is working on, together with Yassir El Jamouhi, studies Islamic Ethics as Educational Discourse: Thought and Impact of the Classical Muslim Thinker Miskawayh (d. 421/1030).[25] Likewise of note are the Islamic Education Research Network, launched at the University of Warwick by Abdullah Sahin; the Bibliotheca Arabica, a long-term research project at the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities in collaboration with the University of Leipzig, directed by Verena Klemm, which aims to gain new insights into the development of Arabic literature from 1150 to 1850 mainly based on manuscript studies; and last but not least the Islamic Scientific Manuscripts Initiative (ISMI) at McGill University in Montreal with its tremendous amount of information on the exact sciences in the pre-modern Islamic world, accessible through the internet, free of charge.

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[24] There is, of course, a vast and important body of contemporary publications on the topic in Arabic, Persian, and other languages of the Muslim world available to scholars in Islamic studies. In order to keep the present, already large publication, focused, we have restricted our literature reviews to pertinent Western languages studies and translations.

[25] It is part of the interdisciplinary Göttingen Research Center "Bildung und Religion in Kulturen des Mittelmeerraums und seiner Umwelt von der Antike bis zum Mittelalter und zum Klassischen Islam," financially supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

3 Summary of Research Studies in This Publication

In Part 1, *Setting the stage* for our collective studies, Wadad Kadi's opening plenary lecture, "The humanities through Islamic eyes: The beginnings," reflects on the status of the humanities in the classical period of Islamic civilization. Kadi begins by discussing the ways early Muslim scholars, especially those preoccupied with exegesis (*tafsīr* or *taʾwīl*), law (*fiqh*), and theology (*kalām*), introduced a humanistic impulse into the religious disciplines. She goes on to show how, despite some differences, these humanist disciplines are comparable to the *studia humanitatis* of Renaissance Europe in terms of their subject matter and methodology. Kadi concludes her lecture by illustrating how Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist* is an expression of an early Islamic humanist endeavor and the precedence it gives to the study of humanistic disciplines.

Part 2, *Prophetic mission, learning, and the rise of Islam*, commences with Angelika Neuwirth's "'Arcane knowledge' communicated in the Quran." Here, the author provides a study of the revelation of hidden knowledge in the early and middle Meccan Suras. She begins by showing how the Quranic concept of eschatological disclosure is embedded in its historical milieu. She goes on to analyze the changing perceptions of the medium of writing in the pre- to early Islamic period, and demonstrates how the early Quranic revelations convey at least two different notions of hidden knowledge that are communicated through writing, the register of men's deeds composed by the celestial watchers, and the spiritual knowledge that God hides in the realm of *ghayb*—a term whose use in the Quran comes close to meaning the "unseen" or "arcane." Finally, the important role the "act of reading" the Quran had in establishing its place within the monotheistic tradition is highlighted.

In "Muhammad as educator, Islam as enlightenment, and the Quran as sacred epic," Todd Lawson sheds light on the epic structure of the Quran, its themes of heroism and enlightenment, and how its compilers responded to the specific literary expectations of their audience. The study combines an analysis of the manifestation of epic forms and themes in the Quran with a discussion of Muhammad's heroic role as the educator of humanity. The author argues here that the Quran's epic structure, and its use of typological figuration to tell the story of Muhammad's life, imparts a new vision of the world to its readers and a new understanding of their place in history.

Gregor Schoeler's "Divine inspiration, storytelling, and cultural transfer: Muhammad's and Caedmon's call" takes a fresh, innovative look at the narrative of Muhammad's call to prophethood and traces the details found in the Quran and those in Ibn Isḥāq (d. ca. 150/767) and *ḥadīth* collections. He makes a distinction between the Quranic revelation and narrative reports about the event and analyzes other literary models for accounts about Muhammad's call. The study concludes with a striking comparison between the literary details found in Ibn Isḥāq and the Anglo-Saxon historian and theologian Beda Venerabilis's (d. 736) narrative of the earliest known English poet, Caedmon (fl. ca. 657–684; famous for his *Hymn* in praise of God, which he is said to have learned to sing in a dream), and analyzes a possible "cultural transfer" that may have occurred.

Next, Martin Tamcke's "The exercise of theological knowledge in the Church of the East, provoked by coexistence with the Muslims (seventh century CE)," illustrates how encounters with Muslims had an impact on the doctrines and teachings of the Church of the East. The patriarch Īšōʿyahb III's (r. 649–659) reaction to Islam reveals a surprisingly sophisticated theological debate, which led to the reformulation of the Church's own theological profile. The author reveals Īšōʿyahb's conviction that his congregation had to convince Muslims of the kinship of their beliefs and doctrines. Īšōʿyahb also appears to have realized that the members of his congregation needed to be sufficiently educated in theology and trained for theological debate. The author concludes that the encounter with the religious "other" resulted in an increased engagement with the Church of the East's own doctrines and teachings.

Jamal Juda's "Contributions of the *mawālī* ('new converts to Islam') to education in early Islam" (*al-Mawālī wa-l-tarbiya wa-l-taʿlīm fī ṣadr al-Islām*) is a paper in Arabic that traces the function non-Arab clients, converts, or freedmen, known as *mawālī* (s. *mawlā*), fulfilled in early and classical Islamic learning. The chapter meticulously studies Arabic sources referring to notable figures among the *mawālī*, up to the Umayyad period, who made significant contributions to teaching and learning. Juda reveals how *mawālī* were able, in a relatively short period of time after the Muslim conquests, to become both active and integral parts of nearly all fields of classical Islamic education, including Quranic recitation, exegesis, the prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), and the linguistic sciences, as well as medicine and translation activities. The author also shows how some *mawālī* managed to assume key positions in the Islamic state as scribes (*kuttāb*) and fiscal agents in the administration, or as tutors for children of the elite (*awlād al-khāṣṣa*). This paper strikingly highlights the pluralistic and cosmopolitan character of early Islamic knowledge acquisition and education.

Part 3, *Rational vs. spiritual approaches to education*, begins with Nadja Germann's "How do we learn? Al-Fārābī's epistemology of teaching." Here, the author looks at an understudied aspect of al-Fārābī's writings on education, his epistemology of teaching. Interestingly, she defines al-Fārābī's understanding of teaching as the transmission of an intellectual heritage that consists of a specific corpus of antique and late-antique texts. She also clarifies that, for al-Fārābī, true knowledge can only be acquired through a process of deduction from first premises. Furthermore, the author calls attention to the important place the philosophy of language occupies in al-Fārābī's writings. We note finally that al-Fārābī defines teaching as the teacher's speech evoking concepts within the student's mind.

Thematically closely related to Germann's study, Mariana Malinova's "Al-Fārābī and his concept of epistemological hierarchy" addresses the role al-Fārābī's understanding of knowledge and the epistemological process play in his thinking. By looking at al-Fārābī's cosmology and his views on philosophy, religion, humankind, society, and the philosopher-prophet as the "perfect ruler," the author compellingly illustrates the philosopher's intention to construct a universal epistemology or paradigm of human knowledge. This epistemology is meant to serve as the foundation of a social utopia in which the tensions between the need to transcend the material world, while simultaneously engaging in its organization, are resolved.

Yassir El Jamouhi's "Educational discourse in classical Islam: A case study of Miskawayh's (d. 421/1030) *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*" analyzes Miskawayh's renowned ethical work *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (*The refinement of character traits*) as a source for the study of educational discourse in classical Islam. El Jamouhi focuses on Miskawayh's reception and transformation of the ancient Greek intellectual heritage. He shows that Miskawayh's work is characterized by an attempt to harmonize ancient Greek moral philosophy with Islamic discourses about the world and God and concludes that Miskawayh's method is best described through its critical and selective reception of various sources, its rational approach to religious phenomena, and its understanding of ethics as a universal good.

In "Teaching ignorance: The case of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)," Paul L. Heck studies al-Ghazālī's understanding of learning and knowledge against the backdrop of the fifteenth-century German philosopher, theologian, and jurist Nicholas of Cusa's concept of "learned ignorance." Heck illustrates how al-Ghazālī's skepticism regarding the philosophers' claim to have authoritative knowledge of the true reality of God led him to develop a new method of learning. Al-Ghazālī promoted a monistic view of existence in which humans must see God with their minds and realize that all exists *in* or *with* God. The author concludes that a concept that could be called "learned ignorance" lies at the heart of al-Ghazālī's project of religious renewal, a concept that combined skepticism and monism for the benefit of people to experience, love, and obey God.

Likewise interested in al-Ghazālī, Steffen Stelzer's "*Al-Rafīq qabla l-ṭarīq*: Remarks on al-Ghazālī's view of Sufism as a way of learning religion" explores the role of Islamic mysticism for and in Islamic education by examining two of al-Ghazālī's works, *Ayyuhā l-walad* (*Letter to a disciple*) and *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*The deliverance from error*).[26] The chapter traces a few stations of the Sufi path of learning (one's) religion, beginning with al-Ghazālī's distinction between knowledge that is useful on the path to the hereafter and that which is useless. It explores the importance of companionship in Sufi learning and the way in which the knowledge about the Prophet—as the exemplar for Islamic education—can be acquired only through immediate (individual and collective) experience. It concludes that the role mysticism plays for Islamic education ultimately consists in educating people to be living examples of the *sunna*, and thus to prepare them to receive the divine light whenever it occurs.

Sebastian Günther, in "'Only learning that distances you from sins today saves you from hellfire tomorrow': Boundaries and horizons of education in al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd," then continues to explore how the two famous Muslim scholars understood the issue of the limits and obstacles to human education. Based on a comparison of the epistemological views expressed in al-Ghazālī's

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[26] While *Ayyuhā l-walad* has commonly been viewed as a work originally written by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in Arabic, recent research casts significant doubt on this attribution. It suggests instead that this treatise was compiled in Persian one or two generations after Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's death, and entitled *Ay farzand* (the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *Ayyuhā l-walad*). Three different sources have been identified by modern scholarship as being used for this later compilation: (1) Two genuine letters by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, which are both part of a medieval collection of his correspondence titled the *Faḍā'il al-anām min rasā'il Ḥujjat al-Islām* (*The virtues of people* [*drawn*] *from the epistles of the Proof of Islam*). In this collection, the two respective letters are listed under nos. 4 and 33. While letter no. 4 is quoted in *Ay farzand* only partly, letter no. 33 is quoted in full, despite the fact that these quotations are found scattered throughout the work. The *Faḍā'il al-anām* was published by ʿAbbās Iqbāl Ashtīyānī (Tehran 1333/1954) and translated into Arabic, under the same title, by Nūr al-Dīn Āl (Tunis 1972). (2) The second source is a letter known as *ʿAyniyya*, written by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's younger brother, the mystic Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), and addressed to his famous disciple, the mystic and theologian ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī (d. 525/1131). The letter was published by Aḥmad Mujāhid as part of the *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i fārsī-yi Aḥmad-i Ghazālī* (*Collection of Persian writings by Aḥmad Ghazālī*, Tehran ^{2}1370/1991). (3) The third identified source is a letter by ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, which is addressed to one of his own disciples. This letter was published by ʿAlīnaqī Munzawī and ʿAfīf ʿUsayrān in the *Nāmahā-yi ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī* (*Letters by ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī*, Tehran 1362/1983). For the full evidence and an extensive discussion of these issues, see Khismatulin, *Sochineniya Imama al-Gazali* (*The writings of Imam al-Ghazali*), especially Text IV, which deals with the *Ay farzand*. I sincerely thank Alexey Khismatulin for drawing my attention to these important findings in al-Ghazālī studies.

al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl (*The deliverance from error*) and Ibn Rushd's *Faṣl al-maqāl fī mā bayna al-sharīʿa wa-l-ḥikma min ittiṣāl* (*On the harmony of religion and philosophy*), Günther identifies these scholars' approaches as knowledge acquisition and learning. He demonstrates that the two scholars differed in the ways they assessed what kind of education people should—and could—seek, based on factors like personal abilities and virtues or the applicable learning methods. This study highlights also that while al-Ghazālī proposed an inclusive approach to learning, Ibn Rushd tended to privilege the intellectual elite and limit the scope of education for the majority of the population.

Moving on to a study of the celebrated Persian poet and scholar Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), in "A Sufi as pedagogue: Some educational implications of Rūmī's poetry," Yoones Dehghani Farsani proposes an innovative reading of Rūmī's celebrated, extensive poem the *Mathnawī* ("The spiritual couplets") as a source of educational theories. Based on Rūmī's understanding of humankind as composed of a spiritual and a physical component, and possessing free will, he characterizes Rūmī's education as primarily religious, ethical, and intellectual in nature and dependent on both the individual's disposition and will to learn. The author identifies five principles of Rūmī's theory of education. Education is a gradual process that must take place within a community, take people's different tastes and mental and emotional capabilities into consideration, and start with matters of conduct (*adab*), and that is a process that can ultimately succeed only through God's benevolence.

Part 4 is dedicated to the topic of *Learning through history*. In "Ibn Isḥāq's and al-Ṭabarī's historical contexts for the Quran: Implications for contemporary research," Ulrika Mårtensson makes a case for rereading the biography of the Prophet (*Sīra*) literature as a potential source for the study of the Quran's context. This type of literature is usually excluded from scholarship on the Quran's context because of its allegedly "religious" and "apologetic" nature. Mårtensson analyzes Ibn Isḥāq's (d. 150/767) *Biography of the Prophet Muḥammad* and al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) history and Quran commentary to show the implications of historians' use of religious concepts to refer to political and societal issues in the context of the Quran. By analyzing both Ibn Isḥāq's and al-Ṭabarī's interpretations of the role of the "Moses' Covenant model" in the Quran, she shows that both authors provide historical theories based on a contextualization of the Quran in reference to Judaism and Christianity.

In "Scholars, figures, and groups in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*," Jens Scheiner offers a comprehensive analysis of the scholars, figures, and groups mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* (*The conquest of Syria*), an important historical source on the early Muslim expansion into Greater Syria. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, he sheds light on the relationships between the work's literary characters, as well as their function within the narrative. His analysis reveals the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s consistent use of tribal and religious terminology to characterize and group individuals into a number of constructed categories. Scheiner's findings not only contribute to our understandings of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative at large; they also provide further evidence concerning the compiler-authorship of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Azdī.

In Part 5, *Literature as method and medium of instruction*, Shatha Almutawa's "Education through narrative in *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*" analyzes the pedagogical reasoning behind the use of different types of stories in the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ wa-khillān al-wafāʾ* (*The epistles of the Brethren of Purity and loyal friends*), the famous fourth/tenth-century philosophical and religious encyclopedia. The analysis of the *Rasāʾil* is based on reading select narratives in the light of the work's overarching goal, to purify and free the reader's soul through a process of education and renunciation of the material world. The author shows how the educational and sometimes seemingly contradictory messages of different stories change when they are read together. She suggests that by spreading certain meanings across several stories the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ were not only hiding potentially controversial opinions but, in this way, they also conveyed their specific theory of education, according to which knowledge had to be presented gradually, using a variety of methods.

Mohammed Rustom's "Storytelling as philosophical pedagogy: The case of Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191)" offers a close reading of Suhrawardī's *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl* (*The reverberation of Gabriel's wing*) in order to illustrate the text's employment of symbolic language in conveying its educational message. The appearance of Gabriel to guide readers on the journey through the various levels of the cosmic order is one of the story's most prominent features, and Rustom focuses his analysis on the function of Gabriel's "wing." The study shows that the story's various symbols function to convey to the readers their own cosmic situation. In this context, Gabriel's wing hints at humanity's celestial origin to which they must return.

Then, in "The masters' repertoire (*mashyakha*) and the quest for knowledge," Asma Hilali and Jacqueline Sublet offer new reflections on methods of transmission beyond the major *ḥadīth* compilations. Based on material gathered in their *ṭalab al-ʿilm* project, they engage in an examination and comparison of the terminology and content of numerous *mashyakha* documents that consist of lists of transmitters and literary fragments, including prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), literary narratives (*qaṣaṣ*), historical accounts (*khabar*), and poetry. Their analysis compellingly illustrates the complexity of the transmission project, which is partly due to the multiplicity of actors who contributed their testimonies to the documents. This chapter points out the "selectivity" involved in the method of mentioning these actors. It also notes the dynamic link between the *mashyakha*'s biographical content and literary compositions.

Michael G. Carter's "The use of verse as a pedagogical medium, principally in the teaching of grammar," investigates the use of poetry in education, including a tentative list of pedagogical texts in verse from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries CE. The study highlights poetry's importance in Arabo-Islamic education by illustrating the ubiquity of versification in all subjects. Carter offers a series of hypotheses on the development and function of the use of poetry in education. He suggests a historical framework for the emergence of versified pedagogical grammar and argues that innovative presentation of familiar material and facilitation of its memorization by the teacher, rather than the students, were the driving forces behind the employment of poetry in education.

Classical Muslim learning is studied from a different perspective in Alexey A. Khismatulin's "Islamic education reflected in the forms of medieval scholarly literature: *jamʿ*, *tāʾlīf*, and *taṣnīf* in classical Islam." Here, the author elaborates on the often-overlooked differences between the three main forms of Arabic and Persian scholarly writing during the classical period of Islam, *jamʿ* (collection), *tāʾlīf* (compilation), and *taṣnīf* (classification or composition). Through a careful comparative analysis of forewords to medieval Arabic and Persian writings, the author shows that, while *jamʿ* and *tāʾlīf* refer to a mere "synthesis" of information from oral or written sources, *taṣnīf* adds "analysis." *Taṣnīf* is more likely to indicate new literary and scholarly approaches and point to changes in traditional forms, structures, and content in Arabic and Persian writings, regardless of the particular field of study to which the respective work belongs.

Antonella Ghersetti's "Primary schoolteachers between *jidd* and *hazl*: Literary treatment of educational practices in pre-modern Islamic schools" brings together legal and literary texts to analyze pre-modern jocular representations of schoolmasters' practices in primary education. It shows how certain literary texts parody the image of primary educators and their duties by systematically reversing the image that is depicted in the legal sources and portrays them as violating their educational and moral obligations. Remarkably, Ghersetti notes that the main accusations against the schoolmasters, a faulty relationship with knowledge, are comparable to those brought forward in derisive representations of learned men in general.

Luca Patrizi's "The metaphor of the divine banquet and the origin of the notion of *adab*" explores the history of the term *adab* in connection to the image of the "banquet," as was proposed by early Arabic lexicographers. This has been dismissed by Western scholars in favor of interpreting *adab* as referring to "custom," and has only recently received serious consideration. He traces connections between nutrition and knowledge in a number of other traditions (Greek, Mesopotamian, and Jewish), focusing on the Sasanian convivial banquet (*bazm*). When Persian *kuttāb* (secretaries, writers) encountered the ancient meaning of the root *ʾ-d-b*, they appear to have used the metaphor of the divine banquet to merge the notion of "etiquette" (linked to the *bazm*) with the pre-Islamic notion of *adab* as "education."

Then, in "Wisdom and the pedagogy of parables in Abraham Ibn Ḥasday's *The prince and the ascetic*," Jessica Andruss engages in a textual analysis of the sixth chapter of Ibn Ḥasday's text in order to explore the translation of Arabic scholarship by Jewish intellectuals during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE in northern Spain and southern France. She exquisitely illustrates how Ibn Ḥasday shaped his Arabic source into a medieval Jewish discourse on knowledge and education by looking at Ibn Ḥasday's use of Hebrew as an educational language, his employment of the *maqāma* genre, and his biblical citations. She then places Ibn Ḥasday into the wider context of the Maimonidean tradition's promotion of parables' pedagogical value.

Part 6, *Travel, the exact sciences, and Islamic learning*, begins with Barbara Stowasser's "War and travel, Patrons and the mail: The education of Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048)." Professor Stowasser was expected to participate in the 2011 Göttingen conference but had to cancel due to health issues. Fortunately, she sent us the long version of her paper shortly before the meeting began, which makes it possible to present it here in edited form. Professor Stowasser passed away much too early, in 2012, and it appears that this substantial study of al-Bīrūnī was the last paper she wrote. In it, the author looks at the life and work of the fourth/eleventh-century Muslim scientist. The study persuasively demonstrates that the ongoing political unrest in Eastern Iran and Central Asia forced al-Bīrūnī to travel frequently from one court and patron to another, and this meant that he was constantly associating with new scholars and confronting new approaches, theories, and ways of thinking. As a result, al-Bīrūnī's continually expanding scholarly network appears to have contributed to the interculturality so distinctive of his work. Moreover, Stowasser's study sheds new light on the importance of the Arabic language as the lingua franca of scholarship in the Islamic realm, and on the fact that, in spite of the difficult political circumstance and his frequent changes in location, al-Bīrūnī was able to continue to work and be productive and original throughout his career.

In "Variants of Galenism: Ibn Hindū and Ibn Riḍwān on the study of medicine," Lutz Richter-Bernburg shows how, despite their fundamental agreement, the two authors' attitudes toward the mode of Galenism that was passed on, or appropriated, from late antique Alexandria still tangibly differed. On the one hand, the medical scholar, philosopher, and poet Abū l-Faraj Ibn Hindū (d. 423/1032), harking back to Galen himself, yielded to the “savants’ consensus” about the Galenian “Sixteen” and the medical curriculum they entailed only with reservations. On the other hand, the physician and astrologer Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Riḍwān (d. ca. 453/1061) wholeheartedly embraced the Alexandrian selection, notwithstanding his protestations of unswerving fealty to the Pergamene master—and to Hippocrates. Interestingly, in this paper Ibn Riḍwān is examined for his often casual, situational advocacy of their study, while as regards Ibn Hindū, the focus is on his deployment of some of Galen’s isagogic and protreptic works.

Sonja Brentjes’s “Teaching mathematical and astronomical knowledge in classical and post-classical Islamicate societies” concludes this thematic part of the book. In her contribution, she addresses the lack of research on the teaching of non-religious sciences by gathering information on the teaching of mathematical and astronomical knowledge from the third/ninth to the eleventh/seventeenth centuries, especially in Ayyubid and Mamluk urban centers, from biographical dictionaries. Teaching methods did not undergo significant changes in this period, but there were considerable shifts in the sources, institutions, and loci of education. Moreover, she also shows that teaching mathematical and astronomical knowledge shifted from the courts to teachers’ and students’ living spaces, and to a variety of institutions, including religious ones.

Part 7, *Politics of knowledge and Muslim Identity*, begins with Sara Abdel-Latif’s “The development of a Sufi anti-curriculum: Politics of knowledge and authority in classical Islamic education.” Here, the author looks at the power struggles between political rule and religious authority in light of the *ʿulamā*ʾ’s development of Sunni educational curricula during and after the *miḥna*. It analyzes the Sufi master Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī’s (d. 412/1021) exegetical and encyclopedic writings, in which he compiled a canon of Sufi knowledge. Al-Sulamī relied on the *ʿulamā*ʾ’s genealogical modes of knowledge transmission, while also challenging their authority by asserting the Sufis’ position as representatives of unmediated divine knowledge. She concludes that, by offering an alternative path to authoritative knowledge based on experiential learning, al-Sulamī challenged the *ʿulamā*ʾ’s curriculum-based learning.

In “Knowledge in the Buyid period: Practices and formation of social identity,” Nuha Alshaar describes the multiple social-intellectual groups that emerged in the Buyid period, such as the “court-based groups” the Buyids patronized in order to build an autonomous political identity, and the "knowledge-based" groups, like the semi-independent legal schools and other mono- or multidisciplinary circles, which developed their own curricula and methodologies. Her analysis persuasively reveals the interaction between the scholars' work and the period's sociopolitical changes, including the effects of the Buyids' inability to claim religious legitimacy for their rule, the competition between various Buyid emirs, and the increasingly territorialized knowledge production that led to scholarly specialization.

Enrico Boccaccini's "A ruler's curriculum: Transcultural comparisons of *Mirrors for princes*" provides an overview and comparison of the topics that authors of *Mirrors* addressed in their respective works, illustrating what a model curriculum for the education of monocratic rulers looked like from the second/eighth to the seventh/thirteenth centuries. Boccaccini studies four Christian and Islamic texts from the genre and emphasizes the importance of reimagining the interactions and relations between these societies. He argues that scholarship needs to explore further the diverse ways the authors of the four texts interpreted the elements of this shared model of rulership, and the implications this has for understanding the transcultural interactions taking place during this period.

In "Interpretive power and conflicts of interpretive power: Caliphate, religion, and 'true' Islamic education at the dawn of the seventh/thirteenth century in Baghdad," Angelika Hartmann analyzes the educational policies of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (d. 622/1225), the thirty-fourth ʿAbbasid caliph, in light of the conflict over interpretive sovereignty in matters of religion. The study begins with an overview of the political and social history of the caliphate in Baghdad at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century, focusing on the institutions and officeholders that competed for the "power of interpretation." The author scrutinizes al-Nāṣir's systematic expansion and reestablishment of Sufi convents and his personal involvement in *ḥadīth* scholarship and concludes with the important insight that both played a crucial role in the caliph's claim to interpretative authority and political power.

Mustafa Banister's "The *ʿālim*-caliph: Reimagining the caliph as a man of learning in eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth-century Egypt" sheds light on the caliph's role in the late Mamluk period. It shows how, in a period of shifting political realities, the office of the caliph, after it had lost most of its political and religious authority, was reimagined as a scholarly one. The scholarly caliph did not represent a threat to the Mamluk sultans' authority, who benefitted from the combination of the caliph's religious symbolism and his prestige as a man of learning. Banister also illustrates the ways in which the *ʿālim*-caliph and the *ʿulamāʾ* interacted, at investiture ceremonies or providing each other with finances, credibility, or instruction.

Part 8 is devoted to *Principles and practices in Ibadi and Shiʿi learning*. In "Teaching ethics in early Ibadism: A preliminary study," Jana Newiger looks at the history and beliefs of this early Islamic minority, which emerged after the second *fitna* of the Islamic *umma* (61–65/680–684), shedding light on an understudied sect from the formative period of Islam. Newiger looks at some of the group's key ethic concepts, including *ʿilm* (religious knowledge), *qadar* (predestination), and the concept of the imamate, using texts from prominent Ibadi *kalām* theologians of the second/eighth century. She concludes by looking at the educational activities of the Ibadis, paying particular attention to the concept of "teacher lines."

Ali R. Rizek's "Scholars of Ḥilla and early Imami legal tradition: Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd, 'the two ancient scholars,' retrieved" traces the reception history al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī ʿAqīl al-ʿUmānī and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Junayd al-Iskāfī, two fourth/tenth-century Imami legal scholars known as *al-Qadīmān* (the two ancient scholars). Surveying references to their opinions, the study shows how these scholars were reintegrated into mainstream Imami *fiqh* after falling into obscurity. The study also focuses on the important role Ḥilla scholars played in retrieving early Imami *fiqh* traditions. Rizek thus suggests that the development of the Imami scholars' position toward the two corresponded with their attitudes to *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and *khilāf* (lit.: controversy; counterargument).

Maryam Moazzen's "Shiʿi higher learning in the pre-Safavid period: Scholars, educational ideals, practices, and curricula" presents a survey of Shiʿi institutions of learning and their impact on Shiʿi intellectual culture. The focus of this examination is the history of Shiʿi higher education during the first seven centuries of Islam, which tells the story of fundamental intellectual changes within the wider political and cultural settings of Muslim society at that time. The author points to the numerous similarities between Shiʿi and Sunni *madrasa*s in terms of their organization, curricula, practices, and role in the spreading of their respective branch of Islamic "orthodoxy." Moreover, the chapter emphasizes the important role that educational institutions played in the establishment of Shiʿism as a distinct religious division within Islam.

Part 9, *Gender, human growth, and Muslim authority in Muslim education*, begins with "Denial of similitude: The exegetical concern with gender in 'And the male is not like the female' (Q 3:36)" by Hosn Abboud. In this paper, Abboud looks at a particular phrase in the story of Maryam's infancy that rejects similitude between male and female and analyzes the various exegetical approaches to this binary statement. By reflecting on the classical exegetes' comments regarding the linguistic and grammatical features in the Quranic text, as well as their broader interpretations of the phrase's narrative and cultural context, the author sheds light on gender in the Quran, and here in particular on certain questions regarding readings of this phrase that advocate superiority of the male over the female.

Agnes Imhof's "'If music be the food of love?' The singing-girls and the notion of *ṭarab* as part of an *adab*-ideal" reveals the link between notions of enrapture and the intellectual and lettered *adab*-ideal in the context of singing-girls' performances in classical Islam. Imhof traces the development of *ṭarab* (lit. "joy" or "pleasure," a synonym for music, which denotes a range of emotions) from its Greek, pre-Islamic Arabian, and Persian beginnings to its entry into the discourse of Arabic-Islamic literature and etiquette (*adab*). The study suggests that music and musically induced excess (*ṭarab*) became part of the identity of the religiously indifferent urban intellectuals, while *adab* simultaneously came to be considered an element of the singer's ideal. Thus, the concepts expressed by these terms are examples of the ambiguity and fluidity of ideas and cultural expressions in classical Islam.

Mohsen Haredy, in "Women scholars of *ḥadīth*: A case study of the eighth/fourteenth-century *Muʿjam al-Shaykha Maryam*," explores the life and work of Maryam al-Adhruʿiyya (d. 805/1402) as an example of the active role that women have played in *ḥadīth* transmission. The author amply illustrates the significant involvement of women in the reception and transmission of religious knowledge and thus casts doubt on stereotypes of women's seclusion and exclusion from scholarship in medieval Islam. This is especially informative in regard to the role of women in *ḥadīth* transmission and the way this kind of knowledge diffusion was perceived and documented.

Asma Afsaruddin concludes this section with "Knowledge, piety, and religious leadership in the late Middle Ages: Reinstating women in the master narrative." In her study, the author challenges the traditional narrative of the decline of women's public roles after the third/ninth century by turning to one of the most important biographical works of the Mamluk period, the *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* (*The book of women*) by prominent Mamluk *ḥadīth* scholar and prosopographer Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 903/1497), providing examples of women who were recognized for their achievements as scholars and religious leaders. The author pieces together the stories of women studying in private or academic institutions, receiving and conferring *ijāza*s (licenses of transmission), reciting the Quran, memorizing poetry, participating in *ḥadīth* transmission, and even endowing educational institutions, thus providing an invaluable account of women's active engagement in religious instruction.

Finally, Part 10, *Transformations of classical Muslim learning*, opens with Christian Mauder's "The development of Arabo-Islamic education among members of the Mamluk military," which reveals the sophisticated system of

Mamluk education that produced numerous well-educated slave soldiers in the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century and throughout most of the eighth/fourteenth century. The quantitative analysis of a comprehensive biographical dictionary indicates that many important Mamluks of this early period were credited with scholarly achievements that were considered worthy of mention alongside those of the local scholarly elite. Remarkably, the author uses the office of the *dawādār* (chief secretary) to illustrate the Mamluk system's structural need for such well-educated members of the military and thus adds another important insight to our knowledge of Mamluk intellectual history.

Mehmet Kalaycı's "Dissociation of theology from philosophy in the late Ottoman period" explores changes to philosophical theology in the Ottoman Empire and its eventual decline in the tenth/sixteenth century. After philosophical theology had dominated the Ottoman *madrasa* tradition throughout the ninth/fifteenth century, a number of political developments led to its downfall. As a result, the author observes, the framework of Sunni theology in the late Ottoman Empire became increasingly narrow and lost most of its dynamism. This development eventually led to the crystallization of Islamic religious thought, which in turn became the starting point for the reformist approaches in Sunni parts of the Islamic world.

Hans Daiber's "The Malaysian scholar Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (b. 1931) on Islamic education: An evaluation in view of classical Islamic sources," concludes this wide-ranging and multifaceted offering of new scholarship. In view of al-Attas's impact as the founder of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur, this final chapter sheds light on this scholar's reliance on earlier Islamic traditions, especially al-Fārābī. In al-Attas's concept of education, the Quran and the prophetic tradition appear as archetypes of knowledge and proper conduct. Furthermore, al-Attas, as this study shows, is probably best understood as an "Islamic humanist" who promotes education as an ongoing process of the acquisition of divine knowledge via the Quran.

With these preliminary insights into the intellectually rich topics of *Knowledge and education in classical Islam*, the editor hopes that readers will benefit from and enjoy the learned and often perspective-changing studies included in these two volumes, and that they will be useful for both experts and students of Islam's intellectual history.

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PART 1

Setting the Stage

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CHAPTER 1

The Humanities through Islamic Eyes: The Beginnings

Wadad Kadi

One of the distinctive features of Islamic civilization is that it emerged within the context of a religion, Islam, and that it was largely shaped by the elemental position occupied in it by Islam's scripture, the Quran, and by the actions of the first generations of Muslims that charted the early stages of Islamic history. As for the Quran, it is simply inconceivable to envision anything Islamic without it, just as it is inconceivable to envision anything Christian without Christ. For Muslims, the Quran was—and still is, of course—the word of God, revealed to His Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, during the latter's mission in Arabia between 610 and 632 CE. In Islamic civilization in particular, the Quran is a divine *text* to be studied from every imaginable angle, for the purpose of understanding it as accurately as possible. This led to the gradual emergence of several disciplines of learning that were called the "Islamic sciences"; they are comprised mainly of Quranic interpretation (or exegesis), law, theology, and spirituality.

In that civilization, however, the Quran was not only a divine text but also one that was revealed in a particular language—Arabic; the Quran itself made several statements to that effect. Although this did not lead to the perception that Arabic was a "holy" language, it did lead to an enormous amount of activity in studying Arabic. As a result, several branches of Arabic philology emerged, mainly grammar, morphology, and rhetoric, and the study of Arabic poetry, prose, metrics, and style also flourished. Furthermore, these disciplines—the "Arabic sciences," as they were called—heavily infiltrated the various Islamic disciplines, for they were indispensable for understanding the divine Arabic text on a basic level. That gave birth to the new collective designation, "the Arabo-Islamic sciences."

Alongside the Quran, Islamic civilization was shaped by the experience of the first generations of Muslims during the first century and a half of Islamic history (seventh-eighth centuries CE), four of whose features concern us here. The first was the swift conquest of the Near East and beyond by the Muslims, so that within decades they were in control of almost all of the lands between India and Spain. These lands were inhabited by populations of a dizzying array

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of ethnicities and religions, who had witnessed over the millennia one civilization after another, from the ancient Egyptian to the Greek and Roman, and further through late antiquity. Faced with such a situation, the Muslims made a highly consequential decision—neither to force the indigenous populations to convert to Islam, nor to "melt" down their great achievements, but to work with them to construct the edifice of a new civilization, destined to become known as Islamic civilization.

The second feature of the early Muslims' experience was the Islamic state. This state, presiding over an ever-expanding empire, officially categorized the indigenous populations as a "protected people" (*ahl al-dhimma*), whereby they could keep their respective religions through paying taxes, with the result that the Muslims did not become a majority in Islamic lands until the fourth/tenth century. On the other hand, the state worked hard to Islamicize the state and society and further the civilization, through instituting such symbols as an Islamic calendar and currency. More important, it lent its authority and resources to the successful launching of three enormously important projects. The first was the standardization of the text of the Quran, so that only one version of it was made canonical—the version that is still with us today. The second was the so-called "Arabization of the diwans," whereby all government records had to be written in Arabic, not in the local languages of the previous empires, thus making Arabic both the official language of the Islamic state and civilization and also the lingua franca of its diverse populations. And the third was the formal launching of a global translation project, in which the state oversaw, organized, and paid for the acquisition of thousands of manuscripts, from Byzantium and elsewhere, and for their translation into Arabic, whereupon the works of Aristotle, Galen, and Ptolemy, among many others, became part and parcel of Islamic civilization, leading to the rise of new areas of inquiry called the "sciences of the ancients," eventually changing the face of Islamic civilization.

The third feature of the early Muslims' experience was the discovery of paper as an ideal medium for writing, to replace the more expensive and bulky papyrus and costly parchment, and hence the emergence of what we may call "the culture of the book" as a hallmark of Islamic civilization. Paper increased literacy among the populace and efficiency in the state's record keeping; most important, it enabled scholars to write large tomes and multivolume works. As a result, entire markets for books in big Islamic cities emerged, scribes constituted a recognizable professional group, and seekers of learning indulged themselves in the thrills of book culture.

The last, but not least, important feature of the early Muslims' experience consisted of human capital, the scholars, littérateurs, and intellectuals who were occupied, often to the point of obsession, with learning and writing books (i.e., in acquiring and disseminating knowledge that was of significance to them), either in disciplines traditionally part of the humanities, like literature and history, or in disciplines outside of the humanities, like religion and science, where even there they discussed matters significant to them as human beings. And when, in the early third/ninth century, they wrested from the state the power to direct Muslim religious life, they did not develop into an organized ecclesiastical hierarchy, into a church, but rather, remained scholars whose métier was knowledge.

Now, while knowledge lies at the foundation of all civilizations, in Islamic civilization, as Franz Rosenthal has stated in his book on the concept of knowledge in medieval Islam,[1] knowledge, *ʿilm* in Arabic,

> is one of those concepts that have dominated Islam and given Muslim civilization its distinctive shape and complexion. In fact, there is no other concept that has been operative as a determinant of Muslim civilization in all its aspects to the same extent as *ʿilm* … There is no branch of Muslim intellectual, religious and political life, and of the daily life of the average Muslim that remained untouched by the all-pervasive attitude toward "knowledge" as something of supreme value for Muslim being. *ʿIlm* is Islam, even if the theologians have been hesitant to accept the technical correctness of this equation.[2]

In this study, entitled *Knowledge triumphant*, Rosenthal discusses various aspects of the relationship between religion and knowledge in Islam. He notes that, in the Quran, knowledge is one of God's attributes. Divine knowledge is the source of human knowledge and is quantitatively superior to human knowledge and qualitatively different from it.[3] Since it is in religion that the two come face to face, "true human knowledge" is "equated with religious insight,"[4] so that religious knowledge is the only knowledge that "has any real value" and "truly deserves to be called knowledge."[5] Despite that, Rosenthal adds, the Quranic view of the world allows for the existence of a secular human knowledge,[6] and, more important, "the reason for the existence of divine knowledge as well as its final destination are, in a manner of speaking, man and his need and desire for knowledge,"[7] which means that knowledge, just like religion, "remains the goal of all worthwhile aspirations of mankind."[8]

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[1] Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant*.

[2] Ibid., 2.

[3] Ibid., 29.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 30.

[6] Ibid., 31.

What I would like to do in the remainder of this address is to take these observations as a starting point to see how they played out in Islamic civilization in a manner different from that undertaken by Rosenthal. I would, first, like to see whether, and if so how, the men who constructed early Islamic civilization made room for a central position for man in their investigations of the religious disciplines that are God-centered—in other words, whether these men brought into the religious disciplines a humanistic impulse. I would then like to see whether there are any parallels between the man-centered disciplines cultivated in early Islamic civilization and the disciplines cultivated in Renaissance Europe's program of study called the *studia humanitatis*, the program that primarily laid the foundation for the emergence of the humanities as an area of study from the nineteenth century onward. I plan to end this address with a discussion of the humanistic features of a unique fourth/tenth-century book from Islamic civilization, al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*.[9]

1 Religious Disciplines in Early Islam and Their Humanistic Impulse

The religious disciplines of learning were among the earliest to emerge in Islamic civilization, and they were understandably God-centered: the ultimate aim of studying the discipline of Quranic interpretation (exegesis) is to know what God has said; in law, what God has prescribed for the faithful; in theology, what God has told the faithful He is; and, in spirituality, how God can be experienced outside of formal channels. And these disciplines do indeed exhibit a pivotal occupation with the deity, even a tendency to "protect" God from anything that might undermine His perfection. We see this, for example, in the exegetes' repetition of the formulaic statement *wa-Allāh aʿlam*, "God knows best," and in their developing several mechanisms to explain apparent contradictions in the divine text, like that of abrogation, where two incompatible Quranic statements are harmonized on the basis of one being abrogated by the other. This mechanism was used frequently in the discipline of Islamic law, where its vitality for charting the proper law is obvious. In theology, one encounters still another mechanism to explain two incompatible statements about one thing, such as whether God can actually be seen; it consists of saying that one statement was figurative while the other was not, and once the figurative is interpreted correctly, the dissonance between the two statements disappears. In theology, too, the various schools vied with each other to "protect" God. A reason-oriented theological school—the Muʿtazila—argued so ferociously for God's absolute justice and absolute oneness that they were called "the people of justice and oneness," and they ended up saying things like "God must do this" or "God cannot do that" (as in the issue of whether children who die might go to hell). This led their opponents—the Ashʿaris—to accuse them of placing themselves above God, telling Him what He can or cannot do.

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 32.

[9] For the preference of the name al-Nadīm instead of *Ibn* al-Nadīm, see Tajaddud's preface in al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist* 7; and al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* xv–xvi.

Despite all of this God-centrist attitude, there are many features in the religious disciplines that exhibit a man-centered attitude. The very names of these three disciplines indicate this fact: exegesis is called *tafsīr* or *taʾwīl*, meaning "clarification" or "interpretation" (obviously, for man); law is called *fiqh*, meaning "understanding (obviously, by man);" and theology is most strikingly called *kalām*, meaning "discussion" or even simply "speech," or "talk"—obviously, *by man* about God—thereby giving rise, among other things, to the discussion of whether *kalām* can indeed be called theology at all, as in Christianity. More substantively, it is clear that all the scholars who investigated religious topics had man—the Muslim community, or parts thereof—as their explicit or implicit audience. The entire exegetical enterprise aims at making God's word accessible to the general public of the faithful, and the exegetes went out of their way to find meanings for all the words in the Quran, even the elusive and opaque ones, coming up frequently with odd explanations derived from dubious sources. The entire legal enterprise is even more clearly audience-oriented; for, in the absence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, the jurists' books were the means by which the faithful learned what was permissible and what was prohibited by God, how they should pray, fast, and pay their alms taxes, and how to conduct their marriages and divorces, write their debts and wills, divide their inheritances and possessions, and so on. In spirituality, individual Sufis recounted their personal experiences in order to instruct their fellow aspirants how to get on the path that leads to an intimate appreciation of God. Even in theology, the definition of the deity is not needed for its own sake, as much as for how it delineates *man*'s relationship to the deity and clarifies *man*'s place in the universe. Thus, the Muʿtazilis' defense of God's justice surely seeks to understand God, but it is because evil is a problem that *man* faces in the world that the issue of God's justice becomes important; it is man's struggle with the limitations of his power to control his destiny that makes it imperative to investigate God's omnipotence.

Nowhere is the centrality of man in religious disciplines more obvious than in the case of a subdiscipline of Islamic law called *uṣūl al-fiqh*, "the sources of law." Founded by the towering jurist al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820), this field aimed at evaluating the sources the jurists may refer to when they formulate their rulings. Al-Shāfiʿī identified the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's secure and sound traditions as the primary, divinely inspired sources for the law; any rulings in them preclude using other sources. But—and here is al-Shāfiʿī's great humanistic contribution—there are issues that cannot be decided on the basis of these two sources, and thus other sources must be identified. These are mainly two, and both are of *human* provenance. The first is human reasoning, especially in the form of analogy, where a ruling found in the primary sources is used by the jurist analogically to produce a ruling about the new issue at hand. The second is the consensus of scholars in the Muslim community on a broadly discussed issue in society—as happened when coffee was discovered, and a ruling was needed to decide whether drinking it was permissible. Most interesting, al-Shāfiʿī based the validation of consensus on a tradition attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that states: "My community shall not agree on an error." No one claimed that this community—including its scholars—was made up of anyone other than men whose knowledge was relative, flawed, and far from the absoluteness of divine knowledge. But the law is not only God's; it is also man's, and it is meant for man.

2 Islamic Civilization and the *Studia Humanitatis*

Let me now proceed to the second form in which early Islamic civilization expressed a humanistic impulse, when it is seen through the lens of the earliest humanistic program of study developed in Renaissance Europe, called *studia humanitatis*. There is obviously some risk and a degree of artificiality in comparing two clusters of human endeavor that are different in almost everything—time period, location, religious background, ethnic composition, language, provenance, development, ethos, and overall history and culture. However, since the *studia humanitatis* were the first *formal and self-conscious* expression of what constituted the humanities, and as they were influential in forming the modern understanding of the humanities, they represent a concrete and functional yardstick against which parallel endeavors may be measured.

Although the roots of the *studia humanitatis* are to be found in the European Middle Ages, the program's self-conception as a man-centered program that makes no room for theology, and takes its cues from Latin and Greek antiquity, clearly marked it as a forward-looking program, effectively breaking with the Middle Ages, and led essentially by a non-clerical elite. These elite, the humanists, saw their fundamental educational program as vital for making a human being truly free. The program included five major subjects: grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy. Grammar meant sufficient mastery of Latin (and later Greek) in order to read, understand, interpret, and critique the works of rhetoricians, poets, historians, and moral philosophers. Rhetoric consisted of studying, and emulating, the ideals in the texts of the Roman and Greek rhetoricians for the purpose of convincing audiences, as eloquence, or the combination of eloquence and wisdom, was meant to be put in the service of the state and the public good. In poetry, the humanists studied and wrote poetry in Latin, then in the vernacular languages, and, under the influence of Aristotle's *Poetics*, wrote commentaries on it and on other rhetorical works, and further explored literary theory and engaged in literary debates. In history, they edited, annotated, and sometimes translated the manuscripts of Latin and Greek historians and biographers, and published them when printing became available; they also wrote histories of their own, starting from the basic belief that history teaches by example. And, in moral philosophy proper, the humanists recovered, studied, and translated works from the various Greek and Latin schools, and engaged in discussing moral issues related to happiness, pleasure, women, fate, and the perfect politician, as portrayed in the genre of "mirrors for princes."

How do the disciplines that were developed in Islamic civilization, particularly the non-religious ones, look when compared with the *studia humanitatis*? In order to bring meaningfulness into this comparison of two widely varying entities, it is helpful to identify key categories through which the comparison can be conducted. I would propose five such categories: classification, representatives, function, subject matter, and methodology. Let me take each of these one at a time.

With regard to classification, the disciplines of the *studia humanitatis* are not isolated anywhere, and hence one cannot speak of a formal category called "the humanities" in early Islamic civilization. And although several scholars wrote works about the "classification of the sciences" in Islam, none of these authors envisioned a humanistic cluster analogous to that of the *studia humanitatis*.

In the category of representatives, one also finds more differences than similarities between the intellectuals who advocated the *studia humanitatis* and those who developed the various disciplines of Islamic civilization. The European scholars consisted mainly of secular—that is, non-clerical—elite, who were schooled in antiquity and worked both in public life and private letters. The group of people who pursued the Arabo-Islamic sciences was much more diverse, vastly more numerous, and came from a broader socioeconomic background, with many of them benefiting from a pervasive patronage system. Furthermore, many of them bridged the religious and non-religious sciences, so that it is quite ordinary to find a historian who is a Quran exegete (like al-Ṭabarī; d. 310/923) and a grammarian who is a theologian (like al-Rummānī; d. 384/994). Many worked in the public sphere as government secretaries, judges, and physicians, but the vast majority remained outside that sphere, some earning their living by engaging in businesses related mostly to books, like manuscript copying and teaching in informal settings. Overall, one never gets a sense that there were two separate categories, with secular scholars on the one hand, and religious scholars on the other. Somehow, the entire enterprise called Islamic civilization seems to have been impervious to such a distinction.

One encounters a similar situation when one looks at the self-perceived function of the *studia humanitatis* and the disciplines of Islamic civilization. While most of those involved with producing works in those disciplines aimed at spreading the knowledge of their respective fields, this effort did not take a formalized form, as was the case in the *studia humanitatis*, which was perceived systemically right from the start as a program of study with a clear educational structure.

It is when we come to the category of subject matter that the differences between the *studia humanitatis* and the disciplines developed in Islamic civilization become narrower and the similarities significant. Leaving aside the religious disciplines, whose "human" component we have discussed above, and concentrating on the non-religious disciplines, we note that the *studia humanitatis* fields thrived enormously in Islamic civilization. The centrality of Latin and Greek for the European humanists is paralleled—if not surpassed—by the centrality and durability of Arabic in Islamic civilization, not least because it was the language in which God's word, the Quran, was revealed.

The closely linked disciplines of Arabic language and grammar emerged first as auxiliaries to the various religious sciences but then took on a life of their own, especially after Arabic became the official language of the Islamic state and the lingua franca of the educated sectors of Islamic society. Every noun, verb, and particle in the language was identified and analyzed, every syntactical and semantic instance was scrutinized, and within decades varying grammatical "schools" emerged in the cultural centers of Basra and Kufa, then later in Baghdad. Before the end of the second/eighth century, the first dictionary and the first grammar of the Arabic language were written.

The scholars of Islamic civilization also developed poetry into a field, like in the *studia humanitatis*, perhaps even more so. Arabic poetry was needed at the beginning to elucidate the meanings of the sacred text, and thus, even the pagan poetry of pre-Islamic Arabia was the subject of intense study. The scattered oral poetry of the poets was not only chanted in private and public settings but also collected and recorded in *dīwān*s, and further scrutinized, analyzed, and commented on. In the meantime, poets continued to compose poetry, as they had done for centuries, and soon Arabic poetry came to have a life of its own, adjusting its contents to the new issues of the times, be they political, social, religious, or artistic. While some poets chose to follow the "ways of the ancients," others publicly rejected the "old poetry" and ushered in a "new poetry" that reflected the experience of the urban man, including his exposure to licentiousness, skepticism, and atheism.

Rhetoric was also developed with great relish in early Islamic civilization. The emerging field of Arabic literary criticism centered at first on issues related to poetry. But, activity in rhetoric came, more importantly, from Arabic prose, a genre that had existed in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times in the form of fiery oral speeches composed mainly in combat situations. The advent of the Quran as a text, not in poetry but in eloquent prose, and the emergence of the state as an important player in shaping the literary culture of society, changed this and opened the door for prose to develop as a written art. And, with many politico-religious groups vying with each other and with the state for hegemony in Islamic society, government officials of all religions, as well as opposition groups, developed rhetorical techniques in prose to convince their audiences of the legitimacy of their causes, and they found themselves borrowing from the rhetorical devices used in oral speech.

History also thrived in Islamic civilization, just as it did in the *studia humanitatis*, since Islam took a political form almost from the start. Once Muslims began to create fields of inquiry to record their experience—tribal, religious, military, political, cultural, administrative, legal, and more—history occupied a prominent position among them. Some historians wrote genealogical histories on the Arab tribes; others wrote chronicles about the conquests and the experiences of the early Muslims; and still others, annals or narratives on the political entities that ruled Islamic society, some concentrating on the state and its bureaucracy, and some writing advice literature to the rulers, reminiscent of the mirrors for princes genre. They also developed, as in the *studia humanitatis*, the genre of the biography, or *sīra*, writing biographies of the Prophet Muhammad in particular, whose life, so central for the faith and the community, was considered worthy of emulation. They developed this genre even further and, unlike in the *studia humanitatis*, another genre emerged from it, which soon became a hallmark of Islamic civilization—namely, biographical dictionaries. These dictionaries consisted of successive biographies of scholars from Islamic civilization in one or more fields of knowledge, from the religious

Islamic disciplines to the philosophical Greek ones, and together they historicized the achievements of the Muslim community (rather than the Islamic state). In all these forms, history was understood to be an inquiry into matters that teach by example, as both Islamic scholars and European humanists often stated.

When discussing moral philosophy in early Islamic civilization, we must note that, of all the branches of Greek philosophy that were translated into Arabic, the branch that proved to be the most enduring and influential was moral philosophy, so much so that the likes of Homer, whose poetry was not translated into Arabic, and Thucydides, whose history was also unknown in Arabic, were appreciated as wise men, sages who explored the dimensions of moral philosophy and ethics and who instructed man on how to live an upright life, one that is compatible with the righteous life advocated in the Quran. Consequently, Greek wisdom sayings were collected, recycled, and repeatedly cited. In this way, Greek wisdom literature entered mainstream Arabic literature, and Islamic civilization as a whole; and so did the wisdom literature of India and Persia, the wise sayings of Jesus and Luqmān, and other figures from the civilizations of the ancient Near East, as well as, of course, those of eloquent figures of the Muslim community, like ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660) and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728).

Finally, the similarity in subject matter between the *studia humanitatis* and the disciplines that flourished in early Islamic civilization extends to the fifth category we identified above, methodology. Fundamentally philological (i.e., "the love of words") in their approach, the scholars working in the two sets of programs/disciplines examined the language and structure of texts written in the classical languages, whose literary traditions they held in high esteem—Latin and Greek for the European humanists, and Arabic for their Islamic counterparts. Collecting those texts, scrutinizing them for accuracy, editing them, annotating them, and commenting on them after translating them, if necessary, were hallmarks of the two programs. And when the scholars of both sides wrote original works in their respective fields, their methods were mostly humanist in approach—speculative, critical, or analytical.

The above comparison between the *studia humanitatis* and the disciplines of scholarship in early Islamic civilization shows that, while the two differed from each other in classification, representatives, and function, they were actually very similar in the more vital areas of subject matter and methodology. On the other hand, the deeply systemic educational direction of *studia humanitatis* continued to set it apart from the disciplines of early Islamic civilization, since teaching was not formalized in colleges (*madrasa*s) during the early period. What replaced them there—other than informal educational settings—were simply books. I shall, thus, spend the last part of this address discussing how the humanities, or the humanistic impulse, found expression in one book, al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*.[10]

3 A Muslim Vision of Civilization as Expressed in al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*

Al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, a unique book, is particularly suitable for this kind of discussion due to its form and substance, as well as its author. It is a biobibliography of the books that were written in Arabic in early Islamic civilization, from its beginning in the first/seventh century until the time of the author at the end of the fourth/tenth century. As such, it gives us a panoramic view of all the intellectual activities that took place in that civilization—its accumulated knowledge—embedded in its favorite form of writing, the book. Its author, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Nadīm (d. 380/990), was a highly educated, expert bookseller, who lived in the capital city of the Islamic world at that time, Baghdad, at the very peak of Islamic civilization. He was, furthermore, a consummate bibliophile, whose love of books is clear on almost every page of his work. Perhaps more important, al-Nadīm did not let his book become a perfunctory mechanical catalogue; rather, it is a work in which he has a strong presence, often making choices that show him to have a predilection for the humanities and a humanist impulse, both of which derive from his vision of civilization in general, and Islamic civilization in particular.

In the Introduction,[11] al-Nadīm identifies his book as

> a catalogue of the books of all peoples, Arab and non-Arab, existing in the language and script of the Arabs, and dealing with the various sciences (*hādhā fihrist kutub jamīʿ al-umam min al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿajam al-mawjūd minhā bi-lughat al-ʿArab wa-qalamihā fī aṣnāf al-ʿulūm*),

from the beginning of the formation of each science until his time. It would include, he adds, accounts of these books' compilers and authors—their names, lineages, categories, dates of birth and death, domiciles, and vices and virtues. He then lists, in a kind of table of contents, the ten "discourses" (*maqālāt*) into which the sciences fall, identifying the disciplines (*funūn*) each discourse would cover (see Appendix).

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[10] I am using the edition of Riḍā Tajaddud.

[11] Al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist* 1–5.

The book follows this plan faithfully. Each discourse starts with the first discipline, then the second, and so forth. Within each discipline, and after an occasional introduction about the formation of the discipline, short biographies of authors in the discipline follow in succession, mostly in chronological order, and each biography ends with a list of the titles of the books authored by that person. In most entries, this list is longer, sometimes by far, than the biographical information entered. Clearly, al-Nadīm's main interest is in books, much more than in people. And clearly, he thinks of his book as a record of Islamic civilization.

But what is it that essentially defines Islamic civilization? Al-Nadīm's introduction leaves no room for ambiguity—it is, foremost, the language in which its books were written, Arabic, the "classical" language possessing such vitality that it allowed for the expression of a multitude of disciplines of learning to develop within the community of scholars for whom it was the lingua franca, and for the translation of a multitude of other disciplines from earlier civilizations. For, before the emergence of Islamic civilization, according to al-Nadīm's first discipline in the first discourse,[12] human history witnessed a number of civilizations, each of which was expressed in a particular language (*lugha*) with a particular script (*khaṭṭ, qalam*), 14 of which he describes and reproduces. At present, the civilizational cycle has reached the Arabs and those who came to accept their language as the language of learning.[13] Together, they built Islamic civilization and wrote their books in Arabic.

The second element defining Islamic civilization is the religion of its first carriers, Islam. As in the case of language, al-Nadīm sees Islam as being preceded by other monotheistic religions (*al-sharāʾiʿ al-munzala ʿalā madhhab al-Muslimīn*),[14] which he discusses in the second section of the first discourse.[15] He then concentrates, in the third section, on the book of that religion, the Quran.[16] What is most stunning about his discussion of the Quran is that it is not "religious"—there is nothing doctrinal or theological about it at all—but instead very humanistic. We get accounts of how the Quran was "collected" (i.e., how God's eternal word became a text within two covers, readily available for human beings to use), then of the ordering of its Suras in the canonical, and some non-canonical, copies. Next, come entries on Quran readers, books by them and about them, and lists of their transmitters. These are followed by lists of the books authored in the various sciences of the Quran, such as interpretation, orthography, and language. And that is all; this is the end of the entire first discourse. The discourse that follows, the second, is on grammarians and linguists.[17]

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[12] Ibid., 7.

[13] See al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist* 13, where al-Nadīm writes a paragraph on the virtues of the alphabets, especially the Arabic one, citing two sayings attributed to the littérateur and statesman Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 215/831) and the philosopher al-Kindī (d. 260/874).

[14] Ibid., 124.

[15] Ibid., 24–26.

[16] Ibid., 27–42.

Now we understand al-Nadīm's vision of civilization more precisely—a religion with its scripture may be at the foundation of a civilization, but it is the *language* of the civilization that shapes it. Anyone who knows that language and writes in it can be one of its architects, regardless of religion, ethnicity, lineage, or anything else. Indeed, language (its structure and grammar) can merge the products of many civilizations into one, when they are all rendered in one tongue, just as when many past human civilizations were blended into one through Arabic in Islamic civilization.

As in the *studia humanitatis*, and in the humanities more generally, al-Nadīm sees language and grammar as absolutely foundational disciplines. And, there is actually more in his *Fihrist* to show that he holds the humanities in high esteem. For one, al-Nadīm gives precedence to the humanistic disciplines in his classification of the discourses; grammar and language (Discourse II) are followed by history, literary prose, and rhetoric (Discourse III), then by poetry (Discourse IV). It is after those areas of the humanities are covered that the two "religious" disciplines of theology (Discourse V) and law (Discourse VI) are taken up. And here again, the discussion is very "human," dealing with the men who founded schools of thought or groups of men who believed in one doctrine or another and, above all, the books these scholars produced.

The fields that follow do include some fields of the humanities—philosophy (within Discourse VII) and storytelling (Discourse VIII). Al-Nadīm delayed discussing them until after theology and law simply because they were among "the disciplines of the ancients," and his plan for his book called for discussing the Arabo-Islamic disciplines first—not at all, I think, because these disciplines were inferior to the Islamic disciplines, but because they were originally not written in the Arabic *language*, but translated into it, as is evidenced by the long introduction he wrote to the first section on "the disciplines of the ancients" and on the translation and translators (*al-naqala*) from all languages into Arabic (304–305). Two more observations are needed about the humanities in the *Fihrist*. First, al-Nadīm merges philosophy and science in one section (Discourse VII, 1), but this is simply because they were both considered part of philosophy in the Greek tradition. Second, the sections on medicine (Discourse VII, 2) and alchemy (Discourse X) may not be humanities disciplines, but the way al-Nadīm presents them—consisting of biographies of scientists and titles of their books—makes the sections on them mostly accessible to a non-specialist audience, including humanists.

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[17] Ibid., 45.

Finally, what I would like to highlight of the *Fihrist*'s humanistic elements is its method, which is fundamentally philological, with a strong focus on precision and painstaking meticulousness—skills readily available to al-Nadīm as a bookdealer, bibliophile, and scholar. Overall, al-Nadīm mentions only the books he had either seen himself or was certain existed through the attestation of trustworthy persons. He further writes the word *kitāb* (book) before every single title he cites, even when unnecessary, in order to make sure that books are not confused with each other, especially in the absence of standard punctuation in Arabic manuscript culture, and he also uses cross-referencing so that relations between books are properly established. On a micro-level, the *Fihrist* is filled with instances where al-Nadīm gives the number of volumes of a book, how many folios it contained, what the size of the folios was, and even how many lines there were on one page. At times, he lists the chapters of the book, identifies the contents of each of them, quotes from them, and states if any of them has a table of contents. He mentions transmitters of books, provides information on them, and lists any commentaries or abridgments of these books. Not infrequently, he mentions the history of the compilation of a book, identifies its various manuscripts, names scribes who wrote each of them, evaluates their scribal work, composes biographies of them, and even tells stories associated with their copies. He points out incomplete copies, passes critical judgments on them, and identifies copies written by famous calligraphers. Most striking is how he imparts the sense that his work is, by its very nature, open ended, and thus asks the readers to fill in the lacunae in his lists of books. To humanists, this method sounds hauntingly familiar.

One could go on and on talking about the *Fihrist*, but what has been said suffices to show how high the humanities were held in the classical period of Islamic civilization and how abundant its contribution to the humanities was in the first four centuries of Islamic history.

The *Fihrist* enumerates about seven thousand books that the architects of Islamic civilization—Muslims and non-Muslims—wrote in, or translated into, Arabic by the end of the first millennium CE. Some of these books belong to areas traditionally considered outside of the humanities proper—namely, religion and the sciences. But, as we have seen time and again, even works produced in these areas had a pronounced humanistic component, one that has the human being as its focal point and center of attention. For a civilization that emerged in a religious context, this humanistic record is quite impressive.

Appendix

The Ten Discourses of al-Nadīm's Fihrist

I. [Untitled]

1. Languages of peoples: Arab and non-Arab; their scripts and writings
2. Revealed scriptures to the Muslims and [other] peoples
3. The Book "to which falsehood does not come at it, from before it or from behind it, a revelation from the All Wise, All Praised" [i.e., the Quran; Q 41:42]; books written on its sciences; Quran readers and their transmitters

II. Grammarians and Linguists

1. Basran grammarians and linguists and the titles of their books
2. Kufan grammarians and linguists and the titles of their books
3. Mixed grammarians and linguists and the titles of their books

III. History, Literature, Biographies, and Genealogies

1. Historians, chroniclers, genealogists, and the titles of their books
2. Rulers, secretaries, epistolographers, financial officials, bureaucrats, and the titles of their books
3. Boon companions, singers, "slap-takers" (*ṣafāʿina*), buffoons, jesters, and the titles of their books

IV. Poetry and Poets

1. Pre-Islamic and early Islamic poets
2. Islamic and modern poets until our time

V. Theology and Theologians

1. Beginning of theology; Muʿtazili and Murjiʾi theologians and the titles of their books
2. Shiʿi theologians: Twelvers, Zaydis, Extremists, Ismaʿilis, and the titles of their books
3. Mujbiri and Ḥashwi [= roughly, Sunni] theologians, and the titles of their books
4. Kharijite theologians and the titles of their books
5. Roamers, ascetics, devotees, Sufis, and the titles of their books

VI. Law, Jurists, and *ḥadīth* Scholars

1. Mālik [ibn Anas] and his disciples and the titles of their books
2. Abū Ḥanīfa and his disciples and the titles of their books
3. Al-Shāfiʿī and his disciples and the titles of their books
4. Dāwūd and his disciples and the titles of their books
5. Shiʿi jurists and the titles of their books
6. *Ḥadīth* scholars and jurists and the titles of their books
7. Al-Ṭabarī and his disciples and the titles of their books
8. Kharijite jurists and the titles of their books

VII. Philosophy and the “ancient sciences”

1. Philosophers of the natural sciences and logic and the titles of their books: their translations, commentaries, those extant and those mentioned but not extant, and those that were extant then were lost
2. Geometricians, engineers, arithmeticians, musicians, calculators, astrologers, instrumentalists, and scholars of mechanics and dynamics
3. Beginning of medicine; physicians: ancient and recent, and the titles of their books, their translations, and their interpretations

VIII. Stories, Fables, Exorcism, Magic, Conjuring

1. Storytellers, fable tellers, illustrators
2. Exorcists, conjurors, magicians and the titles of their books
3. Books on various subjects by unknown authors

IX. Doctrines and Beliefs [of the Non-monotheists]

1. Chaldean Ḥarrīnis, known today as Sabaeans, various dualists: Manicheans, Dayṣāniyya, Khurramiyya, Marcionites, Mazdakites, and others, and the titles of their books
2. Strange and curious doctrines, like those of India, China, and others

X. Alchemists and Philosophers of Alchemy: ancient and recent, and the titles of their books

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PART 2

Prophetic Mission, Learning, and the Rise of Islam

⁂

CHAPTER 2

“Arcane Knowledge” Communicated in the Quran

Angelika Neuwirth

1 Esoteric Knowledge in the Quran?

The disclosure of “hidden” or “arcane” knowledge may not feature, on first glance, among the most urgent issues in education. Yet, the case of the Quran is special because, in this scripture, relevant, momentous knowledge is related to the divine.[1] It is thus not immediately accessible; rather, it is “coded” in various degrees.

It is a well-established fact that “the dialectics of ‘revealed’ and ‘hidden’—of matters that can be known by all people, and matters that are known only to God who, at His discretion, may share some of them with His Select—is an essential part of the theology of the Quran.”[2] Yet, the Quran is characterized by a noticeable predominance of “revealed” over “hidden” knowledge. Accessible knowledge, *ʿilm*, is a ubiquitous topic already in the early Suras,[3] and the Quranic instigation to seek knowledge, as well as the appeal to use one’s God-given gift of understanding in order to acquire knowledge, continue to be the focus of Quranic paraenetics until the end of the divine proclamation. The “hidden,” esoteric knowledge reserved to God Himself is, however, dwelt upon rather seldomly. The “hidden” is usually expressed with the term *ghayb*, which literally means “absence,” but—as transpired from its Quranic antonym *shahāda*, “the apparent,” the “attested”—it is connoted with visuality, and thus comes close to “the unseen,” “the arcane.”

Ghayb is the realm of the divine: “With Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them but He” (Q 6:59). It is, however, more often than not presented as shared by God with some of His Select: “He discloses not his unseen to anyone save only to such a messenger as he is well-pleased with” (Q 72:27). One of the few issues singled out to be part of the *ghayb* kept safe by God is the Hour: “The Hour is coming, I hardly conceal it, that every soul may be recompensed for its labors” (Q 20:15).[4] But, the most important manifestation of

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[1] Walker, Knowledge 100–104; Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant*.

[2] Bar-Asher, Hidden 423–426. See also Gaudefroy-Denombynes, Sens ii, 245–250, esp. 248.

[3] Neuwirth, *Text der Spätantike* 433–450.

[4] Arberry, *Koran interpreted*, whose renderings are otherwise followed in this article, translates less convincingly: “I would conceal it.”

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ghayb is the celestial scripture, which is the focus of this article. In the following, we shall first look at the phenomenon of esotericism in the Quranic milieu, trying to trace the particular status of the disclosure of knowledge against the backdrop of esoteric concepts current in the milieu, both monotheistic and pagan. We will then turn to the Quranic community's discovery of the decisive medium to convey hidden knowledge—writing—a development attested to in the Quran itself. This phenomenon again is closely connected to the Quranic self-perception of being a "reading," and thus the Quran's essential orality, which in the text is not an antonym of writing but rather a concomitant phenomenon.

2 Reflections on the Status of Esotericism in the Quranic Milieu

2.1 *Monotheistic Reflections*

The long tradition of esotericism in the religions of the ancient Mediterranean and the Near East had been disrupted with the advance of Christianity. In the preceding cultures, as Guy Stroumsa points out,

> the cult was to be rendered to the deity in secret, or more precisely, there remained an irradicable distinction between the inner circle and those who took no direct part in the cult ... Parallel to the behavior specific to the group members, there was the knowledge of the insiders, not to be divulged to outsiders ... This secret knowledge could either take the form of myths, of their deeper interpretation (while the story itself was known to all), or of philosophical or religious traditions.[5] Now, both the faith and the cult of Christianity ran counter to such basic attitudes: the new religion was open to all, ... while the inner logic of Christian soteriology was fundamentally anti-esoteric, it was also heir to the koine of religious esotericism ..., both in the Greek and the Jewish traditions. The deep tension stemming from this dual inheritance is reflected throughout the first centuries of the new religion.[6]

It would be promising to proceed from these observations and try to contextualize the Quranic evidence with earlier traditions, both monotheistic and pagan. However, since this article will focus on the core medium of transmitting hidden knowledge, which is writing, the embeddedness of the Quranic concept of the hidden in earlier traditions of esotericism can only be presented in passing here. It is equally beyond the frame of this contribution to scan the entire Quran for esoteric ideas. Rather, we will confine ourselves to the early and middle Meccan texts that have been analyzed before,[7] and which thus provide a solid basis for our investigation.

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[5] Stroumsa, Milk 251.

[6] Ibid., 252.

Let us first turn briefly to one single, but central, monotheistic esoteric issue. An essential dimension of knowledge—according to the Quranic message—is preserved with God until the end of time; it is hidden from men during their lifetimes and will become evident only on the Last Day. This idea of an eschatological disclosure is not alien to the earlier religious traditions either, which equally promise an "apocalypse" (i.e., an unveiling of hidden knowledge to occur at the end of time); comparable concepts have developed in post-Quranic Islam, too.[8] Both kinds of vision, however, are widely different. What is striking in the Quran is the completely unbalanced proportion between the circumstances under which the communication of eschatological knowledge occurs, and the status of the communicated knowledge itself. Indeed, the earliest explicit references to relevant "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) in the Quran are embedded in a highly dramatic eschatological process of disclosure. It is as if the entire cosmic structure had to be removed to clear the horizon for the revelation of that essential instance of knowledge.

What, then, is revealed on the Last Day? In view of very similar descriptions in the Gospels, and of the eschatological circumstances that precede the beginning of the messianic age, which equally depict the complete disintegration of the cosmos, one would expect the disclosure of weighty, collectively significant apocalyptic knowledge, such as unfolded in the revelation of John. In the Gospels what is revealed is the appearance of the Son of God, which will initiate a new age. Thus, Mark 13:24–26 says:

> In the days after that time of trouble, the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses. Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send the angels out to the four corners of the earth to gather God's chosen people from one end of the world to the other.

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[7] See the commentary on the Sura in Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 291–309.

[8] Cook, *Studies* 82–83.

The early Quranic Suras, which adopt the apocalyptic frame of this appearance, however, do not target apocalypse. Rather, they replace the image of the messianic appearance with a strikingly modest, low-profile projection—the individual soul's attaining insight, or, more precisely, knowledge about the self.

What is at stake here is man's illumination after his lifelong blindness, his gaining knowledge of his earthly record of deeds. The entire process of the disintegration of the cosmos is presented as no more than a prelude foreshadowing that drama of disclosure. Among the numerous introductory sections of the early Suras, Q 81:1–14 seems to be the most expressive:

1 When the sun shall be darkened,
2 when the stars shall be thrown down,
3 when the mountains shall be set moving,
4 when the pregnant camels shall be neglected,
5 when the savage beasts shall be mustered,
6 when the seas shall be set boiling,
7 when the souls shall be coupled,
8 when the buried infant shall be asked
9 for what sin she was slain,
10 when the scrolls shall be unrolled,
11 when heaven shall be stripped off,
12 when Hell shall be set blazing,
13 when Paradise shall be brought nigh,
14 then shall a soul know what it has produced.[9]

This knowledge, disclosed to the *nafs* (the soul) on Judgment Day, is part of what the Quran later labels *ghayb* (the realm of the "hidden")[10]—that is, divine knowledge that God alone possesses.

There is a hint as to the mediality through which this knowledge is conveyed—it is clad in written form, presented on scrolls (v. 9). This framework of course adds an important dimension of meaning to the communication. It evokes the agency of the heavenly scribes employed to register the human deeds (i.e., the celestial control over the earthly lives of men). Writing is related to the hidden realm.[11]

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[9] See the commentary on the Sura in Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 291–309.

[10] The present article relies on a strictly diachronic reading of the Quran. For the rationale of this approach, see Neuwirth, *Text der Spätantike* 19–67. The term *ghayb* first appears at the end of the first Meccan period in Q 53:25 and Q 52:41. For the antinomy *ghayb* and *shahāda* in the Quran, see Izutsu, *God and man in the Koran*.

[11] *Ghayb* is equally associated with writing in one of its earliest appearances, Q 52:41: *am ʿindahumu l-ghaybu fa-hum yaktubūn* (Or is the unseen in their keeping so that they are writing it down); cf. the commentary, Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 685–709.

2.2 *Pagan Reflections*

"Writing" is still absent from those concepts of esoteric knowledge that we can trace in pre-Islamic pagan Arab culture. It is admittedly difficult to determine precisely what pagan manifestations of esotericism the earliest community would have encountered in their cultural milieu before these were submitted to a radical reinterpretation in the Quranic text. Gerald Hawting's seminal study "Eavesdropping on the Heavenly Assembly,"[12] continuing Julius Wellhausen's scholarship, has shown convincingly that even those concepts of hidden knowledge that are usually connected with the inspiration of pagan poets, and thus regarded as the most genuine Arab manifestations of esotericism, ultimately reflect the biblical tradition. In the present framework, we will focus on the specific Quranic rereading of those earlier traditions, without discussing their historical foundations, and simply refer here to Hawting's work for their syncretistic dimensions.

It is apparent that the Quranic text reflects an early contest over the authority of supernatural knowledge, claimed by the poets and soothsayers on the one hand, and by the proclaimer of the Quran on the other. Not only soothsayers (*kāhin*s), but also poets, in particular, are considered inspired by demons (*jinn* or *shayāṭīn*), who empower them to utter their linguistically unusual poetic compositions. The proclaimer in several instances—all early Meccan—rejects the allegation that he is a poet or a soothsayer,[13] dependent on low-status inspirational sources such as the demons.[14]

We know little about the mode of inspiration, exerted by the *jinn* and claimed by the poets, due to a lack of early and reliable sources outside the Quran.[15] A rivalry between the two modes of access to supernatural knowledge is, however, realizable from the very beginning of the Quranic communication. We also learn about the trajectories of the communication of demonic-poetical knowledge, which is more than once alluded to through the so-called myth of the shooting stars.[16] The *jinn*s, or demons, positioned on the lowest heavenly sphere, try to take possession of the supernatural knowledge, audible through the heavens, in order to convey it to their protégés, humans who claim supernatural inspiration, such as soothsayers and poets. These demons, however—should they succeed in catching bits of the divine knowledge—are chased by a *shihāb* (a flame usually identified with a shooting star), and are burned up.

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[12] Hawting, Eavesdropping 25–38.

[13] For an attempt to compare *kāhin* speech with the Quranic diction, see Neuwirth, *Text der Spätantike* 682–691.

[14] Ibid., 672–722.

[15] Goldziher, *Abhandlungen* i, esp. 1–106.

[16] The myth has been discussed in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship, particularly by Wellhausen, *Reste* 137; see also Hawting, Eavesdropping 28–29.

Although the knowledge at stake here is not the kind of supernatural speech claimed by the poets—who have no divine message to convey—it is primarily the poets who, in the Quran, are connected with the inspiration of satans. Indeed, they are the focus of Quranic interest, since poetry is the most powerful medium of ideologically significant knowledge in the milieu of the Quran's emergence. Poets are the essential rivals of the Prophet; it is their mundane worldview that stands in stark contrast to the eschatologically informed message of the Quran.

After a number of attempts to rigorously reject the allegation of being a poet (i.e., the receiver of demonic, not divine, inspiration), the proclaimer, at a later stage, is prompted to launch a counter-attack. The model of demonic inspiration enjoyed by poets is refuted in a middle Meccan Sura especially dedicated to contrasting both modes of inspiration, the poetic-demonic and the monotheist-divine, where Q 26:221–222 put forward the provocative statement, "Shall I tell you on whom it is that the satans descend? They descend on every wicked liar. They lend their ears but most of them are lying."

The Quran thus admits the existence of an agency that transfers hidden knowledge not only to the group of mantic functionaries, the soothsayers, but equally to a group of supernormally eloquent individuals, the poets. At the same time, the Quran disqualifies that agency as powerless, and finally draws clear conclusions—it proclaims the end of the era of rival sources of supernatural inspiration, and thus of rival channels for conveying hidden knowledge. What it establishes is a new channel of knowledge transfer, one that will exert a revolutionary impact on the emerging Islamic community—the medium of writing.

3 Anxiety vis-à-vis the Written Word and the Recuperation of Writing

3.1 *Writing on the Arabian Peninsula*

It is noteworthy that the technique of writing did not play a decisive part in the cultural life of pre-Islamic Arabia. Although recent archaeological expeditions have brought to light innumerable rock inscriptions dispersed widely over the Arabian Peninsula, there are hardly any written units that could be described as significant "texts." Most of the rock inscriptions, some of which are at least partly in a North Arabian language, employ the Nabatean script, and they are extremely short, dedicated mostly to private, ephemeral issues.

So, writing is materially extant, even in the desert, and writing would have been familiar to some of the ancient Arab poets—not only from the visual experience reflected in their poems, but, as Gregor Schoeler points out, from practical use as well.[17] Moreover, thanks to Khalil Athamina, Nasir al-Din al-Asad, and Claude Gilliot, we know of reliable testimonies attesting to the fact that many of the urban contemporaries of the Prophet did command a knowledge of writing.[18] And yet, the practice of writing was obviously not employed to create an archive of collective memory. On the contrary, as we shall see, the phenomenon of writing—exhibited most prominently on the rocks in the nomadic landscape, and consequently observed and reflected upon by the Bedouins and their literary spokesmen, the pre-Islamic poets—rather, aroused ambivalent feelings, and even seems to have exerted a destabilizing, indeed sometimes deterrent, effect. (I will come back to this observation below.)

But let us turn first to the issue of literary texts that were not available in writing. Orally transmitted material not only existed in considerable quantity but also—in the shape of both poetry and heroic tales, the *ayyām al-ʿArab* (the [battle] days of the ancient Arabs), for example—attests to a keen stylistic and rhetoric interest and competence in both their composers and recipients. The importance of the *ayyām al-ʿArab* literature as an expression of collective identity, and its impact on the social coherence of pre-Islamic society, can hardly be overestimated. Hence, it comes as no surprise that poetry, by virtue of its cache of panegyrics for particular tribes and lampoons on others, has been labeled the *dīwān al-ʿArab* ("the archive of the Arabs").

The realm of ideas put forward in these texts is, however, limited to their particular milieu, which can be captured through an equally limited scope of literary genres: the narrative (to report heroic tales), the panegyric (employed in poetical sections extolling the poet's tribe, *fakhr*), and the descriptive (in the middle part of the standard long poem, which depicts the poet's camel, or his journey through the desert, *raḥīl*).

It is important to note the almost total lack of a discursive realm. There are no theological, legal, or cultic debates in pre-Islamic poetry, and little theoretical thinking can be traced, if we do not concede one important exception: there is arguably a serious philosophical interest lurking in the introductory part of the *qaṣīda*, the *nasīb*. (I will return to this issue in the discussion of the ambivalent perception of writing.)

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[17] Schoeler, Schreiben 14.

[18] Athmina, Abraham; al-Asad, *Maṣādir* alerts us to the probability of the existence of archives existing at al-Ḥīra, a late antique South Mesopotamian urban center whose learned traditions seem to have been passed on to its successor-center al-Kufa; Gilliot, Reconstruction, in particular his documentation of circles knowledgeable of writing, 66–76.

It is, therefore, striking that the Quran appears—seemingly—out of the void, out of the "empty Hijaz,"[19] as a full-fledged discursive text, extensive in range, and replete with theological and philosophical queries. This observation has tantalized Western scholars for generations. The Quran's surprising richness of ideas, and its consummateness of form, have even raised doubts about the genuineness of the Islamic narrative of the Quran's origin as such. How can such an intellectually sophisticated literary text emerge from a remote space like the Arabian Peninsula? The conventional image of an "empty Hejaz" has only been corrected in more recent scholarship, thanks to Peter Brown, Glen Bowersock, Christian Robin, Garth Fowden, James Montgomery, Robert Hoyland, Jan Retsö, and others, who have provided historical, epigraphic, and iconic evidence for the fact that a transfer of late antique knowledge, from both the northern and the southern neighboring regions to Arabia, had been going on during the centuries preceding the appearance of the Quran, although our knowledge of these processes is still incomplete.[20] Yet, the fact remains that the Quran comes as a sudden disclosure in the Arabic language of, until then, unspoken, or at least unattested, discursive ideas. What makes this novelty still more surprising is the fact that this discursive revolution appears in a consummate literary form. But, let us turn first to the issue of literary texts that were not available in writing.

3.2 *The "Anti-image" of Writing:* waḥy

I promised to say something about the ambivalent perception of writing in the eyes of those nomadic individuals represented by the ancient Arab poets. We owe a most useful overview to James Montgomery,[21] who collected a corpus of *jāhilī* verses that mention writing called by different names, such as *khaṭṭ zabūr* (the writing of a writ), *zubur* (writs), *ma khuṭṭa bi-l-qalam* (the writing of the reed-pen), *khaṭṭ al-dawāh* (writing with ink from an inkhorn), *rasm* (a writing), *ṣaḥīfa* (page), *ṣuḥuf* (pages of writing), and, in the urban context, even *kitāb* (book).[22] However, one name used for writing in poetry stands out: *waḥy*.

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[19] This term was coined by James Montgomery to designate the stereotypical perception of pre-Islamic Arabia. See Montgomery, Empty Hijaz 37–97.

[20] Brown, *Making*; Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*; Robin, Himyar, 831–908; Fowden, *Qusayr ʿAmra*; Hoyland, *Arabia*; Retsö, *Arabs*. For a forceful *plaidoyer* for the assumption that such late antique cultural diversity in the Hejaz should be accepted as the backdrop of the genesis of the Quran, see Conrad, Qur'anic studies 9–15, esp. 11, where he adduces a representative example: "There is ample representation of Ethiopic loan-words in the Qur'an. In what context did this transfer of vocabulary occur? By the eighth century [according to the revisionist position this is the time of the Quran's genesis, A.N.] the Hijaz was an economic and political backwater, overtaken by dramatic shifts to Syria and Iraq that drew the laments of contemporary Arabian poets. Contacts with Ethiopia were insignificant." However, the context of the late sixth century gives us a literary tradition that makes frequent reference to Ethiopia, and to an Islamic scripture reflecting such contacts.

Waḥy is not a technical term for writing; rather, it denotes a non-verbal communication through signs that may take place between animals, or—if between humans—in a foreign, incomprehensible language. In pre-Islamic poetry, however, it is applied mostly to writings the observer (i.e., the poet) found engraved on a rock, or graffiti, or writings on other materials (such as parchment). It was something written that the observer did not, or was unable to, decipher. It served as a sign system deprived of its meaning.

The strangeness of such unintelligible communication is spelled out in some cases. An example of this is a verse by ʿAntara, who compares the devastated campsite to writing, perceived here as faded, old, and unintelligible:

> *Ka-waḥyi ṣaḥāʾifin min ʿahdi Kisrā / fa-ahdāhā li-aʿjam ṭimṭimīyī.*
>
> Like the writing on pages from the era of Kisrā which he gave to one whose speech is barbarous, unintelligible.[23]

The poet talks about a foreign language text written in a foreign alphabet. But, in most cases, *waḥy* denotes an inscription immediately visible in the landscape, one that is taken up as a metaphor for the ruinous state of the deserted encampment, unrecognizable, like faded writing, or reduced to mere linear traces, like those of writing, for example the verse of Zuhayr:

> *Li-man ṭalalun ka-l-waḥyi ʿāfin manāziluhu / ʿafā l-rassu minhu fa-l-rusaysu fa-ʿāqiluh*
>
> Who now inhabits a remnant like writing, its dwellings effaced—effaced, there, are al-Rass, al-Rusais and ʿAqil?[24]

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[21] Montgomery, Deserted encampment.

[22] There are comprehensive descriptions of the production of writing. See Thaʿlabah b. ʿAmr's poem, Mufaddaliyat 74, 1–3a, quoted and translated by Montgomery, Deserted encampment 291.

[23] Ahlwardt 27.2, cited and translated by Montgomery, Deserted encampment 297–298.

[24] Ibid., 284.

And Zuhayr again:

> *Li-mani l-diyāru ghashītuhā bi-l-fadfadi / ka-l-waḥyi fī ḥajari l-masīli l-mukhlidi*
>
> Who now inhabits the abodes which I chanced upon in the hard ground, like the inscription upon the perdurable rock in the torrent-bed?[25]

ʿAbīd b. ʿAbd al-ʿUzza composed these lines:

> *Li-mani l-diyāru talūḥu bi-l-ghamri / darasat li-marri l-rīḥi wa-l-qaṭri*
> *Fa-bi-shaṭṭi Busyāni l-riyāghi ka-mā / kataba l-ghulāmu l-waḥya fī l-ṣakhri*
>
> Who now inhabits the abodes that are visible in al-Ghamr, faded by the passing of the wind and the rain,
> And on the lush bank of Busyān, like writing made by a slave on stone.[26]

Mentions of writing, and often of *waḥy*, are always found in the introductory section of the standard long poem, the *qaṣīda*. This introductory part, the *nasīb*, conventionally starts with the *aṭlāl* motif—that is, the poet's lament at the site of the ruined encampments, where, earlier, he had spent time there in the company of his friends and his mistress. The nostalgic first part of the *qaṣīda* is uniquely open to poetical introspection. It invites reflections on the transitoriness of emotional fulfillment and, moreover, of human life as such.

We are indebted to Suzanne Stetkevych for a suggestive insight into the poet's stance vis-à-vis the *aṭlāl*.[27] Since the rocks, with their writings on them, do not speak for themselves, but bear messages that must be deciphered, the poet—in Labīd's *Muʿallaqa*—stops to query the rocks and the ruins. The poet is aware that the "mute immortals (*ṣummun khawālidu*)" will not speak. Yet, Suzanne Stetkevych argues, they do offer an answer to the poet's aporia, aroused by "the permanence of nature, and the impermanence of culture, and thus, ultimately, nature's immortality and man's mortality."[28]

The rock inscriptions, as well as the other kinds of writing—ultimately indecipherable—are evoked to illustrate the delusiveness of culture. Their lines and shapes, in the poet's eyes, represent not a valid sign system but an empty signifier, reflecting the devastated state of the encampment, which is razed to the ground and reduced to the linear traces of its foundations. Writing, then, represented by *waḥy* in pre-Islamic poetry, plays a rather ambivalent role, as it evokes the consciousness of aporia and the perception of loss.

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[25] Ahlwardt, Frag. 4.1, cited and translated by Montgomery, Deserted encampment 285.

[26] al-Jubūrī, *Qaṣāʾid* 200, vv. 1–2, cited and translated by Montgomery, Deserted encampment 298.

[27] Pinckney-Stetkevych, *Mute immortals*.

[28] Ibid., 21–22.

It is all the more striking that this "*waḥy* of loss," a *waḥy* that remains mute, has been inverted in the Quran. *Waḥy* in the Quran denotes inspiration; it even successfully acquires the meaning of revelation, as such. It is noteworthy that not only *waḥy* but also *āya*, "sign" or "trace," is part of the imagery of the *aṭlāl* sections in ancient Arabic poetry.[29] Though the "trace" is not negatively connoted in poetry, it still belongs to the site of the poet's experience of aporia vis-à-vis the undecipherable writing. In the Quran, it is—like *waḥy* itself—recontextualized. Quranic *waḥy*, to quote Ghassan Masri,

> ends up in the form of *āyāt*, "signs," indications, indices, that are the paragon of decipherment, they are epistemic tools that disclose to the listener the hidden significance in his surroundings and teach him how to read society, history, nature, even other humans. It is not only writing that the Quran produces out of late antique Arabia, but the culture of history and hermeneutics. Sense was introduced in the same stroke as writing.[30]

The Quran not only un-demonizes the pre-Islamic *waḥy*; at the same time, it re-establishes writing as highly meaningful. Before turning to the Quranic *waḥy*, let us examine how the Quran discovers the significance of writing for itself.

3.3 *The Discovery of Writing as a Major Authority*

The idea of writing as an authoritative source of knowledge, although ubiquitous in the later parts of the Quran, was not a given when the proclamation of the Quran initially began. There is no reference to writing in the earliest Suras. We can trace its entrance into the Quranic discourse, more or less precisely, thanks to a recent attempt to arrange the early Meccan Suras chronologically. This Quranic discourse builds on diverse criteria regarding the development both of form and of discourse.[31] Let us, for a moment, follow the Quranic sequence and see what references to writing and oral performance first appear, and in what context they are embedded.

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[29] See the collection of references assembled in Mūsawī Andarzī, *Comparative study* (I thank Ghassan El Masri for kindly alerting me to the article).

[30] This was stated by Ghassan El Masri in an oral communication. He proposes to read the so-called retribution stories in the Quran as stratagems to infuse the *aṭlāl* topos of poetry with (religious) meaning: "To my mind the *auwalun* [the earlier, annihilated communities, A.N.] in many a *sūra* can be legitimately identified as being one and the same as the people of Jahannam; they speak, they tell why they ended up in hell, the explain the secrets of this destiny, that the poet never understood. We get descriptions of their moral and psychological profile, they become an *aya*: a meaningful *wahy*." For a commentary on the stories, see Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, and Neuwirth, *Text der Spätantike* 224–226.

Where writing appears first is in a cluster of quite early Suras (though not the earliest) that establish a relation between the Prophet's proclamation and a celestial *writing* on the one hand, and earlier prophecies on the other. It is in Q 87:18–19 that the Quranic message is credited with indirect participation in the written literary monotheist tradition for the first time—through a reference to "the earliest scrolls (*al-ṣuḥuf al-ūlā*)."[32] The Sura concludes with the verses:

18 *inna hādhā la-fī l-ṣuḥufi l-ūlā*
19 *ṣuḥufi Ibrāhīma wa-Mūsā*

Surely this is in the most ancient scrolls
The scrolls of Abraham and Moses.

The Quranic message thus claims to be substantially identical to the earlier (written) messages conveyed to, or by, Abraham and Moses. The reference to the two prophets is to be understood as an expression of the community's new relation to the biblical tradition, to its newly acquired consciousness of being a part of the biblical history.

It is worth noting that the same Sura[33] also contains the first reference to the act of communicating the message, described as a performance not of recitation (i.e., the act of chanting words by heart) but of "reading," explicitly designated as *qaraʾa*, "to read":

6 *sa-nuqriʾuka fa-lā tansā*

We will make thee read to forget not.[34]

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[31] This attempt at arranging the Suras chronologically is documented in Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i. The procedure is explained in the introduction to ibid., i, 15–72.

[32] See ibid., 253–264 for commentary on the Sura.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Q 87:6.

This reading, however, raises the question as to the particular template the reader could draw on. This gap in information is filled immediately by Q 96, which projects non-earthly writing as the source of the Prophet's "reading." The Sura starts as follows:

1 *iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika lladhī khalaq*
2 *khalaqa l-insāna min ʿalaq*
3 *iqraʾ wa-rabbuka l-akram*
4 *alladhī ʿallama bi-l-qalam*
5 *ʿallama l-insāna mā lam yaʿlam*

Read in the name of thy Lord who created,
Created man from a blood-clot.
Read, since thy Lord is the most generous
Who taught by the pen,
Taught man that he knew not.[35]

If God "taught by the pen" (*al-qalam*), which was definitely intended as a celestial tool of writing, we may justly assume that the source of the Prophet's reading should be a text provided by those celestial scribes who are endowed with the use of the *qalam* (cf. the introductory verse of Q 68):

Nūn. Wa-l-qalami wa-mā yasṭurūn

Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe.[36]

In other words, the Prophet is taught to read to his community from a materially absent, transcendent writing. We might also remember that the Islamic tradition insists on the technical act of "reading" as well. The report in the *Biography of the Prophet* about the Prophet's divine call is built on these Quranic verses, but it presupposes a material writing, presented by an angel as the "master copy" to be read from by the Prophet. Q 96, in contrast, alludes to a transcendent divine writing, which, in the Sura following shortly thereafter, Q 55:1–4, will even reappear as the pre-existent Word of God.

The slightly later Sura, Q 82:10–12,[37] turns to another product of supernatural writing. It evokes the celestial scribes in their activity of producing the registers of man's deeds; they are to provide the evidence for the knowledge to be disclosed to the humans resurrected on Judgment Day:

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[35] For a commentary on the Sura, see Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 264–279.
[36] Ibid., 566–585.
[37] Ibid., 280–290.

10 *wa-inna ʿalaykum la-ḥāfiẓīn*
11 *kirāman kātibīn*
12 *yaʿlamūna mā tafʿalūn*

Yet there are over you watchers,
Noble, writers,
Who know whatever you do.

The subsequent Sura, Q 81:10,[38] accordingly conjures the fait accompli of heavenly registers prepared for the ceremony of judgment that will be unfolded on the Last Day,

10 *wa-idhā l-ṣuḥufu nushirat*

When the scrolls shall be unrolled.

Q 84:7–12,[39] which follows next, depicts two contrasting scenarios on Judgment Day, when the individual registers will be handed over to the just and to the evildoers:

7 *fa-ammā man ūtiya kitābahu bi-yamīnihi*
8 *fa-sawfa yuḥāsabu ḥisāban yasīrā*
9 *wa-yanqalibu ilā ahlihi masrūrā*
10 *wa-ammā man ūtiya kitābahu warāʾa ẓahrihi*
11 *fa-sawfa yadʿū thubūrā*
12 *wa-yaṣlā saʿīrā*

Then as for him who is given his register, "book," in his right hand
He shall surely receive an easy reckoning
And he will return to his family joyfully.
But as for him who is given his register, "book," behind his back,
He shall call for destruction
And he shall roast at a Blaze.

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[38] Ibid., 291–298.

[39] Ibid., 309–329.

The most significant "writing," however, is the comprehensive corpus of knowledge kept on "the preserved tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*), perhaps, to be understood as the celestial "book of the divine decrees," on which the reading of the Prophet draws. Q 85:21–22 concludes:

21 *bal huwa qurʾānun majīd*
22 *fī lawḥin maḥfūẓ*

> But it is a glorious Qurʾan, a glorious reading
> [from a text] preserved in a guarded tablet.[40]

It is in this context that the name of *al-qurʾān*, which by now conveys the meaning of "a reading from a celestial text," is first mentioned in the Quranic text. It will soon become the standard self-designation of the Quranic message.

A little later in the Quran, in Q 80:11–16, the divine communications are presented again as excerpts from the celestial urtext:

11 *kallā innahā tadhkirah*
12 *fa-man shāʾa dhakarah*
13 *fī ṣuḥufin mukarramah*
14 *marfūʿatin muṭahharah*
15 *bi-aydī safarah*
16 *kirāmin bararah*

> No indeed; it is a Reminder
> —And who so wills, shall remember it—
> Upon pages high-honored,
> Uplifted, purified,
> By the hands of scribes, noble, pious.[41]

This heavenly writing, which was already alluded to in Q 96:1–5 (*iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika*), is the subject of one of the latest early Meccan Suras, Q 55:1–4:

1 *al-rahmān*
2 *ʿallama l-Qurʾān*

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[40] See for a commentary on the Sura, Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 330–344.

[41] See the commentary on the Sura, Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 378–394. In order for the rhyme to be represented properly here, all the verse-final *tāʾ marbūṭa*s are represented as *-ah* and not as *-a*.

3 *khalaqa l-insān*
4 *ʿallamahu l-bayān*

> The Merciful
> He taught the Quran, the "reading"
> He created man,
> He taught him clear speech.[42]

This is a text that puts the creation of man second to that of the text, and thus comes close to the perception of a pre-existent Torah, as mentioned in Proverbs 8:22:

> *Adonay qānānī reshit darko / qedem mifʿalaw meʾaz*

> The Lord possessed me as the beginning of his way, the first of his works of old.[43]

It is ultimately because of this pedigree of the Prophet's reading, his relation to the heavenly writing, the pre-existent word of God, that the revelation can be framed in late antique terms as *logos*, and that writing in early Meccan Suras can rise to the rank of the most authoritative vehicle of power. It is made present in a double manifestation, primarily in the shape of the lofty "book of divine decrees," the transcendent scripture that is communicated to a succession of prophets and that encompasses the divine will according to which man is supposed to lead his life. Somewhat lowlier is the "register of human deeds" that documents man heeding or not heeding these precepts. Thus, the two manifestations of writing, taken together, bracket human life. Man is "encircled" by writing. This ubiquity of the concept of writing creates a strong social coherence that comes to replace the earlier amalgamating force exerted by tribal lore and the heathen cult.

3.4 *Reading Scripture and the Quranic* waḥy

The term "*Qurʾān*" indicates simultaneously the act of reading and the corpus of texts to be read—not from a material but from a virtual writing, which would have been undecipherable to a non-prophet. This unique act of supernatural reading thus resembles the decodification of an otherwise unintelligible writing, a *waḥy*. Indeed, in the Quran, the receiving of *waḥy* occasionally figures in the position of the Prophet's act of reading. Q 53:1–5, again among the latest early Meccan texts:

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[42] Ibid., 586–620.

[43] See for the Quranic traces of a *logos* theology, Neuwirth, *Text der Spätantike* 158–163.

1 *wa-l-najmi idhā hawā*
2 *mā ḍalla ṣāḥibukum wa-mā ghawā*
3 *wa-mā yanṭiqu ʿani l-hawā*
4 *in huwa illā waḥyun yūḥā*
5 *ʿallamahu shadīdu l-quwā*

By the Star when it plunges,
Your comrade is not astray, neither errs,
Nor speaks he out of caprice,
This is naught but an inspiration inspired, *waḥyun yūḥā*,
Taught him by one terrible in power.[44]

The Egyptian exegete Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd explained *waḥy* as a sign system employed by the divine speaker, whose understanding is reserved to his elect. God's language is a "coded non-verbal language," a *waḥy* that needs to be "translated" into human language. This new ranking of the non-verbal, commonly unintelligible sign system turns the pagan "*waḥy* of aporia and loss" into a Quranic "*waḥy* of fulfillment." *Waḥy* as the divine revelation—the most elevated form of communication to which humans can aspire—radically reverses the poetic use of *waḥy* as the mirror image of the devastated encampments, and as the emblem of the muteness of the material world.

If this "re-figuration" or re-formation of the poetic mute, *waḥy*—in the shape of the Quranic communicative *waḥy*—is no accident, but rather a purposeful conceptual stratagem, as Josef Horovitz speculates,[45] this understanding would indicate the involvement of an intentional reversal of the pagan worldview. The Quran presents not only a rereading of earlier monotheist traditions (as historical scholarship stresses) but equally a rethinking of pagan Arab positions (as philological research reveals). The Quran should thus be regarded not as a piece of a "rewritten" Bible but rather as a text deeply anchored in its Arabian societal milieu.

In the Quran, the thoroughly pessimistic worldview of the ancient poet—his nostalgic "*ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere*"[46]—is rigorously reversed.

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[44] See the commentary on the Sura, Neuwirth, *Der Koran* i, 642–685.

[45] Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen* 67–68.

[46] Cf. Becker, Ubi sunt 95–96.

It gives way to a positive attitude, confident in the sustained grace of human-divine communication, made possible through the prophetical power of decoding and reading (*waḥy*) the non-verbal language of the "other." This theological achievement is inseparable from the discovery of writing as a divinely established medium of meaningful and authoritative communication.

Moreover, what seems essential in the development is the sacralization of the act of reading—of *qurʾān*—itself. The reading practice of the older traditions is not only adopted—the Quran from the very beginning is read with a cantilena—but, furthermore, I would claim, hypostasized—the receiving of revelation itself is a process of "reading." There is thus an osmotic relation between the celestial written source and the revealed text which remains oral—it is revealed by the act of "reading."

4 Conclusion

More than one kind of writing is at stake in the early revelations of the Quranic text. The earthly realm of societal or moral norms is controlled by celestial watchers committed to the task of writing down man's deeds, thus providing the evidence required for the divinely performed Last Judgment. This knowledge will be revealed to the individual soul, a process that was considered extremely important in the earliest revealed Suras. However, it is not the moral knowledge that is ultimately at stake here, that which is documented in the registers hidden from man during his life. Rather, it is the spiritual knowledge, the "record book" kept by God in his celestial realm of *al-ghayb*, which is frequently mentioned throughout the Quran, whether deemed Meccan or Medinan, that signals the close relationship to that transcendent text.

If we connect the development of this notion of *al-ghayb* to the fulfillment of particular listeners' expectations, it is less the apologetic intent to cope with the scripturality of the older traditions—claimed in previous scholarship—that should be underscored, and far more the proclaimer's conviction of being a participant in the monotheistic legacy, of partaking in the biblical code, which in the older tradition is manifest in the "act of reading," more precisely, in their festive and highly artificial mode of reading. It is through reading that the divine knowledge, otherwise hidden from humans, is communicated to them. This notion of "reading" as the trajectory of the transmission of hidden knowledge, which seems to have been embraced by the community at a very early stage, in theory and in practice, has remained until today the quintessence of the Quran.

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CHAPTER 3

Muhammad as Educator, Islam as Enlightenment, and the Quran as Sacred Epic

Todd Lawson

Civilization—or, to use a more current formulation, civil society—has sacramental value in Islam, to borrow a thoroughly non-Islamic technical term. The Quran, the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, the ethos of Muslim society and culture, and the general pietistic orientation of Muslims all agree that an erring and suffering humanity—the sons of Adam—has been created by God to live in harmony and prosperity. Further, this is seen to be most readily achievable through following the guidance of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad. Guidance or education is therefore pivotal to the central defining Islamicate epic journey from ignorance (*jahl*) to enlightenment (*islām*). The centrality of this journey for Islam is distinctive because it involves the abovementioned children of Adam, humanity. There are no chosen people. According to the Quran, humanity in the aggregate has been guided by God, through prophets and revelations, from the beginning of time. Moses, who is mentioned in its pages more than any other figure, is the ostensible hero of the Quran, and his journey from Egypt to Canaan symbolizes the more abstract journey from bondage to freedom, from ignorance to enlightenment. Through the ineluctable rhetorical power of typological figuration, however, it emerges that Muhammad is the real hero of the book, and it is his journey that it recounts and prescribes as exemplary.[1] He emerges, especially when the Quran and the *Sīra* are read together, as the epic hero par excellence of the Islamic tradition, and his message is esteemed particularly germane for the amelioration of the chaos of religions so characteristic of the Nile-to-Oxus region of late antiquity.[2] In what follows we will attempt to outline in very broad strokes the main features of such epic heroism, a heroism that centers precisely on education.

Islam holds the Prophet Muhammad in esteem in multiple ways. We will focus here on the role of Muhammad as educator, universally admired and celebrated as such by Muslims around the world through the Quran and its exegesis, through the *ḥadith* (or literature of Prophetic traditions) and its exegesis and

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[1] Zwettler, Mantic.

[2] Lawson, *Quran*.

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application to praxis, the so-called *sunna* of the Prophet, and through ancillary institutions—legal, social, pietistic, and conceptual—such as schools, consultations, mosques, meetings, markets, parliaments, *madrasa*s, *zāwiya*s, *ribāṭ*s, *khānaqāh*s, and family life. At the center of all these is the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad is also found at the center of more purely intellectual disciplines and fields of inquiry, beginning, again, with the Quran and its exegesis, the *ḥadīth*, law, poetry, history, natural science, and philosophy.[3] Muhammad is loved and admired for his character, his innate moral beauty, his behavior with friend and enemy alike, his special relationship with God (*walāya*), his role as messenger and prophet, and his heroism in challenging and suffering the forces of darkness seen to have been abroad in his time and place. Finally, his heroism is most celebrated because of the way it transformed his society from one of barbarous and savage violence and conflict (*jahl*) to one in which the virtues of civilization (frequently overlapping with the names and attributes of God in the Quran) set the tone of individual and communal life. It is astounding that Muhammad's great achievements as an educator are not more widely known and celebrated beyond the Islamic world. Persistent ignorance here represents a failure both moral and intellectual.[4]

It may be countered that, in fact, the society produced by Muslims following the teachings of their Prophet was not always a pure vertical development away from the imperfect social reality into which Muhammad was born. However true this may be, Islam does not lay such a failure at the feet of its founder, Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh; rather, it sees this as the all too human failure of his community to live up to the exacting and uncompromising standards he inculcated, first through the Quran, and then through his own example, the *sunna*. Thus, it remains that Muhammad is esteemed foremost as an educator. Such is indeed emphasized by the first Sura to have been revealed, "Recite: And thy Lord is Most Generous, who taught the use of the pen, taught man what he knew not" (Q 96:3–6). An ancillary persuasive example of such esteem and veneration of education is not difficult to find. During the first hijra, a group of Muslims led by Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, the brother of ʿAlī, fled persecution from the Hejaz to the realm of the negus of Abyssinia, seeking refuge from persecution and possible annihilation. The negus offered them refuge, and all proceeded well until emissaries of the hostile Quraysh pursued the refugees all the way to Ḥabash and attempted to persuade the negus to withdraw his protection, accusing the Muslims of having committed a variety of enormities and crimes against their community, their tradition, their kinsmen, and their religion. The negus summoned Jaʿfar to his court to question him about these accusations. Jaʿfar's response was eloquent and persuasive. The negus sent the Qurayshis away empty-handed and frustrated. More important in the present context is the image of the Prophet that emerges from Jaʿfar's speech, and the way in which the purpose of Islam itself is delineated in his words:

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[3] Brown, *Hadith*; Khalidi, *Images*; Hosseini-Nassab, Prophet.

[4] An exception is Gulick, *Muhammad*.

> When [the Muslims] came into the royal presence they found that the king had summoned his bishops with their sacred books [opened] around him. He asked them what the religion (*al-dīn*) was for which they had forsaken their people (*qad fāraqtum fīhi qawmakum*), without entering into his religion or any other. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib answered, "O King, we were an uncivilized people (*kunnā qawman ahla jāhiliyyati*), worshipping idols, eating corpses, committing abominations, violating natural ties, treating guests badly, and our strong devoured our weak. Thus we were until God sent us an apostle."[5]

At the center of this discourse is the idea of transformation through recognition and education—recognition of the spiritual and intellectual impoverishment represented by the status quo, and recognition of the apostle who will guide them away from that state. Note the comparatively scant theological content in this speech. Even before this late second/eighth-ninth century edition of Ibn Isḥāq's epic account of the rise of Islam out of the moral chaos of *jāhilī* Arabia,[6] the theme was already a salient part of the *daʿwa*, or kerygma, of Islam.[7] Beginning with the Quran, the heroism of numerous prophets against the blindness, opposition, persecution, and ignorance of their communities is a prominent leitmotif. There is no space here to elaborate in detail. And, in any case, this reading of the Quran is uncontroversial. It may be argued, or caviled, that we do not know exactly how old the Quran is—though positive evidence is mounting—and, therefore, we do not know with laser precision the year from which we can date this self-identity of Islam and Muslims as cultivators and purveyors of true civilization, civilization in which communal harmony, prosperity, and justice represent the social gospel of the Quran. A community made up of various allegiances and confessions was the theme of this kind of divinely guided education in the document widely known as the Constitution of Medina, a "*kitāb*" whose authorship is ascribed to none other than the Prophet himself.[8] Such themes are part of the divine message of the Quran, no matter how it is arranged, even if the final order of the *Muṣḥaf* represents an authorial gesture of the first magnitude by stressing the epic qualities of the message of Islam.[9] So, it follows that civilization as such is elevated to the rank of religious value, what might be called in another tradition "sacrament."[10] This is, in and of itself, a striking feature to the student of comparative religion. The theological divine unity taught by Islam via *tawḥīd* is meant to be reflected in the unity (*waḥda*) of the community that goes by its name. It is also of some interest that, according to the abovementioned Constitution of Medina and, it may be argued, the Quran itself, such a community is not composed solely of Muslims but reflects late antique cosmopolitanism.[11]

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[5] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* i, 249–250 / Guillaume, *Life* 151–152 (slightly revised).

[6] On the *Sīra* as epic, see Sperl, Epic.

[7] Sinai, Eschatological kerygma.

It is just such an élan, this preoccupation with true civilization, that so obviously captured the imagination, and one might say heart, of the historian Marshall G.S. Hodgson (d. 1968), whose magisterial three-volume study of Islam was given the title *The venture of Islam: History and conscience in a world civilization*. It is a work that, despite its age, remains perhaps the very best introduction to the historical problem of the rise of Islam and its breathtaking expansion, growth, and development on a global scale as a new way of being human. The great success of this venture is ascribed to numerous factors, including to the historical, political, social, economic, and spiritual exhaustion of neighboring societies, to the relentless strength, unity, and military and administrative brilliance of the Muslim invaders or those they commissioned, and, finally, to the truth and compelling sui generis power of the Quran's critique of and prescription for social and spiritual health. It may be further suggested that much of the Quran's literary power stems from the master narrative embodied in the Quran's story of humanity, its relation to God, to death, to suffering, to family, to history, to the cosmos, and to the present moment—*al-sāʿa* ("the Hour" or "the Time"), which is of such characteristic and instrumental frequency in the Quran.

But the Quran is not a work of literature, one may reasonably protest. Indeed, from the earliest times, the Quran, the Prophet, and those who recognized the salience and truth of the abovementioned critique, Muslims included, strenuously asserted that the Quran was not the creation of a mere mortal the way literature, especially poetry, is. Rather, it is the Word of God. But even in the

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[8] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* ii, 85–87 / Guillaume, *Life* 231–232; Lecker, "*Constitution*."

[9] Lawson, *Quran* vxi–xvii.

[10] Very briefly, a sacrament is that action or practice through which the presence or will of God is put into play. Jennings, Sacrament.

[11] Cameron, Late antique apocalyptic; Donner, *Muhammad*.

*āya*s and Suras of the Quran these same readers would recognize familiar "literary structures of religious meaning."[12] So, while the vocation of the Quran was not purely literary, it did trail clouds of literary glory. To adapt the useful words of Northrop Frye's discussion of the Bible, the Quran is both literature and more than literature.[13] A similar subjunctivity regarding its literary character is detected in numerous studies of the Quran. Characteristic here is Mir's observation that some passages of the Quran attain an "almost epic" quality.[14] As it asserts in a pivotal and incalculably important description of how it (i.e., revelation as such) functions, the Quran offers the following: "We sent not a messenger except [to teach] in the language (*lisān*) of his [own] people, in order to make things clear to them" (Q 14:4).[15]

Here, one allow*s* that language comprises much more than vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, however basic these elements are. One of the features of the language of the Quran, it has recently been suggested, is precisely the epic form that it assumes, or, more accurately, was given by those who were responsible for its final arrangement.[16] This form, known in Arabic as the *Muṣḥaf* ("book[ed]," "codex," "compilation," "arrangement") differs, according to Islamic tradition, from the earlier unarranged state of the revelations, whose only principle of order had been that of chronology.[17] As is well known and uncontroversial, at some stage that material was forged into the arrangement we have today, and this arrangement largely reversed the chronological order of the revelation—the *Tanzīl* ("sent down," "revealed")—so that in the *Muṣḥaf* the earliest revealed *āya*s and Suras are consigned to the end of the book, while the latest revelations are placed at the beginning. Such an arrangement also sculpts from what might thus be thought the "raw material"—the *Tanzīl*—an epic structure for the Quran's message of transformation through revelation, a transformation preached to both the individual and the community. Such a structure imparts universality and urgency to this message, in addition to offering a kind of hallowed recital of humankind's travails and successes in its timeless relation with God. All this may also be thought to amount to a highly effective pedagogy.[18] Finally, understanding the Quran's epic form explains the age-old riddle of why the Quran was arranged the way it is.

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[12] Such is the brilliant title of the groundbreaking book from Boullata, *Literary structures*.

[13] Frye, *Great code* xvi.

[14] Mir, Language 94.

[15] Quran translations are from Abdallah Yusuf Ali, *Holy Qur'an*, sometimes slightly adapted. Adaptations are italicized.

[16] Lawson, *Quran* 1–26.

[17] Neuwirth, Structure.

[18] Reda, *Baqara*.

1 The Epic Form

The literary structure of religious meaning of concern here is the epic form. The epic is among humankind's oldest literary preoccupations, beginning in Mesopotamia with the story of Gilgamesh. The books of Homer, Hesiod, and Virgil are further examples—and there are many more. The epic has continued to be written, composed, and sung down to the present, and it remains an influential literary form throughout the world, across a dizzying variety of cultures and languages.[19] The earliest epics are oral poetic compositions. The rhyme aids in the memorization and stabilization of the text.[20] The epic spirit or energy has enlivened and sacralized much of biblical narrative, European literatures, Asian literatures, African literatures, Caribbean literatures, and beyond. Epics are also frequently parochial or tribal. The Quran distinguishes itself by its uncompromising address to humanity. Those who hear it or read it are challenged to expand their vision of what it means to be human. The epic is a human thing.

The epic spirit is, in part, generated by its form. Although each epic is individual and distinct, each is also seen to depend upon form, which is the result of a combination of several elements. Here, we will list (in nine sections) twelve of the most frequent and characteristic of the epic genre. In some instances, the relevance of a given epic element for the Quran and Islam will be readily apparent.[21] In other instances, it will require some further explanation.

1. Frequently the first or oldest literary work (whether oral or textual) of a given culture, and usually very long

Not much is needed to be said here. Indeed, one of the striking features of the history of Islam and, for that matter, Arabic literature, is that the Quran is acknowledged as the first book in Arabic. This is, of course, different from claiming it to be the first literary work. For this we must look elsewhere. It should be remembered that the Quran is also rhymed from beginning to end.

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[19] Some recent important scholarship on the epic is Foley, *Companion*; Beissinger, Tylus, and Wofford, *Epic traditions*; Konstan and Raaflaub, *Epic*.

[20] Reynolds, Epic and history 393: "Given the structures of fixing utterances into both meter and rhyme, the ancient Arabs correctly understood that poetry was more easily memorized and underwent far less change in transmission than prose."

[21] These elements are detailed in the standard article on the topic by Revard and Newman, Epic I & Epic II. For further details regarding the way in which the following epic features occur in the Quran, the reader may consult Lawson, *Quran* 1–75, 169–174.

2. Typically opens in the midst of the action (in medias res)

The term *ab ovo* ("from the egg") was coined by the first century BCE Roman poet Horace in his ideal description of the epic, which usage dictates should not begin at the very beginning, in this case, the egg from which Helen of Troy was born. Rather, a good epic should put us in the middle of the action from the very start, and flatter the audience in assuming that the story is known.[22] This is thought also to provide a more compelling literary structure, allowing for flashbacks, and a more creative manipulation of time and history, for the purposes of emphasizing aspects of the narrative and of enhancing the esthetic experience of the audience and holding its attention. This feature is seen to have a cognate in the Quran's structure, which places the true beginning of humanity, and its relation to God, not at the beginning of the *Muṣḥaf* but deep within the Quran—that is, at Q 7:172:

> When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, [saying]: "Am I not your Lord [who cherishes you and sustains you] (*a-lastu bi-rabbikum*)?"—They said, "Yea! (*balā*'), we do testify!" [This], lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful."

The so-called verse of the Day of the Covenant, or the Day of Alast (from the Arabic *a-lastu*, "Am I not?," of the above verse), which occurs at a time and place "before" creation in a purely spiritual realm, is the moment from which proceeds actual creation, including the creation of Adam and Eve. They are, of course, the main characters, along with Iblis, the angels and God, in the opening narrative of the *Muṣḥaf* (Q 2:30–39). From the point of view of epic structure, it is no accident that the primordial covenant described in Q 7:172—the details of which will not be disclosed until much later in the text—is alluded to here at the very beginning of the *Muṣḥaf*, at the close of the Adam and Eve narrative at Q 2:39.

3. Has a vast setting, covering many nations, the world or worlds, the cosmos, and all time

There is also no need to demonstrate in great detail this feature of the Quran. The unimaginably vast temporal frame has already been pointed out when locating the actual beginning at the Day of Alast, before the creation of the cosmos, time, space, and humanity. Paradoxically for the Quranic chronotope, this is the beginning point for both consciousness and history. The temporal frame ends, in one sense, on the Day of Judgment. The geographic scale is also vast, taking into its scope all places inhabited by humanity, various categories of humans and other creatures, and other worlds such as hell, heaven, the realm of the jinn, the natural realm, and so on.

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[22] Horace, *Ars Poetica* 119–152.

4. Begins with an invocation to a divine being or muse

5. Starts with a statement of theme (praepositio)

These two elements come together with the *basmala* and Fātiḥa, which open the *Muṣḥaf*. Ancient epics typically begin with a prayer or petition to a divine being or muse to ask for inspiration and guidance in relating the narrative. Even though the *basmala* (the phrase or prayer "In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate") occurs frequently throughout the Quran, it remains that it is the very first verse of the Quran. The Fātiḥa is widely held by the Islamic tradition to somehow contain not only the entire Quran but in fact all of the revelations that came before it. The well-known *ḥadīth* of the *basmala*, frequently related as the words of ʿAlī, provides a good example:

> The Quran contains all of previous revelations, the Fātiḥa contains all of the Quran, the Basmala contains all of the Fātiḥa, the letter Bāʾ of the basmala contains all of the Basmala, the point under the Bāʾ contains all that is in the Basmala.[23]

So, with regard to these two epic features we have an instructive example of how the Quran conforms to the wider epic tradition and its expectations but does so in its own, distinctively Quranic fashion. Chief among the themes of the Quran introduced in the Fātiḥa is that of the path, a classic epic concern; the ancient epics involved long and eventful culture-defining journeys of heroes whose quests also entailed the most cherished values and symbols of the culture involved. A chief feature of the journey is hardship and suffering (but, it is not the only one). We will return to this below in the discussion of Muhammad as the hero of the Quranic epic.

6. Makes pervasive use of epithet

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[23] Widely cited in this or variant forms. The point under the *bāʾ* is a feature of Arabic orthography: ب.

7. Makes pervasive use of epic similes

8. Contains long lists (enumeratio)

In another example of the distinctive way in which the epic is embodied by the Quran, these three features, counted separately in Revard and Newman, may be considered to function largely as one element, especially given that the Quran is permeated with the names and attributes of God. These, and other locutions, such as *al-ḥayat al-dunyāʾ* ("the life of the world"), and *ūlū al-albāb* ("those possessed of minds/understanding"), are just as distinctive of the Quran as formulaic references to "the wine-dark sea" or "the rosy fingers of dawn" are of the poems of Homer. The element of lists overlaps with the Quranic use of epithet in that the divine attributes may also be seen as a Quranic example of *enumeratio*, as can the enumeration of various religions, books, communities, elements of the natural world, and supernatural beings. Thus, the Quran fulfils one of the roles of the epic in that it may be thought to provide a dictionary for culture. An epic simile in the Quranic instance would be grounded in the exquisite "Light Verse" at Q 24:35:

> God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! God doth guide whom He will to His Light: God doth set forth Parables for men: and God doth know all things.

Other such epic similes and/or metaphors are not only not difficult to adduce but, on the contrary, represent what is most distinctive about the Quran—the Throne Verse (Q 2:255), the Fātiḥa, the Verse of the Covenant, and so on. These familiar and strikingly beautiful, if not exquisitely poetic, passages of the Quran somehow are always there in reading any passage of the text.

9. Features long and formal speeches

The Quranic "improvisation" upon this epic convention may be thought to be embodied in the fact that the Quran is itself one long speech, the speech of God. There are, of course, ancillary speeches by various persons within the Quran. But, the real demonstration of verbal artistry that such epic speeches seem to have as their raison d'être is found in the entire Quran, not in this or that comparatively short speech of some (non-existent) Quranic Agamemnon, Menelaus, or Odysseus.

10. Shows divine intervention in human affairs

This is the epic convention that requires the least explanation. The self-avowed purpose of the Quran is to provide evidence for the way in which God actively engages with humans at both the individual and communal levels, and to assert that it is happening now.

11. Is recited before an audience

This also requires no argument.

12. Features "star" heroes who embody the values of civilization

With the epic hero, our discussion comes into sharper focus. Epics are universally seen as defined by heroism. An epic without a hero is unthinkable. The heroism displayed and detailed in an epic becomes the blueprint for the moral standards of a given society. While the life of the Prophet Muhammad is not the subject of the Quran in the way that Odysseus's life is the subject of the Odyssey, his struggle and achievement, his epic journey, does, surreptitiously or imperceptibly, assume pride of place through typological figuration. This is, again, one of the key literary features of the Quran.[24] Muhammad is mentioned by name only four times in the Quran. Moses, however, is mentioned over a hundred. Other prophets, such as Joseph and Adam, are also mentioned many more times. Their travails and suffering, what in the context of the epic is called peripeteia, and their survival and success describe an epically charged life, one that has implications and importance far beyond the individual hero. Typological figuration occurs when the audience or reader sees the life of the storyteller, in this case Muhammad, in the stories being told about the previous prophets. In such fashion his status of prophet is sealed for his community. The reader, as part of this community, also identifies with earlier communities—both those who accepted their prophet and also those who rejected their messengers. The reader also sees him- or herself in the stories being told. In such manner, the Quran emerges as a kind of roman à clef in which the story of Muhammad's divinely appointed task to restore the proper worship of God is the central epic adventure, and the enemies and supporters of earlier prophets in their similar task come to life again in members of the community being addressed by the Quran. His heroism, in line with the heroism of previous prophets, is most perfectly defined within the terms of the educator. His primary duty—in the event, quite Stygian—was to restore true monotheism to an ignorant, thankless, and wildly polytheistic humanity.

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[24] Lawson, *Quran* 57–62.

Heroism, however, is not the sole preserve of the prophets. Through reading and delving into the stories of the Quran and its epic vision, the reader/believer also becomes implicated in the heroism of the Quran. Again, typological figuration is at work. It is a very short step from the audience identifying Muhammad with the prophets of the Quran, to identifying themselves with the audience of the earlier prophets.[25] Inasmuch as the Quran implicates all humanity—those present on the Day of Alast—the Quran then may be thought of as the epic of humanity, whose journey from ignorance to enlightenment is a shared desideratum requiring a shared heroism. Part of the pedagogy is implicated in this typological figuration, but not all of it.

In his renowned series of six lectures on heroes and the heroic in history, delivered in May 1840, Thomas Carlyle (d. 1881) courageously dedicated the second lecture to Muhammad.[26] But, this aspect of the Prophet's biography has been slow to attract more attention.[27] Recently, some further progress in the study of Muhammad as hero has indicated a fertile area for future studies.[28] To briefly repeat some of that discussion, it will be relevant to observe that the broad outlines of the Prophet's birth, life, enlightenment, and call, his journey away from home and his return, his suffering and persecution, and his triumph over the same, all represent fairly standard elements of the career of an epic hero.[29]

2 Islam as Enlightenment

Just as the idea of civil society is elevated by Islam to the status of sacrament, so is knowledge. The Quran is replete with various words for truth, knowing, teaching, learning, realizing, intelligence, observation, being aware, recognition, and revelation. It may be that this theme, together with that of the path mentioned above, constitutes the core values of the Quran and Islam. The pervasiveness of the ideas of cognition and perception and illumination in the Quran may be thought to be both summarized and symbolized in the key Quranic verse:

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[25] See the analogous process explicated in Corbin, Épopée.

[26] Carlyle, *On heroes* 60–109.

[27] Nash, Amin Rihani.

[28] Sperl, Epic.

[29] Lawson, *Quran* 14–22.

> Soon will We show them our Signs (*āyātanā*) in the [furthest] regions [of the earth] (*al-āfāq*), and in their own souls (*anfusihim*), until it becomes manifest to them (*yatabayyana lahum*) that this is the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*). Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?
>
> Q 41:53

Just as the epic voice and arrangement of the Quran have been largely ignored by scholarship, so also (until recently) has the apocalyptic dimension of the Quran. In the present context, this is particularly germane, because the core meaning of the originally Greek word apocalypse is "revelation" (cf. above *Tanzīl*). Revelation, a near synonym of enlightenment, is basically knowledge that comes suddenly, perhaps even unexpectedly. It is knowledge, and it therefore presumes a pedagogy and a pedagogue. The knowledge conveyed by Muhammad through the Quran and his *sunna*, whether as information, wisdom, or praxis, is what transformed his followers from savages to civilized humans, as indicated above in the quotation from Jaʿfar.

The word "enlightenment" is chosen here because of the distinctive way in which the abovementioned typological figuration produces knowledge.[30] The identification of the Prophet Muhammad comes about not through an argument from causality or through syllogistic reasoning but through the supralogical dynamism of faith, hope, and the poetics of imagination at work in the process of typological figuration. Long recognized as a powerful generator of art and meaning in the Bible[31] and European literature, typological figuration in the Quran has only recently begun to be explored.[32] The knowledge generated through this figure is that much more permanent and indelible because it is free from the constraints of time and mere rationalism. Indeed, in the midst of the typological "recital," time seems to cease to exist, and the past, the present, and the future merge at the point of recognition or what Aristotle called, in a different context, anagnorisis.[33] Quranic anagnorisis brings with it the sense of absolute and invulnerable truth precisely because it transcends time. Again, Northrop Frye is helpful:

> When we wake up from sleep, one world is simply abolished and replaced by another. This suggests a clue to the origin of typology: it is essen-

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[30] Ibid., 76–94.

[31] Goppelt, *Typos*; Frye, *Great code*; Auerbach, *Scenes* 11–78, ch. "Figura."

[32] Zwettler, Mantic; Lawson, Duality; Lawson, Typological figuration; and now Lawson, *Quran* 57–93.

[33] Kennedy, *Recognition*; note here, 128–129, the construal of Islam as enlightenment.

> tially a revolutionary form of thought and rhetoric. We have revolutionary thought whenever the feeling "life is a dream" becomes geared to an impulse to waken from it.[34]

Such recognition or awakening, an Arabic word for which is *ʿirfān*, is implicated in the act of *islām*, frequently translated as "submission," because an acceptance or recognition of truth, and commitment to the truth, are key to it.

The epic story told in the Quran is what established a new vision of humanity, and made a new world. Those who understood the world in terms of Quranic history, in which it is taught that prophets had been sent by God to every community that had ever lived (Q 10:47), who spoke to that community in their own language (Q 14:4), who recognized Muhammad as the most recent and even the last of such divine emissaries, now understood what might otherwise be seen as the chaos of religions prevailing in the Nile-to-Oxus region as a divinely ordained cosmopolitan setting in which the chief task would be to mutually recognize and understand such "religious" and cultural differences (Q 49:13) in the process of expanding the *dār al-Islām* (the Abode of Enlightenment) at the expense of the *dār al-Ḥarb* (the Abode of Chaos). After all, had "he" wanted, God could have quite easily made humanity into one homogenized community (Q 5:48).

After the remarkable spread and consolidation of Islam, the world became one to a degree previously unattained or imagined. From Andalusia to the Hindu Kush, a "citizen" of this world would be met with familiar moral, mythic, and historical presuppositions and could feel somehow "at home." The hero is not only the Prophet Muhammad but also the inhabitants of this new world, who, to one extent or another, maintained and cultivated the healing ethos of this new epic for humanity, a humanity that had, after all, once been together in perfect harmony in the presence of their Lord on that remarkable occasion before time and place existed (Q 7:172), and who were all traveling a shared path to judgment. A skeptic may see such illogical or irrational conditions as pointing to the impossibility or unworkability of such a vision. A more optimistic response would take into account the perfect unassailability of such a vision, anchored as it is in the placeless and the timeless. At the very least, one might see it as an inspiring verbal icon of hope for a fractured humanity, who, having once been at peace, must of a necessity be capable of it once again. This requires remembrance, and of course the Quran never tires of summoning to remembrance, *dhikr*.

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[34] Frye, *Great code* 80–81.

3 Conclusion

By drawing attention to the epic structure of the Quran, and to its themes of heroism and enlightenment, it is certainly not suggested that a conscious effort was being made to artificially construct a new "epic" scripture. Rather, taking guidance from Q 14:4, which insists that divine revelations are given in the language of their intended audience, we simply wish to point out that part of this language entailed what today we might refer to as the literary expectations of the reader. The form and content—the energy of the epic—had, at the time of Islam, circulated nowhere more pervasively and vigorously than in the Nile-to-Oxus region. Heroes and their travails and triumphs were a large part of that *Gedankenwelt*.[35] It is of some interest to observe that the Arabic epic poems appear between the tenth and twelfth centuries CE,[36] three to five centuries after the revelation of the Quran.

In promulgating the sacred epic of the Quran, the Prophet recounted narratives that functioned rhetorical through typological figuration to bring about a new awareness of who his audience was, and their role in history. The words of Walter Benjamin, discussing another storyteller, are apt:

> [T]he storyteller joins the ranks of the teachers and sages. He has counsel—not for a few situations, as the proverb does, but for many, like the sage. For it is granted to him to reach back to a whole lifetime (a life, incidentally, that comprises not only his own experience but no little of the experience of others; what the storyteller knows from hearsay is added to his own). His gift is the ability to relate his life; his distinction, to be able to tell his entire life. The storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story. This is the basis of the incomparable aura about the storyteller … The storyteller is the figure in which the righteous man encounters himself.[37]

Of course, the Prophet Muhammad did more than tell stories; his role as educator is not exhausted by reference to storytelling. But, the stories he did tell—we all came from the same place and are traveling the same path; God is one; all prophets are equal; humanity is one; and "religion" is one—were essential to Islamic identity. The epic vision of history and humankind taught through his story changed—and continues to change—the world, because ultimately this new epic expands the vision beyond this or that ethnic or linguistic group to speak unapologetically to humanity as a single reality.

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[35] Wheeler, Moses 260–261.

[36] Reynolds, Epic 392.

[37] Benjamin, Storyteller 108–109.

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CHAPTER 4

Divine Inspiration, Storytelling, and Cultural Transfer: Muhammad's and Caedmon's Call

Gregor Schoeler

The most well-known, and likewise most important, biography of the Prophet Muhammad (d. 9/632) from pre-modern times, Ibn Isḥāq's (d. ca. 150/767) *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* (*The book of the campaigns* [*of the Messenger of God*]),[1] also includes a lengthy report on Muhammad's first call. A literal translation reads as follows:[2]

> The Messenger of God would spend each year a month on Mount Ḥirāʾ[3] in seclusion [applying himself to fasting and occupying himself in prayer and religious meditation]. This was among the devotional exercises of the Quraysh tribe in pre-Islamic times … The Messenger of God would fast and pray in seclusion there every year in that month; he also would feed the poor that came to him. When the Messenger of God had completed his monthly sojourn and returned from his seclusion, he first would go to the Kaʿba, even before entering his house. He circumambulated the sanctuary seven times, or as often as it pleased God; then he would go home.
>
> When the month came in which God chose to show him what he willed of his grace, in just that year in which he sent him—and that was in the month of Ramaḍān—he set out for Mount Ḥirāʾ as was his custom for his devotional exercises, with his wife. As, then, the night came in which God wished to honor him with His mission and thereby show mercy to humankind, [the archangel] Gabriel brought him God's command. The Messenger of God recounted,

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[1] For him, see Jones, Ibn Isḥāq.

[2] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat* i, 151–152, and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* iii, 1149–1152. See also the English rendering in Ibn Isḥāq, *Life* 105–107; Andrae, Legenden 5–18; and Watt, *Muḥammad* 39–52, 180–182. A detailed study is included in Schoeler, *Biography* 59–63. For the question of the Prophet Muhammad's literacy, see Günther, Muḥammad 1–26, esp. 2–3, and Günther, Ummī 399–402.

[3] A mountain 3 Arabian miles to the northeast of Mecca.

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> “Gabriel came to me while I was asleep, with a cloth made of brocade upon which something was written. He said,
>
> ‘Read (*iqraʾ*)!’ I answered,
>
> ‘I cannot read (*mā aqraʾu*).’[4]
>
> Thereupon he squeezed me vehemently with it so that I thought it was death. He then released me and said [then again],
>
> ‘Read!’
>
> I answered,
>
> ‘What then shall I read (*mā* [*dhā*] *aqraʾu*)?’
>
> I said this only to keep him from doing again what he had done to me. He then said (Q 96: 1–5),
>
> ‘Recite in the name of your Lord who created—Created man from a clinging substance. Recite. And your Lord is the most Generous—Who taught by the pen—Taught man that which he knew not.’ ”[5]

Muhammad recounted further:

> “So I read the words, and everything was over. Gabriel left me, and I awoke from my sleep. It was as though the words were written on my heart.”

This “initiation scene,” however, does not represent the end of Muhammad’s call; the narrative will subsequently take a highly dramatic turn. We find Muhammad, because of this experience, fearing that he is either a poet or possessed. He even harbors suicidal intentions. As Muhammad is halfway up a high mountain, intent on throwing himself down, Gabriel appears to him again. This time he appears in the form of a man with feet astride the horizon, saying, “O Muhammad, you are the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel!” He thereby prevents the suicide. Further in the course of the narrative, Muhammad’s wife, Khadija, plays an important role. She consoles her husband and receives from her cousin Waraqa b. Nawfal (died before 610 CE [?]), a Christian who knew the Bible, the prophecy that Muhammad is “the prophet of this folk.”

For most Muslims, Q 96:1–5 is considered the very first revelation of the Quranic message, and the significance of this story (or a very similar variant thereof, see below) is evident in light of the great majority of Muslims’ belief in it, and in the way the birth of Islam is portrayed in it. Muslim tradition dates the event as happening around 610 CE.

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[4] An alternative translation would be “What shall I read?”

[5] Trans. Pickthall, *Meaning* 813.

1 Arabia at the Dawn of Islam

In what follows, some explanation and background information is provided regarding this account. But first, a few words about the religious-historical situation in Arabia during Muhammad's time.[6] The largest and most influential segment of Mecca and Medina's populations were polytheists or "pagans." Their main sanctuary was the Kaʿba in Mecca, which, prior to Islam, was already a religious center, and the customs and pilgrimage associated with it were later divested of their pagan character by Muhammad and incorporated into Islam. In Medina, along with the pagan Arab tribes, there were also Jewish-Arab tribes. Christians lived in both cities as well. Finally, there was what can be called a national-Arabian monotheism, the faith of the so-called Hanifs.[7] It appears that the Ḥanīfs were individuals rather than an organized group; they were pious men (and certainly women as well) who no longer found satisfaction in the religion of their ancestors, rejected polytheism, promoted an ethical standard of living, and performed religious practices. Muhammad, who, according to Muslim tradition, was a polytheist in his youth, was apparently close to this religious movement prior to his prophetic call.

2 The Sura and the Report on Its Revelation

We must differentiate between the Sura (i.e., the revealed Quranic verses, "Read in the name of your Lord …!") and the account of the revelation. The Sura was quite possibly written down during the lifetime of the Prophet (i.e., before 11/632). Since Muslims and most European scholars assume that the *textus receptus* of the Quran was compiled and redacted in the middle of the first/seventh century,[8] it is highly probable that around the year 29/650 is the *terminus ad quem* for the wording of the Sura we have before us today.

The situation is different for the report on how the Sura was revealed. Although, as noted, most Muslims see it as the original and authentic account of the call of the Prophet Muhammad, which took place around 11/610, it must be noted that Ibn Isḥāq did not finalize the book containing the account until around the year 143/760, if not later. Ibn Isḥāq's *K. al-Maghāzī* was commissioned at this time by the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) for his son, the crown prince al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785). Hence, between the real, or asserted, event and the relevant report lies a span of around 150 years. The nature of the (literary) transmission is even more problematic. Ibn Isḥāq's *Book of the campaigns* is no longer extant in its original form, but only in later recensions from the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries, the most well-known being Ibn Hishām's (d. 213/828 or 218/834) *K. Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh* (*Biography of our lord Muhammad, the Messenger of God*). The account of the first revelatory experience *in the form we have before us today* was not written down until over two hundred years after the events it describes. Thus, we have before us a report passed down over several generations, a *tradition*, not an eyewitness account.[9]

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[6] Cf. Bell, *Introduction* 16–19.

[7] Ibid., 16.

[8] Ibid., 40–44.

3 Origin and Literary Transmission of the Report on Muhammad's Call

The historian Ibn Isḥāq says, authenticating his account with a chain of transmitters (*isnād*),[10] that this report was presented at the court of the counter-caliph[11] ruling in Medina, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 73/692).[12] The caliph called for a preacher and narrator of tales (*qāṣṣ*, pl. *quṣṣāṣ*)[13] by the name of ʿUbayd b.

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[9] As noted at the beginning of this contribution, the majority of Muslims hold Q 96:1–5 to be the first revelation. This view, however, is not an article of Muslim faith or a dogma. Already, early in the second/eighth century, there were other opinions concerning the order of the revelations, and several other Suras claim the honor of being the first one revealed (cf. Andrae, Legenden 5–18). The most promising candidate by far *after* Q 96:1–5 is Q 74:1–5 (7), beginning with the words, "O you wrapped up in your mantle! Rise up and warn (sc. your folk of the punishment of God)" (Andrae, Legenden 16; Schoeler, *Biography* 72–73). In this regard, Muslim tradition provides the following story: Muhammad found himself alone on Mount Ḥirāʾ, where he was observing devotional exercises; while walking through this wilderness, he is called, whereupon he sees an angel seated on a throne between heaven and earth. Distraught, the future prophet returns to his home and calls out to his wife Khadīja: "Cover me," which she does. Then comes the revelation "O you wrapped up in your mantle" (Q 74:1–7). Muslims who see the incident in which the Prophet is compelled by the angel to read (Q 96:1–5) as the first revelatory experience hold the verses of Q 74 to be the second one.

[10] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* i, 1149; cf. the English translation in Ibn Isḥāq, *Life* 105.

[11] The main caliphate dynasty at that time were the Umayyads, who reigned in Syria and Egypt.

[12] For him, see Gibb, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr.

[13] For the *quṣṣāṣ* see Goldziher, *Muslim studies* ii, 149–159. See recently Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ*. Armstrong's portrayal of the *quṣṣāṣ* is much more positive than Goldziher's, whose opinions were taken into the later literature, opinions Armstrong is out to correct.

ʿUmayr (d. ca. 68/687)[14] to report on the beginnings of the Quranic revelation, whereupon he told the story as we quoted it above.

For our purposes, it is important to stress that Muslim religious scholars classify this account as a popular religious tale, not a *ḥadīth* (i.e., an account belonging to the Muslim tradition that is deemed "sacred"). The account is clearly traced back to a narrator of tales, not to a traditionist or *ḥadīth* scholar. Dating back to the earliest days of Islam, narrators of tales constitute a type of profession. Their activities varied widely over the centuries, ranging from interpreting Quranic stories to delivering sermons, telling edifying stories in the mosques and on the streets (and also at the princely courts, as we saw above), and engaging in outright charlatanry. They were also active in the armies, where they accompanied combatants to encourage them to battle with pious stories and admonitions.[15] *Quṣṣāṣ* motivated by good intentions had in their repertoire legends about the punishment and fate of lost cultures, above all those often mentioned in the Quran. They also relied on biblical stories, like the ones merely hinted at in the Quran, and a variety of uplifting subjects that are dispersed throughout the Quran. Naturally, they were in the habit of generously embellishing their tales' material. These preachers and narrators, with their easily understood and exciting stories, enjoyed huge success among the uneducated masses. They often had larger audiences than the proper religious and legal scholars (*ʿulamāʾ, fuqahāʾ*). The latter sometimes assumed a hostile attitude toward the *quṣṣāṣ*, certainly not only for that reason, who were at times even driven away from the mosques, although such measures never appeared to be very effective. It is occasionally emphasized that there were educated men among the *quṣṣāṣ*,[16] possibly such as our ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr who was invited by the counter-caliph ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr to tell a religious story at his court.[17]

4 Two Versions of the Narrative of Muhammad's Call

As mentioned above, the account of the initial revelatory experience transmitted in the form the historian Ibn Isḥāq ascribes to the preacher and narrator of tales, ʿUbayd, did *not* enter into the scholarly Muslim tradition deemed sacred, the *ḥadīth*. This is not surprising when we consider what was just said about the relationship between the religious scholars and the popular storytellers. Nonetheless, the canonical collections of the traditionists or *ḥadīth* scholars al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870)[18] and Muslim b. al-Ḥājjāj (d. 261/875)—for Sunni Muslims the most revered books after the Quran—contain a version of the account very similar to the one from the *Sīra*. In these versions from the so-called "canonical" *ḥadīth* collections, the archangel Gabriel also appears to Muhammad on Mount Ḥirāʾ and demands Muhammad read or recite, while, at the same time, squeezing him vehemently. And here as well, it is only after being commanded several times that the Prophet utters the first verse of Q 96, "Read in the name of your Lord."

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[14] For him see Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ* 160, 240–241, 291, and Index.

[15] Goldziher, *Studies* ii, 152–153; Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ* 49–65.

[16] This circumstance is stressed in Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ* 75–152, 279.

[17] See at the beginning of this section.

The important motifs are found in both traditions; even the suicidal intent is in the scholarly tradition, although it is occasionally suppressed. Thus, al-Bukhārī is found to include the story several times in various chapters of his collection. At the very beginning of his book, in the chapter "On the beginning of the revelation," he leaves out this sensitive incident; however, in other less prominent places, he gives the full version, including the suicidal intent.

The most important difference between the storytellers' version and that of the *ḥadīth* scholars is, in the former Muhammad receives the revelation of Q 96 in his sleep, in a type of nightmare, whereas in the scholarly tradition, the Prophet has the experience while still awake in the cave. The state of wakefulness while receiving the divine message must have seemed more appropriate to the scholars than a nightmare. Furthermore, missing in the scholarly version is mention of the cloth upon which something was written; the angel dictates the Sura for the Prophet to recite. All in all, the scholarly version contains less details and narrative embellishments than the one from the preachers, or *quṣṣāṣ*. The two versions are so similar that research has long assumed a common source, and we can put forth a hypothesis that is substantiated by textual evidence.[19]

Muslim traditionists trace the account back to a scholar by the name of ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. ca. 94/713), who was one of the earliest and most important collectors of religious material on the life of the Prophet.[20] ʿUrwa was the younger brother of the counter-caliph ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr, the person who invited the preacher and narrator to his court to tell the story. It can thus be reasonably assumed that the account was preserved in the Zubayrid family as a valuable tradition and was then transmitted by them. From the Zubayrids, it was transmitted in its original form to Ibn Isḥāq, and he passed it on to the later historical tradition. Likewise, from the Zubayrid family it was transmitted by ʿUrwa in a "purged" version, one that was acceptable to the *ḥadīth* scholars, and so this version found its way into the scholarly tradition and the canonical *ḥadīth* collections in particular.

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[18] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* i, 3; cf. Schoeler, *Biography* 39–51.

[19] Cf. Schoeler, *Biography* 59, 63–67.

[20] For him, see Schoeler, ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr 910–913.

5 Western Opinions on the Origin of the Report on Muhammad's Call

Western research has not remained content with merely tracing the account in question back to the narrator ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr. Scholars went on to ask where the report on Muhammad's initial message could ultimately have originated, and, in particular, from which native Arabian or foreign literary tradition the characteristic motifs derived.

Some Western researchers who consider the Muslim tradition to be reliable do not dismiss the idea that the account, or at least its distinct parts or motifs, go back to Muhammad himself.[21] The Prophet may have spoken during his time in Medina (around 1/622) about the beginnings of the revelation, and his accounts may very well have laid the foundation for later narratives and legends. When the counter-caliph ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr had the preacher ʿUbayd present the account of the initial revelation, he expected him to narrate a true story, a story with which most of the audience may have already been familiar. In other words, these main features might indeed trace back to Muhammad himself. One might presume that ʿAbdallāh and his companions wanted the narrative to be presented in a professional manner; the narrator would be expected to make it exciting to listen to and even embellish some parts of it.

Researchers who are more skeptical reject such considerations. Some argue that the entire story developed out of the beginning of Q 96, "Read/Recite in the name of your Lord."[22] They point out that this Sura is the only one introduced with the command "Read/Recite."[23] This expression may have led early Muslim scholars, who were interested in finding the oldest components of the Quran, to see this Sura as the oldest of the entire Quranic collection. The incident reported in the tradition would therefore be a later invention.

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[21] See Schoeler, *Biography* 78.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Cf. Günther, Muḥammad 1–26, esp. 2–3, and Günther, Ummī.

6 Literary Models for the Narrative of Muhammad's Call

Even more rewarding than making such speculations about the historical origins of the narrative, is to look for its literary models. It seems impossible, however, to locate a single model for the story as a whole. A commensurate "initiation scene," in which a prospective prophet is forced by a heavenly messenger to read, cannot be identified in Arabic or Jewish literature, or in any other oriental literature, and is absent from the literature of antiquity as well. Nonetheless, parallels for individual elements and motifs have been found. It turns out that an account of the calling of the Babylonian prophet Mani (crucified in 276 CE) was noticed by classical Muslim scholarship.[24] As the story goes, when Mani was 24 years old an angel came to him and said, "Be greeted, Mani, from me and from the Lord who sent me to you and has chosen you to be His messenger." Furthermore, attention has been directed to the vision of the Jewish-gnostic prophet Elchasai, who emerged in East Jordan at the time of the Roman emperor Trajan (r. 98–117).[25] Elchasai is purported to have seen a giant angel, 20 miles tall, in a vision. This angel brought Elchasai the revelations. The appearance of the angel to Elchasai corresponds more or less to the second of Muhammad's encounters with an angel.[26] This is as far as the parallels between the two revelatory experiences go, and both visions have considerable differences. Elchasai saw, in addition to the angel, a female being "standing like a statue above the clouds, between the mountains." Nothing of this sort exists in the Islamic context. The correspondences are thus only partial. In short, an initiation scene comparable to Muhammad being coerced by the angel is found neither in Mani's calling nor in Elchasai's vision.

Two places in the Old Testament, however, may have influenced the formation of the account of Muhammad's call, Isaiah 40:6 and 29:12. Isaiah 40:6:

> A voice of a speaker,
> "Read/Recite!"
> And he said,
> "What shall I read/recite (*qôl ômêr qᵉrâ wᵉ-âmar mâ äqrâ*)?"
> "All flesh is grass …"

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[24] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist* i, 328; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist of al-Nadīm* ii, 775; cf. Andrae, Legenden 84.

[25] See Rudolph, Die Anfänge 318.

[26] See the introduction to this contribution and fn. 9.

And in Isaiah 29:12:

> Yet if a scroll is given to one who cannot read and demands of him,
> “Do read/recite this (*qᵉrâ-nā zäh*)”, he will counter,
> “I do not know reading a book (*lô yâdaʿtī sêfär*) …”

The correspondences here concern the injunction to read, the question as to what is to be read, and the declaration of an inability to read. In both Hebrew passages and the Arabic Sura the word for “read” or “recite” is from the same Semitic root, *q-r-ʾ* (Heb. *qârâ*, Ar. *qaraʾa*). However, in the two Isaiah passages it is *not an angel* who speaks; in Isaiah 40:6, it is only a voice. Moreover, “All flesh is grass,” which is narrated in Isaiah 40:6 in response to the injunction, has nothing to do with the content of the first Quranic revelation, praise of God the Creator. Finally, in the Hebrew texts there is no connection to an initiation scene.

Although the correspondences here are also only partial, it is entirely possible that both Isaiah passages—with the voice’s injunction “to read,” the answer, “I do not know reading a book,” and the question, “What shall I read?”—influenced the emergence of the Arabic story of Muhammad’s first revelatory experience. Knowledge of such biblical passages at this period is in fact perfectly conceivable; in Q 21:105, Psalm 37 (36): 29 is cited almost verbatim, “We have written in the Psalter (*al-Zabūr*) …, ‘The just shall receive the land and shall reside therein forever.’ ” Yet, an initiation scene does not occur in either of the Hebrew texts; furthermore, a model for this is found neither in the Bible nor elsewhere in the literature of late antiquity from the region.

7 The Account of Caedmon’s Call: A Parallel to the Report on Muhammad’s Call?

In late antiquity, and prior to Ibn Isḥāq, there can be found no exact parallel for the report on Muhammad’s call in the literature of the wider Mediterranean. However, remarkably, a tradition can be found that contains all of the essential elements and motifs of the Muhammad account, in the work of a quasi-contemporary of Ibn Isḥāq from a far distant cultural realm. It is almost equally astonishing that we owe the discovery of this parallel not to a scholar of Islamic, English, or comparative studies but to a German Scandinavian studies scholar, Klaus von See (d. 2013).[27]

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[27] von See, Caedmon 225–233.

The story in question concerns a tradition quoted by the Anglo-Saxon historian and theologian Beda Venerabilis ("the Venerable Bede," d. 736 in northeast England) in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, which was completed in 731. Bede reports that the uneducated lay brother Caedmon received, as a gift from God, the singing of the praise of God in the vernacular (i.e., in English). A slightly abbreviated rendering of the story reads as follows:

> As he [Caedmon] there [in the livestock stables] … succumbed to sleep, someone stood by him in his sleep, and saluting him, called him by his name and said,
>
> "Caedmon, sing me something (*canta mihi aliquid*)." But he answered,
>
> "I do not know how to sing … (*nescio, inquit, cantare*)."
>
> Thereupon he who talked to him replied,
>
> "Nevertheless, you must sing for me!"
>
> "What must I sing (*Quid, inquit, debeo cantare*)?" he asked. Whereupon the other said,
>
> "Sing the beginning of Creation."
>
> Having received this answer, he straightway began to sing verses to the praise of God, the Creator, verses he had never before heard …,
>
> "Now we must praise the maker of the heavenly kingdom, and His counsel …, the Author of all wonderous works, Who first created the heaven as a roof for humankind …"[28]

An "initiation scene" is present in this tradition of Caedmon's vision, just as in the Islamic tradition of Muhammad's vision—the transmission of a heavenly message.[29] Both personages receive the message while asleep; both are addressed in a dream by a heavenly messenger, and both, expressed in today's terms, are to be innovative, as they are to "reveal" to humankind something heretofore "unheard of." Muhammad communicates the Sura revealed to him ("teaching man what he knew not"); Caedmon sings a song in the vernacular English rather than the scholarly Latin.

Caedmon's and Muhammad's visions are comparable in the essential details. Above all, the succession of motifs is exactly the same. In both, the initial demand of the heavenly messenger is first met with denial. Then, comes the question about "what" to recite or sing. Finally, both the Sura and the hymn—quite remarkably—have the same theme, the praise of the Creator God.

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[28] Beda Venerabilis, *Kirchengeschichte* i, 397–399 (IV, 24); English trans. Caedmon, *Poems* xvii.

[29] Cf. von See, Caedmon 225–230; Schoeler, *Biography* 62–63.

8 Cultural Transfer from Arabia to England: *Quṣṣāṣ* as Agents of Dissemination

As we saw above, the motifs of the Isaiah passage(s), in particular the disembodied voice's injunction to read and the subsequent reaction of the one spoken to, very probably influenced the account of Muhammad's initial revelatory experience. And, it is also safe to assume that Bede was familiar with the passages in Isaiah. However, it is extremely unlikely that the Islamic tradition and Bede, independently of one another, developed stories from these passages that agree in so many motifs and details, including the narrative sequence of motifs.[30] It is likewise virtually impossible that Bede's Latin tradition, or a part of it, found its way to the Orient and exercised a significant influence there. To my knowledge, there is also no indication of a Jewish transmission. What remains is the assumption that the Arabic narrative somehow seems to have made its way to England and influenced the Caedmon vision narrative.

The way the mediation of this "cultural transfer" may have taken place has already been indicated by von See. Following the German historian Ekkehard Rotter,[31] he first directs attention to the historical situation: When Bede wrote his *Historia* (he completed it in 731 or 732), the rapid advance of Islam in Europe was the "topic of discussion" in the Christian Occident, and Bede expressly mentions the Arabian threat at the end of his book.[32]

Rotter and von See point out further, after years of bloody confrontation between Muslims and Christians—north of the Pyrenees—the years 726 to 730 were characterized by mutual efforts toward a common understanding. One of the visible signs of this was the marriage of the Berber Manu(n)za with Lampagia, a daughter of Duke Eudo of Aquitania.[33] Thus, "through oral communication, especially during such periods of peace, knowledge of religious texts and customs could have been mutually exchanged rather easily."[34]

One element remains missing in this picture of the transference of the account from Arabia to England, as portrayed by Rotter and von See—namely, who in the Muslim armies were responsible for the account's dissemination.

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[30] Cf. von See, Caedmon 231.

[31] Rotter, *Abendland* 219.

[32] Beda Venerabilis, *Kirchengeschichte* ii, 533 (v, 23).

[33] "… neither contemporary sources nor later accounts speak of battles [north of the Pyrenees] in the years 726 to 730, nor do Latin or Arabic records. To the contrary, when we briefly specify the content of later sources, it's as though the opposing armies or peoples are looking for a settlement or modus vivendi that would allow them to live in close proximity. That both camps are led by selfish separatist motives … may have inspired their determination to arrive at a mutual settlement." Rotter, *Abendland* 219.

[34] von See, Caedmon 232.

I have argued that the disseminators were the *quṣṣāṣ* (i.e., narrators of edifying tales and preachers),[35] since they were, as we saw above, active not only in mosques, on the streets, and at the courts but also in the armies, where they accompanied the combatants to embolden them for battle with suitable stories.[36] Furthermore, Muslim narrators and preachers were also present in Europe after Spain was conquered by the Arabs in 92/711. *Quṣṣāṣ* had crossed the Strait of Gibraltar with the Muslim armies.

And there is yet another circumstance that points to the *quṣṣāṣ* as the mediators or transmitters. Let us remember that the heavenly messenger appears to Caedmon while he is asleep. Caedmon's initiation scene consequently corresponds precisely to the version of Muhammad's call disseminated by a narrator or preacher, and less precisely to the canonical version of the traditionists, the *ḥadīth* scholars, in which the vision takes place in a waking state.

We can even draw the conclusion that this non-canonical version had a continuing existence in the Islamic world, apart from the learned written Arabic tradition. Ibn Isḥāq only finalized the redaction of the work containing the popular version of Muhammad's call around the year 143/760 (or some years later).[37] Bede, in contrast, had already completed the work in which he included the tradition of the lay brother Caedmon by 731 or 732—that is to say, at least 30 years earlier than Ibn Isḥāq. Bede's narrative thus appears to be an important indicator of the possibility that the popular version of the Arabic account of Muhammad's vision, with the "appearance of the angel in a dream," or a version derived from it (and comparable to it in all essential points), already existed decades before Ibn Isḥāq's redaction of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, and it was this text version that was disseminated throughout the world.

9 Conclusion

The paramount importance of the account of Muhammad's vision, in which Q 96 was revealed to him through an angel, is evident from the fact that it was seen to manifest the genesis of a world religion. This narrative is considered by Muslims to be authentic. While most Muslims believe Q 96 to be the first revelation, this view is not a dogma. Since the dawn of Islam, other Suras have also been held to be the first to be revealed.

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[35] Schoeler, *Biography* 62–63; Görke, Motzki, and Schoeler, First century sources 32.

[36] Goldziher, *Muslim studies* ii, 152–153; Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ* 49–70.

[37] See under sec. 2, "The Sura," in this essay.

The narrative in question is not a contemporary account, let alone an eyewitness report; rather, it is an account transmitted over several generations. Opinions concerning the actual occurrence of the event, and the date of the appearance of the report about it, diverge considerably. The account, in the written sources we have at present, does not become current until two hundred years or more after the event occurred, in or around 610. Older versions can nonetheless be postulated, and even documented, that slightly decrease the aforementioned time gap.

Motifs and elements of the account can be located in other early religious traditions, the Old Testament and gnostic traditions in particular, yet the report as a whole is new. For the "initiation scene," there is apparently no previous literary model to be found. As to the social classes transmitting the narrative, both scholars and preachers/narrators of edifying tales can be named, and accordingly two differing variants of the account exist.

It should also to be noted in closing that the account very likely was widely disseminated by narrators of tales, even beyond the Islamic world, prior to its appearance in a written work. We find an exact parallel in a tradition invoked by the Anglo-Saxon historian Bede in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*—the heavenly commissioning of a lay brother to sing the praise of God in the English vernacular, something which in England had heretofore been done only in Latin.

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CHAPTER 5

The Exercise of Theological Knowledge in the Church of the East, Provoked by Coexistence with the Muslims (Seventh Century CE)

Martin Tamcke

How were the doctrines and teachings of the Church of the East affected by the change of regime from the Sasanians to the Muslims? In what follows, I will attempt to answer this question by discussing some preliminary observations made at the outset of this regime change. With the help of available sources from the Church of the East, I will examine this question and provide some observations—an undertaking that, previous to this paper, has not been carried out.

Even the earliest testimonies indicate that the presence of the new religious regime had direct repercussions for the theological affairs of the Church of the East; and by no means did East Syrian authors react with ignorance or indifference.[1] In fact, given that the theological profile of their religious rivals could not be clearly established at first, the sophistication of the theological debate is surprising.[2] But the debate began not in the context of a conversation between the learned members of both religions but, rather, in the reformulation of one's own theological profile, which became necessary due to the new presence of these religious rivals.[3]

Identity is a continual process and, thus, never remains fixed. It develops through our experiences in the world and with others. In dialogue with others, we bring not only neutral topics or our perception of others to the conversation but also *ourselves*. We begin an inner dialogue with ourselves that enables

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[1] Young, *Patriarch*; McCullough, *Short history*; Bashear, *Arabs*; Baum and Winkler, *Apostolische Kirche*; Brock, Syriac views; Tamcke, Im Schatten; Tamcke, *Christen*; Tamcke, *Christians and Muslims*; Tamcke, *Christliche Gotteslehre*.

[2] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*; Griffith, *Church*; Baumstark, Eine syrische Weltgeschichte; Brock, North Mesopotamia; Reinink, East-Syrian historiography; Pinggéra, Nestorianische Weltchronistik; Bruns, Von Adam; Reinink, Paideia; Greisiger, John bar Penkaye; Suermann, Das arabische Reich; Sfair, Degli scritti.

[3] On the aspect of the conquest and its consequences in the central geographical regions of the Assyrian Church of the East, see Donner, *Early Islamic conquests*; Morony, *Iraq*; Bartl and Hauser (eds.), *Continuity*.

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us to communicate. But, now we face problems that will certainly not be easy to solve methodically: Which changes can be definitively attributed to the new religious rivals? The problem quickly becomes complicated because the interpretative framework with which one could approach the new rivals could only contain the very tools, strategies, and bodies of knowledge that one had used until then, and that gave the impression a debate with the coexisting other was necessary.[4] However, some evidence indicates that early on the church and its educational institutions did not simply react passively to the changing situation, but aggressively sought out a debate.

The first Catholicos to whom we owe observations of the Muslims is Īšōʿyahb III (r. 649–659).[5] Īšōʿyahb had studied at the School of Nisibis. There, he distinguished himself as an opponent of the headmaster, Ḥenanā, who, because of his theological position toward the church, was harshly criticized for being unorthodox.[6] At the height of the controversy, 300 young students at the school, who did not agree with Ḥenanā's teachings, walked out of the school in protest.[7] Īšōʿyahb was one of these students. But, despite his dissent, he remained affiliated with the School of Nisibis for his entire life. For him, the school was "the communal mother, our sacred school" and simultaneously, despite all of the allegedly mistaken teaching of Ḥenanā, "the mother of life-giving doctrines."[8]

In the years that followed, Īšōʿyahb resided in the Bet ʿAbē monastery and ran a nearby school. But, due to vehement resistance from the local monks, he failed to fulfill his desire of founding a school in this monastery, the monastery he felt connected to until his death. Yet, in the central monastery on Mount Izla, where the reform of the entire monastic way of life in the Church of the East began in the sixth century, it was quite different. Īšōʿyahb's utterly ambivalent attitude toward the abbot of this "mother monastery," the mother of all the monasteries of the Church of the East, and the one from which the reform developed, reflected an extraordinary cohesion of science and piety, which nowhere had become more apparent than in the figure of this abbot, Babai the Great. Īšōʿyahb in fact was, with regard to some issues, against this remarkable figure of East Syrian theology; he wanted to eliminate a part of the lectures pertaining to penance in the monastery of Bet ʿAbē. He preferred instead, in accordance with his own mystical inclinations, to place an emphasis on silence. However, he expressly praised Babai's piety and his profound theological knowledge, and viewed him as a "pillar" of the East Syrian church.

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[4] For an overview, see Griffith, Disputes; Griffith, *Syriac writers*; Griffith, Answering the call; Reinink, Beginnings; Suermann, Orientalische Christen; Tamcke, Zwischen Größenwahn.

[5] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*; Fiey, Isoʿyaw le Grand; Teule, Ishoʿyahb III; Ioan, Arabien; Tamcke, Catholicos; Tamcke, Patriarch.

[6] Tamcke, *Katholikos-Patriarch* 31–34.

[7] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber* 10–13.

[8] Duval, *Isoʿjahb III* 242 (Syriac); 175 (Latin).

Even if Īšōʿyahb did not accept the mystical aspect that developed strongly in his church on the Arabian Peninsula in the following decades, he did accept the doctrinal aspect of it in his otherwise rather politically oriented profile. In this way, he was able to clarify his theological concepts in the debate with the Miaphysites. He was extremely upset when the members of his church did not resist their sectarian opponents, who, because of an alleged proximity to their own church, took possession of buildings belonging to the Church of the East. If it was claimed that this takeover of the Church of the East's property was carried out under the orders of the *Tayyaye*,[9] Īšōʿyahb could only point out "this is entirely untrue." And, as evidence to support this, he could not only cite the (more or less) friendly behavior of the Muslims in dealing with the Church of the East but also explicitly point to a theological argument in favor of his own position and its proximity to the position of the Muslims: "For the *Tayyaye mhagre*[10] do not help those who say that the almighty God suffered and died. And when it does occur that they, for whatever reason, help them, you could still explain to the *mhagre* what is [at issue], and convince them of this, if it is important to you."[11]

This text is often quoted, and almost always misconstrued. What Īšōʿyahb is saying is quite simple. He is encouraging those who are faithful to the Church of the East to engage in a theological discussion. They should provide information about their beliefs. For the moment, in order to keep appropriate emphasis on the challenge of having theologically illuminating conversations with the Muslims, it can be ignored that this took place against the background of traditional polemic debates with sectarian opponents. The passivity of his brothers in faith led him to this ardent appeal. He found it revolting that members of his church accepted injustice out of fear of the new regime. When his faithful remained "without movement, without hurt, and without anger, like tin Gods" in such situations, then they were, from his point of view, neglecting their duty.[12] They would have to be there in order to demonstrate the “power and proclamation” of their beliefs.

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[9] *Tayyaye* means "Arab" in Syriac and is derived from the Arabic name Tayy, the name of an Arab tribal group with whom early Syriac-speakers seem to have interacted closely. Early Syriac sources thus generally use the term for Muslims.

[10] *Mhagre* is generally considered to be derived from the same Semitic root as Arabic *muhājirūn* and to mean something like "the Emigrants." Alternatively, it could be derived from the biblical name Hagar and denote her descendants. See also Ioan, Arabien 54–55.

[11] Italics by the editor.

Had the theological argumentation on the part of the afflicted members of Īšōʿyahb’s congregation in this three-sided debate failed to appear because they were, theologically speaking, not thoroughly prepared for the encounter with the Muslims? A high percentage of the theologians in the Church of the East were theologically trained. The numerous schools that acted as a refuge for academic education point to this training. But, they were clearly incapable of sufficiently protecting this knowledge in a politically alarming situation—that is, in the debate with the dogmatic opponents within Christianity, on the one hand, and with the Muslims, whose theological position was not yet completely clear, on the other. The crucial aspect of the argumentation of the Catholicos is his insistence on a theological approach. The geographic proximity of the dogmatic opponents in the West, the caliphs in Damascus, and the frightening prospect of an alliance between the Christian opponents and the representatives of the new religious regime were overcome with theologically substantial arguments. This was helped by the fact that the Muslims clearly favored the Church of the East and its monasteries.

The Catholicos saw an important opportunity to preserve his church’s identity and retain his congregation, not in the passive acceptance of seemingly inevitable acts against his congregation but, rather, in the active acceptance of contact with the Muslims in order to demonstrate irrefutably that the beliefs and opinions of the Church of the East were close to the beliefs and opinions of the Muslims. This was initially impossible without recourse to arguments that had proven to be popular in debates with theological opponents, particularly the criticism of Theopaschism; this did not actually occur for the sake of the old model of argumentation.[13] The goal was, rather, to bias the Muslims in favor of the Church of the East, and to demonstrate clearly to them that the Church of the East’s doctrines of faith were closer to their own doctrines than those of their opponents in the West.

This manner of argumentation clearly had an effect on the Church of the East. The desire to have a dialogue with the Muslims increased as soon as the continued existence of their own community was at issue. And this dialogue could only take place when the theologically polemical information necessary for this conversation was made available to the congregation. As church leader, Īšōʿyahb III had to learn that his followers were doomed to passivity if they were insufficiently educated in theology and coached for the theological debate. “Man does not possess ability in the way he possesses a material object—ability can be obtained only in continuous practice.”[14] This quote from the existential philosopher Otto Friedrich Bollnow undoubtedly applies to the early encounters between Christians and Muslims.

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[12] Duval, *Isoʿjahb III* 92–97 (Syriac); 71–74 (Latin).

[13] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber* 120.

Īšōʿyahb III’s successor, Gīwargīs I (r. 661–680), continued along the path set by his predecessor in the encounters with the Muslims. In 676 CE, when he ordered his bishops on the Arabian Peninsula to attend a synod on the island of Dirin in the Bahrain archipelago, he regarded the concerns of his predecessor not only as they pertained to the current situation; he also made them concerns for the entire church. Thus, in accordance with the decision of the synod, the task of explaining theological issues became a core component of the daily routine of the church. Every Sunday and holiday each clergyman had to speak to his congregation about the beliefs of the Church, at least briefly, during his sermon.[15] The two goals of the synod were clear—education in Church doctrine, and preparation for debates with those of other beliefs. This required the priest to continually reflect on the foundations of theological doctrine, and it required the faithful to willingly get involved with the distinctions or differences between Christians and Muslims as conferred in sermons. If the potential inquirers from outside the Church of the East were presented as heretics at this time, it cannot be doubted that the first canon had the Muslims in mind. Their portrayal as heretics is nothing unusual, owing to the ongoing vagueness in the theological interaction between Christians and Muslims. As in the time of Gīwargīs’s predecessor, theological judgement had to be acquired, shaped, and honed through discussions with two different parties—with the Muslims, on the one hand, and with the Miaphysite Christians who were competing with the Church of the East to gain favor with the Muslims, on the other.[16] Gīwargīs and his synod certainly knew more about the Muslims, which is clear from the multitude of remarks about social behavior.[17] Herman Teule describes the significance of the synod: “The Synodical canons of Diren belong to the first official decisions of the Church of the East to regulate the interaction of its believers with Muslims and Muslim authorities.”[18] And the responsive element and the willingness to react to new situations with forms of self-restraint were clearer under Gīwargīs's tenure than under Īšōʿyahb's. Herman Teule points out three important elements:

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[14] Bollnow, *Vom Geist des Übens* 12.

[15] Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 336.

[16] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber* 89–122.

[17] Teule, Ghiwarghis I 151–153.

[18] Ibid., 152.

> A number of canons issued during this synod contain references to the Islamic environment of the church of east Arabia. Canon 6 is possibly one of the earliest admonitions to Christians not to bring their differences and conflicts to Muslim courts. Canon 14 forbids Christian women to marry foreign hanpe, again an allusion to the Muslims. Canon 19 stipulates that Christians entrusted by the Muslim authorities with the collection of the *jizya* and *kharaj* should exempt the bishop.[19]

But, one cannot simply eliminate "the other"; the presence of a religious other led to an increased effort on the part of the Church of the East to distribute knowledge to their own, and this created a basis for the possibility of conversations with the Muslims. The knowledge in question was of course derived from established history, but it became critical through the change of regimes. This, in turn, gave it an image that can be understood only through the historical circumstances of those times. Once again, it was necessary for Īšōʿyahb III to discern the potential of encounters with others from an intellectual standpoint, and to utilize his knowledge to ensure the survival of his own community. "You could still explain to the *mhagre* what is [at issue], and convince them of this, if it is important to you."[20]

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[19] Ibid. See also Tamcke, Wie der Islam 243–268.

[20] Duval, *Isoʿjahb III* 73 [Syriac text].

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CHAPTER 6

الموالي والتربية والتعليم في صدر الإسلام

جمال جودة

اهتمّ المسلمون اهتمامًا واضحًا بالتربية والتعليم منذ بدء الدعوة الإسلامية أيّام النبيّ محمّد، وازداد هذا الاهتمام بعد قيام دولة الخلافة في الفترة الراشدة، واستمرّ أيّام بني أميّة ليعطي أُكُله في ظهور طبقة من المعلّمين والمؤدّبين وقرّاء القرآن والقصّاص والعلماء والفقهاء والأدباء والموظّفين والقادة ورجالات الدولة، الذين كان لهم الدور الأوّل في بلورة الجزء الأكبر من الفكر الإسلامي الذي استمرّ حتّى أيامنا هذه.[1]

مرّت العمليّة التعليميّة في مرحلتين: مرحلة الكُتّاب ومرحلة ما بعد الكُتّاب.[2] انحصرت مرحلة الكتّاب في تعليم الصبيان من الغلمان والجواري (الكُتَّاب)،[3] بغضّ النظر عمّا إذا كانوا أحرارًا أو عبيدًا.[4] وكان يقوم بتعليمهم أشخاص أطلِق على الواحد منهم ألقاب مختلفة مثل معلّم،[5] أو معلّم جماعة،[6] أو معلّم مؤدّب،[7] أو كاتب،[8] أو معلّم كُتَّاب.[9]

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[1] انظر: أمين، **تاريخ التربية**؛ هارون، "الجاحظ والمعلّمون" 564–571؛ العقّاد، "التعليم عند العرب"؛ أطلس، **التربية والتعليم في الإسلام**. شلبي، **تاريخ التربية الإسلامية**؛ حور، **تربية الأبناء في الأدب العربي**؛ أبيض، **التربية والثقافة العربية الإسلامية**؛ أحمد، **تاريخ التعليم عند المسلمين**؛ صالحية، "مؤدّبو الخلفاء في العصر الأموي"؛ الأهواني، **التربية في الإسلام**.

[2] انظر: عباس، "التعليم في الأندلس" 16.

[3] قال ابن منظور في **لسان العرب** في مادّة (كتب)، 5/3817: "والـمَكْتَبُ: موضع الكُتَّابِ. والـمَكْتَبُ والكُتَّابُ: موضع تَعْلِيمِ الكُتَّابِ، والجمع الكَتَاتِيبُ والـمَكاتِبُ. [قال] المبرّد: الـمَكْتَبُ موضع التعليم، والـمُكْتِبُ الـمُعَلِّمُ، والكُتَّابُ الصِّبيان؛ قال: ومن جعل الموضعَ الكُتَّابَ، فقد أَخْطأَ."

[4] انظر: ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 3/356. ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 547–548. ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216. ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 2/473، 3/288، 4/315.

[5] انظر: ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة**، 216؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف**، 436 و 548؛ ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى**، 3/356؛ ابن خلّكان، **وفيات الأعيان**، 6/ 20، 247؛ القفطي، **إنباه الرواة**، 2/32.

[6] انظر: ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 475.

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كان الطلبة (الكُتّاب) يلتقون بمعلّمهم في مكان يسمّى المكتب،[10] وكان هذا إمّا في بيت المعلّم،[11] أو في المسجد، أو في غرفة ملحقة بالمسجد،[12] أو في ساحة عامّة.[13] وكانت أعداد الطلبة تتراوح من بضعة أشخاص إلى أشخاص كُثر، فقد ذُكر عن المعلّم الضحّاك بن قيس (ت 102/720) في خراسان أنّه "كان له مكتبٌ كبير إلى الغاية فيه ثلاثة آلاف صبيّ، فكان يركب حمارًا ويدور على الصبيان" في أثناء عمليّة التعليم.[14] ويبدو أنّ مثل هذا المعلّم أُطلق عليه معلّم الجماعة.

يتلقّى الطلبة في هذه المرحلة دروسًا في الكتابة والقراءة وشيئًا من النحو من خلال تعلّم سور من القرآن وحفظها، إضافةً إلى شيء من علم الحساب،[15] ويصف الجاحظ المعلّمين بقوله "وإنّك لو استقصيت عدد النحويّين والعروضيّين والفرضيّين والحسّاب والخطّاطين لوجدت أكثرهم معلّم صغار ومؤدّب كبار".[16] وعلى الرغم من كون التعليم إسلاميًا في هذه المرحلة إلّا أنّ ذلك لم يمنع من وجود معلّمين يهود[17] أو نصارى.[18]

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[7] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (العبّاس وولده) 124. ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 478. ابن حجر العسقلاني، **تهذيب التهذيب** 4/499؛ ابن الجوزي، **سيرة عمر بن الخطاب** 257.

[8] انظر: ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 475.

[9] انظر: ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 5/468؛ ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 477؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 4/221.

[10] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني)، 681؛ ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 475. ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216. ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 584. الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 5/81؛ أبو جبلة، **تاريخ التربية والتعليم في صدر الإسلام** 23، 39.

[11] انظر: ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ مدينة دمشق** 3/25.

[12] انظر: ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216. ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 548. ابن عساكر، **تاريخ مدينة دمشق** (تراجم النساء) 428. الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 17/2؛ السباعي، **من روائع حضارتنا** 125.

[13] انظر: الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 4/559.

[14] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 4/559.

[15] انظر: ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 3/356، 5/498؛ ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 476. البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 112، 280. ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216. ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 548. ابن قتيبة، **عيون الأخبار** 4/130؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 5/445–451. السباعي، **من روائع تراثنا** 125. أبو جبلة، **تاريخ التربية في صدر الإسلام** 91–115.

[16] الجاحظ، **رسائل** 3/31.

[17] انظر: ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 436 (كان حمران بن أبان، مولى عثمان بن عفان معلّمًا يهوديًا).

[18] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 3/356 (مولى نصراني معلمًا في المدينة)؛ البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (العبّاس وولده) 117 (مسيحي من الحيرة عمل معلّمًا في الكوفة ثمّ أسلم).

لقد اهتمّ العرب والموالي على حدٍّ سواء بتعليم أبنائهم من الصبيان الأحرار،[19] وكذلك اهتمّوا كثيرًا بتعليم غلمانهم من العبيد والصبيان، وخصوصًا الذكور منهم وأحيانًا الإناث،[20] حتّى إنّ أهل القرى كانوا يهتمّون بتعليم أبنائهم فيبعثونهم إلى المعلّمين أو إلى الكتّاب للتعليم.[21] وكان وراء هذا الاهتمام دافعان: أوّلًا، الدافع الديني لتنشئتهم تنشئةً إسلاميةً تتوافق ومتطلّبات المجتمع الجديد، ومن ثمّ فإنّ هذا يرفع بدوره من وضعهم الاجتماعي،[22] وهكذا فإنّ الآيات القرآنية العديدة وأحاديث الرسول الكثيرة التي تحثّ على طلب العلم ما هي إلّا تعبير عن هذا الاهتمام الذي بدا واضحًا عند المسلمين منذ بدايات الدعوة. وثانيًا، الدافع الاقتصادي أو الرغبة في تحسين أوضاعهم المعيشية، فكان بإمكان المتعلّم الحصول على وظيفة أو ممارسة مهنة تدرّ عليه مالًا،[23] أو ترفع من سعر العبد المتعلّم عند بيعه،[24] أو ترفع من سعر ولاء المولى الحرّ عند بيع ولائه.[25]

أمّا مرحلة ما بعد الكتّاب، فهي مرحلة متابعة التحصيل العلمي والتخصّص في فرع من فروع العلم، فيأتي الطالب الذي أنهى مرحلة الكتّاب لينضمّ إلى حلقة من حلقات العلم التي كان يرأسها عالم كبير، كلّ بحسب تخصصه. وبانتهاء هذه المرحلة يصبح هؤلاء الطلبة علماء كبارًا كأساتذتهم وأئمّةً يعقدون بدورهم حلقاتٍ للعلم في المساجد وغيرها.

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[19] ابن سحنون، **آداب المعلمين** 82 (كان عبد الله بن مسعود يقول: "لا بدّ للناس من معلّم يعلّم صبيانهم")؛ ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 548 (كان الكميت الشاعر يعلّم الصبيان في مسجد الكوفة)؛ ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 498/5 (عن نصراني يأتي مكّة في خلافة سليمان بن عبد الملك ويُسلم ويلزم المسجد ويرسل أولاده للكتّاب لتعلّم العربية وحفظ القرآن).

[20] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 112 (تعليم الجواري الكتابة والقرآن في الكتاتيب أيّام الوليد بن عبد الملك)؛ وكيع، **أخبار القضاة** 5/2 (أمّ الحسن البصري كانت تعلّم النساء القرآن في مسجد المدينة).

[21] انظر: ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 548.

[22] انظر: ابن حبيب، **كتاب التاريخ** 159. المبرّد، **الكامل في الأدب** 104/2؛ الصنعاني، **المصنف** 115/8؛ ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ مدينة دمشق** 9/7؛ المغراوي، **جامع جوامع الاختصار** 28–29.

[23] انظر: ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 476 (كان قبيصة بن ذؤيب معلّمًا وقد عمل مسؤولًا عن ديوان الخاتم لعبد الملك بن مروان)؛ القفطي، **إنباه الرواة** 273/2؛ أبو جبلة، **تاريخ التربية في صدر الإسلام** 37–39.

[24] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (ترجمة يزيد بن معاوية) 87؛ **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 280؛ الطبري، **تاريخ** 28/7.

[25] انظر: ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 548؛ وانظر أيضًا: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 95.

تسعى هذه الورقة إلى إظهار دور الموالي في التربية والتعليم في صدر الإسلام حتّى أواخر الدولة الأموية، وبخاصّة المعلّمين منهم أو المؤدِّبين أو العلماء.

لقد تحدّدت العبودية وكذلك الولاء بغير العرب بعد الانتصار في الفتوحات ونجاح المشروع الإسلامي في إقامة دولة الخلافة في منتصف القرن السابع الميلادي،[26] وبذا صار الموالي من غير العرب الذين حصلوا على عضوية اجتماعية قبليّة في المجتمع العربي عربًا من خلال رابطة (نسب) الولاء، لا من خلال رابطة (نسب) الدم،[27] وهكذا حمل الولاء مفهوم العروبة والإسلام في آنٍ واحد، وهذا ما عبّر عنه أحد الموالي عندما قال: "إن كانت العربيّة لسانًا فقد نطقنا بها، وإن كانت دينًا فقد دخلنا فيه".[28] والشيء نفسه قال عنه أحد العرب لغير المسلمين: "إذا أسلمتم فإخواننا في الدين (الإسلام) وموالينا (العروبة)"،[29] كما عبّر عن ذلك أحد الموالي عندما سأله أحد العرب عن هويته فقال "أنا ممن أنعم الله عليه بالإسلام وعدادي في كندة".[30]

اختلف دور الموالي وتأثيرهم الثقافي في التربية والتعليم باختلاف أشكال الولاء من جهة، وبتعدّد أعراقهم وجنسيّاتهم من جهة ثانية، وبتنوّع دياناتهم السابقة لدخولهم الإسلام، أو ببقاء بعضهم على دينه والتحاقه بالعرب عن طريق الولاء من جهة ثالثة. زِد على هذا أنّ منهم من وُلِد ونشأ في المجتمع العربي المسلم، ومنهم من والى العرب وهو كبير السنّ وجاء يحمل معه فكرًا وثقافةً جديدةً للمجتمع الجديد.

بدأ ظهور دور الموالي في الحياة العامّة وبالتالي في التربية والتعليم بازدياد أعدادهم في المجتمع المسلم الجديد، الذي بدأ في الظهور في أواخر الفترة الراشدة،[31] وازداد هذا الدور طرديًّا مع ازدياد عددهم

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[26] انظر: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 68–71.

[27] انظر: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 172–178; Günther, Clients i, 344–345.

[28] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 750.

[29] الطبري، **تاريخ** 4/162.

[30] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 5/210.

[31] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 1000، 1006، **أنساب الأشراف** (ترجمة يزيد بن معاوية) 35؛ ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 3/413–415؛ Günther, Clients i, 344.

في المجتمع المسلم، حتى إنّهم أصبحوا يشكّلون معظم عدد السكان في الأمصار في أواخر العهد الأموي أو جيل التابعين وتابعيهم.[32]

أدى اهتمام العرب بتعليم الصبيان من المماليك والغلمان واهتمام الموالي بتعليم أبنائهم وغلمانهم من العبيد إلى ظهور طبقة من المعلّمين الموالي في صدر الإسلام، وإذا أمعنّا النظر في قوائم المعلّمين التي أوردها ابن قتيبة (ت 276/889)، وابن رستة (ت 300/912)، وابن حبيب (ت 245/859)، فإنّنا نجد ابن قتيبة يذكر قائمة من عشرين معلمًا،[33] كان منهم عشرة من الموالي أي بنسبة 50%، وأمّا ابن رستة فقد أورد قائمةً للمعلّمين والمؤدّبين بلغت واحدًا وثلاثين معلّمًا ومؤدّبًا،[34] كان منهم ستّة عشر من الموالي، أي بنسبة 51%، والشيء نفسه نجده في قائمة ابن حبيب التي جاءت تحت عنوان ”أشراف المعلّمين وفقهائهم“[35] في أوّل قرنين من دولة الإسلام، وقد أورد فيها خمسةً وأربعين معلمًا بلغ عدد الموالي منهم عشرون معلمًا أي ما نسبته 45%، وهكذا فإنّ نسبة الموالي المعلِّمين الذين ساهموا في تربية الأطفال وتعليمهم قاربت الـ 50% من مجموع المعلّمين.

ولم يقتصر التعليم في المرحلة الأولى على تعليم القراءة والكتابة والحساب فقط، بل شمل مختلف المهن والصنائع،[36] وكان لكلّ حرفة معلّم، وقد أشار الجاحظ إلى ذلك بقوله: ”وكان لكلّ مهنةٍ معلّم، وهكذا تعدّدت أصناف المعلّمين“.[37] ويبدو واضحًا اقتصار التعليم في أكثر الحرف والصنائع على العبيد والموالي مثل الطبابة والحجامة والدباغة والخياطة وعمل الأحذية وعمل الأثاث والبناء والهندسة وغيرها من المهن والصنائع.[38]

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[32] انظر: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 158–195.

[33] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 547–549.

[34] ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216–217.

[35] ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 475–478.

[36] انظر: أبو جبلة، **تاريخ التربية في صدر الإسلام** 24.

[37] الجاحظ، **رسائل** 3/31.

[38] انظر: الفسوي، **المعرفة والتاريخ** 2/69؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 439. الطبري، **تاريخ** 3/386؛ ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ مدينة دمشق** 7/167؛ وراجع: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 120.

ومن المهن الهامّة التي اختصّ بها العبيد والموالي أيضًا وأصبحوا أساتذةً في تعليمها الموسيقى والغناء،[39] وقد اهتمّ كثير من العرب والموالي بإرسال غلمانهم وجواريهم من العبيد إلى معلّمين للغناء، فقد كان في المدينة المنوّرة مغنّية تعلّم الجواري الغناء.[40] ويُذكر أنّ الثريّا أمةَ ومحبوبة الشاعر عمر بن أبي ربيعة كان لها قصر عظيم يكتظّ بالرقيق والجواري والمغنّين والموسيقيّين.[41] وقد انتبه التجّار وغيرهم في المجتمع المسلم ومنذ أيّام الرسول إلى شراء الجواري والمماليك وإرسالهم إلى معلّمي الموسيقى والغناء لبيعهم بأسعار مرتفعة،[42] وقد ساعد هذا كلّه على ظهور طبقة من الموالي المغنّين والمغنّيات والموسيقيّين والموسيقيّات، وكان خلفاء بني أميّة يقيمون المهرجانات الغنائية والمسابقات بين المغنّين ويوزّعون الجوائز على الفائزين منهم،[43] وقد عمل قسم من هؤلاء الموالي المغنّين على نقل الموسيقى والغناء الفارسي والرومي إلى الغناء العربي،[44] كما ساعدت هذه الفئة على حفظ الشعر الجميل وتناقله بين الأجيال ونشره بين الناس كذلك،[45] وممّا لا شكّ فيه فقد سحر هؤلاء المغنّون الناس وفتنوهم وزادوهم رقّةً، ونمّوا عندهم الذوق المرهف لكلّ ما هو جميل وحسن.

اتّجه العبيد والموالي الذين أنهوا مرحلة الكتّاب إلى تعلّم القرآن وإتقان قراءاته وفقه آياته وأسباب نزوله،[46] وذلك لأنّ الانتماء للمجتمع الجديد والانخراط فيه فكريًّا واجتماعيًّا يتطلّب

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[39] انظر: المقداد، **الموالي** 218؛ أمين، **فجر الإسلام** 173–177؛ عدّة مؤلّفين، **الحضارة العربية الإسلامية** 196.

[40] الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 255/3.

[41] ياسين، **من تاريخ الحضارة العربية** 122–123. أبو جبلة، **تاريخ التربية في صدر الإسلام** 175–182.

[42] انظر: الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 48/1 (معبد المغنّي يعلّم الجواري الموسيقى والغناء)؛ 251/3 (تجّار يشترون الجواري ويعلّمونّهن الغناء للاتّجار بهنّ) 48–49 (علّم مغنّي الحجاز معبد جارية الغناء وباعها في العراق، فأضحت معلّمةً للغناء في العراق). ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 55/6 (كان عبد الله بن جعفر يشتري الغلمان أيّام السفيانّيّين ويعلّمهم الموسيقى والغناء ويتاجر بهم). ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ مدينة دمشق** 24/3 (الاتّجار بالمغنّيات منذ أيّام الرسول). شلبي، **تاريخ الحضارة الإسلامية** 259.

[43] الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 40/1، 317؛ 63/7.

[44] الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 276/3، 290.

[45] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 1122.

[46] انظر: السجستاني، **المصاحف** 203/1، 204 (تعليم الصبيان والغلمان القرآن أيّام الراشدين). وكيع، **أخبار القضاة** 55/1 (كعب الأحبار وعامر بن عبد القيس ودراسة التوراة وتفسيرها في جامع دمشق)، 5/2 (الحسن البصري ووالدته يعلّمان الغلمان القرآن في مسجد المدينة). ابن حميد، **المنتخب** 122 (صحابة الرسول وتعلّمهم القرآن على يد المعلّمين في المدينة). ابن عساكر، **تاريخ مدينة دمشق** م2 ق1، 49–52 (حلقات تدريس القرآن في مسجد دمشق أيّام عبد الملك بن مروان)؛ **تاريخ مدينة دمشق** (تراجم حرف العين المتلوّة بالألف) 516 (حلقات تدريس القرآن في الشام ومكحول الشامي وأبو إدريس الخولاني).

ذلك،[47] لأنّ تحوّل العبد أو المولى إلى قارئ قرآن سيرفع حتمًا من مكانته الاجتماعية بين الناس، وهذا كان مهمًّا في مجتمع صُنِّفت المكانة الاجتماعية فيه بناءً على ولاء الدم.[48]

وبهذا ظهر في الأمصار الإسلامية طبقة من القرّاء العبيد والقراء الموالي. يُذكر مثلًا أنّ غلامًا لسعد ابن أبي وقاص كان قارئ قرآن وحضر معه معركة القادسية،[49] وكان عكرمة (ت 723/105) مولى ابن عبّاس من قُرّاء القرآن المعروفين بمكة، فقد قال مرّة: "كان ابن عباس يجعل في رجلي الكَبْل يعلّمني القرآن والسنّة".[50] ومن مشاهير القرّاء العبيد كذلك أبو سفيان مولى ابن جحش (عاش في الفترة السفيانية) فقد كان يستمع إليه سادة بني عبد الأشهل الأوسيّين في المدينة "ويؤمّهم في صلاتهم وهو عبد وكَاتَب بعد".[51] وكان عبيد بن حنين (ت 724/106) مولى آل زيد بن الخطاب الذي قرأ القرآن على يد زيد بن ثابت (ت 665/45) وأضحى قارئًا مشهورًا في المدينة.[52] وأصبح كثير من الموالي شيوخ قرّاء القرآن في أمصارهم مثل يحيى بن وثاب (ت 721/103)، مولى بني أسد، وكان من سبي قاشان، وصار شيخ قرّاء الكوفة.[53] وكان عبد الله بن كثير بن زاذان بن فيروزان (ت 737/120) مولى كنانة، وأصله فارسي، أحد القرّاء السبعة في مكّة.[54] وكان شيبة بن نصاح بن سرجس (ت 747/130) مولى أمّ سلمة زوجة الرسول، وأصله رومي، وكذلك مولاها أبو ميمونة (توفّي في أواخر عهد بني أمية)، إمامَي أهل المدينة في القراءة.[55] وفي الكوفة كان جلّ موالي بني كاهل أيّام الحجاج بن يوسف قرّاء قرآن ومحدّثين يؤمّون بني كاهل في صلاتهم.[56]

وهكذا ومع نهاية القرن الهجري الأول أضحى معظم قرّاء القرآن وأئمّة المسلمين في مساجدهم في الأمصار من الموالي،[57] ودليل ذلك أن جلّ المشاركين في كتيبة القرّاء التي شاركت في دير

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[47] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 588.

[48] انظر: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 53–71.

[49] الطبري، **تاريخ** 536/3.

[50] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 287/5؛ الحموي، **معجم الأدباء** 186/12.

[51] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 307/5–308.

[52] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 285/5.

[53] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 379/4–380.

[54] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 319/5.

[55] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 297/5. ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 528.

[56] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 570.

[57] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 1231؛ المبرّد، **الكامل في الأدب** 96/2؛ ابن قتيبة، **عيون الأخبار** 62/1.

الجماجم سنة 702/83 في العراق كان من الموالي،[58] والشيء نفسه نلاحظه في ثورة يزيد بن المهلب سنة 722/104 في البصرة، إذ كان جلّ القرّاء الذين وقفوا معه من الموالي،[59] ومن الطبيعي أن نرى مشاهير المفسّرين لآيات القرآن الكريم والذين تحدّثوا عن أسباب النزول من الموالي مثل عكرمة (ت 722/104) مولى ابن عبّاس،[60] ومجاهد بن جبر (ت 722/104) مولى قيس بن السائب القرشي،[61] وسعيد بن جبير (ت 703/84) مولى بني أسد،[62] ومسلم بن صبيح (ت 718/100) مولى سعيد بن العاص،[63] وإسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن السدّي (ت 744/127) مولى اليمن،[64] وكذلك اشتغل كثير من الموالي في كتابة المصاحف ونسخها.[65]

وهكذا فإنّ دورهم بدا واضحًا في الاهتمام بالقرآن وعلومه في جيل التابعين وتابعيهم، وانعكس هذا ليظهر في أشهر مصاحف التابعين التي كان عددها أحد عشر مصحفًا، ستّة منها للموالي وهي: مصحف عكرمة (ت 722/104) مولى ابن عبّاس، ومصحف عطاء بن أبي رباح (ت 732/114) مولى بني جمح، ومصحف مجاهد (ت 722/104) مولى بني مخزوم، ومصحف سعيد بن جبير (ت 703/84) مولى بني أسد، ومصحف صالح بن كيسان (ت 757/140) مولى بني غفّار، ومصحف الأعمش (ت 765/148) مولى بني أسد.[66]

ولما بدأ الاهتمام بالحديث ورواية أخبار الأنبياء بما فيهم النبيّ محمّد وصحابته في العقد الثاني من القرن الهجري الأول، اهتمّ الموالي على اختلاف جنسياتهم بهذا، ولهذا كان كثير من العرب يبعثون مواليهم إلى حلقات العلم في المساجد لسماع الحديث أو القصص الديني.[67] وتزعّم الموالي هذا العلم في العقد الثاني من الدولة الأموية وأصبحوا أئمّة رواة الحديث والأخبار، مثل عطاء بن أبي رباح (ت 732/114) في مكّة، وكان مولى عتاقة وأصله من النوبة، ووُصف بأنّه "كان من أوعية العلم

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[58] انظر: البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 31، 45.

[59] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 209، 216، 217.

[60] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 288/5؛ ابن العماد الحنبلي، شذرات الذهب 130/1.

[61] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 444.

[62] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 71/5.

[63] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 232/5.

[64] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 26/5.

[65] انظر: ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 241/7؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 470؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 69/5.

[66] السجستاني، **المصاحف** 380–386.

[67] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 309/5.

وكثير الحديث"،[68] روى عن أربعين صحابيًّا تقريبًا،[69] وقيل عنه "كان أقدم رجل في جزيرة العرب علمًا"،[70] وقال عنه الأوزاعي "مات يوم مات وهو أرضى أهل الأرض عند الناس"،[71] وبذا روي عن الرسول قوله: "سيد المسلمين عطاء بن رباح"،[72] ووُصف بأنّه "كان عالمـًا ومحدّثًا وفقيهًا"،[73] وكان أعلم الناس بمناسك الحج،[74] وهكذا كان بنو أميّة ينادون في موسم الحج "لا يفتي الناس إلّا عطاء بن أبي رباح".[75] وظهر في البصرة الحسن البصري (ت 728/110) مولى الأنصار، الذي كان "إمام العامّة في البصرة، وكان يسكن في أخصاص البصرة مكان تجمع المهاجرين إليها"،[76] وكان له حلقة علم في مسجد البصرة،[77] وكان يحضرها الفرزدق الشاعر لسماع الحديث والفقه،[78] ويذكر أنّه كان له حلقة خاصّة للحديث مع النساء وتعليمهنّ.[79] وكان لمسلم بن يسار (ت 719/101) مولى طلحة بن عبيد الله، حلقة للعلم في مسجد البصرة.[80] وكان لمحمّد بن سيرين (ت 728/110) مولى أنس بن مالك أيضًا حلقة علم في مسجد البصرة، وكان يحضرها جرير الشاعر أحيانًا،[81] وكان لحمّاد الكوفي المولى حلقة في مسجد الكوفة "وكان جلّ من يحضرها من الموالي".[82] وكان لأبي حنيفة النعمان (ت 767/150) مولى تيم الله بن ثعلبة، حلقة علم في مسجد الكوفة.[83] وكان لزيد بن أسلم (ت 753/136)

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[68] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 79/5.

[69] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 79/5–81.

[70] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 83/5.

[71] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 84/5.

[72] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 81/5.

[73] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 79/5، 280؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 169.

[74] عدّة مؤلّفين، **الحضارة العربية الإسلامية** 195.

[75] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 82/5.

[76] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 1238.

[77] ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 85/4، 304/6؛ أبو حيّان التوحيدي، **البصائر والذخائر** 455/2؛ ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 169/7.

[78] ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 383/5.

[79] ابن حبيب، **كتاب التاريخ** 169.

[80] الشيرازي، **طبقات الفقهاء** 88.

[81] ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 383/5.

[82] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 251/6.

[83] ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 308/6.

مولى بني عدي بن كعب، حلقة في مسجد المدينة.[84] وكان لربيعة الرأي (ت 753/136) مولى بني تيم، حلقة في مسجد المدينة، وكان يحضرها مالك بن أنس وأشراف المدينة.[85]

وانطلاقاً من هذا الحضور للموالي في حركة التربية والتعليم للمجتمع المسلم، فقد اشتهر من بينهم كثير من العلماء في العقد الثاني من الدولة الأموية، وتزعّموا حركة التعليم، وأضحوا من كبار العلماء، فكان عكرمة (ت 722/104) مولى ابن عباس في مكّة "بحراً في العلم"،[86] وكان يجتمع إليه الناس ويفتيهم في كلّ شيء،[87] وكان ابن جريج (ت 723/105) مولى بني أمية، وأصله رومي "إمام الحجاز، ومن أوعية العلم، وهو أوّل من صنف الكتب في الحجاز"،[88] وكان مجاهد بن جبر (ت 722/104) مولى بني مخزوم، وأصله نوبي "عالم أهل مكّة بالتفسير والإفتاء".[89] وكان طاووس (ت 724/106) مولى همدان، وأصله فارسي "عالم أهل اليمن، وصل إلى الخلفاء ووعظهم".[90] وكان سليمان بن يسار (ت 725/107)، مولى إحدى زوجات رسول الله، وأصله فارسي "عالم المدينة وفقيهها".[91] وكان محمّد بن سيرين (ت 728/110)، مولى أنس بن مالك "عالم البصرة في الفرائض والقضاء".[92] وكان أبو الشعثاء البصري (ت 711/93) مولى الأزد "أحد علماء البصرة"،[93] وكان الحكم بن عتبة (ت 732/114) مولى كندة "عالم أهل الكوفة"،[94] وكان نافع (ت 735/117) مولى ابن عمر، وأصله بربري، "عالم المدينة وفقيهها"،[95] وقد أرسله عمر بن عبد العزيز إلى مصر ليعلّمهم السُّنّة.[96] ووُصِف حمّاد بن أبي سليمان

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[84] الذهبي، **تذكرة الحفّاظ** 132/1؛ ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 289/2؛ ابن العماد الحنبلي، **شذرات الذهب** 194/1.

[85] ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 289/2؛ ابن العماد الحنبلي، **شذرات الذهب** 194/1.

[86] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 287/5.

[87] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 289/5.

[88] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 163/1.

[89] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 449/4–450.

[90] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 200؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 32/5؛ ابن كثير، **البداية والنهاية** 216/9، 265.

[91] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 30/5، 51.

[92] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 511/4، 606، 609.

[93] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 481/4.

[94] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 208/5، 211، 212.

[95] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 95/5، 96.

[96] ابن العماد الحنبلي، **شذرات الذهب** 154/1.

(ت 737/119) مولى الأشعريين بالكوفة "بأنه كان فقيه أهل العراق".[97] وكان مكحول الشامي (ت 731/113)، مولى امرأة من هذيل، وأصله من النوبة "إمام أهل زمانه في الشام"،[98] وكان سليمان بن موسى (ت 737/119) مولى معاوية بن أبي سفيان "مفتي دمشق".[99] وكان يزيد بن أبي حبيب (ت 744/127) مولى الأزد "فقيه أهل مصر"،[100] قال فيه الكندي "إنّه أول من نشر العلم بمصر في الحلال والحرام ومسائل الفقه".[101] وكان زياد مولى ابن عياش، "شيخ أهل الرقّة".[102] وكان أبو الزناد عبد الله بن ذكوان (ت 747/130) مولى بني عبد شمس "فقيه أهل المدينة".[103] وكان منصور بن زاذان (ت 748/131) مولى ثقيف في واسط "عالماً يتّمتع باحترام الناس حتّى إنّ اليهود والمجوس وجميع فئات المسلمين خرجوا في جنازته بعد وفاته".[104] وكانت مولاة أبي ثمامة الجمحي (ت 700/81) "تعلّم النساء وتفقّههن في مسجد حمص"،[105] ويذكر عن امرأة مولاة في حدود سنة (728/110) كانت بالبصرة من أشهر علمائها "وكانت محدّثة وتجالس العلماء والفقهاء وتجادلهم".[106] وبهذا أضحى معظم موالي الصحابة رواةً متخصّصين في نقل العلم والأخبار عن مواليهم.[107]

واعتمادًا على ما سبق، فقد تسلّم الموالي العلم في الأمصار، وأصبحوا أئمّتها، وقادة العلم فيها ابتداءً من الربع الأخير من القرن الهجري الأول، ففي مكّة كان عطاء بن أبي رباح، وفي المدينة زيد بن أسلم ومحمّد بن المنكدر (ت 747/130)، ونافع مولى ابن عمر، وابن أبي نجيح (ت 131/749–748)

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[97] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 231/5، 234، 238.

[98] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 200؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 157/5، 457.

[99] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 433/5.

[100] أمين، **فجر الإسلام** 154.

[101] الكندي، **ولاة مصر** 74.

[102] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 457/5.

[103] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 445/5.

[104] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 422/5.

[105] أبو نعيم الأصفهاني، **حلية الأولياء** 129/10.

[106] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 7/ 325.

[107] انظر: ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 456 (عكرمة وروايته عن مولاه ابن عباس) و460 (نافع مولى ابن عمر وروايته عن عمر بن الخطاب وابنه عبد الله) و477 (بشر بن سعيد وروايته عن صحابة رسول الله) و528 (أبو جعفر المدني وروايته عن الصحابة). ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 175/5 (سليمان بن يسار)، و173–174 (عطاء بن يسار). الطبري، **تاريخ** 187/6 (مولى ابن الزبير وروايته أحداث ثورة ابن الزبير)؛ أمين، **فجر الإسلام** 155.

وربيعة الرأي (ت 753/136)، وفي اليمن طاووس، وفي اليمامة يحيى بن أبي كثير، وفي الشام مكحول الشامي، وفي الجزيرة الفراتية ميمون بن مهران، وفي خراسان الضحّاك بن مزاحم، وعطاء بن عبد الله الخراساني، وفي البصرة الحسن البصري ومحمّد بن سيرين، وفي الكوفة إبراهيم النخعي والحكم بن عتبة (ت 732/114) وحمّاد بن سليمان (ت 737/120)، وفي مصر يزيد بن أبي حبيب.[108]

ويعلّق الذهبي على تسلّم الموالي مقاليد الحركة العلمية في الأمصار بقوله "سادوا بأمصارهم بالديانة والرواية"، ويقول أيضًا "إنّما هو دين، من حفظه ساد ومن ضيّعه سقط".[109] وقد لاحظ ذلك عبد الملك بن مروان فقال لمكحول الشامي "يا معشر القرّاء والفقهاء وأصحاب العلوم" فردّ عليه مكحول "نحن قوم أهل ديانة، وأصحاب علم وبلاغة، أدّبنا أنفسنا بالقرآن وحديث رسول الله".[110] ويؤكّد الجهشياري تفوّق الموالي على العرب في التعليم، بحادثة تقول: "مرّ أعرابي على حمار ومعه مولى، أو كاتب من الموالي على ناقة، على مجلس لبني العنبر (بالبصرة) فسلّموا على المولى أولًا، فاعترض الأعرابي، فقالوا له: بدأنا بالكاتب قبل الأمّي".[111] ويعلّق الحموي على ذلك بقوله "لمـّا مات العبادلة عبد الله بن عباس (ت 687/68) وعبد الله بن الزبير (ت 691/72) وعبد الله بن عمر (ت 692/73) وعبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص (ت 685/66) صار الفقه في جميع الأمصار إلى الموالي".[112] وتضيف كتب الأدب القول إنّه حتى الهجناء، وهم ممّن كان آباؤهم عربًا وأمّهاتهم غير عربيّات قد تفوّقوا على العرب الصرحاء في العلم والفقه والورع.[113] وقد نوّه ابن خلدون بذلك فقال: "إنّ العلم من جملة الصنائع التي كان العرب بعيدين عنها، فتلقّفه الموالي من العجم"،[114] وهذا تأكيد لحديث رسول الله الذي يقول "لو تعلّق العلم بأكناف السماء لناله قوم من أهل فارس".[115]

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[108] انظر: الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 85/5؛ ابن حبيب، **كتاب التاريخ** 174؛ ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 415/3–416.

[109] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 15/5.

[110] ابن حبيب، **كتاب التاريخ** 175.

[111] الجهشياري، **الوزراء والكتّاب** 29؛ إخوان الصفا، **رسائل** 346/1–348 (فضل المتعلّم).

[112] الحموي، **معجم الأدباء** 354/2.

[113] انظر: المبرّد، **الكامل في الأدب** 120/2. ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 128/6. زيدان، **تاريخ التمدّن الإسلامي** 442/4.

[114] ابن خلدون، **المقدّمة** 545.

[115] ابن خلدون، **المقدّمة** 544.

يبدو أنّ تزعم الموالي للحركة العلمية، واهتمامهم الواضح بها وظهور دورهم الذي فاق دور العرب، أثار حفيظة بعض العلماء العرب ومنهم الشعبي (ت 722/104) والزهري (ت 741/124)، وقال الشعبي حينما مرّ يومًا بمسجد الكوفة: "لقد أتى عليّ زمان [وُلِد الشعبي سنة 641/21] وما من مجلس أحبّ إليّ أن أجلس فيه من هذا المجلس، فَلَكُناسة اليوم أجلس عليها أحبّ إليّ أن أجلس فيه من هذا المسجد"، وذلك لكثرة تواجد العبيد والموالي في المسجد في حلقات لهم يتدارسون اللغة والنحو والحديث والقرآن والفقه،[116] واتّخذ الزهري موقفًا سلبيًّا منهم، ولم يثق بهم، وامتنع عن رواية الحديث عنهم.[117]

وهكذا أصبح للعلماء الموالي تقدير ملحوظ ومكانة عالية بين الناس في الأمصار، وأصبحت كلمتهم مسموعةً لديهم حتّى في الأمور السياسية، فلمّا ثار ابن الأشعث ضدّ الحجّاج وبني أميّة في البصرة سنة 690/80 قيل لابن الأشعث "إذا أردت أن يخرج الناس معك فأخرِج الحسنَ البصري"[118] ومسلم بن يسار.[119] والشيء نفسه حاوله يزيد بن المهلب عندما طلب تأييد الحسن البصري وفرقد السبخي في ثورته ضدّ بني أميّة في خلافة يزيد بن عبد الملك،[120] فلما أشِير على ابن المهلب قتل الحسن البصري حينما رفض الوقوف إلى جانبه قال له مستشاروه: "فوالله لو فعلت ذلك لانقلب مَن معنا علينا"،[121] وهكذا لمـّا توفّي الحسن تعطّلت صلاة العصر في مسجد البصرة لأوّل مرّة لانشغال الناس في جنازته،[122] والشيء نفسه نراه في الكوفة حين كان سكّانها يذلّون لحبيب بن أبي ثابت (ت 737/119) لأنّه كان عالمـًا كبيرًا فيها.[123]

وانطلاقًا من هذا واعتمادًا عليه فقد روى كثير من الموالي القصص وتسلّموا الإفتاء، كيف لا وهم أصبحوا العالمين بالقرآن وقصصه وتفسيره وفقهه وهم أئمّة الحديث عن سِيَر الأنبياء وسنة رسول

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[116] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 75/6. انظر ايضًا: الفسوي، **المعرفة والتاريخ** 92/2؛ الجاحظ، **البيان والتبيين** 69/2؛ ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 478/2؛ المبرّد، **الكامل في الأدب** 61/2.

[117] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 469.

[118] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 55؛ الفسوي، **المعرفة والتاريخ** 86/2.

[119] الفسوي، **المعرفة والتاريخ** 86/2.

[120] انظر: الطبري، **تاريخ** 594/6؛ ابن أعثم الكوفي، **الفتوح** 13/8؛ البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 210.

[121] ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 408/2.

[122] ابن خلكان، **وفيات الأعيان** 72/2.

[123] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 320/6.

الله وصحابته، ولـمّا كانت خلافة عمر بن عبد العزيز كان أكثر رجال الإفتاء والقضاء في الأمصار من الموالي،[124] وكان منهم من يأخذ بالرأي والقياس.[125] ويمكن القول أيضًا إنّ المدرسة التاريخية الإسلامية التي بدأت بأهل الحديث كان للموالي دور في نشأتها وبلورتها، فكان أوّل من كتب عن السيرة مولى، وهو ابن اسحاق.[126]

إنّ دخول غير العرب في الإسلام، وفي ولاء مع العرب، حتّم عليهم دراسة اللغة العربية، فأقبلوا يدرسونها حتّى برع فيها عدد كبير، فظهر من بينهم المعلّمون والأدباء والشعراء.[127] فيُذكر أنّ عبد الرحمن بن هرمز (ت 117/735) كان "أوّل من وضع العربيّة، وكان أعلم الناس بأنساب قريش، وقيل إنّه أخذ العربية عن أبي الأسود الدؤلي".[128] ويذكر أنّ علقمة بن أبي علقمة (ت 125/742) مولى عائشة زوجة رسول الله كان "له مكتب يعلّم فيه العربية والعروض والنحو"،[129] كما ظهر كثير من الموالي الشعراء.[130]

عمل الموالي كذلك كُتّابًا لمواليهم، لأنّهم كانوا يجيدون الكتّابة والترجمة والعمليّات الحسابية،[131] حتّى إنّ العبيد والغلمان كانوا يعملون كتّابًا لأسيادهم،[132] وهكذا كان على ديوان الخاتم وديوان الرسائل للقادة والخلفاء الموالي وبخاصّة مواليهم.[133] فقد عمل حمران بن أبان كاتبًا لمولاه عثمان بن

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[124] انظر على سبيل المثال: ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 97 (سعيد بن جبير) 454 (أبو العالية)؛ المبرّد، **الكامل في الأدب** 96/2، 198 (الموالي والقضاء). البغدادي، تاريخ بغداد 216/5 (شريح القاضي)؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 73/5 (وهب بن منبه وميمون بن مهران).

[125] ابن حبيب، **كتاب التاريخ** 163.

[126] انظر: جب، **التاريخ الإسلامي** 149؛ الدوري، **نشأة علم التاريخ عند العرب** 30–31.

[127] انظر: عدّة مؤلّفين، **الحضارة العربية** 14.

[128] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 70/5.

[129] ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 216؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 548.

[130] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 1011؛ **أنساب الأشراف** (ترجمة يزيد بن معاوية) 27.

[131] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 609/4 (كان محمّد بن سيرين عالم البصرة في الحساب)؛ 445/5 (كان أبو الزناد عبد الله بن ذكوان صاحب كتّاب وحساب في المدينة)؛ ابن عساكر، **تاريخ مدينة دمشق** (عبد الله بن جابر، عبد الله بن زيد) 274 (كان عبد الله بن ذكوان عالم حساب وكتّاب في المدينة أيام هشام بن عبد الملك).

[132] ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 152/4.

[133] انظر: الطبري، **تاريخ** 180/6–181. الجهشياري، **الوزراء والكتّاب** 48.

عفّان،[134] وعمل الحسن البصري كاتبًا للربيع بن زياد والي خراسان لمعاوية بن أبي سفيان،[135] وكان عبد الرحمن بن درّاج، مولى معاوية، يتولّى الكتابة له،[136] وكان محمّد بن سيرين كاتبًا لمولاه أنس بن مالك،[137] وكان سعيد بن جبير كاتبًا لعدّة رجالات في الدولة الأموية،[138] وذاع صيت عبد الرحمن الكاتب أبو يحيي بن يحيي بن سعد الأنباري، مولى العلاء بن وهب العبادي، وهو من أصل فارسي، وكان قد تتلمذ على يد أحد موالي هشام بن عبد الملك، وكتب للوليد بن يزيد ويزيد بن الوليد ومروان بن محمّد، وقيل عنه: "كان أوّل من فتق أكمام البلاغة وفكّ رقاب الشعر"،[139] وهكذا عمل هؤلاء أيضًا مستشارين وأمناء سرّ لأسيادهم.[140]

ومن المفروض أنّ الموالي والعبيد الذين لم يكونوا من المولّدين في المجتمع العربي أن يجيدوا لغات أقوامهم، ومنهم من كان يتكلّم لغة العلم آنذاك وهي اليونانية، وهكذا عمل كثير منهم في الترجمة أو كان مترجمًا لسيّده من اللغات الأخرى إلى العربية.[141] من هنا بدأ اهتمام المسلمين بالترجمة إلى العربية في أواخر القرن الهجري الأول، وكان أوّل العرب المهتّمين بذلك خالد بن يزيد بن معاوية (ت 704/85) الذي طلب من بعض الموالي ترجمة بعض التراث اليوناني للعربية،[142] كما نقل له مريانوس الراهب بعض كتب المنطق والصنعة (وهي الكيمياء القديمة).[143] وطلب عمر بن عبد العزيز ترجمة بعض كتب الطبّ التي كانت بالسريانية إلى العربية،[144] ونقل الطبيب اليهودي ماسرجويه كتاب القسّ أهرمن في الطبّ وبعض كتب الطبّ لجالينيوس إلى العربيّة، كما نقلت كتب أخرى في الفلك والنجوم ومنها كتاب **عرض مفتاح النجوم في الفلك** المنسوب لهرمس الحكيم.[145] ونقل سالم مولى هشام بن

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[134] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 456.

[135] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 441.

[136] ابن عذارى، **البيان المغرب** 207/2.

[137] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 443.

[138] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 197، 445.

[139] ابن عبد ربه، **العقد الفريد** 73/1؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 463/5.

[140] انظر على سبيل المثال: ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 185/4؛ الطبري، **تاريخ** 489/6؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 557/4، 560.

[141] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (القسم الثاني) 306.

[142] ابن النديم، **الفهرست** 354. وعن حركة الترجمة إلى العربيّة، انظر: Gutas, *Greek thought*

[143] ابن النديم، **الفهرست** 511.

[144] أمين، **فجر الإسلام** 159، 196.

[145] الحلو، **الوافي في تاريخ العلوم** 43.

عبد الملك وكاتب رسائله **رسائل أرسطوطاليس إلى الإسكندر** من اليونانية إلى العربية.[146] كما نقل ابن المقفع بعض الكتب الدينية والأدبية من الفارسية إلى العربية،[147] وبذا فمن المؤكّد أنّ الموالي لعبوا دورًا بارزًا في نقل الثقافة الهلينية التي كانت منتشرةً في الأديرة والكنائس في البلاد المفتوحة إلى العربية.

وكان أولاد الخاصّة من الخلفاء ورجالات الدولة لا يلتحقون بالكُتَّاب مع أولاد العامّة، بل يقوم بتدريسهم معلّمون أطلق عليهم اسم "المؤدّبون"، وهو ما يعرف اليوم بالدروس الخصوصية،[148] وكان الطالب يتلقّى العلم من عدّة مؤدّبين، فمنهم من يعلّمهم القراءة والكتابة والحساب، ومنهم من يعلّمهم القرآن وقراءاته وتفسيره، ومنهم من يعلّمهم النحو والعروض، ومنهم من يعلّمهم الشعر والحكمة وفنّ الحديث والخطابة، ومنهم من يعلّمهم السباحة والعلوم العسكرية، ومنهم من يلقي عليهم دروسًا في تاريخ الأمم والملوك والأنبياء وسيرهم، ويقصّ عليهم آداب السياسة ومكارم الأخلاق وغير ذلك من العلوم التي يحتاج إليها أولاد الخاصّة ورجال السياسة والقادة. واللافت للانتباه أنّ الأب كان يشارك المؤدّب أو العالم في وضع المنهاج أو مادّة الدراسة لابنه.[149]

وتشير مصادرنا إلى مشاركة الموالي في تربية وتعليم أو تأديب أولاد الخاصّة، فيُذكر أنّ إسماعيل بن عبيد الله بن أبي المهاجر، مولى بني مخزوم، كان يؤدّب أولاد عبد الملك بن مروان في دمشق،[150] وكان صالح بن كيسان، مولى بني غفّار، مؤدّبًا لأولاد الوليد بن عبد الملك،[151] وقد أدّب أولاد

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[146] ابن النديم، **الفهرست** 117.

[147] ابن النديم، **الفهرست** 123.

[148] انظر: ابن حبيب، **المحبّر**475–478. الجاحظ، **رسائل** 79/2، 34/3؛ ابن قتيبة، **عيون الأخبار**21/1، 166/2؛ الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 310/1، 193/20؛ ابن حجر العسقلاني، **تهذيب التهذيب** 499/4؛ ابن الجوزي، **سيرة عمر بن عبد العزيز** 257؛ إحسان، "التعليم في الأندلس" 66–67.

[149] انظر: الجاحظ، **رسائل** 43/3؛ **البيان والتبيين** 73/2–74، 179؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 549؛ ابن قتيبة، **عيون الأخبار** 166/2–167؛ ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 477–478؛ ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 217؛ المبرّد، **الكامل في الأدب** 77/1؛ الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 23/9؛ ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ دمشق** 28/3–29، 152/7؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 454/5؛ القفطي، **إنباه الرواة** 292/3؛ ابن الجوزي، **نقد العلم والعلماء** 227؛ أبو جبلة، **تاريخ التربية في صدر الإسلام** 67–71.

[150] انظر: ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 477؛ ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ دمشق** 25/3؛ ابن الأثير، **الكامل في التاريخ** 39/4.

[151] ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 477؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 454/5.

الوليد من بعد ابن كيسان أبو عبيدة محمّد بن عمّار بن ياسر،[152] وكان كلٌّ من سنبل، مولى عمر بن عبد العزيز، وصالح بن كيسان، مولى بني غفّار، وميمون بن مهران معلّمين ومؤدّبين لأولاد عمر بن عبد العزيز،[153] وكان الجعد بن درهم (ت 118/736) مؤدّب مروان بن محمّد ومعلّمه،[154] وكان أبو معاوية النحوي شيبان بن عبد الرحمن، مولى بني تميم، مؤدّبًا لأولاد داود بن علي العبّاسي.[155] ومن الجدير ذكره أنّه لم يشترط أن يكون المعلّم أو المؤدّب مسلمًا بل كان منهم يهود أو نصارى، فقد ذكر أنّ الحجاج بن يوسف استشار أصحابه في اختيار مؤدّب لأولاده "فأشير عليه بمؤدّب نصراني ومؤدّب مسلم فقيل له: إنّ النصراني أعلم من المسلم".[156]

وعمل الموالي في الطبّ كذلك، فقد خدم لدى معاوية بن أبي سفيان أطبّاء من الموالي، وكان أشهرهم ابن أثال النصراني، الذي والى معاوية، وكان خبيرًا بالأدوية.[157] وفي الكوفة ورد ذكر أحد الأطباء الموالي أيّام زياد بن أبيه،[158] واهتم مروان بن الحكم بالطبّ، وترجم طبيبه ومولاه ماسرجويه كتبًا في الطبّ له،[159] واعتمد الوليد بن عبد الملك على الأطبّاء الموالي في إنشاء بيمارستان دمشق،[160] وأسلم عبد الملك بن أبجر الكناني على يد عمر بن عبد العزيز قبل تولّيه الخلافة، فأضحى مولى إسلام، وكان معلّمًا للطبّ في الإسكندرية وحرّان وأنطاكية.[161]

واشتغل الموالي في دواوين الخراج كتّابًا ومحاسبين، وعُيِّنوا للإشراف على جباية الضرائب في مختلف الأمصار، فقد عيّن معاوية بن أبي سفيان مولاه عبد الله بن درّاج سنة 42/662 على خراج العراق،[162] واستعمل وردان، مولى عمرو بن العاص، على خراج مصر،[163] وعزل عبيدُ الله بن زياد

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[152] ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 477.

[153] ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 478؛ ابن حجر العسقلاني، **تهذيب التهذيب** 499/4؛ ابن الجوزي، **سيرة عمر بن عبد العزيز** 257؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 454/5.

[154] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (العبّاس وولده) 100–101.

[155] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 549؛ ابن رستة، **الأعلاق النفيسة** 217؛ ابن سعد، **الطبقات الكبرى** 322/7.

[156] الأصفهاني، **الأغاني** 227/20.

[157] ابن أبي أصيبعة، **عيون الأنباء** 171–174.

[158] البلاذري، **أنساب الأشراف** (ترجمة بنو عبد شمس) 240.

[159] حكمت، **دراسات في تاريخ العلوم** 176.

[160] الطبري، **تاريخ** 244/5.

[161] ابن أبي أصيبعة، **عيون الأنباء** 116.

[162] انظر: الجهشياري، **الوزراء والكتّاب** 24؛ البلاذري، **فتوح البلدان** 298، 300؛ الطبري، **تاريخ** 95/6.

[163] ابن عبد الحكم، **فتوح مصر** 86.

العربَ عن جباية الخراج وعيّن مكانهم الموالي والدهاقين، ووضع على ديوان خراج العراق فروخ بن تيري،[164] وتسلّم صالح بن عبد الرحمن، مولى بني تميم، ذو الأصل الفارسي والذي يجيد العربية والفارسية، ديوانَ خراج العراق أيّام الحجاج بن يوسف،[165] وعرّب بدوره دواوين الخراج فيها، وتعلّم على يديه كثير من الكُتّاب فقال عنه عبد الرحمن الكاتب "لله درّ صالح ما أعظم منّته على الكُتّاب"،[166] وتسلّم سليمان بن سعيد الخشني المولى دواوين الخراج في بلاد الشام لعبد الملك بن مروان،[167] وقام بدوره بتعريبها،[168] وعيّن سليمان بن عبد الملك أسامة بن زيد التنوخي مولى معاوية بن أبي سفيان على خراج مصر، وجدّد مقياس النيل في جزيرة الروضة،[169] واستعان عمر بن عبد العزيز بمولى يدعى جابر فأرسله إلى الأندلس لتنظيم أمور الخراج فيها،[170] وعيّن عمر بن عبد العزيز كذلك عبد الله بن ذكوان مولى رملة زوجة عثمان بن عفان على خراج العراق سنة 99/717،[171] وعيّن ميمون بن مهران على خراج الجزيرة الفراتية أيضًا،[172] وعيّن يزيد بن عبد الملك مولى الحجّاج، يزيد بن أبي مسلم على أفريقية وخراجها، وعرّب دواوين الخراج هناك،[173] وولّى هشام بن عبد الملك عبيدَ الله بن الحبحاب، مولى بني سلول، على مصر وخراجها،[174] وعزل خالدُ بن عبد الله القسري عامل هشام بن عبد الملك على العراق العربَ عن الخراج وعيّن مكانهم الموالي والدهاقين.[175]

وعمل الموالي عمّالًا ومشرفين على أموال الصدقات، فقد عمل نافع مولى ابن عمر على صدقات اليمن لعمر بن عبد العزيز،[176] وعمل طاووس على صدقات اليمن أيّام هشام بن عبد الملك،[177] واستخدم

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[164] الجهشياري، **الوزراء والكتّاب** 26.

[165] الجهشياري، **الوزراء والكتّاب** 38؛ البلاذري، **فتوح البلدان** 298.

[166] البلاذري، **فتوح البلدان** 298؛ ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 158؛ قدامة بن جعفر، **الخراج** 420.

[167] الصولي، **أدب الكتّاب** 192؛ ابن عساكر، **تهذيب تاريخ دمشق** 276/6.

[168] البلاذري، **فتوح البلدان** 197؛ ابن خلدون، **المقدّمة** 244.

[169] الجهشياري، **الوزراء والكتّاب** 51؛ المقريزي، **الخطط المقريزية** 58/1.

[170] مؤنس، **فجر الإسلام** 137.

[171] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 204؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 448/5.

[172] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 449.

[173] قدامة بن جعفر، **الخراج** 346؛ الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 593/4؛ 594/6.

[174] ابن الأثير، **الكامل في التاريخ** 75/5.

[175] اليعقوبي، **التاريخ** 312/2.

[176] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 98/5.

[177] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 55/4.

هشام مولاه عقفان على صدقات مصر،[178] وعمل الموالي مسؤولين عن بيوت الأموال في الأمصار، فقد تولّى عبد الرحمن بن أبي الزناد بيت مال المدينة لعمر بن عبد العزيز،[179] وتولّى شهرحوشب مولى الأنصار بيت مال البصرة أيّام سليمان بن عبد الملك،[180] وأشرفوا على دواوين العطاء منذ الفترة المروانية، فقد عيّن الحجّاجُ سعيدَ بن جبير على ديوان عطاء الجند في الكوفة،[181] واستعمل عبدُ الملك بن مروان موسى بن نصير، مولى بني أمية، على ديوان عطاء الكوفة أيّام ولاية بشر بن مروان عليها،[182] ويبدو أنّ الموالي تولّوا ديوان العطاء في المدينة المنوّرة منذ خلافة هشام بن عبد الملك.[183]

وهكذا كان أبو الزناد عبد الله بن ذكوان، مولى عثمان بن عفان، كاتبًا وعالم حساب في المدينة قد تولّى ديوان العطاء فيها "وقدم على هشام بن عبد الملك في حسابات ديوان المدينة"،[184] كما عملوا حرّاسًا خاصين وحجّابًا للقادة والخلفاء ولرجالات الدولة ولأسيادهم.[185]

وفي الختام يمكن القول إنّ الموالي لعبوا دورا بارزًا في التربية والتعليم في صدر الإسلام، ولا شكّ في أنّ التعدّدية الثقافية التي حملها الموالي أغنت مناهج التربية والتعليم في المجتمع المسلم فتلاقحت هذه المناهج في الإسلام وأعطت فكرًا إسلاميًّا رائدًا آنذاك.

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[178] ابن تغري بردي، **النجوم الزاهرة** 251/1.

[179] ابن قتيبة، **المعارف** 54.

[180] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 375/4.

[181] الذهبي، **سير أعلام النبلاء** 321/4.

[182] ابن عبد الحكم، **فتوح مصر** 203.

[183] ابن حبيب، **المحبّر** 378.

[184] ابن عساكر، **تاريخ مدينة دمشق** (عبد الله بن جابر- عبد الله بن زيد) 274.

[185] انظر: Juda, *Sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte* 90–100.

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PART 3

Rational vs. Spiritual Approaches to Education

⁂

CHAPTER 7

How Do We Learn? Al-Fārābī's Epistemology of Teaching

Nadja Germann

> **T1:** Then [Plato] investigated what this other thing [providing ultimate perfection] must be. It became evident to him that this other thing, whose attainment is the attainment of happiness, is a certain knowledge … [This] knowledge is the final perfection of man and the highest perfection he can possess.[1]

Al-Fārābī's (d. 950) predilection for teaching is well known. Introductions to his thought in general or analyses of his pedagogical principles in particular almost always mention al-Fārābī's epithet "the second teacher," given to him by his contemporaries.[2] The reason for this unparalleled concern with teaching is, at least partially, also well known. It is grounded in al-Fārābī's conviction, as indicated in the quotation above from the *Falsafat Aflāṭun*, that humanity's final goal is "happiness," whose achievement presupposes the acquisition of "a certain knowledge," a knowledge that is considered "the final perfection of man."[3]

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[1] Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Aflāṭun* i, 2–3, 53–54. In what follows I will refer to the text passages quoted in the main text as T1, T2, etc.

[2] The most up-to-date introductions to al-Fārābī's thought and œuvre in general are Janos, al-Fārābī, and Rudolph, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī. See still with benefit Black et al., Fārābī.

[3] See similarly, for instance, al-Fārābī, *Madīna fāḍila* xvi, 2:261–263 (terminology slightly adjusted): "The people of the excellent city have things in common which they all perform and comprehend, and other things which each class knows and does on its own. Each of these people reaches the state of happiness by precisely these two things … The same is true of the actions by which happiness is attained: the more they increase and are repeated …, the stronger and more excellent and more perfect becomes the soul …, until it arrives at that stage of perfection in which it can dispense with matter so that it becomes independent of it." Note that in addition to knowledge, al-Fārābī believes that human beings must perform certain actions in order to attain happiness; these actions fall under moral virtues, on the one hand, and the practical arts needed for society to survive, on the other. However, since both kinds of practical activities are, in their own way, each subservient to the perfection of humanity's rational faculty, and since happiness as such depends exclusively on the latter one (because "the theoretical intellect … is the substance of man," explains al-Fārābī in his

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As such, this conviction is a necessary, but as yet insufficient, reason for al-Fārābī's emphasis on teaching. Most philosophers (*falāsifa*) would subscribe to the same proposed link between happiness and knowledge; nonetheless, none of them earned similar fame for their interest in teaching. In this regard, al-Fārābī stands out due to a second factor—his belief that knowledge is, and usually needs to be, acquired by way of instruction, not autodidactically. According to him, people do not go out into the woods or similar places, observe natural phenomena, and analyze them in order to derive universal truths from them, like the natural laws. That is how philosophers and scientists proceeded in previous ages, for example, the Pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle,[4] but these days are long past, for with Aristotle, says al-Fārābī in his *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*,

> **T2:** … scientific speculation … culminate[d], all the methods [were] distinguished, and … philosophy [was] perfected, with no room left in it for investigation. Hence, it [became] an art that is only learned and taught.[5]

From a modern point of view, this is an odd position. The body of knowledge is considered as finite, and its various elements, as well as its methods of acquisition and justification, according to al-Fārābī, have already been worked out by Aristotle and his predecessors.[6] Nothing is left to be discovered, literally.[7]

Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs xvi, 93:125), I have omitted references to the practical aspect in T1 in order to avoid unnecessary confusion.

[4] See, e.g., al-Fārābī's "histories of philosophy" as developed in the *Falsafat Aflāṭun* and the *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*. Accordingly, until the era of Aristotle, philosophers (a category which, in the age of al-Fārābī, included scientists) investigated the world around them to discover the principles of reality. See Germann, Matter of method, esp. 22–33.

[5] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* ii, 143:151.18–152.2 (my translation is based on the unpublished translation by C.E. Butterworth, which he generously shared with me). In accordance with my sentence structure, I transposed all the verb forms of the quotation into the past tense. In the Arabic original, the "historical" process is described as though it were still in the future.

[6] The idea that the body of knowledge is finite was not invented by al-Fārābī. It is directly linked with the (Aristotelian) view, according to which (1) knowledge is of forms or species (and not, by contrast, of individuals); (2) species are eternal, do not change, and their number is finite; (3) consequently, it is at least theoretically possible to know all the species and, thus, everything that can be known in this world.

[7] Several passages in al-Fārābī's work give one to understand, first, that in his writings Aristotle compiled everything his predecessors had discovered and, second, he figured out the things his predecessors had not discovered. It should be noted, this claim does not conflict with al-Fārābī's further observation that even Aristotle left some gaps. See, e.g., al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs* iv, 20:98, where he highlights Aristotle's achievements in the natural sciences and then adds: "These, then, are the subjects of natural science. [Aristotle] takes the evident premises … Thereupon he goes over them once again with the scientific rules and sifts

The only task that remains to ensure that human beings achieve their goal and acquire the knowledge they are supposed to acquire for the sake of happiness (cf. T1), is, first, to learn—which is the moral obligation of every human being in pursuit of happiness—and second, to teach—which is the responsibility of the accomplished philosophers who master "scientific speculation" and its "methods" (T2), and thus are preordained by nature to guard and transmit humanity's intellectual treasure.[8]

It is primarily for this reason that al-Fārābī puts so much emphasis on teaching. With this unprecedented focus, he sought to fill a gap that existed in the field of epistemology. Since the age of Aristotle, philosophers had been

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them. Those that fulfill the requirements of the premises leading to certainty, he puts forward as demonstrations. And those that do not fulfill these requirements, he leaves as they are, set down in his books as provisions for the investigators who will come after him." See also al-Fārābī's remarks on the science of music. As he writes in the introduction to his *Kitāb al-Mūsīqā l-kabīr*, he found hardly anything helpful concerning this science in what had been transmitted by the Greeks. Therefore, he takes it upon himself to develop this discipline, e.g., *Mūsīqā* I, i, 1:35–37: "I refrained from [writing about music], until I had considered the books of the ancients which have come down to us on this topic (*fann*) … However, I found that they all fall short of exhausting (*tamām*) the parts of this art and that much of what has been established in it is flawed … In view of all this (*ʿinda dhālika*), I decided to comply with your request [to write something about music]." (I am grateful to Thérèse-Anne Druart who drew my attention to this text.) As these quotations indicate, al-Fārābī's statement concerning the completeness of knowledge is on a different level. While there may still be many details, areas, or even entire sciences that have not yet been worked out (by Aristotle or anyone else), both the topical and the epistemological framework—the range of sciences and arts, on the one hand, and the first principles and methods of syllogistic deduction, on the other—have been exposed and systematized by Aristotle. Therefore, according to al-Fārābī's account, whatever field of knowledge is being elaborated in the post-Aristotelian era, it adds to the sum of known details but does nothing to further constitute or modify these two frameworks. Any "thing" suited to be the object of (scientific) knowledge is covered by the Aristotelian sciences and arts. Likewise, the principles and premises, through which new findings must be proven true, are precisely those identified by Aristotle and outlined in his *Organon*. It is in this specific sense that I refer to the completeness of knowledge throughout this paper.

[8] It is also for this reason that, according to al-Fārābī, human beings, in relation to their natural endowments, have certain natural duties, e.g., to become rulers, or scientists, or fill subservient positions to keep society running. Moreover, it is for this reason—in view of al-Fārābī's conviction that government is meant to serve the purpose of leading humanity toward happiness (in the sense of T1 and n. 3)—that the core instrument of rulership consists in instruction and (as the practical preparatory stage) the formation of character; cf. al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda* iii, 38–39:34–5: "After these four things are realized in a certain man (namely, the 'natural' ruler, NG), the realization of the particular instances of them in nations and cities still remains; …: he who possesses such a great power ought to possess the capacity of realizing the particular instances of it in nations and cities. [39]. There are two primary methods of realizing them: instruction and the formation of character."

intrigued by questions related to the theory of knowledge; however, the typical framework within which epistemological issues were pursued consisted of commentaries on or paraphrases of Aristotle's *De anima*. As a consequence, these accounts focused on the acquisition of sense data—Aristotle's *pathēmata*—by way of the external senses.[9] While in al-Fārābī's view there is nothing wrong with this theory from a psycho-physiological point of view, epistemologically speaking, it lacks a crucial element. The theory tackles the problem of how mental representations are derived from reality (i.e., from things, events, relations, etc.), yet, in so doing, it ignores the equally important problems of how the masses of data gathered in this fashion are transformed into true understanding of the respective things, events, relations, and so forth, and how a teacher can convey knowledge about certain things when these things are not present, or worse, when they have previously never been encountered by the student. In short, how will the latter be able to comprehend what the teacher is talking about, and so develop an accurate understanding of reality?

While the basics of al-Fārābī's educational principles have recently been explored, his specific theory, or epistemology, of teaching still needs to be scrutinized, particularly in light of the abovementioned absence of comparable accounts among his contemporary "co-philosophers."[10] This is the aim of the present study, which focuses on these questions: In light of al-Fārābī's concepts of knowledge and science, what is teaching; what is the nature of its objects; and, how can a teacher succeed in bringing about true understanding of these objects in the students' minds? This analysis will build on previous research and expand the discussion of core features of al-Fārābī's thought, such as the curriculum he defends, or the significance of logic within the framework of the sciences.[11] Yet, beyond a discussion of a particular thinker, our study can help shed light on a crucial constellation during the formative period of Islamic culture. For, in discussing a single scholar, we will be confronted with fundamental issues that troubled thinkers such as Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) in the course of the two centuries following al-Fārābī. These issues are, on the one hand, the problem of knowledge, its certitude, and transferability; on the other, the problem of teaching and its epistemological foundation.

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[9] According to *De anima*, extramental reality is perceived by virtue of the external senses (sight, hearing, etc.); the respective objects, however, leave "traces" in the human mind. These are the mental representations or images or—as Aristotle has it—"affections" (*pathēmata*) that can be recalled, even if the object which caused them is no longer present. For a general introduction to Aristotle's theory of perception and cognition, see Shields, Aristotle's psychology.

[10] For an exploration of al-Fārābī's pedagogical principles, see esp. Günther, Principles, who reveals al-Fārābī's strong concern for the teacher-student relation and the moral requirements for successful teaching. For a cursory, though slightly misleading summary of al-Fārābī's theory of instruction see Haddad, Early Arab theory.

[11] On the definition and division of the sciences and philosophy, see Mahdi, *Alfarabi* 65–96; Gutas, Paul the Persian. On logic, Black, *Logic*; Abed, *Aristotelian logic*; Lameer, *al-Fārābī and Aristotelian syllogistics*.

In order to approach this topic, we need to examine its main components, foremost, al-Fārābī's conception of teaching. He elaborates on this in various passages throughout his writings; however, the most extensive treatment can be found in a section of his *Kitāb al-Burhān* that is specifically dedicated to the problem of teaching and learning.[12] This section will be the focus of our study.

1 "Teaching" Is Said in Many Ways

> **T3:** [1] Teaching (*taʿlīm*) is every activity a human being undertakes in order to bring about in someone else the knowledge of something; or in order to bring about in someone else a customary faculty (*malaka iʿtiyādiyya*) from which some activity arises … Therefore, we call "teaching" [even] the habituation of many animals [to perform certain] activities of which we believe that they do not belong to their innate nature (*fī ṭibāʿihā*).
>
> [2] Likewise, when a human being does |p. 78| something in order to copy by this someone else, and does repeatedly what this person does, so that a faculty (*malaka*) develops in him, we call this "teaching." Hence, when an activity is described to him from which a faculty arises, and by this one intends him to perform [this activity], until this faculty develops in him, we call this "teaching."
>
> [3] Similarly, inculcation (*talqīn*) can be called "teaching." There are two kinds of inculcation: first, if a speaker employs an utterance with the intention that the listener often and repeatedly employs [it], so that he arrives at memorizing [it]. This is like the inculcation of languages or songs. It falls under the [category of] teaching to copy (*iḥtidhāʾ*).

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[12] For this paper, I used the edition by M. Fakhry. The majority of the fifth part (*faṣl khāmis*), namely 77–90, deals with teaching (*taʿlīm*), and not just the section (77–83) introduced under this subtitle (*Fī l-taʿlīm*) by Fakhry. There is only a partial English translation of the *Kitāb al-Burhān* by J. McGinnis and D. Reisman, covering sections of the first two parts of the book (20–26). Except for these passages, all translations of the *Kitāb al-Burhān* (chiefly, T3 and T10) are my own.

> [4] The second kind [of inculcation obtains] if, along with this, the aim is to bring about the meanings (*maʿānī*) of these utterances in the soul of the listener. Also, [the instructor] may do something without [employing] words, [thus] bringing about knowledge, and this [too] is teaching, like [by virtue] of gesticulating. Similarly, we may write, so that the writing [serves as] teaching …
>
> [5] There are two kinds of teaching: [first,] teaching which brings about the faculty of an activity. This is teaching either by virtue of copying, or by means of discourse or gesticulation and writing taking the place of discourse. Discourse is the description (*ṣifa*) of an activity which the listener needs to perform, so that a faculty develops in him. The aim does not only consist in the acquisition of knowledge, but also in the development of a faculty from which arises an activity.
>
> [6] We now wish to talk about [the second kind of] teaching, which is [the kind of teaching] from which knowledge (*ʿilm*) occurs. This is what most appropriately is called "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) …
>
> [7] As to the remaining kinds [of instruction], one should invent different names for them, particularly, when [their] mutual dissimilarity becomes obvious, like the inculcation of parrots and the linguistic inculcation of boys. They are obviously different [from one another], even though there is some similarity between them.[13]

In this passage from *Kitāb al-Burhān* al-Fārābī distinguishes between two different kinds of teaching. As stated in paragraph [6], the kind of teaching (*taʿlīm*) he is interested in, and which will be at the center of his subsequent investigations, is the one "from which knowledge (*ʿilm*) occurs." This specification immediately raises two problems that must be addressed in what follows: the distinction between this kind of teaching and the other one, and the somewhat puzzling notion of knowledge (*ʿilm*) which al-Fārābī seems to be employing here in an ambiguous, if not equivocal, manner.[14] In this section of the paper we will examine the first problem (his concept of teaching); section 3 will be dedicated to the second problem (his concept of knowledge). We will occasionally use the Arabic *ʿilm* instead of the English translation "knowledge," primarily in cases where we need to focus on the specific kind of knowledge that, according to our author, is "most appropriately" designated by this name.

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[13] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:77–78. In what follows, the number before the colon refers to the part (*faṣl*), the number following the colon to the pages.

[14] Given that, according to paragraph [6], the knowledge al-Fārābī's preferred kind of teaching conveys is "most appropriately … called 'knowledge,' " we must conclude that there are other types of knowledge that are less appropriately called so. Accordingly, "teaching" too, we can conclude, "is said in many ways."

The demarcation, between the kind of teaching conveying *ʿilm* and the kind that does not, becomes clearer if we look at the different forms of instruction addressed in T3. A distinction is already offered in paragraph [1], where al-Fārābī distinguishes between the two chief purposes of teaching: "to bring about in someone else the knowledge of something," and "to bring about … a customary faculty from which some activity arises." While the first purpose can easily be connected to al-Fārābī's preferred kind of teaching, the second purpose—which must, consequently, be related to the second kind of teaching—represents those forms of instruction that do not bring about *ʿilm*, but aim at preparing for the performance of specific activities. This reading is further substantiated when we examine the examples of "improper" teaching that al-Fārābī mentions, for instance, the comparison with animals at the end of paragraph [1]. Hence, against the backdrop of Aristotelian psychology, it is clear that a kind of teaching, suited to forming habituation in an animal, must be directed toward a psychic faculty distinct from intellect, humanity's specific difference and the particular power of the soul that enables human beings to think in an abstract, scientific fashion.[15]

We find additional corroboration for this interpretation in paragraphs [2] through [4]. In paragraph [2] al-Fārābī cites the example of a student imitating the activities of her teacher "so that a faculty develops" in her and she will be able to perform these activities on her own. This description evokes the idea of the acquisition of a craft in the course of an apprenticeship, or of comparable practical proficiencies requiring persistent rehearsals, such as juggling, archery, or playing the bagpipe. In a similar fashion, al-Fārābī applies the notion of "inculcation" (*talqīn*) in paragraphs [3] and [4]. Belonging to the realm of habituation, inculcation is depicted as a method applicable to human beings and animals. However, while the notion of developing a routine[16] by virtue of persistent repetition was previously at the center, with inculcation, the focus shifts toward the aspect of memorization (*ḥifẓ*), for instance "of a language or of songs." This is notable, for at first glance one might think that speaking and singing presuppose reason and constitute humanity's proper realm; however, in paragraph [7] al-Fārābī leaves no doubt that the very basic level of memorizing and reproducing words and songs can be accomplished by animals as well and, therefore, is not distinctive of human nature. This needs further elaboration.

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[15] For more details on the significance of Aristotelian psychology for al-Fārābī's thought, see section 3 below, with further references. Note that, according to the Aristotelian tradition, only human beings are able to think; even highly developed animals, like chimpanzees, according to this tradition, cannot acquire abstract concepts, let alone judge and argue. As will become obvious in what follows, the distinction between the two kinds of instruction corresponds precisely to the two major tasks required by humanity in order to attain happiness, broached in n. 3 above: on the one hand, the preparatory practical actions (primarily, moral perfection) requiring habituation; on the other hand, the acquisition of (theoretical) knowledge, the "gateway" proper to happiness, by virtue of what is "most appropriately" called teaching (*taʿlīm*).

[16] The term al-Fārābī employs is *ʿāda*.

From other writings, we know that al-Fārābī follows Aristotle in the conviction that parrots and certain other animals are able to imitate sounds, including human voices (speaking and singing), that some animals produce something one might call a type of "music" (e.g., birdsong), and that there are even animals that communicate through sounds (i.e., calls).[17] However, what distinguishes all of these vocal products from real language and music, is the lack of meaning (*maʿnā*). It is precisely this additional level of inculcation to which al-Fārābī refers in paragraph [4], a level only accessible to human beings, even though the form of instruction does not differ much from the inculcation of an animal (cf. paragraph [7]). Nevertheless, in contrast to human beings, animals—according to this essentially Aristotelian position—are able neither to grasp the meanings conveyed by words and language nor to coin expressions themselves. Even if they are able to communicate by means of calls, these sounds are natural (i.e., they are formed through instinct), and not conventional (i.e., intentionally imposed coinage).[18]

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[17] See, e.g., al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ fī l-ʿibāra* 19–20, commenting on *De interpretatione* 2, 16a27–29:117, where Aristotle justifies his usage of "by convention" ("We have already said that a noun signifies this or that *by convention* [Cooke's emphasis]."): "if we keep the words 'by convention' in the definition of the noun, the word 'sound,' and not the word 'expression,' is the appropriate genus of the noun. For sound is sometimes natural, sometimes conventional, while expression cannot but be conventional. Yet we find in the *Book of Animals* that Aristotle says that many birds and other animals occasionally produce sounds composed of letters. And if expressions are composed of letters, the sounds these animals produce are expressions … At the same time, we observe that many of the animals which live around us, such as goats and others, produce sounds—sounds they have been endowed with by nature—which are composed of letters we do know. I am not thinking of birds like the parrot and the magpie, which can be taught expressions, but of those that produce sounds which they have been given by nature. Such sounds are expressions which are not based on convention … That is to say, such *beasts* as produce the said sounds signalize the terror, pleasure, or aggression they feel. For many animals communicate with one another" (Zimmermann's emphasis).

[18] See the quotation in the preceding note. As this quote evinces, al-Fārābī's main divides are (1) between convention and nature and (2) between the meaningful and non-meaningful.

In relation to this, it is notable that in paragraph [7] al-Fārābī explicitly identifies inculcation with the kind of teaching applied in the linguistic training of young boys (*ṣibyān al-lugha*) that, in al-Fārābī's era, usually took place in elementary schools (*kuttāb*).[19] Instruction in *lugha* (i.e., the Arabic language, its grammar, and literary heritage), according to him, consists essentially of first memorizing (*ḥifẓ*) the words and phrases (*alfāẓ*)—like a parrot—and then memorizing their meanings (*maʿānī*)—that is, learning the lexicon of the Arabic language (*lisān al-ʿArab*).[20] While this basic form of conveying the meanings and shades of the Arabic lexicon as such cannot be considered as teaching according to paragraph [6], nonetheless, as we will see in the course of this paper, it constitutes the indispensable, most basic foundation on which the transmission of any further knowledge, including *ʿilm*, must rely. Hence, even though the comparison with the drilling of parrots might at first come across as somewhat pejorative, and as a tacit critique of the prevailing form of instruction at the *kuttāb*, the only caveat actually perceptible at this point is that, from al-Fārābī's perspective, teaching should not stop at this level. In order to proceed to *ʿilm* and, thus, to happiness, some crucial additional stages are required.

A final aspect we need to discuss concerns paragraph [5]. As this passage displays, in connection with the kinds of teaching, al-Fārābī distinguishes between different methods, some of which can be applied in any given setting, others only within the frame of a specific form of instruction. The main divide, in al-Fārābī's view, is between "copying" (*iḥtidhāʾ*) and "discourse" (*mukhāṭaba*). Copying, which requires showing and imitating, is limited to the practical sphere of crafts, proficiencies, and the like; discourse, by contrast, can be applied in both the practical and the purely theoretical sphere. It can, moreover, be replaced or supported by means of "gesticulation" (*ishāra*) and "writ-

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Accordingly, animal sounds that are meaningful, are so by nature, and not by convention (which is the signum of human language); by contrast, sounds that are meaningful only by convention, when they are taught to and uttered by parrots or magpies, neither possess meaning for these animals, nor play a role in the birds' communication with the members of their flock.

[19] For a general survey of the *kuttāb*, see Landau, Kuttāb. Landau's emphasis on learning by rote might be too strong, as shown in Günther, Be masters. For an assessment of the current state of research on this topic in particular, and for further references, see Gilliot, Introduction.

[20] Hence, the forms of instruction practiced at the *kuttāb*, from al-Fārābī's perspective, consist, first, in memorizing in a manner that even animals can be inculcated (i.e., the first kind of *talqīn*) and, second, in a level of *talqīn* that is only accessible to human beings, a level where the semantic dimension of language is involved.

ing" (*kitāba*).[21] Given that the understood setting is a type of classroom, what al-Fārābī probably had in mind are the gestures and notes—perhaps, even including drawings—teachers often utilize to supplement their descriptions and explanations.

Teaching, in the sense underlying the *Kitāb al-Burhān*, can take place only by virtue of discourse, insists al-Fārābī; there is no way to teach *ʿilm* by means of showing and imitating.[22] This position not only underscores the specific rank of *ʿilm*, pertaining exclusively to the realm of theory and, thus, of intellect, in al-Fārābī's account; it moreover prepares the ground for the fundamental role inculcation plays as the basis for any further instruction. If *ʿilm* can be transmitted only through discourse, this presupposes that not only the teacher but also the student has a profound command of the language in which this discourse is held. However, language, as paragraph [4] displays, is transmitted through inculcation, which must necessarily precede the stage of teaching proper. In order to pursue this issue further, and to inquire how teaching can pave the desired avenue toward happiness, we next need to have a closer look at al-Fārābī's notion of knowledge (*ʿilm*), as employed in paragraphs [1] and [6]. For this purpose, we must make a little digression, because in our section of the *Kitāb al-Burhān* al-Fārābī does not introduce this concept; rather, he presumes acquaintance with it.

2 What Is *ʿilm*?

> **T4:** The term "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) occurs in a sentence with two meanings—one is "assent" (*taṣdīq*); the other is "concept formation" (*taṣawwur*). There is both a certain and an uncertain assent, and there is both a necessary certainty and a non-necessary certainty. Clearly, the term "knowledge" is more applicable to what is necessarily certain than to what is uncertain or to what is certain but not necessarily so. [What is necessarily certain], then, should be termed "certain knowledge."[23]

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[21] As to teaching by means of discourse, al-Fārābī distinguishes between a kind that brings about something "which [the listener] already knew beforehand" and a kind that conveys a "knowledge (*maʿrifa*) which [the listener] did not have previously"; for a longer citation of this passage along with its context, see below, section 4 with T10.

[22] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:78: "Now, the teaching which exclusively brings about *ʿilm*, can take place only by means of discourse and what takes its place." By "what takes its place," he refers to gesticulation and writing, cf. paragraph [4].

[23] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 2:25 (trans. 67, terminology slightly adjusted).

As the few indications at the end of our last section already evince, *ʿilm* according to the *Kitāb al-Burhān* is theoretical knowledge accessible only to the intellect. This is al-Fārābī's typical usage of the term "*ʿilm*." While he occasionally employs this expression in a broader sense, what he usually has in mind, in coherence with his focus on philosophy and the sciences throughout his œuvre, is scientific knowledge in the vein of the Aristotelian *epistēmē*. Given the context of our section on teaching—situated in al-Fārābī's epitome of the Stagirite's *Posterior analytics*, itself a treatise centered on the theory of syllogistic reasoning and demonstrative science[24]—we can conclude that it is precisely this notion of *ʿilm* that "most appropriately is called 'knowledge,'" as T3, paragraph [6] has it. Teaching, as discussed in the *Kitāb al-Burhān*, is not any kind of (theoretical) instruction, but rather, aims at scientific knowledge. However, what are the essential features of scientific knowledge according to our author?

As it turns out, even though al-Fārābī's notion of *ʿilm* must be regarded as an engagement with Aristotle's concept of *epistēmē*, it is the result of a fairly particular interpretation. According to al-Fārābī, knowledge (*ʿilm*) can be of two kinds: on the one hand, it consists in the formation of concepts (*taṣawwur*) and, on the other, in the formation of assent (*taṣdīq*), as T4 displays. This distinction is noteworthy. Not only will our author fall back on it within the framework of his theory of teaching, but, as recent research has revealed, he was apparently the first thinker to introduce this twin concept.[25] This is not to deny the fact that al-Fārābī, once again, took inspiration from Aristotle's *Posterior analyt-*

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[24] In what follows, I will employ the term "syllogism" and its cognates in accordance with the sense in which Aristotle utilizes these terms in his *Posterior analytics* (cf. Smith, Aristotle's logic). This is to say, "syllogism" does not refer to any kind of logical argumentation, but only to deductive reasoning, i.e., logical inferences that depart from first premises (or from premises that are ultimately derived from first premises). It should be noted that Aristotle, in his *Posterior analytics*, accepts only a limited number of logical inferences as suitable to apply within the frame of deductive reasoning. As we will see below, al-Fārābī employs the term "syllogism" in a slightly broader sense, embracing inferences that, according to Aristotle, would not count as syllogisms. This has the effect that, within the sphere of syllogistics, al-Fārābī can distinguish between different kinds of syllogisms and their respective power. Accordingly, some syllogisms are stronger and, thus, qualify as scientific, while others are weaker (e.g., dialectical or rhetorical syllogisms) and, hence, cannot be considered as scientific.

[25] On the history of *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*, as well as on al-Fārābī's role in this connection, see Lameer, *Conception*, esp. chap. 2, 19–35; Lameer translates *taṣdīq* as "belief" to highlight its psychological dimension. Yet, in order to remain more faithful to the Arabic root (*ṣ–d–q*), in what follows I will give precedence to the translation as "assent." Admittedly, due to this latter term's significance in the realm of logic, it may be misread at first as referring to a proposition. Nonetheless, it is sufficiently well established in current research as a trans-

ics.[26] Nevertheless, based on the available texts, al-Fārābī's achievement was to coin these technical terms and to make the corresponding concepts the cornerstones of his epistemology.[27] In the section on teaching in the *Kitāb al-Burhān* al-Fārābī briefly expounds *taṣawwur* as follows:

> **T5:** Maybe one believes that when the formation of the concept of something (*taṣawwuruhu*) is sought, it is not always necessary that this is [already] conceptualized (*tuṣuwwira*) beforehand. For, if we do not know the meaning (*maʿnā*) of a word (*ism*), we seek to form a concept (*an nataṣawwara*) of the meaning which is signified by this name, then grasp (*fa-fahimnā*) its meaning, and form its concept (*wa-taṣawwarnā*).[28]

Notably, in his explanation of what he terms *taṣawwur*, al-Fārābī closely follows Aristotle's *Posterior analytics* I, 1, 71a1–13. He not only places concept formation (*taṣawwur*) within the context of teaching and learning as well as the problem of antecedent knowledge, but also delineates it as the act of grasping (*fahima*) the meaning (*maʿnā*) of a word (*ism*). Hence, just as al-Fārābī follows Aristotle in presupposing the application of verbal discourse, *taṣawwur* itself fairly unambiguously captures Aristotle's notion of "understand[ing] (*suniénai*) the meaning of the term" (see n. 26).[29] Thus, while *taṣawwur* is the mental activity of grasping (*fahima*) something, in a teaching environment it can be evoked by the instructor, either by means of words (universal names) that directly sig-

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lation of *taṣdīq* to represent what it is meant to express in this paper, namely, a mental attitude. For this distinction, see our subsequent analyses.

[26] See Aristotle, *Posterior analytics* I, 171a1–13:25–27: "All teaching and learning that involves the use of reason proceeds from pre-existent knowledge … There are two senses in which previous knowledge is necessary. Sometimes it is necessary to assume (*prohypolambánein*) the *fact* (*hóti ésti*) beforehand, and sometimes one must understand (*suniénai*) the *meaning* of the term (*tí tò legómenón esti*); sometimes both are necessary" (Tredennick's emphases; additions of the Greek terms are mine).

[27] This move had a tremendous impact on epistemology in the Islamic world. Ibn Sīnā, in his *Ishārāt wa-tanbīhāt*, put this twin concept at the center of his section on logic, and restructured this field accordingly. Through the *Ishārāt*, this new model entered the pre-modern manuals on logic (cf. al-Khūnājī and al-Abharī) and thus morphed into the standard epistemological pattern; see El-Rouayheb, Introduction; Street, Logic.

[28] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:80; see also Lameer, *Conception* 19.

[29] It should be added that the Arabic translation of the *Posterior analytics* by Abū Bishr Mattā does not use *taṣawwara* and *ṣaddaqa* or any of their cognates to render the passage under discussion (I, 1, 71a1–13). For a discussion of the Arabic translation and its implications, as well as the conclusion that the terms *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq* must be considered as al-Fārābī's own coinages, see Lameer, *Conception* 20–24.

nify concepts, or by virtue of expressions, phrases, or whatever else is suited to explain or circumscribe the particular concept. However, it is important to note that with "concept formation" al-Fārābī first envisages something very particular—namely, grasping the essence (*dhāt*) of a thing, event, relation, or the like—he dubs this "perfect *taṣawwur*."[30] As a consequence, the explanatory speeches most suited for teaching are definitions (*ḥudūd*), which bring about precisely the quiddity of a thing. In terms of accuracy, definitions are followed by descriptions (*rusūm*), and finally by more remote kinds of circumlocution.[31] As far as *taṣawwur* in his envisaged teaching context is concerned, however, we can conclude that what al-Fārābī primarily had in mind is the accurate understanding of the essence or quiddity of something.

Taṣdīq now goes beyond this stage. Still in accordance with Aristotle, al-Fārābī maintains that it occurs if the student forms, along with a certain concept C1, the mental attitude (i.e., the conviction or belief) that C1 exists or is the case:[32]

> **T6:** By way of summary, *taṣdīq* is for someone to have a belief (*an yaʿtaqida l-insān*) about something to which a judgment can apply, by judging that what the thing is outside the mind accords with the object of belief in one's mind, … *Taṣdīq* may be certain (*yaqīn*), it may be approximately certain (*muqārib lil-yaqīn*), [or] it may be the *taṣdīq* that is called "the acquiescence of the soul" (*sukūn al-nafs*) with respect to something.[33]

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[30] Accordingly, we can conclude there are imperfect forms of *taṣawwur*. For the sake of unambiguously bringing to light al-Fārābī's notion of *ʿilm*, and his concept of "ideal" teaching, we will focus on perfect *taṣawwur*.

[31] For al-Fārābī's notion of "perfect *taṣawwur*," see *Kitāb al-Burhān* 1:20 (trans. 63–64, slightly modified): "Perfect concept formation (*al-taṣawwur al-tāmm*) is to conceptualize something (*taṣawwuru l-shayʾ*) by means of a concise account of its essence (*dhātihi*) in a manner specific to it, which is to say, to conceptualize the thing by means of that which its definition (*ḥadduhu*) indicates (*yadullu*)." The other means of bringing about a concept corresponds to the imperfect forms of *taṣawwur* (see the preceding note). Thus, while a definition points exactly to the essence of a thing (inasmuch as it reveals its genus plus specific difference), the description still singles out the species by referring to its genus plus proprium. Other forms of circumlocution indicate attributes that are not directly linked with the essence of the respective thing (i.e., accidents) and, hence, entail the risk of being ambiguous, which is to say, of likewise being attributes of other species.

[32] See also Lameer, *Conception* 19, who adds that *taṣdīq* "concerns a neccesary [*sic*] truth and is said to relate to primary judgments or propositions (*aḥkām awwaliyya* / *muqaddamāt uwal*) and conclusions derived from these."

[33] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 1:20 (trans. 64, slightly adjusted and substituting "*taṣdīq*" for "assent").

As T6 shows, *taṣdīq* can be expressed by means of propositions (i.e., sentences of the type "S is P"). It must be underscored, however, that *taṣdīq* is introduced as a mental attitude. More precisely, it is a conviction or belief that something exists or is the case. Accordingly, while it can be described as a mental attitude toward a certain propositional content, it cannot be mistaken for this content itself. Moreover, there are different degrees of *taṣdīq*: certainty, something close to certainty, and "acquiescence of the soul."[34] "Perfect assent" is equivalent to "certainty," says al-Fārābī.[35] It is the primary goal of teaching and can be triggered by particular factors, either by self-evident first principles and premises, or by syllogisms.[36] In a communicative setting such as the teaching context, the instructor will, accordingly, seek to bring about assent, or defend her teaching, by disclosing either the first principles for the student, or the premises behind an assent under discussion, or by means of setting up syllogisms. For less perfect forms of *taṣdīq*, she might fall back on inductions or even apply rhetorical devices.[37] Regarding the relation of *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*, from al-Fārābī's explanations it is clear that *taṣdīq* presupposes *taṣawwur*, but not vice versa. For, as our author remarks, "In order to bring about assent of something, it is absolutely necessary (*yalzamu ḍarūratan*) that [this 'something'] has already been conceptualized."[38]

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[34] Remarkably, just as al-Fārābī discriminates between more and less perfect forms of *taṣawwur*, he also distinguishes between different degrees of *taṣdīq*. While certitude, as we will see in what follows, counts as "perfect assent," and is the aim ultimately sought for (on which we will, hence, focus further in this paper), the two remaining kinds of assent correspond to the dialectical and rhetorical procedures already alluded to above. Particularly noteworthy is the expression "acquiescence of the soul" (*sukūn al-nafs*) that al-Fārābī employs for rhetorical *taṣdīq*: this is an expression chiefly utilized by Muʿtazilite thinkers of his age. In this way, our author gives to understand that the theological devices used by his contemporaries, in the frame of theological debates, are at best suited to produce a rhetorical form of assent, much inferior to the certainty entailed by demonstration and true *ʿilm*.

[35] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 1:20 (trans. 63).

[36] Among the syllogisms, al-Fārābī once again differentiates between necessary and non-necessary, as well as between essential and accidental. For a careful analysis of al-Fārābī's syllogistics, see Lameer, *al-Fārābī and Aristotelian syllogistics*. As mentioned above, al-Fārābī's notion of syllogism is broader than that of Aristotle. Accordingly, the different degrees of *taṣdīq* discussed briefly in n. 34 are the result of corresponding types of syllogisms: demonstrative syllogisms that induce certitude; dialectical syllogisms that bring about what is "approximately certain;" and, rhetorical syllogisms that lead toward the "acquiescence of the soul." Furthermore, a remark on al-Fārābī's "primary principles and premises" is in place; as he indicates, he uses the terms "principle" and "premise" interchangeably, see *Kitāb al-Burhān* 2:23 (trans. 66): "Such premises are called 'first premises naturally belonging to man,' or 'first principles.'" On the capacity of such first principles and premises, as well as demonstrative syllogisms to guarantee perfect assent, see ibid. 1:22 and 2:23 (trans. 65–66, slightly adjusted): "Necessary certainty may result from a syllogism … An example of [this] is, 'Man is a biped; anything that is a biped is an animal; therefore, man is an animal.' The necessary certainty … is the result of two premises that have also been ascertained to be certain necessarily. That [ascertainment of their certainty] is either not initially the result of a syllogism, or it can be reduced analytically to premises through which necessary certainty is present not as a result of a syllogism … |2:23| … The type [of universal premises] that occurs naturally provides us with a certainty without our knowing whence or how it occurred, and without our being aware at any time that we were ever ignorant of it, … Instead, we find that we seem to have it in us from the very

Finally, *taṣdīq* must be distinguished with respect to its target. In itself, as we have seen, it consists in a mental attitude. However, this attitude can be directed toward two different aspects of a thing, event, relation, or the like—its existence or its being the case and, the reason why it exists or is the case.[39] Here, too, Aristotle's influence is conspicuous, for al-Fārābī's two kinds of assent correspond exactly to the core types of proof distinguished within the Aristotelian tradition, proof of the fact (*quia*) and proof of the reason (*propter quid*).[40] Yet, an assent is not a proof, as is clear from the above discussion. Therefore, the correspondence between al-Fārābī's kinds of *taṣdīq* and the Aristotelian types of proof cannot be misunderstood as identical.[41] The connection between

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beginning of our existence." These are the abovementioned first principles or premises on which demonstrative syllogisms are ultimately based.

[37] For this, see our remarks on less-than-perfect forms of *taṣdīq* above in n. 34. Just like Aristotle, al-Fārābī does not consider induction to be a type of syllogism; according to him, it is primarily used for investigation and, in order for its results to be ascertained as scientifically accurate, always requires verification by means of deduction. For these less perfect forms of *taṣdīq*, see Black, *Logic*; Aouad, Fondements; Aouad and Schoeler, Syllogisme.

[38] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:79.

[39] Interestingly, al-Fārābī maintains that each kind of assent can be had independently of the other; see *Kitāb al-Burhān* 2:25 (trans. 67–68, slightly modified), referring to certitude, which, however, as we have seen, neatly corresponds to the highest degree of *taṣdīq*: "There are three [types of] certain knowledge. One is certainty [about] only *that* a thing is … The second [type] is [certitude about only] *why* something is … The third [type] is the [first] two types together" (McGinnis and Reisman's emphases). Whether al-Fārābī introduces this distinction for logical reasons, or in order to remain faithful to Aristotle's distinction between proofs of fact and proofs of reason (see following note), remains unclear, for as the continuation of this passage evinces (as well as our own investigations in section 4), he leaves no doubt whatsoever that a *taṣdīq* "why" can be obtained only on the basis of an (antecedent) conviction "that"; see T8 below.

[40] The point of reference for this distinction is *Posterior analytics* I, 13, 78a22–23:85: "Knowledge of a fact and knowledge of the reason for it differ." While Aristotle in this opening sentence refers to knowledge, in what follows he explains this division by differentiating types of proof.

[41] This point was demonstrated by Lameer, *Conception* 22–23 (against the background of the first chapter 3–18), who thus did away with previous positions in scholarship that tended

the Aristotelian types of proof and al-Fārābī's kinds of assent is furnished by the communicative setting. Accordingly, the basic form of assent (belief *that* something is the case) can be brought about and defended by means of *quia* proofs; the more advanced form of assent (conviction that something is the case *because* of this or that reason) can be brought about and defended by virtue of *propter quid* proofs.

From our discussion of *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*, two questions arise concerning al-Fārābī's theory of teaching, which need to be investigated in what follows. They both concern the nature of *ʿilm* envisaged in the *Kitāb al-Burhān*. First, is teaching meant to bring about, beyond the mere understanding of concepts, the mental attitude of assent, or does *taṣawwur* suffice as the aim of instruction?[42] Second, whenever *taṣdīq* is sought by a teacher, does al-Fārābī accept assent based on simple proofs of the fact (basic *taṣdīq*) as sufficient to count as *ʿilm*, or does he demand the understanding of the reasons (advanced assent)? Some indications regarding the first question can already be found if we pursue al-Fārābī's notion of *ʿilm* a little further. There are several passages in his writings where he defines knowledge in terms of his twin concept of *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*. Thus, for instance, in his *Kitāb al-Mūsīqā l-kabīr*, in one of the most substantial passages of his entire œuvre on his epistemological principles, he maintains:

> **T7:** [Knowledge (*ʿilm*)] is when there occurs in our [minds] (*ʿindanā*) [1] [the conviction] that the thing exists (*anna l-shayʾ mawjūd*) as well as [2] the reason (*sabab*) for its existence and that it is entirely impossible for it to be other than what occurs in our [minds] … This is what has been summarized in the *Kitāb al-Burhān* belonging to the art of logic. |83| … Among the things which facilitate [the acquisition of knowledge (*ʿilm*)] are definitions, descriptions, indications, …, and the rest of what is investigated in that book.[43]

From this quote it is clear that knowledge (*ʿilm*) presupposes *taṣawwur*, but it must be identified with knowledge of the existence, as well as the reason for the

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to identify *taṣdīq* with judgment or proof (for a handy overview of previous renderings of *taṣdīq*, see Lameer's table on 5–6).

[42] An instruction that is meant to convey knowledge, suited to lead the student toward happiness, humanity's final goal (cf. T1).

[43] Al-Fārābī, *Mūsīqā* I, i, 1:82–83. Page breaks were inserted for easier navigation in the Arabic original.

existence, of the thing under consideration (i.e., with *taṣdīq*).[44] That concept formation is a prerequisite for the acquisition of knowledge, did already follow from assent's dependence on *taṣawwur* as seen above; in T7 this dependence is further substantiated by what al-Fārābī refers to as "things which facilitate [the acquisition of knowledge]." Among these "things" he lists definitions and descriptions, which is to say, accounts that aim at bringing about simple quidditative concepts, not assents. As a consequence, as our quote suggests, *taṣawwur* is an indispensable presupposition but does not yet itself amount to *ʿilm*, in the sense intended by the *Kitāb al-Burhān*. The conclusion that only *taṣdīq* corresponds to scientific knowledge is further supported by the explicit reference to the *Kitāb al-Burhān* in T7.[45] These observations, however, lead us toward the second question raised above, whether both kinds of assent—basic and advanced—equally count as scientific knowledge in al-Fārābī's view.

Despite al-Fārābī's vagueness on this issue in various passages throughout his work, in his *Kitāb al-Burhān*, the immediate context for our topic, he offers a fairly unambiguous account. While assent can be of different degrees, as we have seen in T6 (and in T4), "perfect assent," according to al-Fārābī, "is certainty" (see above with n. 31). Certitude, however, presupposes that a number of quite demanding conditions are fulfilled, such as necessity (i.e., that the thing known cannot be otherwise), that one actually knows that one knows the object of assent, and the eternity of the object known (i.e., that it will never cease to exist in the way it is believed to exist or be the case), as well as a number of further conditions that go beyond the objectives of this paper.[46] This is what al-Fārābī calls "necessary certitude," which can result only from the two sources mentioned above: self-evident first premises and demonstrative syllogisms.[47] Now, if teaching ideally results in "perfect assent," and if "the term 'knowledge' is more applicable to what is necessarily certain" (T4) than to what is not, then the entailments for the kind of *taṣdīq* envisioned by teaching are obvious:

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[44] At this point it remains open as to what function the conjunction "as well as" plays in the first sentence of the quote: whether it is meant to be additive (i.e., belief in both "that" and "why" simultaneously) or merely coordinative (either "that" or "why," or both).

[45] It is not entirely clear whether, with this title, al-Fārābī intends to refer to Aristotle's *Posterior analytics* or his own *Kitāb al-Burhān*, his epitome of Aristotle's *Posterior analytics*. Be this as it may, in both cases, the context would be syllogistic reasoning and demonstrative science.

[46] For the conditions of certitude, see *Kitāb al-Burhān* 1:20–22 (trans. 64–65). For a detailed discussion of these conditions, see Black, Knowledge, with a study of the *Kitāb al-Burhān* and another Farabian treatise, the *Sharāʾiṭ al-yaqīn*, which is explicitly dedicated to this issue, and more comprehensive than the passage in the *Kitāb al-Burhān*.

[47] These syllogisms are reliable, since they "can be reduced analytically to premises through which necessary certainty is present not as a result of a syllogism"; *Kitāb al-Burhān* 1:22 (trans. 65; for a quotation of the entire passage, see above, n. 36), that is, premises which are self-evident.

> **T8:** There are three [types of] certain knowledge. One is certainty [about] only *that* a thing is … The second [type] is [certitude about only] *why* something is … The third [type] is the [first] two types together … Clearly, when we seek to discover just the cause of something, we must necessarily already know *that* the thing exists, and [so] the type of knowledge that is most properly termed "certain knowledge" is the one that is a combined certainty about both existence and cause.[48]

While this quote, along with our preceding analyses, offers a fairly clear notion of the goal envisaged by teaching—namely, the knowledge of both that and why something exists or is the case[49]—there is one problem left that we need to address before returning to al-Fārābī's theory of teaching. This problem concerns the objects of knowledge sought by virtue of teaching, or rather, their epistemological status.

In order to approach this problem, it may be helpful to revisit al-Fārābī's chief model, Aristotle, this time, however, his *De anima*. For, in this treatise the Stagirite makes an important claim. In the frame of his explanations of how things are initially perceived by the senses, and subsequently grasped by the mind, he argues that neither sense perceptions nor the corresponding mental images can be wrong.[50] It is this theory that is in the background of, among other passages, the famous opening lines of his *De interpretatione*, where Aristotle expands on the relation of words, things, and thoughts:

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[48] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 2:25–26 (trans. 67–68, slightly modified McGinnis and Reisman's emphases), already partially quoted above, n. 39.

[49] Note, however, that the formulation admits of "lower" degrees of assent. For this, see our brief explanations above, nn. 34 and 36. Remarkably, even *taṣdīq* resulting from demonstrative syllogisms can be of different degrees, in this case, depending on the respective objects; if these are eternal, assent to them will correspond to necessary certainty, and if they are only temporary (e.g., the fact that Socrates right now plays the bagpipe), their *taṣdīq* will be certain, however, only of the non-necessary kind. See *Kitāb al-Burhān* 1:21 (trans. 65): "Necessary certainty can apply only to permanently existing things, for example, that the whole is greater than the part, for such a thing cannot alter. Non-necessary certainty applies only to things whose existence shifts and alters."

[50] As Aristotle underscores repeatedly, perception of the respective senses' proper objects is always accurate; see, e.g., *De anima* III, 3, 428b19:163: "The perception of proper objects is true." Similarly, minds thinking of simple objects cannot err. Ibid. III, 6, 430a25:171: "The thinking of indivisible objects of thought occurs among things concerning which there can be no falsehood." Falsehood and error, in Aristotle's account, can occur as soon as complexity appears on the scene; on the level of perception, this happens when common objects are regarded, or when several sense impressions are related to the same object.

> **T9:** Words spoken are symbols or signs of affections or impressions (*pathēmata*) of the soul; written words are the signs of words spoken. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects (*prágmata*) of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies.[51]

From *De anima* and *De interpretatione*, al-Fārābī drives home the lesson that there is a natural and, hence, necessary connection between the things we perceive and the corresponding impressions in our minds.[52] And, just as the things are the same for all human beings, so are the impressions, which are their representations or copies. Mental images, insofar as they derive directly from sense perception—insofar as they are, in Aristotle's parlance, "mental affections or impressions (*pathēmata*)" of things perceived—cannot be otherwise. As building blocks of knowledge, therefore, they are reliable and thus can provide the basis for an accurate, scientific understanding of reality.

However, as both *De anima* and this passage from *De interpretatione* convey, the reason for the epistemic trustworthiness of mental representations consists in nothing other than their natural relation with the corresponding objects of sense perception.[53] Therefore, given that in his theory of teaching al-Fārābī wishes to develop an explanation of how knowledge about actually existing or occurring things, events, relations, and so forth can be transmitted by means of discourse[54]—that is, by way of words and not by virtue of literally showing the

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As far as thinking is concerned, falsehood and error can be the result of combining or dividing simple thought objects (i.e., ascribing or denying predicates).

[51] Aristotle, *De interpretatione* 1, 16a4–8:115.

[52] See, e.g., al-Fārābī's commentary on *De interpretatione* 1, 16a6–8, *Sharḥ fī l-ʿibāra* 12–13: "That is to say, the thoughts all men understand when expressed in their different languages *are the same for* them. The sense-objects which those thoughts are thoughts of are *also* common *to all*. For whatever individual thing an Indian may have a sensation of—if the same thing is observed by an Arab, he will have the same perception of it as the Indian" (Zimmermann's emphases). Note that the "affections or impressions (*pathēmata*)" mentioned in T9 are precisely the *pathēmata* we were referring to in section 1 (see n. 9) of this paper.

[53] They are, in a way, causally dependent on the sense perceptible objects; due to the "naturalness" of their relation, they cannot be otherwise, and hence they fulfill an Aristotelian core condition of true knowledge (*epistēmē*), namely, that it be *necessary*.

[54] After all, science is meant to be about exactly this, i.e., really existing or occurring things,

respective things, events, relations, and the like, themselves—he must somehow account for the two factors implied by Aristotle's epistemology. This is to say, first, his teaching model must be able to guarantee that what is imparted by the teacher in effect concerns actually existing or occurring things, events, relations, and the like.[55] I will call this the "reality condition" in what follows. Second, as the channel through which knowledge is acquired in a classroom setting is language, and since the link between language and thought is by convention and not natural, as T9 gives to understand,[56] al-Fārābī will have to find a way to make sure that the knowledge, brought about by the teacher through language, nonetheless cannot be otherwise and is epistemologically reliable. This, I shall dub the "necessity condition." With this background, let us now continue our analysis of al-Fārābī's theory, or epistemology, of teaching.

3 How to Convey *ʿilm?*

> **T10:** [1] One kind of discourse brings into (*yuḥḍir*) actuality something in the mind of the listener which he already knew beforehand … |79| … However, teaching (*taʿlīm*) is not this [kind of] discourse which [should] rather be called "notice" (*taqrīr*) or "reminder" (*tadhkīr*) or what is akin to these expressions.
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> [2] Another kind of discourse aims to bring about in the mind of the listener knowledge (*maʿrifa*) which he did not have previously, neither in perfect actuality, nor in proximate potentiality. Teaching falls under this [kind of] discourse …
>
> [3] … it follows [necessarily] that students [already] know what they are looking for in one respect and ignore it in another. However, there are two kinds of ignorance: first, an ignorance of which one is aware (*yashʿuru*) that it is ignorance; and, [second,] an ignorance of which one believes that it is knowledge. Teaching, now, is a discourse which aims at the knowledge of something which was ignored previously—in a manner that one is aware of it being ignorance. Yet, it is necessary that this

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events, relations, etc.; recall also al-Fārābī's just-discussed insistence that *ʿilm* must include assent *that*, i.e., that knowledge must be directed toward something, which is (at least) believed to exist or to be the case.

[55] In short, the student must be able to know, with certitude, that what she just learned concerns actual things, events, relations, etc., and not, for instance, imaginary beings (such as phoenixes, goat-stags, and the like).

[56] Al-Fārābī basically subscribes to this theory. For his intricate account of the relation of language and thought, see Germann, Imitation.

> thing in itself is somehow known to the students. Knowledge, however, is either concept formation (*taṣawwur*) or assent (*taṣdīq*). Hence, if teaching aims at the formation of the concept of something, it is necessary that this thing in a way was [already] conceived previously, … That of which assent is sought, must necessarily [also] be assented to in a way previously … |81| …
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> [4] … by virtue of [assent] we aim to attain certitude (*yaqīn*), … However, when there is assent, this is either definite (*muḥaṣṣal*) or not. The assent to one of two opposites (*mutaqābilān*), which is determined in a specific manner (*muʿayyan ʿalā l-taḥṣīl*), is a definite assent, [while] the assent to one of the two [opposites which] is indefinite, [is] the [mere] belief (*iʿtiqād*) that one of the two opposites is true without there being an indication to one of them in particular … The syllogism (*qiyās*), by contrast, brings about definite assent … |82| …
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> [5] The [kind of] teaching at the center of our discussion is a [kind of] teaching which is [carried through] by means of human discourse. Thus, we say: the [kind of] teaching which aims at the understanding of something, is a discourse which brings about, with respect to a specific thing (*amr mafrūḍ*), the formation of a concept which was not there beforehand. If this discourse takes place by virtue of linguistic expressions (*lafẓ*) through which one understands the thing sought by conceptualizing it as an object sought, there will not occur an understanding other than the first, but rather a repetition (*takrīr*) of this first … |83| …
>
> [6] Between this thing (*amr*), which causes us to assent, and the object of assent (*al-muṣaddaq*) should be an essential and necessary connection. It should [also] be in its nature to cause us to assent by all means, so that by virtue of our assenting to this, the assent to the object of inquiry comes about. Moreover, the thing (*amr*) should be a premise (*muqaddima*) … |84| … If one proceeds in this manner, those things occur which cause assent—and these are the syllogisms (*maqāyīs*) which I enumerated previously.[57]

Teaching, as al-Fārābī highlights in paragraphs [1] and [2], is the transmission of something new and, hence, must be distinguished from any form of recollection. We need not go into the details here. However, the kind of discourse mentioned by al-Fārābī in paragraph [1]—and being excluded as the sort of teaching he envisions—embraces both anamnesis in the Platonic sense[58] and, in general, remembrance of something previously learned and then stored in one's memory.[59] Concerning our topic, al-Fārābī's insistence on the novelty of the pieces of knowledge conveyed by means of teaching is noteworthy, as it creates a severe tension with the Aristotelian notion, likewise defended by our author, that knowledge acquisition proceeds from the known to the unknown.[60] For, how can teaching be at once the transmission of something new, and take its point of departure from something known?[61]

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[57] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:78–79, 81–84.

[58] According to Plato's theory of recollection, before entering "its" body, the human soul has

In order to solve this seeming contradiction, al-Fārābī embarks upon an investigation into the nature of the required antecedent knowledge. In this connection, as the first phrase of paragraph [3] exhibits, he draws attention to the peculiarity "that students [already] know what they are looking for in one respect and ignore it in another." This antecedent knowledge, "in one respect," and its counterpart, the students' ignorance, "in another," are further specified in the remainder of the paragraph. There, al-Fārābī explains that

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viewed all the eternal forms, of which the individual things in physical reality are resemblances. Upon unification with its body, the soul, in a way, forgets these forms that, however, remain latent somewhere in the back of one's mind. "Learning," as a consequence, is a process of *anamnesis*, of recollection, and not the acquisition of something new. Notably, in addition to Plato's theory of recollection, al-Fārābī explicitly rejects divine inspiration as a possible source of (antecedent) knowledge; cf. *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:82: "Thus, we say first: it is appropriate that there is no inspiration (*ilhām*) or information (*ikhṭār*) of the mind (*bāl*) … This is in lieu of what people believe, namely, that [learning] comes about by virtue of some divine activity (*fiʿl*)."

[59] This second kind of recollection is clearly alluded to in paragraph [2], where al-Fārābī refers to it by virtue of the Aristotelian distinction between first and second entelechy, i.e., "proximate potentiality" versus "perfect actuality." Accordingly, a student learned something—for instance, the law of Pythagoras—a while ago, and stored it in her memory, that is to say, "in proximate potentiality," i.e., first entelechy. Only when she actually applies this previously acquired knowledge—e.g., with regard to our example, when she solves a mathematical problem by means of Pythagoras's law, or explains this law to a classmate when preparing for an exam—does she recall it from first entelechy into second entelechy, i.e., from "proximate potentiality" into "perfect actuality."

[60] See above, the passage from the *Posterior analytics* quoted in n. 26, according to which "[a]ll teaching and learning" presupposes "pre-existent knowledge." As T10 displays, al-Fārābī also subscribes to this principle.

[61] It is, among other things, for this reason that al-Fārābī, in connection with T5, raises the issue of Meno's paradox, already addressed by Aristotle himself in his *Posterior analytics*, within the corresponding context (see *Posterior analytics* I, 1, 71a29–30). Al-Fārābī's treatment of Meno's paradox (as it occurs here, in the *Kitāb al-Burhān*, but also the version presented in the *Falsafat Aflāṭun*) was studied by Black, al-Fārābī on Meno's paradox. For a broader account of al-Fārābī's theory of teaching, addressing its place and role within his philosophy in general (i.e., including the cosmological, political, and ethical dimensions), see Vallat, *Farabi* 161–179.

the antecedent knowledge, mandatory in order to proceed to and grasp the unknown (i.e., that which is ignored), is a sort of awareness, on the part of the student, of her own ignorance with respect to the object sought.[62] That is to say, she must know this very object in a way but simultaneously also be aware that she ignores it in another. Notably, al-Fārābī underlines that this antecedent knowledge is a prerequisite for the transmission of knowledge in both realms of knowledge, *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*; consequently, the formation not only of new concepts but also of mental attitudes depends on prior knowledge. Moreover, in paragraph [5] al-Fārābī adds—now, however, exclusively focusing on *taṣawwur*—that the antecedent knowledge, needed for a new concept (*taṣawwur*) to come about, consists in grasping the thing meant to be taught "*as* an object sought."[63] Let us further pursue al-Fārābī's line of reasoning and, in order to elucidate his indications thus far, focus on the stage of *taṣawwur*, the formation of concepts, before we turn to *taṣdīq*, the attainment of *ʿilm* proper.

In a teaching environment, when introducing new concepts, the teacher, depending on discourse as her exclusive means of instruction, will need to employ particular expressions, as paragraph [5] intimates.[64] Meanwhile, if the student does not yet know the respective concepts, she will, accordingly, not know the meanings of the expressions that the teacher utilizes to refer to these concepts. As a consequence, she will have to derive their meanings and, through these meanings, the corresponding concepts.[65] Now, in order for the derivation of new concepts to be successful, two conditions must be satisfied. On the one hand, with regard to the didactic discourse, the student must presuppose two things: first, and most basically, that the words the teacher employs as names for the sought concepts indeed signify something and are not just meaningless sounds;[66] and second, that what they signify (i.e., the sought concepts) corresponds to something in reality.[67] On the other hand, regarding the student herself, she too must fulfill a particular condition, so that the teacher can help her derive the respective concept: she must be ready for instruction. More precisely, she must have the necessary "raw material" available. This requires further examination.

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[62] This explanation echoes Aristotle's reply to Meno's paradox in his *Posterior analytics* I, 1, 71b6–8:29: "But I presume that there is no reason why a man should not in one sense know, and in another not know, that which he is learning. The absurdity consists not in his knowing in some qualified sense that which he learns, but in his knowing it in a certain particular sense, viz., in the exact way and manner in which he learns it." Al-Fārābī's suggestion, that this "knowing in some qualified sense" is an "awareness," on the part of the student, of her ignorance, is an elegant attempt to bring out more clearly, precisely what the difference between antecedent knowledge and knowledge proper consists of. The consequences of this solution will become more obvious in what follows.

[63] My emphasis. See also al-Fārābī, *Burhān* 5:82: "it is absolutely necessary that every teaching which aims at forming the concept of something, derives from another, antecedent knowledge [acquired] by the students previously, bringing about (*fāʿil*) the formation of the concept sought, other than the knowledge (*siwā l-ʿilm*) due to which the thing becomes an object of inquiry."

[64] See also al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:82 (the continuation of paragraph [5] with its reference to the necessity of using "linguistic expressions [*lafẓ*]" in order to teach): "Therefore, it is necessary that this discourse takes place by virtue of expressions which differ and add to the first expressions. Moreover, it is necessary that the meaning[s] of these expressions are equally understood by both the speaker and the listener [already] prior to the discourse. As a consequence, it is necessary that the signification (*mafhūm*) of these expressions is known to both of them together prior to the discourse." It is striking that, once again, al-Fārābī addresses the problem under consideration from a linguistic, or semantic, viewpoint, which, in agreement with our findings above, section 2 (concerning inculcation [*talqīn*]) underscores the significance of language in his thought.

As we have seen in section 3, *ʿilm*, as addressed by the *Kitāb al-Burhān*, is a very specific kind of knowledge—namely, scientific knowledge, in the demanding sense of *epistēmē*. *Taṣawwur*, in this light, must be described not so much as the formation of any given concept whatsoever, but rather, as the successful formation of a *scientific* understanding of something—that is, the essence of the thing under discussion.[68] It is for this very reason that in paragraph [5] al-Fārābī speaks of "repetition" (*takrīr*) instead of "acquisition," or the like. Teaching a new *taṣawwur* (i.e., bringing about a quidditative understanding of a thing, event, relation, etc.) accordingly proceeds like this: There must be in the mind of the student some sort of mental representation,[69] which, first, is singled out as the object sought. This is to say, the teacher chooses it as the object of instruction and, in order to do so, unmasks it as a concept that the student has not yet grasped in a scientific manner. Second, the teacher's task consists in guiding her student from the known (i.e., this vague, prescientific concept) to the unknown—that is, she must clarify this concept of whose ignorance the student has become aware. "Ignorance," in this connection, refers to a specific aspect of the object of knowledge—namely, the essence or quiddity of the thing, event, relation, and the like under consideration. Thus, it refers to precisely the dimension of an object that is usually captured by a definition, description, or what takes their place.[70]

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[65] See, e.g., al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:84: "The meaning of the name should be known either by virtue of another name or an [explanatory] speech (*qawl*)." Notably, al-Fārābī is well aware that examples a teacher may adduce in order to illustrate an object or topic depend on the (historical, geographical, and cultural) context; examples Aristotle originally applied may no longer be comprehensible and, thus, need to be replaced; see ibid. 86: "Similarly, many of his examples were well-known things (*umūr*) among the people of his time … Yet, they changed after them, and what was well-known in their country became different … For this reason, if we intend to teach these things … , we need to replace the [examples], which Aristotle used and which are unknown among [us], by [examples] which are better known among [us]."

[66] See, e.g., al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:80: "Meanwhile, we cannot help but either know [already] whether this name (employed by the teacher, NG) has signification or not; for if we do not know that it has signification, it is not appropriate that we seek to conceptualize its meaning, except after having learned whether it has signification or not."

[67] Al-Fārābī's descriptions so far reveal an interesting point about the teaching process. While instruction, in his sense, ultimately aims at *certain* knowledge, at the outset acquiring new knowledge (particularly, new concepts) is based on mere trust; it will only be confirmed (scientifically) later on, once the student has reached a stage where she can corroborate the acquired knowledge objectively, i.e., by means of proofs.

[68] See above, al-Fārābī's indication concerning perfect assent (*taṣdīq tāmm*), section 3 and esp. n. 36.

To get a better idea of what al-Fārābī has in mind, it might be instructive to adduce, by way of example, an experience most readers of this paper will have had during their schooldays. Most of us will have had a notion of water fairly early on in our lives. We used it as a beverage, to brush our teeth, to swim in and splash other people with, and many other things. However, to really understand what water is—namely, H_2O (including actually grasping this formula)—most of us had to wait for chemistry class to introduce us into the world of atoms and molecules. In the context of teaching, in al-Fārābī's sense, *taṣawwur* is just this. It consists of a particular epistemic achievement, the understanding of what (which, and how) something is, in a manner that can be expressed by way of a definition, or what corresponds to it.[71]

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[69] Actually, al-Fārābī speaks of a "mental image" (*khayāl*); *khayālāt* are the impressions (*pathēmata*) resulting from sense perceptions. See, e.g., *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:79: "Something is actually [in one's mind], when he sees a mental image (*khayāl*) of the thing, which is impressed on his soul."

[70] See above, section 3, esp. n. 31 (on perfect *taṣawwur*).

[71] From an Aristotelian point of view, this example, admittedly, is inadequate. The essence of a thing is, as adumbrated in section 3, that which is captured by the thing's genus, plus its specific difference. Thus, for instance, a human being is defined as (1) an animal (genus), which (2) possesses rationality (specific difference). Perfect understanding (*taṣawwur tāmm*) of "human being" would, hence, consist in grasping this metaphysical makeup of humanity. The same applies to our example of water. Despite its adaptation to a modern understanding of the elements making up reality, the example may nevertheless be helpful to elucidate al-Fārābī's idea. As a first step, the teacher will draw attention to the new topic, namely, water. Most likely her students will know this expression and immediately have certain associations. The teacher then proceeds to clarify these vague preconceptions by bringing out the essence of water. It is to such a procedure that al-Fārābī refers when he maintains that the "thing sought" must first be identified and then

As a consequence, *taṣawwur*, in al-Fārābī's terminology, can be depicted as the transition from a vague, or prescientific, grasp of the respective concept to a scientific comprehension of its quiddity. What is "new" about this *taṣawwur* is not the raw material itself, but rather, its scientific—that is, quidditative—understanding. Henceforth, this "newly acquired," which is to say, scientifically elucidated, concept remains in the student's "proximate potentiality" (paragraph [2]) and, in order to reactualize it, she can easily recall or be reminded of it.[72] Notably, what al-Fārābī does, in order to bridge the seemingly insurmountable gap between, on the one hand, learning as the acquisition of something new and, on the other hand, learning as the crossover from the known to the unknown, must be described as a specific blend of a primarily language-based teaching model and the abovementioned process of knowledge acquisition by means of perception in the vein of *De anima* and *De interpretatione*. Despite its strictly discursive setting, teaching, à la al-Fārābī, possesses a profoundly empirical dimension, inasmuch as it is contingent upon the presence, in the student's mind, of a certain raw material, the vague concepts that the teacher then clarifies. The student picked up these vague concepts in passing, simply by being a citizen of the world since birth, by possessing and consistently applying her five senses, even if in a prereflective, subconscious fashion.[73] Learning,

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elucidated. This stage of knowledge acquisition, the clarification of somewhat obscure mental representations, is encapsulated by a specific set of the so-called "philosophical questions," namely, those asking what (which, how, etc.) something is, as alluded to above. For the philosophical questions, still see with benefit Hein, *Definition* 57–63 (on the "Vier-Fragen-Schema").

[72] At first glance it may still appear this kind of prior knowledge, required in order to get the process of learning started, does not differ from the antecedent knowledge al-Fārābī explicitly excluded in paragraph [2]. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear, what we labeled as "raw material" can be distinguished from the rejected kind of antecedent knowledge in two respects. First, it differs from the Platonic model (as well as from divine inspiration) insofar as it is acquired by means of the sense perception of empirical individuals, and *not* already impressed on the human soul due to this latter's vision of eternal forms (or inspiration from God). Second, it must be distinguished from antecedent knowledge in the general sense (see above with n. 59), inasmuch as it is not yet *epistēmē*. Only once the vague concepts are scientifically polished will they be stored as "known" concepts in proximate potentiality, and can henceforth be recollected (but no longer taught to the same student).

[73] This is to say, when entering the classroom, the student's mind is no longer a *tabula rasa* charted by first principles but otherwise empty. She possesses many concepts (and probably holds numerous beliefs; more on that in what follows), none of which, however, is scientifically elucidated. The notion of *tabula rasa* refers to the Aristotelian psychological tradition. Accordingly, human beings are born with the faculty to think—often referred to as "potential," "material," "possible intellect," or the like—but without any content (thus,

in the sense of acquiring *ʿilm*, as al-Fārābī insists, in reply to the *falāsifa*, cannot exclusively be explained in terms of sense perception and the impression of mental representations. However, it cannot dispense with them either.[74]

Al-Fārābī's integration of this empirical element into his epistemology of teaching has several remarkable consequences. First, insofar as the raw material, the vague concepts, are derived from reality, they cannot be otherwise.[75] Hence, whatever knowledge she imparts, given that the teacher must base her instructions precisely on this raw material,[76] scientifically polished concepts will necessarily be founded in reality. Accordingly, both the reality and the

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implicitly barring the presence of Platonic innate ideas). Al-Fārābī adheres to this theory, as his *Risāla fī l-ʿaql*, as well as his remarks on the first principles in his *Kitāb al-Burhān*, show. For a possible Stoic influence on al-Fārābī's theory of cognition, see Vallat, *Farabi* 220–224. Vallat's focus is on the primary principles and premises. In our context, however, the reference to the later Stoics' distinction between common notions (in the sense of "inchoate generalizations" and "mere seeds of knowledge") and knowledge proper (222, n. 7) is particularly instructive.

[74] See, in this connection, al-Fārābī, *Mūsīqā* I, i, 1:100–105, where our author intimates that the (theoretical, *naẓarī*) science of music must take its point of departure from empirical evidence (which is why practical music must temporally precede theory, so as to serve as the object of study). According to him, it is only in this fashion that someone seeking the "natural" rules and principles of a discipline (which, in the case of music, have not yet been investigated scientifically, on al-Fārābī's account) can actually find (and then analyze) them. This, however, is not a procedure peculiar to the science of music, as al-Fārābī is fast to add; rather, it can be observed in the history of any given science. As examples, he adduces astronomy, medicine, and optics, which, he believes, were developed accordingly by the ancients.

[75] Even though the notions we originally form are vague, unreflective, and hence prescientific, according to al-Fārābī's take on *De anima*'s psycho-physiological model, mental images nevertheless contain the relevant quidditative "information" required to bring out their scientific account. It is for this reason that the teacher, by means of her explanations, can literally "uncover" these features, and thus lead the student to an understanding of the concepts' definitions (or, more generally, their quidditative accounts).

[76] To be sure, a beginning student does not necessarily need to possess vague concepts of all there is, but a sufficient amount, so the teacher can fall back on a broad enough basis when introducing hitherto completely unknown (even in the vague sense) concepts, referring to neighboring concepts, such as the genus under which the respective concept falls, or related species pertaining to the same genus. Everything else can be worked out within the realm of language and its lexicon. If the student does not know a certain expression (*lafẓ*), a synonym may do. If she does not yet know the meaning (*maʿnā*) of an expression (or its synonyms), i.e., the concept itself, it must be explained by virtue of analogies and its context, etc. Note, once again, the crucial role of language in this model, as also evinced by the passage from *Kitāb al-Burhān* quoted above, n. 64; the expressions utilized for teaching must be "equally understood by both the speaker and the listener [already] prior to the discourse," i.e., before being applied in the classroom.

necessity conditions discussed in section 3 are basically matched by al-Fārābī's teaching model, as far as formation of scientifically clarified concepts is concerned.[77] Second, although so far, in following our author, we have focused on *taṣawwur*, his theory has a surprising effect regarding *taṣdīq*. Even though the understanding of a concept does not, as such, imply the respective thing actually exists, as al-Fārābī himself underscores,[78] nonetheless, owing to the origin of these concepts,[79] understanding what (which, and how) something is, simultaneously entails the student's conviction that what she understood actually corresponds to something in reality.[80] This conviction, however, is nothing other than a basic form of *taṣdīq*, as encountered in section 3. Consequently, the successful student, according to al-Fārābī's teaching model, will, as soon as she has grasped a new concept, arrive at the most elementary level of assent concerning this concept—namely, whatever her teacher just elucidated exists or is the case. This, however, leads us to the last issue of this section, the acquisition of *taṣdīq*, of scientific knowledge proper, by means of teaching.

Let us, once again, return to T10. Just as there is prescientific *taṣawwur* (i.e., vague concepts), there is, as analysis of paragraph [4] reveals, prescientific *taṣdīq*. This is what al-Fārābī calls "indefinite assent." The distinction between indefinite and definite assent consists in their respective epistemic foundations; indefinite assent comes about without further determination, while definite assent presupposes determination. This determination leads to the ultimate aim of scientific *taṣdīq*, already encountered above, certitude (*yaqīn*). As we know from our analyses, certainty is a key concept within al-Fārābī's epistemological framework.[81] It is, as it were, the necessary entailment of *ʿilm* in its most elevated guise. Accordingly, if someone acquires propositional knowledge, in the sense of *epistēmē*, one concomitantly attains certitude.[82] For our purposes, it is important to underscore that certainty is not a subjective state of mind (e.g., the firmness of one's conviction that something exists or is the case), but rather, an objective epistemological property; it is the highest degree of reliability human knowledge can possibly have—that is, necessity.[83] As such, as we have seen, certitude either is the result of self-evidence (first principles and premises) or comes about through syllogistic reasoning (*qiyās*)—and this is what al-Fārābī refers to in paragraph [4].[84] A scientific *taṣdīq*, hence, is an assent that is brought about by means of one of these sources and is, therefore, definite, and not mere belief or conviction. It is justified true belief, regarding which the student ideally knows that it cannot be otherwise.[85] With respect to antecedent *taṣdīq* accompanying *taṣawwur* in the context of teaching, we can now state, by contrast, that it does not fulfill the epistemological standards of scientific assent fleshed out in paragraph [4]. For, as a purely indefinite *taṣdīq* that is neither self-evident nor otherwise determined, it does not lead to scientific knowledge, nor does it produce any kind of objective certitude.[86]

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[77] See above, the last paragraph of section 3.

[78] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:80: "What is conceptualized in this way (i.e., quidditatively) does not entail simultaneously knowledge of its existence."

[79] They are derived from reality; moreover, the student assumes that her teacher utilizes meaningful language, and refers to something in reality.

[80] For this, see above, the first part of section 3 dedicated to *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq*; see also the presuppositions with respect to didactic discourse, esp. n. 67. With regard to the example of H_2O given above, this corresponds to an experience most of us had when our teacher expounded the molecular makeup of water (or, in Aristotelian terms, its essence); we were (probably) all convinced that what she explained had something to do with the liquid we used to drink, splash, etc. On al-Fārābī's intricate notion of being, see Menn, al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*.

[81] See section 3; see also Black, Knowledge.

[82] As seen above, certitude pertains only to the level of knowledge involving truth, that is, to *taṣdīq*.

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[83] As Black, Knowledge, has shown, the conditions for necessary or absolute certitude surpass even Aristotle's requirements for *epistēmē*, for beyond the necessity and the eternity conditions, al-Fārābī also introduces the knowledge requirement. Regarding this latter, Black, Knowledge 22, summarizes: "Certitude, inasmuch as it is a relation dependent upon the existence of its two correlates, the knower and the known, thus requires simultaneous acts of self-awareness of one's own cognitive states and awareness of the external object of one's knowledge. It is a second-order act primarily because it is reflexive." Cf., in this connection, al-Fārābī's notion of *logon didonai* as discussed in Germann, Logic. This, however, concerns necessary certainty; as we have seen above, al-Fārābī admits there are degrees of certitude, fulfilling only a certain number of the conditions expanded in the *Sharāʾiṭ al-yaqīn*. For space restrictions, we cannot further examine these nuances here.

[84] See again above, section 3, with T6. In our present context, al-Fārābī's remarks concerning the nature of the syllogisms inducing the intended scientific goal of teaching, namely, certainty, are noteworthy. As paragraph [6] shows, a major condition for scientific certitude to come about is the existence of "an essential and necessary connection" between a particular premise and the respective object of *taṣdīq*. If so, assent is "cause[d]", i.e., it occurs "by all means." Proceeding from premises to conclusions, by drawing on such essential and necessary connections, amounts to establishing the envisioned determinations by way of syllogistic reasoning. As the last phrase of paragraph [6] insinuates, there are only a limited number of syllogisms that match these criteria, and that are thus suited to produce scientific *taṣdīq* along with certainty—basically, those syllogisms discussed by al-Fārābī in the previous sections of his *Kitāb al-Burhān*. See Lameer, *al-Fārābī and Aristotelian syllogistics*.

[85] This refers to the abovementioned knowledge condition of certitude; see n. 83.

[86] See, in this connection, al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān* 5:81: "It is not absolutely necessary that some assents, which we mentioned, (namely, assents preceding the sought assent accidentally, NG), precede the others (i.e., the ones sought, NG) … [Thus,] it is not absolutely necessary that [assent entailing certitude] is preceded by an assent without certitude.

The implications of this account for al-Fārābī's theory of teaching are far-reaching. In correspondence to the realm of *taṣawwur*, our author gives to understand that scientifically corroborated *taṣdīq* is dependable. Accordingly, it culminates in true *ʿilm*, ideally inducing objective certitude. However, in contrast to *taṣawwur*, where the guarantee for the reliability of concepts consists in the origin of the raw material that, owing to its natural link with reality, cannot be otherwise, the justification for *taṣdīq* occurs primarily top-down. It is warranted, first, by the formal power of syllogisms and, second, by the fact that deductive reasoning ultimately is founded on self-evident first principles or premises.[87] Now, in al-Fārābī's account, the rules of logic, just like the first principles and premises, cannot be otherwise, and are the same for all.[88] As a result, syllogisms based on the principles of deductive reasoning (*qiyās burhānī*), and containing as their matter elucidated concepts deriving from reality, "cause" scientific assent "by all means" (paragraph [6])—in other words, necessarily. If the teacher strictly applies these rules and procedures, and if her student thoroughly follows her lessons, the teacher essentially cannot fail to bring about in her student's mind *ʿilm*, that is to say, definite *taṣdīq* based on scientifically clarified concepts.

With these indications, we can now summarize that antecedent assent, just like prescientific concepts, does not qualify as *ʿilm*. However, just like the vague concepts, the kind of assent concomitantly attached to *taṣawwur* in the context of teaching serves as the starting point from which to launch the process of scientific clarification, or rather—in the case of *taṣdīq*—of syllogistic justification. Accordingly, just like vague concepts, unexamined beliefs can be described as "knowledge" in one way but as "ignorance" in another. For, on the

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Rather, this may happen accidentally without there being any sufficiency at all in the new (*ḥādith*) assent … The indefinite assent which precedes the assent aimed for is not the knowledge generating (*fāʿila*) the knowledge aimed for." Applied to our example of $\mathrm{H_2O}$, that is to say, upon our teacher's clarification of the essential constitution of water—a clarification we believed to explain the real makeup of water (indefinite antecedent assent)—we required proofs (ultimately) based on first, self-evident premises that corroborated our teacher's account (both the fact that and the reasons why water has this molecular structure).

[87] Remarkably, according to al-Fārābī, the first principles are also acquired empirically (see his *Mūsīqā* I, i, 1:100–105, referred to in n. 74 above; see also Black, al-Fārābī on Meno's paradox 19–20; for a different view, cf. Vallat, *Farabi* 207–238). As a result, the process of deduction, proceeding from these first principles toward the specific conclusions, is top-down only to the extent that the direction of argumentation proceeds from the most universal (the first principles) to the more specific (the conclusions whose justification is sought).

[88] See above, section 3, esp. n. 36.

one hand, the teacher can fall back and, by means of discourse, evoke concepts and beliefs already, somehow, present in her student's mind, and proceed to their clarification and proof. On the other hand, this decisive step of transforming vague notions and crude beliefs into well-understood and objectively justified knowledge is precisely what distinguishes *ʿilm* from all sorts of different cognitive states. Teaching, in al-Fārābī's sense of *taʿlīm*, as we can thus conclude in the light of our analyses, must succeed in bringing about "definite assent," leading eventually to necessary certitude.[89] Otherwise, the belief embraced by the student, what her teacher just introduced actually is the case, will remain caught on the level of personal conviction and mere *taqlīd* (i.e., the uncritical adoption of an opinion based on her teacher's authority).[90] However, the knowledge envisaged by al-Fārābī's theory of teaching is much more demanding; ideally, it consists in nothing less than bringing about objectively justified assent of both fact and reason.

4 Final Remarks

> **T11:** Ibn al-Mubārak was asked, "Who constitutes humanity?" To which he replied, "The learned." … "And who," he was asked, "constitutes the lowest class among human beings?" "Those," said he, "who, in the name of religion, grow fat in the world." Thus only the learned did Ibn al-Mubārak regard as belonging to mankind, because it is knowledge which distinguishes human beings from the other animals.[91]

From the outset, knowledge—particularly, religious knowledge—was held in high esteem in classical Islamic culture. God's own instruction had come down to the Arab people by way of the Quranic revelation. The process of extracting its practical, ethical, and legal entailments had been initiated by the Prophet Muhammad himself, and codified in the collections of his sayings and deeds, the *ḥadīth* corpus. As a consequence, teaching and learning—that is, the transmission of God's own instruction—and its practical implications were considered vital activities, constituting, as it were, the backbone of the young and fast-growing Islamic society. More than one and a half centuries after the death of al-Fārābī, the central figure of this paper, the famous philosopher, theologian, and mystic al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) still fervently subscribed to this notion, as T11 intimates.[92]

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[89] As we have seen throughout the paper, al-Fārābī acknowledges the existence of inferior degrees of *taṣdīq*, knowledge, and certitude. While they were not the object of this study, where we focused on his most elevated concept of teaching, it should be added, for the sake of completeness, that even these inferior forms of *ʿilm*, on his account, are suited to lead students who are not capable of doing science on the most elevated level, toward happiness—to somewhat inferior levels of happiness, though, as this concept also admits of degrees.

[90] For this concept, see Calder, Taḳlīd.

[91] Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* 1, 1:8 (slightly modified).

Accordingly, it cannot come as a surprise that, for al-Fārābī, both knowledge and teaching occupy a central place. To be sure, as our section 3 suggests, his concept of knowledge differs from that of his contemporaries active in the fields of theology and law. Strongly influenced by the Greek philosophical tradition, he is convinced that knowledge is about all there is—the world, its inhabitants, and its underlying principles and structure. It is only on this latter level, the world's principles and structure, that God, identified as the first cause of everything, comes into play. Al-Fārābī is confident that humanity, endowed with reason, can discover and understand all these issues, including the existence of God, by virtue of its own cognitive capacities.[93] Or rather, since the age of Aristotle, humanity has discovered and understood more or less all these issues, as we have seen in section 1 (T2). Religious knowledge, as previous research already demonstrated, is only derivative knowledge, according to al-Fārābī.[94] Its core, revelation, must be described as a sort of "translation" of scientific truths into a symbolic and metaphoric language even the uneducated can grasp. Nevertheless, just like theologians and legal scholars, al-Fārābī is convinced that knowledge, as he understands it, is acquired by means of teaching rather than autodidactic inquiry.

Against both backgrounds—the religious tradition, on the one hand, and the philosophical, on the other—al-Fārābī's notions of knowledge and teaching stand out in various respects. For one, there is his thesis regarding the completeness of knowledge. While theologians and legal scholars might agree with this idea, they would do so for different reasons, as their point of reference is, of course, revelation. Philosophers, by contrast, foremost among them Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), seem to have been greatly influenced by al-Fārābī in regard to this issue. Certainly, much of what Ibn Sīnā does in his œuvre is self-consciously presented as the result of autonomous and unaided studies, by means of purely rational inquiry and examination. Meanwhile, despite this careful self-stylization, it turns out, upon closer inspection, that Ibn Sīnā's philosophy is, in the first place, an engagement primarily with the philosophy of Aristotle and his followers. However, as though drawing the consequences from al-Fārābī's notion of the completeness of knowledge, and the implications this has for the arrangement (curriculum) of the various philosophical sciences and their epistemological foundation (deductive structure), Ibn Sīnā remodels philosophy in neat accordance with his predecessor's principles.[95] In this respect, his reorganization of the philosophical curriculum is in line with, but yet clearly transcends, al-Fārābī's ideas.

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[92] The section of al-Ghazālī's *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* from which T11 is taken is dedicated to the "Value of Knowledge, Instruction, and Learning" (1). Al-Ghazālī's chief goal in the first part of this section (3–10) consists in demonstrating the "excellence of knowledge" (3). In view of this, it is highly instructive to notice the wealth and provenance of the material he cites to make his point: first, there is a passage with quotations taken entirely from the Quran; this is trailed by a section with citations ascribed to Muhammad (as reported in the *ḥadīth* corpus); third, he quotes sayings by the Companions of the Prophet (likewise from the *ḥadīth* corpus); and, finally, he adds praises of knowledge by "wise men," i.e., eminent figures of the early Islamic period.

[93] In general, there is consensus that God cannot be known quidditatively; accordingly, his existence can be proved only by means of proofs of the fact and not of the reason.

[94] See Mahdi, *Alfarabi*; Germann, Natural and revealed religion.

Regarding this latter, by contrast, the theory of the completeness of knowledge had tremendous consequences for his theory or, rather, epistemology of teaching. For, just like the *mutakallimūn* and jurists, our author is convinced that instruction consists in the transmission of an intellectual heritage assembled in a specific corpus of texts. While, for theologians and legal scholars, this corpus comprises the Quran and the *ḥadīth* collections, al-Fārābī points to the Aristotelian writings, along with the late-antique commentaries available in Arabic. Yet, whereas for theologians and legal scholars the truth and trustworthiness of their texts are warranted by their ultimate author—that is, God—al-Fārābī would reject their position as mere *taqlīd*. For him, true knowledge presupposes a specific process of knowledge acquisition—namely, deduction from first premises by virtue of demonstrative syllogisms based, as their matter, on quidditatively clarified concepts.[96]

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[95] If one takes al-Fārābī's notion of the completeness of knowledge (as contained in the Aristotelian corpus) seriously, and if one further accepts the entailments of his theory of knowledge (particularly, if one aspires for knowledge in its most elevated form), the consequence for philosophy—or rather, for the philosopher dealing with the Aristotelian œuvre—must be to rearrange and present (i.e., explain and prove) the knowledge embraced by this text corpus in a truly scientific manner. This is precisely what Ibn Sīnā did, not yet wholeheartedly in his *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, where he still follows the structure of the Aristotelian corpus, but in all his later philosophical summas. These modifications have been studied already with regard to his metaphysics and its impact on the further developments of this discipline. See Bertolacci, *Reception*; Eichner, Dissolving the unity of metaphysics.

[96] Ideally, this process of learning is accompanied by a second-order knowledge regarding the accuracy of the applied methods. For the conditions of certitude and, particularly, the knowledge condition, see section 3 above with n. 46; for further specifications, see n. 83.

In this last respect, al-Fārābī is, once again, in close agreement with the philosophers, who would also refer to deductive reasoning as the only reliable source of true knowledge. However, their theories of knowledge acquisition, in his view, are incomplete. To be sure, just like him, they presume an empirical foundation provided by sense perception. Nevertheless, while their theories neatly explain how mental representations of things, events, relations, and the like occur in one's mind, derived from sense perceptions, they do not expound on how the data, collected by way of the external senses, stored in the memory, and related to the faculty of imagination, is eventually transformed into actual knowledge (i.e., into elucidated concepts and objectively justified beliefs). This chasm is precisely what al-Fārābī's theory of teaching is meant to bridge. Moreover, his insistence on learning as an intrinsically discursive process lends his thought a trait that is largely absent from his co-philosophers' œuvres; doing and transmitting science turn into primarily exegetic and analytic activities. This requires some additional remarks.

The exegetic dimension is particularly obvious in the text at the center of our study, the passage on teaching in al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Burhān*. A striking example is his discussion of the dilemma of how teaching can bring about something new, even though, according to his theory, it simultaneously must presuppose some sort of acquaintance with the object sought. Al-Fārābī's predominantly semantic approach to this problem has already been discussed by previous research, and met with a certain perplexity.[97] Considered in the light of al-Fārābī's epistemological presuppositions, however, this approach makes perfect sense. If teaching is based on a determinate body of texts, and if the unique means of teaching is discourse (i.e., communication by way of language), concepts can be evoked in the mind of the student only by virtue of expressions and phrases possessing specific meanings. This explains, among other things, the important position philosophy of language occupies in al-Fārābī's thought, voiced, in our context (section 2), in the fundamental role ascribed to inculcation (*talqīn*) as an indispensable preparatory stage of teaching proper. It is the meanings of expressions and phrases that, utilized in the frame of the teacher's explanations and descriptions, either recall or bring about scientifically refined concepts, and ultimately, assent. As a consequence, it is the correct understanding and mastery of language that lies at the basis of successful teaching and, in general, of the practice of science itself.[98]

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[97] Black, al-Fārābī on Meno's paradox 26–28, e.g. 27: "None the less, the narrowness of the discussion here is surprising against the backdrop of al-Fārābī's broader philosophical project, even granted the linguistic and pedagogical focus of this particular text."

[98] See Germann, Imitation.

Moreover, and this leads to the analytic dimension of al-Fārābī's concept of teaching, his particular notion of *ʿilm* is a major reason for the emphasis he puts on questions related to the ideal curriculum of the sciences, as well as the function he accords to logic. None of these preoccupations is a unique feature of his philosophy, for already the late-antique commentators on Aristotle display a similar interest in both the philosophical curriculum and logic.[99] And even in the framework of theology and legal studies, both the question of which subjects need to be taught and the art of argumentation are recurrent topics.[100] In connection to al-Fārābī's epistemology, however, they obtain a specific connotation. If the body of knowledge is complete, the only challenge for a human being seeking perfection and, hence, happiness, consists in acquiring this treasure. Yet, what does "acquisition" mean in al-Fārābī's thought? It cannot boil down to mere memorization, as T3, paragraphs [3] and [7] display.[101] Instead, it can only signify the scientific understanding, derived from the principles underlying reality and based on logical proofs suited to induce certitude, of the totality of things, events, relations, and so forth, already discovered by Aristotle and his predecessors. Given that, as al-Fārābī defends, scientific reasoning perfectly mirrors reality, the analysis of this body of knowledge into its various fields and branches, according to their hierarchy and interrelations, isomorphically represents all there is in reality, along with its interdependencies and causal connections. Therefore, the task of scientists and teachers alike consists in this: arranging and conveying the body of knowledge in accordance with the structure of reality, as deduced by syllogistic reasoning. For it is precisely at this stage of complete and perfectly scientific understanding of all there is, arranged in neat correspondence with its real structure, that the students will attain the level of the so-called "acquired intellect,"[102] a level where their knowledge basically coincides with the realm of pure intelligibility—the sphere of the separate intelligences; a level, in short, that constitutes "the final perfection of man" and "whose attainment is the attainment of happiness" (T1).[103]

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[99] The reference here is to the (Neoplatonic) commentators associated with the schools of Athens and Alexandria. For a concise survey with a particular emphasis on the *Categories*, the first treatise of Aristotle's *Organon*, see Falcon, Commentators.

[100] See, e.g., Bakar, *Classification*; cf. the collected studies in Endress, *Organizing knowledge*. See also Wagner, Munāẓara.

[101] If our chief section, the passage on teaching in the *Kitāb al-Burhān*, embraces traces of criticism against the traditional forms of education prevailing in the age of al-Fārābī, then it concerns primarily this aspect. Traditional education, with its focus on text corpora, their memorization, and linguistic analysis, certainly does a great hermeneutic job. From al-Fārābī's perspective, however, this kind of education can only be preparatory. As such, it fails to make sure, first, that its students proceed to a serious, i.e., quidditative, understanding of the contents; second, that what the students have to memorize corresponds to some actual things, events, relations, etc.; and third, that their knowledge is corroborated by scientific proofs, being the only means to entail certitude and, thus, lay the epistemic foundations for the attainment of happiness.

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[102] In his *Risāla fī l-ʿaql* al-Fārābī distinguishes three stages of the human intellect: first, insofar as it is a capacity (potential intellect; when human beings are born, their intellects are pure potentiality—i.e., the *tabula rasa* referred to above, n. 73—since they have not yet learned anything); second, insofar as it actually thinks something (actual intellect); and third, insofar as it has learned all or most of the forms or species, i.e., the proper objects of knowledge; see above, n. 6 (acquired intellect).

[103] See also al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa madaniyya* A, 2, 8:33 (square brackets replaced by angular brackets): "When the rational faculty attains to being an intellect in actuality, that intellect it now is in actuality also becomes similar to the separate things and it intellects its essence that is ⟨now⟩ intellect in actuality … Through this, it becomes such as to be in the rank of the active intellect (i.e., one of the separate intelligences, NG). And when a human being obtains this rank, his happiness is perfected." For al-Fārābī's psychological account of this stage, see his *Risāla fī l-ʿaql* 16–19, 73–74.

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CHAPTER 8

Al-Fārābī and His Concept of Epistemological Hierarchy

Mariana Malinova

Al-Fārābī (259–339/870–950), known as the “Second Teacher” (Aristotle being the First), dedicated his life to the essence of knowledge and to the methods for obtaining knowledge. The present text aims to demonstrate that al-Fārābī’s concepts of knowledge and the epistemological process become the unifying elements of all major themes in his works and that the concept of epistemological hierarchy plays a key role in his understanding of the virtuous city and the Philosopher-prophet as its perfect ruler.

Throughout his works, al-Fārābī poses two fundamental questions: How is it possible to gain knowledge, and how can knowledge of an immaterial and transcendent being be attained? The historical and conceptual context that frames al-Fārābī’s writings renders the answers to these questions even more complex, since his philosophy accommodates and reconciles various concepts of knowledge that stem from diverging and conflicting sources.

Initially, al-Fārābī relies on the textual background he shared with his Christian teachers, students, and friends in tenth-century Baghdad. During his education, he rigorously studied the writings of the “Firsts,” and was deeply influenced by discussions and analyses of the translated texts of Plato and Aristotle, their Neoplatonic commentators, and the Neoplatonic writings, among them the pseudo-epigraphic writings of Aristotle.[1] Overall, the philosophical circles in the ʿAbbasid capital upheld the notion of a direct continuum between the Alexandrian school of late antiquity and Baghdad. Al-Fārābī himself claimed to be a direct representative of the academic tradition of the school of Alexandria in Baghdad.[2]

In this context, his epistemological intention embraced elements from both Aristotelian cosmology and the Neoplatonic concept of emanation.[3] There-

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[1] About the philosophical sources for his writings, see Walzer’s introduction and commentary in Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state*; Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on intellect* 7–34; Fakhry, *Fārābi, founder of Islamic Neoplatonism* 10–40.

[2] For a critical review of sources, containing biographical and autobiographical notes about and by al-Fārābī, see Steinschneider, *Fārābī* (*Alpharabius*) 1–11; Gutas, Biography 208–213.

[3] His friend and adherent is Abū Bishr Mattā (d. 329/940). Together with al-Fārābī, he studied

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fore, the strong Neoplatonic influences that tinge his interpretation of the First Teacher—Aristotle—are intertwined with his desire to present the philosophical way of life as fully compatible with the religious values of Islam. All these result in al-Fārābī's vision combining his original teaching about the intellect, and its role in his cosmology, with the concept of prophecy.

The intellect is the unifying element of the three fundamental human realities, the divinely created universe, human nature, and the life of the human community. The intellect organizes these three realities; they are manifestations of it. The intellect is the common element, shared by the three of them.

1 The Intellect and the Created Universe

Al-Fārābī commences his analysis of the epistemological process with the superior reality and the cosmology of the supralunary world. The basic principle of his cosmology is the intellect. It constitutes the very substance of the First Existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*). The First is pure intellect, and this intellect is not something different or outside the One.[4]

The most essential characteristic of this intellect is its actuality, attained by the act of intellection. Its intellection is an eternal and ongoing act of actual cognition, through which the First contemplates, thinks its substance, and then knows it. In this act of cognition, the subject of cogitation, cogitation itself, and the object of cogitation are the same.[5]

The First is the One and Only, and it holds the most superior position in the universe. At the same time, it is the eternal Source for creation and the ultimate cause of everything in existence. The Second Intellect comes to existence through emanation from the One.[6] By contemplating the course of its being, it produces the Third Intellect. By thinking its own essence, the Second produces a celestial body, which is called the First Heaven.[7] The dual think-

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Aristotle's writings. His student is Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 362/972). Both of them, although in different periods, were actively involved in the translation process in the ʿAbbasid capital and were prominent translators of Aristotle. Gutas, *Greek thought* 145–147; Janos, *Method* 260–262.

[4] "The First is an actual intellect by its substance." Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 70–71.

[5] An adapted reference to Aristotle's concept of intelligence, as developed in Book XII (Lambda) of his *Metaphysics*. Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 343; Merlan, *Monopsychism* 9.

[6] "The substance of the First is a substance from which every existent emanates, however it may be, whether perfect or deficient." Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 94.

[7] As regards to the dynamics and nuances of the use of "celestial body," "heaven," as well as the cosmological and astronomical terms employed by al-Fārābī, see Janos, *Method* 115–119.

ing of the intellects is a productive act, which repeats itself and follows in a descending order. Subsequent to contemplating the First, each intellect generates the intellect of the next level. Contemplating its own essence, it begets a new celestial body. Thus, the world evolves into an ontological hierarchy where, in descending order, the lower in rank emanates from the higher and follows it.

The foundations of this emanation process are provided by the cogitation process, the intelligizing of the intellects.[8] The intellects are ten in number. They are all separate (*mufāriqa*) from matter and share a common object of contemplation—namely, the First. At the same time, each of them contemplates its own essence. In the hierarchy of being, they are also called "secondary" (*thawānī*),[9] as they hold the second rank in the organized cosmos (*al-martaba al-thāniyya*) by following the One. Al-Fārābī identifies this First Cause for the existence of all things with God. The *thawānī*, in their part, are the causes for the existence of celestial bodies.

Thus, the various levels of being are connected and ensue from each other by virtue of a hierarchic causality, in accordance with which the upper levels beget the lower ones and create an all-embracing cosmology. In this way, the whole being follows six principles, the first reason, the secondary reasons, the Active Intellect, the soul, form, and matter.[10]

This process of emanation performs the transition between the First Existent,[11] i.e., the One as a transcendental God, and the world, the realm of plurality. The dual object of contemplation of any of the intellects marks the transition from the first level of being, from the One, to the world of diversity and multiplicity, from the simple to the complex.[12] At the same time, the pure intellects attain their perfect existence in this dual cognitive process, not only because they get to know themselves but also becausee they come to realize the underlying reasons for their own existence, as well as the otherworldly beginnings of each cognitive process.[13]

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[8] Walzer, Fārābī on the perfect state 60.

[9] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 2.

[10] Ibid., 2.

[11] Walzer, Fārābī on the perfect state 56.

[12] "In the first level there cannot be many but rather only a single one. In each of the other grades, there are many." Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 2, English translation in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 82.

[13] "But none of them [the ten intellects] is sufficient in itself to attain excellent existence by thinking its own essence only, but it acquires perfect excellence only by thinking together with its own essence the essence of the First Cause." Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 117. "It is as though the excellence of its being [secondary causes and the Active Intellect, M.M.] is completed only through the support of a certain multiplicity." Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 40; English translation in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 87.

This cosmological chain strings ten pure and separate intellects into a hierarchical line that ends with the Active Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*), the guiding principle of the sublunary world. In spite of lacking the imperfections that ensue from matter and form, they are nevertheless all imperfect, as they owe their existence to something that is more perfect than they are.[14] The closer they are to the First, the more perfect they are, and vice versa—the further away from it, the less perfect their existence.

The lower the level in this hierarchical structure, the more complex its constitution. Accordingly, the Active Intellect is the least perfect one because it is at the remotest distance from the Prime Cause.

Plurality is far more strongly expressed in its actions because, in order to achieve its perfection, it has to simultaneously intelligize three objects: the First, all the secondary causes, and its own essence.[15] This is the main difference in comparison to the other intellects. Neither another intellect, nor another celestial body emanates from it. In spite of the fact that it occupies the lowest and the most remote level from God, the Active Intellect rules the sublunary world.

2 The Active Intellect and Its Role in Human Knowledge

From an epistemological standpoint, the level of the Active Intellect is the highest that can be achieved by man in the hierarchy of being. The Active Intellect itself plays a central role in human knowledge because of its connection to the rational human soul. Only through this connection can man know the universe.

The human mind is limited by matter and cannot attain knowledge about transcendent reality by itself. That is why the mind needs to be assisted from the outside. It has to be removed or separated from the material world by the Active Intellect, which gives it primary knowledge, the first step necessary for achieving happiness.[16] The Active Intellect initiates the process of thinking in man, thereby becoming the primary source of thinking in general, and every form of philosophical thinking in particular.

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[14] "Their substance derives from something else and their existence is consequential to the existence of something else. The perfection of their substances does not extend so far that in themselves they do not need to receive existence from something else; it is rather the case that their existence is bestowed on them by something more perfect in existence than they are. This is a deficiency common to all existents other than the First." Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 40; English translation in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 86–87.

[15] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 34.

[16] Ibid., 74.

Al-Fārābī defines the key role of the Active Intellect as "watching over the rational animal and endeavor[ing] to have him reach the highest level of perfection that man can reach."[17] Thus, he visualizes the relationship created between the Active Intellect and man through the religious image of the Holy Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-amīn, rūḥ al-quds*).[18]

Man steps up in the hierarchy of being through knowledge, thereby distancing himself from the material and getting closer to God.[19] The Active Intellect serves as a mediator between man and the celestial hierarchy, and also as a link between the worlds of the immaterial and the material, leading the potential human intellect to actuality.

All human beings, according to al-Fārābī, have a natural disposition, called potential intellect (*ʿaql bi-l-quwwa*), capable of abstracting form from matter. Every man possesses it at birth. In its initial stages, however, it is still undeveloped and weak. Al-Fārābī compares it to the child's limited capacity for walking, or to a weak and low flame that cannot set wood on fire.[20]

The actualization of the capacity of the potential intellect occurs when the Active Intellect illuminates it. In describing the correlation between the Active Intellect and the human potential intellect, al-Fārābī uses the metaphor of "light which the sun provides to the sight of the eye."[21]

By the medium of the Active Intellect, the human intellect abstracts forms from material things and receives them as objects of thinking. Al-Fārābī calls these objects of thought "intelligibles" (*maʿqūlāt*). They are forms abstracted from their matter. Before these universal forms are abstracted from their matter, they are potential intelligibles. After their abstraction, they become actual intelligibles. As actual objects of thought, they acquire a new level of being through reason, and "they come to be among the existing things of the world and are connected, as intelligibles, among the totality of existing things."[22]

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[17] "*ʿInāya bi-l-ḥaywān al-nāṭiq.*" Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsa* 32; English translation by McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 82. There is an obvious contrast between al-Fārābī's Active Intellect, which is concerned with the human soul, and "the impassible Mind" in Aristotle's concept of the Intellect. For further details about combining Aristotelian and Neoplatonic interpretations of the Active Intellect, see Fakhry, *Fārābi, founder of Islamic Neoplatonism* 75–76; on the role of the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic register of epistemology in the construction of al-Farabi's epistemology, see Netton, *Fārābī and his school* 52–53.

[18] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 3; "Protective spirit" or "Holy spirit" in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 83.

[19] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 36.

[20] Al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm* 37.

[21] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 35.

[22] Al-Fārābī, *Risāla* 20, translated into English in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 72.

At this stage of the cognitive process, the potential intellect, which has acquired the first level of abstraction, becomes an actual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*). On this level, man obtains knowledge of first intelligibles common to all men. It is the first step in his process of acquiring perfection and knowledge.[23] In this process, the human intellect can master all forms in the existing world. Thus, they are transformed into objects of thought for the actual human intellect, which, in turn, reaches a new level of perfection and a higher level of abstraction. At this higher level, it becomes acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*). The human intellect can now attain abstract forms that are immaterial. As another kind of intelligible, these forms are always actual because they are never material. They refer to the First Cause and the entire hierarchal order of separate intellects, ending with the Active Intellect.[24] Although al-Fārābī does not explicitly explain how these pure forms reach the human intellect, it is clear that they come directly as an emanation of the Active Intellect.

This is suggested by the etymological connotation of the highest degree of the human intellect—the acquired one. Thus, we can explain the main difference between the Active Intellect and the other nine, pure intellects; in order to achieve the perfection of its existence, the Active Intellect has to intelligize three, instead of two, objects of thought. Through intelligizing the rest of the higher separate intellects, it provides the human soul with knowledge of the hierarchical order of the universe, to which it itself belongs.

At this point, we are referred to the problem of self-knowledge that al-Fārābī formulates as the guiding principle in the organization of the universe. On its highest level, as an acquired intellect, the human mind repeats the cognitive act of the rest of the separate intellects. In this "ecstatic act of knowledge,"[25] it intelligizes itself, and in the process of acquiring self-knowledge, an identity between the knower and the known is achieved: "Man who is a potential intellect becomes an actual intellect in itself after he was not, and an object of thought in itself after he was not and he becomes a divine [being] after being a material one."[26]

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[23] "The thing is intellected [*yuʿqal*] initially" means, the forms that are in matter are extracted from their matter and acquire another existence, different from their initial existence. Al-Fārābī, *Risāla* 20; McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 73; Dieterici, *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen* 71.

[24] Al-Fārābī, *Risāla* 13–16, 30–31.

[25] Merlan, *Monopsychism* 21.

[26] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 36; English translation in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 84.

Unlike the other separate intellects, which, in this way, produce a lower ontological level, the human intellect is transformed into something different; it climbs up the hierarchy of being, achieving similarity to the rest of the separate things (*ṣāra shabīhan bi-l-ashīyāʾ al-mufāriqa*).[27] Thus, the acquired intellect becomes the substance of man and operates as a link between the human intellect and the transcendental Active Intellect.[28] In this way, knowledge, as an ontological concept, is connected with the epistemological state of man.

The final goals of human existence coincide with the final goals of man's reason, in other words, to reach the state of an immaterial pure intellect[29] and to devote human life to pure contemplation. The very stages of the epistemological process confirm the conclusion that human perfection is not something static, but a process, an incessant progress in knowledge, getting closer and closer to extreme happiness.

Thus, al-Fārābī corroborates the thesis that, through reason, man naturally enters a hierarchy that goes beyond his earthly existence. In order to achieve harmony with the whole, the highest goal of individual life is devotion to spiritual life and to immaterial and transcendent intelligibles. On the one hand, the individual human being becomes aware of himself as a part of the cosmological hierarchy. On the other hand, he becomes aware of himself as a part of the human community. Intellect and rational reasoning lead man to this harmony by intelligizing the three fundamental realities, the created universe, human nature, and human society.

Al-Fārābī does not provide an unambiguous definition of happiness.[30] The alternative images of happiness share this common idea; that is, the drive for its realization is an incessant process that mobilizes all the mental and spiritual strengths of man. The final goal of human life lies beyond the material world because only the souls of those who have lived a spiritual life can survive in the afterlife.[31] Consequently, what matters in this world is following the path to attain perfect knowledge, which is the supreme happiness. The steps on this path are outlined clearly:

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[27] Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 206; al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 35. In *Siyāsa* 34, al-Fārābī refers to the separate things stating that "things that are intelligibles in themselves are separate from material bodies and do not subsist in any matter whatsoever. These are the intelligibles by virtue of their substances"; English translation in McGinnis and Reisman, *Classical Arabic philosophy* 83.

[28] Al-Fārābī, *Risāla* 27.

[29] "Felicity means that the human soul reaches a degree of perfection in its existence where it is in no need of matter for its support, since it becomes one of the incorporeal things and of the immaterial substances and remains in that state continuously forever." English translation in Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 205.

[30] For different interpretations of the nature of happiness, see Galston, Theoretical and practical dimensions 120–125.

> Since what is intended by man's existence is that he attains supreme happiness, he—in order to achieve it—needs to know what happiness is, make it his end, and hold it before his eyes. Then, after that, he needs to know the things he ought to do in order to attain happiness, and then do these actions.[32]

The attainment of happiness is defined as a conscious moral choice, mobilizing all spiritual strengths in assisting the rational part of the human soul. As a result, man consciously directs his actions to advance to the Good.[33]

Thus, in his concept of the human intellect, al-Fārābī subordinates practical reason to theoretical reason. The sole function of practical reason is to serve the theoretical by helping the human being attain happiness.[34] Human happiness can be fully realized by achieving perfection in theoretical and practical reasoning; this can be accomplished by performing good actions in society.

3 Knowledge and Its Role within Human Community

The individual who is completely devoted to contemplation, and is isolated from the community of man, is incapable of grasping the wholeness of the world. Only through interaction with other human beings can he overcome the limitations of individual existence and become aware of his place in the larger picture of society and the world. Only through assistance from others can he approach his own happiness, because the innate disposition of every single man is to join other human beings and to associate with other men.[35] Only within society can he fully develop the potential of his faculties.[36]

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[31] Walzer, Fārābī on the perfect state 262–263.

[32] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 78; translated into English by Fawzi Najjar in Lerner and Mahdi, *Medieval political philosophy* 35.

[33] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 73.

[34] Walzer, Fārābī on the perfect state 209.

[35] Alfarabi, *Philosophy* 23.

[36] "Man belongs to the species that cannot accomplish their necessary affairs or achieve their best state, except through the association of many groups of them in a single dwelling-place." Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 69, English translation by Fauzi Najjar in Lerner and Mahdi, *Medieval political philosophy* 32.

Al-Fārābī calls the social framework through which man can attain happiness “the virtuous city” (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*).[37] Within this society of excellence and in cooperation with other men, man can, in cooperation with other men, overcome the limitations of individual life, thereby reaching a state of perfection through his inborn nature. This city is organized on the basis of the same metaphysical principles that organize the wholeness of being emanating from God.

The order and the various ranks within the political community symbolize the universal cosmos, as a hierarchically structured and coherent whole.[38] The ontological hierarchy of the cosmos is reflected in the epistemological hierarchy of the virtuous city. All citizens of the virtuous city are divided according to their ability to develop their virtue through participation in social life, and their level of education. Social hierarchy is a natural one, since the position of every individual is predetermined according to his natural disposition to know and to learn things. Thus, the natural hierarchy in the ideal virtuous society is a replica of the heavenly order.[39] It is derived from the epistemological hierarchy, which contains a hierarchy of the sources and the methods of acquiring knowledge.

The hierarchical structure of human knowledge is determined by the subject of each science, and thus, it is ontologically founded, since the very structure of human knowledge mirrors the structure of the universe. Due to the causality that links the separate levels of being, the universe features both hierarchical order and coalescence. Likewise, the sciences are coalescent in terms of their object of study; at the same time, their various branches stem from each other in a causal sequence.

Following this logic, al-Fārābī places philosophy above all the sciences because its task (i.e., to give “account of the beings as they are perceived by the intellect with certain demonstrations”[40]) guarantees the foundation for the development of the other sciences. Its method, surpassing all the rest, represents the only path for obtaining certain knowledge about corporeal and incorporeal beings. As such, all the other sciences are its subordinates.

That is why the highest position in the virtuous city is specifically assigned to the Philosopher. Philosophers can grasp, by themselves, the idea of happiness, and discover the means for its realization. Therefore, they are the best citizens and occupy the upper ranks of society.

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[37] Walzer, Fārābī on the perfect state 231.

[38] On the metaphysical background of the political community and its structural principles, see O’Meara, *Platonopolis* 187–189; Smirnov, Understanding justice 288–292.

[39] Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda* 24–25.

[40] Ibid. 83; translated into English by Mahdi in Alfarabi, *Philosophy* 41.

According to al-Fārābī, the Philosopher is endowed with the highest theoretical and practical virtues because real philosophy, in contrast to defective philosophy (*falsafa nāqiṣa*),[41] gives the real Philosopher an opportunity to intervene in the life of society, by sharing his knowledge and helping others. All citizens of the virtuous city ought to have knowledge of the metaphysical truths about the First Cause, the separate intellects, the celestial spheres, the natural bodies, the place of man in the universe, and his connection to the Active Intellect.[42] The paths to obtaining such theoretical knowledge differ according to the different intellectual capacities of men. The majority of citizens need both teacher and instructor.[43]

Only the real Philosopher can answer this need and be the actual ruler of the virtuous community. As such, he has achieved the perfection of his theoretical wisdom. His intellect, becoming an acquired one, is capable of contemplating the Active Intellect. Only when man attains this highest rank, and when there is no intermediary between him and the Active Intellect, does his acquired intellect become matter for the Tenth celestial intellect—the Active one. He is the mediator, passing on the revelation from God to man. Al-Fārābī writes:

> This emanation that proceeds from the Active Intellect to the passive through the mediation of the acquired intellect, is revelation. Now because the Active Intellect emanates from the being of the First Cause, it can for this reason be said that it is the First Cause that brings about revelation to this man through the mediation of the Active Intellect. The rule of this man is the supreme rule; all other human rulerships are inferior to it and are derived from it.[44]

This person becomes a Prophet when the Active Intellect has an impact on another faculty of his soul—the faculty of representation, which is "extremely powerful"[45] and developed to perfection in him. The main activity of this faculty of imagination is to receive the intelligibles by representing or imitating them. Through his perfect imagination, the Prophet transforms the metaphysical truths into images, stories, and symbols, in order to persuade and instruct those who are less perfect than him when grasping the intellectual truths. The language of imagination, imitation, and persuasion is the language of religion. For example, in order for ordinary people to understand better the process of revelation and the transformation of the human intellect, these can be translated, via religious symbols and images, and may be presented in the encounters of the Prophet with the Angel of Revelation (Gabriel).

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[41] Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda* 87.

[42] Walzer, *Fārābī on the perfect state* 276–278; al-Fārābī, *Milla* 44–45.

[43] Al-Fārābī, *Siyāsa* 78.

[44] Ibid., 79–80; English translation by Najjar in Lerner and Mahdi, *Medieval political philosophy* 36–37.

[45] Walzer, Fārābī on the perfect state 223.

Therefore, the perfect ruler of the excellent community must be a person who is "a wise man and a philosopher and an accomplished thinker who employs an intellect of divine quality, … and a visionary prophet: who warns of thing to come and tells of particular things which exist at present."[46] This Philosopher-prophet directly receives the revealed laws of God that should organize the life of human community. He is the lawgiver, as well as the ruler, who knows how to use theoretical wisdom to promote the happiness of the community. Further, he possesses the knowledge and means to attain this goal. As such, the Philosopher-prophet is not the passive thinker withdrawn from active social life; on the contrary, he acts as an organizing and structuring principle of society.

Pertaining to the Philosopher-prophet, al-Fārābī incorporates the main characteristics of Plato's true philosopher and of the Prophet of Islam. This suggests that his basic intention was to integrate two different concepts of knowledge, and to provide a coherent and universal epistemological framework. Combining two completely different epistemologies, al-Fārābī reconciles their contradictions, and creates a universal paradigm of human knowledge. It provides the unifying pattern for all major themes of his philosophical legacy.

In a challenging and provocative fashion for his contemporaries, al-Fārābī wants to "rationalize" religion and provide a philosophical explanation of prophecy. He believes that philosophy and religion comprise the same subjects and deal with the same reality.[47] However, religion serves philosophy because it is only its imitation. Religion deals with "opinions and actions, determined and restricted with stipulations and prescribed for a community by their first ruler."[48] Consequently, religion is deemed for the masses, since their intellect finds it difficult to grasp the principles of beings, their hierarchy, and the real goal of human life. Therefore, masses rely on imitations of real knowledge in order to approach and get closer to it.

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[46] Ibid., 245–247; al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda* 92.

[47] Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda* 89.

[48] Al-Fārābī, *Milla* 43; translated into English by Butterworth in Alfarabi, *Political writings* 93.

4 Conclusion

Through this relationship between philosophy and religion, al-Fārābī reproduces the dynamics of a deep cultural transformation within Muslim society in the tenth century.[49] Philosophy had ceased to be a servant of religion,[50] which was its role at the time of al-Kindī (d. ca. 252/866). Within the translation movement of his time, the problems posed by "foreign" philosophy were woven into religious, monotheistic discourse and became part of rational theology in Islam. In addition, philosophy emancipated itself from theological discourse. Inspired by the Greek classics, al-Fārābī persuaded his contemporaries that philosophy is not only an autonomous science but also a universal one that precedes religion, since it is the oldest science. In the course of history, philosophy had been embraced by the most enlightened and best-developed societies. A permanent body of universal, philosophical knowledge had been preserved and transferred by the Chaldeans, the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks, the Syrians, and the Arabs.[51]

Although al-Fārābī mentions particular societies devoted to philosophy, he does not make clear whether the virtuous city ruled by the Philosopher-prophet had existed in the past or existed in his own epoch. Bearing in mind the uncertainty and instability of his own times, we suggest that the period of the early *umma*, ruled by the Prophet Muhammad, may be considered as an example of this political ideal.

Al-Fārābī's understanding that ultimate happiness can be attained in the afterlife (albeit only because of the efforts of man during his earthly existence) bears the mark of the conflict between the two major tendencies in his thought—that is, the demand to surpass the limitations of the material world and the demand to engage man in its organization. It is the concept of the perfect political order of the virtuous city, governed by the Philosopher-prophet, that fully reconciles all of these tensions.

Al-Fārābī's philosophical pathos leads to a unified vision of the structure of all beings, culminating in a social utopia that has an epistemological foundation—a vision not only for his contemporaries, but one that should be shared with and striven for by every human community.

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[49] Gutas, *Greek thought* 151–187.

[50] Walzer, New studies 180.

[51] Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda* 86.

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CHAPTER 9

Educational Discourse in Classical Islam: A Case Study of Miskawayh's (d. 421/1030) *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*

Yassir El Jamouhi

"It's easier to split an atom, than a discourse."[1] This modified citation helps to describe the proliferation of educational discourses[2] in the classical period of Islam (ninth-thirteenth century CE). The principles, content, and ends, as well as the practical and religious character of education in Islam, are fundamentally affected by statements from the Quran and the prophetic tradition. Moreover, relevant statements on education can be found in Islamic literary writings, and in the scientific treatises on philosophy, moral philosophy, theology, mysticism, and so forth, of that time.[3] A particular feature of the educational discourse in classical Islam is its reception of the ancient Greek, Syrian, Christian, Jewish, Iranian, and Indian intellectual heritages that became accessible through Arabic translations of the respective works from the eighth century CE onward, a fact that reflects a distinctive openness to foreign cultural and religious thought.[4]

A particularly prolific member of the intellectual generation of Islam's classical period, Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh (ca. 320–421/932–1030) is portrayed in secondary studies mainly as a moral philosopher and historian (on account of his extant works, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* and *Tajārib al-umam*), and is today considered to be one of the most influential ethicists in Islam. The time of his appearance on the scene (tenth-eleventh century CE) represents a cultural and intellectual golden age of Arab-Islamic history.[5] Miskawayh's reflections

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[1] The quote is from Albert Einstein, and its original wording: "It is easier to split an atomic nucleus than a prejudice" (German: Es ist leichter, einen Atomkern zu spalten als ein Vorurteil).

[2] Following Gardt, Diskursanalyse 30, I understand the term discourse as "dealing with a theme that is reflected in utterances and texts of various kinds." ("die Auseinandersetzung mit einem Thema, die sich in Äußerungen und Texten der unterschiedlichsten Art niederschlägt.").

[3] See, e.g., Günther, Bildung.

[4] Mohammed Arkoun and Joel L. Kraemer describe this circumstance with the term "humanism"; see Arkoun, *Humanisme*; Kraemer, *Humanism*.

[5] See, e.g., Wakelnig, Philosophen 233.

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on ethics and the theory of education are characterized by a comprehensive inclusion of religious (both Islamic and non-Islamic), philosophical, historical, and economic sources. These diverse elements find expression particularly (although in condensed form) in his principal work on ethics, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (*The refinement of character*). The present article represents a case study of Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* that aims, first, to identify and contextualize the characteristics of educational discourse in classical Islam, and second, to shed light on the ways Miskawayh adopted and transformed the ancient philosophers' ideas on the theory of education in the light of his own conceptions of God, mankind, and the world. The goal of the article is to investigate Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* as an exemplary source of information that might provide us with a heuristic picture of educational discourse in classical Islam.

1 Miskawayh's Life and Works

A conspicuous feature of classical Arab-Islamic literature is that authors rarely write about their own lives. This is also the case with Miskawayh. As a result, Miskawayh's writings communicate hardly any information about his life. Even regarding his birth, we find no consistent information, either in his works or in later sources, that might allow us to make detailed comments on it. However, this fact does not necessarily show authorial lack of scientific rigor when it comes to the preservation of information and knowledge. Instead, this might be regarded a distinguishing feature of the literary and scientific culture of that time. Moreover, a discussion of the culture of writing in classical Islam, on the basis of the paradigms of today's scientific culture, could hardly be regarded as a theoretically and methodologically objective approach, since every discourse community is characterized by its own sociocultural conditions and expectations.

In his *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (*Lexicon of writers*), the Arab-Greek geographer Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) writes that Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb, sometimes also called Abū ʿAlī al-Khāzin, is the full name of Miskawayh, which is his epithet (*laqab*).[6] Miskawayh was born around 932 in Rayy, near present-day Tehran. Following the contemporary *ḥadīth* scholar Ibn Manda (d. ca. 395/1004–1005), Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī places the date of Miskawayh's death on the 9 Ṣafar 421/22 February 1030. At this point it should be noted that scholars disagree on the question of whether the name Miskawayh refers to the author himself, his father Muḥammad, or his grandfather Yaʿqūb. Hence, two variations of the name can be found in the research literature, Miskawayh and Ibn Miskawayh. In this paper I will argue that Miskawayh is the author's epithet, for two reasons. First, his aforementioned contemporaries called him Miskawayh; and second, the author calls himself Miskawayh, for instance, in his book *al-Hawāmil wa-l-shawāmil* (*Open* [*questions*] *and explicit* [*replies*]). This book contains questions posed by Abū Hayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) to Miskawayh and the latter's responses.

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[6] Al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam* 493.

From works of contemporary authors—such as the treatises (*rasāʾil*) of the Arab littérateur Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008); *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn* (*The character traits of the two viziers*) and *al-Imtāʿ wa-l-muʾānasa* (*Enjoyment and conviviality*) by the writer and philosopher Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023), known as "the man of letters" among the philosophers and "the philosopher" among the men of letters; *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* (*Canon of medicine*) by the Persian physician and philosopher Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), also known by the Latinized name Avicenna; and *Yatīmat al-dahr* (*The unique pearl*) by the Persian writer Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038)—we learn that, especially in his early years, Miskawayh gained a certain prominence, mainly due to his work as a secretary and librarian at the court of the Shiite Buyids in Baghdad and Rayy. His thought was met with mainly positive reactions by his contemporaries. Contradictory opinions are expressed in the abovementioned books *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn* and *al-Imtāʿ wa-l-muʾānasa* by Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī. On the one hand, he refers to Miskawayh as a shaykh, which is considered an honorific title and an expression of respect. On the other hand, many descriptions can be found that portray Miskawayh in a negative light.[7] In other passages, al-Tawḥīdī seems to lecture Miskawayh.[8] Al-Tawḥīdī also attacks Miskawayh's Christian teacher Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 363/974), describing his translation as disfigured, and criticizing him for his poor mode of expression.[9] It should be noted that neither the praising nor the scolding remarks reflect the true intellectual peculiarity of Miskawayh, especially since they are highly subjective and refer to personal issues rather than to his works' content.

Moreover, we learn from al-Tawḥīdī and al-Thaʿālibī that Miskawayh was in close contact with the Persian author and statesman Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. ca. 360/970), who has been labelled as the second al-Jāḥiẓ.[10] In this context, it is worth mentioning that al-Tawḥīdī wrote, in his book *al-Imtāʿ wa-l-muʾānasa*, that

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[7] See al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ* i, 51.

[8] Al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq* 23.

[9] See al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ* i, 51.

[10] See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xvi, 137–138.

Miskawayh had learned nothing from Ibn al-ʿAmīd or the Persian theologian and philosopher al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992), although the latter had spent five years in Rayy supposedly doing research and teaching.[11] Al-Tawḥīdī also states that Miskawayh was interested in the study of alchemy,[12] and that he should therefore have read the books of the Persian physician and alchemist Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (known under the Latinized name Rhazes or Rasis; d. ca. 313/925 or 323/935) and the alchemist Jābir b. Ḥayyān (known under the Latinized name Geber; d. ca. 199/815).[13]

So, we have seen that Miskawayh was interested in a variety of things. Philosophy, logic, ethics, education, psychology, metaphysics, theology, alchemy, medicine, and so forth, all represent fields of knowledge that he dealt with, and characterize the diversity of his works. In general, a number of things might be stated regarding Miskawayh's work. First, it needs to be made clear that his output as a writer was very limited in comparison to the literary activity of contemporary authors, such as al-Tawḥīdī or Ibn Sīnā. As a result, his work can easily be summarized, despite the uncertainty surrounding the degree of authenticity with which these works have been transmitted throughout the past centuries. Nonetheless, due to the quality of Miskawayh's engagement with his topics, his works are now considered a testimony to the imagination and open-mindedness of the classical period of Islam. Second, it should be noted that the attempt to put Miskawayh's works in chronological order proves to be a very difficult task. However, this is a common problem in biographical research, and seems doomed to remain unsolved.

The following chart[14] shows all works that are mentioned by the Persian philosopher Abū Sulaymān al-Manṭiqī (d. ca. 380/990),[15] the Arab-Greek geographer Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), the Arab historian al-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248), the Arab medic and biographer Ibn Abī Uṣaybīʿa (d. 668/1270), the Kurdish medic and historian al-Shahrazūrī (d. 687/1288), and the Shiite theologian and historian Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895). The works mentioned are *al-Fawz al-aṣghar* (*The minor victory*), in which the author takes a close look, from a metaphysical-psychological perspective, at questions of ethics, human self-fulfillment, and the attainment of happiness; *Kitāb al-Fawz al-akbar*, of which no copy has survived, but which is likely to have existed because Miskawayh mentions its title at the end of *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*;[16] *Kitāb*

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[11] Al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ* i, 51.

[12] Ibid., 50.

[13] Based on Newman, Jābir ibn Ḥayyān.

[14] See Arkoun, *Nazʿat al-ansanah* 205–206.

[15] See al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* vi, 171.

[16] See Miskawayh, *Fawz al-aṣghar* 120.

al-Saʿāda (*The book of happiness*); *al-Ḥikma al-khālida* (*The eternal wisdom*), also known as *Jāwīdān khirad*; *al-Hawāmil wa-l-shawāmil* (*Open* [*questions*] *and explicit* [*answers*]); and a number of minor treatises on philosophy, psychology, and logic, such as the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (*The refinement of character*), which is known as Miskawayh's principal work on ethics and represents the subject of this paper.

al-Manṭiqī (d. ca. 380/990)	**al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229)**	**al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895)**	**al-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248)**	**Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270)**	**al-Shahrazūrī (d. 687/1288)**
al-Fawzān al-kabīr wa-l-ṣaghīr fī ʿilm al-awāʾil		*Kitāb al-Fawz al-aṣghar*	*Kitāb al-Fawz al-ṣaghīr*		*al-Fawzān fī ʿilm al-awāʾil*
		Kitāb al-Fawz al-akbar	*Kitāb al-Fawz al-kabīr*		
Kitāb Tartīb al-saʿādāt wa-manāzil al-ʿulūm	*Kitāb Tartīb al-saʿādāt*	*Kitāb Tartīb al-saʿādāt*			
Tahdhīb al-akhlāq		*Kitāb al-Ṭahāra fī tahdhīb al-akhlāq*		*Kitāb Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*	
al-Risāla al-musʿida					
al-Mustawfā fī l-shiʿr	*Kitāb al-Mustawfā*	*Kitāb fī mukhtār al-shiʿr*			*Kitāb al-Mustawfā fī l-shiʿr*
Tajārub al-umam wa-ʿawāqib al-himam		*Kitāb Tajārub al-umam*	*Kitāb al-Tajārub*		
Uns al-farīd	*Uns al-farīd*	*Kitāb Nadīm al-farīd*			*Uns al-farīd*
		Kitāb Uns al-khawāṭir			
al-Ḥikma al-khālida	*al-Ḥikma al-khālida*	*Kitāb al-Ḥikma al-khālida*			*al-Ḥikma al-khālida*
al-Shawāmil		*Kitāb al-Siyāsa lil-mulk*			
Other books on mathematics, science, theology, arithmetic, alchemy	*Kitāb al-Jamīʿ*	*Kitāb Ādāb al-ʿArab wa-l-furs*	*Kitāb fī l-adwiya al-mufrada*		
	Kitāb al-Siyar	*Nuzhat nāma ʿalāʾī*	*Kitāb Tarkīb al-bājāt*	*Kitāb al-Tabīkh*	
		Kitāb Fawz al-saʿāda		*Kitāb al-Ashriba*	
Marginal note referring to logic					Marginal note referring to logic

Apart from the six works that are mentioned above, all other writings, especially those listed by al-Khwānsārī, have not been passed down to us. A closer look at the titles mentioned in the chart reveals that they have not been passed down in a homogeneous manner by the various biographers.[17] One reason for the differences might be that biographers based themselves on different sources.

2 Miskawayh's Work: *The refinement of character traits*

In the Arab-Islamic history of thought, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* is primarily considered as a crucial source for research on ethics. The title *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq wa-taṭhīr al-aʿrāq* consists of two parts. The first part appears in the book as *ṣināʿat Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, with the term *ṣināʿa* functioning in this context as a synonym for *ʿilm* (science). The second part of the title also appears in the book when Miskawayh writes: "*wa-li-dhālika samaytuhu bi-Kitāb Taṭhīr al-aʿrāq*" (Thus I called it the *Book of the purification of ancestries*). In this context, one might point to a number of earlier Arabic works on ethics and education theory. The following list presents merely a limited number of exemplary works and raises no claim to completeness: *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr*[18] (*The small essay on right conduct*) and *al-Adab al-kabīr*[19] (*The great essay on right conduct*) by the Persian author Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 142/759);[20] *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*[21] (*The refinement of character traits*) and *Kitāb al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk*[22] (*The book of crown in the ethics of kings*) by the Arab writer al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868); *Kitāb Makārim al-akhlāq*[23] (*The noble deeds of ethics*) by the Islamic scholar Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894); and the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*[24] (*The refinement of character traits*) by Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī,[25] the Christian teacher of Miskawayh.

Arkoun mentions six different manuscripts of the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*: British Museum 1561; Fatih 3511; Ayasofiya 1957; Köprülü 767; Fazil-library 261 A; and

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[17] Further information on the individual works can be found in Arkoun, *Nazʿat al-ansanah* 207–209.

[18] Ed. Zaki Bāshā; German translation Rescher 1915.

[19] Ed. Zaki Bāshā.

[20] See al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* iv, 140.

[21] Ed. Ṭanṭā 1989.

[22] Ed. Cairo 1914.

[23] Ed. 1990.

[24] Ed. 1913.

[25] The attribution of the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* to Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī is still a matter of debate among scholars. Cf. for instance Arkoun, *Nazʿat al-ansanah* 226.

Dār al-Kutub al-Qāhira, al-Fahras al-thānī 282, 1.[26] An examination of Miskawayh manuscripts from the manuscript collections in Istanbul, conducted during a research trip in November 2015, revealed the existence of 12 versions of the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, some handwritten, others printed, some parts of collections, others single monographs.[27] Apart from MS Fatih 3511, titled *Kitāb al-Ṭahāra fī tahdhīb al-nafs*, and MS Fazil Ahmed Pasa 767, with the title *Ṭahārat al-nafs*, all of the abovementioned manuscripts bear the title *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*. As a result, of particular importance for moral philosophy, multiple editions of Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* were published at various times, which, for the sake of brevity, will not be mentioned in this article. In terms of its structure, the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* consists of six treatises (*maqālāt*), on: the foundations of ethics, character, and education; the good and happiness; justice; love and friendship; and the treatment of the mind. Education and formation are discussed primarily in the second treatise.[28] In the introduction to *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, Miskawayh unequivocally describes the work's objectives:

> Our object in this book is to acquire for ourselves such a character that all our actions issuing therefrom may be good and, at the same time, may be performed by us easily, without any constraint or difficulty. This object we intend to achieve according to an art, and in a didactic order. The way to this end is to understand, first of all, our souls: what they are, what kind of thing they are, and for what purpose they have been brought into existence within us—I mean: their perfection and their end; what their faculties and aptitudes are, which, if properly used by us, would lead us to that high rank.[29]

From this we can conclude that the overriding objective of Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* lies in the acquisition of ethics, which presupposes a certain formation, or rather, a system of education. Hence, education occupies an important place in this process of acquisition or learning. The different stages of learning that lead to success relate to knowledge of the appetitive souls, as well as their powers and predispositions. This underlines the significance of the psychological dimension in Miskawayh's reflections on the theory of education.

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[26] Arkoun, *Nazʿat al-ansanah* 227.

[27] 1. Ayasofiya No. 1957–001; 2. Ayasofiya No. 2818–001; 3. Esad Efendi No. 1836; 4. Fatih No. 3511; 5. Haci Mahmud Efendi No. 1633; 6. Haci Mahmud Efendi No. 1827; 7. Id Mehmed Efendi Nr. 37; 8. I. Ismail Hakki No. 1301–002; 9. Sehid Ali Pasa No. 2772–003; 10. Veliyüddin Efendi No. 1936; 11. Fazil Ahmed Pasa No. 767; 12. Haci Ahmed Pasa No. 261.

[28] Based on the edition by Zurayk 1966 and the French translation by Arkoun 1969.

[29] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 1.

3 Miskawayh's Sources and the Problem of Transmission

Analysis of the sources for the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* show that Miskawayh, for the most part, based his argumentation on ancient Greek philosophers. As can be seen from the chart below, Aristotle is mentioned 52 times throughout the work, whether by name, by the pronoun "he," or by the attribute *al-ḥakīm* (the "sage" or "philosopher"). This makes him by far the most significant authority in the text. The chart lists the most important authors that Miskawayh relied on in his *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*. The authors are arranged according to the frequency with which they appear in the text. Authors that are mentioned only once are listed alphabetically, and their position in the chart is not indicative of their role within the text.

Authors	**Frequency of occurrence**
Aristotle	52
al-ḥukamāʾ (the sages or philosophers)	22
Muhammad, the Prophet	9
Galen	5
Plato	4
al-Kindī	3
Socrates	3
Hippocrates	2
ʿAlī (referred to as *amīr al-muʾminīn*)	1
Ardashīr	1
Ayyūb	1
Bryson	1
Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī	1
Porphyry	1
Pythagoras	1

The fact that Miskawayh's argumentation relies primarily on ancient Greek philosophers allows him, on the one hand, to use their respective terminology. On the other hand, this might be a way of emphasizing the rational consensus between antique and contemporary schools of thought. Moreover, the recourse to antique texts might imply that contemporary thinkers are able, for instance, to study phenomena and events in the manner of Aristotle and Plato. A particularly distinctive feature of Miskawayh's style of writing is the precise mentioning of his sources. The following texts are explicitly mentioned in *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* and can therefore be said to provide the work's ethical, philosophical, religious, and pedagogical framework: Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics*, *Categories*, and *De anima* (*On the soul*); *Oikonomikos* by the ancient philosopher Bryson (lived sometime between 100 BCE and the second century CE); the Greek physician Galen's (d. ca. 216–217 CE) *Akhlāq al-nafs* (*Dispositions of the soul*); the Arab philosopher al-Kindī's (d. ca. 256/873) *Risāla fī l-ḥīla li-dafʿ al-aḥzān* (*On the art of dispelling sorrows*); and the Quran and the prophetic traditions.

Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics* is one of the most important sources in Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*. This claim is supported by the numerous passages in the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* where Miskawayh mentions the work explicitly, quotes from it both directly and indirectly, paraphrases its content, or uses it to support his position. Another work by Aristotle that is mentioned explicitly by Miskawayh, and which he employs as source for his *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, is the *Categories*, which is counted among Aristotle's writings on logic. However, it remains unclear on which version or translation of Aristotle's text Miskawayh relied. The question of who was the first translator of the *Categories* is still a matter of scholarly debate. In his critical edition of the Arabic translations of Aristotle's writings on logic from 1980, Abderrahman Badawi argues that the Christian Arab translator Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn (d. 289/910–911) was the first to translate the book, and that Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī used this translation as a basis for his own rendition of the *Categories*.[30] The Arabic translation that is included in Badawi's critical edition might shed light on the way Miskawayh adopted, adapted, and paraphrased Aristotle's *Categories*. "Aristotle made it clear in the Book on Ethics,[31] as well as in the Book on Categories, that a bad man may, by discipline, become good."[32]

Moreover, Miskawayh also made extensive use of another of Aristotle's works, the *De anima*. Just as is the case with Miskawayh's use of the *Categories*, we do not know which version of *De anima* he had at his disposal.

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[30] Cf. Badawi, *Manṭiq Aristū* 11–12; Gutas, *Greek thought*; Gutas and Endress, *Greek and Arabic lexicon*.

[31] I.e. the *Nicomachean ethics*.

[32] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 30.

> These are the words of this philosopher [Aristotle], which I have quoted exactly. They come from the translation of Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqi, who is a man well-versed in both languages, namely Greek and Arabic, and whose translation has won the approval of all those who have studied these two languages. At the same time, he has tried hard to reproduce the Greek words and their meanings in Arabic words and meanings without any difference in expression or substance. Whoever refers to this work, i.e., the one called *The Virtues of the Soul*, will read these words as I have quoted them.[33]

Miskawayh declares that he is drawing on an Arabic translation by the physician and translator of Greek philosophical works Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī (d. after 302/914).[34] He explains he has chosen that particular translation because the translator has mastered both Greek and Arabic, and, for another thing, stands out due to a certain reliability and precision regarding his transmission of Greek texts into Arabic. According to the current state of research, this particular version of Aristotle's *De anima* is not at our disposal. Thus, if we want to shed light on the reception and transformation of the *De anima*'s content, we face the problem of having to select an alternative version of the text for a comparative analysis of the passages Miskawayh has paraphrased. In the case of the education of boys, Miskawayh relied heavily on Bryson's *Oikonomikos* (Οἰκονομικός). While this can be seen from the following passage, it remains unclear which translation of Bryson's work Miskawayh adopted. "A section on the education of the young, and of boys in particular, most of which I have copied from the work of 'Bryson.'"[35]

In this context, one might point to Swain's *Economy, family, and society from Rome to Islam* (2013), which offers a critical edition and translation of Bryson's *Management of the estate*. However, Swain deals only cursorily with the Islamic reception of Bryson's work. Hence, he contributes little to our understanding of the way Miskawayh integrated Bryson's text in his thoughts on the theory of education, and into his oeuvre as a whole. Greek philosophy does not represent the only source of inspiration for Miskawayh's reflections on ethics and the theory of education. Another philosophical inspiration, whose name is mentioned three times in *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, is al-Kindī. The fact that Miskawayh relied on an Arab philosopher, who was likewise influenced by Aristotle's philosophy, highlights the significant impact of antique intellectual heritage on Miskawayh.

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[33] Ibid., 80. Slightly adjusted.

[34] Based on Endress, Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī.

[35] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 50.

4 Miskawayh's Theory of Education and the Concept of Reception

During the classical period of Islam, intellectuals were thus confronted with a conglomerate of diverse cultures and religions, which left a notable and lasting mark on the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, whose theory of education is the subject of this article. In this context, Miskawayh attempted to enter into a dialogue with humanity's intellectual heritage that crosses cultural and religious boundaries and places humankind at its center. This culturally, philosophically, and theologically heterogeneous milieu had a significant influence on Miskawayh's thought and works on philosophy, ethics, and the theory of education.[36] Miskawayh's reception of ideas on the theory of education from Antiquity, and their transformation in light of the prevailing image of God, humankind, and the world shaped by Islam, is characterized by a distinct openness to the philosophical ideas of other cultures and religions. Miskawayh's concept of reception is also marked by a selective approach to his sources and their reception, which is governed by a critical reflection that takes into consideration the sources' religious and political context. Part of this approach is Miskawayh's language, which, whenever it comes to the formulation of theologically relevant thoughts on ethics or the theory of education, is characterized by a certain objectivity and is untainted by pro-Sunni or pro-Shia notions.

The different encounters with various elements of other cultures and religions, of which the majority had entered Arab-Islamic thought as a result of the wave of Arabic translations of ancient Greek works that started in the eighth century CE, generated diversity within Arab-Islamic societies and presented people, particularly intellectuals, with new challenges. Among those challenges was the construction of a new identity that aimed for a rationalistic consensus between ancient pre-Islamic systems of thought, which Muslims associated with the age of "ignorance" (*jāhiliyya*),[37] marked by paganism and polytheism, and the new way of life that had come with the rise of Islam, which for Muslims was a natural and complete representation of the highest goals of education and ethics and a synonym for enlightenment, humanity, and cultural progress.[38]

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[36] Cf. Arkoun, *Humanisme arabe*.

[37] Based on Shepard, Age of ignorance.

[38] Cf. Günther, Bildung 211.

5 Education as a Deconstructive-Reconstructive Process

Miskawayh recognized the importance of education as a tool, both for the deconstruction of obsolete discourses and constructions, and for the reconstruction of a new knowledge that met the requirements of its time. Miskawayh's ideas about the theory of education are based on the assumption that human nature can be changed through education and formation. This becomes particularly apparent in the following quote:

> It is for this reason that the ancients held different views regarding character. Some said that character belongs to the non-rational soul; others that the rational soul may have a share of it. Then people have differed on another point. Some have expressed the view that he who has a natural character does not lose it. Others have said: No part of character is natural to man, nor is it non-natural. For we are disposed to it, but it also changes as a result of discipline and admonition either rapidly or slowly. This last view is the one we favor because we observe its truth plainly and because the former view leads to the nullification of the faculty of discernment and reason, to the rejection of all forms of guidance, to the surrender of people to savagery and neglect, and to the abandonment of youths and boys to the state in which they happen to be without any direction or instruction. This is manifestly very disgraceful.[39]

Here, Miskawayh mentions that Greek philosophers disagreed on the question of whether a person's character could be changed. Some assume the natural character (*khuluq tabīʿī*) is predefined and unalterable, while others argue it can be changed through education (*taʾdīb*) and recommendations (*mawāʿiẓ*). Throughout the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, Miskawayh uses different terms to express the concepts of education and formation. The term most frequently used by Miskawayh is *taʾdīb*, followed by the terms *siyāsa*, *taʿlīm*, *taʿallum*, and *tarbiya*, last of which only appearing twice throughout the text.[40] In terms of the above quote, we might conclude that Miskawayh lays out two theoretical positions, which he reflects on in a critical manner, in order to eventually forge them into a single position that serves as an argument for his own point of view. As a result, we might say that Miskawayh's argumentation strategy and concept of reception are, inter alia, characterized by critical reflection.

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[39] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 29–30.

[40] Some scholars have pointed out that in his writings Miskawayh does not use the term *tarbiya*. See, e.g., Gamal al-Din, Miskawayh 135–156.

A distinctive feature of Miskawayh's understanding of education is its deconstructive function. Here, too, elements of Aristotelianism can be discerned, for instance, when Miskawayh writes:

> Aristotle made it clear in the Book on Ethics, as well as in the Book on Categories, that a bad man may, by discipline, become good. But he did not consider this to hold absolutely, for he found that the repetition of admonitions and discipline and the good and virtuous guidance of people cannot but produce different results on different people: some are responsive to discipline and acquire virtue rapidly, while others are also responsive but acquire it slowly.[41]

This quote shows that the power of education to turn the evil in man into good is an expression of its deconstructive function. This pedagogical conception displays notable links to critical pedagogy and today's deconstructive education approaches, which address diversity in society, especially in relation to images and perceptions of gender, as well as reflections on personal beliefs, and a change of perspective in the treatment of identities, which are to be seen as social rather than predetermined biological categories.[42] In terms of the theory of education, Miskawayh also emphasizes the individuality and diversity of every person being educated, and the consequences this diversity bears on people's learning speed and learning strategies. The fact that Miskawayh picks up on education's deconstructive function and integrates it into his theory of education, proves his inventiveness and creativeness feed on the ancient Greek intellectual heritage, which he puts into practice for the benefit of the "community of Islamic discourse." This is also an indication of Miskawayh's openness to ideas from earlier cultures and religions. Miskawayh says:

> We put this in the form of a syllogism which goes as follows: Every character is subject to change. Nothing which is subject to change is natural. / Therefore, no single character is natural. The two premises are correct, and the conclusion of the syllogism follows according to the second mood of the first figure.[43]

After Miskawayh names his selection of sources, he then explains the principles of his theory of education and places them in context; finally, he applies a logical syllogism as an argumentation strategy for integrating the previously adopted Aristotelian elements into his reasoning. This process of reception and transformation is accompanied by an attempt at constructing an intellectual identity. For Miskawayh, the importance of education derives not only from its deconstructive function but also from its constructive dimension.[44] There is a reciprocal relation between these two functions of education. What would mankind be without education?

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[41] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 31.

[42] See, e.g., Hartmann, Bildung 253–278.

[43] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 31.

> If innate nature is neglected and not subjected to discipline and correction, every man will grow up in accordance with his own nature and will remain all his life in the condition in which he was in childhood, following whatever suits him naturally: whether wrath, pleasure, maliciousness, greed, or any other reprehensible disposition.[45]

Miskawayh replies to the question with a hypothetical, yet decisive, answer. The neglect of education, and the refusal to form and correct people's character, would lead to a situation where all humans grow up according to their nature and remain in a state of infancy for their entire life, subjected to their "obscene predispositions." In contrast, the constructive function of education allows people to refine their character, which contributes to the development of their personality and qualifies them for social life in a society.

6 The Teacher as a Spiritual Father and Human God

Since the teacher occupies a central position in the process of education, the pupil owes him respect, love, and obedience. Miskawayh argues:

> As for the third love, namely, [our] love of philosophers, it is nobler and superior to love of parents because the philosophers' nobility and rank become reflected in our souls, they are the causes of our real existence, and with their help we attain perfect happiness.[46]

This passage makes it clear that the third stage of love belongs to philosophers and teachers. As explained elsewhere in the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, the third stage of love lies between the first stage of love, which belongs to God, and the second stage of love, which belongs to the parents. The fact that teachers are assigned such a high stage of love, lying between those of God and the parents, is a result of the sublime position that they occupy in the education of the human soul. Moreover, teachers are said to be the cause for the real and intellectual existence of mankind because they allow people to obtain perfect happiness. Therefore, Miskawayh considers the teacher as a spiritual father and a human God (*wālid rūḥānī wa-rab basharī*), and he is obligated to educate people according to an ethical code of conduct, largely borrowed from Bryson and adapted to the sociocultural context of Miskawayh's time. Thus, a teacher's primary task lies in his role as a leader who is supposed to motivate people to engage with both the theoretical and the practical sciences in order to gain, in equal measure, intellectual and practical happiness.

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[44] This is highly reminiscent of Wolfgang Klafki's approach to the theory of education, which presents itself as critical-constructive principles of teaching.

[45] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 32.

[46] Ibid., 134.

Ascribing spiritual and divine attributes to a teacher emphasizes his preeminent pedagogical status in the education and formation process. Moreover, this connection with the spiritual and divine bears a resemblance to the pedagogical function of the Prophet Muhammad, as a broker of religious content.[47] This is significant in two respects. First, it shows the influence of the Prophet Muhammad as a role model, which, second, has a significant impact on the theory of education, in terms of the adoration and obedience involved in the teacher-pupil relationship. Moreover, the spiritual teacher-pupil relationship is marked by mystical dimensions. This mixture of philosophical, religious, and mystical ethics in Miskawayh's ideas on the theory of education was taken up by later authors, such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who is considered one of the most significant religious scholars of Islam, and the Persian theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). In the works of these authors, the path to ethical and spiritual perfection is paved with mystical elements.

7 Education as an Ongoing Duty of Every Qualified Person

A distinctive feature of Miskawayh's thoughts on the theory of education is the fact that every person qualified to be an educator is charged with an ongoing duty to do so. To be qualified, one has to have adopted an ethical code of conduct, through which one develops the aspired virtues. In this context Miskawayh writes:

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[47] Regarding the role of the Prophet Muhammad as the Muslims' *spiritus rector*, see Scheiner, Lehrer 235–268.

> Now, he who has attained in [the acquisition of] these morals a rank of which one may be proud, and has acquired through it the virtues which we have enumerated, has necessarily the obligation to educate other people and to pour out to his fellow men the gifts which God (exalted is He!) has bestowed upon him.[48]

This aspect of the theory of education highlights the necessity of a sustainable effort in education, and it implies the idea of lifelong learning, which represents a religious duty in Islamic philosophy and ethics of education. Moreover, the principle emerges that knowledge must go hand in hand with action, as it is considered an ethical requirement that a Muslim, or, in fact, the human community as a whole, rather than just an individual, should benefit from the acquired knowledge.[49] Another aspect of the theory of education is the teacher's regard for the pupil's biological and psychological conditions. From a biological point of view, Miskawayh considers childhood as the phase of life in which the pupil is most prepared to acquire knowledge and adopt the principles of ethics. Apart from the physical and social elements of education, Miskawayh also emphasizes the importance of psychological factors. Miskawayh recognizes the parents' key role in the education of a child, as can be seen from the following passage:

> It is the Law which reforms the young, accustoms them to good deeds, and prepares their souls to receive wisdom, seek virtue, and attain human happiness through sound thinking and correct reasoning. It is the duty of parents to train them to observe these and other forms of good conduct, by different methods of discipline, such as flogging if necessary, or rebukes if availing, or promises of favors or enjoyments which they like, or warnings of punishments which they fear.[50]

This passage introduces parents' responsibilities regarding the education of children, as well as the different education methods that stand at their disposal. In terms of the educational objectives, Miskawayh makes recourse to the Sharia's precepts. But, how can boys benefit from the ethical values Miskawayh extensively describes in his *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, to eventually gain complete happiness? The answer to this question reveals a number of crucial aspects of Miskawayh's approach to the reception of ancient Greek morals, his argumentation strategies, and his ideas on the theory of education. Regarding the question of whether boys can benefit from the formulated ethical values, Miskawayh distances himself notably from Aristotle.[51] Whereas Aristotle argued that boys would hardly profit from his *Nicomachean ethics*, Miskawayh justifies the mentioning of ethical values by explaining the pedagogical effects of the mere involvement with this barely accessible highest stage of happiness. In this context, Miskawayh stresses that his aim is not for the boys to reach the highest stage of happiness; rather, he seeks to convey to them the knowledge of the existence of this particular stage of happiness, which is usually only reached by certain people. For Miskawayh, the pedagogical aspect of this lies in sensitizing boys and motivating them to pursue, in the future, the highest stage of happiness, which can be reached only through personal effort and God's support. In his description of the state of those who have reached the highest stage of happiness, and who are therefore called the God-fearing (*al-muttaqūn*) and the pious (*al-abrār*), Miskawayh reverts to the Quran and the prophetic tradition.[52] He quotes from Q 32:17: "Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden [in reserve] for them—as a reward for their [good] deeds."[53] Moreover, he mentions a prophetic *ḥadīth* that describes the hidden things that are awaiting those who have reached the highest stage of happiness.[54] The use of the Quran and the prophetic tradition shows how Miskawayh infuses his ethical teaching with an Islamic-religious dimension, and how he connects Aristotelian and Islamic morals. In this context, it should also be mentioned that Miskawayh leaves both the Quranic passage and the quote from the prophetical tradition without comment. As a result, he merely employs their ethical and pedagogical aspect to support his argumentation.

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[48] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 49.

[49] Cf. Günther, Bildung 211.

[50] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 32.

Altogether, we have seen that there is a dynamic relationship between Miskawayh's basic ethical ideals and principles and Aristotle's moral philosophy. Moreover, it can be concluded that the applied methods of representation and argumentation suggest an approach to the reception of concepts from his own and other cultures, which, apparently, lays claim to universal validity. Yet, it should also be noted, throughout the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* Miskawayh mentions the Sharia 35 times, without providing a concrete definition or any criteria for it. At a later stage of this article I shall illustrate the context in which he mentions the Sharia.

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[51] It should be noted that with Aristotle the term "boys" refers not only to children but also to people who act like children by following their sensory desires.

[52] Cf. Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb* 92.

[53] Based on the English translation of the Quran by Ali, *Holy Qur'ān*.

[54] Cf. Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb* 92–93.

8 The Social and Practical-Educational Dimension of Religion

What is the role of the religious elements in Miskawayh's reflections on the theory of education? Scholars have predominantly presented Miskawayh as a Shiʿite philosopher of classical Islam, although the secondary scholarship has not investigated the Shiʿite aspects of his thought that much. Yet, his remarks on religious content cast significant doubt on this assessment. Instead, we are confronted with a reflective objectivity regarding the formulation of theologically relevant ethical and theoretical-educational content, which is far from adopting any dogmatic position. Whenever Miskawayh has recourse to religious content and concepts and integrates them into his argumentation, he limits himself primarily to the social dimension of Islamic-religious content and rituals, such as the pilgrimage or the Friday and communal prayer, as can be seen from the following quote:

> It is indeed to help develop this fellowship that both the Law and good custom have enjoined people to invite one another and to meet in banquets. Possibly the Law made it an obligation on people to meet five times a day in their mosques and preferred communal prayer to individual prayer in order that they may experience this inborn fellowship which is the origin of all love and which exists in them in potency. In this way, this inborn fellowship would become actual, and would then be strengthened by the right beliefs which bind them together.[55]

Miskawayh's usage of the term "faith" in the plural (*al-iʿtiqādāt*) in this context is highly significant. While the text is directed at a discourse community informed by Islam, it also clearly implies and acknowledges religious pluralism within society. This is also reflected in the way Miskawayh employs the term "religion" (*dīn*), which appears in the text only 13 times in the singular and once in the plural (*diyānāt*). While Miskawayh does not define the concept of Sharia, he provides a brief, broad definition of religion: "For religion is a divine condition which leads men voluntarily to supreme happiness."[56] Miskawayh also argues that the social significance of religious practices derives from human interaction, which produces and renews love and friendship between people, and which represents the ultimate goal of religion/Islam. The following passage from the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* shows that Miskawayh also tries to consider Islamic-religious commandments and prohibitions from a rational point of view:

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[55] Miskawayh, *Refinement* 127.

[56] Ibid., 128.

> He should be trained to avoid drinking water during his meals. As for wine and the different kinds of intoxicating beverages, let him indeed beware of them, for they injure him in his body and in his soul and incite him to quick anger, foolhardiness, the performance of vile deeds, impudence, and the other blameworthy dispositions. Nor should he attend drinking parties, except when the company is well-bred and virtuous; otherwise, he might hear vile speech and silly things that usually take place in such parties.[57]

This passage illustrates how Miskawayh discusses, in rational terms, an issue that is considered prohibited within the discourse community coined by Islam. He does not mention the Islamic prohibition against alcohol, and instead emphasizes the rationally verifiable detriments of wine consumption on the learning and education process. This reveals not only Miskawayh's rational approach to religious phenomena but also the particular significance that he attributes to reason vis-à-vis revelation. In light of the fact that Miskawayh, as he openly declares,[58] has adopted the chapter on the education of boys from Bryson, we might ask ourselves, to what degree he has revised Bryson's ideas to insert them into an Islamic context. There is no obvious answer to this question, all the more so since Miskawayh does not mention which version of Bryson's work he used.

9 Conclusion

Based on a discussion of Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, the present article has brought out the defining features of the educational discourse of classical Islam and analyzed them in their context. Moreover, the passages quoted from the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* have illustrated the ways in which Miskawayh received and contextually transformed the ancient Greek intellectual heritage. In doing so, a particular focus was placed on the relation between education and religion. At this point, several conclusions might be drawn from the preceding analysis. First, Miskawayh considered his method of reception of ancient Greek moral philosophy to be in line with the Islamic view of the world and God. Second, for Miskawayh education and religion complement each other, as he unifies the multiplicity of philosophical and Islamic-religious morals. One of Miskawayh's argumentation strategies that, in particular, highlights the author's role is his avoidance of the directly dogmatic use of religious content. Third, it has emerged from the analysis that education, ethics, religion, and philosophy are key terms in Miskawayh's thoughts on the theory of education, and that they interact with each other in a dynamic relationship. And, while education represents the process and result of the involvement with theoretical and practical sciences,[59] the framework for the acquisition of this knowledge is provided by ethics, as a process of self-reflection and reflection of one's behavior vis-à-vis the other, both within and beyond the common human experience. In terms of its content, ethics entails elements from various philosophies and religions.

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[57] Ibid., 53.

[58] "A section on the education of the young, and of boys in particular, most of which I have copied from the work of 'Bryson'." Ibid., 50.

The present case study has shown that Miskawayh's reception concept is selective and critically integrates a number of ethical and philosophical elements, both from his own and other cultures. At this point it should be noted that Miskawayh's reception of ancient Greek thought cannot be examined on the basis of the paradigms of today's scientific culture, especially since such an approach might produce a distorted and subjective image of the process of reception as merely an act of apathetic imitation and repetition. Instead, Miskawayh's reception and transformation of ancient Greek philosophy ought to be examined in the sociocultural and political context of his time. The criteria for such an examination must also be derived from that classical period of the Islamic history of ideas, which is likely to have considered the reception of this kind of intellectual thought an expression of intellectual innovation. Moreover, it can be said that Miskawayh's reception of chosen sources highlights the universality of the human mind, which crosses space and time.

The novelty of Miskawayh's concept of reception also lies in his transformation of the critically selected thoughts of various philosophers, which at times contradict each other, into a new harmonic paradigm that meets the sociocultural expectations of his discursive community. As a result, Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* ought to be read as a reflection of his ethical and theoretical-educational thought. A central result of this case study concerns Miskawayh's attempt at constructing, in light of the reconciliation of the truths of revelation and reason, an integrative approach based on education and ethics. Altogether, Miskawayh's reflections on ethics and the theory of education are characterized by a pronounced openness to elements from other cultures and religions.

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[59] Cf. Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb* 39.

His thought is also marked by a rational approach to religious phenomena, an understanding of ethics as a universal human good, and an emphasis on critical thinking in relation to theoretical and practical knowledge.

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CHAPTER 10

Teaching Ignorance: The Case of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)

Paul L. Heck

It is no secret that scholars continue to grapple with the skepticism of the famed scholar of classical Islam Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who is most well-known for his attempts to renew the arena of religious learning in his day.[1] This paper seeks to offer further precision on the nature of his skepticism by highlighting its pedagogical function. In a recent publication, Sebastian Günther demonstrates that al-Ghazālī was a meticulous pedagogue.[2] Indeed, in what follows, we aim to give further substance to the idea that the skeptical aspects of his thought are meant to serve his pedagogical goals. Teaching ignorance! Of course, it was not his ultimate goal to encourage his students to feel they can know nothing, but doing so was a necessary step in teaching them how to know things as they really are. In that sense, al-Ghazālī is using skepticism to develop a new approach to learning.

As is well known, al-Ghazālī renewed the religious sciences by locating them within the framework of his "science of the other world" (*ʿilm al-ākhira*). In this way, he sought to establish a new kind of scholastic approach to learning, a mystical scholasticism that built upon, but also went beyond, the philosophical scholasticism that had come to predominate, especially subsequent to the system of thought formulated by Avicenna.

In this sense, it is worth noting the connection of al-Ghazālī's educational project to his philosophical one, as featured in other studies in this collection. He is grappling with the limitations of the traditional educational approaches in his day, in which scholastic methods predominated. He does not seek to do away with them when it comes to education, but he also recognizes more is needed in order for a religious education to be fully cultivated in his students. He is posing the questions: What does it mean to know? Is it simply a set of definitions to be learned? Or does it include something more? And, if it includes something more than definitions, how is that to be conveyed?

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[1] For recent analysis of al-Ghazālī's skepticism, see Kukkonen, Skepticism and Halevi, Doubts.

[2] Günther, The principles.

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Closely related to al-Ghazālī's use of skepticism for his pedagogical project is the monistic tendency noticeable across his writings. This aspect of his thought—the idea that the only existent is God—has also been the focus of recent scholarly attention.[3] Here, we show the connection between the two, between his skepticism and his monism. Al-Ghazālī encouraged doubt about the claims of the philosophers to have a surer knowledge of God than that given in the revelation conveyed by Muhammad, but he in no way dismissed the power of philosophical reasoning. Rather, his skeptical attacks on philosophy were a way to open the ground to a new approach to knowing—a new kind of scholasticism. The new scholasticism that al-Ghazālī would formulate did not do away with reasoning, but rather depended upon seeing as much as reasoning. It thus required a monistic view of existence in order that God might be manifest in existence in some fashion, so as to be "seen."

However, al-Ghazālī was careful to maintain scholastic boundaries within this new method of learning. Already by his time, in mystical circles, the sense of God's self-disclosure was not unknown, but the seeing in question here did not result from mystical disclosure (*kashf*), even if al-Ghazālī acknowledged that certain saintly figures did experience such disclosure. Rather, the seeing in question resulted from mystical knowledge (*maʿrifa*)—or awareness of all things being with God, so that one might "see" God as the singular agent of the entirety of existence, even if existence in the immediate sense is experienced as multiple and divided. It was thus necessary for al-Ghazālī to posit a monistic framework such that God's existence could be "seen" in some fashion in the world and not simply demonstrated by philosophical reasoning. In other words, for al-Ghazālī, the mystical "experience" is primarily an experience with cognitive value. The fact that the mystical aspect of al-Ghazālī's thought implies a kind of knowledge, rather than a disclosure, makes it difficult to know whether al-Ghazālī was in fact committed to a monistic conception of existence in reality, but he certainly had to assume it in order to develop the scholastic approach underlying his larger pedagogical project.

1 Background

The thought of al-Ghazālī did not appear in a vacuum. His conception of monotheism, which veers in the direction of monism, has roots in the teachings of Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910), considered one of the architects of Sufism as a scholarly system, who posited four levels of monotheism, the highest of which raised the veil between knower and known (God). Another influence on the thought of al-Ghazālī is the work of Avicenna. Much of the Greco-Hellenistic heritage of philosophy had been translated into Arabic under ʿAbbasid patronage over the course of the ninth century, and during the following century this heritage was gradually integrated into Islam's scholarly circles. Avicenna (d. 1037) represents a high point in this process, but also a serious challenge. Refining the thinking of his predecessors, notably al-Fārābī (d. 950), Avicenna came to the conclusion that the revealed message of Islam has a purpose in society for the common people, as an agent of order, but it does not offer the certainty of demonstrable proof, as established by the philosophical method. It thus has no ethical claim on the learned elite! In order to counter this claim, al-Ghazālī was faced with the challenge of showing the learned elite of his day that they were confused about the nature and purpose of revelation. In other words, he had to inform them of their own ignorance! To address the learned elite on their own terms, al-Ghazālī certainly had to adopt the ideas of Avicenna, but his philosophy posed a threat to the integrity of revelation as a meta-rational phenomenon originating in divine speech, rather than, as Avicenna stated, as a special product of human reasoning. It was thus necessary to humble the philosophers, something al-Ghazālī accomplished with the use of skepticism. In that sense, his skepticism is thus functional rather than existential—that is, it is a means to an end and not an end per se.

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[3] See Treiger, Monism; and Griffel, Cosmology.

Of course, questions about the meaning and status of the names of God featured prominently in the debates around the relation of philosophical methodology and divine revelation in terms of approaches to the acquisition of knowledge. What is the content of the names of God? If God disclosed God's names through revelation, then how can the human mind hope to comprehend them? Thus, like all Islamic scholars, al-Ghazālī took part in the ongoing debates over the names of God.

In addition to the name of Allah, God has 99 other names or attributes. He is creator, provider, powerful, merciful. He is just. He sees and hears. He knows. He gives life, puts to death, and makes people rise again. These and other names or attributes are important for Islam's liturgical life, since they inform Muslims of what they are worshipping. However, the idea that God has many names or attributes raises questions about the oneness of God. Surely, these names or attributes cannot simply be metaphors. If so, how would the believer know what God is in reality? At the same time, if they are not simply metaphors, they apply to God and so are eternal as God is eternal (that is, they have no origin). But, this is to suggest that God is not the only thing without origin. Is there, then, a plurality in the godhead? Scholars proposed various solutions,[4] and al-Ghazālī would leave his own mark on the debate, as we will see. His main interest, of course, was in knowing (and teaching) the content of the divine names. Again, how can the human mind grasp the meaning of divinely revealed knowledge about God? It is worth noting here that al-Ghazālī treated the question of the divine names or attributes in a highly philosophical milieu. It is true that he saw the names or attributes of God foremost as standards for the ethical life in Islam, but his treatment of the question offered him a way to introduce into the scholastic discussions of his day the idea of learned ignorance, as the form of skepticism by which to counter the claims of philosophy. Can philosophers pretend to acquire knowledge of the names of God—that is, their meanings, which constitute knowledge of the divine reality—through a scholastic methodology?

2 Learned Ignorance

It is best to describe al-Ghazālī's skepticism as learned ignorance. What do we mean by learned ignorance? We find the idea, if not always the exact term, in the writings of several figures from the intellectual history of European Christianity. Perhaps the most famous representative of learned ignorance in that context is Nicholas of Cusa, or Cusanus (d. 1464).[5] He was a figure of some influence in the Western church during the fifteenth century, as well as being involved in the scholastic debates of the period over the relation of mystical experience to scholastic theology.[6] Like al-Ghazālī, Cusanus spoke to questions about the nature of mystical theology as a kind of knowing.[7] Also, like al-Ghazālī, he operated in a highly scholastic context. Also, like al-Ghazālī, he was interested in the reform of religion. Also, like al-Ghazālī, he did not reject the scholastic mindset, but he was troubled by its excessively rationalistic method. The central question for both al-Ghazālī and Cusanus involved the nature of knowledge. How do we know things, not as they are (that is, as part of a rational order created by God and comprehensible to human reasoning), but as they *really* are (that is, as they exist in or with God)? To put it another way: Do we have knowledge because there is a rational order, in which everything has a causal nature that the mind can comprehend and define in relation to other things? Or, do we have knowledge because we have knowledge of the meta-rational source of this rational order—that is, the origin in which all things have their existence in reality?

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[4] See, for example, Allard, *Problème*.

[5] Hopkins, Nicholas of Cusa.

[6] It is worth noting that comparison has already been made between Cusanus and the thought of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), who, of course, is known to have drawn upon and developed al-Ghazālī's vision. See Smirnov, Ibn ʿArabī.

[7] The goal here is not to speak to Cusanus' thought per se, but rather, to use it as backdrop to al-Ghazālī's. Much can be gained from a fuller comparison of the two figures. The scholarly literature on Cusanus is vast. By way of example, see Guzman Miroy, *Tracing*; Hudson, *Becoming God*; Casarella, *Cusanus*; Izbicki/Bellitto, *Nicholas of Cusa*.

Neither al-Ghazālī nor Cusanus was anti-rational. The thought of each is complex but also intelligible. Still, the ultimate goal for each was not to reach more exact definitions of things through the methods of philosophical scholasticism, but rather, to develop a new method of learning by which to see things as they exist with God (that is, as they *really* are), which will here be called mystical scholasticism. (We could also refer to it as mystical theology.) Thus, in addition to comprehending the world rationally (via human reasoning), we can more perfectly understand its true reality by *seeing* it (that is, by comprehending it as it exists in its meta-rational source). Again, reason is not dismissed. Rather, the point is that reason, if properly used, will lead one to the conclusion that greater certainty is to be reached by a manner of learning beyond the limitations and shortcomings of human reasoning.

Al-Ghazālī and Cusanus, each in his own way, promoted this approach and, to defend it against philosophical scholasticism, made use of the concept of learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia* in the parlance of Cusanus). They did not reject the idea of a rational order, created by God and comprehensible to human reasoning, but they did reject the notion that the methodology of philosophical scholasticism could yield surer knowledge of the quiddity (that is, true reality) of God *ex creaturis*. Because of the infinite nature of God, one cannot reason back to the creator through analogy from finite creatures. God is infinite, making it impossible to be certain about statements made about God through analogy to the finite. Thus, the learned scholar should know that he knows nothing in this respect, and that scholastic *ratio* can only confirm our ignorance of the quiddity of God.

Here, then, we are faced with a particular kind of skepticism, which is purposeful, leading not to a dead end but to a new way of knowing, whereby one proceeds by seeing as much as by reasoning. How does the shift from reasoning to seeing occur? God is infinite in both essence and attributes, and so the scholastic *ratio* is incapable of securing certain knowledge of God, for the reasons just explained. This, in turn, raises a question about our knowledge of all beings. If we cannot know anything about the source of being (that is, God) via philosophical scholasticism, how can we know anything with certainty, also via philosophical scholasticism, about the beings that originate in that source?

Knowledge of the reality of creation is greatly jeopardized as a result of our ignorance of its originating source. We cannot know the reality of creatures if we cannot know the reality of their creator.

Another approach is thus needed. We must seek to know the incomprehensible (God) incomprehensibly (that is, by a method beyond scholastic *ratio*). How is this to happen? Learned ignorance teaches us that God has no definition or limit by which to be defined. But, this conclusion itself teaches us something. Learned ignorance does not simply teach us that we cannot know God by scholastic *ratio*. It also teaches us that God has no opposite—that is, no boundary against which to be defined—since God is infinite. God is thus not to be defined, neither as being the world, nor as not being the world or other than the world. If God has no limit in that sense, then God is in sight—not the sight of the physical eye but the sight of the eye of the mind (*oculus mentis* in the parlance of Cusanus). Once one has comprehended the incomprehensible quiddity of God—that is, once one has grasped the concept of learned ignorance—one is able to take the next step, moving beyond philosophical scholasticism so as to see the world as it exists with God, and not simply as it exists in view of the rational order created by God.

Learned ignorance thus brings about a shift in methodology from reasoning to seeing—again, seeing not by the physical eye but, rather, by the unlimited eye of the mind. It is not the eye of the mind alone, of course, but the eye of the mystically educated mind. A certain appreciation, if not actual experience, of the mystical is needed. Mysticism, then, for both al-Ghazālī and Cusanus, is a kind of knowledge, making it part of the scholastic project even while challenging the preeminence of its philosophical methodology. Here, the intellect remains intellect, but it is not limited to knowledge acquired by the senses or through strictly philosophical reasoning. Since the scope of what the mind can know is potentially unlimited, the intellect enjoys the capacity to see (again, still in a scholastic sense) the unlimited quiddity of God, even if doing so incomprehensibly (confusedly—*ḥayratan*—in the parlance of al-Ghazālī).

It is worth noting that there is no single term for learned ignorance in the Arabo-Islamic heritage. However, the idea is embodied in a saying attributed to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 634), a leading Companion of Muhammad and his first successor (caliph) as leader of the community (*umma*) of Muhammad. The saying is as follows: "The inability to comprehend is a kind of comprehension" (*al-ʿajz ʿan al-idrāk idrāk*). One could ask about the origin of the idea in Islam. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, there was a tradition of skepticism in Islam, even if it did not always take the same contours as the traditions of skepticism in ancient Greece and modern Europe. Al-Ghazālī was well aware of the tradition of skepticism in Islam. It features most famously in his so-called autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*The deliverer from error*), in which he narrates the crisis of doubt that he experienced at the height of his teaching career.[8] He also knew the precise terminology of skepticism, such as "the equivalence of (equally compelling but mutually opposite) arguments" (*takāfuʾ al-adilla*), as can be seen in his overview of logic, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* (*The standard of knowledge*), which devotes a section to the topic. For our purposes here, it is enough to note that the idea of learned ignorance was essential for al-Ghazālī to counter the ascendancy of Avicenna's philosophy as the surest approach to knowledge and its resultant claim that God's revealed message of heaven and hell is nothing more than socially useful, but rationally indemonstrable, knowledge. In this fashion, al-Ghazālī took advantage of one aspect of the philosophical method (skepticism) in order to deflate the claim that philosophical reasoning alone offered the surest approach to knowledge of God and of all being(s). In other words, while challenging philosophy, al-Ghazālī never entirely left its domain.

To sum up: Learned ignorance claims that we cannot know the quiddity of things by scholastic *ratio*, chiefly the quiddity of God. God is incomprehensible because there is no basis for comparison between the finite, which we know, and the infinite, which we do not know. As a result, we also cannot know the quiddity or reality of finite things (even if we do know them in a certain sense through philosophical examination), because their cause (that is, the being in which they originate), God, is incomprehensible. We thus need another approach to the entire question of knowledge and knowing. We must seek to know the incomprehensible incomprehensibly—that is, we must seek to know God (the incomprehensible) by a method beyond scholastic *ratio*. Only then can we hope to know the quiddity of things as they *really* are. The point, then, is to begin the scholastic process directly from God rather than creation (*ex creaturis*)—from seeing rather than from reasoning analogically. By not knowing, then, one begins from God, who is not other (*non aliud*), since, as incomprehensible and indefinable, God is without limit, making God everything in a certain sense—that is, in or with everything as its causal origin. Thus, one sees God's relation with the world (that is, sees things as they are in or with God), viewing the world (in the parlance of Cusanus) as God unfolded or (in the parlance of al-Ghazālī) as God manifested.

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[8] Menn, Discourse.

3 The Highest Goal in Explaining the Most Beautiful Names of God

The idea of learned ignorance and its place in al-Ghazālī's thought can best be seen in *al-Maqṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā* (*The highest goal in explaining the most beautiful names of God*).[9] The work is divided into three sections, the longest of which is the middle section, in which al-Ghazālī details the meaning of each of the 99 names of God. The point in doing so is to encourage people to identify with the names of God, thereby forming their souls, in the ethics of Islam, as measured by God's attributes. The names or attributes of God therefore cannot be obscured if one is to be able to identify with them (at least in terms of their ethical meaning and not in terms of their ontological weight), and it is for this purpose that al-Ghazālī goes to great lengths to detail their meanings, even such names as might seem exclusive to God. Indeed, he says it is possible to identify even with the primary name of God, Allah, in a kind of *theosis* (*ta'allah*), whereby the believer does not become God but thoroughly immerses his heart and aspiration in God, seeing nothing but God, heeding no one but God, putting hope in nothing but God, and having fear of no one but God. Al-Ghazālī's explanation of God's names is highly philosophical. Again, the reason for this is to enable people to make sense of them by the human mind so as to be able to identify with them, thereby making God's ethical qualities one's own in a sense. More specifically, the goal of this highly philosophical delineation of God's names is to encourage the idea that, in Islam, the rational faculty is to have mastery over the appetitive and irascible faculties of the soul. For example, when explaining God's name as "ruler" (*malik*), al-Ghazālī first describes "ruler" as the one who needs nothing, whereas everything needs him. This sense of the name is exclusive to God. The human being cannot be ruler in this absolute way, but he does possess a realm in his heart and soul where he can rule over his soldiers (his appetite, anger, and passion) and his subjects (his tongue, eyes, hands, and all bodily members). If he rules them and they do not rule him, if they obey him and he does not obey them, he will attain the rank of ruler in this realm. In that sense, he can take on this name of God at least in terms of its ethical import. Al-Ghazālī is stressing the ethical import of God's names. He is not suggesting any shared human-divine ontology. Still, by identifying with God's names, one is able to aspire to otherworldly existence, even before parting from this world; the failure to identify with them leaves one at the subhuman level of the beasts. Thus, by identifying with God's names, one shares, in some fashion, with God's lordliness but not with God's divinity.

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[9] Al-Ghazālī, al-Maqṣad; see also Shehadi, Unknowable God.

If this were all al-Ghazālī had to say about the divine names, we could conclude that he was simply working to align the language of Islam more closely with the concepts and categories of philosophy, as scholars prior to him had done. However, the first section of the work suggests another purpose. There, al-Ghazālī questions the very possibility of applying names—qualitative limits—to the divine essence. He begins by taking a strong position against those who say the name is the same as the thing named (*res significata*; in Arabic, *al-musammā*). Such a claim—that the name is the same as the thing named—results in a number of theological conundrums. On the one hand, it implies the quiddity or reality of God is simply a set of verbal expressions in Arabic. On the other hand, it suggests the names of God are themselves divine, meaning that Muslims worship names, the names describing the divine reality, rather than the divine reality itself. The point is that the names themselves, as verbal expressions, exist only on the tongues of humans. It is not the verbal expressions of the names applied to a thing that represent the thing's reality but, rather, the conceptual meanings of these names. In other words, a thing is not its names but, rather, what those names mean conceptually. In this way, al-Ghazālī is setting the stage for the middle section of the work, where he explains the "content" of the divine names in philosophical categories, in order for the human mind to be able to grasp them and so identify with them. At the same time, he has also left the door open for learned ignorance. Even if it is possible to know something of the divine names in order to derive ethical benefit from them, it is still clear that the quiddity of a thing cannot be totally captured in the names applied to it, even if these names do describe it. Al-Ghazālī is not a theological obscurantist, but he does emphasize the limits of knowing. For example, God's name as "creator" does indeed describe God but does not totally capture his quiddity as creator. In short, philosophy, discursive reasoning, is central to theology, but it also raises the question as to whether the names, even in their conceptual meaning and not only verbal expression, can capture the quiddity of a thing, especially the quiddity of God.

After a complex discussion, al-Ghazālī finally gets to the point. If you were to ask, he says, about the ultimate knowledge about God that can be reached by those who know God, you would have to say that it is their inability to know Him (*al-ʿajz ʿan maʿrifatihi*). In other words, if those who know God truly know God, they will know that they do not know God's quiddity (or reality) and cannot possibly know it. In this way, al-Ghazālī exposes the limits of naming things through human reasoning.

This is no resignation to mystery! Indeed, he notes, those skilled in logic know by demonstrable proof that they cannot know the quiddity of God. Here, then, we see philosophy—learning—in the service of ignorance. To confirm the point, al-Ghazālī cites the saying attributed to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq that the inability to comprehend is a kind of comprehension. He further explains: "No creature can have the enjoyment of observing the true essence of God except confusedly (*ḥayratan*)."[10] Al-Ghazālī has thus paved the way for a closer relation between scholastic method and mystical theology: knowing the incomprehensible God incomprehensibly! Here is the text:

> If you said: What is the endpoint of the knowledge of the knowers of God the Exalted (*nihāyat maʿrifat al-ʿārifīn bi-llāh taʿālā*)? We would say: The endpoint of the knowledge of the knowers is their inability to know (*ʿajzuhum ʿan al-maʿrifa*). Their knowledge in truth is that they do not know Him; that it is completely impossible to know Him; that it is impossible that anyone but God the Mighty and Majestic know God with true knowledge encompassing the essence (or full extent, *kunh*) of the attributes of lordship (*ṣifāt al-rubūbiyya*). If that is disclosed to them by demonstrable proof (*inkishāf burhānī*), as we noted it, they would know it, that is, they would reach the endpoint that it is possible for creation (humanity) to know. This is what the great righteous one Abū Bakr, God be pleased with him, alluded to when he said: "The inability to grasp comprehension is a kind of comprehension." Indeed, this is what the master of humanity (Muhammad), God's prayer and peace upon him, meant when saying: "I do not count praise of You as You have praised yourself." He did not mean that he knew about Him what his tongue did not comply in expressing. Rather, the meaning is: "I do not encompass your praises and the attributes of your divinity, but you alone encompass it." Thus, no creature, in examining the reality of His essence (*ḥaqīqiyyat dhātihi*) obtains other than confusion and stupefaction. As for the scope of knowledge, it lies in knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of His names and attributes.[11]

It is worth noting that al-Ghazālī speaks of learned ignorance as one of two paths to knowledge of God. He is thus not rejecting philosophical scholasticism, only dethroning it. The first path to knowledge of God is comparison (analogy). In this sense, we think of God's attributes in terms of what we know of them in ourselves. God is powerful, knowing, living, speaking, generous, and so on. We think of these names or attributes by analogy—that is, as we do our own human experience of being powerful, knowing, living, speaking, being generous, and so on. This approach is not without merit, but like Cusanus, al-Ghazālī claims that it is deficient, since, ultimately, no comparison can bridge the divide between the human creature and the divine creator. We might say that God is generous as we are, only more, but it would still fall short of God's infinity and thus knowledge of the true reality of God as generous. Al-Ghazālī says it is like describing sexual intercourse to a pre-adolescent youth by comparing it to the sweetness of sugar. The comparison is not without merit, but it still falls short of the mark. Comparative definition, however useful in describing something alien to one's experience, still cannot convey knowledge of the thing as it really is.

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[10] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad* 54.

[11] Ibid.

As both al-Ghazālī and Cusanus maintain, you have to be a thing—you have to experience it—in order to know it, but humans can in no way pretend to be God or have the experience of being God, as a pre-adolescent youth might expect one day to have experiential knowledge of the pleasure of sexual intercourse. This is where we catch sight of the second path to knowledge of God. Knowledge of God's quiddity is only possible if we are like God in some fashion, but this is completely blocked to humans since we share nothing with God in terms of what is specific to God's quiddity. Indeed, our ignorance is not limited to God's essence; rather, it extends even to His names or attributes. Only God can know them as they really are. For us, they are only names that we imperfectly compare to our own experience of these attributes. We describe God as maker and governor of the world, for example, but we do not know what these descriptions truly mean in reality when applied to God.

It must be emphasized again that al-Ghazālī is not dismissing rationally obtained knowledge in favor of mystery. As mentioned earlier, he is making a wholly philosophical argument for learned ignorance. It is not enough to say "powerful" or "knowing" or even "creator" when we are asked what God is. Such names do not fully capture the quiddity of God. Al-Ghazālī is willing to consider a compelling philosophical definition of God: "God is what exists necessarily (that is, without cause) and from which all that can possibly exist has existence."[12] But this way of naming God is also rejected, since it describes God only in terms of God's causality—that is, God's causal relation to creation—and not in terms of God's quiddity per se apart from His causal agency. Such a philosophical definition, no matter how compelling, is still based upon analogical reasoning of a kind and does not explain what God is. God's quiddity is beyond names, whether verbal expressions on the tongue, or conceptual meanings that we derive by philosophical reasoning. Here, al-Ghazālī only hints at the solution to the philosophical dilemma of philosophical reasoning leading to ignorance: learned ignorance! Indeed, in this work, he comes close to, but rejects, the idea of resemblance between divine creator and human creature as a solution to the dilemma. However, short of admitting affinity between humanity and divinity, he does speak of the idea of monistic existence.[13] By philosophical reasoning, the learned may come to know that all there is to know about God is our inability to know Him.

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[12] Ibid., 50.

However, there is another class of elite believers, those who realize all existence is one. All exists in or with God. In this sense, they can know God, not by reasoning, but by seeing—not seeing God directly but insofar as all exists in or with Him. There are thus two kinds of scholastic knowers, the philosophical and the mystical. They are distinguished by the way they respond when asked what they know of God. As al-Ghazālī puts it, the learned should say, "No one other than God knows God." But the truly learned should say, "I know only God."[14] This second type of knower is making this claim not solely on the basis of philosophical reasoning, but rather, on the basis of mystical reasoning building upon philosophical reasoning. Learned ignorance teaches that it is impossible to know anything about God via philosophical reasoning, but here the second knower makes a positive statement about his knowledge of God: "I know only God." He makes this claim on the basis of learned ignorance, which teaches not only that philosophical reasoning has no knowledge to offer about God but also that God has no limit and is therefore not other than the world. There is nothing in existence except God and God's works, and so such a knower as this looks upon sky, earth, and trees, not as they are (that is, as part of a rationally comprehensible order), but as they *really* are—as they exist in or with God, in the sense of having their origin (that is, being) in God's power and as always being with God in that sense. Thus, just as one can say that he sees only the sun when beholding its rays stretching over the mountains, similarly, one can say, "I know only God and I see only God." Everything in existence is a light from the lights of God, and a trace from the traces of the pre-eternal power of God.[15]

The fact that al-Ghazālī is not encouraging the mystical experience per se, but is, rather, introducing a new kind of scholastic framework can be seen from the chapter on monotheism in his magnum opus, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (*The revivification of the religious sciences*).[16] He begins the chapter by posing a dilemma.

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[13] Ibid., 58.

[14] Ibid., 59.

[15] Ibid., 58–59.

[16] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* iv, 322–374.

Usually, people think about things in either one of two ways. In the first, one looks at the world according to its own system of causality, but this is to fall into polytheism, since looking at the world in such a fashion awards causal agency to something other than God. In the second way, one does not bother at all about such things, thinking nothing of causes, but this is to fall into immorality, since, when one thinks that God is the cause of all, it becomes irrelevant whether one adheres to the way of Islam or not; one need not do anything if one has no causal agency. This is the dilemma that leads to skepticism. We simply do not know the causal reality of things behind appearances. But, in the hands of al-Ghazālī, skepticism serves a purpose, as discussed above—namely, to introduce a new way of thinking about a question—and this is exactly what al-Ghazālī undertakes over the course of this chapter, by developing a conception of monotheism that includes the possibility of seeing God as the ultimate agent of all things without, however, undermining the cognitive (and thus moral) capacity of human beings.

The crux of his argument depends on the way he classifies monotheism into four categories. The first, is the monotheism of the hypocrite who avers that there is no god but the God (Allah) and yet does not believe it in his heart. The second, is the monotheism of the unlearned masses of Muslims who say and believe that there is no god but the God. The third and the fourth levels of monotheism are integral to al-Ghazālī's purposes. In the third level, one sees all things from two perspectives—as many and divided, but as originating in one agent, namely, God. This, of course, is difficult even for the learned scholastic to grasp: How, al-Ghazālī's interlocutor queries, is it conceivable to see only one when we see sky, earth, and all the other sensible bodies as many? How are the many one? As for the fourth level of monotheism, it is the monotheism of the mystical scholars who no longer see the many, only the one. Indeed, they are no longer aware even of themselves, having become annihilated in monotheism (*al-fanāʾ fī l-tawḥīd*). Al-Ghazālī has no interest in exploring this highest level of monotheism, since it lies beyond the purview of scholastic inquiry, but it does serve his purposes as the grounding for his new scholastic framework, mystical scholasticism. This new framework is operative, in the scholastic sense, in the third level of monotheism, where theological inquiry is possible; that is, this kind of monotheism is related to, but is not simply the result of, mystical experience. One can actually argue one's way to it. Two things, however, stand in the way of seeing the many things of existence as originating in the causal singularity of God—the idea that animals have volition of their own, and the idea that physical things (such as rain) are the real cause behind change (such as vegetal growth). Through argumentation too complicated to spell out here, al-Ghazālī gradually initiates his reader into another way of thinking about the rational order of creation, whereby one looks at things, not in themselves (and thus as part of a causally related and rationally comprehensible order), but insofar as they ultimately originate in the singular agency of God. In that sense, the scholastic can "see" the oneness of the many things of existence. He may not be able to see it as directly as the mystic experiences it, but this mystically informed *ratio* nevertheless "alerts him in general to the manner of the destiny of the many as one" (*yunabbihuhu fī l-jumla ʿalā kayfiyyat maṣīr al-kathra fī ḥukm al-mushāhada wāḥidan*).[17] All of this is to say that al-Ghazālī's project remains thoroughly scholastic even when veering in the direction of mystical—and monistic—insight.

4 Monism

The monistic vision of al-Ghazālī, the first inklings of which appear in *The highest goal* as the consequence of the argument for learned ignorance, is more fully stated in *Mishkāt al-anwār* (*The niche of lights*).[18] There, al-Ghazālī explores the new possibilities of knowledge afforded by the monistic vision, which, again, is the (perhaps unintended) consequence of learned ignorance. A system of rational causality remains in place, but the focus is on seeing things, not just seeing them, but seeing them as they really are in or with God: The knowers here are those who, when they see things, see them with God. It is a kind of knowing that al-Ghazālī, like Cusanus, calls taste (*dhawq*), which operates, he makes clear, not according to analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), but in terms of mystical consciousness (*wijdān*).[19] So, his system of learning begins as a form of scholastic inquiry, as suggested above in relation to the chapter on monotheism in al-Ghazālī's magnum opus, but it is best described in terms of a mystical rather than a philosophical kind of *ratio*. The education of the *wijdān* is as vital as that of the *ʿaql*.

Like Cusanus, al-Ghazālī here speaks of existence in terms of the light of God. All existence has existence insofar as there is light for it to be seen, but nothing has light on its own. All light is borrowed from the light of God. The only real light is God's light. All else is light only metaphorically. One sees this light, not with physical sight, but with the intellect—al-Ghazālī calls it the "inner eye of the heart." As the physical eye cannot see without the light of the sun, so the inner eye of the intellect cannot see without the light of God's speech. In other words, one must undergo mystical training in God's revelation. It is impossible, al-Ghazālī says, to reach this vantage point by analogy or comparison (a clear reference to *The highest goal*). However, with the illumination of God's speech, the intellect is actualized, becoming able to see a thing, not as it is in itself, but as it is in or with God. Without this insight, it remains in darkness—that is, unknown as it really is.

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[17] Ibid., iv, 327.

[18] Al-Ghazālī, Mishkāt al-anwār.

[19] Ibid., 38.

In this work, *The niche of lights*, al-Ghazālī shows his commitment to syllogistic reasoning, but he also notes his recognition of its limits. The philosophical method that seeks definitions is confronted with the infinite, necessitating mystical seeing alongside philosophical reasoning. Within this new scholastic framework, the intellect, bearing a resemblance to God on the basis of the light that it derives from God's light, is no longer bound to finite definitions, but rather, is able to grasp the infinite (*fī quwwatihi idrāk mā lā nihāyata lahu*).[20] It is not limited to knowing things in philosophical categories, but can see things with the sight of prophets and saints. Here, al-Ghazālī distinguishes between the rational spirit, in terms of syllogistic reasoning, and the higher holy prophetic spirit, in terms of what the eye of the mind can see beyond the rational order, apparently including contradictory opposites, something impossible for syllogistic reasoning, which is bound by the law of noncontradiction. Now, one sees all in or with God. In a way, it is a *theosis* of all existence. All is seen as existing in or with God. The causal order of things does not end, but scholastic philosophy as a method is now only one mode of knowledge within a much wider circle of knowing, one that ultimately operates by sights (and insights) and symbols alongside, and in cooperation with, philosophical reasoning.

In sum: things in themselves pass into oblivion, but what remains to be known by those with insight is the source in which they originate. This is explained in the following text, where beauty is mentioned as the final object of knowledge.

> The only existent is His face … God is too great for comparison … Knowers … agree that they see nothing in existence except the One, the Real/True … That which makes (things) manifest is not separated from the (things) manifested in the knowledge of those with insight … Beyond the intellect is another kind (of knowing) where what is not manifest to the intellect becomes manifest … Among them (those veiled from God by pure light) are those for whom everything they comprehend by (physi-

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[20] Ibid., 8.

> cal) sight is burned up and turned to nothing, but they remain, observing beauty (*jamāl*), holiness (*quds*), and their own essences in the beauty they obtained as a result of reaching the divine presence. The seen (thing) is effaced but not the one who sees. (That is, they retain cognitive and thus moral capacity).[21]

5 Love and the Pedagogical Fruits of Learned Ignorance

Where does such complex argumentation lead to in the end? Al-Ghazālī's thought is never far from his educational goals. Of all his writings, his magnum opus, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, arguably most fully displays this connection between his scholastic outlook and his aims as a teacher. As noted earlier, al-Ghazālī had a clear vision of effective education. The idea of learned ignorance, too, along with its accompanying monistic tendency, served his pedagogical purposes. Here, of course, I am speaking of education in mystical theology, a topic that would have generated controversy in al-Ghazālī's day, as in other periods of the history of Islam. What approach was to be taken to education in the mystical experience, especially in terms of the relation between scholastic reasoning and mystical seeing? (Cusanus faced similar questions.) Can one really see God, as mystics claimed? It was certainly necessary to see God if one was to love God, as a mystic should. In other words, there was a relation between the mystical experience and the concepts of divine beauty. But it was necessary to set scholastic conditions for such mystical seeing. After all, a lunatic can claim that he sees God. What is there to distinguish between the mystical experience and that of the crazed madman?

Al-Ghazālī, it should be remembered, was troubled by statements of earlier well-known mystics in Islam that seemed irrational, for example, the claim of one mystic to be God or the claim of another to be unable to distinguish between himself and divine reality. Thus, for al-Ghazālī, training in mystical theology, no less than other fields of knowledge, required a recognizable—and scholastically sound—method. It is for this reason that he introduces a new framework for the religious sciences, which he calls "the science of the other world" (*ʿilm al-ākhira*). Learned ignorance, I maintain, served as the necessary foregrounding for this new scholarly vision, which integrates mystical seeing with scholastic reasoning. This can be seen in the chapter on love in *The revivification of the religious sciences*. There, al-Ghazālī's goal is not simply to speak about the love of God, but actually to educate his readers into the knowledge of mystical seeing whereby they see all things as pleasurable and beautiful (and thus attractive and worthy to be loved), not the things in themselves, but rather, traces of the power of God. The two following texts demonstrate the link between the intellectual foregrounding (learned ignorance and its monistic byproduct) and the development of a methodology of mystical seeing:

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[21] Ibid., 17, 24, 37, 52.

> The mind (*ʿaql*) of those with insight, when they examine the details of what God the Exalted has made (even when they see the gnat) are dazzled, and their inner core (*lubb*) is confused (*yataḥayyar*, alluding to learned ignorance). Because of this, the grandeur of God, His Majesty, and the perfection of His attributes grow in their hearts; and their love for Him grows. The more they are acquainted with the wonders of God's making, the more they derive from that (knowledge of) the grandeur and majesty of God the maker, increasing in awareness and love for Him.[22]
>
> Those with strong insight (*baṣīra*) and endowment (*minna*) that is not weakened, when in a state of inner balance, see only God the Exalted; are not aware of anything but Him; and know that there is nothing in existence except God. His acts are a trace of his power (*qudra*) and are subject to Him. They have no existence in reality (*bi-l-ḥaqīqa*) apart from Him. Existence belongs, rather, to the One, the Truth. Through Him is the existence of all his actions. Those in this state look at actions only to see in them the agent (that is, God) … The entire world is the composition of (composed of?) God the Exalted. Those who look at it as God's action are aware of it as God's action and love it as God's action—look only at God, know only God, and love only God.[23]

One thus can and does love God because, thanks to the methodology of scholastic mysticism, one does indeed see God, since God is the only true existent. All things, including the smallest insect, should not be seen in themselves, but rather, as they exist in the incomprehensible power of God—a way of knowing not in terms of scholastic *ratio* but in terms of confusion! Indeed, in this chapter, al-Ghazālī makes a direct reference to learned ignorance, saying, "Glorified be God who provided for his creatures, as the only way to knowledge of Him, the inability to know Him."[24]

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[22] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* iv, 411.

[23] Ibid., iv, 413–414.

[24] Ibid., iv, 392.

How exactly does this happen? Over the course of the chapter, al-Ghazālī gradually leads the reader—presumably, a student undertaking training in mystical theology (and not necessarily the mystical experience)—to the realization that all he loves in the world, all that he finds pleasurable and beautiful, all of this is really God. This is not the place to spell out the argument, which is based on a combination of aesthetics and ethics. In short, what we love for itself, and not for any ulterior motive, is beauty, which, it will be remembered, is what featured above as the final object of knowledge in *The niche of lights*. For example, we find pleasure in gazing at green fields and running water, not because we think to eat or drink from them, but from the sheer pleasure of gazing upon their beauty. But true beauty is not visible to the physical eye. Al-Ghazālī speaks of true beauty in terms of ethical character, explaining that the attributes of beautiful character, which is more compelling than physical beauty, come about as the result of three things: the knowledge that people of good character have of God, their power or ability to reform themselves and others, and their detachment from lowly passions and base lusts. However, al-Ghazālī concludes, one should realize that the knowledge, power, and perfection of those with good character are nothing next to the knowledge, power, and perfection of God. It is noteworthy that he does not define these attributes as they apply to God (keeping in line with learned ignorance), but suggests that they are infinitely incomprehensible. The point, then, is not to define them, but rather, to explain them as a motive to make God the exclusive object of one's love. Only God should be loved, as he says, "If the beauty and nobility of knowledge is something to be loved and is in itself a thing of beauty and perfection in relation to the one whom it describes, then for this reason it is appropriate that only God the Exalted be loved. The knowledge of scholars is ignorance next to His knowledge."[25] The thrust of Ghazālī's pedagogy in mystical theology is captured in the following selections from the chapter on love:

> All that exists in relation to the power of God the Exalted (*qudrat Allāh taʿālā*) is like shade in relation to the tree, light in relation to the sun; all things are the traces of his power (*āthār qudratihi*), and the existence of all belongs to his existence (*tābiʿ li-wujūdihi*) … Kindness from people can only be conceived metaphorically, for the one who is kind is God the Exalted (that is, God is the singular source of all qualities that are loved) … My goodness, who can deny that it is really possible to love God the Exalted? … Does he deny that these descriptions are the descriptions of

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[25] Ibid., iv, 391.

> beauty, perfection, and goodness … and that they describe God? … (He now turns to the question of resemblance [*munāsaba*] between creator and creature, which is a potential risk of the monistic outlook). The closeness of the slave (that is, the human) to his Lord the Mighty and Majestic is in terms of attributes (not in terms of physical closeness), attributes which he is commanded to follow and the characteristics of lordship (knowledge, righteousness, goodness, kindness, mercy, guidance, and so on) which he is commanded to emulate … All the regions of the realm (*malakūt*) of the heavens and the earth are the domain of the knower who takes his place therein as he wishes (referring to the unlimited scope of the intellect) … Whoever thinks about awareness (*maʿrifa*) of God the Praiseworthy will have disclosed to him the mysteries of the realm (*mulk*) of God, even a little bit, and upon this disclosure, he will be struck in his heart with joy that will almost make him fly … This is among the things that are comprehended only by taste (*dhawq*, that is, mystical theology as opposed to philosophical scholasticism).[26]

6 Conclusion

We have traversed diverse terrain: learned ignorance, monism, and mystical training in the love of God. But it is important to see it all in terms of a single purpose. Al-Ghazālī wants people to know God through seeing, not only through reasoning, because, if they see God, they will love God, and if they love God, they will obey God, and obedience to God lies at the heart of al-Ghazālī's project of religious renewal in what he sees as a corrupt community of Muslims, especially its scholarly leaders who have become totally compromised with the world, or who have dismissed the need to undertake the religious duties of Islam in preference for the allegedly higher knowledge of philosophy. While he must argue in the language of philosophy, he also must challenge its methodology, and by challenging its methodology, he can challenge the ethical shortcomings of its purveyors. Indeed, the learned elite are to know that they are obliged by reason to adhere to Islam's way of life. To that end, they must be made to see the limitations and shortcomings of philosophy, as demonstrated by philosophical reasoning itself! As a result, al-Ghazālī's project must encompass many things. It must be based on knowledge, but a knowledge that can challenge the preeminence of philosophy on its own terms. For him, it is clear that the predominant methods of knowing have failed to educate believers on obedience to God. And is that not the goal of a religious education? The philosophically learned see revelation as something for the masses, while the religious scholars have turned the religious sciences into a source of worldly prestige and profit, thereby failing to model the ethical character of Islam. Al-Ghazālī set out to renew his society and its scholars by restoring the otherworldly focus of knowledge in Islam, but to get there, to change the course of the community of Muhammad in a time of crisis, which was ultimately ethical, he had to begin from learned ignorance and use it as an effective pedagogical method.

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[26] Ibid., iv, 386–398.

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CHAPTER 11

Al-Rafīq qabla l-ṭarīq: Remarks on al-Ghazālī's View of Sufism as a Way of Learning Religion

Steffen Stelzer

In *Islam in the modern world*, Sayyid Hossein Nasr draws broad outlines for an Islamic education:[1]

> The most elevated form of knowledge is the perception (*idrāk*) of God, a knowledge that, however, cannot be attained save through the possession of faith (*imān*). The strengthening of faith is therefore a prerequisite of any educational system that seeks to possess an Islamic character, while this strengthening is itself not possible without moral education and the acquisition of the virtues of purity and reverential fear (*taqwa*).[2]

The benefit of these words for this essay lies, first, in their being concise and, second, in the fact that, although they are meant to give important guidelines for an Islamic education for our time, these coordinates are derived from what Nasr himself would call "traditional" data.

I will use them as yardsticks for an attempt to trace a few stations of a path of learning that is both contemporary and not contemporary.

In the widest sense, the question that guides these pages is the role of Islamic mysticism ("Sufism") for and in Islamic education. As this topic is far too comprehensive to be treated in such a restricted space, I concentrate on one author, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, and specifically on some issues addressed in two of his works: *Letter to a disciple* and *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*Deliverance from error*).[3]

I am aware that it would be inappropriate to call these texts treatises on Islamic education or even mystical treatises on Islamic education. They are not comprehensive and are much too personal. Yet, it is precisely these characteris-

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[1] The Arabic in the chapter title, *al-rafīq qabla l-ṭarīq*, is an Arabic proverb. In its complete form it says, *al-jār qabla l-dār wa-l-rafīq qabla l-ṭarīq* (the neighbor before the house and the friend before the way).

[2] Nasr, Islam in the modern world 161.

[3] Al-Ghazālī, *Letter to a disciple*, and al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism*.

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tics that I think will be more telling than the well-formed systematical texts. To put it in a nutshell, I would say that both the *Letter* and *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* tell of learning religion.

To enter into a more detailed description of this process, as understood by al-Ghazālī, it is useful to recall the main points in Nasr's statement:

1.) The aim of education is knowledge or, to be more precise, a "form of knowledge." This needs stressing because it implies that the end of education does not consist in the possession of knowledge as an object but in a state of being ("perception of God").
2.) This state can only be reached through faith. Faith does not stand in opposition to knowledge or describe a lack of it. It is the necessary condition for "the most elevated form of knowledge."
3.) An Islamic education that leads to knowledge must, therefore, see it as its main task to strengthen faith.
4.) At least one of the factors that contribute to the strengthening of faith is "moral education."
5.) Nasr mentions two character traits in connection with "moral education": purity and "reverential fear" (*taqwā*). These seem to be essential to the form of knowledge an Islamic education strives for. It is, however, unclear if they are two among a greater number of desirable virtues and are, thus, part and parcel of morality, or if they have a special status that may ground morality itself. This matters because the answer will influence the question of how these virtues are to be acquired. In other words, the question will be either, if moral education helps a disciple to become pure and filled with "reverential fear," or if, for such a purpose, a deeper education is required.

These points and questions are translatable into a series of titles that help to retrace what I would call "al-Ghazālī's steps on the path of learning religion."

I will expound upon them under the following titles:

1. Learning (your) religion
2. Learning Sufism
    a. *Learning "knowledge"*
    b. *Learning "companionship"*
3. Learning the reality of prophecy
4. Learning faith

1 Learning (Your) Religion

There is a well-known *ḥadīth* that describes the "teaching of your religion." A person appears, one does not know from where, in a gathering of the Prophet Muhammad and some of his companions. He kneels opposite the Prophet and asks him three questions: What is *islām*? What is *īmān*? What is *iḥsān*? Each question is answered to his satisfaction, and he leaves as he came. Only after he has left does the Prophet identify him to his companions as the Angel Gabriel and adds: "He came to teach you your religion."

Although this *ḥadīth* refers to a particular incident, it obviously carries much wider meaning. One may even wonder if it does not describe a situation that should be taken as the basic figure of all Islamic education. I suggest that it applies, at least to a time when one makes (or has to make) a beginning with one's religion.

Such a beginning can, of course, also be a re-beginning. Al-Ghazālī's case is particularly illuminating in this respect. We know that *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* describes the story of its author as a narrative of crisis. What emerges from its critical separation are two actors, reason and faith, which are seen to be at war with each other.[4]

In the Introduction to his translation of al-Ghazālī's *Letter to a disciple*, Tobias Mayer describes this catastrophe well when he speaks of a "collapse of faith in reason."[5] The further al-Ghazālī's rationality developed, the more it dissolved the ground under his feet—that is, the "belief in received religious truths or dogmas (*taqlīdiyāt*),"[6] until he finally "had lost the only obvious means of escape: his own rationality. He could, therefore, not simply *think* his way out of the abyss."[7]

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[4] We are used to seeing reason and faith, not as results of a separation (crisis) through which they come into existence, but as givens that may spark a crisis. For a different point of view, see Jalāluddīn Rūmī's description of the separation between "belief" and "unbelief" as only occurring belatedly, when what is in the heart has reached "the spout of the tongue": "Now let us consider humans: inwardly, in the depths of their hearts, they all love God, search for Him, and pray to Him. All their hopes are in Him, and they acknowledge no one as omnipotent or in absolute dominion except Him. Such an idea is neither infidelity nor faith. Inwardly it has no name, but when the 'water' of that idea flows toward the 'drain spout' of the tongue, it congeals and acquires form and expression. At this point it becomes 'infidelity' or 'faith,' 'good' or 'evil.'" Cited in Rumi, *Signs* 102.

[5] Mayer, Introduction xiii.

[6] Ibid., xii.

[7] Ibid., xiii. A feat Mayer sees performed by another person who embodies this crisis: Descartes, who, according to him, "ingeniously [used] reason to retrieve his theism" (ibid., xv). How

This incapacity has far-reaching consequences. For Mayer, al-Ghazālī's "escape" consists in a "going-deeper." He "grounds his own … remarkably developed rationality (and by extension that of his whole civilization) in an ultimately mystical perception of God."[8]

It would, of course, be important to know if this "ground" was not already laid by al-Ghazālī's religion. Such a deeper ground or "underground" would not necessarily figure under the name of an "ultimately mystical perception of God." We will return to this question later. For now, we should remark that this grounding "of his whole civilization in an ultimately mystical perception of God" required a further step of learning.

2 Learning Sufism

How does one learn Sufism? How does it enter an Islamic education? Or, what enters with it? If Mayer's analysis of al-Ghazālī's resort to mysticism is correct, if, as he says, "the Ghazzalian point of view insists … that Sufism is absolutely indispensable for an authentic Islam and that in consequence the whole of the religion must be informed by the mystical impulse,"[9] then Sufism cannot be learned as a particular subject—that is, as a discipline within a larger curriculum of Islamic studies. Second, it is not adequate to learn Sufism by learning *about* it. I would advise, therefore, to reformulate the question of what the role of Sufism in Islamic education is, which presupposes that we already have a clear knowledge of Sufism, and ask instead what enters with Sufism into Islamic education. The first thing that occurs with such a reformulation is a shift in the meaning of knowledge.

2.1 *Learning "Knowledge"*

Al-Ghazālī's *Letter* opens with the motive for the distinction between useful and useless knowledge. The disciple surveys the state of his former studies and asks the master for help to separate the two: "I have studied various kinds of science, and I have spent my life learning and mastering them. I now ought to find out which kind will be of use to me on the morrow, to keep me company in my grave, and those which are of no use to me, so that I may give them up."[10]

Descartes was able to do this, whereas al-Ghazālī was not, is well worth investigating. It would form an important chapter in the annals of "modernity."

[8] Ibid., xv.

[9] Ibid., xi.

[10] Al-Ghazālī, Letter to a disciple 2.

Given the fact that the Prophet had clearly pointed out this distinction and warned against the pursuit of "useless knowledge," this is in itself not surprising.[11] What is impressive is the radicalism with which al-Ghazālī places sciences that are venerable members of the Islamic canon, and to which he had devoted himself seriously for quite a length of time, under the rubric of "uselessness"; jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and scholastic theology are now, for him, "sciences unimportant and useless in the pilgrimage to the hereafter."[12]

Of course, jurisprudence and scholastic theology are not unimportant and useless in themselves, but only on and for a certain path. In terms of learning (your) religion, the relevance of knowledge depends on your perspective: Do you consider religion mainly as a means to structure your *stay* in this world (*dunyā*), or do you see it as a *way* (*ṭarīq*)? In the latter case, you will look for help from an education that is, even in this world, oriented toward the hereafter. Any knowledge that guides you on this path, toward this aim, is useful. However, to guide you "all the way," it has to overcome a stupendous obstacle: death. Al-Ghazālī knew that, left to his own knowledge, he would be left alone precisely there where he would need the company of another the most. The knowledge of jurisprudence he had so assiduously collected throughout his life would help him to go neither to death nor through it. For that, he would need love and he would need a friend.

2.2 *Learning "Companionship"*

> I observed mankind, and saw that everyone had an object of love and of infatuation which he loved and with which he was infatuated. Some of what was loved accompanied him up to the sickness of death, some [even] up to the graveside. Then all went back and left him solitary and alone, and not one of them entered his grave with him. So, I pondered and said: The best of what one loves is what will enter one's grave and be a friend to one in it. And I found [it to be] nothing but good deeds! So, I took them as the object of my love, to be a light for me in my grave, to be a friend to me in it and not leave me alone.[13]

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[11] Cf. the Prophet's prayer (*duʿā'*) quoted here by al-Ghazālī: "O God, I take refuge in Thee from knowledge which is not useful" (*Allāhumma innī aʿūdhu bi-ka min ʿilmin lā yanfaʿu*). Al-Ghāzalī, *Letter to a disciple* 2.

[12] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 53.

[13] Al-Ghazālī, Letter to a disciple 28.

To learn useful knowledge one needs a companion, a beloved, a friend. It is in this context that the Sufis slowly emerge for al-Ghazālī. But, even with love and the importance of companionship on the horizon, al-Ghazālī still drags his feet. For, the observation that none of what you befriended in this life will go with you further than your graveside is certainly, physically, correct. And the conclusion that only your good deeds will accompany you further is, canonically, correct. But, at the same time, these observations betray, in their correctness, an oversight in *adab* (good manners) that al-Ghazālī lets pass or is not aware of.

To understand this, we have to remember that these remarks about friendship and love are quotes from a conversation between two friends on the subject. Al-Ghazālī tells us that this is Ḥātim al-Aṣamm's reply to his companion (*ṣāḥib*) Shaqīq al-Balkhī, who had "accompanied" him (*ṣaḥibtanī*) for 30 years and who asks him now what he had learned from this time of *ṣuḥba*.

Certainly, the answer given is *theologically* correct, but is it correct as a *friendly* reply, as a reply to a friend?

Skimming the literature about *ṣuḥba*, one quickly becomes aware that there are (and that there would have been) other possibilities. Al-Qushayrī tells us:

> I heard Abū Ḥātim say: I heard Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj say: I heard Zaqqāq say, "I have kept company with this folk for forty years and I have seen them always showing friendship toward one another or friendship toward those who love them. He who does not accompany his deeds by piety and scrupulousness (*taqwā wa-waraʿ*) eats nothing but what is totally illicit."[14]

Zaqqāq does not qualify the deeds he mentions here, but as it makes no sense to accompany bad deeds by piety and scrupulousness, we must assume that the text refers to good deeds and that, therefore, good deeds *by themselves* do not accompany me into the grave because they are themselves in need of good company.

The topic of death, which surfaced in Ḥātim al-Aṣamm's reply to his companion Shaqīq al-Balkhī, occurs in these conversations about *ṣuḥba* with remarkable frequency. On the one hand, death seems to evoke the issue of companionship; on the other, it seems to drive a search for its reality, a search for real companionship:

> I heard the master Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq say: "A certain man told Sahl b. ʿAbdallāh [al-Tustarī]: 'Abū Muḥammad, I want to be your companion.'

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[14] Al-Qushayri, *Epistle* 304.

> He asked him, 'If one of us dies, who will be the companion of the survivor?' The other man answered, 'God.' Sahl said, 'Then let us accompany Him now!' "[15]

Going from step to step, companionship ends in *ṣuḥba* with the companion who "is with you wherever you are."[16] Once this is known, it becomes clear that what is more difficult than finding a companion who accompanies *you* is for you to accompany *Him*.

To realize this, al-Ghazālī had to learn the knowledge of the Sufis. And although he began even this education in the company of books,[17] he soon learned another knowledge, this time "not by study, but rather by fruitional experience (*dhawq*) and the state of ecstasy (*ḥāl*) and the exchange of qualities (*tabaddul al-ṣifāt*)."[18]

These are familiar terms for anyone studying Sufism. Yet, as important as they are when investigating the quality knowledge is given in mysticism, and especially in its Islamic form, one should not forget that the practices of the Sufis, their path of companionship, their knowledge through taste, are not ends in themselves but combine with something al-Ghazālī very clearly recognized when he said: "Generally speaking, anyone who is granted nothing of that through fruitional experience grasps of the reality of prophecy (*haqīqat al-nubuwwa*), only the name."[19]

We can say, therefore, that Nasr's description of the characteristics of Islamic education as leading to "the perception of God" should be accompanied by knowledge of the reality of prophecy. For it could very well be that the question of how virtues, in general, and purity and reverential fear, in particular, can be acquired will find its answer there.[20]

3 Learning the Reality of Prophecy

Once it is clear why companionship is such an important ingredient of mysticism as a path of knowledge, the way opens to consider the most excellent example of Islamic education, the Prophet. What one might call, in a different context, his disciples or even apostles were called "companions" (*ṣaḥāba*) because this word indicates the mode of teaching that he used with them, and it was also used by his "teacher," his Lord, with him.

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[15] Ibid., 30.

[16] *Huwa maʿakum ayna mā kuntum* (Q 57:4).

[17] "I began to learn their lore from the perusal of their books." Al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism* 51.

[18] Ibid., 52.

[19] Ibid., 57–58.

[20] A parallel worth pursuing: Plato's *Meno* begins with the question "Can virtue be taught?"

It follows that the knowledge of prophecy (both in the subjective and objective sense) is, next to the knowledge of God, the most elevated knowledge and that the former plays an indispensable role for the attainment of the latter.

Which way should one take to know the reality of prophecy? Following the mental habits most of us have been trained in, and paying tribute to our philosophical upbringing, the shortest way seems to consist in asking what the reality of prophecy is. Yet, it is significant that al-Ghazālī does not choose this kind of question. He asks, instead, "How do I know if someone's claim to prophecy is true? What proofs are there for it?"[21]

The answer he gives is built on two presuppositions: first, on a theory of the development of the faculties of knowledge. This theory says that first there is the faculty of the senses, then another faculty called "discernment," followed by "intellect" (which can, according to al-Ghazālī, distinguish between the necessary, the possible, and the impossible), and finally prophetic knowledge. The second presupposition says, if there is an object of knowledge that transcends the intellect, "an example" is required for its understanding.

Accordingly, prophecy that transcends the intellect can *to some extent* be understood (I would add "rationally") through examples, or through "analogy." For al-Ghazālī, the world of dreams supplies such an example of "scientific" knowledge that cannot be based on observation, like the medicinal effect of plants or certain astronomical phenomena that occur in timespans not accessible to human observation. One may say, prophecy has something in common with them; they are examples of or hints about it, and through them we understand as much. But, because prophecy, *in its reality*, transcends the intellect, there is, strictly speaking, no example for it.

Even proof by miracle does not solve the problem. Its weakness lies, for al-Ghazālī, in the fact that it still belongs to the world of "well-ordered argument," where for every "pro" there is a "con"; that is, it also belongs to the world of logical discourse.

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[21] This choice is well known in what may be called "Sufi propaedeutics." Ibn ʿArabī once remarked that Sufi shaykhs never answer a question with "what is" (*mā hiya*), but, in their answer, always address the state of the questioner. Al-Ghazālī is approaching this manner, while still holding (or being held) back. Seen from a Sufi perspective, a certain degree of "wavering," or seen from a "rationalist" angle, a certain amount of "balancing" is, by the way, characteristic of most of his positions.

The reality of prophecy or, as al-Ghazālī calls it, “the light of Prophecy,” however, is not situated on the level of argument or analogy. “Therefore, seek sure and certain knowledge of prophecy in this way, not from the changing of the staff into a serpent and the splitting of the moon.”[22]

In which way should it be sought then? Al-Ghazālī, using the *iṣṭilaḥāt al-Ṣufiyya*, the traditional “terminology” of the Sufis, calls this knowledge “knowledge by taste” (*dhawq*).[23] Prophecy must be tasted to be known.

How does one taste a prophet? The answer to this question is given by him in a few lines of praise addressed to the Sufis: “I knew with certainty that the Sufis are those who uniquely follow the way to God Most High, their mode of life is the best of all, their way the most direct of ways, and their ethic the purest.”[24] “For all their motions and quiescences, exterior and interior, are learned from the light of the niche of prophecy. And beyond the light of prophecy there is no light on earth from which illumination can be obtained.”[25]

If one wanted to receive an Islamic education that would strengthen faith through moral education, then those whose “ethic is purest” would be the ideal teachers. The purity of their ethic would derive from the fact that they learn from the Prophet *in every respect*. They are not the best teachers because they possess extensive knowledge of the Islamic sciences, or because they exude the romantic glow attributed to a “higher light” that is so often associated with mysticism, but because of what al-Ghazālī calls the “absolute following” (*al-ittibāʾ al-muṭlaq*) of the *sunna* of the Prophet.[26] This is a soberer affair.

It is a matter of obedience. In his *Letter to a disciple* al-Ghazālī writes: “Oh disciple, the essence of knowledge is to know what obedience and worship are” (*an taʿlama al-ṭāʿa wa-l-ʿibāda mā hiya*). And he defined both as “conformity to the Lawgiver as regards commands and prohibitions, in both word and deed.”[27]

This is a definition of obedience in the legal and logical sense (*mā hiya*), and it is significant that it occurs as such in the *Letter*. But, in *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn*, another dimension of obedience is opened. There, al-Ghazālī points to what he calls the “three secrets of following the *sunna*.” The third is “a mighty secret concerning the purification of the self” (*sirr ʿaẓīm fī tazkiyat al-nafs*).[28]

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[22] Al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism* 63.

[23] Often translated rather awkwardly, because it is borrowed from the rationalist discourse, as “fruitional experience.”

[24] Al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism* 56.

[25] Ibid., 57.

[26] Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn* 68.

[27] Literally, “following the Lawgiver in the commandments and prohibitions” (*mutābaʿat al-shāriʿ fī l-awāmir wa-l-nawāhī*); cf. al-Ghāzalī, *Letter to a disciple* 22.

[28] Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn* 73.

Islamic law does not exist without a lawgiver. But, whereas the benefit of obeying the law for the sake of obeying it (*al-fāʾida al-ḥukmiyya*) does not change through the manner in which it is given, the benefit of obeying the law for the purpose of purifying the self indeed changes by the manner in which it is given. In this context, it is important that al-Ghazālī addresses the giver of the law (*al-shāriʿ*) when speaking of the purification of the self by using the customary address for the Prophet, "God's blessings and peace be upon him (*ṣalla llāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam*)."[29]

Let me add some explanatory notes that take into account the fact that al-Ghazālī calls these matters "secrets." When it comes to the purification of the self (which has always been described as one of the main aims of the mystic path), knowledge of the laws is required, but it must be accompanied by knowledge of the manners and times for applying it. The latter can only be acquired through an extremely high degree of familiarity with the one who "deposited" (*waḍaʿa*) the laws: "For all their motions and quiescences, exterior and interior, are learned from the light of the niche of prophecy."[30] Such following requires a kind of obedience that differs from following the law purely and simply.

How is one to learn from this light? Earlier in the *Munqidh*, al-Ghazālī tells us about the solution to a crisis of reason for which reason itself could not provide a remedy:

> My soul regained its health and equilibrium … But that was not achieved by constructing a proof or putting together an argument. On the contrary, it was the effect of a light which God Most High cast into my breast. And that light is the key to most knowledge.[31]

One may rightfully wonder if these lines contribute to an understanding of the role of mysticism for Islamic education. For here the light is said to be divine, not prophetic, and it does not illuminate as a consequence of a gradual, guided process of learning but through something like an inrush. Finally, the Sufis do not appear in this formulation. Nevertheless, I read it as containing an indication or a flicker of the second light, the light of prophecy.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] This is the reason why having memorized a number of prophetic sayings (*aḥadīth*) and applying them as one sees fit, without having learned when and under which circumstances they should be applied, is, to say the least, very irresponsible.

[31] This crisis, sometimes referred to as his "first crisis," made him a skeptic and a hypocrite at the same time: "During that time I was a skeptic in fact, but not in utterance and in doctrine." Al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism* 23.

This indication appears in an indirect way. It is legible less in al-Ghazālī's text itself and more in the irritation of his translator about a particular word of this text.

R.C. McCarthy wonders "How did God cure him?" and answers, with al-Ghazālī, "By means of a 'light' which He 'cast' into the young skeptic's 'breast.'"[32] This is for him, however, less of an answer and more of a restatement of the question because it presents three obstacles to understanding, "light," "breast," and "cast." McCarthy is able to present an interpretation of the former two words and, thereby, dissolve these obstacles to some extent, but the third resists his efforts: "But the word 'cast' gives us pause, in conjunction with what follows in our text. For if, as al-Ghazālī says, God cast, or threw, or sent down, this light, then the latter would seem to have been some sort of special intervention on God's part."[33] "Casting" is an obstacle because, unlike the previous two ("breast" and "light"), which were dissolved into faculties possessed by al-Ghazālī ("heart" and "intellect"), it resists integration on al-Ghazālī's side. The compromise McCarthy concludes with is, therefore, more of an expression of his "puzzlement": "In fine, I incline to think that he principally intends the 'light' of intellect or intelligence, while not excluding some indefinable sort of 'gust of grace.'"[34]

McCarthy's interpretation of the divine "casting" as a "special intervention on God's part" is, for him, "reinforced by the traditions which Ghazali proceeds to cite and especially by the last sentence of Paragraph 16 of the *Path to Sufism*."[35] It is well worth quoting this paragraph in full:

> Therefore, whoever thinks that the unveiling of truth depends on precisely formulated proofs has indeed straitened the broad mercy of God. When the Apostle of God—God's blessing and peace be upon him!—was asked about the "dilation" in the Most High's utterance: "So he whom God wishes to guide aright, He dilates his breast for submission to Himself (i.e. to embrace Islam)" (Q 6:125), he said: "It is a light which God casts into the heart." Then someone said, "And what is the sign of it?" He replied: "Withdrawal from the mansion of delusion and turning to the mansion of immortality." And it is this of which the Apostle—God's blessing and peace be upon him!—said: "God Most High created men in darkness, then sprinkled on them some of His light." From that light, then, the unveiling

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[32] Ibid., n. 44, 89.

[33] Ibid., n. 44, 90.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

> of truth must be sought. Moreover, that light gushes forth from the divine liberality at certain times, and one must be on the watch for it according to the saying of the Apostle—Peace be upon him!—"Your Lord, in the days of your lifetime, sends forth gusts of grace: do you then put yourselves in the way of them!"[36]

Several things need attention in this passage. First, "the unveiling of truth" cannot be forced. It is an act of mercy. Second, reception of truth and refusal are set in a context of "dilation" (*inshirāḥ* or *basṭ*) and contraction (*qabḍ*), which traditionally denote, in Islam in general and in Sufism in particular, what one could call "the two moments of the heart." Both play an important role, but each in its own place. Rational, argumentative thought—al-Ghazālī's "precisely formulated proofs"—can, accordingly, be characterized as "contracted" and "contracting." Contraction resists or prevents submission. Dilation, on the other hand, allows one to submit. It opens the heart to the reception of light, or the knowing of useful knowledge.

Furthermore, if it is God who dilates the breast for submission, then opening to the "gush of light" that is cast cannot be the result of any action on my side. And, to complicate matters further, it is not even correct to say that "I am *not* able to do anything," for such a formulation is still bound to a self that posits itself as the origin of its actions. This double difficulty is, it seems to me, the reason for McCarthy's irritation.

To clarify, another irritation of al-Ghazālī's translator should be mentioned. Later in the *Path to Sufism*, in a section we already briefly referred to, al-Ghazālī addresses the difficulty of understanding where "you have no example."[37] To use the world of dreams and certain astronomical and medicinal phenomena as "examples" for prophecy helps one to understand only as long as examples occur to me. But what "if the prophet has a special quality of which you have no example and which you in no way understand, how can you find it credible? Assent comes only after understanding. But the example needed occurs in the first stages of the way of Sufism."[38] McCarthy remarks regarding the last sentence,

> The knowledge obtained through prophecy is somehow of the same nature as that obtained through the practice of Sufism. But I am not sure

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[36] Ibid., 23–24.

[37] Ibid., 62.

[38] Ibid.

> what Ghazzali means by his statement that 'the example needed occurs in the first stages of the way of Sufism.'[39]

If we read this statement with the previous remark about "the special quality (of the prophet) of which you have no example and which you in no way understand," then we can infer that *this* example (i.e., the example of something of which you have no example) is only given by Sufism. It would, at the same time, denote the reality of Sufism and the reality of prophecy. This non-example would occur in the first stages of Sufism. It would dilate and open the heart, and in that state knowledge, if it is cast, could be received.

What happens in the first stages of Sufism? A meeting. A meeting without which there would be neither first stages nor further stages. A meeting, one has to add, which al-Ghazālī is curiously silent about. In the first stages of Sufism the initial meeting with the spiritual guide occurs.[40] Its example, or rather, non-example, is, of course, meeting the Prophet.

Like every spiritual path, the path of Sufism requires an initiation. This initiation is the initial meeting of spirits (or souls) without which there would be no path, for, through it, the armor of the *nafs* (the selfish Self) is breached, which usually prevents the submission, or the humility, required to receive "useful knowledge."

The lore of the Sufis is replete with these "meetings." The aspirant is caught unawares, found unguarded, for the blink of an eye, and it is at this moment that the light can be cast. What dilates the breast is, therefore, not the person one meets, but the light cast in that meeting. This is the origin of Sufism's, or mysticism's, stress on love. It appears that this love is not the name for an emotional state savored for its own sake, but a solvent—that is, an essential ingredient for a path of knowledge.[41]

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[39] Ibid., n. 206, 109.

[40] It is remarkable, and deserves attentive and dedicated reading, how much meeting and accepting your spiritual guide is fraught with hesitation for al-Ghazālī. At one point, he informs us that he learned Sufism "from the perusal of their books." At another, we hear that he frequented some Sufis. At still another, a glimmer of hope appears when he tells a disciple (who, according to Mayer, is a younger ego of al-Ghazālī himself), "Know that the traveller (*al-sālik*) should have a master and a guide and instructor (*Iʿlam annahu yanbaghī lil-sālik shaykhun murshidun murabbin* …)." But then the instruction (*tarbiya*) of this shaykh is compared "to the work of the farmer (*fiʿl al-fallāḥ*) who uproots thorn-bushes and weeds from the midst of the crops, so that the plants are in proper condition, and his yield is brought to perfection." Al-Ghāzalī, *Letter to a disciple* 34. According to this description, the instructor's work is negative and consists in *activity*. Now, removing obstacles on the way to perfection is certainly important in all kinds of education, and especially in spiritual education. It is also amply documented in many works on Sufism. But what is missing in al-Ghazālī's description here is a *positive* description of the work of a teacher, which, furthermore, cannot be qualified as activity (or deed, *fiʿl*). Could this side not be as important for an Islamic education as the one mentioned, or even more so? One will have noticed, this is the question my essay insists on.

Given the unpredictability and incalculability of these meetings and these "gushes of light," can there be any continuity such that speaking of *a path* of knowledge, or a "*system* of education" would be meaningful? Or do we have to resign ourselves to the all-too-frequent appreciation of mysticism as something extraordinary for the moment, yet completely unfit for "coherence"?

We have said that the accompaniment of the Prophet and the *ṣaḥāba* is the model that Islamic education is nourished by and tries to emulate. In order to expand on the question above, we, therefore, should go back to the saying of the Prophet about dilation quoted by al-Ghazālī:

> From that light, then, the unveiling must be sought. Moreover, that light gushes forth from the Divine liberality at certain times, and one must be on the watch for it according to the saying of the Apostle—Peace be upon him!—"Your Lord, in the days of your lifetime, sends forth gusts of grace: do you then put yourselves in the way of them!"[42]

It is clear from these words that calculable continuity cannot be sought from the "gushes of light." Maybe one should dispense with the word "continuity" altogether here and speak of steadiness. Steadiness is in "being on the watch" or, better, lovelier, "putting oneself in the way of the gusts of grace sent in the days of one's life."

The light of Prophecy from which, according to al-Ghazālī, "the unveiling of truth must be sought"[43] shines from a lamp that stands in a niche. Al-Ghazālī calls it "the niche of the light of Prophecy." The purpose of a niche is to collect the light and to protect it from being extinguished.[44] Both of these, collecting and protecting the light, are the "works" of the *sunna* of the Prophet.

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[41] Or of a path of faith. A contemporary theologian, Raimon Panikkar, has expressed this in clear and excellent words: "Faith can never be blind because faith [credere in Deum] does not see, does not need to see. It does not belong to the field of consciousness. This means that the way to cross the barrier of consciousness is through love of a real person." Panikkar, *Rhythm* 251.

[42] Al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism* 24.

[43] Ibid., 24.

[44] Besides its Quranic reference, the Arabic word used here, *mishkāt*, shares an interesting space with its Hebrew neighbor, *mishkan*, meaning "place of dwelling" and commonly translated as "tabernacle."

If all the motions and quiescence, exterior and interior, (of the Sufis) are learned from the light of the niche of prophecy, then the role of mysticism for Islamic education consists in precisely this: to educate human beings to be a living example of the *sunna*, to teach them to build and rebuild the structure that helps to gain the strength and wakefulness of faith necessary for holding oneself in the way of the divine light at any and all times.

4 Learning Faith

We read in the quotation at the beginning of this essay that "the strengthening of faith is … a prerequisite of any educational system that seeks to possess an Islamic character." It is not difficult to subscribe to such a statement. But I think we must go further. Certainly, as the example of al-Ghazālī, together with so many others, has shown, the "crises of faith" are the exclusive property neither of this century nor of Islam alone. There is, however, in our time a lack in the understanding of faith, or an active effort to avoid asking about it, so strong that even the multiplication of religious discussions about it only contributes to burying it deeper.

It seems that we could benefit from another visit of a foreigner "who looks as if he travelled a large distance, although no traces of travelling are on him." We discuss the meanings of "religion" and of particular religions. But it is difficult to avoid the impression that "learning faith," without which there would be no religion and, I contend, not even an understanding of religion, is not at the top of our agendas.

For this reason, stories like al-Ghazālī's are excellent reminders. They remind us, after all, of the fact that faith not only moves on a comfortable scale of "strengthening" and "weakening," but may actually be lost. And they remind us that faith can be learned. To see this, one has to stretch al-Ghazālī's sentence a bit and recognize that between "a heart empty of all" and "a heart empty of all save God" there may be a long time.[45] One should not hurry away from this emptiness of the heart to try to fill it too quickly. Not even to fill it with God. If we keep it for some moments, we can hear its echo, maybe closer to us, in the words of someone who said that "the locus of the mystical is not knowledge, not even knowledge of Being, but the realm of *sunyatā*, of emptiness."[46] The beauty of these words lies in the fact that they allow for the beginning of faith. They share this with the words and deeds of the Sufis al-Ghazālī praised so highly. They explain why faith is needed and by whom:

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[45] Al-Ghazālī, *Path to Sufism* 51.

[46] Panikkar, *Rhythm* 248.

> From the disciple, faith is needed, and faith is more than knowledge, faith is empty, it has no object; it cannot be conceptualized. Faith is not belief. The mystic cannot have sufficient faith as long as he is encumbered by the ego. Humility, which is the death of the ego, is the first mystical virtue.[47]

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[47] Ibid., 251.

CHAPTER 12

“Only Learning That Distances You from Sins Today Saves You from Hellfire Tomorrow”: Boundaries and Horizons of Education in al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd

Sebastian Günther

Dedicated to Professor Ella Landau-Tasseron
on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday

Questions concerning knowledge and education for people, both as individuals and as members of society, are key issues in Islamic religion and culture, and indeed, Muslim scholars have intensively engaged in the advancement of ideas and systems of educational thought since the rise of Islam.[1] During Islam’s classical period (second-tenth/eighth-fifteenth centuries) in particular, a considerable body of scholarly writings in Arabic (and Persian) emerged in which Muslim thinkers devoted much thought to advancing and exploring concepts, forms, goals, and techniques of teaching and learning.

This article revisits certain epistemological concepts related to education and the intellect that were advocated by two celebrated Muslim thinkers, the fifth/eleventh-century philosophical theologian, mystic, and religious reformer Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and the sixth/twelfth-century philosopher, legal scholar, and physician Abū l-Walīd Ibn Rushd. A towering figure of Islamic orthodoxy, al-Ghazālī is particularly renowned for his “spiritual” approach to learning and is considered one of the great architects of religious education in Islam. Ibn Rushd, by contrast, an exponent of Aristotle, has attracted much attention in both medieval and contemporary times for his “rationalist” views on learning and his criticism of al-Ghazālī’s refutation of the philosophers.

However, rather than focusing on the undisputed positive contributions these two scholars have made to the advancement of educational theory, in the following we will explore issues that the two scholars identified—deliberately or inadvertently—as boundaries, restrictions, or obstacles to learning and human growth in the context of religiously defined societies.

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[1] The quote in the title refers to al-Ghazālī’s statement, *al-ʿilm alladhī lā yubʿiduka l-yawm min al-maʿāṣī … lan yubʿidaka ghadan ʿan nār jahannam*; cf. his *Letter to a disciple: Ayyuhā l-walad* 16–17.

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In order to make this comparative analysis a fruitful endeavor, two particularly influential works that closely link the two scholars with one another have been chosen as the basis of our research, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*The deliverance from error*), al-Ghazālī's spiritual "autobiography" (composed between 499 and 502/1106 and 1109),[2] and Ibn Rushd's *Faṣl al-maqāl fī mā bayna l-sharīʿa wa-l-ḥikma min ittiṣāl* (*The decisive treatise determining* [*the nature of*] *the connection between the divinely revealed law and philosophy*, also rendered as *On the harmony of religion and philosophy*, written between 560 and 565/1165 and 1170).[3]

The decision to explore these two works for issues in Islamic learning rests on several considerations. First, the two texts exhibit a specific approach that is shared by their respective authors, an academic outlook perhaps best described as encompassing the courage to know, the courage to doubt, and the courage to critique.[4] This distinctive attitude to learned culture is apparent in the explicit and thought-provoking titles of these books: *The deliverance from error* and *The decisive treatise*. Moreover, a striking maturity of analytical insight is evident throughout the exposition of the respective texts. Second, the two works share an overall thematic concern with the question of the relationships between scripture and philosophy, faith and reason, and spirituality and rationality, which represent key themes in classical Islamic thought. Third, although the conclusions the two scholars come to ultimately contrast in regard to the aforementioned concerns, their special dedication to issues of learning and education, along with their attention to matters of human growth, predominate in these portrayals. The latter point is of particular note since the individual views of these two thinkers include frequent, explicit discussions of the confines and even risks of knowledge acquisition in religiously defined contexts. Al-Ghazālī makes this point overtly at the beginning of *The deliverance*: "You have asked me, my brother in religion, to communicate to you the aim and secrets of the sciences and the dangerous and intricate depths of the different doctrines and views (*ghāʾilat al-madhāhib wa-aghwāruhā*)."[5] The principal objective of the present study, therefore, is to identify and examine some of these communications, as well as specific statements in al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd, which reveal, and thus help us to better understand, the complex and, in part, tense relation between education and religion in classical Islam.[6]

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[2] Heath, Reading 198.

[3] Cf. Belo, *Averroes* 50.

[4] The first part of this expression I owe to Saeed Sheikh, al-Ghazālī 587.

[5] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 60; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 2 (§ 2). The English quotations from al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh* in this article follow MacCarthy's translation where not otherwise indicated.

1 Al-Ghazālī

A native of the Iranian city of Ṭūs near Mashhad, at the pinnacle of his career al-Ghazālī lived in Baghdad (484–488/1091–1095), the vibrant political, administrative, and economic center of the ʿAbbasid dynasty (132–656/750–1258) and the veritable cultural cosmopolis of the medieval Muslim world. It was in Baghdad that al-Ghazālī witnessed exceptional educational activities in both religious and secular branches of knowledge, particularly advances in the humanities, natural sciences, medicine, architecture, and technical sciences.[7] Indeed, al-Ghazālī actively took part in the academic life of his day as an eminent scholar and author, already highly respected during his lifetime and, for a time, he was also the main law professor (or "rector") of the newly founded Niẓāmiyya College, the most famous institution of higher learning in Baghdad and perhaps the entire Islamic world in the fifth/eleventh century.

Al-Ghazālī believed that reason and the senses allow humans, to some degree, to acquire knowledge of the visible, material world,[8] while revelation and inspiration permit them to discover the invisible, immaterial world. Through perpetual learning and spiritual exercises humans attain "true" knowledge and become capable of comprehending (to various degrees and depending on the learner's stage in gnosis) aspects of the realm of divine sovereignty (*ʿālam al-malakūt*). This fundamental view of al-Ghazālī's concept of learning is reflected in the curriculum he indicates in the very first pages of his magnum opus, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (*The revival of the studies of religion*), a work in which al-Ghazālī strove to reconcile traditional Islamic beliefs with Sufi teachings.[9]

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[6] For the principal benefit of exploring authoritative medieval Muslims thinkers' concepts of education, and the fact that certain problems encountered in medieval times continue to concern us today, see my articles, "Your educational achievements," esp. 72–73; Education, general (up to 1500); and the editor's introduction to this volume. These publications also identify key studies on issues in classical Islamic education.

[7] Günther, "Auf der Suche" 118–121; Günther, "Nothing like Baghdad." See also al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* (trans. Abū Laylah) 1–28 (Abū Laylah's introduction). For the role and meaning of "knowledge," see Leaman, *Islamic philosophy* 51–70 ("Knowledge").

[8] Al-Ghazālī also makes the point that the senses are not a perfect instrument for doing this—one's eyes cannot detect the movement of a shadow, for example, even though after an hour one can see that it has indeed moved; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 66; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 4 (§10).

Guidance on the virtuous path of learning, as al-Ghazālī views it, is a pledge, on the part of the learned, to safeguard the learner's way to salvation and happiness in the hereafter. Therefore, students seeking salvation must purify themselves by renouncing bad habits and character flaws in order to become worthy vessels for knowledge. Moreover, the students need to remove themselves from worldly (and family) affairs and fully concentrate on learning. They must respect and honor their teacher, inwardly and outwardly, and always embrace his advice. They must know that the true goal of learning is the attainment of inner virtue and spiritual perfection, not authority over or recognition by others. Therefore, students also must have a clear idea of the relationship the different sciences have to the objectives of learning, and not overestimate (or underestimate) any discipline. In turn, teachers working in a religious context should make their students aware that the foremost objective of learning is to draw closer to God, not to accumulate worldly gains. Hence, teachers are advised that their behavior and actions must conform to their words and teaching. They are the noblest among the erudite; as al-Ghazālī points out, they philanthropically share their knowledge with others.[10]

Al-Ghazālī also believed that it was on account of the natural confines of the human mind that the prophets spoke to their communities figuratively and through signs and symbols. Humans can compensate for these natural limitations through individual learning efforts and by fulfilling their responsibilities as members of the community.[11] However, corruption, selfishness, and arrogance are serious obstacles to learning, even though they are of human provenance. Such failings complicate matters on the individual and communal levels because of their far-reaching religious, social, political, and ethical consequences.

Deep concerns of this kind seem to have moved al-Ghazālī to write, toward the end of his life, *The deliverance from error*, a work that offers a great deal of insight into religious learning in general and into al-Ghazālī's own intellectual development and spiritual growth in particular. After his lifelong study of major branches of knowledge, such as theology, philosophy, and law, in this work al-Ghazālī concedes that he found religious certainty and fulfilment in Islamic mysticism alone.

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[9] Montgomery Watt, al-Ghazālī 1038–1041; al-Ghazālī, *Incoherence* xviii–xix (Marmura's introduction).

[10] Günther, Be masters 380–385.

[11] In the first chapter of the *Iḥyāʾ*, *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* (The book of knowledge), al-Ghazālī relies on Q 4:83, which reads, "If [the people] had referred [the matter] to the Messenger and to those in authority, those [rationally] seeking meaning (*yastanbiṭuna*) would have found it out from them." Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* 11; see also Abdel Haleem, *Qurʾan* 58. For al-Ghazālī's concept that religious observance, while compulsory for all, may be complemented by gnostic knowledge for those who seek a deeper understanding of the meaning of Quranic tenets, see also Montada, Ibn Rushd esp. 118–120.

On the basis of this highly personal testimony, al-Ghazālī detects and discusses several perils encountered by seekers of knowledge, which they should be warned of when following more advanced curricula, particularly in theology, philosophy, logic, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, the political sciences, and ethics. Moreover, he offers some suggestions on how to avoid or correct potential errors on the path of spiritual learning. We shall therefore take a closer look at al-Ghazālī's views of learning in the disciplines that he explicitly mentions in *The deliverance* before undertaking a similar inquiry into Ibn Rushd's ideas.

1.1 *Theology*

Predestination, the fear of God connected with knowledge of God in this life, as well as the fulfilment of human destiny and happiness in the hereafter, are the thematic cornerstones of al-Ghazālī's considerations concerning speculative theology (*kalām*). These and other fundamental elements of al-Ghazālī's theology can be traced in his various writings despite the fact that al-Ghazālī did not write a coherent exposition of his own theological views. Moreover, he occasionally appears to be ambivalent or even inconsistent in his theological views, as he is "dealing with intertwined and at times conflicting epistemologies and systems of thought," as Ahmad Dallal has pointed out.[12] Yet, while al-Ghazālī was critical of certain traditional methods of acquiring knowledge (including those of various religious sciences), he did make use of traditional religious idioms to introduce his own ideas.

In *The deliverance* the author alerts his reader to several impediments to learning. Al-Ghazālī observes here that certain research activities do not correspond to the research objectives of a given discipline. For example, while the main aim and purport of theology is to "conserve the creed of the orthodox for the orthodox and to guard it from the confusion introduced by the innovators," the theologians busy themselves with investigating "the true natures of things" and "the study of substances and accidents and their principle."[13] Certain theologians sincerely carry out the critical task of protecting orthodoxy by defending the tradition of the Prophet, repulsing attacks on the Muslim faith, and fighting heretical innovations; yet, tendencies to get sidetracked and make concessions have a negative effect on their work. Al-Ghazālī specifies three points that he sees as obstructing learning and scholarly debate:

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[12] Dallal, Perils of interpretation esp. 774, 778, and 786, assesses and expounds on the various readings of al-Ghazālī's thought, by both medieval scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) in his collection of legal statements *Majmūʿ fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya*, and modern researchers, such as R. Frank in his *al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿārite school*, while aptly pointing to the fact that these readings deal "with a whole cultural legacy with numerous trends and schools."

- reliance on premises taken over from adversaries in a scholarly debate through uncritical acceptance of (a) their arguments, (b) their references to matters agreed upon by community consensus, or (c) their use of quotations from the Quran and the prophetic tradition;[14]
- focusing too much on exposing inconsistencies in the arguments of adversaries; and,
- criticizing adversaries for the irrational consequences of what they claim rather than dealing with the claims as such.

This kind of conduct was often evident in theological discussions, as debates often were overly concerned with discovering contradictions inherent in conflicting views and refuting conclusions drawn from the premises of the opponent.[15]

Such approaches only weaken one's own arguments, and they do not allow for content beyond basic insights and self-evident truths. Moreover, unsystematic discussion in academic matters generally obstructs academic work. True academic learning ought to be self-determined, self-paced, and purpose-oriented if one desires to reach a higher level of understanding.

Consequently, the mystical path of seclusion and spiritual exercise is the only alternative to busying the mind with too many unnecessary, not to mention, worldly, things. As al-Ghazālī explicitly makes clear in reference to his own educational development, the genuine way to salvation consists of: (a) spiritual exercise, (b) devotion that purifies the soul and cleanses the heart for the contemplation of God Most High, and (c) the cultivation of virtues.[16] Nevertheless, those seeking contentment in theology should be pardoned since "healing remedies differ as sicknesses differ, and many a remedy may help one sick person and harm another."[17]

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[13] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 72–73; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 6 (§§21, 24).

[14] On this issue, see Montada, Ibn Rushd 117.

[15] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 72; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 6 (§23).

[16] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 105–107; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 20–21 (§§92–95).

[17] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 72–73; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 6 (§24, slightly adjusted).

1.2 *Philosophy*

Al-Ghazālī counts six subdivisions (*aqsām*) among the philosophical sciences: the mathematical (*riyāḍiyya*), logical (*manṭiqiyya*), natural/physical (*ṭabīʿiyya*), metaphysical (*ilāhiyya*), political (*siyāsiyya*), and ethical (*khuluqiyya*).[18]

He begins his deliberations on philosophy and the philosophers by stating that a merely superficial understanding of a scholarly discipline generally makes it impossible to detect distortions within that discipline, while cognizance of its "intricate profundities," by contrast, helps to overcome such problems and eventually to refute a given doctrine. This also applies in regard to a sound understanding of "the subtleties of the philosophical sciences."[19]

Interestingly, in this context al-Ghazālī appears to approve of an advanced student's exploration of the essential ideas (and risks) of a scholarly discipline—philosophy, in this particular case—without a master or teacher. Indeed, he sees individual examination of the challenging aspects of a branch of scholarship as something that helps one better understand its characteristics and increases individual cognition. In reference to his own studies and experience, he says of the philosophers:

> I knew, of course, that undertaking to refute their doctrine before comprehending it and knowing it in depth would be a shot in the dark. So I girded myself for the task of learning that science by the mere perusal of their writings without seeking the help of a master and teacher. I devoted myself to that in the moments I had free from writing and lecturing on the legal sciences … As it turned out, through mere reading in those embezzled moments, God Most High granted me insight into the farthest reaches of the philosophers' sciences in less than two years.[20]

Al-Ghazālī finds that analytical comparison between two disciplines assists with stepping beyond the general boundaries of knowledge acquisition. For him, it is something that helps generate new knowledge. However, when elaborating on this point he also remarks, “Not a single Muslim divine had directed his attention and endeavor to that end”—that is, to such an in-depth comparative approach to major scholarly disciplines.[21]

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[18] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 79; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 8 (§ 36). In his early work, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (*The intentions of the philosophers*), al-Ghazālī listed only four sciences among the philosophical (rational) disciplines: mathematics (*riyāḍiyyāt*), logic (*manṭiqiyyāt*), physics (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*), and metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*). It is interesting that al-Ghazālī appears to have no less than seven different classifications in his authentic works, a fact that "reflects his deep engagement with the philosophical tradition (*falsafa*), in which this theme originated and developed," as Treiger states in his comprehensive study, al-Ghazālī's classification 2–3.

[19] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 74; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 7 (§ 26).

[20] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 74–75; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 7 (§ 27).

In general, given al-Ghazālī’s overall scholarly achievements, it is unsurprising that he contemplates entire branches of scholarship and systems of thought. For example, he emphasizes that two things are important to refute a discipline: first, comprehensive study and deep understanding of the thought system(s) under consideration (anything less would be equivalent to being blindfolded); and second, the attainment of certainty and “safety from error” through acquiring reliable, definite knowledge of the true meaning of things.[22]

Yet, certain attitudes and conditions may prevent the learner from acquiring knowledge of the true meaning of things and reaching new insight. These obstacles arise from “servile conformism,” a too-close association with masters, and the “slavish aping of parents and teachers.” Instead, a transition from guided learning to self-study is necessary to enable the mind to open up to ideas and remain unaffected by a teacher or parent’s opinion and authority. Importantly, however, true insight is impossible without “the effect of a light which God Most High cast into my breast; and that light is the key to most knowledge.”[23] Perhaps it is needless to say that al-Ghazālī’s main concern here is the only path of learning and human growth that he considers religiously appropriate and valid—the path of the mystic, who is inspired and guided by the divine light.

On other occasions in *The deliverance*, al-Ghazālī provides further insight into his own methods of study. He specifies, for example, the following practices that worked best for him: close reading of study texts, alone and undisturbed, followed by reflecting upon the subject, and revisiting the issue in question to reexamine its complexity and hidden problems. This kind of learning procedure would come full circle by summing up the subject under consideration, attempting to reach certainty in the given matter, and conclusively identifying what constitutes practical insight, and what abstract delusion.[24]

1.2.1 Logic

Regarding logic, al-Ghazālī makes it clear that he sees this discipline as part of the philosophical sciences. At the same time, he upholds the idea that logic has its own particular methods of reasoning and argumentation. Indeed, for al-Ghazālī, logic is a neutral instrument of learning, a distinction that separates it epistemologically from philosophy and thus it can be recommended by al-Ghazālī to theologians as a means of learning.[25] It is worth quoting a key statement al-Ghazālī makes in this regard in *The deliverance*:

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[21] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 74; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 7 (§ 26).

[22] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 63–66; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 3–4 (§§ 7–10).

[23] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 67–68; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 5 (§ 15).

[24] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 74–75; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 7 (§ 27).

> As for [the] logical sciences (*manṭiqiyyāt*), none of these relates to religion (*dīn*) either by way of denial or affirmation. They are no more than the study of the methods of proof and standards for reasoning, the conditions of the premises of demonstration and the manner of their ordering, the conditions of correct definition and the manner of its construction. They simply affirm that knowledge is either conception, arrived at through definition, or assent, arrived at through demonstration. Nothing of this ought to be denied. It is the same kind of thing the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and religious speculative thinkers (*ahl al-naẓar*) mention in their treatments of proofs. The philosophers differ from them only in their expressions and idioms and their more exhaustive definitions and classifications.[26]

The term "logic," as al-Ghazālī sees it, signifies studying the methods of demonstration (*burhān*) and syllogism (*qiyās*), along with dealing with the conditions governing the premises of apodeictic demonstration, the manners in which they may be combined, and the requirements for their sound definition and how to draw them up.[27] In adopting logic—that is, Aristotelian logic—instead of the traditional system of exploring signs and analogies for meaning, al-Ghazālī was "revolutionary," although, as Josef van Ess noted, he was not entirely novel in this line of reasoning.[28] In other words, as a Shāfiʿi legal scholar and an adherent to rational theology in the "orthodox" (Ashʿari) tradition, al-Ghazālī acknowledges the legitimacy of Aristotelian logic in the quest for truth.[29] Indeed, for him, only logic affords the criterion to help conclusively distinguish between true and false and between certain and non-certain knowledge. Moreover, logic alone provides the methods necessary for constructing new, certain knowledge.

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[25] On the general question of al-Ghazālī's position to the secular sciences and logic, see the elucidating study by Marmura, Ghazālī's attitude 100–114.

[26] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 81–82 (trans. M. Marmura); cf. Marmura, Ghazālī's attitude 103.

[27] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 81–82; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 9–10 (§ 44).

[28] van Ess, Logical structure 47.

[29] The Ashʿarī school of dogmatic theology was founded by the theologian Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī of Basra (d. 324/935). Initially, al-Ashʿarī was an active member of the leading school of *kalām*, the Muʿtazilites and their rationalistic interpretations. However, al-Ashʿarī (around the year 300/912–913) "converted" to "orthodoxy." He formulated a theology that reversed basic Muʿtazili tenets while, at the same time, rendering reason and the method of rationalistic dialectical reasoning acceptable to traditional Muslims. Through

Therefore, al-Ghazālī rhetorically asks, “What has this [logic] to do with the important truths of our religion that it should call for rejection and denial?”[30] In response to the question, he defines a number of issues that constrain students and scholars when dealing with logic. First, if someone were to condemn logic without logical proof, that person would gain only a poor reputation among logicians. This would be due primarily to the person’s own poor mind, but also to the religion, which—as the critics will claim—was founded upon such denial. Second, the admirer of logic might even come to determine that certain instances of unbelief (*kufr*) attributed to the philosophers are concepts seemingly based on logical proofs, rather than religiously offensive ideas. Such a person would “rush into unbelief” before having studied mainstream Islam. Therefore, for the sake of Islam, it is necessary to warn the faithful student of the potential problems inherent in logic, so that no one employs it unless he has received sufficient preparatory training for properly engaging in this kind of learning.[31]

1.2.2 Metaphysics

Al-Ghazālī views metaphysics as a branch of philosophy, and one expressly relating to logic. Within this general structure, he criticizes those philosophers who deal with primary principles and abstract concepts but who, “when, in metaphysics, they finally come to discuss questions touching on religion, … cannot satisfy those conditions, but rather are extremely slipshod in applying them.” Moreover, the philosophers’ preoccupation with demonstration and logic makes them so insouciant in matters perilous to religious belief that they “rush into unbelief even before [actually] teaching the metaphysical sciences.”[32]

In other words, al-Ghazālī portrays philosophical learning as missing the true essence of religion because of the philosophers’ concentration on theoretical considerations and inquiries into concept and categories. Although al-Ghazālī—in full agreement with the Ashʿarite tradition to which he adhered—does not deny the merits of metaphysics when it comes to theological prob-

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his successors, Ashʿarism gradually gained momentum to become the dominant school of *kalām*.

[30] See also Marmura, Ghazālī’s attitude 103; and Sayyid, *al-Ghazālī’s views on logic* 34–37.

[31] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 82; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 9 (§ 44).

[32] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 83; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 10 (§ 45).

lems (at least not in countering respective philosophical arguments), he subtly underlines the usefulness of proof in the matter of religion, the proof of being—that is, the Being of God, as the foundation of all things.

Although al-Ghazālī does not go into detail in this regard in *The deliverance*, for him metaphysics does have its place in advanced religious learning. It does so, however, within the expressly defined framework of the Ashʿarite doctrine and its denial of the objective validity of causality in nature: no thing or man has any power; God alone possesses all power—the idea that forms the basis of the Ashʿarite belief in miracles, which in turn is the basis for the proof of prophethood, as al-Ghazālī makes very clear in his autobiography.[33]

1.2.3 Mathematics and Physics

Like logic and metaphysics, the natural sciences are not religiously dangerous as such. However, some aspects of science go beyond the formal procedures of demonstration and are thus incompatible with orthodox Muslim faith.

As for the mathematical (and philosophical) disciplines, al-Ghazālī warns the student of two major religious perils arising from the study of these scholarly fields. One risk to faith inherent in the study of mathematical disciplines (*al-riyāḍiyya*)—including arithmetic (*ʿilm al-ḥisāb*), geometry (*ʿilm al-handasa*), and astronomy (*ʿilm hayʾat al-ʿālam*)—is posed by “the fine precision of their details and the clarity of their proofs.”[34] These qualities, al-Ghazālī observes, are characteristic of mathematics and constitute a real danger in religious education, because the virtually uncontested accuracy attributed to mathematics has the potential to make an excessively strong impression on the student, even perhaps causing the student to extend the prestige held by mathematics to all other mathematical and philosophical disciplines. The student might even begin to question the religious sciences and eventually disavow religion altogether, because the human mind does not necessarily grasp the divine design underlying the events and phenomena that occur in the natural world.

Here al-Ghazālī repeats views already stated in his main work, *The revival of the studies of religion*, where he urged his fellow Muslims to set aside not only philosophy, logic, and discursive theology but also the mathematical sciences, in favor of a Sufi-oriented program of spiritual purification. Since the mathematical sciences belong to the philosophical branches of knowledge, a student of mathematics would at the same time become "insidiously affected by the sinister mischief of the philosophers," because that student may become enamored with others' perception of his appearance as being particularly clever, and he may persist in his high opinions of the philosophers. This is nothing but "a very serious evil" (*āfa aẓīma*).[35]

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[33] Al-Ghazālī states, “When one is broad-minded enough to accept such marvels (*badāʾiʿ*) and is compelled to admit that they are special properties (*khawāṣṣ*), the knowledge of which is an apologetic miracle (*muʿjiza*) for some prophets, how in the world can he deny that the same is true of what he hears said by a truthful prophet, confirmed by miracles …?” Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 127–128; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 31 (§ 149). See also Abdul Hye, Ashʿarism 237–243; Leaman, *Islamic philosophy* 34–36 (Miracles and meaning); and Sweeney, Greek essence 45–52.

[34] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 79–80; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 8–9 (§ 38).

There is also a second, more complex, danger inherent in dealing with mathematics, one that concerns the general relation of science to faith. Al-Ghazālī warns that Islam actually would be harmed if someone endeavored to strengthen it by denying obvious natural phenomena and their scientific explanations—such as the solar and lunar eclipses—claiming that these occurrences contradict the Islamic religion. In support of his view, he quotes the Prophet Muhammad, who is credited with saying, "The sun and the moon are two of the signs of God Most High: They are not eclipsed for the death or life of any man. So, when you see an eclipse, fly in fear to the mention of God Most High."[36]

Yet, al-Ghazālī is somewhat ambivalent here; he also states that these prophetic words do not require a denial of the mathematical sciences by which the course of the sun and the moon can be explained. Therefore, attitudes and actions that encourage denial of natural phenomena, in spite of the reasonable explanations that the natural sciences provide, may succeed with pious and simple-minded people. The learned, however, will not doubt the scientific explanations; rather, they will question the foundations of Islam and even start thinking, "Islam is built on ignorance and the denial of apodeictic demonstration." For this reason, such approaches to the exact sciences are generally unsuited to sustain and defend faith and religion. Instead, they increase the people's love of philosophy, including the mathematical sciences, and cause them to become embittered against Islam. Thus, anyone acting in the belief that unsubstantiated denial of the mathematical and philosophical sciences helps to defend Islam, actually does great harm to this religion because "the revealed Law nowhere undertakes to deny or affirm these sciences, and the latter nowhere address themselves to religious matters."[37]

Yet another problem relates to the fact that the ancient Greeks grounded mathematics in proofs, while they studied metaphysical questions based on speculation. This twofold way of studying was, al-Ghazālī briefly notes, an unsuitable model for the education of faithful Muslims.

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[35] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 79; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 9 (§ 40).

[36] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 79; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 9 (§§ 41–42).

[37] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 79; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 9 (§ 41). See also Ruddle-Miyanmoto, Regarding doubt 161, 168–169.

Al-Ghazālī concludes these considerations by confirming that the risks inherent in mathematics are considerable, and that it is necessary to "warn off anyone who would embark upon the study of those mathematical sciences." Indeed, anyone studying them risks infection by their vices and is in serious danger with regard to his faith. "Rare, therefore, are those who study mathematics without losing their religion and throwing off the restraint of piety."[38]

As for the study of the natural sciences or physics, which deal with natural phenomena and the physical world, with both the organic and inorganic matters of God's creation, al-Ghazālī's viewpoints underwent an interesting development during his lifetime. In his early work, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (*The intentions of the philosophers*), he is rather critical of physics, as he makes clear here:

> In physics, the sound is mixed with the false, and right is dubiously like error; … in the book *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (*The incoherence of the philosophers*) will be explained the falsity of what must be held false.[39]

In *The deliverance*, al-Ghazālī takes a more nuanced approach to physics and its subcategories. Here, he confirms that the study of physics, like that of medicine, does not require repudiation for religious reasons, as these sciences per se pose no serious threat to faith. This was, with the exception of certain aspects of the said sciences, all to do with the creed, which confirms, "Nature is totally subject to God Most High."

At this point, al-Ghazālī directs the reader of *The deliverance* to his earlier work, *The incoherence of the philosophers*, where he outlined four problematic questions (*masāʾil*) concerning the natural sciences, all of which relate, directly or indirectly, to learning:

1. The first point that al-Ghazālī critiques has two aspects. One relates to the natural scientists' insistence that the course of nature is necessary and unchangeable, and the other to their idea that miracles are impossible. Against the philosophers, but in agreement with the Ashʿarite occasionalist doctrine that confines all causal action to God, al-Ghazālī argues that certain types of miracles are indeed possible.

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[38] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 80; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 9 (§ 40).

[39] Al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid* 10–11.

2. The second point also deals with two aspects: (a) the natural scientists' claim that the human souls are self-subsisting substances (*jawāhir qāʿima bi-anfusihā*); and, (b) these scholars' inability to rationally demonstrate (*bi-l-burhān al-ʿaqlī*) that the soul is not imprinted on the body.
3. Third is the natural scientists' claim that the soul is eternal and perpetual (*abadiyya wa-sarmadiyya*) and that it cannot be annihilated.
4. The fourth and final point is again twofold. It relates to (a) the natural scientists' denial of bodily resurrection and the souls' return to their bodies, and (b) their negation of the existence of a physical paradise and hell.[40]

While points one and four are straightforward, points two and three—concerning the relation of the soul to the body and the nature of its existence, eternal or non-eternal—are more complex. Al-Ghazālī mentions two key actions of the soul relevant to learning: (a) soul actions requiring the body (including imagination, sensation, and emotion); and (b) soul actions *not* requiring the body (such as cognition of the intelligibles divested of matter). After presenting the views of the scientists and philosophers, al-Ghazālī summarizes his position on these issues as follows:

> We do not deny anything they have mentioned and [agree] that this belongs to prophets. We only deny their confining themselves to it and their denying … the revivification of the dead, and other [miracles of this kind]. For this reason, it becomes necessary to affirm miracles and … to support what all Muslims agree on, to the effect that God has power over all things.[41]

Al-Ghazālī returns to this issue at the end of his book, in the conclusion to his refutation of the philosophers' denial of bodily resurrection, the physical existence of paradise and hell, and the corporeal pleasures and punishments in the hereafter. Here, he even more explicitly challenges the philosophical study of problems concerning the belief in the hereafter, as stipulated in scripture and the Law that it contains, again highlighting the superiority of divine teachings:

> [W]e do not deny that there are, in the hereafter, kinds of pleasures superior to the sensory. Nor do we deny the survival of the soul after separation from the body. But we know these through the religious law (*sharʿ*), since it has conveyed [that] resurrection [will take place].[42]

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[40] Al-Ghazālī, *Incoherence* 163 (§§19–20); see also Marmura's introduction, ibid., xxiv.

[41] Ibid., 165 (§§19–20).

[42] Ibid., 213–214 (§19).

Al-Ghazālī thus affirms that, for the faithful student, it is obligatory to take the language of the Quran literally, not metaphorically. However, a deeper metaphorical and symbolic sense of scriptural statements beyond the literal may present itself and gain in significance when pursuing the mystical path. Still, for al-Ghazālī, the exploration of this deeper sense must first be based on the literal acceptance of the respective statements in scripture, as Michael Marmura has commented on this issue.[43]

1.2.4 Political Sciences and Ethics

Al-Ghazālī's remarks in *The deliverance* on the political sciences are rather brief. He blames the philosophers for reducing these disciplines to "administrative maxims concerned with secular affairs and the government of rulers." Moreover, the philosophers merely duplicated the concerns of the political sciences from only two sources, (a) the proclamations found in the scriptures revealed to the prophets (*kutub Allāh al-munzala ʿalā l-anbiyāʾ*) and (b) the maxims handed down from the earlier prophets (*salaf al-anbiyāʾ*).[44] In spite of the succinctness of these statements, al-Ghazālī's line of thought is clear: The *sharīʿa* is the sole source of all authority (including political authority). Furthermore, the *sharīʿa* existed already, prior to the advent of Islam (as he speaks of scriptures and revelations to prophets in the plural), and humans cannot change these laws; they may only learn of them (as the philosophers simply duplicated these perpetual laws in order to apply them to worldly matters).

In learning about the *sharīʿa*, two main prerequisites, and the parameters they set, must be observed. These are: (a) acknowledging the established divine source of the *sharīʿa* on the one hand; and (b) belief in and obedience to God alone on the other.[45]

Thus, additional sources for learning and practicing the political sciences are:

- the will of the Prophet (as expressed in the prophetic tradition, the *ḥadīth*, the initial source of communal consensus);

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[43] Ibid., xxi. Al-Ghazālī conveyed the same message, although in a more nuanced way, in his earlier *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayna l-Islām wa-l-zandaqa* (*On the boundaries of theological tolerance in Islam*), a work that attempts to provide a legally sanctioned definition of what is—in due consideration of historical developments and determinations—to be considered unbelief (*kufr*) in mainstream Sunni ("orthodox") Islam and what is not. Particularly relevant in our context is al-Ghazālī's discussion of the five levels of and the rules for figurative interpretation; cf. al-Ghazālī, *On the boundaries* 104–107, 117.

[44] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 79, 85; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 8, 11 (§§36, 50).

[45] Binder, al-Ghazālī's theory 220.

- the consensus of the community (including contemporary Muslim as well as preceding Muslim and non-Muslim generations through the "maxims handed down from the earlier prophets"); and,
- religious observance, as al-Ghazālī recaps the issue in *The deliverance* (after having dealt with it extensively in various chapters of *The revival*).[46]

Now, concerning ethics, both the study and acceptance, as well as the outright rejection, of the ethical teachings set forth by the Muslim philosophers bear serious risks for true (orthodox) believers. Al-Ghazālī argues that studying philosophical books, such as those of the Brethren of Purity, may lead the unprepared learner to approve of these writings and their "wrong" ideas. Hence, the faithful student must be prevented "on account of the deceit and danger they contain," just as children must be prevented from handling poisonous snakes.[47] Also, philosophical ethics are constituted of, on the one hand, a mix of false and religiously precarious philosophical ideas, and of maxims from the prophetic tradition and Islamic mysticism on the other. Simple-minded people, who are unable to distinguish right from wrong, may thus reject not only philosophically defined ethics that need to be rejected for religious reasons, but also good orthodox teachings, just because the philosophers uttered them.[48]

Furthermore, al-Ghazālī argues that ethics is a discipline the philosophers use as an umbrella for all the principal human virtues and moral conduct that the Sufis commit to following. The philosophers simply "took over these ideas and mixed them with their own doctrines, using the lustre afforded by them to promote the circulation of their own false teaching."[49]

Therefore, the evil and mischief arising from the study of philosophical ethics, in which principles of asceticism are combined with both philosophical teachings and quotations from the prophetic tradition, is twofold: If one accepts this kind of ethics, one accepts philosophical teachings that contradict orthodox Islamic faith. But, in rejecting them, one also risks rejecting the true prophetic wisdom often integrated into these ethics on the basis that these maxims were articulated by philosophers; this is the more serious danger.

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[46] Especially in volume one of *The revival*, which is devoted to the general themes of worship and divine service.

[47] For al-Ghazālī's use of images in his "apologetic autobiography," *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, to characterize his attitudes toward the Graeco-Arabic philosophical tradition, see also Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 102–104.

[48] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 86–87; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 11–12 (§ 52).

[49] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 86; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 11 (§ 50).

Consequently, al-Ghazālī advises the student to seek truth by the truth alone, and not by men and the errors they impart in their philosophical books, expressly identifying the latter as the writings of the Brethren of Purity and writers like them. Therefore, "the thoroughly grounded scholar (*ʿālim rāsikh*)" is obliged to not deprive anyone in need of guidance, but to teach students properly (in the orthodox tradition) so that they benefit from these instructions.[50]

While al-Ghazālī offers this advice concerning the risks in dealing with philosophical ethics, he is obviously also contemplating the responsibilities of a mystical scholar and reformer, which he saw himself as toward the end of his life—a mission that the title and content of his late work *The deliverance from error* makes very clear.

2 Ibn Rushd

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) is probably best known to the historian of Western philosophy for his commentaries on Aristotle, which, in their Latin versions, significantly influenced the development of Aristotelianism in both medieval Europe and Renaissance Italy. In the Muslim world, it is Ibn Rushd's writings in defense of rationalist philosophy that left their mark.

Ibn Rushd lived most of his life in al-Andalus, the Iberian Peninsula under Muslim rule, and a stronghold of genuine Islamic learning and creative intellectual exchange during his lifetime, the sixth/twelfth century. The Almohads, the ruling dynasty in North Africa and al-Andalus between 524 and 668 (1130 and 1269), paradoxically promoted a reformist-puritan doctrine as their state policy, while their reputedly enlightened rulers were very much interested in (Aristotelian) philosophy and the sciences, hence their support of illustrious scholars, philosophers, and physicians, such as Ibn Zuhr (Lat., Avenzoar; ca. 484–557/1091–1161), Ibn Bājja (Avempace; ca. 487–533/1095–1139), Ibn Ṭufayl (Aben Tofail; ca. 493–581/1105–1185), and not least of all, Ibn Rushd. Nonetheless, the restrictive state policy of the Almohads led some of the most conservative religious scholars in their realm to publicly discredit philosophy and the philosophers and to incite the people against any form of rationalist thought. It was in this complex political-religious and intellectual climate that Ibn Rushd formed his ideas.[51]

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[50] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 89–90; al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 12–13 (§§ 58–60).

[51] Günther, "Auf der Suche" 121–124; Günther, Ibn Rushd 252–256.

For Ibn Rushd, two principal approaches to Islamic learning exist. One approach, as he saw it, is text-oriented in terms of its sources and traditional in its methodology. It rests on the Quran and is supplemented by prophetic traditions and the commonly accepted interpretations of the Quran. In other words, it relies on the authority of scripture and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, along with the consensus of religious scholars and the analytical methods of interpretation that had already been generally established. In Ibn Rushd's view, this (traditional) kind of learning is the most appropriate way of educating ordinary citizens. The other approach is fully intellectualized and creative. It is based on (a) *burhān* (demonstrative reasoning), (b) *taṣdīq* ([rational] assent), and (c) *takhayyul* ([attentive] imagination). This exclusive approach to education is recommended to those intellectually capable of advanced learning. Given such a focused, imaginative, and creative kind of knowledge acquisition, Ibn Rushd famously also argued that philosophy is not only a natural component of religion and its study but also truly instrumental in directing and correcting the traditional beliefs of faith.[52]

In this spirit, Ibn Rushd's *The decisive treatise* appears as a rigorous appeal for the harmony of religion and philosophy. It is a forceful attempt to demonstrate that the Quranic revelation and the Law (*sharʿ*, *sharīʿa*) it contains not only do not contradict but, indeed, safeguard and support the pursuit of truth, which is the aim of philosophy—the latter, for Ibn Rushd, is identical to Aristotle's thought.[53]

Interestingly, many of Ibn Rushd's arguments in this treatise are formulated as direct or indirect refutations of charges that al-Ghazālī put forward against the philosophers. Moreover, Ibn Rushd's whole "discourse" (*maqāl*) gives the impression of representing a defense of the philosophers against al-Ghazālī's criticism of them, because the latter had attracted so much public attention that a systematic response in published form was appropriate and needed.[54] This was all the more necessary, since al-Ghazālī's teachings flourished during the reign of the Almohads.[55]

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[52] Günther, Ibn Rushd 256–258.

[53] Belo, *Averroes* 3.

[54] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* xl–xli (Butterworth's introduction).

[55] Notably, al-Ghazālī's teachings were considered as unbelief under the dynastic predecessors of the Almohads, the Almoravids (r. 431–542/1040–1147), who promoted conservative theological stances based on Ashʿarism; cf. Griffel, *Philosophical theology* 81. Indeed, the reception of al-Ghazālī's thought in the West during the Almoravid reign was not without tension. While, on the one hand, "his thought resonated with the profound aspirations of the Islamic societies of the day," as Fierro describes it, on the other, it represented

Like al-Ghazālī in *The deliverance*, Ibn Rushd discusses a number of specifics concerning knowledge acquisition and education in *The decisive treatise*, including significant limitations and restrictions on learning. However, in contrast to al-Ghazālī, from the outset Ibn Rushd stresses his principle idea that "intellectual reasoning or a combination of intellectual and legal reasoning" is a suitable, helpful, and divinely sanctioned method of study. He supports this view scripturally by repeatedly referring to relevant Quranic verses, including the saying of the Exalted, "So, reflect, you who have eyes [to see and understand]" (Q 59:2).

Against this epistemological background, Ibn Rushd explores several causes that prompted the emergence of contending intellectual groups and factions in Islam, including the theologians, philosophers, logicians, and natural scientists. However, he does not stop at analyzing the merits and shortcomings of these groups. He also offers advice on how to prevent or overcome these divides. Remarkably, much of his reasoning in this regard is framed within the context of education.

2.1 *Theology*

Ibn Rushd states that the Quran contains three ways of generating truth: (1) dialectical (*jadalī*), studied by the theologians; (2) demonstrative (*burhānī*), studied by the philosophers and natural scientists; and (3) rhetorical (*khiṭābī*), used by the majority of common people (*jumhūr ghālib*).[56] Problems with the dialectical pursuit of truth arise when differences among the theologians, concerning the interpretation of scripture, spill over to the common people, where they cause—as a consequence of the limited intellectual capability of the latter—confusion and turmoil. First, Ibn Rushd argues, there is the apparent meaning of scripture and the Law it contains, which generally needs to be respected. Second, there is interpretation of scripture, which should be conducted exclusively by those skilled in demonstration. Third, the results of such scriptural analysis must not be made available to the masses. Rather, they should be accessible only to those intellectually capable of understanding them. Therefore, the sophisticated methods used by the rationalist theolo-

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a challenge to the traditional religious scholars. This seems to have led to "the dark and hotly debated episode of the burning of al-Ghazālī's work, ordered by the Almoravid *amīr* and instigated by certain Andalusī *ʿulamāʾ*," as later Muslim historical sources indicate; cf. Fierro, Between the Maghreb 3.

[56] Cf. also von Kügelgen, *Averroes* 31–32. An alternative reading of the third term would be "discursive" (*khiṭābī*).

gians of the Ashʿarite school in particular must be rejected, because they target not only the elite but also the masses with their interpretations of the Quran. Ibn Rushd states:

> Those among them who reflected have wronged the Muslims in the sense that a group of Ashʿarites has charged with unbelief anyone who is *not cognizant* of the existence of the Creator (glorious is He) by the methods *they have set down for cognizance* of Him in their books. But, in truth, they are the ones who are the unbelievers and those who are misguided. From here on they disagree, with one group saying "The first obligation is reflection," and another group saying, "Faith is" …
>
> If it were said, "If these methods followed by the Ashʿarites and others adept in reflection are not the shared methods by which the Lawgiver intended to teach the multitude and by which alone is possible to teach them, then which ones are these methods in the Law of ours?" We would say, "They are the methods that are established in the precious Book alone … And these are the shared methods for (a) teaching the majority of the people and (b) [the method for teaching] the select".[57]

Here, Ibn Rushd sets clear limits to the scholarly tasks and duties of rationalist theology, whereas he includes both the Ashʿarites and, as his arguments proceeds, the Muʿtazilites (who the Ashʿarites oppose) as well.

At first glance, Ibn Rushd appears to draw conclusions here quite similar to those expressed by al-Ghazālī in *The deliverance*, where al-Ghazālī emphatically called upon the theologians to protect Islam from confusion and heresy by preserving the orthodox creeds, instead of long-windedly exploring "the true natures of things" and other themes irreverent to theologians (and the faithful).

Still, Ibn Rushd expressly names al-Ghazālī in *The decisive treatise* as a champion of the Ashʿarite school of theology. In other words, Ibn Rushd is rather indifferent to al-Ghazālī's venture of voicing criticism of the dialectical theologians on the one hand and recommending logic as tool of theological learning on the other. Instead, Ibn Rushd points out the risks of dealing with theological matters discursively, since such activities do nothing in defense of the Quran and the Law. He also states that the discursive theologians would "end up at the point where no one grasps an interpretation of them" anymore. Also, the doctrinal quarrels of the theologians had achieved nothing but an increase of heretical innovations (*wa-li-dhālika kathurat al-bidaʿ*).

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[57] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 30–31 (§§54, 55, italics by S.G.); see also ibid., xxxvi (Butterworth's introduction; italics by S.G.). See also Fakhry, *Averroes* 12–35 ("The critique of Ashʿarite theology").

Ibn Rushd's advice on the matter is that dialectical theologians should admit that the Quran is "completely persuasive and able to bring about assent for everyone."[58] With this argument, Ibn Rushd essentially readjusts the collective intellectual focus onto the inclusiveness of the Quranic scripture and the divinely revealed Law. At the same time, he undermines and ultimately rejects al-Ghazālī's ideal of learning—that is, one that centers on the acquisition of intuitive knowledge (*maʿrifa ḥadsiyya*) as the proper method to arrive at certainty (*yaqīn*), as *The deliverance* and other works al-Ghazālī wrote at a mature age display so clearly.[59]

2.2 *Philosophy*

Ibn Rushd views philosophy and logic as closely linked and interrelated disciplines. This has led some modern scholars to speak of Ibn Rushd's philosophical logic.[60] In *The decisive treatise*, Ibn Rushd famously determines that "the Law makes it obligatory to reflect (*naẓar*) upon existing things (*mawjūdāt*) by means of the intellect, and to consider (*iʿtibār*) them" by syllogistic reasoning (*qiyās*), which means "deducing (*istinbāṭ*) and inferring (*istikhrāj*) the unknown from the known." Furthermore, he says that the most complete kind of reflection on the Law not only calls for but also urges and warrants performing "demonstration" (*burhān*).[61]

In the course of establishing these key instructions for rationalist learning within the tradition of the Aristotelian proof, Ibn Rushd identifies some critical issues that arise when certain groups of scholars make use of philosophical logic and demonstration in matters concerning the interpretation of scripture. For this argument, he takes the belief in the hereafter and its conditions as a model.

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[58] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 29–30 (§§ 52, 54).

[59] Although not made explicit, Ibn Rushd appears to contest one of al-Ghazālī's key statement that reads, "My soul regained its health and equilibrium and once again I accepted the self-evident data of reason and relied on them with safety and certainty. But that was not achieved by constructing a proof or putting together an argument. On the contrary, it was the effect of a light, which God Most High cast into my breast [in reference to Q 6:125]. And that light is the key to most knowledge. Therefore, whoever thinks that the unveiling of truth depends on precisely formulated proofs has indeed straitened the broad mercy of God … From that light, then, the unveiling of truth must be sought." Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance* 4 (§ 15).

[60] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 1 (§ 1). See also Leaman, Ibn Rushd 645; and Griffel, *Philosophical theology* 81.

[61] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 2–3 (§ 3).

Ibn Rushd here refers first to the Ashʿarites. He criticizes them as those who "pretend to demonstration, saying that it is obligatory to take these descriptions [of the hereafter] in their apparent sense since *there is no demonstration* rendering that apparent sense preposterous."[62] Other scholars, especially the mystics, must be objected to as well, since many of them apply the philosophical method of demonstration in the same manner when interpreting the Quranic descriptions of the hereafter. Still, although making use of one and the same method, they reach considerably different conclusions. Al-Ghazālī in particular was criticized in this regard, because he inadequately combined these two ways of learning for religious instruction in his books when (a) referring to the lack of demonstrative proof in rendering an assumption positive, and (b) using demonstrative proof for individual spiritual interpretations.[63]

Ibn Rushd sums up this point by maintaining that the common people need to take the Quranic verses on the hereafter in their apparent literal (*ẓāhir*) sense; any figurative interpretation of them (*taʾwīl*) represents, leads them to, unbelief (*kufr*). Thus, interpretations of verses concerning the hereafter should be mentioned only in books of demonstration (*kutub al-barāhīn*), and they should only be made available to those who are adept in demonstration, in the Aristotelian tradition of philosophy and logic. "Whereas, if they are established in other demonstrative books with poetical and rhetorical or dialectical methods used in them, as does Abū Ḥāmid [al-Ghazālī], that is an error against the Law and against philosophy," Ibn Rushd concludes.[64]

2.2.1 Logic

Within this rather composite reasoning on literal and figurative understandings and interpretation of scripture, the importance of philosophical logic in knowledge acquisition and learning plays a central role for Ibn Rushd. This is notable since, through his plea for a demonstrative approach to scripture and its Law, which should be made available only to qualified intellectuals, the author apparently intends to cast aside the doubts of those among his fellow Muslims who are engaged in both jurisprudence and syllogistic reasoning.

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[62] Ibid., 20–21 (§ 32).

[63] Ibid., 21 (§ 32).

[64] Ibid., 21 (§ 33–35). See also Horten, *Texte* 23–27.

In order to strengthen his appeal for studying philosophical logic, Ibn Rushd appears to offer three key points, which can be summarized as follows:

1) *In general*, the Quran and the Law it contains urge humankind "to reflect upon existing things by means of the intellect, and to consider them." Here, Ibn Rushd reaffirms his central view that he already prominently voiced at the beginning of his treatise and several more times throughout the book.
2) *More specifically*, the purposes of study for the jurist and for the philosopher do not essentially differ; in fact, they are similar. Ibn Rushd again refers to the divine command "Consider, you who have sight" (Q 59:2) and maintains, "This is the [divinely revealed] text for the obligation of using both intellectual and Law-based syllogistic reasoning."
3) *Finally*, syllogistic reasoning conforms to the Law; it is no heretical innovation. In other words, Ibn Rushd argues, "the Law calls for the most complete kind of reflection by means of the most complete kind of syllogistic reasoning, and this is the one called demonstration." Anyone who desires to be cognizant of God and of all the existing things by means of demonstration needs to know, first, the different kinds of demonstration and, second, in what way demonstrative syllogistic reasoning (*qiyās burhānī*) differs from dialectical (*jadalī*), rhetorical (*khiṭābī*), and sophist syllogistic (*mughālaṭī*) reasoning. Importantly, if grounded in these kinds of study activities, the learner does not cross the borders of faith. Quite the reverse, cognizance of God is achieved by, and conforms to, cognizance of intellectual syllogistic reasoning.[65]

In spite of his open critique of al-Ghazālī, Ibn Rushd does not demand limiting access to al-Ghazālī's books. Instead, as Charles Butterworth noted in his introduction to *The decisive treatise*, Ibn Rushd calls for "greater attention to the intention of the Law and the methods by which it calls to human beings."[66] Individuals who are intellectually qualified to read books on philosophy, logic, and the natural sciences could and should study these sciences. Likewise, they may also read and benefit from al-Ghazālī's books. But the common people, with their limited intellectual abilities, must be prevented from such unrestricted readings. In fact, those responsible for the believers need to monitor and enforce these educational restrictions, on the premise that while the Quran does speak to all the people, it does so in different ways. Ibn Rushd clarifies this further, stating:

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[65] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 1–3, 3–6 (§ 2–3, 3–10). See ibid., xxiii (Butterworth's introduction), and Fakhry, *Averroes* 36–42 ("Logic and theory of knowledge").

[66] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* xxx (Introduction).

> What is obligatory for the Imams of the Muslims is that they ban those of [al-Ghazālī's] books that contain science from all but those who are adept in science (*ahl al-ʿilm*), just as it is obligatory upon them to ban demonstrative books from those not adept in them (*man laysa ahlan minhu*).[67]

In view of the wide spectrum of human intellectual capabilities, Ibn Rushd further specified these rules of learning. He recommended that:

- Those of limited intellectual capabilities must not study demonstrative books under any circumstances. The harm and confusion that might occur to their faith, caused by ideas they do not understand, would be too significant. This group of people should be banned from reading books on scientific and demonstrative issues altogether.
- Those of superior innate dispositions may study demonstrative books. Still, attention needs to be paid, since a lack of practical virtue, inexperience in structured reading, and the absence of a teacher may mislead them.
- Those belonging to the intellectual elite are advised to engage in reading books on philosophical logic and demonstration and to become cognizant of their ideas to the utmost possible degree. Forbidding them to deal with these concepts is equivalent to keeping them ignorant, which is tantamount to inflicting an injustice upon them.[68]

By and large, Ibn Rushd advocates that the contents and methods of teaching and learning must correspond to the capabilities of the individual human mind. However, more specifically, in focusing on the intellectual elite, he expresses views on education that have far-reaching consequences, and not just for related basic educational and ethical values (such as the freedom of all individuals—or the lack thereof—to pursue their interests as they see them). Indeed, the learning restrictions to be enforced on the masses also clearly limit their participation in communal and societal matters. Any decision-making in public affairs, for example, is thus reserved for the elite.

2.2.2 Metaphysics

While Ibn Rushd deals with metaphysics extensively in his other writings,[69] he makes it clear in *The decisive treatise* that his primary purpose here is to prove that "reflection upon philosophy and logic" is an obligation for Muslim students. Furthermore, Ibn Rushd clarifies that, for him, philosophy is an inquiry into existent things (*al-mawjūdāt*) rather than into being (*al-mawjūd*). In other words, metaphysics, as a science that is traditionally understood to study the fundamental nature of all reality or being (i.e., first causes or unchanging things), is not of primary concern to Ibn Rushd in this work, where he attempts to reconcile scripture and philosophy (or science) and thus to harmonize the faith-versus-reason dichotomy. Still, our author is explicit about his own position on learning: (a) he follows Aristotle in metaphysical problems and (b) he defines metaphysics as a theoretical science, which explores the causes and principles of being. This also means that it is a science concerned with the knowledge of being as such.[70]

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[67] Ibid., 22 (§ 36).

[68] Ibid., 1 (§ 1).

[69] See esp. Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's metaphysics* and El-Ehwany, Ibn Rushd.

Within this general framework, Ibn Rushd stresses that demonstrative truth (and, along these lines, philosophy, since it searches for the truth) cannot conflict with scripture. If philosophy and scripture disagree on the existence of any particular being, scripture is to be understood figuratively and thus to be in need of interpretation. Since the existence of literal and figurative speech, as well as apparent and inner meaning in matters of scripture, has been known to previous generations, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and since it has been accepted by all groups of Muslim scholars—theologians, philosophers, and jurists alike—the question of interpretation (and its limits) gains much significance.[71]

Why this is the case, what interpretation as a tool of learning means, and why the philosophers alone are equipped with the unique methods of demonstrative knowledge will be addressed in greater detail below in the context of Ibn Rushd's views on the political sciences.

2.2.3 Mathematics and Physics

Ibn Rushd obtained a systematic knowledge of the mathematical sciences at a young age, but he did not practice them in his later years. In Seville, for example, he had studied with the court physician-philosopher and natural scientist Abū Jaʿfar b. Hārūn al-Tarjālī (d. 575/1180), who was employed by the Almohad ruler Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (r. 558–580/1163–1184), and in Marrakesh with the astronomer Abū Isḥāq Ibn Wādiʿ, an otherwise unknown scholar.[72]

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[70] Arabic-Islamic scholarship came to know and make use of two distinct types of metaphysics, a metaphysics of Being and a metaphysics of the One. While the first is that of Aristotle, the second is that of Plotinus (since Plotinus's *Enneads* was mistakenly ascribed to Aristotle). Cf. El-Ehwany, Ibn Rushd. Here, Ibn Rushd's statement from his short treatise on metaphysics, *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-nafs* (*Summary of* [*Aristotle's*] *book on the soul*), is reproduced, which introduces his review of the composition of beings and their source of behavior and knowledge. It reads, "Our aim is to pick from the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle his theoretical doctrines." Ibid., 560. See also Sweeney, Greek essence 52–57.

[71] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 6 (§ 9), 9 (§ 13), and 20–21 (§§ 32–34).

In *The decisive treatise*, Ibn Rushd embeds his views on the art of mathematics (*ṣināʿat al-taʿālīm*) within the wider discussion of whether Muslims could or should rely on and make use of achievements put forward by those "not sharing [in our religion]." He makes it explicit that, by this reference, he means "those ancients who reflected upon these things before the religion of Islam." If the ancients had already investigated a matter completely, Muslims should, he recommends, seize their books and analytically study (*naẓara*)[73] the subject matters they contain, so as to get a firm grasp on these subjects. If the respective information proves to be correct, it should be accepted and become part of the body of knowledge in Islam, whereas it is necessary to alert people to anything incorrect in this regard and to set things right. This brings Ibn Rushd to the conclusion that true understanding of a matter can only be achieved through the accumulation of knowledge from "one person after another" (*wāḥid baʿda wāḥid*), meaning that, in so doing, "the one who comes after […] rel[ies] upon the one who preceded him" (*yastaʿīna fī dhālika al-mutaʾakhkhir bi-l-mutaqaddim*).[74]

This insight of the sixth/twelfth-century Muslim thinker is remarkable in more than one respect. Primarily, it brings to mind Isaac Newton's (1642–1727) modest but nonetheless famous saying, "If I have seen a little farther than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." At the same time, Ibn Rushd here reveals an awareness of a universal idea that today is sometimes understood in connection to the concept of cultural heritage. According to this idea, processing information is a way that enables people to usefully bring past experiences to bear on their present situation. In other words, "the concepts of the past, painstakingly abstracted and slowly accumulated by successive generation[s], become available to help each new individual form his own conceptual system," to use the words of the British pioneer in mathematics education, Richard R. Skemp (1919–1995).[75]

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[72] Ibn Rushd himself mentions this in his most important work on astronomy, *Mukhtaṣar al-Majisṭī* (*Summary of the Almagest*, written between 1159 and 1162). This book, however, is "more an attempt to understand the scope of theoretical astronomy in his time rather than an attempt at an authoritative work" on the topic. Cf. Forcada, Ibn Rushd 565. In addition, Ibn Rushd was familiar with the works of several important Muslim natural science scholars, such as the astronomer and mathematician Abū Muḥammad Jābir Ibn Aflāḥ (Lat., Geber; died toward the middle of the sixth/twelfth century; not to be confused with the alchemist Geber), and the writer on practical and theoretical astronomy Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā al-Zarqālī (Lat., Arzachel; 419–479/1029–1087), both from al-Andalus; as well as the Egyptian mathematician, astronomer, and physicist Ibn al-Haytham (Lat., Alhazen, ca. 354–430/965–1039).

[73] Butterworth translates *naẓara* throughout his book as "to reflect."

[74] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 4–6 (§§ 5–7, 9).

Intriguingly, Ibn Rushd continues his observations by saying that the special need for successive knowledge accumulation and learning goes "along the lines of what occurs in the mathematical sciences (*ʿulūm al-taʿālīm*)."[76] Clarification of this viewpoint follows swiftly. Taking the arts of geometry (*ṣināʿat al-handasa*) and astronomy (*ṣināʿat ʿilm al-hayʾa*) as examples, Ibn Rushd alerts his reader that, if these disciplines had not already come into existence, people would not know the use of them and be unable, for instance, to find the distance between celestial objects. (It is of note that Ibn Rushd is known for having studied these specific problems in geometric astronomy with his astronomy teachers in Seville and Marrakesh, and that he later theorized about them in his *Mukhtaṣar al-Majisṭī—Summary of the Almagest*—written between 554–557/1159–1162).

Although not mentioning al-Ghazālī by name, Ibn Rushd seems, at this point in *The decisive treatise*, to reiterate—and refute—a statement made by al-Ghazālī in *The Deliverance*. Al-Ghazālī, in his autobiography, had used the solar and lunar eclipses as examples to support his argument that dealing with the mathematical sciences and syllogistic demonstration can be harmful to one's faith and to the Islamic religion in general. For Ibn Rushd, by contrast, learning about the sizes of the heavenly bodies, their shapes, and their distances from each other is safeguarded and called for by the Law because demonstration—the method used to obtain this kind of mathematical knowledge—entails an action (or a thought process) that all those capable in the mathematical sciences trust. But, without making use of knowledge and experience established by the previous generations, it is impossible "in this time of ours" (*fī waqtinā hādhā*) to learn of these phenomena. It is impossible even for the most intelligent person, unless "by means of revelation (*waḥy*) or something resembling revelation."

2.2.4 Political Sciences and Ethics

Ibn Rushd was keenly interested in the political sciences (as he was in public affairs), while the term "political sciences" in his case may best be rendered as political philosophy. Indeed, he argued expressly in favor of a practical political philosophy, one that "probes the foundations and guiding principles of the law," as Daniel Frank noted.[77] Ibn Rushd conceived of "a society grounded in obedience to a divine law," while manifesting "a coherent and theoretically defensible structure."[78] Within this wider political-philosophical context, education and its practical implications for Muslim society played an important role in Ibn Rushd's thought. This is evident, for example, in his own biography, for in 547/1153 Ibn Rushd accepted the invitation of ʿAbd al-Munʿim (r. 527–558/1147–1163), the enlightened and philosophically interested Almohad ruler at that time, to come to Marrakesh and act as adviser on the ambitious project of building educational and literary institutions throughout the Almohad empire.[79] Interestingly, one of the schools which ʿAbd al-Munʿim seems to have consulted Ibn Rushd on was a college that specialized in preparing clerks (*muwaẓẓafūn*) for work in the Almohad administration.[80]

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[75] Skemp, *Psychology* 15–16.

[76] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 5 (§ 8).

Along these lines, several of Ibn Rushd's writings speak of his keen interest in political and ethical issues related to the state and society at large. This is exemplified in Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Plato's *Politeia* (the only Arabic commentary on this work) and on Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics*. In his commentary on Plato's *Politeia*, for instance, Ibn Rushd makes the distinction—significant in the Islamic context—between Muhammad the founder of an (as Ibn Rushd saw it) "ideal state" and Muhammad the Prophet. Here, Ibn Rushd also expresses the idea that an ideal state can exist and flourish only under the guidance of a philosopher-king. Indeed, the Platonic idea of a philosopher-king appears as a model for Ibn Rushd to conceptualize a just and perfect polity—a concept that he seems to have viewed as potentially being realized in Islam within his own lifetime.[81]

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[77] Frank, Political philosophy 520.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Renan, *Averroës* 15, was the first who drew attention to these activities of Ibn Rushd. He wrote, "L'an 548 de l'hégire (1153), nous trouvons Ibn-Roschd à Maroc, occupé peut-être à seconder les vues d'Abd-el-Moumen, dans l'érection des collèges qu'il fondait en ce moment, et ne négligent pas pour cela ses observations astronomiques." One notes, of course, that Renan used *peut-être*, "perhaps," in his remarks. Furthermore, see Arnaldez, Ibn Rus̲h̲d 909–920; Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* xiv (Butterworth's introduction); and Günther, Ibn Rushd 252–253, with more primary source material in support of the above statement.

[80] The curriculum of this college required students to memorize Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭa'* (*The smoothed path* [*on learning Islamic law*]) as well as Ibn Tūmart's *Aʿazz mā yuṭlab* (*The most cherished of what is required* [*to live the life of a faithful Muslim*]). In addition to training in legal issues and the religious-ideological foundations of the ruling Almohads, the students also received physical, and even military, training in preparation for their roles as future administrators, while the caliph guaranteed all living expenses, including the costs of the horses and weapons. Later, the school's graduates replaced senior administrators from the previous Almoravid dynasty, who were then appointed as councilors (*fī l-mashūra*) to the junior administrators. Cf. the anonymous book, *Kitāb al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya fī dhikr al-akhbār al-Marrākishiyya* (*The book of embroidered cloaks: On the history of Marrakesh*) 150–151; this text has been dated to the eighth/fourteenth century. See also al-Manūnī, *Ḥaḍārat* 17; and Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd* (*Averroes*) 33.

In *The Decisive treatise*, Ibn Rushd expresses much of his political-ethical thought during his deliberations on Quranic passages on the hereafter and the impact these verses and their interpretations have on different groups of people in society. The Quranic statements on the hereafter hold such special significance for Ibn Rushd because they compel citizens—in different ways and according to their intellectual capabilities—to ethical behavior, so that people adequately contribute to their communities and societies. Ibn Rushd instructs his readers:

> You ought to know that what is intended by the Law (*sharʿ*) is only to teach true science (*al-ʿilm al-ḥaqq*) and true practice (*al-ʿamal al-ḥaqq*). True science is cognizance (*maʿrifa*) of God (may He be blessed and exalted) and of all the existing things as they are, especially the venerable ones among them; and cognizance of happiness in the hereafter (*al-saʿāda al-ukhrawiyya*) and of misery in the hereafter (*al-shaqāʾ al-ukhrawī*).
>
> True practice is to follow the actions that promote happiness and to avoid the actions that promote misery; and cognizance of these actions is what is called practical science (*al-ʿilm al-ʿamalī*).[82]

Ibn Rushd also notes that the Muslims had turned away from observing the soul-related, ethical principles stipulated in the Quran in general and in the verses on the hereafter in particular. Therefore, al-Ghazālī (whose viewpoints on these verses and their refutation play a central role in this part of Ibn Rushd's argument) had, in his main work, *The revival of the studies of religion*, called upon his fellow Muslims to return to piety, to an ascetic-mystical lifestyle, and to what brings about true happiness.[83] But, in spite of his commendable intentions, al-Ghazālī had failed. Although not explicitly mentioning al-Ghazālī in the subsequent passage, Ibn Rushd points out that the failure lay in not understanding the "instructive" nature of the scriptures. Therefore, even religious learning is in need of demonstration and rational thought. Ibn Rushd makes this idea clear, stating:

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[81] For Ibn Rushd's critical views of contemporary polities, see Rosenthal, Place 249–250; see now also Tamer, *Islamische Philosophie* 152.

[82] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 23 (§ 38). For a differentiation between the Law and religion on the one hand, and faith on the other, see Manser, Verhältnis xxv, 20–28.

[83] Ibn Rushd, *Decisive treatise* 23 (§ 38).

> [w]hat is intended by the Law is teaching "true science" and "true practice." *Teaching* is of two sorts: A) *forming a concept* and B) *bringing about assent*, as those that dialectical theology have explained; and there are three methods of bringing about assent for people: 1) demonstrative, 2) dialectical, and 3) rhetorical; and two methods of forming concepts: either a) by means of the thing itself or b) by means of a likeness of it;
>
> [but] not all people have natures such as to accept demonstration or dialectical arguments, let alone *demonstrative arguments*, given the difficulty in teaching demonstrative arguments and the lengthy time needed [for this] by someone adept at learning them …[84]

Given these explicit theoretical premises of several ways to use scripture for the purpose of instruction, Ibn Rushd also suggests a number of implicit, practical effects of this process. The latter become evident, for example, in his suggestions to educate through developing in the student the ability to respond to common features of categories ("concept formation") or by prompting the student to agree with something after thoughtful consideration ("bringing about assent"). As this endeavor of interpreting the scriptures has direct bearings on politics and ethics in Muslim societies, those intellectually capable of deducing meaning from difficult-to-understand passages in the Quran are obliged to do so. What exactly he means by the term interpretation, Ibn Rushd specifies as follows:

> The meaning of interpretation is: drawing out the figurative significance of an utterance from its true significance without violating the custom of the Arabic language with respect to figurative speech in doing so.[85]

Here, the science of interpretation (*ʿilm al-taʾwīl*) is expressly identified as the practical side of applying demonstration in instruction, although both activities—demonstration and interpretation—lead to the truth, if carried out by the learned and conducted properly.[86] However, for anyone not skilled in this discipline, “it is obligatory to take them [the verses with descriptions of the next life] in their apparent sense: for him it is unbelief (*kufr*) to interpret them because it leads to unbelief.”[87]

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[84] Ibid., 24 (§39); slightly modified.

[85] Ibid., 9 (§13); see also 17 (§23–24).

[86] Ibid., 13 (§16).

3 Conclusion

To conclude our exploration of al-Ghazālī’s and Ibn Rushd’s views on the boundaries and horizons of learning expressed in two of their most influential treatises, we highlight the following points.

First, al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd were well aware of the fact that, within a religiously framed education, issues may occur that delay learning, hinder it, or make it entirely impossible. Some of these difficulties relate to the human individual and their personal responsibilities, and arise from a lack of personal effort and insufficient commitment to learning (al-Ghazālī), character flaws such as untruthfulness, selfishness, and arrogance on the part of the learner and/or the teacher (al-Ghazālī), insufficient practical virtue and inexperience in structured reading (Ibn Rushd), and studying without a teacher (Ibn Rushd). Other problems relate more generally to a given educational environment, including specifics of the intellectual culture championed by the scholars of an academic discipline (al-Ghazālī), and different methods of instruction that teachers apply, dissimilar sorts of guidance that they offer, and varying relationships that they build with their students (Ibn Rushd).

Second, further constraints on learning are determined by the natural mental abilities of humans, which are “God-given.” This basic view represents an understanding that al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd share. Yet, while al-Ghazālī suggests that humans might compensate for natural intellectual limitations through individual learning efforts, so that they fulfill their responsibilities as members of the community, Ibn Rushd, by contrast, opines that the majority of the common people, with their limited abilities of understanding, need to be restricted to learning through sensory perception, believing in the literal meaning of scripture, and acquiring practical skills.

Indeed, according to Ibn Rushd ordinary citizens must not engage in higher learning nor have direct access to its fruits. The intellectual elite, by contrast, must fully engage in creative learning, which dwells on demonstrative reasoning, rational assent and attentive imagination. Building on this thought, Ibn Rushd advocates that philosophical sophistication (in the Aristotelian tradition) is not only a natural component of the elite's education but also a highly instrumental means of directing and correcting traditional Islamic beliefs.

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[87] Ibid., 21 (§ 34); see also 18–19 (§§ 25–27).

Third, al-Ghazālī promotes an educational concept that credits basically every human with the right to and the potential for learning and understanding. According to this model, the act and experience of acquiring knowledge or skill is accessible to—and attainable by—every human being. With this key idea, al-Ghazālī stimulated Islamic learning in significant ways. Ibn Rushd, in turn, distinguishes between two different, though complementary, concepts of learning:

1. a traditional concept for the common people, which rests on the authority of the scriptures and the maxims of prophetic tradition (in their literal understanding), along with the consensus of religious scholars; and
2. an imaginative concept for the intellectual elite, which dwells on philosophical sophistication and reason, along with an exclusive mandate for the figurative interpretation of Scripture.

Hence, the common people must concentrate on the practical aspects of life. The more practical the knowledge is, the more suitable it is for the common people. Deeper insight into the world and the divine essence, however, is a privilege of the select few. Ibn Rushd justifies this position by pointing to the serious problems that arise when rationalist or figurative interpretations of scripture spill over to the common people, causing nothing but confusion and turmoil and, indeed, harming the common people's faith. Therefore, only those with superior innate dispositions and intellectual capabilities are mandated to apply reason in learning, and they should do so without restriction. Restraining the elite from higher learning would be equivalent to keeping them ignorant and treating them unjustly, which is against the Law.

Fourth, al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd offer distinctly different views about the ends and endeavors of knowledge acquisition. Al-Ghazālī, for example, stresses that:

- attainment of inner virtue and spiritual perfection, so as to draw closer to God, are the true goals of learning, not the acquisition of authority over or recognition from others, nor the accumulation of worldly treasures;
- acquisition of reliable, definite, and comprehensive information helps attain certainty of knowledge and the "deliverance from error";
- understanding the relation of the different sciences to the objectives of learning is an important precondition for success in learning;
- contrasting assessments of ideas help generate new knowledge;
- prioritizing one's own, self-determined targets in knowledge acquisition facilitates learning, as does avoidance of excessive involvement with the

arguments of the adversary or the many different opinions prevalent in the community of scholars; and, finally,
- gradual transition from guided learning to self-study is necessary, since mere imitation of the teacher (or the parent) prevents new insights.

Al-Ghazālī makes many of these points with explicit reference to his own process of lifelong learning and his teaching activities. After contemplating several major branches of scholarship that he studied during his life, he singles out mysticism from all other branches of knowledge, be it theology, philosophy, physics, metaphysics, or the political sciences. For him, the effect of the "light, which God casts into the human breast," is the key to true knowledge. Mystical insight and spiritual growth thus constitute the only trusted path of self-actualization leading to the final goal of human existence—that is, eternal life and happiness in the hereafter. Interestingly, in this regard, al-Ghazālī also concludes that the mathematical sciences pose a particular risk to the unprepared religious student, because their fine precision and the clarity of their proofs may diminish a student's faith and make him disavow religion altogether.

Ibn Rushd, in turn, emphasizes that:

- contents and methods of teaching and learning must correspond to the capabilities of the individual human mind;
- true understanding is accomplished only successively—that is, new insights are based on the achievements of other individuals and former generations; and
- reliance on accomplishments of those belonging to cultures and religions other than one's own is essential for cultural progress.

Within this general context, Ibn Rushd makes two more specific points which are significant for education. First, philosophical logic and demonstration are religiously lawful and highly effective means of interpreting scripture and are superior to intuitive knowledge acquisition. And second, a polity needs to be guided and ruled by the most erudite, a philosopher-king, in order to succeed and flourish.

Fifth, in *The decisive treaties*, Ibn Rushd criticizes al-Ghazālī directly on more than one occasion, as al-Ghazālī—although adhering to the Ashʿarite school of theology himself—had disapproved of the speculative theologians for their dialectical approach to scripture on the one hand, while recommending logic as a tool of theological learning on the other. Al-Ghazālī was to be contested regarding this, Ibn Rushd argues, because he confused people by inadequately applying two methods that must not be applied in the context of religious learning. Ibn Rushd states that al-Ghazālī was mistaken in (a) using the lack of demonstrative proof to render an assumption positive, and (b) using demonstrative proof for individual spiritual interpretations. Ibn Rushd objects to this practice, for he believed that al-Ghazālī caused people to detach themselves from both philosophy *and* religion. Alternatively, Ibn Rushd highlights the central role of philosophical logic in knowledge acquisition and learning generally, as well as the demonstrative approach to scripture and its Law more specifically.

Last but not least, in spite of the differences in the educational approaches taken by the two Muslim thinkers, both al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd had an immense influence on Islamic learning. While al-Ghazālī's powerful intellect, and his combination of rationalism, mysticism, and orthodox belief, shaped Islamic thought in a way that is still evident today, by contrast, Ibn Rushd did not have any direct followers among medieval Muslim scholars—whereas the Latin and Hebrew translations of his incisive philosophical works found an attentive audience among European Christian and Jewish scholars. In view of such markedly dissimilar appreciation and judgment which the intellectual heritages of the two thinkers received in the Muslim pre-modern world, one wonders if al-Ghazālī's more inclusive approach to learning (which bears the majority of the Muslim community in mind and indeed addresses them) must not be seen as a significant factor in the wide acceptance of his scholarly views and intellectual legacy. By contrast, Ibn Rushd's exclusive approach to learning (privileging the intellectual elite, while limiting the educational goals and opportunities of the majority of the population) seems to have deprived him of any major impact in the Muslim pre-modern world. While al-Ghazālī's thought continued to have a significant impact on later Muslim scholars, both pre-modern and modern,[88] it was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that Ibn Rushd's rationalism started to be "rediscovered" by certain (liberal) Arab Christian and Muslim intellectuals[89]—and introduced into the intellectual discourse of the contemporary Arab world.

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[88] On this question see Griffel and Tamer (eds.), *Islam and rationality*.

[89] These include the Syrian Faraḥ Anṭūn (1874–1922), the Egyptian Muḥammad ʿImmāra (b. 1931), the Moroccan Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī (1935–2010), the Egyptian Ḥasan Ḥanafī (b. 1935), and the Syrian Ṭayyib Tizīnī (b. 1934), to mention only a few particularly prominent thinkers. Cf. von Kügelgen, *Averroes*; and Hoigilt, *Islamist rhetoric* 106–140.

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CHAPTER 13

A Sufi as Pedagogue: Some Educational Implications of Rūmī's Poetry

Yoones Dehghani Farsani

This paper aims to explore some educational implications of Rūmī's poetry. Here, I will share findings from my study on verses of Rūmī's poetry which seem to convey educational notions that may be applied to the reconstruction of the classical Muslim theory and practice of education.[1] Before discussing the main idea of the paper, three points will be dealt with as an introduction to the paper's topic. In this part, first a short biography of Rūmī will be given to provide a better understanding of the context of Rūmī's life. Then, I will discuss scholarship on Rūmī's *Mathnawī* as a work in which he discusses ideas related to education. Finally, some preliminary points regarding the educational thought will be discussed, which can be derived from the *Mathnawī*.

1 Biography

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī, also known, mainly in the Western academic sphere, as Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī, the Persian poet, jurist, theologian, and Sufi mystic, was born on 6 Rabīʿ i 604 / 30 September 1207, in the city of Balkh in present-day Afghanistan.[2] When he was five years old (i.e., in 609/1212–1213),[3] his family left Balkh and moved to the western lands of the Islamic world. It is not entirely clear why the family decided to leave their homeland, but

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[1] A very useful work on educational thought in classical Islam is Gilliot, *Education and learning*.

[2] Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 73. The most useful work on the biography of Rūmī is by Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Aflākī, a disciple of Rūmī's grandson, Jalāl al-Dīn ʿĀrif, at whose request Aflākī wrote this work. French and English translations of this book have been rendered by Clement Hurat and John O'Kane, respectively. For more details on Aflākī, see Meier, *Aflākī*. For a biography of Rūmī, see also Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī*, a very good study on Rūmī's life. The author has accumulated accounts on different stages of Rūmī's life from various sources and has compared and analyzed them. For a very good biography of Rūmī in a European language, see Schimmel, *Rumi* 7–46.

[3] Aflāḳī, *Manāqib* i, 16. Some recent studies do not agree with this date. For a discussion on this, see Ritter and Bausani, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

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as Aflākī insists, a major reason was the dispute between Rūmī's father,[4] Sulṭān al-ʿUlamāʾ Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn, known as Bahāʾ-i Walad (543–628/1148–1231), and two political and scholarly authorities of his time, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwārazm-Shāh (r. 596–617/1200–1220)[5] and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209–1210),[6] the celebrated philosopher and theologian of seventh-century Khorasan.[7] After passing through different cities in the Islamic lands,[8] Rūmī's father accepted an invitation by the Seljuq ruler of Anatolia, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Kayqubād I (r. 616–634/1219–1236), and in 626/1228 the family finally settled in the city of Konya.[9]

Rūmī must have started his education early in his childhood under the supervision of his father, who was a distinguished preacher and scholar in Balkh.[10] In Konya he continued his education in Islamic scholarship. After the death of his father on 18 Rabīʿ II 628/23 February 1231, when Rūmī was 24 years old, he took over his father's position and became a *faqīh* and *muftī*.[11] Later on, in 630/1233, Rūmī moved to Aleppo and then to Damascus to complete his studies in different branches of the knowledge of his time,[12] and after seven years, when he had mastered those branches, he went back to Konya.[13]

On 26 Jumādā II 642 / 23 October 1244, when Rūmī was 33, he met Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Tabrīzī (d. after 645/1247), a Persian Sufi mystic and scholar,[14] at the bazaar in Konya.[15] This meeting was a turning point in Rūmī's life because, allegedly, from that moment onward he devoted his life to what Shams-i Tabrīzī taught him. Shams-i Tabrīzī's teachings influenced Rūmī to the point that he left his position as a teacher and secluded himself in order to practice the teachings of Shams-i Tabrīzī.[16] Rūmī's two famous poetical works, *Mathnawī-i maʿnawī* and *Dīwān-i Shams*, were composed after his acquaintance with Shams-i Tabrīzī and are clearly inspired by him.[17]

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[4] See Lewis, *Rūmī* 119.

[5] For more details on him, see Bosworth, Khwārazm-Shāhs.

[6] For more details on him, see Anawati, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

[7] Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 2–11; for a good discussion of this, see Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 9–16; Ritter and Bausani, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

[8] There is a debate in scholarship over when the family left Balkh and which cities they visited before they finally took up residence in Konya. For a discussion on this issue, see Lewis, *Rūmī* 55–63; Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 9–20.

[9] Ritter and Bausani, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī; for details on their entrance to Konya, see Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 9–25.

[10] For a biography of Bahāʾ-i Walad, see Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 7–55. A collection of Bahāʾ-i Walad's lectures has been preserved and published; Bahāʾ-i Walad, *Maʿārif*. For an analysis of his prominence in Balkh, see Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 32–33.

[11] See Lewis, *Rūmī* 123.

[12] Aflākī in *Manāqib* i, 84 calls these branches of knowledge *ʿulūm-i ẓāhir*, which must at least include *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, and logic. See Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 295. On this issue, see also Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 44.

[13] Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 77–84. See also Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 37–44, and Lewis, *Rūmī* 14–190, for an analytical account of Rūmī's journey.

[14] Little is known about Shams-i Tabrīzī. It is mostly thought that he was a wandering Sufi mystic. However, as Ritter has pointed out, the notes that Shams-i Tabrīzī's *murīd*s took during his lectures (see Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 88–89), which are now at our disposal, demonstrate that Shams-i Tabrīzī followed the conventional theological concepts of his

From 647/1249 until the time of his death, Rūmī devoted himself to educating his students (*murīd*), who were from various social classes, on the basis of Shams-i Tabrīzī's teachings. Nevertheless, he apparently did not follow the norms of the educational system of his time; for instance, he did not accept the designation of shaykh.[18] Rūmī died on 5 Jumādā II 672 / 17 December 1273 in Konya and was buried there.

It might be wrong to consider Rūmī's profession only as that of a Sufi mystic. As noted above, he studied all branches of the Islamic knowledge of his time and pursued his study throughout his journey to Syria. The mention of his name as a prominent Hanafi *faqīh* in biographical dictionaries is evidence that his knowledge was not confined to mysticism.[19]

Studying the historical context of Rūmī's career as a scholar, one can suggest that he utilized poetry as a medium to convey his teachings. This can be observed especially after Shams-i Tabrīzī's arrival in Konya.[20] This effort seems to have materialized mostly in the *Mathnawī*, which was composed after Rūmī met Shams-i Tabrīzī. It is in this work that Rūmī expresses his novel ideas concerning various aspects of human existence.[21] Hence, it seems that this book is a source for the study of the educational implications of Rūmī's poem.

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time. For more details, see Aflākī, *Manāqib* ii, 614–703; Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 49–53; Schimmel, Shams-i Tabrīz(ī).

[15] Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 86.

[16] See Aflākī, *Manāqib* i, 88; Lewis, *Rūmī* 164–165. For a good discussion of various aspects of this event and an analysis of different historical sources on it, see Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 55–67.

[17] Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 92; Schimmel, Shams-i Tabrīz(ī). The other three works of Rūmī, i.e., *Fīhi mā fīhi*, *Mawāʿiẓ majālis-i sabʿa*, and *Maktūbāt*, are actually the compilation of his sayings and his letters to political authorities and scholars, gathered and published by his students posthumously. For an account of these works, see Lewis, *Rūmī* 292–295; Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 148–170; Ritter and Bausani, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

[18] Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 92.

[19] See Lewis, *Rūmī* 123.

[20] See ibid., 313–314.

[21] Humā'ī, *Mawlawīnāma* 7.

2 *Mathnawī-i maʿnawī*

The *Mathnawī-i maʿnawī*, Rūmī's most famous writing, is a didactic poetical work in double verses in rhyming couplets with the rhyme-scheme aa, bb, cc, dd, composed in six chapters (*daftar*).[22] This book was apparently inspired by Ḥusām al-Dīn Chelebi,[23] who saw some of Rūmī's students deeply engaged in reading the *Ilāhī nāmah* by Sanāʾī[24] and the *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* by ʿAṭṭār Nīshāpūrī.[25] It is said that, as a consequence, he asked Rūmī to compose a *mathnawī* like those of Sanāʾī and ʿAṭṭār so that it would endure as a memento of him.[26] Rūmī accepted this suggestion and started composing the *Mathnawī* by dictating it to Chelebi. According to Aflākī, the first chapter of the work was composed between 657/1259 and 660/1262. Then, Rūmī started the second chapter two years later (i.e., in 662/1263–1264),[27] and he continued until he completed the work.[28] This pause in composition between the first and the second chapters was, according to Aflākī, due to the death of Chelebi's wife.[29] Aflākī indicates that Rūmī dictated his poem to Chelebi whenever it occurred to him. Sometimes they stayed awake composing from the beginning of the night until the next morning. After each session, Chelebi used to read out what Rūmī had dictated to him, and at the end they made corrections wherever it was necessary.[30] Since the anecdotes in the book are not linked with each other systematically,[31] it seems that the whole work was composed without a previously planned structure.

The *Mathnawī* incorporates anecdotes and stories from various sources, some of which originate from the Quran and *ḥadīth*. In each chapter, Rūmī tries to communicate his message to the reader by focusing on a particular part of the anecdote. The conclusion he draws from each story or anecdote is usually discussed in detail afterward, so that the reader is given the moral of the story in an explicit, rather than an implicit, form. It is important to notice that a relatively small proportion of the stories and anecdotes of *Mathnawī* originates from Rūmī; he borrowed most of the stories and anecdotes from other sources. Nevertheless, it should be understood that he changed the borrowed stories by highlighting certain aspects in order to communicate his own message. In other words, his borrowing of material does not affect the originality of his *Mathnawī*.[32] Studies have shown that Rūmī's *Mathnawī* was influenced by the two prominent Persian poets ʿAṭṭār and Sanāʾī. However, one should not underestimate the influence of the Quran and *ḥadīth* tradition on his work, which, according to some scholars, influenced Rūmī much more than other sources.[33]

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[22] For more information on the *mathnawī* as a type of poem, see Bruijn, Mathnawī.

[23] Chelebi (d. 683/1284) is supposed to have been Rūmī's favorite disciple. For more details on his life, see Aflāki, *Manāqib* ii, 737–783; See also Yazici, Ḥusām al-Dīn Čelebi.

[24] Sanāʾī is the pen name of the Persian poet Majdūd b. Ādam al-Ghaznawī (d. 525/1131), and *Ilāhī nāmah* is the title of his *Mathnawī*. For more details on his life and works, see Bruijn, Sanāʾī.

[25] Farīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm was a Persian mystical poet (fl. sixth/twelfth century), and *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* is the title of his *Mathnawī*. For more details on his life and works, see Ritter, ʿAṭṭār.

[26] Aflākī, *Manāqib* ii, 739–740.

[27] Rūmī indicates this point at the beginning of the second chapter. See Rūmī, Mathnawí i, 247.

[28] Aflākī, *Manāqib* ii, 744.

[29] Ibid., 742.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ritter and Bausani, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī; for the style of the *Mathnawī*, see Nicholson's introduction to Rūmī, Mathnawí i, 8–13.

3 Issue of Methodology

A major difference between Rūmī and other Muslim scholars who dealt with educational and learning-oriented ideas in their works is that Rūmī's contribution occurs in the form of mystical poems, while the other scholars' ideas are found in scholarly books. As a result, the present study will differ, in terms of its methodology, from a study on the works of, for instance, al-Ghazālī. The *Mathnawī-i maʿnawī* is not a work in which specific topics are discussed in recognizable sections, separately. Consequently, if one is going to study a particular topic from Rūmī's point of view in the *Mathnawī*, one has to come to terms with the fact that the topic may not occur in only a single place in the work. In other words, although Rūmī deals with many topics related to human existence, he does not devote specific parts of his book to a specific topic.[34] Concerning the topic of this study, I derive Rūmī's ideas on education and learning from verses scattered throughout his book.[35]

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[32] Lewis, *Rūmī* 287–288. For a thorough study of the sources from which Rūmī borrowed, see Furūzānfar, *Maʾākhidh*.

[33] Schimmel, *Rumi* 47–48.

[34] See Furūzānfar, *Sharḥ* 2. He compares the style of speech in the *Mathnawī* with that of the Quran; in both, a topic is dealt with in various parts of the text. See also Lewis, *Rūmī* 394.

[35] For this reason, I consulted the *Mawlawīnāma* by Humāʾī, which categorized different parts of the *Mathnawī* according to the themes/topics discussed. I used this source in order to find the relevant verses for my study.

In most cases, Rūmī's thoughts in the *Mathnawī* appear in the form of allegories. Hence, the first idea that comes to mind is to refer to the commentaries on the *Mathnawī*.[36] However, one cannot rely much on them, since studies conducted on the commentaries of the *Mathnawī* show that they have interpreted the book mainly through the lens of their own time and space, or that the commentators have read their own personal views into it.[37]

The main idea in the next part will be to discuss some of Rūmī's educational ideas, which I call Rūmī's "educational principles." Before proceeding, it should be made clear that there have been very few systematic studies on Rūmī's educational thoughts, in contrast to the various studies that introduce the educational thoughts of other Muslim philosopher and thinkers, such as al-Ghazālī or Mullā Ṣadrā.[38] Almost all of today's studies on Rūmī's works focus primarily on the literary and mystical aspects of his poems,[39] and scholars working in the field of the educational sciences have not considered Rūmī's works as a source of educational ideas.

4 Humanity according to Rūmī

The very basis of each educational theory is its definition of humanity. This is because humans are the subject matter of education, and all methods, principles, notions, and aims for each given theory in this field are defined on the basis of human characteristics.[40] Consequently, from a methodological point of view, the first step toward learning about the "educational principles" of Rūmī is to uncover his definition of humanity. In other words, the first step will be to look for the traits and characteristics that Rūmī attributes to humanity when they are treated as the subject matter of education.

Looking at those parts of the *Mathnawī* where Rūmī touches upon his definition of humanity, one notices that Rūmī mentions three major characteristics of humanity related to education and learning. First of all, Rūmī introduces the human spirit (*rūḥ*), in juxtaposition to his body (*jism*), as human's essence. For Rūmī, a human's essence, his innermost part, is a metaphysical existence and, although a human is a combination of spirit and body, the spirit is primary, while the body is merely a vehicle that carries the spirit. In Rūmī's view, the will, thought, and behavior of humans originate from their spirit.[41] According to this notion, the final goal of education is to train the essence of humans (i.e., their spirits).

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[36] For an excellent historical bibliography of commentaries on the *Mathnawī* from various parts of the Islamic world, see Lewis, *Rūmī* 469–475.

[37] Ritter and Bausani, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

[38] Mullā Ṣadrā was a Persian Shiʿi philosopher and theologian (d. 1050/1640) from the Ṣafavid period. For more information on him, see MacEoin, Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī. For a discussion of the educational ideas of al-Ghazālī and Mullā Ṣadrā and a bibliography of works on their educational ideas, see SAMT, *Rawānshināsī*.

[39] There is a large number of works dealing with the literary analysis of Rūmī's *Mathawī*. For an analytical bibliography of them, see Lewis, *Rūmī* 423–649.

[40] Bihishtī et al., *Ārāy-i dānishmandān* ii, 187. See also Baqirī, *Nigāh-i dubāra* 15.

This view on the human spirit is not exclusive to Rūmī and can be seen also in the larger tradition of mystical thought, where the human is considered as the most mysterious and complex being, even more complex than heavenly beings.[42] It is generally believed that this idea originated with Ibn al-ʿArabī (560–638/1165–1240), the Andalusian Sufi mystic and philosopher. However, Annemarie Schimmel affirms that this view's roots can be traced back to the Quran.[43]

Rūmī explains the significance of the spirit with an allegory; the spirit is a parrot and the body is a cage in which the parrot is incarcerated. He says:

> The parrot whose voice comes from (Divine) inspiration and whose beginning was before the beginning of existence,
> That parrot is hidden within thee: thou hast seen the reflexion of her upon this and that (the things of the phenomenal world).[44]

Rūmī asserts that although happiness, sadness, and thought, as well as all of a human's physical behaviors, seemingly occur in his body, this is solely an illusion, and it is the spirit that is the real impetus. This reality becomes apparent to the human when the spirit leaves the body, and, as a consequence, the body becomes rotten and stinky.[45]

The second characteristic of humanity according to Rūmī is the complexity of the structure of their being. Rūmī regards the existence of human as twisted and nested, consisting of multiple layers of which only the body, as the outer appearance, can be seen. He formulates this idea in the following verse:

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[41] For a study on the position of human in Rūmī's poem, see Schimmel, *Triumphal sun* 247–280.

[42] Lewis, *Rūmī* 404.

[43] Schimmel, *Triumphal sun* 273.

[44] Rūmī, Mathnawí ii, 94 (*daftar* i, vv. 1717–1718).

[45] Bihishtī et al., *Ārāy-i dānishmandān* ii, 188.

> The body is the shadow of the shadow of the shadow of the heart: How is the body worthy of the (lofty) rank of the heart?[46]

He does not stop at this point, and considers the existence of human as a jungle in which both wild and dangerous animals, and harmless and humble ones, exist. He depicts this as follows:

> The being of man is a jungle: be on your guard against this being, if you are of that (Divine) Breath. In our being there are thousands of wolves and hogs; (there is) godly and ungodly, and fair and foul.[47]

This verse implies that the existence of human involves vices and virtues, simultaneously. Describing the human spirit, Rūmī asserts in a verse:

> (He is) like an ox, his left half black, the other half white as the moon. Whoever sees the former half spurns (him); whoever sees the latter half seeks (after him).[48]

The third characteristic one can observe as a principle of humanity in the *Mathnawī* is the human's free will.[49] Rūmī insists on the human's free will and denies any constraints. In order to explain his position, and as a proof, he mentions the doubt that humans encounter in their everyday lives. He says:

> (The thought), "Tomorrow I will do this or I will do that," is a proof of the power to choose, O worshipful one.[50]
>
> We are left vacillating between two (alternative) actions: how should this vacillation be without (that is, unaccompanied by) free-will?[51]

These three major characteristics are the founding elements of Rūmī's definition of humanity. They are crucial for the reconstruction of Rūmī's thoughts on education and learning.

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[46] Rūmī, Mathnawí vi, 440 (*daftar* vi, v. 3307).

[47] Ibid., ii, 294 (*daftar* ii, vv. 1416–1417).

[48] Ibid., 253 (*daftar* ii, vv. 607–608).

[49] For a study of free will in Rūmī's thought, see Paul, *Jalālu'd-din Rūmī* 341–357; Humāʾī, *Mawlawīnāma* 77–101.

[50] Rūmī, Mathnawí vi, 182 (*daftar* v, v. 3024).

[51] Ibid., 280 (*daftar* vi, v. 408).

5 Toward Rūmī's Educational Thought

In the previous section I introduced three major characteristics of humanity according to Rūmī's poems in his *Mathnawī*. The question in this section of the paper is how Rūmī's understanding of humanity might have influenced his thoughts on education and learning.

As pointed out previously, for Rūmī, a major characteristic of humans is the notion that the human spirit is of a metaphysical nature and that it is the most crucial element of his existence. By supporting this point of view, a thinker considers the religious, ethical, and intellectual education in the process of learning as superior to other kinds of education, such as physical or social education. This is because, for him, the essence of humanity is of a metaphysical nature and not a physical one. Rūmī's practice as a teacher in Konya supports this thesis since, according to our sources, during this time he taught his students mystical knowledge, while there is no mention of other types of religious knowledge, such as *fiqh*, logic, or grammar, which do not concern the inner being of humans.[52]

On the other hand, for thinkers who do not consider humanity to possess a metaphysical nature, the object of education is to help humans fulfill their (worldly) wishes and desires, which have been formed in their everyday lives.[53] Most probably, such thinkers would not prioritize religious education over, for example, physical education. This does not seem to be the case for Rūmī.

Another major feature of humanity according to Rūmī's system of thought is the notion that the human being is a complex, multilayered structure that has two kinds of inner forces, each of which leads him toward vices and virtues. For a theorist in the area of education and learning, this would mean that, besides the teachers from whom one learns in the process of education, there are "teachers" within one's being who may have the same power of influence, and whose lessons may be decisive for the course one's life takes. It seems that Rūmī adheres to this theory of education and learning.

The third feature Rūmī insists is a major human characteristic is free will. This idea determines Rūmī's educational ideas to a large extent, since it implies that he has to accept that the major impetus of one's behavior is a controllable force. The opposite approach may be found among theorists who believe that a human is shaped mostly by his environment and has no chance to flee from outside forces.[54] It appears that in Rūmī's view it is the human himself who is the major decision maker regarding all aspects of the process of his education.

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[52] See Furūzānfar, *Zindagānī* 92.

[53] ʿAlam al-Hudā, *Naqsh* 37.

6 Educational Principles according to Rūmī

Reading through the verses of the *Mathnawī* that contain notions related to education and learning, one can identify five categories that can be termed as Rūmī's five principles of education. In the following I will quote a number of Rūmī's verses in their English translation by Reynold A. Nicholson in order to explain and discuss these principles.

The first principle that can be derived from Rūmī's verses is that the process of education occurs in a gradual manner and that the educator must be aware of this. Rūmī believes that the process of the mental and intellectual development of a human is a gradual and continuous process. Consequently, he insists that there must be no rush in the process of education. Rūmī believes that due to the complex nature of the human being, it would take many years for a human to reach his full potential. He insists that the teacher must be very cautious of what he teaches his pupils, because otherwise he might have to see the opposite result of what he planned to reach. Rūmī formulates this idea in the following verses:

> If you give a babe bread instead of milk, take it (for granted) that the poor babe will die of the bread; (Yet) afterwards, when it grows teeth, that babe will of its own accord, asks for bread.[55]

The second principle concerning education and the process of learning is that although all humans are created out of the same essence, they have different tastes and mental and emotional capabilities related to learning. Rūmī says:

> Know well that intelligences differ thus in degree from the earth to the sky.[56]
>
> Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that (work) has been put into his heart.[57]

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[54] SAMT, *Rawānshināsī* 246–247.

[55] Rūmī, Mathnawí ii, 34 (*daftar* i, vv. 581–582).

[56] Ibid., vi, 30 (*daftar* v, v. 459).

[57] Ibid., iv, 91 (*daftar* iii, v. 1618).

The major implication of this principle is that one should not presuppose that all people need or have to be the object of the same education curriculum, but that for different people, depending on their needs and capabilities, different education programs must be developed.

The third principle is that education in matters of conduct or, in Rūmī's terminology, *adab*, comes before intellectual education.[58] To him, *adab* is acquired through the beneficence of God and cannot be learned. However, *adab* is so crucial to the process of learning that, if one lacks it, acquiring knowledge may cause harm instead of benefit. Rūmī considers *adab* the prerequisite for acquiring real knowledge. In this regard he says:

> Let us implore God to help us to self-control: one who lacks self-control is deprived of the grace of the lord; the undisciplined man does not maltreat himself alone, but he sets the whole world on fire.[59]

The fourth educational principle that can be derived from Rūmī's verses is that the mental and intellectual development of humans should takes place within society. Unlike many Sufi mystics, who prefer to live in seclusion and prescribe their students to proceed alone on their way to perfection, Rūmī denies this standpoint on the basis of a saying attributed to the Prophet: "There is no monasticism in the religion [of Islam]" (*lā rahbāniyya fī l-dīn*). Rūmī insists on the virtue of living in human society in the following two verses:

> Beyond doubt he who cheerfully goes alone into the customhouse will go more cheerfully (when he is) with companions;[60]
>
> To the friend, when he is seated beside his Friend, a hundred thousand tablets of mystery are made known.[61]

Up to this point, I have mentioned four educational principles that do not seem to be exclusive to a Muslim thinker, and that might also be held by a non-Muslim or non-Sufi Muslim thinker. The fifth principle that can be derived from Rūmī's poem, however, seems to betray the mystical as well as the Islamic nature of the educational and learning-related thoughts of Rūmī.

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[58] Nicholson has translated *adab* as "self-control." In Rūmī, Mathnawí vii, 17, he defines it as "the character, feelings, and manners which are the fruit of spiritual culture."

[59] Ibid., ii, 8 (*daftar* i, vv. 78–79).

[60] Ibid., vi, 286 (*daftar* vi, v. 517).

[61] Ibid., vi, 404 (*daftar* vi, v. 2641).

In some places of the *Mathnawī*, Rūmī talks about the role of God's beneficence and His support in the process of learning. He implies that all human educational endeavors to reach perfection and happiness would be in vain if humans did not enjoy the beneficence of God and were reluctant to ask for God's help. He formulates his idea in the following verses:

> We have spoken all these words, but in preparing ourselves (for the journey before us) we are naught, naught without the favors of God. Without the favors of God and Gods elect ones, angel though he be, his page is black;[62]
>
> One atom of the shade (protection) of (Divine) favor is better than a thousand endeavors of the devout pietist.[63]

From Rūmī's point of view, God's beneficence, or in his terminology *ʿināya*, would exceed the speed of the learner on his way to reach his goal.[64]

A question might come to mind regarding how one can attract the beneficence of God in this regard. According to Rūmī, in order to attract the beneficence of God one must prove that one really seeks the beneficence of God. In other words, one's own endeavor in order to gain God's beneficence plays a decisive role in its attainment. Rūmī asserts:

Do not seek the water, (but) get thirst, so that the water may gush forth from above and below.[65]

7 Conclusion

So far no systematic study has been conducted on the educational and pedagogic implications of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's poem. What I have offered in this paper is an introduction to some of the educational and learning-related thoughts of Rūmī that can be found in his *Mathnawī-i maʿnawī*. Since education is not confined to the areas of intellectual and physical qualities that one acquires during their life, and covers the spiritual and religious dimensions as well,[66] it seems that for any attempt to reconstruct the educational theories of medieval Muslim scholars, Rūmī's thoughts as an eminent Sufi mystic can be of great significance. Although Rūmī's thoughts on education and learning differ in many aspects from the ideas of, for example, Muslim philosophers or theologians in this area, exploring his educational and learning-related ideas can convey a more comprehensive image of all various types of educational notions, which were practiced or were in circulation in the medieval Islamic world.[67] Rūmī's ideas may also inspire the modern reader (Muslim and non-Muslim) in both fields of theory and practice.

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[62] Ibid., ii, 102 (*daftar* i, vv. 1878–1879).

[63] Ibid., vi, 471 (*daftar* vi, v. 3869).

[64] Shahrībarābādī, ʿInāyat 99.

[65] Rūmī, Mathnawí iv, 180 (*daftar* iii, v. 3212).

[66] See Günther's Introduction to this volume.

Rūmī's definitions of humanity and human nature, and his viewpoint concerning the real impetus of human deeds, form the principles of his approach to education and learning. He believes that humans possess a metaphysical nature, and that their being is a complex, multilayered structure. Moreover, he considers humans' free will to be a major characteristic of their being. One of the major principles of Rūmī's approach to education and learning is that humans differ in their mental and intellectual capabilities to learn. He insists, unlike many Sufi mystics, that the process of learning is gradual and takes place best in society, not in seclusion. In addition, human education in matters of conduct (*adab*) has priority over intellectual education according to Rūmī. He affirms that *adab* is acquired through the help of God and cannot be learned through human effort alone. Finally, he speaks about God's beneficence (*ʿināya*) as the most crucial element in the process of learning. Hence, within the process of learning, *adab* and the endeavor to attract God's beneficence are significant elements for Rūmī. In fact, they represent the prerequisites for success since without them all human attempts are worthless.

There is also another reason why Rūmī's poetry can play an important role for modern scholarship. Today, many people, Muslims and non-Muslims, find inspiration for everyday life in Rūmī's poems. He is becoming increasingly popular among people of different cultures and religions.[68] Very few other Muslim thinkers enjoy similar fame. The attention that people of various religious and cultural communities pay to Rūmī's thought is not a phenomenon of the modern age. Aflākī describes in detail the winter day on which Rūmī died. The weather was extremely cold; nonetheless, as Aflākī insists, a large number of the residents of Konya, not just Muslims but presumably also Christians and Jews, attended his funeral ceremony.[69]

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[67] For an investigation of the educationl thoughts of some of the medieval Muslim philosophers and theologians, see Günther, Be masters.

[68] See, e.g., Lewis, *Rūmī* 499–524, who believes that Rūmī has moved into Western consciousness.

[69] Aflākī, *Manāqib* ii, 972–973.

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PART 4

Learning through History

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CHAPTER 14

Ibn Isḥāq's and al-Ṭabarī's Historical Contexts for the Quran: Implications for Contemporary Research

Ulrika Mårtensson

Currently, the number of entries on Islamic, Jewish, Indian, and African concepts and thinkers in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is rising so as to begin to compete with the previously dominant classical and Western names and concepts, thus producing a world history of philosophy.[1] This article contends that such a universal vision of *homo academicus* might stimulate further progress in the field of Quranic studies. Here, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's (d. ca. 150/767) biography of the Prophet Muhammad in the redaction of Ibn Hishām (d. ca. 218/833), *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, and the history and Quran commentary of Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), will be compared with contemporary Quran research. It will be argued that while these historical writings are usually considered "religious" and therefore apologetic, and "late" in the sense of constituting post-Quranic Islamic accounts of the Prophet and the Quran, they offer perspectives on the Quran's context that are more historically oriented than is usually assumed. Hence, we might consider them as "historically relevant, albeit diverse, explanations of the Quran's religious context"—diverse explanations indeed also being the main characteristic of current research on the same topic. The two selected sources are therefore important milestones, both in studies of the production of Islamic-Arabic historical knowledge about the Quran and also in Quran research. In different ways, Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī both conducted historical *research* into the Quran, into its relationship with Abrahamic prophecy and scriptures, its generic form, and its message. These are questions that contemporary researchers also ask. Taking Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī seriously as Quran researchers implies that they should be included in current state-of-the-art research. Though my approach may seem dangerously close to scientific apologetics for what is really religious discourse, I am focusing on how these two historians produced knowledge about the Quran's place in human history, and

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[1] Zalta, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

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how that knowledge adds to current research on the Quran's context, form, and message. Finally, there are important educational aspects to these histories. The material that Ibn Hishām edited is reported to have served as educational material for the first ʿAbbasid caliphs, and al-Ṭabarī produced all his research in the context of teaching. To study them now thus brings out how research and education served to make the ʿAbbasid administration "science based," to use a modern idiom.

A side-argument concerns the use of al-Ṭabarī's works. It is common and reasonable to look for medieval Muslim commentators' views of the Quran in their Quran commentaries. However, al-Ṭabarī's history is equally important. Here, it is not enough to look at how al-Ṭabarī, for example, described the Prophet's revelation to know how he historicized the Quran. One must consider the whole outline of the history, since his analytical concepts span the entire work.[2]

Against this background, I take up the challenge defined by Nicolai Sinai and Angelika Neuwirth:

> [I]f a historical contextualization of the Quran is to be pursued with any methodological and intellectual credibility today, it must make a determined effort to detect and describe the ways in which the Quran's theology and literary format could be deemed by the community of its adherents to outclass and outbid previous competitors on the scene of religious scriptures in such a decisive way that it became the foundational text of a new monotheistic religion, Islam.[3]

In answering the challenge, I will develop the point that Sinai and Neuwirth also make, that a contextual analysis of the Quran is not inimical to the classical commentarial and historical traditions.[4]

1 The Quran in Context

Research surveys in three recent anthologies on the Quran and its historical context show that "Western" or "non-normative" Quranic studies have progressed steadily since systematic research began in the late 1800s.[5] Focus has shifted from the person of Muhammad and the impacts that his mindset, political considerations, and "influences" from Judaism and Christianity had on his religious message, to the analysis of the Quran's literary and legal-doctrinal features, with a focus on its self-representation *as text* and the ways in which it *employs* material from other religions for this purpose.[6]

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[2] El-Hibri, Unity; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic historiography*; El-Hibri, Narrative; Mårtensson, Discourse; *Tabari*; "Economy"; Concept.

[3] Sinai and Neuwirth, Introduction 14.

[4] Ibid., 14.

[5] Reynolds, Introduction: Qurʾānic studies; Reynolds, Introduction: Golden age; Donner, Challenges; Griffith, Christian lore; Sinai and Neuwirth, Introduction.

Yet there is frustration in the research community. Islamic historian Fred Donner claims that progress in Quranic studies is hampered by the lack of consensus regarding the Quran's context: "Given this grave uncertainty over the Quran's context, scholars must reverse the usual procedure when studying a text: rather than using the context to illuminate the meaning of the text, we must start with the Quran text itself, and try to deduce from hints inside it what a plausible historical context (or several contexts, in case it is not a unitary text) might be."[7] While the traditional Islamic sources, such as the *Sīra*, do provide historical and geographical context for the Quran, Donner dismisses their accounts about the doctrinal and communal development because they provide "much anachronistic and idealizing material," including material about the supernatural, and because they fail to provide plausible contexts for the Quran's countless references to Jewish and Christian lore:

> [I]n the traditional origins narrative, Jews are presented as hostile to Muhammad, certainly not a source of inspiration to him, and *Christians are entirely absent from the context in which Muhammad lived and worked.* One gets the sense that the tradition is not presenting us with an accurate picture of Muhammad's relations with the earlier monotheisms, a feeling that is very strong today, when numerous recent studies have brought convincing evidence that Syriac Christianity and the Syriac language were in some still undefined way an important part of the Quran's *Sitz im Leben* and had a significant influence on the text, or at least on parts of it.[8]

Donner also points out the paradox that while most Western Quran scholars reject the historicity of the *Sīra* literature, they still depend on it to date the Quranic verses: "[T]he mainstream of Western scholarship has historically been much more willing to challenge or reject the Islamic tradition's views on the nature of the Quran itself, than it has been to criticize the tradition's view of the Quran's historical context."[9]

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[6] See, e.g., Madigan, *Self-Image*, and Wild, Sura 3:7; Wild, *Self-Referentiality*.

[7] Donner, Historian 25.

[8] Ibid., 26; italics UM. In his monograph, *Muhammad and the believers: At the origins of Islam* (2010), Donner in fact presents the *Sīra* in a way that somewhat nuances his summary description in this quote, especially regarding the Jews; see further references below.

According to Donner, then, among the most promising attempts to reconstruct a historical context for the Quran is the research on the Quran's relationship with Syriac Christianity and the Syriac language, which dates back to the studies by Alfred Mingana, Arthur Jeffrey, and Tor Andrae in the 1920s and 1930s.[10] While these early scholars were preoccupied with the Prophet's mindset and religious "influences," contemporary researchers, such as Sidney Griffith, explore the role that Syriac Christianity played in the Quran's self-image and self-representation. In a contribution to the same volume as Donner, Griffith describes how Andrae and John Bowman, for example, studied the Prophet Muhammad's contact with Syriac Christians. Andrae identified Nestorian piety and eschatology as the closest proximity to the Quran's piety, which, he suggested, reached Muhammad through a Nestorian preacher from Yemen who is mentioned in sources from the 800s, Yemen being a foothold for the Nestorian church. Bowman instead argued that it was Syrian Orthodox Monophysitism that was Muhammad's Christian interlocutor.[11] As we shall see below, the *Sīra* tells us that the Prophet had contacts with Monophysites represented by the Abyssinian kingdom of Aksum and the Christians of Najrān, while Nestorianism is hard to identify. The only possible link to Yemeni Nestorianism is a report about a Christian slave from a Yemeni tribe, Banū l-Haḍramī, of whom it is said that he did not speak the Arabic that the Prophet spoke and that the Prophet used to sit at his booth at al-Marwa in Mecca, so much so that the Quraysh taunted the Prophet that his message was in fact the teachings of the Yemeni Christian slave.[12]

Griffith himself approaches the Quran as an autonomous religious discourse in Arabic, clearly distinct from Syriac Christianity but containing linguistic and thematic "Syriacisms." These should be analyzed in terms of the role they play *within* the Quranic discourse. For example, the Syriac term for a Trinitarian concept of Christ is given an Arabic form in the Quran in the context of a critique of the Trinity.[13] In Griffith's words, defining how the Quran employs Syriacisms "enhances our knowledge of the social, cultural and religious complexity of the Arabic-speaking audience addressed by the Arabic Quran and in the process it discloses the Quran's own detailed awareness of the folklore of that audience's Christian members, whose patristic and liturgical heritage was distinctly Syriac."[14] Furthermore, "[t]he Syro-Aramaic tradition is not the only source of Christian discourse present in the milieu of the Arabic Quran, but it is arguably the most important and most pervasive one."[15]

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[9] Donner, Historian 27.

[10] Donner, Challenges 39–40.

[11] Griffith, Christian lore 111–112, ref. to Andrae, *Origines* 207; Bowman, Monophysite.

[12] Guillaume, *Life* 180/IH 260.

[13] Griffith, Christian lore 114–116.

Griffith's method is thus used to identify what he calls "Syriacisms" in the Quran, identify the Syriac source, and then compare it with the Quranic version. By clarifying how the Quran reworks these Christian theological themes, he advances our understanding of what is specific to the Quran's own theology: its insistence on God's One-ness and the impossibility of consubstantiation between God and man. Griffith does not, however, take the next step and assess whether the *Sīra*'s information about the early community and the Prophet's contacts with Syriac Christians presents a plausible historical context for the Quran's "Syriacisms." For example, the *Sīra* refers to Q 19 (*Maryam*) and the beginning of Q 3 (*Āl ʿImrān*) in the context of the Companions' and the Prophet's debates about Christology with the Abyssinians and their co-Monophysites in Najrān.[16]

Like Donner, Nicolai Sinai and Angelika Neuwirth warn against the *Sīra*, although their reasons differ. From their German perspective, reliance on the *Sīra* to contextualize the Quran historically coincided with the Nazification of the German universities and the interruption of productive work undertaken by the Jewish scholars Abraham Geiger, Josef Horovitz, and Heinrich Speyer to compare the Quran with the Bible and rabbinic literature.[17] More specifically, however, Sinai and Neuwirth reject the *Sīra*'s portrayal of the Prophet as having had a definitive and unchanging religious message throughout his career (610–632). Sinai and Neuwirth approach the Quran as a "text-in-progress" reflecting a "community-in-progress" (i.e., a community that came into being by engaging in polemics and dialogue with its Jewish and Christian neighbors).[18] In another study, Sinai argues for an approach that, on the one hand, rejects the *Sīra*'s description of the Prophet's religion and, on the other hand, accepts its historical chronology. Sinai's approach is grounded in Theodor Nöldeke's method of dating Suras, which combines analysis of thematic and literary characteristics with the *Sīra*'s basic chronology. Nöldeke's model defines the Prophet's religious teachings as developing between the years 610 and 632. It also modifies the traditional Islamic dating by connecting certain Quranic themes with certain periods and contexts.[19] According to Sinai's application of Nöldeke's model, it is the *Sīra*'s religious portrait of the Prophet, as preaching the same message throughout, that bears the marks of later redaction. Its political portrait of how a charismatic preacher became the leader of a tribal confederation is, however, entirely plausible and provides the changing contexts that are accompanied by a changing religious message. This development can be uncovered if one studies the intra-textual relations between Quranic Suras and themes. For example, Sinai takes some early Meccan Suras that refer to *al-insān* ("mankind"; Q 84 and 95) and argues that the term *al-insān* does not recur in later Suras because it has been supplanted by a view of humanity, not as a whole, but as divided into believers and unbelievers. Thus, "mankind" reflects an early stage when the community did not distinguish between believers and unbelievers.[20] Another example is Q 37 and 51, which treat Abraham in slightly different ways. Sinai concludes that the thematic differences between the early Q 51 and the later Q 37 reflect a chronological development in the community and its religious thought.[21]

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[14] Ibid., 131.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Guillaume, *Life* 150–155; 270–277/IH 217–224; 401–411.

[17] Sinai and Neuwirth, Introduction 5–6.

[18] Ibid., 6.

Sinai's application of Nöldeke's dating system exemplifies what Donner described as the simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the *Sīra* as the Quran's context. However, for Sinai, the main challenge is posed not by Donner but by Daniel Madigan's argument that no proponent of the Quran as process has come up with an objectively applicable method.[22] Rather, their arguments evince a circularity where a model is developed and applied in order to confirm a presupposed process of development. Madigan's chief example is Neuwirth's thesis, inspired by Nöldeke, that the Quran reflects a development through four distinct phases and that the concept of *kitāb* is significant, above all, in the second "middle Meccan" period. By imposing this rigid model on the text, Madigan argues, Neuwirth ignores the many instances of *kitāb* that occur outside of the period she claims it belongs to.[23] In Madigan's view, the Quran does not, in an objectively verifiable manner, testify to stages of development. The concept of *kitāb* is not limited to certain parts of the text, but the text throughout presents itself as a *kitāb* from God; *kitāb* thus expresses a consistent Quranic self-identity as scripture and cannot be seen as a discrete and historically bounded theme.[24]

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[19] Sinai, Process; ref. to Nöldeke, *Geschichte*. See also Sinai, Two types.

[20] Sinai, Process 431.

[21] Ibid., 432–438.

[22] Ibid., 408, ref. to Madigan, *Self-Image* 86.

[23] Madigan, *Self-Image* 87–89.

[24] Ibid., ch. 2.

In another important study of *kitāb* in the Quran, Matthias Radscheit has argued that it refers specifically to a *written contract* (the Covenant between God and man that man will worship God alone and not associate humans with Him).[25] Radscheit's interpretation of *kitāb* implies that the Quran views itself as an advocate of a written contract. I have, in an earlier study, applied his definition of *kitāb* and Covenant (*mīthāq*) to the Quran with reference to Aristotle's concept of constitution (*politeia*) as the principle that organizes the citizens' lives and the laws in the city (*polis*), deviation from which means that the political community is no longer itself and consequently faces disasters.[26]

This brief survey implies that a consensus is in fact emerging within a particular field of inquiry—namely, that the Quran is a distinct religious discourse that *uses* (among other things) Jewish and Christian concepts and literatures to define itself, and that the Syriac Christian milieus are important points of reference for Quranic theology in particular. Concerted efforts to advance research into the Quran's context are also being made, including recent edited volumes by Gabriel Saïd Reynolds, and by Neuwirth, Sinai, and Michael Marx. The contributors map and explore in detail the various historical and cultural contexts of the Quran: Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Abyssinia. However, even though Arabia and Abyssinia, and to some extent Syria and Mesopotamia, play important roles in the *Sīra*, none of these studies has attempted to connect the knowledge gained about these contexts with the *Sīra*'s contextualization of the Quran. Hence, it is still unclear why the *Sīra*'s references to Q 3 and 19 (and indeed Q 112) in the context of the Prophet's and the community's polemics against Monophysitism is implausible, given Griffith's assumption that Syriac Christianity is a reference point for Quranic theology.

2 The Quran as Rhetoric

Another type of study with potential implications for the context of the Quran are studies of Quranic rhetoric, which refer to both classical and biblical models. Jacques Jomier has found that the Quran uses the classical logical proof—the syllogism—to argue the case for its own inimitability (*iʿjāz*), presented as an empirical proof of its divine character.[27] Geneviève Gobillot has compared the Quran's rhetoric to other Near Eastern scriptures, observing that while the latter voice believers' arguments to prove that their gods exist, the Quran is God's own argumentation for his divinity using the classical *enthymeme* (i.e., not the perfect but the hypothetical and imperfect syllogism).[28] In my study of *kitāb* and Aristotle's concept of constitution in the Quran, I have argued for an even narrower definition of the Quranic *enthymeme* as *semeion*, or proof through "sign," corresponding to the Quranic term *āya*, "sign." *Semeion* in Aristotle's rhetoric is proof adapted for deliberative speech in the public forum. Instead of using the abstract syllogism adapted to philosophers, the speaker here convinces the public by referring to topics and events that the audience can identify with; these are the "signs."[29]

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[25] Radscheit, Iʿjāz. On Covenant as key concept in the Quran, see Wansbrough, *Quranic studies* 8–12; Humphries, Myth; Gwynne, *Logic* 1–24.

[26] Mårtensson, "Proof."

[27] Jomier, Évidence; cf. Gwynne, *Logic*, chs. 8–9.

Regarding comparison with biblical rhetoric, the most consistently developed approach is Michel Cuypers's "Semitic rhetoric" analysis of the Quran, which focuses not on the argumentation but on "the grammar of the text or the discourse."[30] Through a detailed analysis of both short and long Suras Cuypers concludes that each Sura is a rhetorical unit with a core theme; that Suras form thematic clusters; and that the whole Quran is a compositional unit constituted by the Suras and their themes, in which some of the long and late Medina Suras are thematically connected with the short and early Mecca ones.[31] Cuypers's findings, like those of Madigan regarding *kitāb*, thus contradict the Nöldeke-inspired model of dating the Quranic themes. From a rhetorical viewpoint, differences between and within Suras can be explained as rhetorical variations on a theme rather than as expressions of a substantial, progressive change in thought-content.

The abovementioned Quranic concept of the Covenant (*mīthāq*; also *ʿahd*) has also been treated in the context of rhetoric studies as the underlying theme of the entire canon. According to Gwynne, the totality of Quranic rhetoric is a syllogistic proof of the necessity to uphold the Covenant:

> The relationship between God and humanity is called the Covenant, and in my view it is the logical key to the entire structure of Quranic argument. Virtually every argument in the Quran expresses or implies one or more of the covenantal provisions … The pivotal covenant-passage is Q 7:172 … Just as Islam holds that no soul bears the burden of another's sin

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[28] Gobillot, Démonstration.

[29] Mårtensson, "Proof."

[30] Cuypers, *Banquet* 473; "Semitic rhetoric" in Cuypers's sense includes Hebrew, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and New Testament Greek texts, but vanishes as a literary form in early medieval times.

[31] Cuypers, Analyse; cf. Cuypers, Structures rhétoriques; Cuypers, *Banquet* 473–489.

> (cf. Q 6:164, 17:15, etc.), Q 7:172 depicts the Covenant not as a communal legacy but as an act by which every human soul individually accepts God as Lord.[32]

The Covenant explains why the Quran refers to other scriptures, Judaism, and Christianity—namely, for historical examples of what happens when people uphold or violate the Covenant: "Otherwise, unsupported statements that God does not break his Covenant (e.g. Q 2:80) from an analytical point of view amount to simple assertions."[33]

In my application of *semeion* to the Quran I argued that the Quran established a connection between the Covenant and the *kitāb* that implies a turning away from the New Testament Christ as the divine spoken *logos*, which Madigan sees as the model for *kitāb*, toward a concept of writing that is concerned with written contracts and which takes as its own model Moses's Sinai revelation.[34] Finally, Cuypers's analysis of Q 5 (*al-Māʾida*, "The festive meal") concludes that the Covenant is the key concept and theme of the Sura and that it establishes *ḥajj* and its sacrificial rituals as the appropriation of the Christian Easter by returning to Abraham's Covenant sacrifice.[35]

On the basis of Griffith's observation that Syriac Christian lore provides the material for the Arabic Quran's references to Christian theology, and Cuypers's conclusion that the *ḥajj* appropriates Easter, it can be suggested that the Syriac Christian communities were important interlocutors for the specifically Quranic definition of Covenant. Moreover, the *Sīra*'s references to verses from Q 19 and Q 3 in early contexts is suggestive of the rhetorical-topical approach to the Quranic message as variations on a consistent theme. The remainder of this article consists in applying this approach to the *Sīra* and al-Ṭabarī's history and commentary.

3 Ibn Isḥāq

The author of the *Sīra*, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq (d. ca. 150/767), was born in Medina to a family originating from ʿAyn Tamr in Iraq. ʿAyn Tamr had belonged to the territory of the Arab kingdom of Lakhm, who were vassals of the Sasanids from circa 300 until their kingdom was toppled by Shah Khusraw Parviz in 602.[36] While the Lakhmids had already adopted Christianity under their second king, Imruʾ al-Qays, it was only the last king, al-Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir, who officially identified himself as Christian. To distinguish themselves from the Byzantine Christian Arab vassals of Ghassān, who were Monophysites, the Lakhmids adopted Nestorianism.[37] Whereas Monophysitism defined Christ as having one divine nature in a human incarnation,[38] Nestorians defined Christ as a human in whom the divine word (*logos*) coexisted with his human nature; consequently, Mary was defined as the bearer of Christ but not of God.[39] Importantly, while Nestorian theology and literalist hermeneutics were defined by the Antiochene Bishop Theodor of Mopsuestia (350–428), in the Sasanid Persian realm it continued to be developed through a series of councils and writings in the period from the late 500s to the early 600s, a process that continued well into ʿAbbasid time (as did the Monophysite Jacobite creed).[40]

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[32] Gwynne, *Logic* 1–2; cf. Humphries, Myth, for an earlier statement of the thesis that the Covenant shapes the Quranic view of history.

[33] Gwynne, *Logic* 2.

[34] Mårtensson, "Proof," following the definition of *kitāb* in Radscheit, Iʿjāz.

[35] Cuypers, *Banquet* 451–489.

In 602, after Shah Khusraw Parvīz brought down the Lakhmid kingdom under al-Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir, their territory was ruled directly by the Shah until it was conquered by Abū Bakr's general Khālid b. al-Walīd in 633–634. Ibn Isḥāq's grandfather Yasār, who appears to have been a Christian and possibly of the Nestorian faith, was taken prisoner and brought to Medina, where he was first the slave and then, upon conversion to Islam, the *mawlā* of the Prophet's family, al-Muṭṭalib.[41] According to Alfred Guillaume, Yasār had already been imprisoned by the Sasanid king when Khālid b. al-Walīd conquered ʿAyn Tamr and sent him and the other prisoners to Medina.[42] Ibn Isḥāq's father and two uncles became specialists in historical *akhbār* and *ḥadīth*, a profession and transmission that Ibn Isḥāq continued.[43] The family specialization in Islamic history and *ḥadīth* suggests that they were of a scholarly or administrative background, possibly even familiar with the Christian teachings and administrative legacies of the Sasanid Empire.

The Muslim bibliographers categorized Ibn Isḥāq's historical material into four topics: *al-mubtadaʾ* (Creation and pre-Islamic history), *al-mabʿath* (the Prophet's mission up to the Hijra), *al-maghāzī* (the Prophet's state and conquests), and *al-khulafāʾ* (the Medina caliphs).[44] According to Ibn Saʿd (d. ca. 230/845), Ibn Isḥāq sought out the caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) in the former Lakhmid capital al-Ḥīra and wrote *al-maghāzī* for him.[45] Subsequently, the biographers report he joined the caliph, al-Manṣūr, in Baghdad and wrote a history from Creation to the present for the benefit of the heir apparent, al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785).[46]

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[36] Shahid, Lakhmids.
[37] Trimingham, *Christianity* 198–199.
[38] Lyman, Monophysites.
[39] Müller, Nestorians.
[40] Griffith, *Church* 131–136; 117.
[41] Jones, Ibn Isḥāḳ.
[42] Guillaume, *Life* xiii.
[43] Jones, Ibn Isḥāḳ.

Ibn Isḥāq's writings are not preserved as one opus. *Al-mabʿath* and *al-maghāzī* are extant in the form of Ibn Hishām's (d. 213/828 or 218/833) edition, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, while *al-mubtadaʾ* and *al-khulafāʾ* are preserved as reports from Ibn Isḥāq in later works, where they are just one among several other sources. Al-Ṭabarī's history, *Tāʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, and Quran commentary, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, are the ones that contain the most material from Ibn Isḥāq.[47]

There are also several transmitters of Ibn Isḥāq's material, the most important being al-Bakkāʾī (d. 183/799), Ibn Bukayr (d. 199/815) and Salama b. al-Faḍl (d. ca. 191/806). Ibn Hishām relied on al-Bakkāʾī's transmission, while al-Ṭabarī used mainly that of Salama b. al-Faḍl; while this is not the place to deal with the transmissions, it should be noted that there are differences between them.[48]

Regarding the reliability of Ibn Isḥāq's reports, Gregor Schoeler argues that the *maghāzī* material can date to the time of the Prophet, and that orally transmitted reports were put into writing in the early 700s; hence, historians in Ibn Isḥāq's generation (d. ca. 150/767) relied on written sources whose transmission can go back to the Prophet's generation.[49] Schoeler also analyzes a *mabʿath* tradition, the famous report about the first Quranic revelation (Q 96:1–5). While he concludes that this report was based on hearsay and did not go back to an eyewitness source, the report's main components were already being widely circulated in the second half of the first Islamic century (i.e., by the late 600s).[50] From this perspective, the report can be viewed as a valid testimony to how (parts of) the community in the late 600s conceptualized the founding event of Islam. As will be further explored below, the report of first revelation and its immediate context also contain “Syriacisms,” which could imply that these were considered significant in the late 600s and that the *Sīra*’s religious reports therefore deliberately seek to connect with the “Syriacisms” in the Quran in order to highlight the significance of Christian teachings on Jesus for Quranic theology. Newby has argued, the fact that Ibn Isḥāq wrote for the ʿAbbasid caliphs means that the Iraqi context, with its powerful Christian and Jewish groups, shaped his reports about the Prophet as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies.[51] In which case, Ibn Isḥāq, as a historian, was working with a presumed significance of Christianity for Islamic theology in reference to two historical contexts, that of the Prophet in the Hejaz (the subject matter of history), and that of the ʿAbbasids (the context of the historian). This suggests that Christianity was at least as important a context for the Prophet’s message for Ibn Isḥāq as it is for contemporary scholars. However, Ibn Isḥāq, and later al-Ṭabarī, attribute all three religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) to specific, divine legal and ethical principles, which are reformed and perfected in the Prophet’s message. In other words, these Muslim historians operate with a theory of the “common origins” of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, although the origins are divine revelation rather than human constructions. Nevertheless, since the implications of the divine revelation and its principles are enacted as human history, the historians contextualize the Prophet’s message with reference to Judaism and Christianity as historical religions. Moreover, although the historians agree on the principles in the Prophet’s message, they present quite different contexts for it, which gives the impression that they are developing different *historical* theories of the rise of Islam.

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[44] Brockelmann, Ibn Isḥāḳ 414.

[45] Schoeler, *Biography* 28, ref. to Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* 401–403.

[46] Schoeler, *Biography* 28–29, ref. to al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh* i, 220–221; cf. Abbott, *Papyri* 89–90; Newby, *Making* 7.

[47] Raven, Sīra; Schoeler, *Biography* 32–33; see Newby, *Making*, for a reconstruction of Ibn Ishāq's material based mainly on al-Ṭabarī's history and commentary, which is difficult to use because it arranges the material thematically and without distinguishing between the different sources.

[48] Guillaume, *Life* xvii–xxii; Schoeler, *Biography* 31–33.

[49] Ibid., 20–31.

[50] Schoeler, *Biography* 38–79.

4 Ibn Hishām’s Edition

Ibn Hishām’s edition of Ibn Isḥāq’s *Sīra* begins with the Prophet Muhammad’s genealogy, according to which he descended from the patriarchs and kings whom the Quran defines as prophets (i.e., the line of Abraham through Ismael).[52] It mirrors the genealogy of Jesus that introduces the Gospel of Matthew, except that instead of carrying on straight to the miraculous conception story as the Gospel does, Ibn Hishām proceeds to narrate, in great detail, political events in the south of the Arabian Peninsula and their impact on the Hejaz and Quraysh, eventually followed by a narrative about the Prophet's miraculous conception.[53] The primary context Ibn Hishām established for the Prophet's religious mission is thus the political contest between the surrounding Byzantine and Sasanid empires and their allies in the kingdoms of Yemen and Abyssinia (Aksum) and the Arabian Peninsula, and the promise of redemption coming from the Abrahamic genealogy.[54] Thus, just as the New Testament returned to Abraham's founding Covenant to abrogate the Mosaic Torah of the Sinai Covenant, the *Sīra* also returns to Abraham. In the narrative immediately preceding the Prophet's mission, it is reported that five men, dissatisfied with idol worship, sought Abraham's true religion. One was the Persian Salmān al-Fārisī, while the others were from Quraysh. Three of them became Christians, including Waraqa b. Nawfal, the cousin of the Prophet's wife Khadīja. Zayd b. ʿAmr remained searching until he died; he is described as follows:

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[51] Newby, *Making*.

[52] Guillaume, *Life* 3–4; 40–41/IH 3–7; 60–62.

> [H]e went forth seeking the religion of Abraham, questioning monks and rabbis until he had traversed al-Mausil and the whole of Mesopotamia; then he went through the whole of Syria until he came to a monk in the high ground of Balqā. This man, it is alleged, was well versed in Christianity. He asked him about the Hanīfiyya, the religion of Abraham, and the monk replied, "You are seeking a religion to which no one today can guide you, but the time of a prophet who will come forth from your own country which you have just left has drawn near. He will be sent with the Hanīfiyya, the religion of Abraham, so stick to it, for he is to be sent now and this is his time." Now Zayd had sampled Judaism and Christianity and was not satisfied with either of them; so at these words he went at once making for Mecca; but when he was well inside the country of Lakhm he was attacked and killed. Waraqa b. Nawfal composed this elegy over him:
>
> You were altogether on the right path Ibn ʿAmr,
> You have escaped hell's burning oven
> By serving the one and only God
> And abandoning vain idols.
> And by attaining the religion which you sought
> Not being unmindful of the unity of your Lord
> You have reached a noble dwelling

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[53] Ibid., 68–69/IH 100–102.

[54] Ibid., 90–104/IH 130–150.

> Wherein you will rejoice in your generous treatment.
> You will meet there the friend of God,
> Since you were not a tyrant ripe for hell,
> For the mercy of God reaches men,
> Though they be seventy valleys deep below the earth.[55]

The elegy connects Abraham's religion with the biblical rejection of idol worship, adding the Quranic creed of "the unity of your Lord."

The report about the Prophet's first revelation follows immediately after the elegy. It is introduced by a claim that the Prophet's advent was foretold in the Gospel of John:

> Among the things which have reached me (Ibn Isḥāq) about what Jesus the Son of Mary stated in the Gospel which he received from God for the followers of the Gospel, in applying a term to describe the Apostle of God, is the following. It is extracted from what John the Apostle set down for them when he wrote the Gospel for them from the Testament of Jesus Son of Mary: "He that hates me has hated the Lord. And if I had not done in their presence works which none other before me did, they had not had sin: but from now they are inflated with pride and think that they will overcome me and also the Lord. But the word that is in the law (*al-kalima allatī fī l-nāmūs*) must be fulfilled, 'They hated me without a reason.' But when the Comforter (*Munaḥḥemana*) has come whom God will send to you from the Lord's presence, and the spirit of truth which will have gone forth from the Lord's presence he shall bear witness of me and you also, because you have been with me from the beginning. I have spoken to you about this so that you should not be in doubt." The *Munaḥḥemana* (God bless and preserve him!) in Syriac is Muḥammad; in Greek he is the Paraclete.[56]

The passage is from John 15:23 and contains two "Syriacisms" in the Arabic language: *nāmūs* and *munaḥḥemana*. Guillaume remarks that this passage follows the Palestinian Syriac lectionary, which has *munaḥḥemana*, while "the ordinary Bible of the Syriac speaking churches" has the Greek *paracletos*.[57] *Munaḥḥemana* echoes the famous Comforter passage in Isaiah 40:1–6:

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[55] Ibid., 103/IH 149.

[56] Ibid., 103–104/IH 149–150.

[57] Ibid., 104, n. 1.

> **Comfort ye, comfort ye my people (*naḥḥamū naḥḥamū ʿammī*)**, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. **The voice said, Read out. And he said, What shall I read out (*qôl ômêr qerâ weâmar mâh ʾęqrâ*)?** All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.

Isaiah 40:1–6 combines the comfort theme with the image of someone reading out a message about redemption, and it helps us to see the link between the comfort theme in Ibn Isḥāq's quoted Palestinian lecture of John 15:23 and his report about Muhammad's—the Comforter's—first revelation more clearly.

Before that, however, the Quranic concept of Covenant is introduced, as a prelude to the first revelation:

> The ***Munaḥḥemana*** (God bless and preserve him!) in Syriac is Muḥammad; in Greek he is the paraclete. When Muhammad the Messenger of God reached the age of forty God sent him in compassion to mankind, "as an evangelist to all men" (Q 34:27). Now God had made a covenant (*mīthāq*) with every prophet who He had sent before him that he should have faith in him, testify to his truth and help him against his adversaries, and He required of them that they should transmit that to everyone who believed in them, and they carried out their obligations in that respect. God said to Muḥammad, "When God made a covenant with the prophets (He said) this is the writing (*kitāb*) and wisdom which I have given you, afterwards a messenger will come confirming what you know that you may have faith in him and help him." He said, "Do you accept this and take up my burden?," i.e. the burden of my agreement which I have laid upon you. They said, "We accept it." He answered, "Then bear witness and I am a witness with you." (Q 3:75)[58] Thus, God made a covenant with all the prophets that they should testify to his truth and help him against his

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[58] The Covenant between God and the prophets echoes the primordial Covenant between God and mankind in Q 7:172.

> adversaries and they transmitted that obligation to those who believed in them among the two monotheistic religions. Al-Zuhrī related from ʿUrwa b. Zubayr that ʿĀʾisha told him that when God desired to honor Muḥammad and have mercy on His servants by means of him.[59]

Then follows the story about the first revelation itself, which contains the same words in Arabic as Isaiah 40:1–6 does in Hebrew, seemingly to evoke the theme of the Comforter:

> When it was the night on which God honoured him with his mission and showed mercy on His servants thereby, Gabriel brought him the command of God. “He came to me,” said the Messenger of God, “while I was asleep, with a coverlet of brocade whereon was some writing, and said, **‘Read! (*iqraʾ*)**’ I said: **‘What shall I read (*mā aqraʾ*)**?’ He pressed me with it so tightly that I thought I would die, then he released me and said: **‘Read!’** (***iqraʾ***) I said, **‘What shall I read? (*mā aqraʾ*)**’ He pressed me with it again so that I thought I would die, then he released me and said, **‘Read! (*iqraʾ*)**’ I said, **‘What shall I read? (*mā aqraʾ*)?’** He pressed me with it a third time so that I thought it was death and said **‘Read! (*iqraʾ*)**’ I said, **‘What then shall I read? (*mādhā aqraʾ*)**’—and this I said only to deliver myself from him, lest he should do the same to me again. He said:
>
> Read in the name of thy Lord who created,
> Who created man of blood coagulated.
> Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent,
> Who taught by the pen,
> Taught that which they knew not unto men.”[60]

The “Syriacism” *nāmūs* reappears in the narrative after the Prophet had told his wife Khadīja about his experience; she told her cousin Waraqa about it, and he said:

> Holy, Holy! By Him in whose hand is Waraqa’s soul, if what you say is true, Khadija, there has come to him the greatest *Nāmūs* who came to Moses before, and lo, [Muhammad] is the prophet of this community. Tell him to stand firm.[61]

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[59] Guillaume, *Life* 104–105/IH 150–151.

[60] Q 96:1–5. See also Mårtensson, Discourse 314, on this possible Hebrew-Arabic wordplay.

[61] Guillaume, *Life* 107 (mod. English)/IH 153.

Against the background of promises of a return to Abraham's true religion, the Palestinian Syriac reading of John 15:23, and with a side-glance at Isaiah 40:1–6, Ibn Isḥāq's report about the Prophet's first revelation can be seen as signifying:

– Comfort for the people of Abraham's "monotheist" Covenant, which implies that they have been wronged or made to suffer before the advent of the Comforter;
– Comfort comes in the form of the law, *nāmūs*;
– *Nāmūs* has come to Moses before and it is a written law (similar to the Sinai tablets), as also testified to by the significance of the Pen and Reading in Q 96:1–5.

Further on in the historical narrative, concerning the Prophet's rule in Medina, the divine Covenant is given historical form in a social contract between the Prophet, the Muhājirūn, the Anṣār, and some of the Jewish tribes of Medina. The document, referred to in previous research as "the Medina Constitution" or the "*umma* document,"[62] begins as follows:

> The apostle wrote a contract (*kitāb*) concerning the emigrants and the helpers in which he made a friendly agreement with the Jews and established them in their religion and their property, and stated the reciprocal obligations, as follows:
>
> In the name of God the Source of Life, the Continuous Protector of Life. This is a written contract (*kitāb*) from Muḥammad the Prophet [governing the relations] between the faithful covenanters (*al-muʾminūna*) and the Muslims (*al-muslimūna*) of Quraysh and Yathrib, and those who followed them and joined them and labored with them (*jāhada maʿahum*). They are one distinct community (*ʾumma*) among the people.[63] …

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[62] The text is generally considered to date to the Prophet's time and has been extensively researched. For an analysis and research survey, see Arjomand, Constitution. Arjomand argues for conceptualizing the document as a constitution in the legal theoretical sense of founding principles for a political community, rather than as a tribal security pact, as some others argue; 557. I also agree with his rendering of *al-muʾminūna* in the sense of "faithful convenanters"; cf. Mårtensson, "Proof" 378–379, for this sense applied to *muʾmin* in the Quran, where it also derives its meaning in relation to the Covenant as a written contract and security. See Donner, *Believers* 72–74, for the argument that the document testifies to the ecumenical character of the Prophet's community, since he argues that the Jews are included in the category of "believers" (here, "faithful"). However, I agree with Arjomand that this is a constitutional document, where the parties are defined through their loyalty to the specified terms, which are distinct from religion (*dīn*); Donner thus pushes the document's meaning from its contractual frame into more "religious" semantics; hence, his definition of it as "ecumenical."

[63] Guillaume, *Life* 231–232/IH 341.

> The faithful covenanters (*al-muʾminūna*) are each other's freedmen among the people (*ʾinna al-muʾminīna baʿḍahum mawālī baʿḍihim min dūn al-nās*). To the Jew who follows us belong help and equality. He shall not be wronged nor shall his enemies be aided.[64] … The Jews shall contribute to the cost of war so long as they are fighting alongside the faithful covenanters. The Jews of the Banū ʿAwf are one community with the faithful covenanters (the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs), their freedmen and their persons except those who behave unjustly and sinfully, for they hurt but themselves and their families. The same applies to the Jews of the Banū l-Najjār, Banū l-Ḥārith, Banū l-Sāʿida, Banū Jusham, Banū l-Aws, Banū Thaʿlaba, and the Jafna, a clan of the Thaʿlaba and the Banū l-Shutayba.[65] … The Jews must pay with the faithful covenanters as long as war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document (*ṣaḥīfa*) … The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib … The Jews of al-Aws, their freedmen and themselves have the same standing with the people of this document (*ṣaḥīfa*) in pure loyalty from the people of this document (*ṣaḥīfa*).[66] …
>
> God affirms the reliability and loyalty of what is in this document (*ṣaḥīfa*). This written contract (*kitāb*) will not protect the unjust and the sinner. The man who goes forth to fight and the man who stays at home in the city is safe unless he has been unjust and sinned. God is the protector of the loyal man who fulfills his obligations, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.[67]

This written contract (*kitāb*), which is referred to as a document (*ṣaḥīfa*) in the legal sense, grants the Jews the right to their religion (*dīn*) and property and obliges them to share the costs of war with the Prophet's community (*umma*). Relations between the Prophet and the Jews were thus not hostile; they had a contractual partnership. Hostilities only arose later between the Prophet and other Jewish tribes who aided the Prophet's enemies.[68] The religious principle of "the law that came to Moses before" is correspondingly positive as the historical manifestation of the divine Covenant and the foundation of the Prophet's administration.

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[64] Ibid., 232/IH 342. Modified translation.

[65] Ibid., 232–233/IH 342–343.

[66] Ibid., 233/IH 343.

[67] Ibid., 231–233/IH 341–343. In this last paragraph I have modified Guillaume's translation to bring out the aspects related to contractual loyalty and mutuality, and the significance of "documenting" the contract terms through writing. For the translation of *ittaqā* as "to fulfil one's obligations" (as God requires the faithful to do), instead of Guillaume's "God-fearing," I relied on the *Lisān al-ʿArab* and the analysis under the root *t-q-y*.

[68] See reports in Guillaume, *Life* 239–270/IH 351–400 contextualizing Q 2.

A similar contract was entered between the Prophet and the Christians of Najrān who were Monophysites allied with the Abyssinian kingdom of Aksum. The *Sīra* reports, from the Yemeni historian and judge Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728 or 114/732), that Christianity was established in Najrān by a wandering preacher and ascetic named Faymiyūn. At the time the people of Najrān worshipped a date palm tree, but Faymiyūn instructed them in "the law of ʿĪsā b. Maryam" and God sent a gale which uprooted the palm tree.[69] The designation of Jesus as the son of Mary is in line with the Quranic view of Christ as harboring God's *logos* without sharing God's nature. Suleiman Mourad has suggested that this description of the palm tree cult in Najrān may echo Q 19:23–25 (*Maryam*), the scene where Mary gives birth to Jesus under a date palm tree: "Labor pangs drove her to the trunk of the palm tree … 'Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you and it will drop upon you fresh ripe dates.'"[70]

In a second version of the story about the establishment of Christianity in Najrān, reported from Muḥammad b. Kaʿb al-Quraẓī and a local Najrānī man, the ascetic founder is anonymous, and his message is said to be Islam. The following describes the ascetic's first convert, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Thāmir:

> He (Ibn al-Thāmir) began to sit with him and listen to him until he became a Muslim and acknowledged the unity of God and worshipped Him. He asked questions about the laws of Islam … whenever ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Thāmir entered Najrān and met any sick person he would say to him, "O servant of God, will you acknowledge the unity of God and adopt my religion so that I may pray to God that He may heal you of your affliction?" The man would agree, acknowledge the unity of God, and become a Muslim … The people of Najrān accepted the religion of ʿAbdullah b. al-Thāmir according to the Gospel and the law which ʿĪsā b. Maryam brought. Afterwards they succumbed to the same innovations as their co-religionists.[71]

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[69] Ibid., 14–16.

[70] Mourad, Palm-tree story. For a study that "locates" these references to the region of Palestine and to the *Protoevangelium of James* and other ritual texts pertaining to Mary in the Nativity celebration, see Guillaume Dye, Qur'anic Mary and Qur'anic chronology, article forthcoming in proceedings from the Fourth Nangeroni Meeting, "Early Islam: The Sectarian Milieu of Late Antiquity?," Milan, June 15–19, 2015.

[71] Guillaume, *Life* 16–17/IH 23–24.

Guillaume here sees an echo of Q 3:45 *et passim*, where it says that Jesus is the son of Mary and that his Gospel is the same divine revelation as the Torah and, by implication, the Quran.[72]

Further on in the narrative about the Prophet's mission in Mecca it is reported that "some twenty Christians came to him from Abyssinia" and, upon hearing the Quran being read, accepted Islam. Ibn Isḥāq says that al-Zuhrī reported that the scholars in Medina associated these Abyssinian converts with Q 28:53–55 (*Accounts*) and 5:85 (*The Festive Meal*).[73] In the same context, it is reported that the Prophet used to converse at length with a Christian slave and that the Quraysh chided him that his message was nothing but the teachings of the Christian; the reference is to Q 16:105 (*The Bees*).[74] Christian Abyssinia and the kingdom of Aksum reappear as a topic in several contexts. Eighty-three of the Prophet's Companions in Mecca took refuge from the Quraysh's persecutions with the king of Aksum.[75] In this context, the Companions read a passage from Q 19 (*Maryam*) to the king, who broke into tears and confirmed the truth of the message concerning Jesus.[76]

Finally, the Prophet as ruler in Medina received a delegation of 60 Christians from Najrān, among them Bishop Abū Hāritha b. al-ʿAlqama: "The Christian kings of Byzantium had honoured him and paid him a subsidy and gave him servants, built churches for him and lavished honours on him, because of his knowledge and zeal for their religion."[77] The report says that the bishop and his two aides spoke to the Prophet and that they were "Christians according to the Byzantine rite, though they differed among themselves in some points, saying He is God; and He is the son of God; and He is the third person of the Trinity, which is the doctrine of Christianity."

The point is made that they had thus corrupted the true faith in Jesus son of Mary that once was their founding creed.[78] The Prophet addressed them and invited them to "promote peace" (*aslama*), and Q 3:1–80 (*Āl ʿImrān*) was sent down to correct their theology: "Alif Lām Mīm. God there is no God but He the Living the Ever-existent," and so forth.[79] The report ends with the Najrān delegation turning back home with their Trinitarian creed intact, while acknowledging the Prophet's political rule.

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[72] Ibid., 16, n. 2.

[73] Ibid., 179/IH 259.

[74] Ibid., 180/IH 260.

[75] Ibid., 146/IH 208 *passim*.

[76] Ibid., 152/IH 220–221.

[77] Ibid., 271/IH 401.

[78] Ibid., 271/IH 403.

[79] Ibid., 272/IH 403–404.

5 Analysis: Ibn Hishām's Contextualization of the Quran

Ibn Hishām's edition of the *Sīra* contextualizes the Prophet's religious mission and the Quran within the power politics of the Byzantine and Persian empires, their impact on the Arabian Peninsula, and the religious and tribal genealogy of Abraham. The political and the religious are intrinsically related. It is repeatedly stated that the Christians in Najrān were allies of Byzantium, and that the Abyssinian Christians were a kingdom. The Prophet entered contracts with both the Jews and the Christians, portrayed as expressions of God's Covenant with the prophets that their followers are obliged to help the Prophet when his time comes. This is also the context in which the Quranic concept of *kitāb* is employed—in other words, in the report about the written contract (*kitāb*) between the Muhājirūn, the Anṣār, and the Jews of Medina, which corresponds with how Radscheit and I myself understand *kitāb* in the Quran.[80] Donner has taken Ibn Isḥāq's report about the Prophet's *umma* (or "the Medina Constitution," above) to support his interpretation of the Quran as reflecting a *historical* ecumenical community of "believers," which included all monotheists, and that it was only with the Umayyad dynasty that Islam constituted a demarcated, distinct religious identity.[81] I contend that if one understands the *umma* report as a constitutional social contract (*kitāb*), the contractual inclusion of Jews into the political community (*umma*) does not reduce the doctrinal distinctiveness of this community as the return to the Abrahamic creed; indeed, the report states that the Jews and the Muslims have their respective *dīn*.[82] Accordingly, Monophysitism is consistently cast as the kind of "corrupted" Christian *doctrine* that the Quranic message polemicizes against, at the same time as the *political* relations between the Prophet and the Christians of Aksum and Najrān are described as sound; Aksum even assisted the Prophet's mission by providing a safe haven for his Companions during the conflict with the Quraysh. This, together with the fact that "Syriacisms" are deployed as a frame for the story of the first revelation, implies that Ibn Hishām's edition of the *Sīra* confirms Griffith's conclusions regarding the significance of "Syriacisms" in the Quran itself. This can be understood as historians' research efforts to produce historical knowledge about the context of the Quran, given that the Quran itself polemically refers to Christian theology.

At this point, we can return to Neuwirth's and Sinai's challenge—that any theory of a context for the Quran must be able to explain how its theology and literary format could be deemed by its adherents to outclass other scriptures and creeds. Ibn Hishām's edited *Sīra* merges the Quran's critique of Monophysitism with a critique of the Quraysh's polytheism; here is the Companion Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib's explanation of the Prophet's message to the king of Aksum:

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[80] See above, section 1 of this chapter.

[81] Donner, *Believers*, esp. 71–74, 194–196. See footnote 62, above.

[82] Again, see discussion in footnote 62, above.

> [T]he king had summoned his bishops with their sacred scriptures exposed around him. He asked them what was the religion for which they had forsaken their people, without entering into his religion or any other. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib answered, "O King, we were an uncivilized people, worshipping idols, eating corpses, committing abominations, breaking natural ties, treating guests badly, and our strong devoured our weak. Thus we were until God sent us a messenger whose lineage, truth, trustworthiness, and clemency we know. He summoned us to acknowledge God's unity and to worship Him and to renounce the stones and images which we and our fathers formerly worshipped. He commanded us to speak the truth, be faithful to our engagements, mindful of the ties of kinship and kindly hospitality, and to refrain from crimes and bloodshed. He forbade us to commit abominations and to speak lies, and to devour the property of orphans, to vilify chaste women. He commanded us to serve God alone and not to take any other partner than Him, and he gave us orders about prayer, almsgiving, and fasting (enumerating the commands of Islam). We confessed his truth and believed in him, and we followed him in what he had brought from God, and we worshipped God alone without associating anything with Him … [W]hen [the Quraysh] … came between us and our religion, we came to your country, having chosen you above all others. Here we have been happy in your protection, and we hope that we shall not be treated unjustly while we are with you, O King!"[83]

Here, violations of commitments and oppression of the weak are equated with sharing God with other partners, and polytheists and Trinitarians are both seen as guilty of the latter. Accordingly, the Abyssinian king's justice and protection of the weak and persecuted Companions is somewhat later in the same report connected with him not actually believing in the Trinity but in the true creed about Jesus son of Mary.[84]

The Quranic message about returning to Abraham's true monotheism is thus a *political* critique directed primarily against the powerful families of the

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[83] Guillaume, *Life* 151–152/IH 219–221.

[84] Ibid., 154–155/IH 222–224.

Quraysh, and potentially at other polities and religious institutions. The attraction of the message thus lay, quite simply, in the promise of a new social contract. The view of Jesus as the son of Mary, which is reflected in both the Quran and the *Sīra*, must therefore be considered as connected to this promise. The possibility that Ibn Isḥāq's family were Nestorians before they became Muslims could be seen as implying the *Sīra* expresses that kind of *perspective* on Quranic Christology. However, if we turn to al-Ṭabarī's history, we find that it establishes a link between the Prophet and the Nestorian Lakhmids, which may provide the broader political context for the new social contract.

6 Al-Ṭabarī

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) hailed from Amul in Ṭabaristan, a province on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. Tabaristan was a culturally complex region, where the Sasanid imperial legacy lived on through local vassal dynasties. While the exact origin of al-Ṭabarī's family is unknown, it appears that his father, Jarīr b. Yazīd, was the vassal lord of the lands surrounding Amul, a status al-Ṭabarī may have inherited.[85] Al-Ṭabarī left home as a young boy to become a scholar and "defend the law of the Prophet."[86] Eventually, his studies brought him to Baghdad, where he settled and spent his whole adult life writing and lecturing to students, some of whom became judges and jurists; he even developed his own, albeit short-lived, legal methodology and rulings, designated *al-madhhab al-jarīrī*.[87] The link to Ṭabaristan was maintained since he inherited the family lands and lived off its produce, which he traded in Baghdad.[88] There, his learning became of interest to the state administration. The *wazīr* Ibn ʿUbaydallāh al-Khāqānī offered him a position as judge of the *mazālim* court (which he declined); he was invited to the residence of the famous *wazīr* ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā for a doctrinal disputation with the Hanbalites;[89] and, he wrote a legal treatise on the administration of conquered lands for the *wazīr* Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAzīzī (r. 291–295/904–908).[90]

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[85] Vasmer, Māzandarān 937–938.

[86] Rosenthal, *Introduction* 15, ref. to al-Ḥamawī, *Irshād* 429–430.

[87] Stewart, *al-Bayān*.

[88] Rosenthal, *Introduction* 13–14.

[89] Ibid., 50, 73.

[90] Stewart, *al-Bayān* 329.

7 The Commentary

Al-Ṭabarī's Quran commentary is of interest here because in it he defined the Quran in terms of rhetoric, in a way that corresponds with how contemporary researchers have defined it, notably Jomier, Gobillot, Gwynne, and Mårtensson. The commentary is titled *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* (*The encyclopedia of clear distinctions concerning the intended meaning of the signs of the Quran*).[91] The text's meaning is defined primarily with reference to exegetical reports and *ḥadīth* and through linguistic analysis, including "variant readings" (*qirāʾāt*), by which the meaning is also made to correspond with specific legal and doctrinal positions.[92] In the methodological introduction to the commentary, al-Ṭabarī develops a hermeneutics centered around the rhetorical concept of *bayān*, "clarification," or "clear distinctions."[93] Al-Ṭabarī explains *bayān* such that God has endowed humans with the capacity to communicate with each other by clarifying their innermost selves and deepest concerns. This capacity to clarify through distinctions is essentially the same whether the speaker is God or a human, only that God's *bayān* is perfectly clarifying, while the human is less so; prophets are more rhetorically accomplished than others, and the Prophet more so than his predecessors. The aim of exegesis is therefore to clarify God's innermost concerns or intentions, as communicated in the Quran. Because God wants to be understood, al-Ṭabarī argues, He communicates with a people in their spoken idiom (*lisān*) (Q 14:4). Consequently, the Quran was communicated in the Quraysh's Arabic idiom, which included words from the languages of other people with whom Quraysh were in close contact. Since these words were integral to the Qurayshi idiom, they must be considered Arabic. Al-Ṭabarī's principal examples are Persian, Abyssinian, and "Roman"—in other words, Byzantine Greek (*lisān al-furs wa-lisān al-habasha wa-lisān al-rūm*).[94] His discussion of this topic is framed in general linguistic terms, implying that al-Ṭabarī, like Ibn Isḥāq, perceived the Quran and its message as simultaneously divine and historical-contextual. He pointed out that since the Quran's Arabic language is specific to its context, *ḥadīth* from the Prophet is the principal context of the Quran's meaning.[95]

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[91] For a more detailed discussion of the meaning and translation of this title, see Mårtensson, "Proof" 391–392.

[92] Mårtensson, Concept; Shah, Dynamics; Gilliot, *Exégèse*, ch. 8.

[93] Mårtensson, "Proof"; Intention; Concept; Gilliot, *Exégèse* 73–78.

[94] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* i, 22.

[95] Ibid., i, 13–48, and esp. 63–64; cf. Mårtensson, al-Tabarī; Mårtensson, Intention; Mårtensson, Concept; here, it is pointed out that even though he theorized the Quran's meaning as

Rhetoric also plays a significant role in this context. According to al-Ṭabarī, the Quran is God's supremely persuasive proof (*al-ḥujja al-bāligha*), which is distinct from human counterparts precisely by its persuasiveness. The vehicle of the proof are God's *āyāt*, the inimitable "signs" (*al-āy al-muʿjiza*), which He used to clarify His innermost concern.[96] The precise meaning of the term was, according to al-Ṭabarī, twofold: a symbol (*ʿalāma*) that testifies to something outside of itself; and, an account (*qiṣṣa*) that gives information about God.[97] This corresponds to my own thesis that *āya* is related to the classical rhetorical concept *sēmeion*, or "sign *enthymeme*"—in other words, proof (*ḥujja*) by examples known to the public.[98] He defined the Sura as a thematically bounded unit of narratives (*āyāt*), which the scribes wrote down on the Prophet's command. Here he quotes a *ḥadīth* from Ibn ʿAbbās where the caliph, ʿUthmān, explains how the long Medinan Suras came into being: "Whenever a part of the longer *sūra*s descended on the Prophet he would call for those who used to write (it down) and he said, 'Place these signs (*āyāt*) in the *sūra* in which this or that is mentioned.' "[99]

The rest of the *ḥadīth* explains that this close thematic resemblance between narratives in Q 8 (*al-Anfāl*) and Q 9 (*al-Barāʾa*; also known as *al-Tawba*) was the reason why the two Suras were not separated by a *basmala*, even though *al-Anfāl* was from the early Medina period and *al-Barāʾa* from the very end of the Quranic revelation.[100] The *ḥadīth* states that thematic considerations governed the redaction of the long Suras. This view would be in line with a rhetorical view of Suras as constituted by thematically defined units.[101] While I cannot treat this here, it should be noted that al-Ṭabarī, and his exegetical reports, often used inter-Quranic references when explaining the meaning of a verse, thus establishing meaning contexts across the Quran.[102] Even though his principal focus was the meaning of each verse, rather than the analysis of internal structures, he appears to have assumed what is emerging today as one of the most dynamic fields in Quranic studies—namely, conceptual links and

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dependent on the contemporary context, he did not always have Prophet and Companion reports but often relied on later exegetical reports and linguistic analysis.

[96] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* i, 13; Mårtensson, "Proof."

[97] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* i, 72.

[98] Mårtensson, "Proof."

[99] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* i, 69.

[100] Ibid., 69–70.

[101] Abdel Haleem, Context.

[102] Mårtensson, Concept 24, ref. to Q 21:105; on al-Ṭabarī's construction of contexts, see also Shah, Dynamics. I explore this aspect of his exegesis in detail in a monograph devoted to al-Ṭabarī's *madhhab* (Gorgias Press, 2018).

themes across the Quran. Noticeably, al-Ṭabarī *theorized* this approach to the Quran through rhetorical linguistics.[103] From this viewpoint, the reason why a rhetorical topic like Abraham appears in different forms in different Suras would depend on the specific thematic context rather than on a diachronic development.

In line with Gwynne's thesis that the Covenant is the Quranic concept par excellence,[104] al-Ṭabarī also viewed the Covenant as central to the Quranic message, and he followed the connection that the Quran itself established between the Covenant and *kitāb*. In Q 7:169 (*al-Aʿrāf*), *kitāb* is connected directly with the Covenant: "But surely the covenant of writing (*mīthāq al-kitāb*) has been taken for them, that they should not speak anything but the truth with reference to God."

Al-Ṭabarī commented:

> He the Exalted says: Had there not been laid upon these ones who (now) accept bribes for their rulings and who say "God will forgive us this deed" the covenant of writing (*mīthāq al-kitāb*) which forbids this, meaning the contracts that God took from the Israelites to establish the Torah and act in accordance with it. So He, may His praise be multiplied, said to those whose story He accounted for in this sign,[105] warning them on account of their disobedience of His command and breach of His contract (*ʿahd*) and covenant (*mīthāq*): "Did not God lay upon you the covenant of His writing 'that you should not speak anything but the right with reference to God' and not add anything to it except what He sent down to His messenger Moses in the Torah, and never distort what is right when referring to it?"[106]

This exegesis establishes a frame of reference for *mīthāq al-kitāb* that is legal and contractual, and which explicitly says that the Covenant of writing ensures that justice is not corrupted by bribes and that the truth is upheld. The fact of *writing* itself is central to the possibility of upholding justice and truth: what is written is there to be seen by all concerned parties—unless it is modified, which is forbidden by law.

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[103] Mårtensson, "Proof"; Concept.

[104] See above, section 2 of this chapter.

[105] "Those whose story He narrated in this sign" (*alladhīna qaṣṣa qiṣṣatahum fī hādhihi l-āya*); the phrasing supports the theory that *āya* corresponds to *sêmeion*, proof demonstrated by narrating stories familiar to the public.

[106] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* vi, 143.

Because of its referential connection with law and justice, I have argued that *mīthāq al-kitāb* signifies a social contract that comes close to Aristotle's definition of "constitution" (*politeia*), the *principle* that guides lawmaking in the city-state (*polis*) and without which the citizens are no longer themselves.[107] In al-Ṭabarī's history the significance of written contracts is illustrated with reference to the political fortunes of imperial rule, as we shall see presently. This legal-contractual significance of *mīthāq al-kitāb*, as the Quran's central message, connects it with the "Syriac" concept of *nāmūs*, which appears in Ibn Isḥāq's report about the Prophet's first revelation (Q 96:1–5) as "there has come unto him the greatest *Nāmūs* that came unto Moses beforehand."[108] As mentioned, *nāmūs* is Syriac for "law," which explains the explicit connection with Moses, who is the principal biblical lawgiver. In the Quran, Moses is also connected with *kitāb*, which makes him the main role model for the Prophet Muhammad; in Q 2:53 (*al-Baqara*): "And when We gave Moses the Writing (*al-kitāb*) and the Criterion (*al-furqān*) so that you might be well-guided."[109]

Al-Ṭabarī commented as follows:

> The criterion (*al-furqān*) which God mentioned that he brought to Moses on this occasion is the writing (*al-kitāb*) by which the right is distinguished from the futile, and it is an adjective and attribute of the Torah. Thus the correct meaning of the verse is this: "When We brought to Moses the Torah which We had written down for him on the tablets, and through which We had distinguished between the right and the futile." The writing (*al-kitāb*) must be an adjective of the Torah, serving to enhance its standing and enrich its attributes, to which the criterion (*al-furqān*) has then been attached as another adjective.[110]

In other words, al-Ṭabarī on the one hand related the Covenant to the written (legally binding contracts), and, on the other hand, with Moses's writing, in a way that appears to correspond with how Ibn Isḥāq's report about the Prophet's first revelation also connected the Quran with Moses's "law" (*nāmūs*). Below, we will see that al-Ṭabarī contextualized the Prophet's message with reference to Syriac-writing Christians, but in quite a different way compared to Ibn Hishām.

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[107] Mårtensson, "Proof."

[108] See above, section 4 of this chapter.

[109] On Moses as the main model for Muhammad in the Quran, see Stewart, Understanding; Opeloye, Confluence.

[110] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* i, 407.

8 The History

Al-Ṭabarī's famous history is titled *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (*The history of the messengers and the kings*). Here, al-Ṭabarī contextualizes the Prophet within the history of the lands of the ʿAbbasid Empire. *Tārīkh* follows the rough outline of biblical history, beginning with divine creation. The pre-Islamic part interweaves biblical motifs, Quranic references, and historical reports within a chronology based on the Persian kingship lists, into which Israelite and Arab kings are integrated, and from which Islamic history follows up to the year 915 CE.[111] The focus is on rulers' choices and their political and administrative consequences.[112] Within this framework, al-Ṭabarī connects the two Quranic concepts of *mīthāq* and *kitāb* with administrative justice. Both are described as established by God at Creation, *kitāb* through the Pen, which, according to al-Ṭabarī, was the first thing that God created, echoing Q 96:1–5,[113] and *mīthāq* is described as being established with the creation of Adam, referring to Q 7:172:[114]

> From Ibn ʿAbbās, commenting on God's word: "And your Lord took from the backs of the children of Adam their progeny and had them testify against themselves: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes!' He rubbed Adam's back, and every living being to be created by God to the Day of Resurrection came forth at Naʿmān here which is behind ʿArafah. He laid upon them their covenant: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes!' "[115]

This primordial Covenant serves as model for the social contract and all other legal contracts described in the history, establishing that the conditions must be known and acknowledged by the contracting parties and that they should be put down in writing. In the subsequent historical narrative, the social contract is contextualized as referring to the prevailing system of vassalage and the contractual rights and duties of the ruler and his vassals. The one who breaks the contract also breaks the Covenant with God and raises himself to the level of God, implying that God symbolizes the contract as principle.[116]

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[111] On the pre-Islamic parts of the *Tārīkh* and their function for the rest of the history, see Khalidi, *Arabic* 75–81; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic historiography*; Mårtensson, Discourse; *Tabari*; "Economy"; Whitby, Jesus.

[112] Petersen, *Early Arabic tradition*; Hodgson, Two pre-modern historians; Tayob, Analytical survey; Tayob, Political contours; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic historiography*; Shoshan, *Poetics*; Mårtensson, Discourse; Mårtensson, *Tabari*; Mårtensson, "Economy."

[113] Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari*, 198–203//LI 29–33.

[114] Ibid., i, 304–307/LI 134–137.

[115] Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari* i, 305/LI 134–135.

Al-Ṭabarī then proceeds to describe how the Persian kings were the first to implement this social contract in human history, as they were the first to found city-states and, eventually, empires.[117] As political history unfolded, the just rulers upheld the divine principles of the social contract, while others—the oppressive tyrants—violated them, putting themselves above the law and demanding to be worshipped instead of God.[118]

Intertwined with the reports about the kings are reports about the prophets and messengers. According to al-Ṭabarī's narrative, God also made a Covenant with Abraham, promising his descendants "sent-down writings (*al-kutub al-munzala*) and persuasive principles for judgment (*al-ḥikam al-bāligha*)."[119] The adjective *bāligha*, which refers to the rhetorical term *balāgha*, "attaining conveyance of meaning," implies that prophets are more successful in conveying meaning and more persuasive than other orators. Because they have access to *kitāb munzal*, writing sent-down from God and containing His own knowledge, they can persuade rulers of the necessity to uphold *mīthāq al-kitāb*. Within the logic of this narrative, Moses is the first prophet and descendant of Abraham who receives the promised *kitāb munzal*:

> God said to Moses: "'I have chosen you above mankind by My message and by My words, so take what I have given you and be among the thankful!' And We wrote for him in the tablets about everything", then told him: "Hold on to it hard and command your people to do the best of it. I shall show you (all) the abode of those who rebell!" (Q 7:144–145). Then Moses went back to his people … and with him was God's contract (*ʿahd Allāh*) on his tablets.[120]

The Prophet is the second to receive *kitāb munzal*, and al-Ṭabarī cites two reports about the first revelation (Q 96:1–5), which establishes the connection between the two revelations through the comment by Waraqa b. Nawfal that the Prophet had received the same *nāmūs* as Moses. Al-Zuhrī's (d. 124/742) version reads *hādhā al-nāmūs alladhī unzila ʿalā Mūsā b. ʿImrān*, identifying the “sent down” with *nāmūs*.[121] Ibn Isḥāq’s (d. ca. 150/767) version reads *laqad jāʾahu al-nāmūs al-akbar—yaʿnī bi-l-nāmūs jibrīl ʿalayhi al-salām alladhī kāna yaʾtī mūsā—wa-innahu lanabiyyu hādhihi l-umma*.[122] Here, the explanation that *al-nāmūs* refers to Gabriel has been added. Apart from this “Syriacism,” which is integral to the *matn* of the report about the first revelation, al-Ṭabarī’s narrative lacks the other “Syriacisms” from the New Testament which surround the report in Ibn Hishām’s *Sīra*.

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[116] Mårtensson, Discourse.

[117] Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari* i, 341/LI 170–172.

[118] Ibid., v, 146–162, 252–267, 284–294/LI 892–900, 958–966, 981–994.

[119] Ibid., ii, 105/LI 318.

[120] Ibid., iii, 77/LI 494.

It is important to note that al-Ṭabarī takes a broader approach to the Prophet and the Quran in his history than Ibn Hishām does in his redaction of Ibn Isḥāq’s *Sīra*, placing them within the historical context of religion and imperial administration in the regions corresponding to the lands of the Islamic caliphates. He does not concern himself with such doctrinal topics as we find in the reports in Ibn Hishām’s *Sīra*; for example, he reports about the Companions’ flight to Abyssinia but not about the Prophet’s encounters with Christians from Abyssinia and Najrān. Moreover, his narrative about the Companions in Abyssinia lacks the theological disputes about Christology found in the *Sīra*.[123] This could be because al-Ṭabarī used another transmission of Ibn Isḥāq than Ibn Hishām,[124] but it could also be that, as a historian, he was concerned with matters other than the doctrinal details of religious polemics through which the *Sīra* contextualized the Quran. Elsewhere I argue that he was specifically interested in imperial administration and the political implications of a divinely sanctioned social contract within the economic and legal structures of a system of vassalage.[125]

Yet, it is precisely through al-Ṭabarī’s connection of *kitāb* and imperial administration that we can gain a view of the significance that he attached to Syriac Christianity as a context for the Prophet. Al-Ṭabarī’s Prophet narrative omits Ibn Isḥāq’s famous report about the Prophet’s contract (*Kitāb Rasūl Allāh*) with the Jewish and Arab tribes of Medina.[126] The effect of this omission is that the principal social contract model in al-Ṭabarī’s history is the one connected with the primordial Covenant, and which was first established in human history by the Persian kings. Thus, within the logic of al-Ṭabarī’s narrative, the Quran, as *kitāb munzal*, is rhetorical proof which seeks to persuade of the necessity to uphold the social contract, and here the Persian kings become historically significant models.

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[121] Ibid., vi, 68/LI 1148.

[122] Ibid., vi, 72/LI 1151.

[123] Ibid., vi, 98–101/LI 1180–1184.

[124] See above, section 3 of this chapter.

[125] Mårtensson, Discourse; *Tabari*; “Economy”; Concept.

[126] See above, section 4 of this chapter.

Al-Ṭabarī's explanation of the historical cause of the Prophet receiving *kitāb munzal* from God is in his reports about the Sasanid Shah Khusraw II Parvīz (r. 590–628). Compared with his predecessor, the great Shah Khusraw Anūshirwān, who upheld rule by *mīthāq al-kitāb* and thereby pleased God,[127] Khusraw II Parvīz violated the social contract in several ways and thus turned into an oppressor and tyrant. In this context of a tyrannical Sasanid king, al-Ṭabarī explicitly connected the fate of the Sasanid Persians to the Prophet and Quraysh in Mecca and the Hejaz. The following report shows how al-Ṭabarī associated the contractual principle of *kitāb* with the Christian Byzantines, whereas the Zoroastrian Sasanids are cast as allies with the Prophet's enemies, the polytheistic Quraysh:

> ʿIkrima said: "The Byzantines and the Persians fought against each other in the nearer part of the land … and the Byzantines were defeated. This came to the ears of the Prophet and his companions when they were in Mecca and caused them distress. The Prophet disliked the Zoroastrian people without written contract (*al-ummiyyūn min al-majūs*) gaining the upper hand over the Byzantine people of written contract (*ahl al-kitāb min al-rūm*). The rejecters of contract (*al-kuffār*) in Mecca, however, rejoiced and hurled abuse; they encountered the Prophet's companions and said, 'You possess written contract and the Christians possess written contract while we are people without written contract (*ummiyyūn*). Now our brothers the Persians have been victorious over your brothers, the possessors of written contract, so if you attack us we shall triumph over you!' Then God sent down (*Sūrat al-Rūm*)."[128]

The mighty, polytheist families of the Arab Quraysh are said to have been allies with the Sasanid Persians, and both groups are portrayed as opposed to the principle of the written contract (*kitāb*), which is the core of the Prophet's message. The Christian Byzantines are defined as *ahl al-kitāb*, which implies that they were positively associated with the principle of *kitāb*, the people who respect contracts, a meaning in line with Radscheit's understanding of Quranic *kitāb*.[129]

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[127] Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari* v, 265/LI 966.

[128] Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari* v, 324–325/LI 1005–1006; English translation in Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari* is modified here.

[129] See above, section 1 of this chapter.

On this basis, al-Ṭabarī proceeds to set up a triangular relationship between the Sasanid Persians as imperial rulers; the polytheistic Arab Quraysh, who were their allies in the Hejaz; and the Nestorian Christian Arab Lakhmids, who were the Sasanid's vassals in Mesopotamia. What happened was that the Sasanid Shah Khusraw Parvīz violated his contract with his Arab Lakhmid vassal, who had his capital in al-Ḥīra in Mesopotamia, and brought down their kingdom. This led to the first defeat of the Sasanids by a coalition of Arab tribes in the Battle of Dhū Qār. In a personal comment on this development, al-Ṭabarī quotes the Prophet, but without giving any *isnād*, thus indicating that this was his own understanding:

> It is related from the Prophet that when the Prophet heard the news of Rabīʿah's rout of Kisrā's army, he exclaimed: "This [has been] the first military encounter in which the Arabs have secured their just due from the Persians, and it was through me that they were given the victory (*wa-bī nuṣirū*)!"[130]

Al-Ṭabarī thus established a causal relationship between Khusraw's contract violation, the victory by Arab Christian tribes over Sasanid Persia, and the power of the Prophet's mission. *Kitāb* was violated, and a new Covenant was required to restore justice.

9 Conclusions

Ibn Isḥāq and al-Ṭabarī both attribute crucial significance to Christianity as providing doctrinal and political context and causes for "Covenant renewal." They both, however, portray the nature of the Covenant as identical with Moses's Sinai Covenant of a written law. Since Moses has been identified as the Quran's quantitatively most dominant prophet, it can be suggested that both historians provide *historical theories* for why Moses's Covenant model has this role in the Quran—namely, its reference to the legal principle of written contract. In al-Ṭabarī's case, he connected this legal principle with an imperial system of vassalage, which implies that the system was continuously relevant before, during, and after the Prophet's mission and the production of the Quran. Assuming that it is this legal principle that is associated with the Quran's key religious concepts, there is no need to assume a *substantial* development within the Quran in the sense of Neuwirth's and Sinai's "the Prophet's learning curve." The substance of the message could just as well have been constant, in accordance with the rhetorical approach to the Quran. In fact, that could make more historical sense, since there is no evidence that either the Prophet or the scribes who composed the canonical text were ignorant of the basic political and legal societal structures of their time and region and how they related to the different religions.

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[130] Yarshater, *History of al-Tabari* v, 338/LI 1016.

I readily admit that these arguments are based on mere rereadings of familiar material. Yet, I hope to inspire new ways of thinking about these early historians as researchers who were seeking to explain the emergence and appeal of the Quran in historical—and, in al-Ṭabarī's case, also linguistic and rhetorical—terms. We have seen how their approaches align with approaches, and even results, in current Quran research. Hence, the ways in which they employed "religious" and doctrinal concepts to refer to political, societal, and language-related topics could offer clues to a more multileveled analysis of the theoretical paradigms and methods they applied when producing historical knowledge about the Quran. Since both historians also served as tutors and teachers, their works also give insight into the education of rulers, administrators, and jurists, and for this reason as well, they have a place in studies of the history of Islamic education.

10 Excursus: Aristotle and Syriac Christianity

According to Sidney Griffith, the Monophysite Syrian Orthodox Christians or Jacobites had, around 530, begun to systematically employ Aristotelian logic and rhetoric to define their doctrines and ecclesiastical identity in relation to Byzantium's enforced conciliar orthodoxy.[131] By the mid-700s, the Nestorians at the ʿAbbasid court of Baghdad were also employing Aristotle systematically. However, there is evidence of Aristotelian thought among the Nestorians already in the late 500s. Paul the Persian was a Nestorian with a strong interest in Aristotelian logic and thought, and he took up a position at the court of Khusraw Anūshirwān (r. 531–579),[132] the shah who ruled justly and with God's blessing, according to al-Ṭabarī.

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[131] Griffith, *Church* 110–112.

[132] Ibid., 113.

The connection between Monophysites, Nestorians, and Aristotle takes on new implications if connected with the theory that the Quran is the rhetorical persuasion, through narrative sign-proofs, of the reality of the Covenant. Aristotle's concept of the lawgiver (*nomothetēs*) founder of the city-state (*polis*) and its constitution (*politeia*), who "is responsible for the greatest of goods,"[133] appears as a possible model for Ibn Isḥāq's report about the Prophet's first revelation (Q 96:1–5) and its verification by the Christian Waraqa b. Nawfal that this was "the *nāmūs* (law) that came to Moses before." The constitution is a way of organizing and defining the offices of the city-state, particularly the sovereign office.[134] If the Prophet is seen as a *nomothetēs*, his constitution, which he established in his city-state (*al-madīna*), is signified by *mīthāq al-kitāb*: the ruler is bound by written legal contracts. Later in Islamic history, the same pattern applied to the caliph, who was, in theory, bound by *sharīʿa*. The philosopher and universal historian Miskawayh (320–421/932–1030), who had studied al-Ṭabarī's Jarīrī *madhhab* under his disciple, the Kufan judge Ibn Kāmil, claimed to be a follower of Aristotle. Miskawayh defined *nāmūs* as the foundation of *siyāsa* (politics) and *tadbīr* (administration), and he defined three orders of *nāmūs*. The first order is *al-nāmūs al-akbar*, which proceeds from God and conditions justice in settlements between the claims of men, which is the second order, the *nāmūs* of the judges, who treat the third order, the *nāmūs* which is money (*dīnār*).[135]

Miskawayh's tenth-century definition of *nāmūs* in terms of what he conceived of as Aristotelian political theory suggests that *nāmūs* could have had that significance already in the *Sīra*, given that it was edited at a time when Aristotle was the most commented on philosopher in Baghdadi scholarly circles. The same context might explain why al-Ṭabarī defined the Quran in rhetorical terms as God's persuasive sign-proof about the necessity of a constitution that binds the ruler by the *written* law—in other words, the Covenant in the Sinai tradition:

> By the mount and a writing inscribed in a rolled-out parchment (*wa-l-ṭūr wa-kitābin masṭūr fī raqqin manshūr*) (Q 52:1–2)
>
> By the figs and the olives; by Mount Sinai and this secure city (*wa-l-tīn wa-l-zaytūn wa-ṭūri sīnīn wa-hādha l-baladi l-amīn*) (Q 95:1–3)

Of course, this does not mean that the Quran came from a Christian milieu, only that the rhetorical message of the Quran about the need for a Covenant in the Sinai form was directed to the polytheistic Quraysh and to Christians, both of which groups were thought to need and appreciate the message.[136]

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[133] Aristotle, *Politics* ii.12.1273b28–34, i.2.1253a30–32.

[134] Ibid., iii.6.1278b8–10, iv.1.1289a14–17.

[135] Arkoun, Miskawayh; Plessner, Nāmūs.

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[136] Hence, Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī present a complex view of the relationship between polytheism and Christianity which appears to call into question Gerald Hawting's thesis that polytheism, as presented in the Quran, refers to flawed Christian monotheism, but that this fact has been covered up in the tradition through references to "polytheism." It seems to me that neither Ibn Hishām nor al-Ṭabarī is trying to cover up anything, but that they perceived both polytheism and Christianity (and Jews) as in need of the Prophet's version of the Sinai Covenant of written law, suggesting that the Quran might reflect the same view; see Hawting, *Idolatry*.

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CHAPTER 15

Scholars, Figures, and Groups in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*

Jens Scheiner

The book titled *Futūḥ al-Shām* (*The conquests of Syria*) and compiled by Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Azdī (died between 160/776 and 215/830)[1] is the oldest fully preserved historical work we have at hand. Being a typical work of *akhbār* historiography (with all implications for historical teaching as found in other sources of this type), it represents an impressive and detailed narrative about the early Muslim expansion into Greater Syria (henceforth: Syria). The narrative begins with Abū Bakr assembling troops in Medina and then dispatching them to various parts of Syria and southern Iraq. Following this, the book turns to the fights, diplomatic missions, and other challenges (e.g., theological disputes) that these troops faced when confronted by their opponents. Throughout this text, the reader encounters small skirmishes and much more substantial military clashes between local garrisons and fighters emerging from the Arabian Peninsula. Numerous confrontations occur, leading to the surrender of cities after the conclusion of a treaty. In the course of this narrative, many groups and more than 200 persons feature prominently. On the one hand, among the recurring groups are "the Muslims,"[2] who had been dispatched by Abū Bakr, and their opponents and "defenders of Syria," "the Byzantines." On the other hand, the narrative often focuses on individuals, particularly the military commanders, such as Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ, Khālid b. al-Walīd, and Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān, or the Byzantine emperor Heraclius. Prominent references are also made to the scholars listed in the work's *isnād*s, or chains of transmitters. Therefore, in this study I differentiate between (individual) scholars who taught and transmitted the work or the traditions therein, and actors who are mentioned in the course of the narratives and who can be divided into two categories: figures (i.e., individual actors) and groups (i.e., collective

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[1] For an outline and discussion of the wide range of conclusions reached by researchers about al-Azdī's death date, see Scheiner, *Past*, ch. 2.

[2] Quotation marks are used to highlight that particular groups are literary constructions used in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. The same, of course, applies to some persons. However, in these cases quotation marks are left out for the sake of readability.

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actors).[3] While scholars are a priori assumed to have been active as educators during their respective lifetimes,[4] figures and groups are regarded as characters of a narrative—in other words, as conceptualizations of the compiler-author and/or the individual scholars. In other words, for the present study I do not assume that figures and groups were "historic persons" (a claim, however, that in most cases can be realistically made). Instead, I take them as literary characterizations within the narrative.

1 Methodology

Hence, the complete set of scholars, figures, and groups mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* will be studied in what Sebastian Günther once coined as an "immanence-based" approach (that is taking the text as an object of analysis, while disregarding its context).[5] Furthermore, this set is so comprehensive that it has to be analyzed through the mechanism of a quantitative methodology.[6] Such a holistic approach, however, can neither engage deeply with the narratological representation of *all* figures or groups, nor provide a detailed analysis of all *isnād*s in the work. However, it is possible to use quantitative data on scholars, figures, and groups to arrive at general statements about the composition and the relation of each of these categories to one another. In addition, the data assembled for this task allows for conclusions to be drawn about the cohesion of the narrative and, hence, about the underlying question of authorship.[7] Despite there being a consensus in contemporary scholarship that Abū

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[3] I did not come upon collective transmitters, i.e., groups that are said to have transmitted traditions. They can be found, however, in other historical works when *akhbār* are introduced by the verb *qālū* (they said).

[4] Of course, some transmitters of *akhbār* may be fictitious. However, this has to be proven on an individual basis.

[5] See Günther, Introduction xvii, where the "immanence-based" or "immanence-oriented" approach is distinguished from the "socio-historical."

[6] I was inspired to take up this approach by the various publications of John Nawas and Monique Bernards, who regularly used quantitative analytical approaches to deepen our understanding of Islamic civilization. However, they typically draw on multiple biographies derived from a number of Arabic sources, rather than analyzing the dramatis personae of only one work. For Nawas's and Bernards's research, in particular their Ulama Project, see for example Bernards and Nawas, Distribution; and, Nawas, Contribution. For another biographical study about the Companions in which the author, Fuad Jabali, also employed a quantitative approach, see Jabali, *Companions*. I thank Adam Walker for pointing this out to me.

[7] For a similar approach using geographical data found in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, see Scheiner, Terminology.

Ismāʿīl Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Azdī is the compiler-author of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, this consensus is based mainly on the interpretation of the historical reports' *isnād*s and the manuscripts' *riwāya*s (lines of transmission) included in several *Futūḥ al-Shām* manuscripts. There is no known entry on al-Azdī in any of the biographical dictionaries. Therefore, by analyzing, in particular, figures and groups as represented in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the question of authorship is approached anew—this time, from a narratological angle.

Scholars, figures, and groups of persons have been analyzed in many of the previous studies on the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, although this has been done in an eclectic manner.[8] William Nassau Lees (d. 1889), who presented the *editio princeps* of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* in 1854, was able to identify 24 scholars mentioned in the *isnād*s.[9] Michaël de Goeje (d. 1909)[10] was the first to study the depiction of groups and figures in the work: on the one hand, he characterized "the Muslims" in general as "heroes of piety" and "saints";[11] while on the other hand, he presented some typical features of the portrayal of some leading figures, such as the Byzantine emperor Heraclius or his Armenian general Bāhān.[12] The first scholar to focus on tribal groups in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, in particular those of South Arabian or Yemeni origin, was Leone Caetani (d. 1935). He realized that in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* "the tribes of Yemen [are glorified] more than all other tribes."[13] These initial insights into the scholars, figures, and groups were further developed in the course of the fourteenth/twentieth century: Akram Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī found out (in 1983) that al-Azdī praised the tribal group of al-Azd throughout his *Futūḥ al-Shām* and that most of al-Azdī's authorities were from Basra and Kufa, but only a few of them came from Syria.[14] Lawrence I. Conrad built on these findings (in 1987) by recapitulating that the work focused on Yemeni tribes and on al-Azd,[15] while making an argument about a Syrian provenance of the work.[16] In addition, he presented new findings regarding the scholars mentioned in one of the work's *riwāya*s[17] and various

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[8] I am currently completing a comprehensive overview of the research history of al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* that will be published in due time in Scheiner, *Past*, ch. 1.

[9] For his index of *isnād*s, see al-Azdī, *Fotooh al-Shām* 51–58 (*isnād*s).

[10] De Goeje is renowned for his devastating critique of Lees's edition and ideas, most of which, however, are no longer tenable. For this critique, see de Goeje, Mémoire.

[11] Ibid., 25.

[12] Ibid., 24–25; 29–32.

[13] See Caetani, *Annali* ii-2, 1151, n. 2.

[14] See al-ʿUmarī, al-Azdī wa-kitābuhū 75–76.

[15] See Conrad, History 53.

[16] Ibid., 52.

[17] Ibid., 55–59.

*isnād*s[18] and recognized the contrastive representation of the figures of Khālid b. al-Walīd and Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ.[19] Suleiman Mourad responded to Conrad (in 2000) by arguing for an Iraqi origin of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. He also made new contributions to the study of the scholars included in the *isnād*s[20] and presented two additional *riwāya*s.[21] In the aftermath of these fundamental studies, several scholars came forward with more detailed information regarding the depiction of various figures and groups: Josef van Ess focused on Muʿādh b. Jabal and his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (in 2001),[22] while Lawrence I. Conrad discussed "the image of Heraclius as a well-intended but misguided monarch"[23] (in 2002). Furthermore, Nadia El Cheikh tackled the portrayal of "the Byzantines" in relation to "the Muslims"[24] (in 2004), being followed by Thomas Sizgorich who (in 2007) analyzed, in particular, the exchange of gifts between both parties.[25] Nancy Khalek treated the literary portrayal of the figures of Bāhān, Muʿādh b. Jabal, Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ, and other *ṣaḥābī*s (in 2010)[26] and, finally, Mohammad Rihan dedicated a study to the presentation of the tribe of ʿĀmila (in 2014).[27] The editors of the most recent (and best) edition of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, ʿIṣām ʿUqla and Yūsuf Banī Yāsīn, also contributed to our knowledge about scholars in the work (in 2004).[28] For instance, they presented biographical information on almost all transmitters in the *isnād*s,[29] including the identification of forty-two of al-Azdī's direct informants,[30] and discussed the *riwāya*s of the three manuscripts that were known to them.[31] Most recently, Boaz Shoshan presented (in 2016) many tropes relating to figures and tribal groups (e.g., al-Azd) that are contained in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*[32] and analyzed the portrayal of the figures of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Heraclius.

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[18] Ibid., 30–31.

[19] Ibid., 39–40.

[20] See Mourad, al-Azdī 589–591. Based on the Lees edition, he counted 122 *isnād*s and 41 informants of al-Azdī (of whom he could identify 31). See ibid., 589 and n. 150.

[21] See ibid., 582.

[22] See van Ess, *Fehltritt* 136–139.

[23] See Conrad, Heraclius 143.

[24] See El Cheikh, *Byzantium* 7; 35–36.

[25] See Sizgorich, "Prophets" 1006–1007.

[26] See Khalek, "Tall" 115–122.

[27] See Rihan, *Politics*.

[28] For an English translation of this edition, see al-Azdī, *Early Muslim conquest*.

[29] See the respective footnotes throughout the edition.

[30] See al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 22–36 (*Dirāsa*).

[31] Ibid., 63; 77.

[32] See Shoshan, *Tradition* 55–68.

It becomes clear from this overview of the state of the art that most researchers were preoccupied, on the one hand, with the identification of the scholars mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, and on the other, with the portrayal of select figures and groups. While certain individuals, such as Heraclius or Abū ʿUbayda, and some groups, like al-Azd, were more often discussed, others, like Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān or Quraysh, have not been studied thus far. In addition, an overall analysis of all scholars, figures, and groups mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* has never been attempted.

What I do in this study, therefore, is to analyze the complete dramatis personae and all scholars mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. With this objective in mind, I have listed all persons and groups of individuals found in the work and supplemented them, whenever necessary, with some biographical information derived from the EI².[33] Therefore, from a methodological perspective, some of the results presented here depend on the information that is included in this reference work on the basis of various sources. Regarding scholars and figures, I primarily adopted the names and *nisba*s from the *Futūḥ al-Shām* but double-checked it with information from the EI². In case an affiliation to a tribal group was not mentioned in the former, I added this from the latter. Regarding groups, I differentiate between tribal and other groups. For tribes, I follow the classification into North and South Arabian descent as found in the EI² but have made use of the information of their interrelations from both the *Futūḥ al-Shām* and the EI². Regarding nontribal groups, I closely tracked their portrayal in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* itself.

Based on this data, the following research questions will be clarified: What can be said about the relationship between scholars and figures in general? With which cities are the scholars associated? And what are the subunits, or categories, into which figures can be clustered? As I will demonstrate, "fighters in Syria" and various tribal groups feature among the most important subunits in this regard. Focusing more deeply on groups, I discuss particular aspects of the tribes mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, like their classification as North or South Arabian tribes, their correlation with scholars and figures, and their relation to each other. Finally, a brief introduction to the portrayal of groups other than tribes mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* will round off this study. It will focus on "the Arabs," "the Muslims," "the Byzantines," "the Polytheists," "the Christians," and "the Israelites."

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[33] Of course, a more detailed analysis is possible when using information on persons and groups from the many available biographical dictionaries. However, in most cases referring to the EI² is sufficient for this preliminary study. In the rare cases in which particular persons or groups are not mentioned in this reference work, I used the biographical dictionaries by Ibn Saʿd, al-Bukhārī, and Ibn ʿAsākir and Caskel's *Ǧamharat*.

2 Analysis

Of the 216 persons[34] (that is scholars and figures) mentioned by name in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*, regarding 50 (23%) no full biography (*tarjama*) could be found either in the *EI*^{2} or in the biographical literature. Of these 50 persons, however, 13 are mentioned in other Arabic sources, such as al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* or Ibn ʿAsākir's *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (TMD), and, hence, are known to some extent. We are thus left with 37 persons (17%) who are found only in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* and can be labeled as (otherwise) "unknown." This percentage does not seem high to me (compared to the 166 persons, or 77%, who are well-known), but for its proper assessment, other Arabic works have to be analyzed along the same lines.

Regarding the function that these 216 individuals serve within the text of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*—in other words, whether they are presented as figures, as transmitters (or scholars) or as both, the following figure provides us with some answers.

According to figure 15.1, 143 (out of 216) persons occur as literary figures in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, while 89 persons function as transmitters, who supposedly made use of historical material (*akhbār*) contained in the work in their teaching sessions. A particular subgroup of them is shown in the fourth column: 11 persons appear in the work's *riwāya*, hence being responsible for the transmission (and teaching) of the whole manuscript. Furthermore, few people in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* function as both figures and transmitters (see third column), which means that not many people transmitted reports about their own activities in Syria and Iraq.[35]

Regarding the percentage distribution of figures, transmitters, or both, figure 15.2 presents the details.

As figure 15.2 shows, almost two-thirds of the people mentioned by name in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* are figures, while one-third are scholars who function as the transmitters of various *akhbār* or of the whole text. Only a small percentage (7%) function as both transmitters of *akhbār* and as figures in these traditions. In my view, this is a rather small ratio, but, again, further studies have to be undertaken to show how this percentage relates to other historiographical works, such as al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* or Ibn Hishām's *Sīra*. A study of this common phenomenon in Muslim historiography is a desideratum.

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[34] It would further our understanding to list all 216 persons in this footnote. However, the reader can consult the index to the translation of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, where all persons (and groups) are mentioned. See al-Azdī, *Early Muslim conquest*.

[35] These 16 persons are included in the first two columns. Hence, these two columns total 232 people.

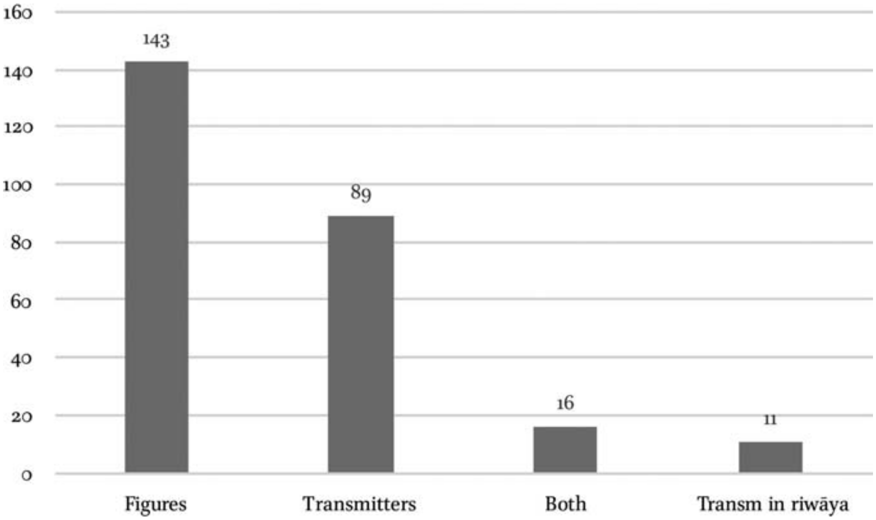

FIGURE 15.1 Function of persons in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*

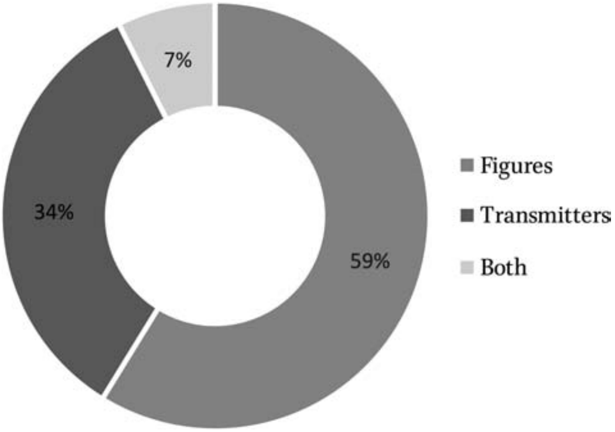

FIGURE 15.2 Function of people (in %) in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām*

Focusing more closely on the group of scholars mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the question of geographical distribution of the scholars, and hence of regional centers of historical teaching, comes to mind. The abovementioned Akram al-ʿUmarī was of the opinion that al-Azdī, whose second *nisba* is al-Baṣrī, and most of his informants, hailed from Basra and Kufa. Based on the analysis of scholars mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, Suleiman Mourad also put forward arguments for Iraq as the work's origin. Therefore, I will briefly re-evaluate the places with which the 89 scholars who function as transmit-

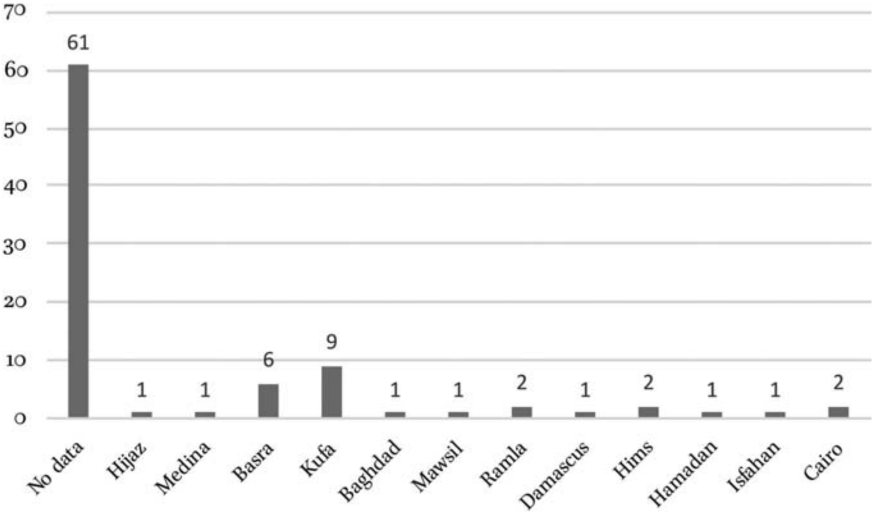

FIGURE 15.3 Association of scholars in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* with places and regions

ters in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are said to have been associated. This does not mean that the scholars were active *only* in these places (most likely they were not). Instead, the places mentioned above indicate the city or region where a particular scholar was remembered to have been active most. Based on biographical data (mostly *nisba*s) found in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the following geographical distribution can be observed (see figure 15.3):

The first striking feature of figure 15.3 is that more than two-thirds (or 69 %) of the scholars mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are not credited with any particular city or region. Of the rest, most scholars are remembered to have been active in Kufa or Basra, just as al-ʿUmarī stated. Assessed by region, 17 scholars (or 19 %) were associated with Iraq, five (or 6 %) with Syria, and two with the Hijaz, Iran, and Egypt respectively.[36] Admittedly, the data on which figure 15.3 rests is quite limited. Still, some useful insights can be deduced from it: First, the geographical association of scholars does not seem to be of particular importance in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, because 69 % of scholars lack this information.[37] Second, a small but substantial number of scholars are credited with having been active in Iraq, while other regions, in particular Syria, do not play a big role. Therefore, these observations support Mourad's findings, according to which most of the transmitters mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* have an Iraqi background. Whether the *Futūḥ al-Shām* also originated from Kufa, as Mourad claimed,[38] is less obvious, since these Iraqi scholars could have used *akhbār* that they collected in other regions or from non-Kufan scholarly circles (*ḥalqa*s).

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[36] Mourad did a similar count but used additional data from the biographical literature. According to him, 15 scholars came from Kufa, seven from Syria, six from Medina and three from Basra. See Mourad, al-Azdī 589.

[37] Neither is the geographical association of figures. Instead, tribal affiliations seem to be more important, as will be shown below.

Leaving the scholars and the topic of education proper and turning to a closer analysis of the figures mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the first question that arises from the title of the work is: How many of the 143 figures are portrayed as having fought during one of the campaigns in Syria (subgroup one)? By comparison, the following figure (see 15.4) will also list the number of those figures who are characterized as having fought in Iraq (subgroup two) and those who are known to have taken part in raids led or authorized by the Prophet Muhammad (subgroup three). While the data to subgroups one and two is derived exclusively from the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the data to subgroup three originated from the *EI*^{2}.

Of the 143 figures mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 90 (or 63%) are portrayed as having fought either in Syria or in Iraq. Hence, the content of the *Futūḥ al-Shām* is—as its title suggests—to a very large extent dedicated to military activities in Syria and Iraq, which is also reflected in the narrative's dramatis personae. In contrast, 53 figures (or 37%) are not characterized as fighters, but are depicted in the narrative as pursuing other, sometimes more diplomatic, activities (not depicted in figure 15.4). As figure 15.4 also shows, however, a substantial number of figures (or 27%) are known to have fought with Muhammad prior to their engagement in Syria or Iraq.

These absolute figures, however, do not allow for definitive statements about the relationship between the three subgroups. Hence, figure 15.5 shows the overlap between them. In other words, in it we will find answers to the question: How many figures are characterized in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* as having fought in Syria *and* Iraq? In addition, it is interesting to know how many figures are said to have fought in Syria and with Muhammad and how many in Syria, Iraq, and with Muhammad. The data for the last two points is in part derived from the *Futūḥ al-Shām* and in part, i.e., when Muhammad is concerned, from the *EI*^{2}.

Starting with the third column of figure 15.5, only 1 of the 90 people who are characterized as Syrian and Iraqi fighters is depicted in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* as having fought in Syria and Iraq and is remembered as having participated in raids with Muhammad. This person is Khālid b. al-Walīd. According to the first column, 4 of the 90 people are mentioned as fighting in Syria as well as in Iraq. The difference—in other words, 86 people—are portrayed as having

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[38] See Mourad, al-Azdī 591.

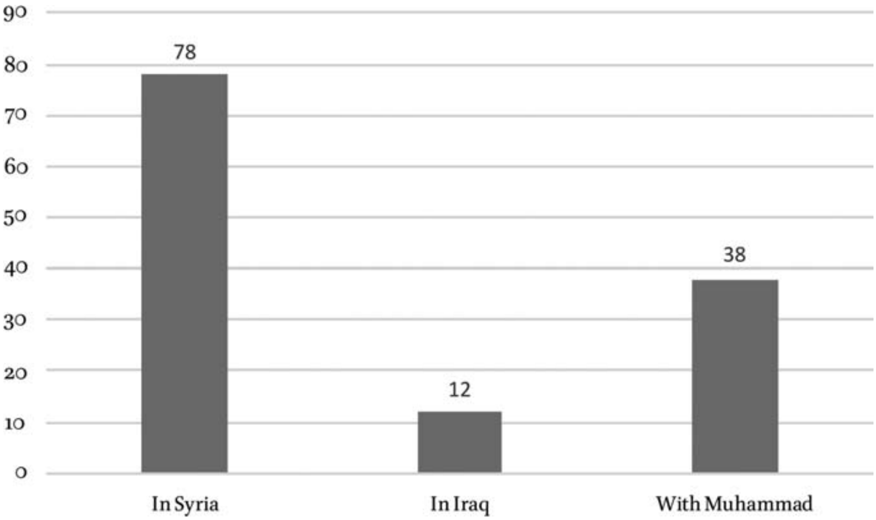

FIGURE 15.4 Figures portrayed as fighters in Syria, in Iraq, and with Muhammad

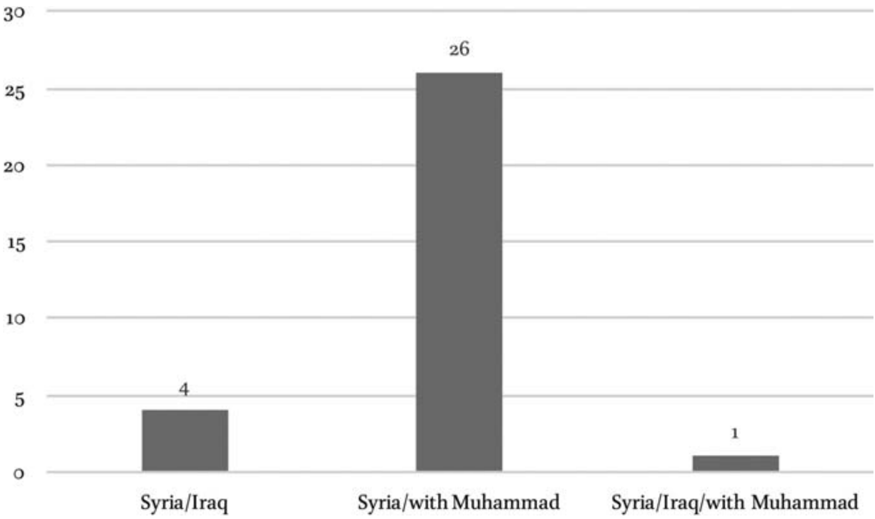

FIGURE 15.5 Figures portrayed as fighters in Syria/Iraq, in Syria/with Muhammad, and in Syria/Iraq/with Muhammad

fought either in Syria or in Iraq (not depicted in figure 15.5). In other words, the *Futūḥ al-Shām* presents the people not as continuously fighting in both regions but as having been deployed in either Syria or Iraq. This division is narrated in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* by mentioning the many tribal groups that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar had dispatched either to Syria or to Iraq.

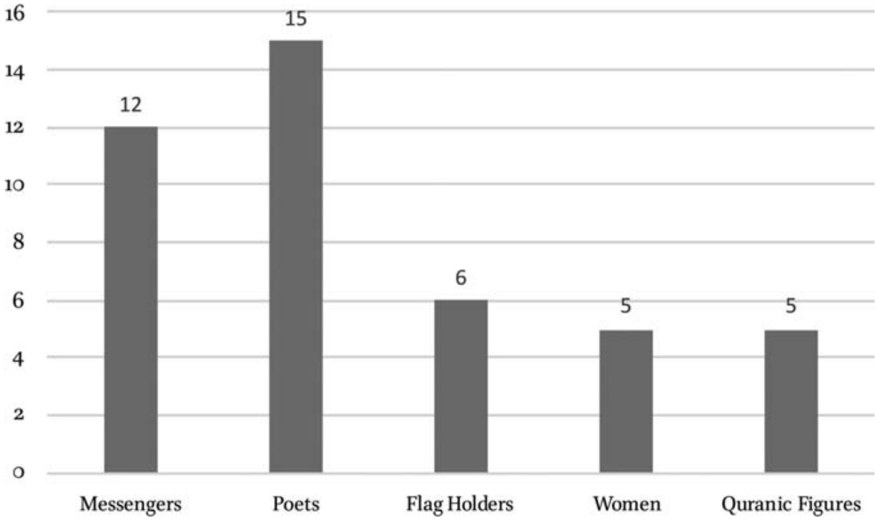

FIGURE 15.6 Figures portrayed as messengers, poets, flag holders, women, or Quranic figures

Another striking feature of figure 15.5 is found in the second column (based on the mixed data from the *Futūḥ al-Shām* and the *EI*^{2}). Of the 78 figures who are said to have fought in Syria, 26 (or 33%) are renowned fighters. In other words, one-third of those depicted in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* as fighting in Syria are known to have previously fought with Muhammad. This is unsurprising, because there is a general perception of continuity between the elites before and after Muhammad's death in other Arabic sources, which is also found in some modern studies. What is more startling, though, is that two-thirds of the figures fighting in Syria, as depicted in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, are not known to have fought before (either with Muhammad or in Iraq). Hence, most of the figures in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are depicted as having been recruited for only the fight in Syria. This then shows that the narrative in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* is composed, to a large degree, of a set of fighting figures who exclusively fought in Syria. Besides, although these fighters are also portrayed in religious terms (as belonging to "the Muslims"), a large majority of them do not have a "fighting connection" to Muhammad.

Apart from fighters, figures in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are also portrayed as messengers, poets, flag holders, women, and Quranic figures, as figure 15.6 shows.

Of the 143 figures, 12 (or 8%) are characterized as messengers delivering letters and oral messages between the various "Muslim" commanders and ʿUmar in Medina and between the emperor Heraclius and the Byzantine units on the ground, while 15 (or 10%) are either called a poet in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* or are

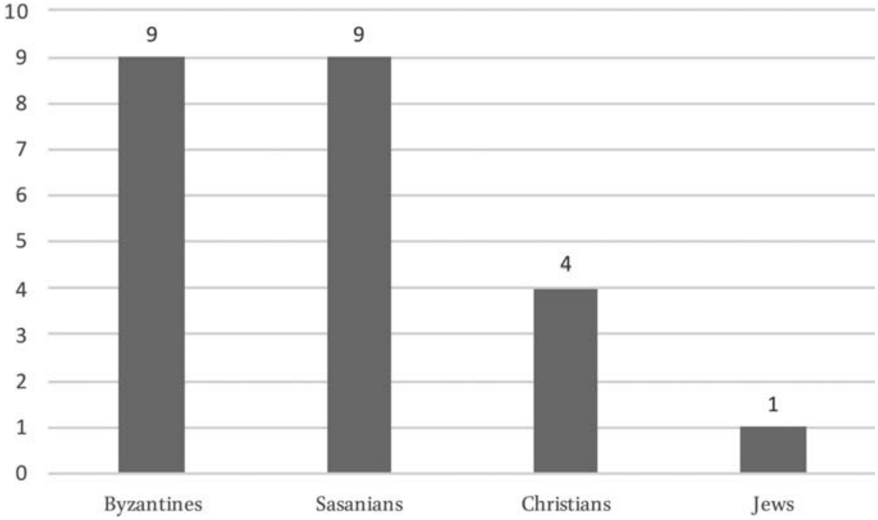

FIGURE 15.7 Figures portrayed as Byzantines, Sasanians, Christians, and Jews

represented as quoting some lines of poetry.[39] Less numerous, but still recognizable, are: (1) figures who are depicted as flag holders during various events, (2) explicitly mentioned women, and (3) a few figures who also feature prominently in the Quran, such as Adam, Moses, or Muhammad. Flag holders may be singled out from the group of "the Muslims," because of their exalted positions on the front lines. Women, in contrast, accompanied their men (sometimes together with children) to Syria. In rare cases, women are also depicted as fighting or rather as pressuring male fighters (with tent poles) to stay on the battlefield. Quranic figures are most likely mentioned due to the quranisized style of the whole narrative.

In addition, some figures in the narrative are depicted as opponents of "the Muslims." Although "the Muslims'" opponents are usually referred to collectively, for example, as "the Byzantines," 9 out of 143 figures (or 6%) in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are specifically mentioned as having fought on the side of "the Byzantines" and the Sasanians respectively,[40] while 4 are said to have been of the Christian and one of the Jewish faith (see figure 15.7). This is not a high ratio of the total mentioned figures, but it still shows that opponents of "the Muslims," as individuals, played a particular role in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative.

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[39] This substantial number of poets was recently introduced, and their poetry discussed, in both a MA thesis and a paper. See Mourad, Poetry and Ṣāyama, *Shiʿr*.

[40] The term Sasanian does not appear in the narrative. Instead, "the people of Persia" (*ahl al-furs*) or "Persians" (*aʿājim*) is used.

Apart from these characterizations, many people are associated with a tribe or a subtribe in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Tribes and subtribes are understood here as social units the members of which define themselves along lines of real or fictitious kinship, share a common name, and adhere to one leader or chief (*malik* or *sayyid*). Tribes are solidarity units that serve to protect their members against aggression posed by others (individuals, neighboring tribes, or states) and establish a shared economy among their members (and sometimes beyond).[41] In the course of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative, 71 tribes and subtribes (*qabāʾil*, s. *qabīla*; or *ḥayy*)[42] are mentioned, either directly or indirectly. What is meant by "directly" here is that tribes are depicted as collective actors without any person being associated with them (e.g., "Zubayd did not withdraw"). In contrast, figures who carry a *nisba* that refers to a particular tribe are mentioned as individual actors (e.g., "Saʿīd b. ʿĀmir b. Ḥudhaym al-Qurashī commanded the left flank"). Hence, in these cases, tribes are mentioned only indirectly. Furthermore, in many cases (e.g., concerning al-Azd) both ways of depiction are used in the narrative (e.g., "al-Azd attacked" and the messenger ʿAmr b. Ṭufayl al-Azdī is introduced).

Before we proceed to (quantitative) details regarding these modes of representation, let us turn to a more general analysis of all 71 tribes, which can be clustered on the basis of data provided in the *EI*^{2} according to the North and South Arabian divide. This geographical approach to systematizing tribes was used by several genealogists (*nassāb*) in the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. However, they never established a comprehensive system that was without contradictions.[43] According to these genealogical constructions, (ideally) all Arab tribes are related through the two brothers ʿAdnān and Qaḥṭān.[44] The tribes who see ʿAdnān as their common ancestor are referred to as *al-ʿArab al-mustaʿriba* (lit. "the arabicized Arabs"), or less precisely North Arabian tribes, while those believed to have descended from Qaḥṭān are called *al-ʿArab al-ʿāriba* (lit. "the pure Arabs"), *ahl al-Yaman* (lit. "the people from Yemen") or, hence, South Arabian tribes.[45] Due to the incoherence of the genealogical sys-

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[41] For a more detailed definition of tribes, see Caskel, *Ǧamharat* 23–24, Donner, Role 80–81 (who adds "some rather distinctive social practices" to this definition), and Orthmann, *Stamm* 202–205. In addition, Orthmann discusses tribes as solidarity units (26–39), their economic variety (137–182), and tribal genealogy (208–217).

[42] According to Caskel, both Arabic terms are used in late antique Arabic poetry with the meaning of tribe or subtribe. See Caskel, *Ǧamharat* 53, n. 4. In al-Azdī's narrative, they are also used in the same sense. For the Arabic terminology of tribes, see Orthmann, *Stamm* 256–266.

[43] On this system in general, see Caskel, *Ǧamharat*.

[44] For evidence of a quatro-polar rather than a bipolar system, see Orthmann, *Stamm* 210.

[45] See ibid., 210–211.

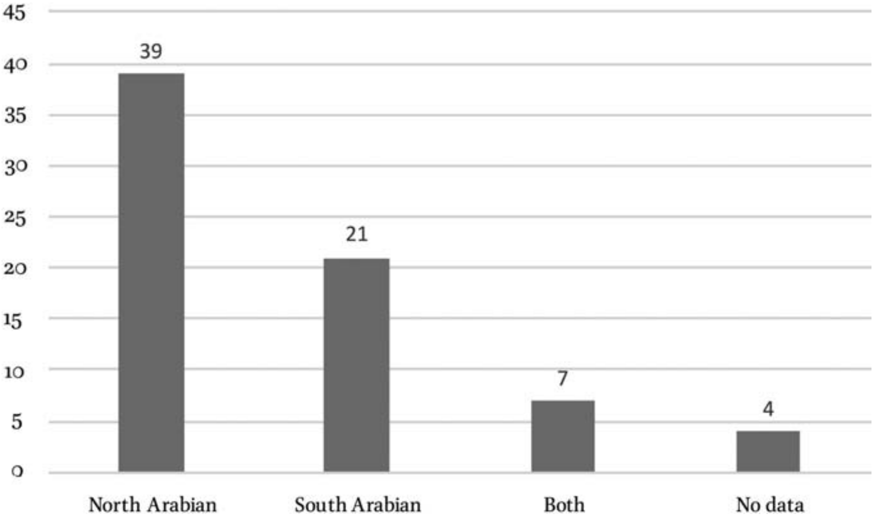

FIGURE 15.8 Classification of tribes as North Arabian, South Arabian, both, or unclear

tem, there are wide discussions among the genealogists about whether a tribe is of North or South Arabian descent. In some cases, a tribe is even associated with both groups, while in other cases a tribe was overlooked—or, at least, the data is missing. Hence, figure 15.8 shows the distribution of North and South Arabian tribes in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* (also including unclear cases).

Of the 71 tribes mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 39 (55%) are classified as North Arabian, while 21 (or 30%) are systematized as South Arabian. A further 11 tribes (or 16%) are impossible to assign to one of the two groups, because they are either associated with both groups or because there is no data available. Figure 15.8 clearly shows a domination of North Arabian tribes, such as Quraysh, throughout the narrative, while South Arabian tribes, like al-Azd, play an important, but not a major, role. However, when focusing on specific narrations of events in the course of which a large number of tribes is mentioned, then this distribution varies. South Arabian tribes, for example, are dominantly named during the Battles of Fiḥl, Ḥimṣ, and al-Yarmūk. During the Battle of al-Yarmūk, in particular, the South Arabian tribe Ḥimyar is said to have provided the majority of fighters and the deeds of those who belong to al-Azd are narrated most prominently (often by transmitters from al-Azd). In contrast, North Arabian tribes form the majority of tribes in the beginning of the narrative during the battles that took place in Iraq, as well as during the coming of tribes to Abū Bakr.

Turning back to the data included in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 50 tribes are directly mentioned in the narrative (that is they are portrayed as collective actors). They

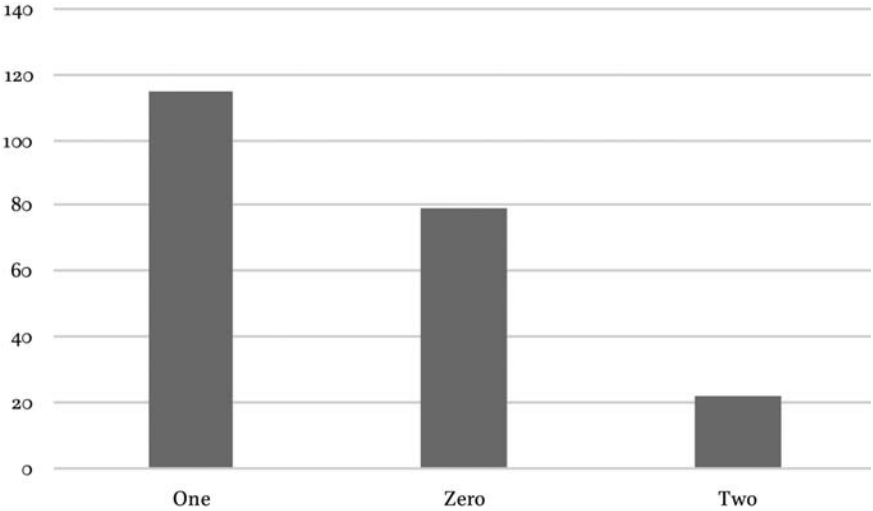

FIGURE 15.9 Association of scholars and figures with one, zero, or two tribes

are: Aḥmas, ʿĀmila, Asad, Aslam, al-Azd, Bajīla, Bakr b. Wāʾil, Banū ʿAbs, Banū ʿĀmir b. Luʾayy, Banū ʿAmr, Banū Buqayla, Banū ʿIjl, Banū Kaʿb, Banū Mashjaʿa, Banū Muḥārib b. Fihr, Banū Numayr, Banū l-Qayn, Banū Sahm, Banū Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, Banū Sulaym, Banū Taghlib, Daws, Ghassān, Ghifār, Ḥadas, Ḥaḍramawt, Hamdān, Ḥimyar, Judhām, Khathʿam, Khawlān, Kināna, Kinda, Lakhm, Madhḥij, Muḍar, Muzayna, al-Namir, Qays, Qudāʿa, Quraysh, Rabīʿa, Tamīm, Ṭayyiʾ, Thaqīf, Thumāla, Yashkur, Zubayd, ʿĀd, and Thamūd. The last two (i.e., ʿĀd and Thamūd) are tribes mentioned in the Quran and are quoted only as such in the narrative. Hence, ʿĀd and Thamūd do not feature as having fought in Syria or Iraq. In contrast, the remaining 48 tribes do. This shows that the representation of North and South Arabian tribes as collective actors is an important narratological feature of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

The issue of tribal representation becomes more complex when the indirect references (i.e., the scholars and figures mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* that are associated with a tribe through their *nisba*s) are analyzed. This is the case because some people are associated with more than one tribe (i.e., a tribe and its subtribe), and because many people are not presented with their complete names (consisting of *kunya*, *ism*, *nasab*, *nisba*, and *laqab*). In the latter case, data for the tribal affiliation had to be added from the *EI*^{2}.

Focusing on the question of how many people are associated with multiple tribes, figure 15.9 provides the answer. Of the 216 persons mentioned by name in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 79 (or 37 %) could not be associated with any tribe due to lack of information in the narrative as well as in the *EI*^{2}. In contrast, 115 people

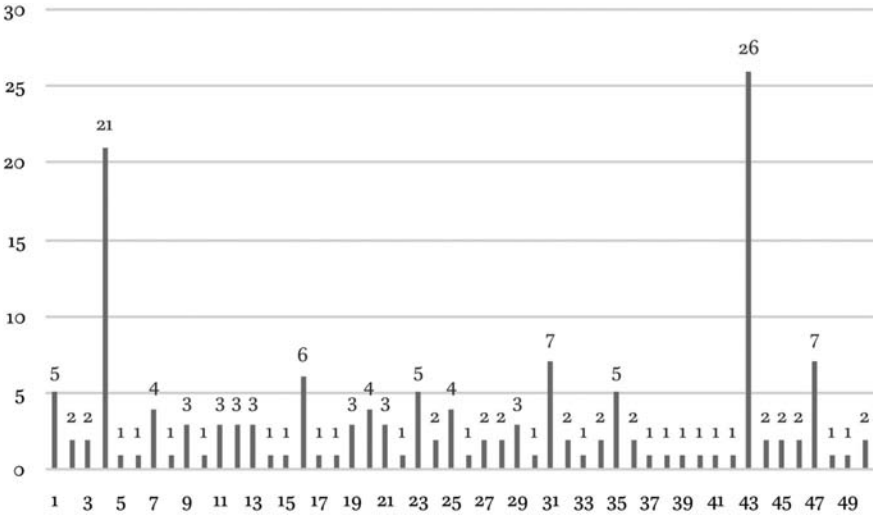

FIGURE 15.10 Affiliation of scholars and figures with tribes
Note: The sum of all columns is 159, because 22 individuals who are associated with two tribes are depicted twice, that is with both their tribal affiliations.

(53 %) are associated with one and 22 (or 10 %) with two tribes. Hence, almost two-thirds of the people mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* have a tribal affiliation. This again shows how important the tribal identification of scholars and figures was in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

Taking this analysis a step further, it is interesting to know the exact distribution of these scholars and figures between the tribes. Hence, figure 15.10 shows the tribal affiliation of 137 persons (115 are associated with one tribe and 22 with two tribes).[46]

Unfortunately, the names of the tribes that people are associated with, cannot be included in the figure for technical reasons, but are expressed in consecutive numbers (1 to 50) below.

> (1) ʿAbd Shams, (2) ʿAdī b. Kaʿb, (3) Asad, (4) al-Azd, (5) Bajīla, (6) Bakr b. Wāʾil, (7) Banū ʿAbs, (8) Banū l-Qayn, (9) Banū ʿĀmir b. Luʾayy, (10) Banū Ḥanīfa, (11) Banū Hāshim, (12) Banū ʿIjl, (13) Banū Layth, (14) Banū Mālik, (15) Banū Numayr, (16) Banū Sahm, (17) Banū Shaʿb, (18) Banū Shaybān, (19) Banū Sulaym, (20) Banū Zuhra, (21) Daws, (22) Fazāra, (23)

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[46] There is no individual associated with three tribes. Of course, the 79 individuals that cannot be associated with a tribe are not taken into consideration in the following remarks.

> Banū Muḥārib b. Fihr, (24) Ghassān, (25) Hamdān, (26) Ḥimyar, (27) Jumaḥ, (28) Kalb, (29) Khathʿam, (30) Khawlān, (31) Khazraj, (32) Khuzāʿa, (33) Kināna, (34) Kinda, (35) Makhzūm, (36) Banū Mashjaʿa, (37) Mazn, (38) Murād, (39) Muzayna, (40) Nakhaʿ, (41) al-Namir, (42) Qays, (43) Quraysh, (44) Tamīm, (45) Tanūkh, (46) Taym, (47) Ṭayyiʾ, (48) Thumāla, (49) ʿUdhra, (50) Zubayd.

Taking a close look at figure 15.10, a wide array of tribes is mentioned, totaling 50 tribes.[47] In other words, 137 (out of 216) individuals mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are associated with 50 tribes (out of a total number of 71 tribes). However, of the 50 tribes, more than three-quarters (39 tribes or 78 %) are associated with less than 3 persons. More precisely, 20 tribes (or 40 %) are associated with one person only, 12 tribes (or 24 %) are associated with two, and 7 tribes (or 14 %) with three persons.

For the analysis of tribal clustering in the narrative of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the remaining 11 tribes (or 22 %) that are associated with more than three people is of particular interest. Therefore, figure 15.11 shows an extraction of figure 15.10, listing only those tribes that are associated with more than three persons.

Looking at figure 15.11, al-Azd and Quraysh immediately catch one's eye. Twenty-one (or 15 %) of the 137 people associated with a tribe in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are related to al-Azd, while 26 of 137 (or 19 %) are associated with Quraysh. The dominance of al-Azd in the narrative has already been observed in various studies, but not that of Quraysh. In fact, scholars and figures from Quraysh are represented to a higher degree than those from al-Azd. Although the difference between Quraysh and al-Azd is not as high as the ratio between North and South Arabian tribes,[48] this figure supports the finding that North Arabian tribes, to which Quraysh belongs, are more often mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* than South Arabian tribes, such as al-Azd. The domination of Quraysh can be observed not only in absolute numbers but also from the mentioning of subtribes in figure 15.11. ʿAbd Shams, Banū Sahm, Banū Zuhra, Banū Muḥārib b. Fihr, and Makhzūm, which are listed beside Quraysh, are in fact the latter's subtribes.

According to figure 15.11, 25 people (or 18 %) can be associated with these five subtribes, 18 of which are already included in the 26 people listed under

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[47] The sources for the 50 tribes that scholars and figures are associated with are the following: 28 tribes (or 56 %) are deduced from *nisba*s of persons in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, while the data for the remaining 22 tribal affiliations (or 44 %) is taken from the *EI*^{2}.

[48] The ratio between North and South Arabian tribes, as mentioned above, was 55 % to 30 %.

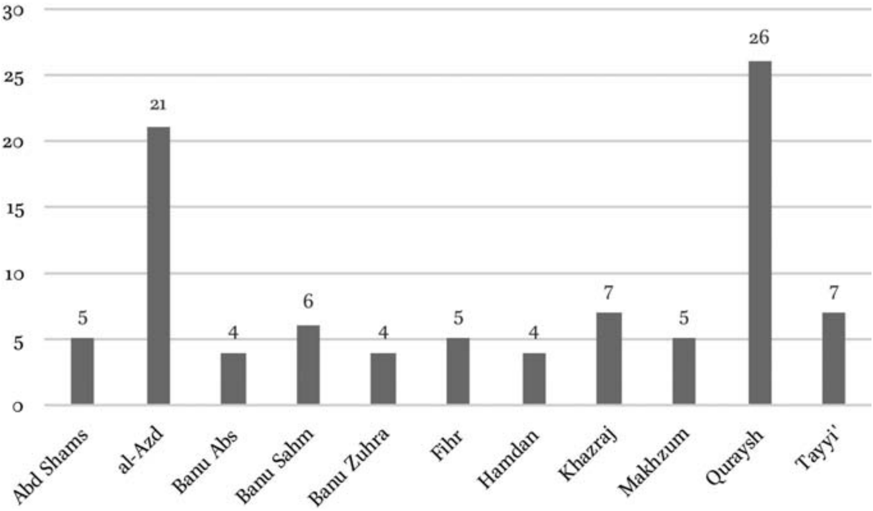

FIGURE 15.11 Affiliation of more than three scholars and figures with tribes

Quraysh, because these individuals were associated with the tribe and its subtribe at the same time. In contrast, none of the subtribes of al-Azd are associated with more than 3 individuals; hence, none of al-Azd's subtribes appear in figure 15.11.

Furthermore, when counting all individuals that are associated with Quraysh and its subtribes and with al-Azd and its subtribes, a similar point can be made. On the one hand, there are 49 individuals (or 23% of all persons mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*) who can be associated with Quraysh or its subtribes ʿAbd Shams, ʿAdī b. Kaʿb, Banū ʿĀmir, Banū Hāshim, Banū Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, Banū Sahm, Banū Zuhra, Banū Muḥārib b. Fihr, Makhzūm, Jumaḥ, and Taym. On the other hand, 21 individuals (or 10%) can be associated with al-Azd or its subtribes Banū Buqayla, Daws, and Thumāla. This result, then, qualifies previous scholarship that often observed a bias in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative toward South Arabian tribes or, more precisely, toward al-Azd. The opposite is the case: North Arabian tribes, in particular, Quraysh and its subtribes, dominate the set of scholars and figures mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

This dominance, and the close relationship between scholars and figures from Quraysh and its subtribes, is no coincidence. Either a majority of scholars from these tribes transmitted particular *akhbār* that were meaningful to them, in which Quraysh and other North Arabian tribes feature most prominently, or more *akhbār* were fictionalized, preserved, and transmitted in which North Arabian tribes are mentioned than those in which South Arabian tribes are depicted.

Returning to figure 15.11, besides al-Azd, Quraysh, and its subtribes, we also discover that people from Khazraj (that is from Medina) and Ṭayyi' (that is from Syria) are represented by seven individuals (or 3 %) each. This representation is above average and also calls for an explanation. I assume, first, that Khazraj features prominently, because many scholars and figures in the narrative are associated with the center of the expansionists' movement (i.e., Medina), one way or another. This assumption is supported by the subgroup of persons that are explicitly called "al-Anṣārī" ("the Supporters" [of Muhammad]): eight scholars and figures (or 4 % of the all people) carry this *nisba* in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Second, Ṭayyi' is most likely represented to such a high degree because the members of Ṭayyi' that are mentioned in the narrative all hail from Syria. In other words, there is a relationship between the areas where Ṭayyi' settled and to where the expansion was directed.

After having discussed the 50 (out of 71) tribes that are directly mentioned by being presented as collective actors separately from the 50 (out of 71) tribes mentioned only indirectly in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the question of the intersection between both groups arises. This overlap is 28 tribes (39 %).[49] In other words, these 28 tribes show up as collective actors in the narrative, while their *nisba*s are also used to present individual figures (and scholars) in the work. Hence, these are the tribes that are most prominently presented in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*.[50] Assessing these 28 tribes for their North or South Arabian association, the well-known result shows up: North Arabian tribes dominate the narrative, numbering 16 (out of 28; 57 %). In contrast, 10 (out of 28) tribes (or 36 %) are South Arabian tribes, while the remaining two are unclear. If the overlap is 28 tribes, then 22 tribes are presented only as collective actors, while another 22 tribes are associated with particular persons in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, but do not occur as independent collective actors.

A final point regarding tribes in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* can be made: Apart from the examples already given, tribes and their related subtribes can be grouped into genealogical clusters. This is another prominent feature of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative. Therein, we find information about which tribe was a subtribe of the other. Going over the 71 tribes that are included in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, the patterns below can be observed. Since the *Futūḥ al-Shām* does not include a coherent system of all 71 tribes, I added missing pieces of information from the *EI*^{2} in order to get an image that is almost complete:

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[49] These tribes are: Asad, al-Azd, Bajīla, Bakr b. Wā'il, Banū ʿAbs, Banū ʿĀmir b. Lu'ayy, Banū ʿIjl, Banū Mashjaʿa, Banū Numayr, Banū l-Qayn, Banū Sahm, Banū Sulaym, Daws, Ghassān, Hamdān, Ḥimyar, Khathʿam, Khawlān, Kināna, Kinda, Muzayna, al-Namir, Qays, Quraysh, Tamīm, Ṭayyi', Thumāla, and Zubayd.

[50] It is not astonishing that 6 of the 11 tribes associated with more than three scholars and figures (see figure 15.11) are included in the 28 most often quoted tribes.

(1) ʿĀmila, Lakhm, and Judhām (with its subtribe Ḥadas) form a tribal cluster;
(2) al-Azd, with its subtribes Daws, Thumāla, and Banū Buqayla, forms another one.

Further clusters are:

(1) Ḥimyar, Madhḥij (with its subtribes Murād and Nakhaʿ); and,
(2) Kinda and Ḥaḍramawt.

These four clusters comprise South Arabian tribes.

The five clusters of North Arabian tribes are:

(1) Quraysh and its subtribes ʿAbd Shams, ʿAdī b. Kaʿb, Banū ʿĀmir b. Luʾayy, Banū Hāshim, Banū Muḥārib b. Fihr, Banū Saḥm, Banū Saʿīd, Banū Zuhra, Jumaḥ, Makhzūm, and Taym;
(2) Khathʿam (with its subtribe Banū ʿAmr) and Bajīla (with its subtribe Aḥmas);
(3) Rabīʿa, Muḍar, Muzayna, Qays (Aylān) (with its subtribes Banū Sulaym, Thaqīf, and Banū ʿAbs [with its subtribe Fazāra]), Bakr b. Wāʾil (with its subtribes Banū Ḥanīfa, Banū ʿIjl, Banū Shaybān, and Yashkur), Banū Taghlib, Banū Kaʿb, and al-Namir;
(4) Ḥamdān and Banū Shaʿb; and,
(5) Kināna (with its subtribe Ghifār), Banū Layth, and Banū Mālik.

Two further clusters are of a mixed nature (that is the tribes cannot definitively be ascribed as either South or North Arabian):

(1) Qudāʿa (with its subtribe Kalb), Banū l-Qayn, Tanūkh, and Khawlān (with its subtribes Aslam, Banū Mashjaʿa, and ʿUdhra); and,
(2) Asad and Banū Numayr.

Furthermore, there are the two Quranic tribes

(1) ʿĀd and Thamūd.

Finally, some tribes are not grouped together, such as Ghassān, Khuzāʿa, and Tamīm, while regarding Khazraj, Mazn, Ṭayyiʾ, and Zubayd no information is available about subtribes in the sources used.

Although present in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative, neither these clusters nor the North and South Arabian divide are used to present the tribes as antagonistic actors. In particular, the conflicts between Qays and Yaman that are present in first/seventh-second/eighth-century historiography are completely missing in the narrative. Neither Abū Bakr nor ʿUmar preferred one tribal unit or cluster over the others; there is no mention of playing a tribe off against another; and no tribal alliances (*ḥilf*) were established at the expense of other tribes. Instead, a harmonious image is drawn of equal actors united through bonds of belonging to "the Arabs" and even more so of being part of "the Muslims," which represent two further collective actors in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative. Apart from them, there are also "the Byzantines," "the Polytheists," "the Christians," and "the Israelites," each of which will be presented in the remaining part of this study.

"Arabs" is a designation that is used often in the narrative. In some places, it describes the entirety of the Arab tribes who are related to each other through family ties, in other words, according to the patterns of the North-South divide and according to tribe-subtribe clusters, as shown above.[51] In addition, there is a longer passage in which Khālid b. al-Walīd describes "the Arabs" in a speech addressing a Byzantine commander:

> Verily, we, the Arabs, were one of these communities whom God—praise be to Him—caused to lodge in a place on earth where there are no running rivers and where there exists only meagre vegetation. Most of our lands are wastelands and deserts. Therefore, we were the owners of stone- and loam-made houses, ewes and camels, straitened livelihood and persistently unceasing distress. Thus, we were severing the ties of our kinship and killing our children for fear of destitution. The strong among us were devouring the weak and so were our majority devouring our minority. No tribe of ours could feel safe with another tribe except for four months of the year. We were worshipping, other than God, deities and idols which we sculpted from stones with our own hands, which we selected with our own eyes, which neither harm nor benefit and to which we are prostrating.[52]

According to this self-description by Khālid, "the Arabs" are portrayed as living in a barren country, pasturing sheep and camels, and consisting of a tribal society driven by violence and by polytheistic (but inefficient) beliefs. This description is to some extent topological and therefore reflects the literary construction of the term "Arab" as used in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. From historical sources, we know that the term (as preserved in various languages) denoted groups that lived in the Nile Delta, southern Palestine, the Sinai Peninsula, or in Ḥawrān, the Bekaa Valley, central Mesopotamia, and Southern Arabia in antiquity and late antiquity. Hence, we can be sure that Arabs did not live only in the Arabian Peninsula or in barren countries during that period. In addition, some of the groups that our sources associate with Arabs lived in cities, some on fertile oases, and others in provisional camps. Some of them tilled fertile lands, some were nomads herding animals, and some made their living from seminomadic agriculture and commerce. In other words, Arabs should not be regarded as only desert dwellers or Bedouins. Furthermore, although the social organization of these groups varied, most of them constructed their social bonds as tribes. In late antique Arabic poetry and in the Quranic text, "Arabs" refers to those groups that shared variants of the same Northern Arabic idiom. However, it is unclear to what extent these groups overlap with those characterized by their social organization or their means of living.[53]

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[51] See al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 81, where Abū Bakr is portrayed as having said that "the Arabs are children of one mother and one father." In addition, individual figures call themselves "brothers." See, e.g., ibid., 86, 100, 106, 211.

[52] See al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 307. The translated passages are taken from the English translation prepared by Hamada Hassanein and myself.

In other words, the term "Arabs" is used in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* to describe an entire community (of people living together in tribes), but, as the following examples show, also to denote only parts of it. For instance, there is the subgroup of "Arabs" that came to Abū Bakr from Yemen in order to fight in Syria, or those "Arabs" that reneged their allegiance to the *umma* and were forced back to religion and tax duties by Abū Bakr and his troops in the so-called "Wars of Apostasy." Another subgroup is "the Arabs in Syria." This group falls into three subcategories that are elucidated in the following passage from the *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Interestingly, this passage is narrated from "the Byzantines'" perspective:

> The Arabs in Syria, who were bound to obey Caesar [i.e., Heraclius and "the Byzantines"], fell into three categories: One category included those who were embracing the Arabs' religion and were siding with them [i.e., "the Muslims" from Medina]. Another category included Christians who had determination for Christianity and were siding with us ["the Byzantines"]. The third category included Christians who did not have such determination for Christianity and who thus said: "We hate to fight the adherents of our religion and we hate to support the non-Arabs [i.e., "the Byzantines"] against our people [i.e., "the Arabs" from Medina]."[54]

According to this description, there are, on the one hand, those "Arabs" that adhered to the new faith advocated by Muhammad and attacked the Byzantine territory and its Christian inhabitants. On the other, the term "Arabs" designates fighters who supported the Byzantine army and embraced Christianity. Of most interest in our context, however, is the third subgroup of "the Arabs in Syria":

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[53] For Arabs, see Grohmann et al., al-ʿArab; Retsö, Arabs (historical); and Eickelmann, Arabs (anthropology).

[54] See al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 266.

Although they are described as Christians, they did not support "the Byzantines," who are clearly delineated as "non-Arabs." At the same time, this group also did not fight on the side of "the Arabs" from Medina, who are characterized as belonging to "the Arabs in Syria," as part of the same family ("our people"). Hence, this third group, although related to both fighting parties, remains neutral and does not engage in fighting. In general, all "Arabs in Syria" seem to be contrasted with other groups in Syria that are either local inhabitants of non-Arab origin or Byzantine rulers or soldiers.

Apart from referring to a community or several subgroups, individual figures are also singled out as "the Arabs'" horsemen, while "Arab" horses are also mentioned twice.[55]

Beside "the Arabs," the narrative often mentions "the Muslims" as collective actors. "The Muslims" (*al-muslimūn*; lit. "those who submitted themselves to [the one God]"), who are sometimes also called "the people" (*al-qawm*, *al-nās*), is a designation that is derived from the Quran. Hence, in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* it is used to describe the people to whom Muhammad was sent as a prophet, who followed him, who lived in Medina, whom Abū Bakr dispatched to Syria and Iraq, and who engaged in fighting there. "The Muslims" are also differentiated by their subgroups. Sometimes, for example, military subunits are mentioned, for example, "the Muslims'" right or left flank, "the Muslims'" cavalry or infantry, and so forth. Additionally, Muslim fighters, who are depicted as using the battle cry "God is great(er)!" (*Allāhu akbar*), are divided into "common Muslims" and "the Muslims' chiefs (*raʾīs*)" (or masters [*sayyid*]), as well as into Muslim men and, as was shown above, Muslim women. At the beginning of the narrative (in the context of Abū Bakr's fight against seceding tribes), there is a differentiation between "new" and "old" Muslims,[56] probably referring to the Muhājirūn (Emigrants) and the Anṣār (Supporters). These terms characterize two further subgroups of "the Muslims," the first being the earliest adherents of Muhammad in Mecca, who emigrated to Yathrib and are said in the narrative to have regularly been consulted by Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and to have bid farewell to the leaving commanders together with Abū Bakr. The latter group refers to Muhammad's supporters in Yathrib/Medina, who are usually described as belonging to the Arab tribes of al-Khazraj and al-Aws (the latter is not mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*). The abovementioned eight persons who carry the *nisba* "al-Anṣārī" are singled out as belonging to this subgroup.

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[55] In contrast, "the non-Arabs" (*al-ʿajam*) is used only three times in the narrative. The term usually describes people whose way of speaking Arabic is incomprehensible or incorrect, often referring to Persians. In al-Azdī's narrative, however, *ʿajam* is used to designate local inhabitants of Syria, for example, in the passage just discussed or in a speech delivered by Abū Sufyān before the Battle of al-Yarmūk in which he says that the Muslims were "in the non-Arabs' abode (*dār al-ʿajam*)." When Persians are meant, the plural *aʿājim* or the expression *ahl al-furs* (lit. "the people of Persia") is used.

[56] See al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 78.

A final subgroup of "the Muslims" has to be mentioned here. It is "the ten to whom Paradise was promised" (*al-ʿashara al-mubashshara*). This expression is used once in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, when Saʿīd b. Zayd is explicitly said to have belonged to this group.[57] The concept of "the ten" goes back to several prophetic traditions in which various lists of ten of the most famous Muslims are preserved. According to Wensinck, these lists vary to some extent: some include Muhammad, while others do not, but substitute him with Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ.[58] Although nowhere in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* is a full list of ten names provided, those figures, who—according to Wensinck—are usually mentioned as part of these lists, show up in the course of the narrative. Apart from Saʿīd b. Zayd, the remaining nine figures are Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (the four political-religious leaders who were recognized as *rāshidūn* or "rightly-guiding" from the third/ninth century onward), Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbayd Allāh, Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, and Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that "the ten to whom Paradise was promised" are implicitly mentioned as a subgroup of "the Muslims" in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* in a version in which Muhammad is substituted with Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ.

A last observation regarding "the Muslims" should be made: "The Muslims" are usually distinguished from the Arab tribes in the narrative due to the oft-occurring contrast between "the Arabs" on the one side, and "the Emigrants" and "the Supporters" on the other. In short, it seems to me that the whole narrative in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* includes two principal perspectives: a religious one, which is reflected in Quranic designations, like "the Muslims," and a tribal one, which is represented by the many tribes and persons associated with a tribe.

Opposing "the Muslims" in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are "the Byzantines" (*al-rūm*) or simply "the people" (*al-qawm*). Since "the people" is also sometimes used for "the Muslims," referential ambiguities occur in the narrative. "The Byzantines," who are also treated as a collective actor, are described as being as strong as iron and as solid as a cornerstone and as advancing on the Muslims in large numbers. Sometimes, figures are provided for these large numbers; for example, five thousand of the Byzantine horsemen fought at al-Dāthina, between thirty and forty thousand soldiers were present at Fiḥl, or more than one hundred thousand in the Battle of al-Yarmūk. In other instances, similes are used; for example, Byzantines are as numerous as the pebbles at the beach or the grains of dust; they come like the night or in a flood as if they were black grasshoppers. In addition, "the Byzantines" are supported by "the [Christian] Arabs in Syria," by other local people of Greater Syria (e.g., from Damascus), and by Christian dignitaries (such as bishops, priests, and monks). Besides fighting in groups or in duels against "the Muslims," some individual Byzantine figures negotiated peace-making and discussed religious issues with some "Muslim" representatives. However, in the eyes of some of their Syrian subjects, "the Byzantines" were corrupt, seized goods, and raped innocent women. Socially, "the Byzantines" fall into the following subcategories: their emperor (*qayṣar*), Heraclius; their noblemen, who are also called patricians (*baṭāriqa*, s. *biṭrīq*); their grand men (*ʿuẓamāʾ*, s. *ʿaẓīm*) or sovereigns (*mulūk*, s. *malik*); some named Byzantine commanders, such as al-Durunjār, Wardān, Bāhān, or Ibn Qanāṭir; and individual Byzantine soldiers, who are rarely named (except for one who is called Jirja [George?]). Hence, in contrast to the social uniformity of "the Muslims," "the Byzantines" show a strong hierarchy. Also, their army is depicted in a more organized way than "the Muslims": It is said to have had an infantry consisting of swordsmen and bowmen, several cavalry units, and a navy. In addition, an Armenian unit commanded by Jirjīs is also mentioned. As for "the Byzantines'" clothing, it is said that a Byzantine fighter is dressed in Persian finery, while others wear white clothes that look like silver plates. This topological representation supposedly stresses "the Byzantines'" wealth and power.

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[57] See ibid., 175.

[58] For "the ten to whom Paradise was promised," see Wensinck, al-ʿAshara.

In the beginning of the narrative, "the Byzantines" are twice called Banū l-Aṣfar (lit. "the sons [or children] of al-Aṣfar" or "the sons [or children] of the Yellow or Red One"). This name is structurally similar to the names of several Arab tribes mentioned above. Hence, it could also be translated as "the al-Aṣfar tribe" and thus fits the general tribal notion of the whole narrative. However, not only is the exact meaning unclear, but so is the origin of the term. Some Muslim genealogists, in addition to the *adīb* al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956), regard al-Aṣfar as the grandson of the biblical figure of Esau and as the father of Rūmīl, who is seen as the ancestor of the Greeks (*rūm*). In contrast, De Sacy argues that Banū l-Aṣfar is an Arabic translation of the Hebrew *edom* (lit. "red"), which was used by Jewish scholars to designate the Roman emperors Valerian and Titus and, by extension, the whole Flavian family. Von Erdmann provides a passage from Bar Hebraeus's *Tārīkh* for the use of *aṣfar* as a translation of *edom*, but then brings forward some arguments against De Sacy's thesis. In his view, which somehow corresponds to De Sacy's, again, *aṣfar* is a translation of the Latin word *flavus* (lit. "yellow"), which was introduced by some Arabs to designate primarily the Roman Flavian dynasty. Later, this expression was extended to all descendants of this dynasty, including the Byzantine emperors. Raf Praet, a graduate student from Ghent University, informed me that *aṣfar* might be understood as "pale" and might also refer to Constantius Chlorus (Constantius the Pale, d. 306), who was the father of Constantine the Great and founder of the Constantian dynasty. Consequently, Banū l-Aṣfar refers to the descendants of Constantius (i.e., only to the Byzantine emperors).[59]

Parallel to the tribal vs. religious dichotomy of "the Arabs" vs. "the Muslims," "the Byzantines" are also depicted along religious lines when they are called by the Quranic term "the Polytheists" (*al-mushrikūn*, lit. "those associating [other deities] with God") or when they are referred to as "the Christians." "The Polytheists" is often used in a military context in which the Quranic concept of fighting for the cause of God (*jihād*) is explicitly mentioned or invoked. For example, "the Muslims" are said to have fought "the Polytheists" during the Battles of Ajnādayn and al-Yarmūk and the conquests of Damascus, Fiḥl, and Ḥimṣ. In these cases, "the Polytheists" most likely also included, apart from "the Byzantines," native Christian or pagan inhabitants of Syria (and Iraq). However, this social distinction is never made explicit in the narrative.[60]

In one place, during a theological dispute between Muʿādh b. Jabal and some Byzantine officials, Muʿādh implicitly accuses "the Byzantines" of adhering to polytheism when distinguishing his, and "the Muslims,'" religious practices from those of "the Byzantines":

> We [Muʿādh and "the Muslims"] do not say, either, that he is one of two or one of three, that God has a son or that He has a spouse or a child, or that there are other gods associated with Him. There are no other deities but He; "He is far above what they say".[61]
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> Q 17:43

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[59] For Banū l-Aṣfar, see Goldziher, Aṣfar; de Sacy, Lettre; von Erdmann, Ueber; D.[ie] Red.[aktion], Nachträge; Fl.[eischer], Zwei Beilagen; Fierro, al-Aṣfar.

[60] In the rare cases when the native inhabitants of Syria are mentioned in the narrative, they are called "*anbāṭ al-Shām*" (lit. "the Nabateans of Syria"). According to Fischer, this term has to be understood as "common people, peasants" and refers to a group of Aramaic-speaking inhabitants of Syria who were known as soil-tillers and hired workers in the sixth century. In the narrative, the native inhabitants of Syria are said to have worked as spies and foot-messengers for "the Muslim" troops, bringing news about "the Byzantines'" activities, delivering letters between the commanders, but not as supporters of "the Byzantines." Hence, they are depicted similarly to the Samaritans in other sources. For the *anbāṭ al-Shām*, see Graf and Fahd, Nabaṭ; and Fischer, Redakteurglossen 450–451; for the Samaritans, see Pummer, Foot-soldiers.

[61] See al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 208.

In this context (and, in fact, throughout the whole narrative), “the Polytheists” are those who claim that God has a child (e.g., Jesus), or that He is one of three (i.e., those who follow a Trinitarian theology). Hence, parallel to the Quranic text (and most probably inspired by it), “the Polytheists” are understood in the narrative as Trinitarian Christians and as pagan, pre-Muslim Arabs who worshiped idols.

In the initial sense, the term was applied to “the Byzantines,” who were also described as a subgroup of “the Christians.” “The Christians” is yet another Quranic term: *al-naṣārā* (s. *al-naṣrānī*). Christian communities in seventh-century Syria and Iraq fell mainly into three confessions: Greek-speaking Orthodox, following their patriarch in Constantinople and the faith of the Byzantine emperor (so-called Melkite Christians); western Syriac Miaphysites (previously known as Jacobites), following their patriarch in Antioch; and eastern Syriac Christians (previously known as Nestorians), following their Catholicos at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In the *Futūḥ al-Shām*, however, these three Christian denominations are not distinguished from one another; instead “the Christians” are presented as a collective unit. Besides being associated with “the Byzantines,” more often “the Christians” are said to be “Arabs” and to have supported the Byzantines in Syria. Hence, “the Arab Christians” fought with them at Ajnādayn, Fiḥl, and al-Yarmūk and supported them in Damascus and Caesarea. Of the four Christians mentioned above in figure 15.7, three supported “the Byzantines” as fighters, spies, or messengers. One of the “Christian Arab” groups in Syria, however, is said to have abstained from helping the Byzantines against their fellow (Muslim) Arabs, as was also shown above. Other “Christian Arabs” are even depicted as spies and messengers for “the Muslims,” while, finally, several individual Christian figures are said to have converted to “the Muslims’ ” faith.

Regarding “the Israelites” as collective actor, again the Quranic designation of the Jewish people, Banū Isrāʾīl (lit. “the sons [or children] of [Jacob] Israel”), is used in the narrative. This term appears only twice: once in a speech by the only Jew mentioned by name, Kaʿb b. al-Ḥabr (see above, figure 15.7), referring to “the scripture of God” in which it is written that Syria as a region was inhabited by “the Israelites”;[62] and a second time in a speech by ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, who compared the plague of ʿAmwās to the divine punishments God is said to have inflicted on the Israelites when they were in Egypt.[63]

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[62] See ibid., 373.

[63] See ibid., 381.

3 Conclusions

The quantitative analysis of all scholars, figures, and groups of individuals included in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* has produced a number of interesting results: Of the 216 persons mentioned by name, 60 % are literary figures, while 34 % function as scholars transmitting individual *akhbār* or the whole manuscript. Among the latter, Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafī (d. 576/1180) and Abū Isḥāq al-Ḥabbāl (d. 482/1089) have to be mentioned in particular. On the one hand, al-Silafī noted in his *Mashyakha* work that he had heard the "fifth and sixth part of Abū Ismāʿīl Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Azdī al-Baṣrī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* in a session that was connected [by transmission] to the author."[64] He then read the narrative to several of his disciples whom we know by name from the extant *Futūḥ al-Shām* manuscripts. On the other hand, Abū Isḥāq al-Ḥabbāl is mentioned as the common transmitter in the *riwāya*s of all manuscripts, while in one chain in particular it is said that he had a written text at hand. Hence, these two points indicate that a fixed text of the work already existed during al-Ḥabbāl's lifetime (prior to the first Crusade), and that both scholars used the text for their *majālis* in which, among others, also historical texts were read, studied, and transmitted.[65]

Of the 216 scholars and figures, 77 % are well known, while 17 % of the names only appear in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* and are, hence, not mentioned in other sources. Regarding the scholars, their largest subgroup (19 %) is associated with Iraq in the narrative, whereas other regions are represented to a very limited extent.

However, geographical association of scholars does not play as important a role in the narrative as their tribal affiliation. Of all persons mentioned therein, 63 % are associated with one or two tribes (while 37 % are not affiliated to any tribe). This is a strong first indicator for the tribal notion of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

Regarding the individual figures included in the work's narrative, 63 % of them are presented as fighters in Syria or Iraq, with only a very small number of persons (that is four) as fighting in both regions. Rather, 67 % of all figures are portrayed as being active only in Syria (that is they are presented as new recruits for a new cause). However, 33 % of all figures can—with the help of the *EI*^{2}—be identified as having fought with Muhammad. This shows that one-third of the fighters presented in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* are reported to have previous military experience. Furthermore, the following subgroups of figures can be recognized in the narrative: 8–10 % of all figures are portrayed as messengers, poets, flag holders, women, and Quranic figures, while 6% are presented as individual Byzantine and Sasanian fighters and as "the Muslims'" opponents.

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[64] See al-Adzī, *Futūḥ al-Shām* 17, n. 5.

[65] For a detailed discussion of the manuscripts' transmission history, see Scheiner, *Past*, ch. 4.

Turning to the groups mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative, 71 tribes and subtribes and 6 further collective actors can be found therein. Of the 71 tribes that are presented in genealogical clusters of tribes and related subtribes, 55% are North Arabian, while 30% are South Arabian tribes. Hence, North Arabian tribes, in particular Quraysh, are most frequently mentioned in the narrative. A relatively high number of Quraysh's subtribes (or 11) feature therein the highest number of individual persons are affiliated with Quraysh (that is 49), and the tribe frequently appears in the narrative, both directly and indirectly. The up-to-now neglected dominant role that Quraysh plays in the narrative is one of the major new findings of this study. That al-Azd features prominently among South Arabian tribes was already discussed in secondary literature. Furthermore, of the 71 tribes, 11 (or 22%) are associated with more than three persons, which, hence, makes them the most-often represented tribes when persons are concerned. To this group belong Quraysh with several subtribes and al-Azd, but also Khazraj and Ṭayyi'. While 50 of the 71 tribes can be deduced from the narrative on the basis of individuals (that is through the persons' *nisba*s), the same number of tribes are also directly mentioned as collective authors. There is an overlap between both groups consisting of 28 tribes (or 39%) of all tribes mentioned.

Regarding the remaining six non-tribal groups, "the Arabs" are depicted on the level of communities, subgroups, and individuals. They are literarily constructed as having been poor and violent, as well as adhering to a polytheistic belief. In addition, most of them are fighters attacking Syria and Iraq, but some "Christian Arabs in Syria" help "the Byzantines" against them. All "Arabs" are also represented as a big family, which overlaps with the presentation of the tribal genealogical clusters that go back to the two brothers, ʿAdnān and Qaḥṭān. This presentation according to blood-relationship can be interpreted as an ethnic notion of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative.

The religious notion of the narrative is even more dominant. It is visible in the use of several Quranic terms that describe some collective actors. For example, the group of "the Muslims" is defined by adherence to Muhammad's teachings, including a strong belief in monotheism. "The Muslims" are divided militarily, according to army units, and religiously: in addition to the Muhājirūn (Emigrants) and the Anṣār (Supporters), "the ten to whom Paradise was promised" (*al-ʿashara al-mubashshara*) are mentioned in the narrative. Furthermore, "the Israelites" and "the Christians" are presented in line with the Quran. While the first are mentioned only twice in biblical references, the latter are described as polytheistic (more precisely as Trinitarian) with the help of Quranic concepts and not by mentioning major Christian denominations. "The Christians" are in general presented as supporting "the Byzantines." However, some "Christian Arabs in Syria" abstained from that, while some individual "Christians" are depicted as converting to "the Muslims'" belief. "The Byzantines" (*al-rūm*) is again a term found in the Quran. Hence, "the Byzantines" are usually also called "the Polytheists" in the narrative. Twice, however, they are depicted according to tribal lines when they are called Banū l-Aṣfar. "The Byzantines" are described in the narrative as being strong, many in number, rich, and—some of them—very corrupt. Hence, although some inhabitants of Syria support "the Byzantines," others hate them because of their corruption. In addition, "the Byzantines" are presented as adhering to a strong social hierarchy, compared to "the Muslims," who are depicted as equals.

In conclusion, the *Futūḥ al-Shām*'s narrative is permeated with both a tribal (or "ethnic") and a religious notion. While Arab tribes and "the Byzantines," when called Banū l-Aṣfar, represent the tribal level, the groups of "the Muslims," "the Polytheists," "the Christians," and "the Israelites" stand for the dominating religious level. In addition, the narrative works with dichotomies: "the Arabs" vs. "the non-Arabs," "the Muslims" vs. "the Polytheists," and so forth. Interestingly, the dichotomy between North and South Arabian tribes that can be observed on an analytical level is not made explicit in the narrative. This does not necessarily mean that the *Futūḥ al-Shām* reflects the historic practices during the early expansion. It rather creates and promotes an image of a past that includes all the aforementioned characteristics. However, these literary elements are found not only in the *Futūḥ al-Shām* but also in other works of Arabic historiography. Their consistent use speaks to an authorial hand that shaped the narrative's text. In other words, the presentation of scholars, figures, and groups is further evidence for Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Azdī being the compiler-author of the *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

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PART 5

Literature as Method and Medium of Instruction

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CHAPTER 16

Education through Narrative in *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*

Shatha Almutawa

The tenth-century *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, or the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, contain over 40 narratives that appear to have didactic purposes.[1] In this chapter, I argue that the Ikhwān's entertaining narratives are part of a pedagogical system that addresses different audiences according to their interests and abilities. The narratives, in their many forms—allegorical tales, animal fables, parables, and dialogues—all aim to lead the reader through a process of purifying the soul by means of education and reflection.

Approaching the *Rasāʾil* through its narratives brings out puzzling features of this work, including, for example, the many audiences the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ address, and the different levels of understanding that one can hope to arrive at. The Ikhwān were geniuses of rhetoric—they managed to address people of different factions, beliefs, and degrees of education, and to express to each what he or she could comprehend, be it in the language of logic, scripture, or poetry. But, even the language of logic is not a united whole; there is the logic of the grammarian, the logic of the mathematician, the logic of the philosopher, and the logic of the rationalist theologian.

The Ikhwān are also masters of repetition; they will not have a reader lose a thought, so they tell it again and again, in different ways, describing, arguing, and proving each idea within the same epistle, and often in several different epistles. The clear message that is repeated throughout the text is that the soul must be purified through a process of education and renunciation of the material world—though the work as a whole says so much more. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ teach us about the geographies and peoples of the world, they introduce us to animals and plants in great detail, they bring the stars closer to us in their expositions on astronomy and astrology, and they also reintroduce magic to our skeptical world. One can see this as a Neoplatonic enterprise progress-

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[1] The identity of the Ikhwān has been debated since the writing of the *Rasāʾil*, the 52 epistles penned by the members of this society. Different manuscripts attribute the text to people of different sectarian affiliations.

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ing through the sciences toward ascent to the Active Intellect, or the One, the source of the world.[2] However, this is not an exercise to be done in isolation. The student does not sit alone, or just with a teacher, apart from the world, in quiet contemplation of abstract truths. As one learns about animals, one is invited to interact with them in an ethical manner, recognizing them as beings with a consciousness of their own.[3] As one learns about geography, one is prodded to travel,[4] to see more of the world than one's own immediate surroundings. In effect, learning, for the Ikhwān, is integrated with living in the world, and participating in it actively, and the quest for salvation is a social one that involves many other people.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ's greatest achievement in their famous *Rasāʾil*, apart from the breadth and scope of their work, which is indeed impressive, is their exceptionally sophisticated philosophy of education. For the Ikhwān, science, religion, and philosophy are different forms of expression for the same truth—they are languages that can be used to communicate the same ideas. The Ikhwān see these fields of knowledge as tools of communication that can unite rather than divide people, making the pursuit of truth part of a collective human effort.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ's view of the harmony of religion, philosophy, and science was not uncommon at the time; there were scholars in Islamic, Jewish, and Christian communities who espoused this view as well, but the project of harmonizing philosophy with religion—reason and revelation—continued to be contested and reviled in the medieval period after the Ikhwān's writing, even continuing to this day. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ were bold enough to declare their project openly—to quote the Quran and the *ḥadīth*, and to equate their truth with that of Plato, Aristotle, Jesus, Moses, and the Buddha. They follow in the footsteps of the earlier Muslim philosopher al-Kindī in applying a philosophical lens to Quran exegesis.[5] They demonstrate to the reader how one can read scripture and find in it new, or different, truths than one is accustomed to, truths that may be expressed by non-Muslim thinkers.

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[2] Nasr, *Introduction*.

[3] See epistle 22 on animals in volume 2 of *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ's animal fable has been translated twice, first by Goodman in *Case of the animals*, and again by Goodman and McGregor in *Epistles*.

[4] See Touati, *Islam and travel*.

[5] Janssens, al-Kindi 1–21.

1 The Narratives

There are different types of narrative in the 52 treatises that make up *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*. They vary in length. The longest is the well-known animal fable, and the shortest is only a few sentences long. Some of the narratives have human characters, others have characters who are animals or *jinn*. Some have complex plots, others are made up entirely of dialogue. Some seem realistic, others are clearly fabulous. The Ikhwān borrowed many of their stories from Indian, Greek, Christian, and Jewish traditions, as well as Arabic *adab*,[6] but many of their stories appear to be original.

Many of the narratives constitute proof for the existence and eternity of the soul (see, for example, the dream narratives below). Other ideas communicated by the narratives include proof that:

- the body is inferior to the soul;
- the body misleads the soul;
- people can be educated;
- people resist being educated;
- people often need a teacher;
- knowledge is not given to only one group of people;
- all religions share the same truths;
- people from different religions can collaborate in learning the truth;
- people learn differently;
- some knowledge should not be given to certain people; and
- knowledge can be misused.[7]

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ's entire philosophy stems from a belief in the existence and eternity of the soul, that the soul is superior to the body, that the body drags down the soul and keeps it from being elevated, and that knowledge is the nourishment of the soul.[8] The final aim of the authors is to help readers understand this, in order to set free their own souls. The process by which the reader can achieve this is an educational process; the more one learns and understands the truths and lives according to them, the more one is able to untangle oneself from the temptations—and chains—of this material world.

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[6] This genre of Arabic writing is often translated as belles-lettres.

[7] Almutawa, "Imaginative cultures."

[8] In fact, knowing is a defining aspect of the soul. In epistle 28 on epistemology, the Ikhwān write that once God blew into Adam a portion of His Soul, the body not only came alive but became knowing. See Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* iii, 18. Knowledge is described as the soul's nourishment. See ibid., 19.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ believe that people learn differently, and some desire to know more than others.[9] But, aside from people's differing abilities, there are different types of knowledge. Some things are known intuitively, some are a priori knowledge. When telling allegories, fables, and other tales, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ make certain truths more accessible, and mask others. Some are word problems, as in the story of the two men who share loaves of bread with a passerby:

> It was told in a parable that two men traveled together, and when they arrived at the banks of a river, they sat down for lunch. Each one of them took out his provisions, and one of them had two loaves of bread while the other had three. As they broke the bread in the middle to eat it, a passerby came by, and they invited him to eat with them. He accepted their invitation and sat down to eat with them. When they were done, he got up and gave them five dirhams. He said, "Divide it evenly amongst yourselves," and went on his way. So the man who had two loaves of bread said to his companion, "You take half of it and I'll take the remaining half, since he said divide it evenly." The man with the three loaves said, "Fairness dictates that I take three dirhams and you take two, because he said evenly based on the loaves of bread." They disagreed and fought, and went to a judge. He judged that the man with two loaves should have one dirham and the man with three loaves should have four dirhams, and that is just and correct.[10]

Here, the narrative presents a lesson on the importance of understanding mathematics for use in daily life. Ironically, this narrative appears not in the epistle on arithmetic or geometry but, rather, in the epistle on the characteristics of true believers—suggesting that a true believer would be educated and skilled in the use of mathematics.

In the epistle on missionary activity, we are shown the importance of a teacher providing the questioner with answers. When the prince is sleepless at night, wanting to know about the world beyond the palace, in which his father secluded him, he does not find relief until a wise man seeks him out and tells him three parables. We are told that the wise man's approach should be emulated in teaching.[11]

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[9] Ibid., 19. Epistle 28 on epistemology.

[10] Ibid., iv, 78–79.

[11] The Buddha narrative appears in the epistle on missionary activity (epistle 48), in Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* iv.

To show that the soul exists and is eternal, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ tell several dream stories, such as the Iraqi bar dream narrative:

> There was a man in Iraq who invited his friends to drink, and when they were done eating and sat down to drink, the sounds of ouds and flutes were raised, and the alcohol went around. They were moved by the music. One of the men fell asleep because of the pleasure and happiness they were in, and he saw a beautiful house with curtains, beds, pots, basil and fruits, glowing candles, and incense burning. The courtyard was surrounded with light, basil plants and pleasant fragrances. He saw beautiful and handsome boys. He was surprised, and thought about what he heard and smelled, and the good sensations that please the senses and overjoy the soul. He became drowsy and fell more deeply into his sleep, until he was not aware of anything around him.
>
> Then he dreamt that he was in a church in Byzantium, lit with lanterns, ornamented with images, and filled with crosses. He found himself amidst priests and monks wearing garments made of haircloth, on their waists bands and in their hands hung braziers that they were flinging and using to burn Indian and Arabic incense and frankincense. They were reciting words like praise of God, chanting them and repeating them, until the man memorized them. *"Kisna wa-Sakhra qalilan wa-aban | Muḥammad hina bansa ila bama,"* which can be translated into Arabic to mean, "The chosen ones praise God at night, for they are alive with Him, even if they were dead. As for the evil ones who are unjust, they are dead to God, even if they were alive in this life."
>
> He saw a group of bishops with wine glasses, and in their napkins pieces of bread that they distributed to the group. They gave them from the wine to drink. The man took some of the bread eagerly and drank, for he was extremely hungry and thirsty, having forgotten that he had dined in Iraq. That continued to be his state, surprised and thinking about how he landed in Rome and ended up in that church, and how he can return to Iraq, with the great distance between them. Then he remembered his friends and the joy he left them in, so he missed them and was bored with the place where he was. He woke up and found himself in Iraq, in his seat between his friends. The candles and sounds and smells that he contemplated before falling asleep were the same, nothing having changed.[12]

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[12] Ibid., iv, 87–88.

With this narrative the Ikhwān show that when the body is still and inactive, the soul is set free, and is able to do what the body is not able to do while awake.

2 Intertextuality between Narratives

While some narratives stand alone, others are meant to be read together. Consider the dialogue that appears in epistle 38 on resurrection and the afterlife, in which a Muslim in heaven and a Muslim in hell reflect on their lives and the ways in which they understood and practiced their religions:[13]

> This is a conversation that took place between two men, one of them among the friends of God and His virtuous servants who were saved from the fires of hell, whose souls were purified of the animosity of hell's people, and whose hearts were given comfort from the pain of torture in hell. The other man is one of those who are ruined and tortured, whose hearts are burned with the heat of the animosity of hell's people, and whose souls suffer its punishments. The man who was saved said to the man who was ruined: "How are you?"
>
> "I am blessed by God, seeking and desiring more blessings. I am eager to collect them, granting victory to God's religion, showing enmity to God's enemies, and waging war against them."
>
> "And who are God's enemies?"
>
> "All those who disagree with my doctrine and creed."
>
> "Even if they were of the people of 'No God but God'?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "And if you conquer them, what do you do with them?"
>
> "I invite them to my faith and creed, and my opinion."
>
> "And if they don't accept it?"
>
> "I fight them, regard their blood and money as permissible to me, and enslave their progeny."
>
> "And if you can't overtake them?"
>
> "I invoke God against them day and night, and damn them in my prayers in order to draw closer to God almighty."
>
> "And if you invoke God against them, would harm befall them?"
>
> "I don't know, but when I do what I described, I find comfort for my heart, pleasure for my soul, and healing for my chest."

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[13] Ibid., iii, 312–313.

> "Do you know why?"
>
> "No. You tell me."
>
> "Because your soul is sick, your heart is tormented, and your spirit is punished. Pleasure is the lack of pain. Know that you are trapped in one of the levels of hell, and it is God's *huṭama*, the flaming fire of God, the burning fire that laps the hearts,[14] until you escape it and save yourself from its torment if you meet God almighty as he promised in His saying, 'Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evil-doers crouching there.' "[15]
>
> Then the one who was ruined said to the one who was saved, "Tell me about your views and creed and the state of your soul."
>
> He responded, "Yes, as for me, I see that I am [dwelling] in the blessings of God and beneficence that cannot be counted or given thanks for enough. I am satisfied by what God has apportioned and decreed for me. I calmly bear His judgment. I do not wish harm over anyone, nor do I harbor corruption, or intend to do evil. My soul is in comfort, my heart is free, and all beings are safe from me. I have entrusted my creed to God, and my religion is the religion of Abraham, may peace be upon him. I say as he said, 'He who follows me is one of my own, and he who disobeys me, [to him] God is forgiving and merciful.' 'If you torment them, they are Your servants, And if You forgive them, it is You Who are Almighty, All-Wise.' "[16]

In this dialogue, the Muslim who tried to forcefully convert people is in hell; however, he is pleased with his situation. Instead of writhing in pain and crying out as he burns in the fires of hell, the man speaks of God's blessings, and is calm and satisfied. At the end of the dialogue, the man in heaven tells him that he is in hell, which suggests perhaps that he does not know where he is.[17]

Despite its levity, this story presents us with a unique conception of reward and punishment in the afterlife. It could be read as a reinterpretation of the Quran's verses on paradise and hellfire, done subtly, by painting a picture quite unlike that which would be painted by a literalist reading.

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[14] *Huṭama* is translated as "the smasher" by Fakhry, *Interpretation*; as the "consumer" by Khalidi, *Qurʾan*; "That which breaks to pieces" by Ali, *Three translations*; and "the crushing disaster" by Shakir, *Qurʾan*. Q 104:4–6.

[15] Q 19:72.

[16] Q 5:118. Khalidi's translation.

[17] For a discussion of the afterlife in the thought of Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, see Almutawa, "Death" 56–75.

But, heaven and hell are not the ultimate subject of this dialogue. The issue discussed by the two characters is *jihād* and forced conversion. On first reading, this narrative makes the point that violence is evil—hell is for those who use force to convert others.

Reading this narrative by itself, or in the context of the epistle in which it appears, we come away from the story with a pluralistic message. It seems to be about the importance and goodness of tolerance for each person's soul. Without practicing tolerance, one cannot achieve salvation.

Yet, another narrative in another epistle appears to make the opposite claim:

> Know that in the bygone time it was said that there was a wise man who was a student of medicine. He entered a city and saw that the majority of its inhabitants had an invisible disease of which they were not aware.[18] He reflected on their condition and how to treat them, to cure them from their affliction[19] which extended over time. He knew that if he informed them of their disease, they would not listen to him or accept his advice, but might even harbor animosity towards him, think that his opinion is impossible, undermine his education, and disdain his knowledge. So he tricked them because of his great pity for those of his species, and his eagerness to treat them for the sake of God Almighty's satisfaction. He sought from the inhabitants of that city a man from its nobility who had that disease, and gave him a medication that he had prepared to treat him. He had him inhale it and sneeze. The man sneezed and from that point onward he felt a lightness in his body, a comfort in his senses, health in his body, and strength in his soul. The cured man thanked his healer and said to him, "Do you have a need which I may fulfill for you to reward you for the good you have done to me when you treated me?"
>
> He said, "Yes. Help me treat one of your brothers."
>
> The man agreed.[20] So they visited another man whom they believed to be more easily treated. They waited until his friends left and they were alone with him. They treated him and he was immediately cured. When he was healed he thanked them profusely, blessed them and said, "Do you have a need which I might fulfill to reward you for the good you have done to me?" They said, "Help us treat one of your brothers."

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[18] I have left out the repetition in لا يشعرون بعلتهم ولا يحسون بدائهم الذي بهم.

[19] Another repetition here: ليبرئهم من دائهم ويشفيهم من علتهم.

[20] Literally: قال سمعاً وطاعة لك.

> He agreed. They met with another man, and treated him the way the first man was treated, and he said to them what the first said, and they said to him what was said to them.
>
> Then they dispersed in the city, treating people one by one in secret, until they had treated many people, and they had many supporters, friends and acquaintances. Then they announced themselves to the people and told them about the treatment, and they forced them to be treated. They would meet people one by one, and a group would hold the man by the arms and another from the legs. Others would force him to inhale the medication, and some would force others to drink the medication, until they cured the entire city.[21]

With this allegory the Ikhwān present a *tafsīr*, or interpretation. They tell us that this is the way of the prophets and cite Muhammad as an example. He first delivered his message secretly to his wife Khadīja, his cousin ʿAlī, and a few other people he trusted. He did not go public with his message until 40 people had been converted. Is the meaning of this tale, then, that force may be used only after thorough preparation, and when it is likely to succeed? Is this an allegory for Ismaʿilism—the movement should be secret until enough people join it and can protect themselves? When this narrative and the dialogue between the Muslim in hell and the Muslim in heaven are read side by side, they present an apparent contradiction.

The Ikhwān explain that the doctor in the narrative is like a prophet, and the sick people are those who do not know the truth. The motif of the sick soul that is ignorant of the truth runs throughout the 52 epistles.[22] We are often told that the sick soul can be healed only if it renounces the material world, and the doctor is the one who helps the sick realize that this world is base and transitory, that there is a far worthier world above.

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[21] Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* iv, 14–15.

[22] This description of the soul is derived from Greek philosophy. Plato, Aristotle, and Galen all made the analogy between a sick body and a soul misled by vice. In the *Republic*, Plato describes the vices as diseases of the soul. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ quote the *Republic* because they quote it in their last epistle on magic. Aristotle brings up this analogy in his *Ethics*, which had been translated into Arabic by the tenth century. Since the Ikhwān devote their chapters on logic to Aristotle's philosophy, we know that they had read some of his works, and we find his stamp on their ethics as well. Finally, Galen's medical works, and perhaps also his philosophical commentaries, deeply influenced the Ikhwān's thought; we see his thought adopted by the Ikhwān frequently. As Tahera Qutbuddin points out in Healing the soul (64–65), the Quran also seems to make this analogy, although the Quranic verses refer to the heart, rather than the soul, as being sick. Qutbuddin found twelve different verses where this analogy is made; in each case, the sickness points to doubt or denial of the truth of Islam. In Islamic philosophy, the analogy is made by al-Rāzī, who died in 925 CE. In his book *The spiritual medicine*, he discusses healing the soul by instruction and education.

But, force is used to heal the sick soul. Why is violence condoned here when it was condemned elsewhere in the *Rasāʾil*? This is why a methodology for reading narratives within the *Rasāʾil* is important. In order to understand the *Rasāʾil*, we must read the narratives together. Each narrative, by itself, is like a puzzle that cannot be solved without the clues hidden in the other narratives.

Looking at the narratives as a whole, we find that they all revolve around knowledge and ignorance, especially the knowledge of one's abilities and role in society. This knowledge is instrumental in enabling one to achieve salvation. For the sake of the individual and society, one should know *what* one can learn, *how* one can learn, and what one should do with that knowledge. Those who can understand abstract truth are the philosophers. Those who can represent this truth for the masses are the prophets. Kings must exhibit a list of characteristics that allow them to be good rulers, and other members of society have characteristics that suit certain professions more than others.

We find this explored in a cluster of narratives in the last epistle on magic, in which power is misused by people who are ignorant of the ends for which this power was created. Because they misunderstand that power, and their role in society, they become responsible for various forms of injustice.

If we take all of this into account, the two stories we have discussed, which previously had two different meanings, now come together to form a third meaning, which is that conversion—and the use of violence in converting others—is not evil in itself, but it is evil when it is performed by the wrong person. Thus, the man in hell is there not because his action was evil but because he is not suited for missionary activity, or for the task of conversion. He was not called to prophecy, or to serve as a "doctor of souls," as the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ are. The difference between "*jihād* is permissible" and "*jihād* is permissible for *some*" might appear to be insignificant, but it places great limits in application; in the case of the Ikhwān's epistles, we are given no indication that it is permissible for any person to perform this action; it is permissible only for prophets of God. Additionally, we are told that Muhammad fought the unbelievers only when they persecuted weak Muslims in Mecca, and he did so in order to stop the persecution, not to forcibly convert the Meccans.[23]

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[23] Contrast the Ikhwān's attitude with those of two contemporaries. The tenth-century Isma'ili scholar Ibn al-Haytham wrote *Kitāb al-Manāẓir*, where he recounts a conversation he had with the missionary Abū ʿAbdallah, with whom he wanted to study. Abū

When enough narratives are examined, we find that one narrative holds the key to another, and that they are all connected. Each narrative is a puzzle, and it can only be solved if it is examined together with all the other puzzles. The key for all of the puzzles is the Ikhwān's theory of education. It is one's level of education that decides where one stands in the world, and what one's role is in the world. You can be a doctor only if you have studied medicine. You can be a philosopher only if you have studied philosophy. And you can be a *dāʿī*, or a missionary, only if you are learned in the sciences that the missionary should study. The prophet, in the Ikhwān's Neoplatonic view, is one who has acquired all knowledge, and also has the ability to communicate it to people of differing intellectual abilities.

This allows us to see the subtleties in the two stories: The use of force might be acceptable in some situations, but it is only to be used in certain circumstances, and only by those who are qualified. Thus, the Muslim in hell is not in hell because he used force; he is in hell because he was not qualified to convert people, but he nonetheless attempted to do so, showing that he did not understand his role in society.

The contradictory narratives that the Ikhwān present reflect the complexities within scripture. The Ikhwān show how the Quranic verses could be read figuratively. For example, the Quran makes numerous statements about hell and heaven, and describes the afterlife in great detail. Nowhere in scripture is it suggested that hell is a comfortable place, where one would be satisfied and feel surrounded by blessings, as it appears in this narrative. Hell is the place of fire and pain. Yet, through this dialogue, the authors argue that not all people con-

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ʿAbdallah begins to turn away Ibn al-Haytham as a potential disciple by saying, "You seek knowledge and guidance, and yet we regard the shedding of blood as lawful and we kill persons and take their wealth as booty." Ibn al-Haytham responded, "You kill those whose blood God allows and the taking of whose possessions He permits." This response helped convince Abū ʿAbdallah to take Ibn al-Haytham as his student. See Madelung and Walker, *Advent*. The Arabic is on page 6 and the English translation on page 67.

Another contemporary, the Ḥanbalī jurist Abū l-Qāsim al-Khiraqī (d. 945 or 946), wrote a compendium of jurisprudence entitled *al-Mukhtaṣar*, or *The summary*. This work became so popular, about three hundred commentaries had been written on it by the sixteenth century. Al-Khiraqī writes that missionaries should not be sent to Zoroastrians, because they have already received the message and rejected it. Rather, they should be fought, along with the people of the book, namely the Jews and the Christians.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ do not directly or explicitly contradict these contemporary views in their writing, but their narratives show us their opposition to such attitudes. And, they make their statement obliquely—by telling two contradictory stories, each showing a different perspective.

ceive of heaven and hell as physical places, with actual gardens and fires.[24] They present an alternative reading, for those who are able to understand abstractions, in which heaven is the release of the soul from the chains of the material world, and hell is attachment to this world.[25] Likewise, the seemingly conflicting messages within the Quran regarding belief and conversion are there for a reason; one needs to capture the subtle meanings in order to arrive at the true message. Apparent contradictions point to complicated truths, to different teachings meant for different situations and different audiences. If one reads only one part of the Quran, without reading the others, one will see only one side of an issue, and if one sees only one small, confined part of the world, one will have a very limited understanding of existence.

But why would the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ go to such lengths to obscure such a simple message, when it could be stated quite clearly? Are we reading too much into the text? Could this not be an eclectic text written by authors who disagreed, and the contradictions are simply a matter of their different opinions? Yes and no. We find contradictions within very small sections of the *Rasāʾil*, which would presumably have been written by the same author, for example, in the first 30 pages of the epistle on magic, where a cluster of stories are said to demonstrate the reality of magic. We also find the unified, overall message reiterated throughout the text, more than once in each epistle.

We do not need to look hard to find evidence that the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ were afraid of persecution. They hid their identity purposefully. We might not know who they were afraid of—the ʿAbbasid caliphs who did not want to be replaced by the Faṭimids, for example, or theologians who opposed reading scripture through the lens of Greek philosophy. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ saw their own message as controversial.

Having hidden their identity, why would they also need to hide their message in stories and parables, and scatter their ideas over 52 epistles? The answer, again, is in the Ikhwān's theory of education.

Knowledge cannot be presented all at once; the student acquires one concept before proceeding to the next and progressing from one level to another. Arguments are made step by step, laying out the proof methodically. The Ikhwān emphasize that people learn differently. Some learn from arguments, while others need imagery. Some people can understand math, others poetry. For this reason, the Ikhwān present us with a comprehensive curriculum that can be used by educators—missionaries—in any way they see fit, based on who their students are. The epistle on math can be taught in part to some students, but not to others. The same is true for all the other epistles. And, one does not teach magic to those who have not studied all the sciences, including theology and philosophy.

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[24] The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ have their own conception of the afterlife, described in their epistle 38.

[25] Almutawa, "Death."

Because people learn differently, and cannot acquire all knowledge at once, and find different types of evidence convincing, they cannot be told that the Quran may be read figuratively in just one statement. Understanding this is a process, and it is one that involves learning not only about the Quran but also about all of the human sciences. It is through the progression of learning about mathematics, astronomy, geography, and so on that one is introduced to possible nonliteral readings of the Quran. One purpose of these new readings is to keep the Quran alive and relevant—when Muslims began developing the sciences they inherited from the Greeks, some thinkers, such as al-Rāzī, began to see religion as old wives' tales. When the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ found their new worldview reflected in the scripture of Islam, they were able to reconcile and salvage different approaches to truth.

Thus, an analysis of the various types and sources of narrative in the *Rasāʾil*, as well as a study of the subtleties within these narratives, and the contradictions in and between them, shows us that the message and the goals of the Ikhwān are expressed in the tapestry of these narratives. Literary and historical studies of these narratives are vital in the study of the Ikhwān and their views on religious issues.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ are not the first to use narrative in a pedagogical fashion. However, the Ikhwān present a large variety of narratives, some alluding to, or elucidating, philosophical ideas, others more moralistic, and some that appear to be straightforward word problems. Animal stories are effective when communicating political ideas, as in the story of the foxes and the wolf.[26] Stories can produce feelings of disgust, as does the story of the prince who spends a night in the sarcophagus,[27] and the story of the promiscuous man who brays like a donkey.[28] The story of the travelers in the king's marvelous city make us wonder if we are missing out on the world's wonders by living our day-to-day lives without giving priority to our souls.[29]

Knowledge is to be found in every culture. These tenth-century authors tell stories from a wide variety of cultures and traditions: Indian traditions, such as the story of the lame man and the blind man;[30] Persian stories, such as the story of the sick king who gives up all his possessions;[31] and, biblical stories, such as the story of Saul and the witch of Endor, and Laban's sheep.[32] The Ikhwān instruct their readers to overlook surface differences—every human being is able to learn, to understand this world is a trap, and that what truly matters is not political or sectarian affiliation but a reverence for the truth and the pursuit of the soul's salvation. In this subtle way, the Ikhwān redirect the reader's attention to a unifying goal, one that can only be reached through acceptance of other faiths and traditions, because cooperation between people is necessary in the pursuit of knowledge, the instrument through which one may find liberation. Narratives in the *Rasāʾil* contribute to this message in different ways; some make the point directly, others more obliquely. Taken together, the narratives paint a colorful picture of the Ikhwān's beliefs and theory of education.

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[26] Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* iii, 170–171.

[27] Ibid., iv, 163–164.

[28] Ibid., 114–115.

[29] Ibid., i, 167.

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[30] Ibid., iii, 156–159.

[31] Ibid., iv, 315–327.

[32] Ibid., 292–294.

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CHAPTER 17

Storytelling as Philosophical Pedagogy: The Case of Suhrawardī

Mohammed Rustom

Amongst the writings of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191),[1] the founder of the School of Illumination and a key figure in post-Avicennan Islamic philosophy, are a series of visionary tales. In the context of each of these narratives, Suhrawardī employs numerous symbolic images in order to convey several key ideas that punctuate his philosophy. Given their concrete language, these tales add a dimension of depth not easily discernible in Suhrawardī's strictly speaking philosophical works, given the latter's reliance upon abstract language.

As Cyrus Zargar has recently demonstrated in his ground-breaking study, the use of storytelling in order to convey ethical, philosophical, and spiritual teachings is quite commonplace in Islamic civilization.[2] We thus have a number of antecedents to Suhrawardī in the Islamic philosophical tradition who did just this, as is evidenced in the writings of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ,[3] Avicenna (d. 428/1037)[4]—a direct influence upon Suhrawardī in this regard—and Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185).[5] But, what makes Suhrawardī's treatises unique is that, for one thing, the vast majority of his tales were written in Persian,[6] and, more

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[1] For Suhrawardī's life and work, see Aminrazavi, *Suhrawardi*; Corbin, *En islam iranien* ii; Marcotte, Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl; Nasr, *Three Muslim sages* 52–82; Walbridge, *Leaven*; and Ziai, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī.

[2] Zargar, *Polished mirror*.

[3] See their best-known epistle, Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Case*.

[4] The relevant texts are translated and analyzed in Corbin, *Avicenna*.

[5] See Ibn Ṭufayl, *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*.

[6] His Persian works can be found in Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿa-yi muṣannafāt* iii. For French translations of most of Suhrawardī's symbolic tales, which are accompanied by complete notes and introductions to each recital, as well as paraphrases and summaries of anonymous Persian commentaries upon his *Āwāz-i par-i Jibrāʾīl* and his *Muʾnis al-ʿushshāq* (also known as *Fī ḥaqīqat al-ʿishq*), see Sohravardî, *Archange empourpré* part two. Readers familiar with Thackston's 1982 edition of translations of Suhrawardī's visionary recitals would do well to read Landolt, Suhrawardī's "tales of initiation," his review article of this work. Thackston's translations have been reissued in a bilingual edition, Suhrawardī, *Philosophical allegories*. Two of Suhrawardī's other Persian treatises are available in translation. See the bilingual edition of

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important, they explicitly and consistently draw on key terms and concepts from Islamic philosophy on the one hand and Sufism on the other. Moreover, the figure of the Angelic guide features prominently in these narratives, serving as a kind of pedagogical link to take readers through the multiple levels of the cosmic order and into the very depths of their being. As is the case with all of his symbolic stories, the narrator is Suhrawardī and is not Suhrawardī. It is he because he relates the tale in the first person. But, it is not he insofar as those reading the tale follow the footsteps of the narrator and become initiated into the inward significance of its symbols. Through unveiling the text by "becoming" the narrator, its readers unveil and, therefore, "become" their true selves.

For my purposes here, I will focus on what is perhaps the best-known of Suhrawardī's symbolic stories, namely his *Āvāz-i par-i Jibrāʾīl* (*The reverberation of Gabriel's wing*).[7] In order to understand the pedagogical posture that the author assumes in this particular tale, I will offer a close reading of its symbols, culminating in an analysis of the function of Gabriel's wing. Scholars who have worked on this text have variously translated the term *āwāz* as "chant," "sound," and "song." Here, it will be rendered as "reverberation," which is equally plausible. By reading *āwāz* as reverberation, there emerges a more nuanced understanding of the significance of the symbology of the Angel's wing within the cosmological matrix of the tale.

Suhrawardī, *Book of radiance* and *Shape of light* (translated earlier in Kuṣpinar, *Ismāʿīl Anḳaravī*). This latter text has been the subject of some important commentaries in Ottoman Turkish and Persian. See Kuṣpinar, *Ismāʿīl Anḳaravī* 53, and Dāwānī, Commentary, respectively. For more on Suhrawardī's Persian writings in general, see Nasr, *Islamic intellectual tradition* 154–159.

[7] The text is to be found in Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿa-yi muṣannafāt* iii, 208–223. From here onward, citations from this story will simply appear as *Āwāz*, with the relevant page numbers going back to vol. 3 of *Majmūʿa-yi muṣannafāt*. A study of this text can be found in Tuft, Symbolism. For a translation of an eighth/fourteenth-century Persian commentary on *Āwāz-i par-i Jibrāʾīl* by an anonymous Indian author (along with a translation of the original text), see Aminrazavi, *Suhrawardi* 151–165. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

In Persian, *par* primarily denotes a "wing," although it can also mean a "feather," a "leaf," etc. See the entry s.v. "par, parr" in Steingass's famous Persian-English dictionary: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/steingass_query.py?page=239. In the text that forms the subject of the present article, the primary sense of *par* as "wing" is quite naturally understood and even demanded by the cosmological picture in which the text is framed.

1 The Basic Setting

At the beginning of *The reverberation of Gabriel's wing* Suhrawardī speaks of being freed from the women's quarters, and from some of the shackles and limitations experienced by children.[8] In a state of discomfort, the result of what he calls "the onslaughts of a dream" (*hujūm-i khwāb*),[9] he takes a lamp and goes toward the men's quarters of his home. This entire scene takes place against the background of the setting of darkness, which is referred to as "the hand of the brother of non-existence" upon the regions of the lower world.[10] Suhrawardī circles (*ṭawāf*) these quarters until the break of dawn, at which time he wishes to enter his father's *khānaqāh* or Sufi lodge. One of its doors leads to the city, and the other door leads to an open field (*ṣaḥrā*) and a garden (*bustān*).[11] After closing the door that leads to the city, he proceeds toward the field and the garden. Once outside, he encounters ten beautiful Sages (*pīrān*) seated upon a bench. With great hesitation, he approaches them and greets them.[12]

2 The Angel and the Interior Temple

The meeting that takes place with these Sages is indeed mysterious. Ten, which is the number assigned to them, would seem arbitrary if it were not known that in the classical Islamic philosophical conception of the cosmos there were ten Intellects, one proceeding from the other in a series of emanative descents from the First Intellect (the first descent from the Godhead) all the way to the tenth or Active Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*). These Intellects were identified with the Angels by Avicenna,[13] and Suhrawardī further angelizes the cosmos by assigning an angelic function to everything in his cosmic system.[14] The tenth or Active Intellect is identified with the Angel Gabriel, who is the Sage seated at the furthest end of the bench. Gabriel is the Angel who brings revelations to the prophets, and, as the "link" between Heaven and Earth, acts as the guide for humanity.

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[8] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 209.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 210.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Nasr, *Three Muslim sages* 42.

[14] See the helpful summary in Aminrazavi, *Suhrawardi* 81–86.

When Suhrawardī approaches these Sages, he addresses the Angel Gabriel, asking him where the Sages have come from. Gabriel replies in the following manner:

> "We are a group of disengaged folk. We have come from the direction of No-Place-ville [*nā kujā-ābād*]." I did not understand the reference, so I asked, "To which clime does that city belong?" He said, "To that clime which cannot be pointed at by the forefinger." Thus, I came to know that the Sage was extensive in knowledge.[15]

The Angel reminds Suhrawardī of the eighth clime, that place "which cannot be pointed at by the forefinger."[16] The place which is no place is, in fact, where this very encounter takes place. By meeting the Angel, he becomes initiated into what he always has been *in divinis*. The Angel orients him to his own situation by indicating to him that place from whence they came, which is the place that cannot be "pointed at."

The meeting with the Angel implies a kind of initiation at the very moment of the encounter, but it also requires one to return to one's true self in its entirety. The Angel is a guide for Suhrawardī because he will cause him to retrace those steps leading him back to himself. The Angel will allow him to perform the necessary spiritual exegesis, or *taʾwīl*, of the text of his own soul so that he may return to his primordial nature.[17] His true self is, from this perspective, distinct from him, which is why it can function as his pedagogue. In reality, they are not different. However, because his soul is still trapped in the world, he must relearn what he has always known so that he may once again know who he truly *is*.

As Henry Corbin (d. 1978) notes in *Avicenna and the visionary recital*, a fundamental change must take place within the individual. This change will allow him to recognize himself as a prisoner in what Corbin calls the "cosmic crypt," thus acting as an impetus for his awakening for the encounter with the Angel.[18] That there needed to be a transmutation in Suhrawardī's being is confirmed by the Angel when Suhrawardī asks him why it is that these Sages, who are characterized by immobility, have in fact descended into the lower world: "How is it that you have descended into this *khānaqāh* after claiming to never move or change?"[19] In response to his question, the Angel provides Suhrawardī with the analogy of a blind man who does not see the light of the sun. The sun never changes. It is always in its "place." If the blind man does not perceive it, it is not because of the sun. Rather, it is because he does not possess the faculty that will allow him to see it. But, when he can see it, this is because a change has occurred in him, not in the object of his perception, which has always been there. Thus, the Angel tells Suhrawardī, "We, too, have always been seated upon this bench, yet your [prior] inability to see is not an indication of our non-being, nor does [the fact that you can now see us] indicate change or motion [on our part]—the change is in your state (*ḥāl*)."[20]

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[15] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 211.

[16] Sohravardî, *Archange empourpré* 258, n. 12. See n. 29 for references to the "eighth clime," more commonly referred to as the "world of imagination."

[17] *Taʾwīl* is literally defined as "taking something back to its origin." For the *taʾwīl* of the soul, see Corbin, *Avicenna* 28–35.

[18] Ibid., 19.

This meeting could only have taken place in a semi-dream state, when Suhrawardī was imaginally positioned between waking and sleeping. At the beginning of the tale Suhrawardī provides precisely this background for what will pave the way for the meeting with his celestial archetype. When we "awaken" to the situation of imagination, there arises within us a desire to transcend the ephemeral realm and join our celestial archetype,[21] which is what we have always been and never ceased being, but of which we have grown heedless on account of our material existence. The desire to move inward is occasioned precisely by this awareness, without which one can never turn inward because of being distracted by the outward. Yet, in order to enter the inward, one must proceed *from* the *outward*, but not be *of* it. The cosmic situation is therefore perfectly set up for us at the beginning of this tale. The semi-dream state in which Suhrawardī finds himself is that realm in which he has never ceased to be, but of which he is only now aware by virtue of his realization of being trapped in the "cosmic crypt."

It will be recalled that Suhrawardī circled the men's quarters—here, symbolizing his state of contemplation—until the break of dawn, which symbolizes illumination. He then states that he had an intense desire to enter his father's *khānaqāh*.[22] Corbin notes that the term *khānaqāh* is to be understood here as "the interior temple as the 'place' for the encounter with the Angel."[23] It is precisely in this interior temple that Suhrawardī has the encounter. The "father" referred to by Suhrawardī is the Angel of his own being, his personal celestial guide. By entering the temple of his "father," he turns toward himself; in other words, he turns inward.

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[19] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 215.

[20] Ibid., 215.

[21] Corbin, *Avicenna* 26.

[22] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 210.

[23] Sohravardî, *Archange empourpré* 258, n. 6.

This initial step Suhrawardī takes toward himself is instantiated from outside of himself, hence the symbolism of illumination. It is an inner illumination, but one which proceeds from *without*; that is to say, an illumination from his archetype forever fixed in the divine "mind" impels him from *without* to turn *within*. This "from without" is not to be understood in terms of physical space. I use it here to denote the complete dependency the spiritual aspirant has upon the divine volition (in this sense "outside" of him) for him to turn to himself, which is nothing but an image of the divine Self. The Angel Suhrawardī encounters is none but his own true self *in divinis*. Suhrawardī enters the temple in order to *contemplate*—that is, in the etymological sense of the term, to enter that place where one may witness God's divine signs. Suhrawardī is therefore able to concentrate upon the one whose image he seeks, and who seeks him. By concentrating, he returns to his *center*, which is his own image *in divinis*.

3 The Art of Tailoring and the Tablet of the Soul

The Angel continues to initiate Suhrawardī into the different orders of cosmic reality to which his soul, in its pure, luminous substance unbounded by matter, truly belongs. The different levels of initiation that the Angel takes him through allow him to understand the text of the cosmos with greater clarity. As he increases in knowledge, he recognizes more of himself and his situation *in divinis*. The Angel goes on to teach Suhrawardī the art of tailoring (*ʿilm-i khiyāṭa*), telling him that knowledge of this science will allow him to repair his own patched frock (*muraqqaʿa*) whenever it needs to be stitched.[24] This patched frock, worn by the Sufis, symbolizes their orientation in the world. The science of tailoring, therefore, can be taken to be a type of spiritual method in which the Angel instructs Suhrawardī so that he may never go about without his Sufi frock—that is, so that he may never be without his fundamental orientation in the world. This spiritual method that the Angel teaches him is nothing other than invocation (*dhikr*). So long as the soul is tied to the material world, the "frock" of one's being will be torn. It is only through *dhikr* that the *dhākir* (invoker) may mend the substance of his soul, thus transcending himself into the presence of the *madhkūr* (Invoked).[25]

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[24] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 216.

[25] For *dhikr* in Sufism, see Anawati and Gardet, *Mystique musulmane* 187–260; Chittick, *Sufism* 52–60; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions* 167–178.

Suhrawardī then asks the Sage to teach him the Word (*kalām*) of God.[26] When Suhrawardī met the Sage at the beginning of the tale, the latter told him that both he and the other nine Sages were "preservers of the Word of God."[27] The Sage responds to Suhrawardī's request by telling him that, so long as he is "in this city" (*dar īn shahr*), he can only learn so much of God's Word.[28] "This city" is to be understood as the material world, which explains why, when describing the inner temple, Suhrawardī speaks of it as having two doors, one of which leads to the city, and the other to an open field and a garden. By closing the door that leads to the city, he closes himself off from the materiality of this world, from the "city" full of distractions, and enters through the door leading to the open field, which symbolizes that expansive interstitial space known as the world of imagination (*ʿālam al-khayāl*).[29]

When one enters the open field of imagination, the city is seen for what it truly is: a place engrossed in materiality and within which its adherents—whom Suhrawardī shall at the end of the tale refer to as merchants (that is, the merchants of the material world)[30]—are imprisoned by virtue of their distance from the open field, and hence, their true selves.[31] Yet, so long as man is embodied in the city, so long as he is characterized by some type of material framework, the city is "inhabited." Thus, it is only to the degree of man's detachment from the city that he will learn the Word of God.

Recounting how the Angel taught him God's Word, Suhrawardī says:

> Swiftly, he took hold of my tablet (*lawḥ*), and then taught me a rather mysterious alphabet (*hijāʾ*) such that, by means of it, I could know whatever *sūra* [Quranic chapter] I wanted. He said, "Whoever does not understand this mysterious alphabet will not acquire those secrets (*asrār*) of God's Word as he ought to. But whoever becomes proficient in it will be given nobility and contancy."[32]

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[26] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 216.

[27] Ibid., 211.

[28] Ibid., 216.

[29] Helpful discussions of the nature of the imaginal world in Suhrawardī can be found in van Lit, *The world of image* 37–78 and Marcotte, Suhrawardī's realm. For broader treatments of the topic, see Chittick, *Imaginal worlds* 67–113; Corbin, *Spiritual body*; Rahman, Dream 409–419.

[30] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz*, 223.

[31] At the end of the tale (Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 223), we encounter this city once again, where Suhrawardī cites a verse from Q 4:75 in which the people dwelling in the *qarya* (here, "town") are oppressors. Translations of all Quranic terms and verses are taken from Nasr et al., *Study Quran*.

[32] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 216.

Suhrawardī goes on to say that numerous wonders (*ʿajāʾib*) were revealed to him, and that whenever he was unable to understand a "passage" from the *Sura* of the cosmic text, the Angel would teach him the answer.[33] The reference in this passage to the tablet of one's own being immediately calls to mind the *lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*, or the Preserved Tablet, mentioned in Q 85:22. The Preserved Tablet is the primordial, celestial archetype for all of the Words of God. The Quran, which is the Word of God, is in the Preserved Tablet, as are the other Words of God. Yet, here we are also told that Suhrawardī has his own tablet, upon which the mysterious alphabet taught by the Angel was transcribed and with which he was able to read the *Sura*s of the Word of God.

The tablet of one's being is nothing other than a reflection of this primordial Tablet; there is thus a direct correspondence between the symbol and its archetype.[34] The Words inscribed upon the Preserved Tablet are also to be found in the cosmos and upon the tablet of one's being. That Suhrawardī had in mind this correspondence between the metacosm, the macrocosm, and the microcosm is made perfectly clear in the lines which follow, where he asks the Angel about the correspondence (*munāsaba*) between the blowing of the Spirit (*nafath-i rūḥ*) and the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*).[35] As will be seen from the Angel's answer, the correspondence between the blowing of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is the same as the correspondence between the spirits of humans and the Holy Spirit.

4 The Words of the Cosmos

The Angel answers Suhrawardī's question concerning the correspondence between the blowing of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit by stating that everything in the four corners of the world proceeds from Gabriel's wing.[36] Suhrawardī asks him how he is supposed to understand what this means. The Angel replies in the following manner:

> You should know that the Real has several Greater Words (*kalimāt-i kubrā*) which are luminous Words [proceeding] from the august glories of His noble Countenance, some of which are above others. The First Light is the Highest Word (*kalima-yi ʿulyā*), beyond which there is no Greater Word.

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[33] Ibid., 217.

[34] For a detailed investigation into this point, see Lings, *Symbol.*

[35] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 217.

[36] Ibid.

> Its relation in light and manifestation to the other Words is like the relation of the sun to the other stars.[37]

The Angel proceeds to explain that the rays of the Highest Word form another Word, whose rays then form another Word, and so on until their number becomes complete.[38] He states that these Greater Words are collectively to be referred to as the Engulfing Words (*kalimāt-i ṭāmmāt*),[39] a point to which we shall return shortly. We also learn that the last of the Greater Words is none other than the Angel Gabriel, and that the spirits of human beings proceed from this Greater Word. The Greater Words above Gabriel are therefore the nine Angelic Intellects of Neoplatonic Islamic cosmology, while Gabriel is the tenth or Active Intellect.

The Angel then offers an exegesis of several key Quranic passages to prove that the Word and the Spirit have the same reality. He cites, for example, Q 19:17, "Then We sent unto her Our Spirit." This is followed by a citation from Q 4:171, where Jesus is described as God's "Word which He committed to Mary" and as "a Spirit from Him." After equating the Word with the Spirit, the Angel demonstrates how the spirits that proceed from the last Greater Word are called "Smaller Words" (*kalimāt-i ṣughrā*).[40] The question of the correspondence between the blowing of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is thus answered by the Angel through his exposition of the descent of the Greater Words of God down to the last Greater Word, and ultimately to the Smaller Words, which are the spirits of human beings.

What is elucidated here by the Angel is the essential divine nature of the things in the world. If the spirits of human beings are Smaller Words and the Angel is a Spirit and the last of the Greater Words, then there is an intimate relationship between this Angel and the spirits that proceed from it. The blowing of the Spirit is, therefore, the coming about of human spirits from the last Greater Word. And, through the emanative descent, beginning with the Greatest Word or the First Intellect, the Smaller Words or breaths of the Spirit are also related to the other Words. Ultimately, all the Words are rays issuing from the divine Light. But, insofar as the last of the Greater Words is a ray proceeding from the divine Light, the Smaller Words, which come from the last of these Greater Words, are rays of its light. It is with this image in mind that we shall now turn to Suhrawardī's exposition of Gabriel's wing.

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[37] Ibid. The phrase "from the august glories of His noble countenance" is taken from the famous prophetic tradition that speaks of the seventy thousand veils of light and darkness that veil God from His creatures. In *The niche of lights*, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) wrote an important commentary upon both this tradition and the famous Light verse (Q 24:35). The reference to the "Highest Word" in this passage harks back to Q 9:40.

[38] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 218. Suhrawardī's cosmology here seems to have influenced the famous Safavid philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640). For Ṣadrā's understanding of the cosmic function of the Divine Words, see Rustom, *Triumph* 21–26.

[39] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 218.

[40] Ibid., 219.

5 Gabriel's Wing

Suhrawardī had to be initiated into all the other symbols before he could be informed of the function of Gabriel's wing. The myth that the Angel presents to him is not simply a recasting of the Neoplatonic structure of the cosmos. There is something deeper at work here. It was mentioned above that the Greater Words, taken as a whole, form the "Engulfing Words." It is the function of the Angel's wing that will enable us to understand these Engulfing Words. The Angel addresses Suhrawardī:

> You should know that Gabriel has two wings, one of which is right and is pure light (*nūr-i maḥḍ*). The entirety of this disengaged (*mujarrad*) wing is a relation to the Real. And he has a left wing, upon which are some traces of darkness, like the spots on the surface of the moon which resemble the feet of a peacock. This is a sign that its being has one side towards non-being. Yet when you consider the relation of its being with respect to the being of the Real, it is qualified by His being.[41]

The Angel's right wing, characterized by pure luminosity, faces the world of pure Light, that is, the "side" of the Greater Words. The left wing is not "dark" as such. Its traces of darkness result from a depravation of the light which comes from the side of the Greater Words. From the shadow cast by the Angel's left wing, there thus emerges the material world.[42] In other words, the window into the prison of the world only allows for a certain amount of light from the garden of pure luminosity to seep through. Therefore, the "reverberations" of the wing of Gabriel are the same as the patches of darkness upon its left wing. Just as the imperfection of light is cast as a shadow, the imperfection of the Small Word is cast as a reverberation. A shadow at once bespeaks its source and a deficiency on its own part. Likewise, a reverberation denotes from whence it proceeds, yet, by its function, it also denotes its imperfection since it is removed from its source.

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[41] Ibid., 220.

[42] Ibid., 221.

As Suhrawardī has already shown, the Spirit and the Word share the same reality. The spirits of human beings are reverberations of the Angel's left wing because they are imperfect, a result of their descent into the cosmic crypt. By being characterized by the dual nature of light and darkness, the Spirit or small Word is therefore "confused." Like the spirits of the righteous, the spirits of the evildoers and those who do not believe in God are also reverberations of the Angel's left wing, but are "muddled echoes" (*ṣadā āmīz*).[43] That is to say, their reverberations are more confused than the reverberations of the righteous. Since the righteous are closer to their source, their reverberations are less confused, and they therefore manifest, in a clearer sense, their true natures. In the language of light and darkness, the rays of the unbelievers are darker than the rays of the believers since the latter are closer to the Sun.

It is not until the penultimate paragraph of this tale that the function of the Angel's wing becomes entirely clear. In response to Suhrawardī's question concerning the form (*ṣūra*) of the wing of Gabriel, the Angel replies, "O heedless one! Do you not know that these are all symbols (*rumūz*) which, if understood exoterically, would render all of these Engulfing Words (*ṭāmmāt*) ineffectual?"[44] It was mentioned earlier that the Greater Words are referred to as the *ṭāmmāt*. This term appears in the singular at Q 79:34 with reference to the "great calamity" of the Day of Judgment.[45] It conveys the idea of "calamity" and "disaster," its Arabic root denoting "overflowing," "flooding," and "being engulfed." In Q 79:34, the final day will be a great calamity since it will overtake people and its terrors will "engulf" them. The reason the Greater Words are engulfing is because they proceed from the Greatest Sound (which is the first existentiation from the Godhead), and through the downward flow of their descent engulf and overflow, and thus fill, the cosmos. Yet, those in the material world can only grasp the reality of the Greater Words through the Angel, who is the last of the Greater Words. The symbols in the tale are therefore necessary insofar as they convey to those in the material world their own cosmic situation. Hence, the symbolic function of the Angel's wing in particular acts as an intermediary, demonstrating our celestial origin and how it is that, from our descent into the cosmic crypt, we have become trapped by materiality but may return to our true Home once again. The wing also plays an important role in the very symbolism of the flight of the human spirit to its Origin: we descended into the world by virtue of the very thing that will allow us to ascend.

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 222.

[45] Q 79:34 and the verse following it read, "So when the Great Calamity befalls—a day when man shall remember that for which he endeavored."

6 By way of a Conclusion

At the beginning of *The reverberation of Gabriel's wing* Suhrawardī cites the important early Sufi figure Abū ʿAlī Fārmadī (d. 477/1084)[46] as saying, "Of all of the reverberations of Gabriel's Wing, one of them is you."[47] It is only after having been shown the function of the wing by the Angel that Suhrawardī comes to understand why he was not able to learn much of God's Word while trapped in the "city." At the same time, the initiation he received into whatever of the Word he could read from the tablet of his being becomes clearer to him, as he now understands the correspondence between the tablet of his being and the Words of God. It is nothing but a reverberation of the wing of the Angel which Suhrawardī realizes he himself is. He is a Word of God, and he reads the Words of God in the very cosmic reverberations that are manifested in forms on the outward plane, and upon the tablet of his soul on the inward plane.

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[46] For whom, see Gozashteh and Negahban, Abū ʿAlī al-Fārmadī.

[47] Suhrawardī, *Āwāz* 209.

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CHAPTER 18

The Masters' Repertoire (*Mashyakha*) and the Quest for Knowledge

Asma Hilali and Jacqueline Sublet

What factors lie behind the collections of various forms of oral and written transmission many decades and centuries after the collection of *ḥadīth* material and the fixation of *ḥadīth* science? Such is the interrogation that emerges indirectly from Georges Vajda's lecture given in Rome in 1974.[1] The same question is raised by more recent research focusing on the study of manuscripts.[2] This questioning is due to scholars' increasing concern with defining the dynamic link between the history of transmission and the theory of transmission. The continuity of *ḥadīth* transmission after the appearance of the "Six Books," and after the adoption of new forms of oral and written teaching, raises profound questions about the functions of these multiple forms, their differences, and their use by the milieu of *ḥadīth* scholars.[3] Certificates of transmission (*ijāza*, pl. *ijāzāt*, here: *ijāza*s; *samāʿ*, pl. *samāʿāt*, here: *samāʿ*s; *mashyakha*, pl. *mashyakhāt*, here: *mashyakha*s), and many literary genres emerge after the fourth/tenth century, the century of *ʿilm al-ḥadīth*, and after the elaboration of the most important collection of *ḥadīth*, which would later be canonized.[4] This work renews the reflexion on the methods of transmission in the periphery of the major compilations and beyond the frame of *ḥadīth* in the strict sense of prophetic traditions. Our approach addresses a specific category of documents: the *mashyakha* (masters' repertoire).

The *mashyakha* designates a group of people often known for their piety and their high social rank. The word *mashyakha* is often annexed to a place, as in *mashyakhat ahl al-bayt*, *mashyakhat al-masjid*, or to the name of a tribe, *mashyakhat Quraysh*, or to a specific group, such as the Companions of the

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[1] Vajda, Transmission orale.

[2] For examples of studies on manuscripts of transmission post-Six Books, see Witkam, *Ijāza*.

[3] Eerik Dickinson speaks about desperate transmissions because of the loss of the high chain of transmission (*sanad ʿālī*). Dickinson, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī. Stefan Leder defines the aim of the secondary forms of transmission, like the audition certificates (*ijāza*s), as the "dissemination of the text"; its interruption would induce the disappearance of the text. Leder, Understanding.

[4] Hilali, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāmahurmuzī.

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Prophet, *mashyakhat al-ṣaḥāba*.[5] It designates a group of notables and pious men, *lahum faḍl wa-ṣalāḥ wa-ʿibāda*, and could be annexed to a branch of science, for example *mashyakhat al-ḥadīth* (the notables of the discipline of *ḥadīth*). In every case, the term refers to the official position of leadership in the discipline.[6] As a document, the *mashyakha* can merely be a list of the names of *shuyūkh* (masters, teachers, learned men) of a specific scholar—whether he is transmitter of *ḥadīth* or any man with a scientific reputation. In the fourth/tenth century, the *mashyakha* documents did not merely constitute lists of transmitters, and they became more than simply chains of transmission.[7] Closely linked to the rise of the *madrasa*s,[8] the *mashyakha* could be written by a master who wanted to identify his own masters or by a student who aimed to reconstitute his master's chain of masters.[9] The document contains an amount of transmitted material, merely *ḥadīth*.[10] The *mashyakha* is often the object of transmission and identification of the cited *shuyūkh*, a task undertaken by students who were destined to become masters in turn. We often find in the biographies of transmitters the following typical expressions: *wa-lahu mashyakha rawāhā ʿanhu fulān* (he compiled a *mashyakha*; or, a *mashyakha* is attributed to him that was transmitted by such a scholar); *wa-lahu mashyakha kharrajahā fulān* (he compiled a *mashyakha*; or, a *mashyakha* is attributed to him—of which the transmitters' names have been identified by such scholar).[11] The material length of the *mashyakha* document depends on its content—

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[5] For a general sense of *mashyakha* as a group of notables, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmiʿ*; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Kifāya*; al-Rāmahurmuzī, *Muḥaddith*; Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfāhānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*.

[6] See this specific meaning of the word in al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*; al-Ṣanʿānī, *Ṭawḍīḥ* i, 359; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt* i, 511.

[7] Vajda, Transmission orale 4.

[8] Ibid., 4.

[9] Jan Just Witkam speaks about a "scholarly curriculum vitae." Witkam, *Ijāza* 126. For an attempt at defining *mashyakha*, see Arberry, Teachers 339; Leiser, Ḥanbalism 161; Vajda, Transmission orale 4.

[10] *Wa-lahu mashyakha kubrā hiya ʿawālihi ʿan al-kibār wa-mashyakha ṣughrā ʿan kull shaykh ḥadīth* (He composed a large *mashyakha* in which he compiled the *ḥadīth* with high chains of transmission and a small *mashyakha* with one *ḥadīth* for each authority). See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xvii, 417: the biography of Ibn Shādhān (d. 339/950).

[11] For examples of this, see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 85; for the expression "*sammā al-mashyakha*" (to give a name to the *mashyakha*) instead of *kharraja* (to identify the authorities), see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xvi, 436. For an example of a *mashyakha* written by a master who decides to collect the names and the *ḥadīth* transmitted to him by his masters, see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xx, 280. The expression *jamaʿa li-nafsihi mashyakha* (he compiled a *mashyakha* for himself) means he identified the names of his own masters and mentioned the material he heard from them.

namely, the list of the masters' names and the amount of transmitted material. We have information about *mashyakhas* that consist of multiple volumes.[12]

A large number of *mashyakha*s have been preserved in manuscripts, and some of them have been damaged over the centuries. Only a relatively small number have been published, although there is an increasing move toward publication. The word *mashyakha* itself has several synonyms according to the region where the text was produced, for example: *thabat*, *muʿjam*, or *fahrasa* in the Maghreb, and *barnāmaj* in Muslim Spain.[13] Moreover, the document can bear the word *mashyakha* or one of its synonyms in its title, but this is not a requirement. The reason a document can be considered a *mashyakha* is its content: a list of the names of several *shuyūkh* related to one scholar, which is gathered by a disciple, by the master himself, or by any scholar to honor a master. The *mashyakha*s contain the names of the *shuyūkh*, together with literary contents (a selection or fragments of *ḥadīth* texts, *qaṣaṣ*, *khabar*, poetry, *adab*, and any fragments that could have been transmitted to a scholar). Describing these literary *mashyakha*s as archeological items, as well as considering their textual analysis, is the aim of the "*Ṭalab al-ʿilm*/Quest for Knowledge" Project. Our main methodological principal is to proceed through a sustained comparison between the science of *ḥadīth* and the history of *ḥadīth*; the one influences the other and plays a key role in its evolution.[14] This study focuses on the evolution of notions and concepts related to *ḥadīth* and education in classical Islam rather than an evaluation of the material transmitted in the classical period in view of the issue of authenticity. Before the examination of specific examples of *mashyakha* documents and the analysis of their terminology and content, the following section defines our project, which we call *Ṭalab al-ʿilm*.

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[12] For examples of *mashyakha*s that fill 2 volumes, see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xviii, 85; or even 14 volumes, ibid., xx, 280.

[13] Al-Ahwānī, Kutub barāmij. See the word *barnāmaj* associated with the word *shuyūkh* in al-Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-mughīth* ii, 378; Witkam, *Ijāza* 126–127; Leiser, Ḥanbalism 161; Vajda, Transmission orale 2.

[14] Among the studies that tackle the problem of the link between the theory of *ḥadīth* and the transmission history of *ḥadīth*, see Witkam, High and low 139–140, where he evokes the problem by showing the gap between the theory and the practice of the elevation of the *sanad*. Eerik Dickinson's analysis of the use of the *isnād* (chain of transmission) in the Ayyubid period sheds light on the way the practice of transmission tries to correspond to the definition of the elevation of *isnād* and its importance in *ḥadīth* science. The author establishes that the issue of authenticity is almost replaced by the issue of elevation. Dickinson, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī cxxii, 487.

1 The *Ṭalab al-ʿIlm* Project

Ṭalab al-ʿilm, an early notion linked to the beginnings of teaching institutions in Islam, refers to journeys in search of knowledge.[15] The early sources, like *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* by Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), describe Muslim scholars travelling around *dār al-Islām* in the first/seventh century, and teaching, learning, and studying a variety of materials. Words and acts of the Prophet, the Quran, commentaries on the Quran, proverbs, poetry, *adab*, and narratives about the battles of the Arabs (*ayyām al-ʿArab*), constitute the main substance of the term *ḥadīth* before the third/ninth century.[16] In the fourth/fifth century, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360/971) initiated a theoretical book on *ḥadīth* sciences. In his book, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil bayna l-rāwī wa-l-wāʿī* (*The transmitter who distinguishes between the transmission and the knowledge of* ḥadīth), his first task is to mark a distinction between the science of *ḥadīth* (*dirāya*) and the transmission of *ḥadīth* (*riwāya*).[17] He establishes the moral and scholarly conditions of transmission and identifies the methods of collecting *ḥadīth* with regard to the aims of this transmission. Thus, al-Rāmahurmuzī gives a certain coherence to transmission history as a historical process and as a system of thought. In his book, he cites Abū Bakr al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/819): "The transmitter [must know] the *sunna*, and must be trustworthy in his religion, known for his sincerity and rigorous in the matter he transmits, aware of the meaning of the *ḥadīths*, and [must be] far from errors."[18]

The double perspective of *riwāya*/*dirāya* is the guideline of the *Ṭalab al-ʿilm* project, and both our approaches to the *mashyakha* documents complement each other. Asma Hilali deals with classifying the various material involved in the *mashyakha*; evaluating the different modalities of citing the Quran, *ḥadīth*, and other materials; analyzing the *ḥadīth* and other texts, such as narratives, proverbs, or poetry, with careful attention to the terminology used by the transmitters; and, most of all, evaluating the different ways the transmitted texts, with their critical comments, relate to concepts from *ḥadīth* science. A first glance at the *mashyakha* makes it possible to sketch out the thought patterns of Muslim scholars involved in *ṭalab al-ʿilm* between the fourth/tenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. The next step consists of relating the material from the *mashyakha* to the corresponding patterns. Methodologically, she compares the key notions in the documents with their conceptual meaning in *ḥadīth* science. She builds bridges between *dirāya* and *riwāya*.

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[15] See important moments of the journey in search of knowledge in Jabali, *Companions*; Sublet, Fiqh šāfiʿite; Sublet, De passage; Madelung, Early Murji'a 32–39; Lucas, *Constructive critics* 327–369; Robinson, *Empire* 34.

[16] On the themes of the narratives transmitted in the first centuries and the complexity of the term *ḥadīth*, see Noth, *Early Arabic historical tradition* 62–173.

[17] Al-Rāmahurmuzī, *Muḥaddith*. On al-Rāmahurmuzī, see Juynboll, al-Rāmahurmuzī; Librande, Categories. The author of the latter translates (268) the title of al-Rāmahurmuzī's work as "The ḥadīth specialist who distinguishes between the transmitter and the attentive receiver."

[18] Al-Rāmahurmuzī, *Muḥaddith* 404.

In a complementary way, Jacqueline Sublet describes the *mashyakha*s in manuscripts, focusing on the *riwāya* point of view. She treats the manuscript as a frame for the rich items, both onomastic and literary, that it contains. The onomastic aspect will be treated within the limits of its connection to transmission (specific qualifications, relationship, names and "*nisbas*," nicknames). She describes the *mashyakha*s as title pages with various inscriptions found in every blank space around the title and around the text itself. These inscriptions contain the names of trustworthy, learned men who guarantee the authenticity of the document (elevation of the chain of transmission), together with accounts of the transmitting sessions that gathered a circle of auditors and readers, reading and audition certificates (*qirāʾa*s and *samāʿ*s), licence-certificates authorizing transmission (*ijāza*s), the location of the institutions and any place—mosque, *khānqāh*, garden, private houses, and so on—where transmission sessions were held and the geographical areas where the learned men spread their science. An important part of the project will involve identifying the learned men and women involved in transmitting this information.

As a first step, we selected unedited *mashyakha*s in manuscripts whose reproductions and brief descriptions are kept in the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (IRHT-CNRS, Paris),[19] collected by Jacqueline Sublet from 1964 onward. Then, we read a significant part of the 60 documents we selected on the basis of several criteria:

- Chronology: In order to examine documents written in the fourth-ninth/tenth-fifteenth centuries (from the rise of the genre up to the pre-Ottoman period).
- Presence of literary content (excluding documents that contain only a list of the transmitters' names): Quotations and developments showing the aims of the "author-compiler" (*mukharrij*) of the *mashyakha* (the scholar who gathered the text) in honor of the "dedicatee" (the *shaykh* to whom the list of *shuyūkh* is dedicated). Many issues have been raised about the relevance or

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[19] We are grateful to Zouhour Chaabane, Muriel Rouabah, Lahcen Daaïf, and Christian Müller for their help and support.

irrelevance of the content from the minor collection, namely the records of transmission sessions.[20]

- Presence of *samāʿ*s and *ijāza*s surrounding the manuscript text: Proving it was read by several learned men and women throughout the centuries in different historical and social contexts, some of them having travelled on journeys in search of knowledge to read the text under the supervision of the "author-compiler" (*al-mukharrij*) or some other scholar who had permission to transmit it. The *samāʿ*s and *ijāza*s provide data about when and where the transmission took place and in what type of institution the *mashyakha* was read during lecture-meetings, mainly *madrasa*s, mosques, or private houses—the intention being to give the auditors a clear understanding of the text so that they could pass it on to other scholars. Passing it on does not imply copying it. The date of the audition is a specific matter that has to do with the issue of the high chain of transmission. The mention of the audition date aims to show the close contact between the student and the master, and the crucial element is to have the earliest copy of a given session held by the master.

The description of each *mashyakha* as a manuscript document is the second step.

- The first page, which contains the title of the text, the names of the "dedicatee" and the "author-compiler," *samāʿ*s, *ijāza*s, and inscriptions of other types, and the certificates written in the margins of the document after it was completed, or on any blank place in the manuscript, proves that the text of the *mashyakha* in its entirety was read in order to be transmitted. As mentioned earlier, several graphic markings that can be found on the title page, in the margins, or at the end of the text will be taken into account.
- Finally, if the manuscript is in good shape, we can hopefully decipher the colophon (the formula showing the end of the text), which is written down by the "author-compiler" (*al-mukharrij*) or the scribe and which, above all, consists of chronological and geographical data, the place where the text was written down, and whether by the "author-compiler" himself, by a copyist, or by another actor in the transmission.

Examining the *mashyakha*'s religious and literary content constitutes the third step in our project. One striking aspect in the documents is the heterogeneity of their content. In the *mashyakha* text, like in a collection of *ḥadīth*, one can find fragments from several kinds of texts: narratives about miracles, invocations, scientific matters, and information about the positive and negative qualities of transmitters. A challenging task in this project is to organize the material and find a logic behind the selection of the topics made by the "author-compiler." To approach the question of the content, we consider two elements at work in the transmission process: the text and, when the *mashyakha* is transmitted, the context of its transmission—at least, in relation to the circle of teaching.

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[20] Dickinson, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī 486, makes the hypothesis that the content of the collection is almost a superficial matter and the main issue in the recorded sessions of transmission is the elevation of the *isnād*. He states that the major problem after the first centuries is that the soundness of transmission has fallen.

From this perspective, several questions are raised: What are the textual and contextual elements at work during the citation of the narratives attributed to the masters? By this, we mean the analysis of the narrative elements in the document referring to the historical context of the document, the social status of the participants, their gender, and their role in the elevation of the chain of transmission. Among the questions we intend to raise are, for example, the following: Do the contextual elements influence a transmitter when he cites a dream narrative related to a meeting between his master and the Prophet Muhammad?[21] In other words, what elements give a specific text the status of a narrative that is worth quoting in a *mashyakha*? How are the concepts of *ḥadīth* science used in the documents? And, to what purpose are they used in the transmission process? Thus, we are analyzing the text in order to answer these questions and to contribute to the study of the transmission of texts in the post-Six Books period.

The first part of our article deals with the description of a selection of *mashyakha*s and focuses on the different layers of actors (i.e., transmitters). The second part examines two problems: terminology and literary content. Both topics complement each other, and their coherence is related to the relationship between the form of the text and its internal logical construction; between soul and body, so to speak, following the expression of Jan Just Witkam describing the link between codicological aspects and the manuscript's content.[22]

2 Different Layers of Actors

Like many other texts—not only *ḥadīth*s and texts dealing with religion—a *mashyakha* was often read in public before listeners during reading and hearing (*qirāʾa wa-samāʿ*) sessions and is therefore enriched with the testimonies of its lectors and auditors. The concept of transmission is here expanded: not only does the *mashyakha* contain the names and identities of several masters who transmitted to a *shaykh*, but the written document is also surrounded by the names and signatures of those who read it under the authority of a master or listened to a learned man authorized to transmit it. And the *mashyakha* is transmitted together with its *samāʿ*s and *ijāza*s. There are various ways to name the "dedicatee," and sometimes the appellation shows that the document is no longer kept in the hands of its "dedicatee," for example in a *mashyakha* written down in the sixth/twelfth century that we will examine below.

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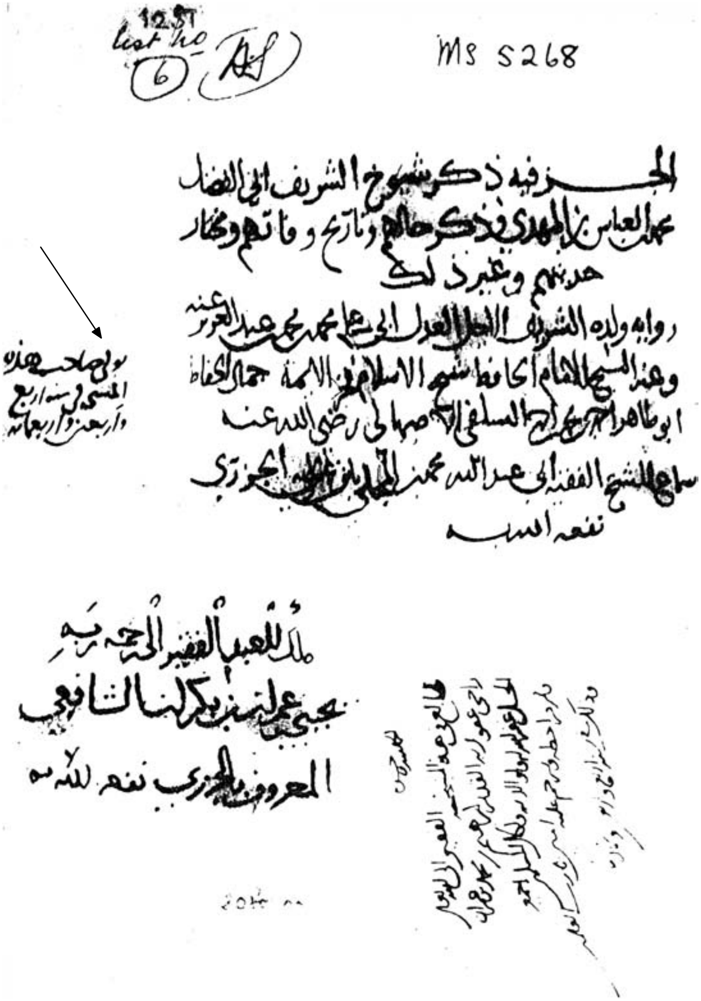
[21] See the spiritual value of relics, such as the sandal of the Prophet, in the transmission context in Dickinson, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī 482.

[22] Witkam, *Ijāza* 130.



12.ST list no 6 MS 5268

الجزء فيه ذكر شيوخ الشريف أبي الفضل
محمد بن العباس بن المهدي فيه ذكر حالهم وتاريخ وفاتهم ومختار
حديثهم وغير ذلك
رواية ولده الشريف الأجل العدل أبي علي محمد بن محمد بن عبد العزيز عنه
وعند الشيخ الإمام الحافظ شيخ الإسلام فخر الأئمة جمال الحفاظ
أبو طاهر أحمد بن محمد بن أحمد السلفي الأصبهاني رضي الله عنه
سماع للشيخ الفقيه أبي عبد الله محمد [illegible] الجزري
نفعه الله به

توفي صاحب هذه
المشيخة في سنة أربع
وأربعين وأربعمائة

ملك للعبد الفقير إلى رحمة ربه
يحيى [illegible] الشافعي
المعروف بالجزري نفعه الله به

FIGURE 18.1 ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty Arab. 5268, fol. 1 recto, title page, see left margin

→ *tuwuffiyya ṣāḥib hādhihi l-mashyakha sanat 444* (this *mashyakha's* dedicatee died in 444). *Ṣāḥib*, which originally meant "possessor" or "companion,"[23] here designates the dedicatee.

The question is, were *mashyakha*s continuously transmitted, or were they kept in the hands of the dedicatee as a personal treasure? What weight does the *mashyakha* carry, and did it evolve over the centuries? In any case, we can characterize four kinds of *mashyakha*s.

2.1 *First Case: The Shaykh Collects His Masters' Names*

The shaykh is the person we refer to as the "dedicatee," and, in this first case, he also declares himself the *mukharrij*, the "author-compiler" of his own text. This is the historian al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348),[24] who wrote down the list of his masters' biographies. The manuscript is a copy of this text from one century later, the only one—at least to our knowledge—preserved in a library (Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 12, fol. 204 recto–218 recto):[25]

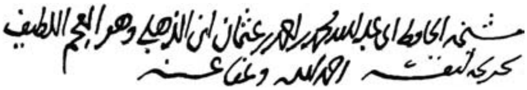


FIGURE 18.2 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 12, fol. 204 recto

> *Mashyakhat al-ḥāfiẓ Abī ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Dhahabī wa-huwa l-muʿjam*
> *al-laṭīf // takhrījuhu li-nafsihi raḥimahu Allāh wa-ʿafā ʿanhu.*

List of the masters of Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Dhahabī; it is a small[26] alphabetical repertoire // he wrote it down by himself, may Allāh give him praise and forgiveness.

At the end of the text appears the date 837/1434, which was when the copyist, Ibn Zurayq,[27] completed his work:

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[23] Al-Bāshā, *Alqāb* 367.

[24] In this document, he refers to himself as "Ibn al-Dhahabī." He also does so in the autograph manuscripts of his *Tārīkh al-Islām* that are kept in Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphane, Ayasofya 3010 to 3014. See Bencheneb and Somogyi, al-Dhahabī, Shams al-Dīn.

[25] Al-Dhahabī, *Muʿjam* 61–67: *samāʿāt* and index, s.v. -s.

[26] Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 532: *laṭīf* meaning "modest, without pretention."

[27] Nāṣir al-Dīn Abū l-Baqā' Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, like his father and his

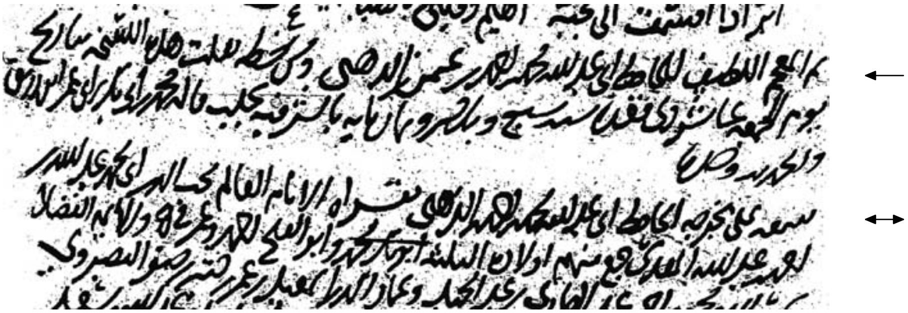

FIGURE 18.3 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 12, fol. 217 recto

⟶ *Tamm al-Muʿjam al-laṭīf li-l-ḥāfiẓ Abī ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān b. al-Dhahabī wa-min khaṭṭihi nuqilat hādhihi l-mashyakha bi-Tārīkh // yawm al-jumʿa 10 dhī l-qaʿdā sanat 837 bi-l-Sharafiyya bi-Ḥalab. Qālahu Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Abī ʿUmar Ibn Zurayq wa-l-ḥamdu lillāh waḥdahu.*

End of the "Small Dictionary" by the learned Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān b. al-Dhahabī. This *mashyakha* was copied from his own handwriting in al-Sharafiyya, in Aleppo, Friday the 10th of Dhū l-Qaʿdā 837. The text has been read [during a session] by *Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Abī ʿUmar Ibn Zurayq*. The praise is only to God.

Then, the same qualifier is found at the beginning of the certificate that follows the *mashyakha*:

↔ *Samiʿa ʿalā mukharrijihi al-ḥāfiẓ Abī ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Dhahabī* […]. *bi-qirāʾat al-imām al-ʿālim Muḥibb al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Maqdisī*[28] *jamʿun min-hum awlāduhu al-thalātha Abū Bakr Muḥammad wa-Abū l-Fatḥ Aḥmad wa-ʿUmar* […].

An assembly, among them his three sons Abū Bakr Muḥammad, Abū l-Fatḥ Aḥmad and ʿUmar, heard it [this dictionary] from his author-com-

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brother ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, is known as Ibn Zurayq (812–900/1409–1494); al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* vii, 169, nº 413; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* ix, 551.

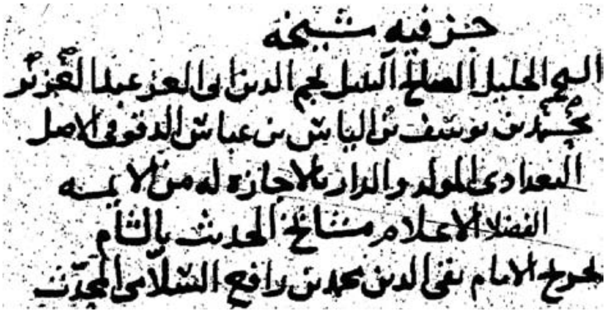
[28] Known as Ibn al-Muḥibb al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī, he died in the year 737/1336, and learned from more than a thousand *shuyūkh*. He was dedicated a *mashyakha* (*muʿjam shuyūkhihi*); see Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* viii, 201.

> piler the learned […] Ibn al-Dhahabī through the lecture that the imām, the learned man Muḥibb al-Dīn […] al-Maqdisī […].

A few remarks, which we will develop further on: The scribe refers to the author-compiler of his own *mashyakha*; he uses the praise formula *afā ʿanhu* (May God have mercy upon him), pointing out that the *mashyakha* was copied in 837/1433, which was after al-Dhahabī's death. At the end of the text, the same scribe adds to al-Dhahabī's name the qualifier *al-ḥāfiẓ* (the learned man) in order to pay homage to his reputation and knowledge.

2.2 *Second Case: The "Author-Compiler" Gathers the Names of the Masters of a Learned Man He Wants to Honor*

The *mukharrij* acts as an "author-compiler" because he actually does the work of collecting, ordering, and writing down the text. This is the case of the text preserved in ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *ḥadīth* 387, fol. 177 recto–183 recto, in which the historian Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī (d. 774)[29] collected a *mashyakha* for Najm al-Dīn al-Daqūqī and wrote with his own hand:



جزء فيه مشيخة
الشيخ الجليل الصالح النبيل نجم الدين ابي العز عبد العزيز
محمد بن يوسف بن الياس بن عباس الدقوقي الاصل
البغدادي المولد والدار بالاجازة له من الايمه
الفضلا الاعلام مشايخ الحديث بالشام
تخريج الامام تقي الدين محمد بن رافع السلامي المحدث

FIGURE 18.4 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *ḥadīth* 387, fol. 177 recto

> *Juzʿ fīhi mashyakhat // al-shaykh al-jalīl al-ṣāliḥ al-nabīl Najm al-Dīn Abī l-ʿIzz ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz // Muḥammad* [*sic*: two *ism-s*][30] *b. Yūsuf b. Ilyās b.*

---

[29] Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī Taqī l-Dīn Abū l-Maʿālī Muḥammad b. Rāfiʿ b. Hijris b. Rāfiʿ (704–774/1304–1372), see Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* viii, 403.

[30] The letter *ṣād* (meaning: *ṣaḥīḥ*) written over three names confirms that the name is Abū l-ʿIzz ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muḥammad, which is an unusual way of drawing up two *ism*-s. But the author-compiler/*mukharrij* Ibn Rāfiʿ insists on this way of naming al-Daqūqī in the colophon, fol. 193 recto. Maybe because his brother, or cousin, bears the same name (*ism*),

> *ʿAbbās al-Daqūqī l-aṣl // al-Baghdādī l-mawlid wa-l-dār bi-l-ijāza lahu min al-aʾimma // al-fuḍalāʾ al-aʿlām mashāʾikh al-ḥadīth bi-l-Shām // takhrīj al-imām Taqī l-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī al-muḥaddith.*
>
> Volume in which occurs the *mashyakha* of the honorable master, the pious and noble man, Najm al-Dīn […] al-Daqūqī as his origin, al-Baghdādī as his place of birth and residence, together with the transmission certificates (*ijāza*s) he had from the virtuous guides, the well-known scholars and masters of *ḥadīth* in al-Shām. Composed (*takhrīj*) by […] Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī, the *ḥadīth* transmitter.

Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī collected such a text for other members of this family. In his *Tārīkh ʿulamāʾ Baghdād*,[31] he says this, not about our Shams al-Dīn but probably about one of his brothers:

> *Kharrajtu lahu juzʾ ʿan jamāʿa min shuyūkhihi bi-l-ijāza aḥḍarahu li-akhīhi l-madhkūr bi-l-Qāhira aṣl ijāzatihi fa-kharrajtuhu.*
>
> I compiled especially for him a volume with the names of the masters who gave him transmission certificates (*ijāza*s). It is his brother [by his mother, named ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī] who came to me in Cairo with the original transmission certificates [given to his brother] and I wrote it out.

2.3 *Third Case: Three Scholars Are Actors in the* mashyakha

Al-Mashyakha l-Baghdādiyya, containing the names of masters originating from Baghdad, is preserved in Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *ʿāmm* 4505 (new reference: Asadiyya 234), fol. 1 recto–34 recto, with three scholars as actors and guarantors: the "dedicatee" Ibn Maslama, the "author-compiler" the historian al-Birzāl, and then an "oral transmitter" named Abū ʿAlī al-Wasfī, who heard (*samāʿ minhu*) and read the text under Ibn Maslama's (*li-ṣāḥibihi*, meaning *ṣāḥib al-mashyakha*: the "dedicatee") responsibility (*qirāʾat^{an} ʿalayhi*), as the title indicates:

Muḥammad, with another *kunya* and *laqab*: Abū ʿAbdallāh Shams al-Dīn, see Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī, *Tārīkh ʿulamāʾ Baghdād* 209–210, nº 179.

[31] See of his maternal brother's (*akhūhu li-ummihi*, named Najm al-Dīn al-Rabʿī) biography, Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī, *Tārīkh ʿulamāʾ Baghdād* 107.

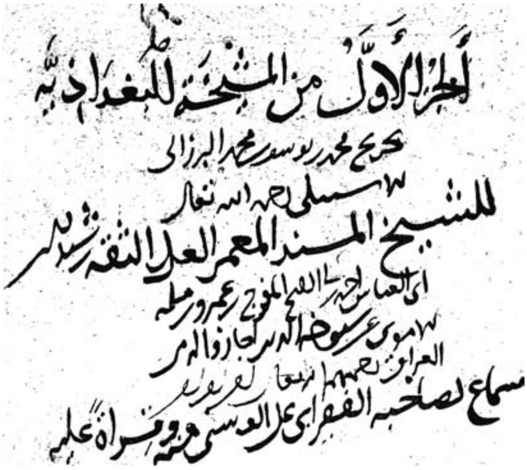


FIGURE 18.5 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *ʿāmm* 4505 / Asadiyya 234, fol. 1 recto

> *Al-juzʾ al-awwal min al-mashyakha l-Baghdādiyya // takhrīj Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Birzālī // al-Ishbīlī raḥimahu Allāh taʿālā // lil-shaykh al-musnid al-muʿammar al-ʿadl al-thiqa Rashīd al-Dīn // Abī l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Abī l-Fatḥ al-Mufarrij b. ʿAmr b. Maslama // al-Umawī ʿan shuyūkhihi lladhīn ajāzū lahu min // al-ʿIrāq raḥimahum Allāh taʿālā.*[32] *// Samāʿ li-ṣāḥibihi l-faqīr Abī ʿAlī al-Wasfī minhu wa-qirāʾat*^{an} *ʿalayhi.*
>
> First part of *al-Mashyakha l-Baghdādiyya* composed by (*takhrīj*) […] al-Birzālī[33] […] to honor the shaykh […] Ibn Maslama[34] and which includes the names of the Iraqi masters […] who gave him license to transmit. This *mashyakha* was transmitted by ear from the dedicatee by the humble Abū ʿAlī al-Wasfī[35] because he read it under his responsibility.

The last man quoted in this title is Abū ʿAlī, Ibn Maslama's companion, who heard the text and gave the first oral transmission (*samāʿ*) of it. The manuscript is not an original; Birzālī composed it, and a scribe wrote it down. This is followed by a *samāʿ*, a certificate meant to prove that a man named Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī al-Shāfiʿī read the text of the *mashyakha* under the supervision of Ibn Maslama, who himself had permission to transmit it from several authorities. It is important to note that he read not only the text but also the certificates of transmission that accompanied the text. This shows how the stream of texts can grow along the centuries with these new forms of testimony in *samāʿ*s and *ijāza*s.

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[32] The scribe wrote down the word *taʿālā* four times so that the space on the line did not stay empty. See Sublet, Dans l'Islam médiéval.

[33] The historian al-Birzālī, who died in 665/1266, is the author of several *mashyakha*s. See Rouabah and Sublet, al-Birzālī ʿAlam al-Dīn; Rouabah, Édition inattendue 309–318.

[34] Aḥmad b. Mufarrij b. ʿAlī, also known as Ibn Maslama (555–650/1160–1252), was in charge of the orphans' properties (*nāẓir al-aytām*) in Damascus. Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* vii, 430.

[35] Abū ʿAlī Rizq Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Abī ʿAlī al-Wasfī. Silafī gave him an *ijāza* in 645/1247, and he died the same year. See Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn, *Tawḍīḥ al-mushtabih* ix, 184–185.

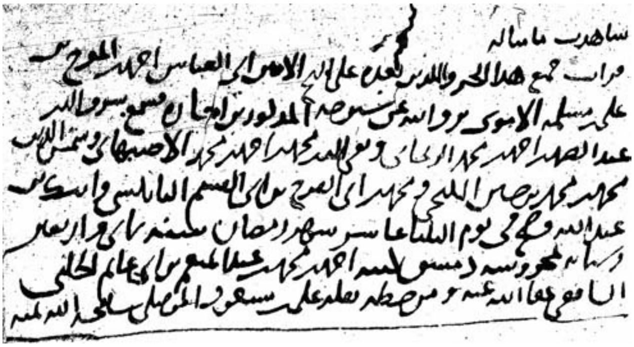


FIGURE 18.6 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *ʿāmm* 4505 / Asadiyya 234, fol. 0 (before fol. 1 recto)

Shāhadtu mā mithāluhu // Qaraʾtu jamīʿ hādhā l-juzʾ wa-lladhīn baʿdahu ʿalā l-shaykh al-amīn Abī l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. al-Mufarrij b. // ʿAlī b. Maslama al-Umawī bi-riwāyatihi ʿan shuyūkhihi al-madhkurīn ijāzat^{an} *fa-samiʿa Sharaf al-Dīn // ʿAbd al-Ṣamad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Rayḥānī wa-Taqī l-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Iṣbahānī wa-Shams al-Dīn // Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Kanjī wa-Muḥammad b. Abī l-Faraj b. Abī l-Qāsim al-Nābulusī wa-Aybak b. // ʿAbdallāh fī yawm al-thulāthāʾ ʿāshir shahr ramaḍān. sanat thamān wa-arbaʿīn // wa-sittimiʾa bi-maḥrūsa Dimashq. Katabahu Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Abī Ghānim al-Ḥalabī // al-Shāfiʿī* (*ʿafā Allāh ʿanhu*) *wa-min khaṭṭihi naqalahu ʿAlī b. Masʿūd al-Mawṣilī* (*sāmaḥahu Allāh bi-mannihi*).

I have verified in the copies of the document [the following:][36] I read the whole of this part (*juzʾ*) and the other parts which follow under the direc-

---

[36] See examples of the expression *shāhadtu bi-amthālihi* in documents of transmission in Leder, al-Sawwās, and al-Ṣāġarjī, *Muʿjam as-samâʿât* 81, 96, 128.

> tion of the trustworthy master Abū l-ʿAbbās [...] Ibn Maslama al-Umawī [and I quoted] the transmissions he got from his masters from whom he had an authorization to transmit (*ijāza*) [the names of scholars who witnessed the same reading session follows] on Tuesday 10 Ramaḍān 648 [/6 December 1250] in Damascus. The man who wrote this is Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Abī Ghānim al-Ḥalabī al-Shāfiʿī—may God have mercy upon him—and the one who transcribed this from his handwriting is ʿAlī b. Masʿūd al-Mawṣilī—may God grant him His mercy.

This certificate is an undated copy from an autograph. Thus, Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ghānim al-Ḥalabī read the text in 648/1250 under the supervision of Ibn Maslama, to whom the *mashyakha* is dedicated, and the text was copied by a scribe named ʿAlī b. Masʿūd al-Mawṣilī. Let us point out that "the text" means the whole text as it is in the manuscript, which includes the audition certificate (*samāʿ*). And this is essential, because the persons whose names are quoted in the audition certificates enlarge and extend the transmission, although their identities were not always registered in the biographical sources we are currently using. This shows how the stream of texts can grow over the centuries with these new forms of testimony in *samāʿ*s and *ijāza*s.

2.4 *Fourth Case: The "Referee"*

Another kind of *mashyakha* implicates three partners, two of whom we already know: the "dedicatee," the "author-compiler" and the third is the "referee," the master-ancestor to whom the document is devoted. In manuscript Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 80, folios 141–158, the title mentions those who made the writing of this *mashyakha* possible: the master-ancestor or the referee, the dedicatee and the author-compiler. We find the title twice, once in a shorter form:[37]

> *Man adrakahu al-Khallāl min aṣḥāb Ibn Mandah // takhrīj al-ḥāfiẓ Abī Mūsā l-Madīnī.*
>
> Here are those, among the companions of Ibn Mandah,[38] from whom al-Khallāl[39] received teaching // collected by the *ḥāfiẓ* Abū Mūsā l-Madīnī.[40]

---

[37] Fol. 142 recto.

[38] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq (310–395/922–1005). Rosenthal, Ibn Manda.

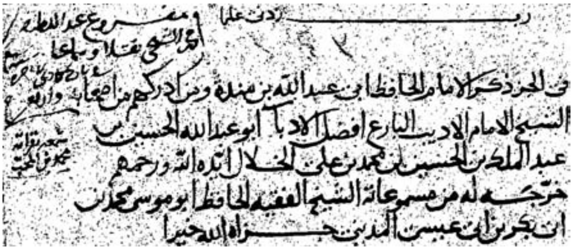
[39] Al-Ḥusayn Abū ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣbahānī died in 532/1137. Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* xii, 420, nº 377; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wuʿāt* i, 536, nº 1112.

[40] Muḥammad Abū Mūsā b. ʿUmar b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar. See Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*

Thus, we may characterize three scholars[41] with well-defined roles:

- the "referee," the master as a reference in the past: Abū ʿAbdallāh Ibn Mandah, who is the source of the transmission and the master-ancestor in this case;
- the "dedicatee," al-Khallāl, linked to the referee and whose masters' names are provided in the *mashyakha*;
- the "author-compiler" (*al-mukharrij*) of the *mashyakha*, al-Madīnī, who collected the names and data about the transmissions.

This definition appears clearer where the title is formulated differently. Hereafter, the names of the protagonists are more developed, and the superposition of authors or transmitters is described with a preciseness that does not diminish the complexity of the notion of "author-compiler." Folio 143 verso:



رب زدني علما

في الجزء ذكر الامام الحافظ ابن عبد الله بن منده ومن ادركهم من اصحابه
الشيخ الامام الاديب البارع افضل الادبا ابو عبد الله الحسين بن
عبد الملك بن الحسين بن محمد بن علي الخلال ايده الله ورحمه
خرجه له من مسموعاته الشيخ الفقيه الحافظ ابو موسى محمد بن
ابي بكر بن ابي عيسى المديني جزاه الله خيرا

FIGURE 18.7 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 80, fol. 143 verso

> *Fī l-juzʾ dhikr al-imām al-ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAbdallāh Ibn Manda wa-man adrakahum min aṣḥābihi // al-shaykh al-imām al-adīb al-bāriʿ afḍal al-udabāʾ Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. // ʿAbd al-Malik b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī l-Khallāl, ayyadahu Allāh wa-raḥimahu // kharrajahu lahu min masmūʿātihi al-shaykh al-faqīh al-ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā Muḥammad b. // Abī Bakr b. Abī ʿĪsā l-Madīnī, jazāhu Allāh khayr^{an}.*
>
> In this text the person in question is […] Ibn ʿAbdallāh Ibn Mandah and his companions // whom […] al-Khallāl […] // had met. The […] // shaykh al-Madīnī […] gathered his oral transmissions and wrote it down as an homage to him [*lahu* referring to al-Khallāl].

---

iv, nº 618; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* iv, 246, nº 1784: he was born in Isfahan, known in those days as "the town" (*al-madīna*), which led to his name, al-Madīnī. He was a great, learned man who travelled in search of knowledge and wrote treatises on the science of *hadīth*, and he died in 581/1185.

[41] He is the father of a well-known Damascene historian, al-Qāsim ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Birzālī. See Rouabah and Sublet, al-Birzālī ʿAlam al-Dīn.

We can summarize this abounding vitality of transmission: at the very beginning, we find the name of Abū ʿAbdallāh Ibn Mandah, then the names of his companions to whom he transmitted, and whose names are the topic of the *mashyakha* (*man adrakahum min aṣḥābihi*). Those names were gathered by al-Khallāl, the man to whom the *mashyakha* is dedicated; then appears the name of the author who collected the texts or fragments of texts and who selected from among the texts al-Khallāl wrote down in order to pay him respect (*kharrajahu lahu*), the one we know as al-Madīnī. The presence of three actors in the transmission, not two, as the title page shows, is not so obvious in ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty Lib., Arab. 5270:

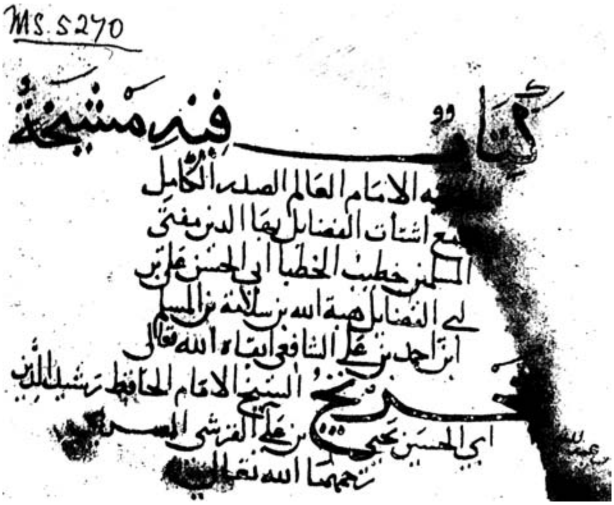

MS. 5270

FIGURE 18.8 ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty Lib., Arab. 5270, fol. 1 recto

> *Kitāb fīhi mashyakhat // al-faqīh al-imām al-ʿālim al-ṣadr al-kāmil // bi-*[??] *jāmiʿ ashtāt al-faḍāʾil Bahāʾ al-Dīn muftī // l-Muslimīn khaṭīb al-khuṭabāʾ Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. // Abī l-Faḍāʾil Hibat Allāh b. Salāma b. al-Musallim // ibn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Shāfiʿī*[42] *abqāʾahu Allāh taʿālā // takhrīj al-shaykh al-imām al-ḥāfiẓ Rashīd al-Dīn // Abī l-Ḥasan Yaḥyā b. ʿAlī l-Qurashī l-Miṣrī*[43] *// taraḥḥamahumā Allāh taʿālā.*
>
> This book contains a *mashyakha* [dedicated to] the jurist, the imam, the learned, the perfect [who possesses] all sorts of qualities, mufti of the

---

[42] Ibn al-Jumayyizī al-Shāfiʿī (559–649/1163–1251). See Vajda, *Dictionnaire des autorités* 72.

[43] Born in 584/1188, he died in 662/1263. Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* xxviii 239, nº 198.

> Muslims, chief-preacher Bahāʾ al-Dīn […] ʿAlī […] al-Shāfiʿī, may God the Almighty protect him. The sheikh Rashīd al-Dīn […] al-Miṣrī gathered it (*takhrīj*). God the Almighty have mercy upon both of them.

We may remark that the expression "*abqāʾahu Allāh taʿālā*" (May God the Almighty protect him) means that the dedicatee Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī is still living.

The introduction explains how the *mashyakha* was conceived:

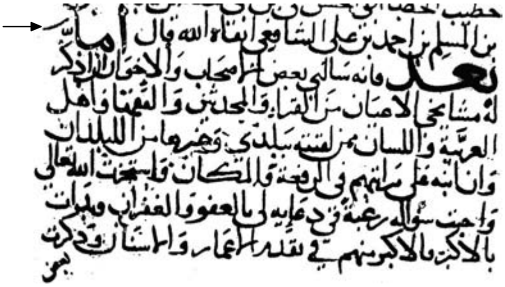


FIGURE 18.9 ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty Lib., Arab. 5270, fol. 1 verso

→ *Ammā // baʿd faʾinnahu saʾalanī baʿḍ al-aṣḥāb wa-l-ikhwān an adhkura // lahu mashāʾikh al-aʿyān min al-qurrāʾ wa-l-muḥaddithīn wa-l-fuqahāʾ wa-ahl // al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-lisān mimman laqītuhu bi-baladī wa-ghayrihā min al-buldān // wa-an unabbih ʿalā marātibihim fī l-rifʿa wa-l-makān wa-stakhart Allāh taʿālā // wa-ajabtu suʾālahu* […]

> One of my companions and friends asked me to enumerate to him, whose celebrated masters I met in my country or elsewhere, whether they were Quran readers, *ḥadīth* transmitters, jurists or learned men with whom I spent some time in my country and elsewhere, [and to introduce them] according to their rank [in scholarship] and to the consideration they enjoyed (with God's permission). I answered his request […].

A little further—not in the title but in the text, fol. 2 recto up to fol. 4 verso—the third person, who has a long biography and who plays the role of the "referee," the most important transmitter, al-Silafī, appears.[44] Although he is a contemporary of Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī (d. 649/1251), he is quoted first and has the longest biography in the text, fol. 3 recto, line 6:

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[44] Gilliot, al-Silafī S̲h̲ams al-Dīn.

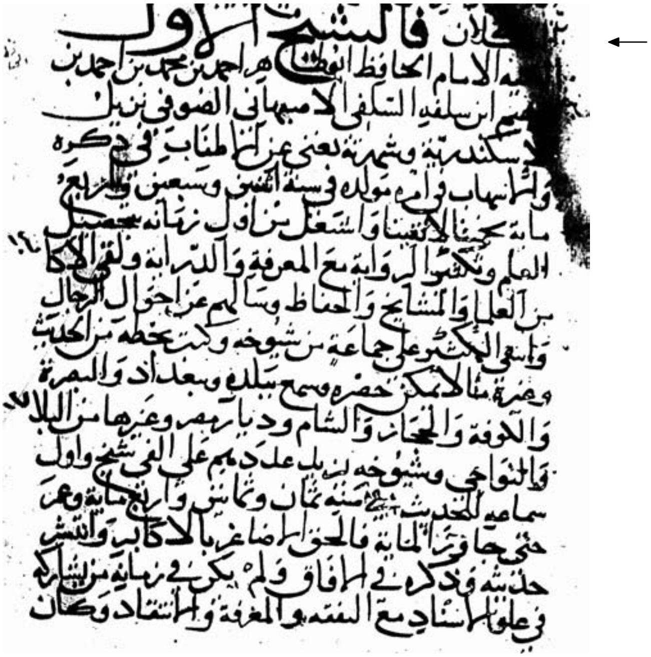

FIGURE 18.10 ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty Lib., Arab. 5270, fol. 3 recto

→ *fa-l-shaykh al-awwal* […] *al-Silafī l-Iṣbahānī l-Ṣūfī* […]

The first shaykh is al-Silafī l-Iṣbahānī l-Ṣūfī.

The passage shows that al-Silafī, born 478/1085, the celebrated Shafiʿite *muḥaddith*, appears as the master and not as the ancestor. He is known as "*al-akbar minhum*" (the greatest of them) in the text. al-Silafī is the first *shaykh* to be quoted (fol. 2 recto to 4 verso, 5 and a half pages). Is this tutorship real? The portrait drawn in the text is almost an ideal portrait, and the connection with the "dedicatee" is not obvious but is quite possible. Al-Silafī is the master of two thousand learned men spread over several countries, from Baghdad to Cairo and the Hejaz, and he began to transmit in the year 488 (when he was ten) and continued to do so when he had almost reached the age of 100 in 578/1182. Ibn Maslama, who was born in 559/1163, met him in 573/1177 and 574/1178 (fol. 3 verso) at transmission sessions. The other masters are Shafiʿites—among them, the well-known historian Ibn ʿAsākir is named (fol. 14 recto to fol. 16 recto)—who have a connection to the city of Baghdad, which explains the title's wording.

As a conclusion to this *riwāya* point of view, let us recall that an *ijāza* is not a mere agreement between a master and a disciple. It is a contract between them, written down as a strong link using the word *sharṭ* to express a mutual agreement, a convention between the one who reads the text and gives *ijāza* to the assistants, whose names are quoted carefully. In Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., ms. 4505 (new reference: Asadiyya 234), *al-Mashyakha l-Baghdādiyya*, fol. 12 verso, the text of a *samāʿ*, dated 650/1252, the last line before the word *ṣaḥḥaḥa* reads:

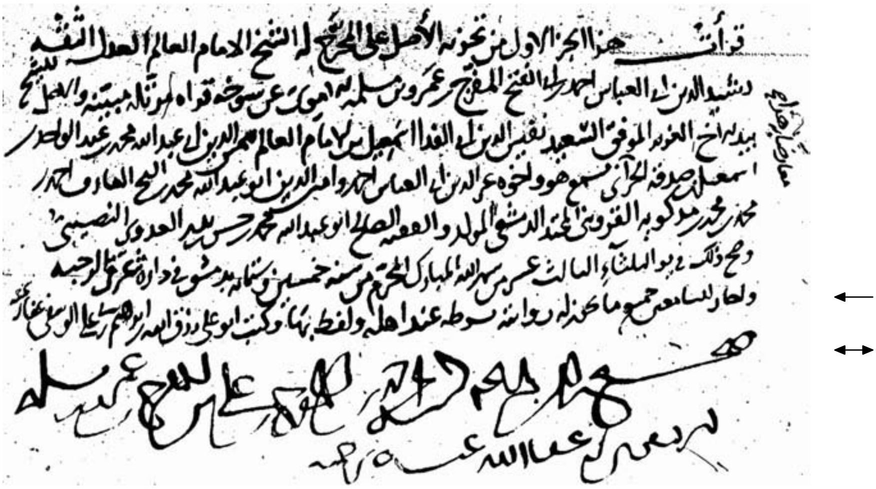

FIGURE 18.11 ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., ms. 4505 / Asadiyya 234, fol. 12 verso

> → *Wa-ajāza lil-sāmiʿīn jamīʿ mā yajūz lahu riwāyatuhu bi-sharṭihi ʿinda ahlihi wa-lafaẓa bihā wa-kataba Abū ʿAlī Rizq Allāh Ibrāhīm b. Abī ʿAlī al-Wasfī ʿafā Allāh ʿanhu*
>
> He granted the audience permission to transmit all the matter [Ibn Maslama] gave him according to the conditions in current use among the people *of transmission* [i.e., hadith experts] (*ʿinda ahlihi*); Abū ʿAlī Rizq Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Abī ʿAlī al-Wasfī, may God forgive his sins, said so and wrote it down (*wa-lafaẓa bihā wa-kataba*).

The *ṣaḥīḥ* inscription that follows reinforces the solemnity of the transmission and gives it an authentication, by the hand of the old *shaykh* to whom the *mashyakha* is dedicated. The *samāʿ* is dated 650/1252, the year Ibn Maslama, who was born in 555/1160, died:

↔ *Ṣaḥḥaḥa dhālika kullahu, katabahu Aḥmad b. Abī l-Fatḥ b. ʿAlī b. al-Mufarrij b. ʿAmr b. Maslama // al-Umawī, ʿafā Allāh ʿanhu bi-raḥmatihi*

> The whole is authenticated by Aḥmad […] b. al-Mufarrij // al-Amawī, may God have mercy upon him.

Thus, the *mashyakha* does not only to bring to light a relationship between a "dedicatee" and his masters. Most important is the presence of a beloved "referee," who can be linked to him through several transmitters or directly connected to him and, above all, praised by him—or by the *mukharrij*-author-compiler, who thus takes his share of the blessings—as a most valuable link to the vast stream of transmission throughout the centuries in Muslim lands. The fact that the link between transmitters can be expressed in several ways increases the strength of their everlasting proximity and continuity.

3 The Terminology of *ḥadīth* Science in *mashyakha* Documents

When *mashyakha* appears as a genre in the tenth century, systematic books of *ḥadīth* science were developed, dedicating a large amount of reflexion on the ways the concepts are drawn up.[45] The "authors-compilers" of the *mashyakha*s, the "dedicatees" themselves or their students, are aware of the conceptual turn of the history of *ḥadīth*. The use of the terminology of transmission in the documents will be examined in view of its involvement in the conceptual framework of *ḥadīth* science.

The *mashyakha* document is characterized by its pragmatic aspect. The aim of the document is often declared as closely related to the qualities and defaults, "*ḥāl* pl. *aḥwāl*" (literally: state), of the masters and evokes the authenticity of the chain of transmission.[46] Theoretically, the high chain of transmission (*sanad ʿālī*) contains a direct line of uninterrupted oral transmission, between the different links involved in a journey in search of knowledge, that connect it to the transmitters.[47] The oral nature of the transmission is the principle of the high chain. In addition to the oral transmission, the moral qualities of the different authorities are essential. In this respect, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāmahurmuzī says:

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[45] Robson, al-D̲j̲arḥ.

[46] The article "Ḥāl" in EI^2 is limited to its technical meaning in Sufism; cf. Gardet, Ḥāl. For an allusion to its technical sense in the science of the foundations of the law, see Macdonald, Ḥāl. For its meaning in *ḥadīth* science, see Juynboll, Rid̲j̲āl.

[47] For the theoretical meaning of the high chain of transmission, see Schacht, *Origins* 171–175; Cook, Eschatology, and Cook, Opponents. See also the recent study of Witkam, High and low 129. We would add that in addition to the short aspect of the high *isnād*, the moral attributes of the transmitters are also essential. A long *isnād* could be higher than a short

> One should not consider as a source for judgment the *ḥadīth* of a transmitter who recounts the traditions (*akhbār*) of the Prophet without saying, "I heard (*samiʿtu*)"; or "So-and-so transmitted to us (*ḥaddathanā*)"; or "So-and-so announced to us (*anbaʾanā*)"; or "So-and-so informed us (*akhbaranā*)"; or any other word (*lafẓa*) that implies the authenticity (*ṣiḥḥa*) of the transmission by hearing (*samāʿ*) or by analogous means.[48]

A detailed look at the *mashyakha* documents shows that the issue of the high chain of transmission is often replaced by the earliest copy of the *mashyakha* transmitted directly from the master.[49] In the following, we will first show the involvement of the authors in the conceptual framework of *ḥadīth* science and the scientific project they draw up behind the genre of *mashyakha*, and then we will demonstrate the double method of alignment and dismissal of the concepts of *ḥadīth* science. Behind the question about the way the concepts are related to *ḥadīth* science, our aim is to address some indepth questions about the aim of the composition of the *mashyakha*.

The manuscript Dublin 5268, dated to the twelfth century (see Figure 18.1), contains a volume of *mashyakha* (*al-juzʾ fīhi dhikr shuyūkh*) in folios 1 recto–29 verso. At the beginning of the document, it is specified that the teaching sessions are sessions of reading (*qirāʾa*). There are two teaching sessions from which the document derives. In the month Dhū l-Ḥijja 495/November 1101, the first of these teaching sessions took place in Baghdad under the authority of the son of the dedicatee, Abū ʿAlī al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Mahdī, who learned the *mashyakha* directly from his father.[50] We should specify that Ibn al-Mahdī is not the reader but represents the authority who controls the authenticity of the reading sessions. The reader of the Baghdad session is the scholar Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad

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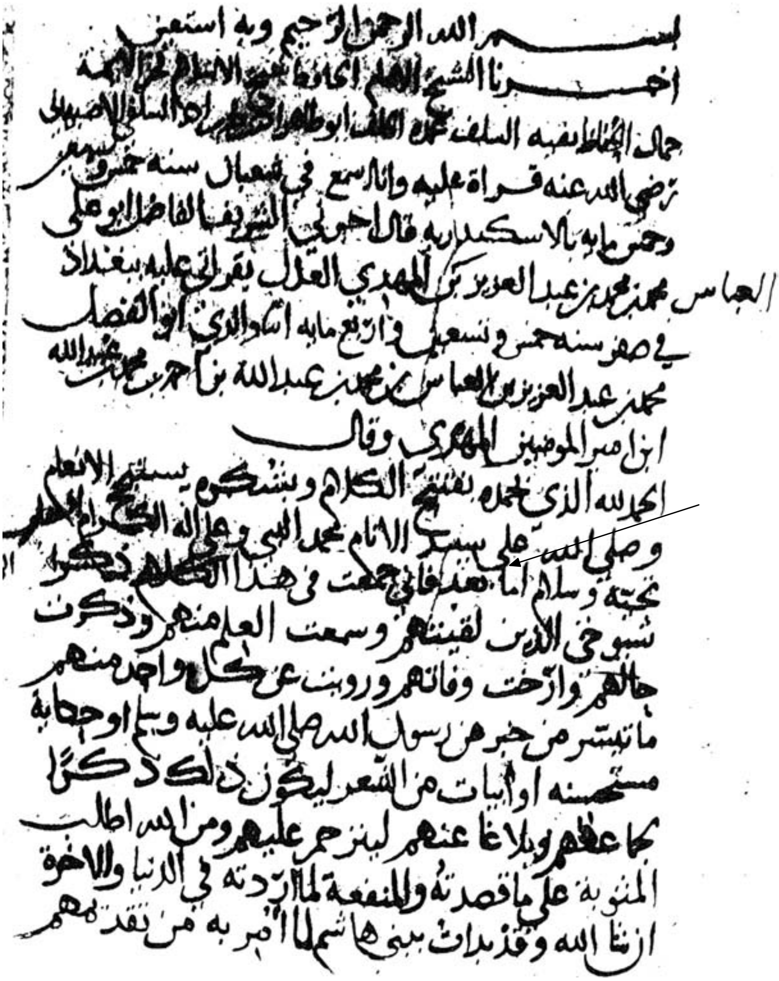
one when the totality of the transmitters is reliable. Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī insists on the complementarity of the two conditions: short chain and reliability of every link, and he affirms that the definition of the high chain as the opposite of the low chain is a mistake, because the difference between the two chains does depends not only on the number of transmitters but also on their quality as reliable links; see al-Naysābūrī, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* 11–12. Witkam, *Ijāza* 124–136.

[48] Al-Rāmahurmuzī, *Muḥaddith* 450.

[49] Witkam, High and low 139.

[50] Fol. 1 verso, l. 7.

al-Silafī l-Iṣbāhānī. He transmitted the document in Jumādā al-Ūlā 575/December 1179 in Alexandria,[51] one year before his death. One of the participants in the Alexandria session, Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mujallī b. ʿAlī al-Jazarī,[52] is the author of the *samāʿ*. The document relates the names of the masters of Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās Ibn al-Mahdī (d. 444/1052), the "dedicatee," the "author-compiler," and the narratives attributed to them. We find the following statement by Ibn al-Mahdī:



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه استعين
اخبرنا الشيخ الامام الحافظ شيخ الاسلام فخر الائمة
جمال الحفاظ بقية السلف [illegible] ابو طاهر [illegible] السلفي الاصبهاني
رضي الله عنه قراءة عليه وانا اسمع في شعبان سنة خمس وسبعين
وخمسمائة بالاسكندرية قال اخبرني الشريف القاضي ابو علي
العباس محمد بن محمد بن عبد العزيز بن المهدي العدل بقراءتي عليه ببغداد
في صفر سنة خمس وتسعين واربعمائة انا الشيخ ابو الفضل
محمد بن عبد العزيز بن العباس بن محمد بن عبد الله بن احمد بن محمد بن عبد الله
ابن امير المؤمنين المهدي وقال
الحمد لله الذي نحمده بفتح الكلام ونشكره بختم الانعام
وصلى الله على سيد الانام محمد النبي وعلى آله الكرام الاعلام
تحية وسلام اما بعد فاني جمعت في هذا الكتاب ذكر
شيوخي الذين لقيتهم وسمعت العلم منهم وذكرت
حالهم وارخت وفاتهم ورويت عن كل واحد منهم
ما تيسر من خبر عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم او حكاية
مستحسنة او ابيات من الشعر ليكون ذلك ذكرا
[illegible] وبلاغا عنهم ليترحم عليهم ومن الله اطلب
المثوبة على ما قصدته والمنفعة لما اردته في الدنيا والآخرة
ان شا الله وقد بدات ببني هاشم لما امر به من تقديمهم

FIGURE 18.12 ms. Dublin, Chester Beatty Arab. 5268, fol. 1 verso

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[51] Ibid., l. 5.

[52] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 290.

> ⟶ *Fa-innī jamaʿtu fī hādhā l-kitāb dhikr shuyūkhī lladhīn laqītuhum wa-samiʿtu l-ʿilm minhum wa-dhakartu ḥālahum wa-arrakhtu wafātahum wa-rawaytu ʿan kull wāḥid minhum mā tayassara min khabar ʿan rasūl Allāh* […] *thumma al-ʿudūl al-mujmaʿ ʿalā thiqatihim.*[53]
>
> I mentioned in this book those among my masters whom I have met, and I transmitted the science from their oral teaching. I mentioned their qualities and defaults and gave their dates of death. I narrated under the authority of each one of them what is easy among the *ḥadīth* of the messenger of God [… and] then I mentioned the witnesses whose trust is an object of consensus.

In this short presentation of the masters' names that are listed in the book, a number of key concepts are noted: *liqāʾ* (a meeting implying oral transmission), *samāʿ* (oral transmission), *ḥāl* (pl. *aḥwāl*; the qualities and defaults of the transmitters), *ʿadl* (person of good morals), and *thiqa* (trustworthy). Additionally, there are other concepts quoted as commentary about the ways the documents were transmitted within the teaching circles. For example, the author specifies whether the teaching session consists of reading (*qirāʾa*) or listening (*samāʿ*). The *qirāʾa* session is composed of the transmission of the text based on written material from the master, as well as from the student, who follows the reading using a written copy. The *samāʿ* session is based on its oral transmission. The sum of the concepts could be summarized by these two principles: the physical encounter of the principal actors of the *mashyakha* and their moral portrait.

The use of the concepts of *ḥadīth* science announces that the "author-compiler" is aware of the implications of the two theoretical conditions for the elevation of the chain of transmission: the physical encounter that implies oral transmission and the moral and scientific profiles of the masters. Both conditions are encompassed in the concept of *ḥāl*. The description of the circumstances of the transmission, using the two theoretical conditions of the *sanad* elevation, complete the biographical project behind the composition of the *mashyakha* and increase the historical probability of the oral transmission and the high chain of transmission. A specific historical detail is accorded great importance—namely, the date of the earliest copy heard from the master, as we saw in Ibn al-Mahdī's example. The issue of the high chain is important in the *mashyakha* texts, but it is restricted to the specific link between the student and the master and does not involve the totality of the links in the chain.[54]

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[53] Fol. 1 verso, ll. 12–15.

[54] Witkam, High and low 131.

Nevertheless, despite the awareness about the *sanad* elevation issue, we note that historical information about some specific circumstances of the transmission is often dismissed. In the manuscript Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 80, folios 141 to 158, the sixth/twelfth-century scholar from Isfahan Abū ʿĪsā al-Madīnī (d. 581/1185) says in commenting on the chain of transmission of a given *ḥadīth*:

> *idhnan in lam yakun samāʿan*[55] ([I have transmitted] by authorization, or perhaps I transmitted it using a reading certificate); he adds the following comments:
>
> *wa-lā naʿlamuhu* (we do not know this [*ḥadīth*]),[56]
>
> *lā yaḥḍurunī samāʿ ī minhu* (I do not recall the authorized version of this *ḥadīth*),[57]
>
> *wa-lā arā ʿalayhi āthār al-samāʿ wa-aẓunnunī samiʿtuhu* (I find no trace of a reading certificate concerning this *ḥadīth* and I think that I did hear it).[58]

Thus, the "author-compiler" attests that he cannot verify the paths of transmission of a specific *ḥadīth* and, in the second example, declares his lack of knowledge of the circumstances of transmission. To negate crucial information about the oral transmission or to cast doubt about the exact meaning of the notion of *samāʿ* shows a gap between the conceptual rigor evidenced in the document and the dismissal of the scientific meaning of the same concepts.

The discrepancy between the theoretical meanings of the concepts and their usage among *ḥadīth* scholars has already been pointed out by Gautier Juynboll.[59] He focuses on the notion of "usage" (*istiʿmāl*) and takes into account the gap between the theoretical meaning and the meaning that emerges from the use of the concept among *ḥadīth* scholars. He cites the fifth/eleventh-century author al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), whom we already mentioned, who develops a theory about the same gap.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's work illustrates the gap between the definition and its usage. In a chapter called "The knowledge of expressions used by the people of *ḥadīth*," he writes:

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[55] Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 80, fol. 146 verso.

[56] Ibid., 80, fol. 150 recto.

[57] Ibid., 80, fol. 149 verso.

[58] Ibid., 80, fol. 154 recto.

[59] Juynboll, *Mursal*.

> The attribution of the qualifier “linked” (*musnad*) to a *ḥadīth* signifies that its chain of transmission is unbroken between its transmitter and those from whom he heard it. Often [experts] use the term [*musnad*] to designate [a *ḥadīth*] attributed specifically to the Prophet.[60]

He distinguishes between the theoretical definition of the term “linked” (*musnad*) and its usage (*istiʿmāl*) by the experts.[61] He reconstructs the meaning of the term by looking at how *ḥadīth* experts use it. Its usage became a linguistic reality specific to authors predating al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, who makes note of this literary tradition.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī presents other elements that illuminate the meaning of “usage”:

> Regarding an interrupted (*mursal*) [*ḥadīth*], its chain of transmission is broken in precisely this way: one of the transmitters did not hear it directly from the transmitter who precedes him. However, most [*ḥadīth*] that are called *mursal* according to the usage [of the experts] are *ḥadīth* transmitted by a Follower, according to the Prophet.[62]

The modification of the meaning of the term *mursal* is due to the successive interventions of several earlier authors who contemplated the interruption of the chain of direct transmission between the Follower and the Prophet. According to the author, the experts’ use of a term in their criticism of texts constitutes a definition in and of itself, which has the same importance as its theoretical definition. Usage restricts the theoretical definition of a term, and the experts’ use of it gives it a conventional meaning. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī affirms that usage generates a tacit agreement between the authors regarding one meaning rather than another. While the theoretical definition establishes a broad meaning for the terms of *ḥadīth* science, their usage establishes their terminological definitions. In *ḥadīth* science, usage, along with theory, produces the meanings of terms. The author thus confers upon usage the same authority as theory in determining the sense of a term. The transfer of the conceptual meaning from the theoretical level to the level of usage emphasizes the gap between the theory of *ḥadīth* and the history of *ḥadīth*.

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the partial transformation of the concept described by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and the use of the concepts of *ḥadīth* science in the *mashyakha* documents. The consistency of our authors is random. Some information is treated rigorously, other information less so. The earliest date for the authentic transmission of the copy of the *mashyakha* is the most important matter in the document and is the main focus of the author's attention and effort. The conceptual involvement of the "author-compiler" concerns the specific time and space in the chain of transmission in which the copy of the *mashyakha*, based on the earliest session he held, was produced. In the *mashyakha*, the focus is on the necessity for continuity in the transmission of the document in order to avoid its disappearance, which would mean its "death."[63] The general presence, however superficial, of the concepts related to *ḥadīth* science in the documents makes it appear as though *ḥadīth* science and the issue of authenticity are being given consideration because they refer to an ideal of transmission.[64]

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[60] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāya* 21.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

The treatment of the concepts in the *mashyakha* partially answers the question: What is the *mashyakha* for? The issue of authenticity and its conceptual framework show one aspect of the aims of the document—the high chain of transmission. On the other hand, when the same aspect is neglected in specific contexts, this reveals the limits of the authenticity issue. Except for the highest chain between the author and the dedicatee, the other aspects of the *mashyaḫa* have a secondary value. The contents of the *mashyakha* provide a more precise idea about the document, its usage, and its value.

4 The *shuhūd* in *mashyakha* Documents

The problem of literary genres is outside the scope of ancient Arabic literature, and so we address the question related to literary genres starting from the inner logic of the *mashyakha* documents. By literary genres, we mean the variety of material we find in the content of the *mashyakha*, which in the terminology of *ḥadīth* is called *matn*. The notion of genre is nevertheless very complex, and it often calls for complementary notions.

One of the particularities of a literary genre is the awareness of its existence by the author. In the *mashyakha* documents, we find various literary genres: *ḥadīth*, narratives attributed to several authorities, anecdotes, and so forth. Needless to say, none of this material seems to be able to describe, on its own, the complexity of the content of the *mashyakha*. Nevertheless, as we mentioned above, the *mashyakha* is above all a list of names of masters with an additional variety of texts transmitted under their authority. What is the value of the material narrated in the *matn*, then, and how is it organized? To what extent can we consider the *matn* as a secondary aim in the document?

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[63] Leder, Understanding 60.

[64] Witkam, High and low 132.

If we look at the content separately from the structure, we find that the superposition of topics in the documents is independent from the biographical issue. For instance, narratives about miracles occupy a large part of the document. The miracles are narrated through a specific literary structure that suggests an endless description of miraculous events. It often concerns the Prophet and also includes figures from the *ḥadīth* milieu, such as the "dedicatee" himself, and no comments are made by the "author-compiler" about the value of the narrative containing the miraculous event.[65] Their historicity is suggested through the equal status that is given in the text to the narrative about miracles and to the historical material. Ritual obligations are another important topic that constitutes a genre in itself. This genre is often a short text, obviously intended to be learned by heart. Similar to ritual *ḥadīth*s in the *ḥadīth* compilations, the ritual *ḥadīth*s in *mashyakha* documents enumerate benefits and punishments as consequences of human actions. The third genre category concerns proverbs and anecdotes regarding, for example, daily life and death and anecdotes about the Prophet's life. We find topics such as the ethics of fasting, the lawfulness of the meat produced by Jews and Christians, and clothing.[66]

According to our selection of documents, the "author-compiler" takes into account two parameters in his compilation: (1) the balance between the number of prophetic sayings and the other accounts; and (2) the reference to *ḥadīth* science. When we first glance at the document, we note that the "author-compiler" gives various narratives, such as *ḥadīth*, proverbs, and *akhbār*, the same importance in terms of the space dedicated to them in the document. Nevertheless, there is another level of complexity in the literary genres expressed in the very definition of the composition of the *mashyakha*. For instance, in the manuscript Dublin 5268, title page, fol. 1 (see Figure 18.1), the author-compiler, Ibn al-Mahdī, declares at the beginning of the document:[67]

> *al-juzʾ fīhi dhikr shuyūkh* [...] *wa-dhikr ḥālihim wa-Tārīkh wafātihim wa-mukhtār ḥadīthihim* ***wa-ghayri dhālika.***

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[65] See, e.g., the meeting between the Prophet and the scholar Ibn Manda in ms. Damascus, Asadiyya Lib., Ẓāhiriyya, *majmūʿ* 80, fol. 144 verso–145 verso.

[66] Regarding the exclusion of anecdotal material from the main compilation, like in al-Bukhārī, see Witkam, High and low 126.

[67] Figure 18.1, title page, fol. 1 recto, highlighted by us (see Figure 18.1 in this article).

> In this volume, we mention the names of the masters [...] and their qualities as transmitters, their dates of death and a selection of their *ḥadīth* **and other topics**.

When the same "author-compiler" enumerates in the following folio the details of the contents of the *mashyakha*, the issue of genre seems more and more heterogeneous, if not vague. This heterogeneity is expressed by the preposition ***aw*** (or) as it appears in the following quotation:

> [...] *wa-rawaytu ʿan kull wāḥid minhum mā tayassara min khabar min rasūl Allah ṣallā Allāh ʿalayhi wa-sallam* ***aw*** *ḥikāyat mustaḥsana* ***aw*** *abyāt min al-shiʿr.*
>
> [...] and narrated from each one of them a selection of narratives from the Prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, **or** recommended story **or** verses of poetry.[68]

This passage continues by adding a new element to the meaning of the collection as an act of memorization (*dhikr*) that leads to benefits in this life and in the afterlife.[69]

Behind the apparently random aspect of the literary genres in the *mashyakha* documents lies the superposition of genres that result from the superposition of the transmitters. The aim of the "author-compiler" in the composition of the *mashyakha* is the biographical project, and, in a way, the list of names justifies the list of texts.

As a tentative conclusion, while we are shaping our *Ṭalab al-ʿilm/Quest of Knowledge* project, we have gathered some reflections about the *mashyakha* that we will amplify and support as we analyze our first 60 documents.

The *mashyakha* document is a hybrid genre involving both a biographical project and a literary project. Behind the complexity of the different layers of actors, there is a system of transmission renewal based on the perpetual increase of the actors in the *mashyakha* documents.

The number of transmitters is extended, though the most important ones are the witnesses of the earliest session held by the "author-compiler." Alignment to the concepts of *ḥadīth* science is contrasted with the dismissal of the elevation issue whenever it does not concern the quasi-mythical first session.

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[68] Figure 18.12, fol. 1 verso.

[69] Ibid.

The biographical issue in the *mashyakha* is based on the selection process of the masters and, in the words of Georges Vajda, this very issue is linked to merit—not everyone deserves to be mentioned in a *mashyakha*.[70]

Another issue concerns the organization of the material and is closely linked to the dynamics of the transmission session, a major part of the composition of the document once it is transmitted, which includes improvisation, creativity, and all the means of literary composition. There is a dynamic link between the list of names and the list of texts, the one depending on the other. The paradox of the occasional attribution and withholding of importance to and from the elevation issue influences the perception of the *mashyakha*, and there is a switch from biography and the elevation issue to a literary narrative and a flow of themes that should be emphasized.

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[70] Vajda, Transmission orale 1.

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CHAPTER 19

The Use of Verse as a Pedagogical Medium, Principally in the Teaching of Grammar

Michael G. Carter

This paper examines the use of poetry in education, particularly in grammar, and offers some speculations about the origins of, and motivations for, the production of versified textbooks.

The most common metre for pedagogical verse in all disciplines is *rajaz*, usually in the *muzdawij* form, each half of the line rhyming and changing with every line, though *qaṣīda*-type monorhyme throughout the whole poem is often found, in all metres, including *rajaz*. Lines can also be grouped, according to rhyme, into strophic patterns of varying length.[1] Other poetic elaborations are *takhmīs*, converting an existing poem into stanzas of 5 half-lines,[2] and *tashṭīr*, the insertion of two additional half lines into each line of well-known poems.[3]

The three most famous *urjūza*s in grammar are the *Mulḥa* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122), the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), and its lesser known forerunner, the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Muʿṭī (d. 638/1231). However, this last is claimed to be metrically unique, being composed in a mixture of *rajaz* and *sarīʿ*. The two metres are so alike that even Ibn Khaldūn incorrectly refers to Ibn Muʿṭī's poem as an *urjūza*,[4] and in Western scholarship *rajaz* and *sarīʿ* are occasionally confused.[5]

Every subject in the curriculum of the *madrasa* is given metrical treatment, both the traditional Islamic syllabus of Quran,[6] *ḥadīth*, grammar, jurispru-

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[1] See Endress, Wissenschaftliche Literatur 471–473; Kilito, Discours didactique 79–81. By coincidence, all the examples in Table 19.2 are of non-*rajaz* monorhyme, some with the characteristic internal rhyme of the classical *qaṣīda* in their first line, but the *muzdawij* scheme is well represented elsewhere, particularly in longer *rajaz* poems.

[2] There is more than one *takhmīs* of the famous morpholexical *Maqṣūra* of Ibn Durayd (Brockelmann, GAL i, 112). However, purely syntactical poems do not seem to have been given this treatment.

[3] The *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik may be the only grammatical work to be restructured in this way (ibid. ii, 525).

[4] Al-Ṭanāḥī, intro. to Ibn Muʿṭī, *Fuṣūl* 34–35.

[5] Examples in Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 12 fn. 2, and cf. Frolov, *Arabic verse* 137 n. 5.

[6] Including, textual variants (*qirāʾāt*), orthographical issues, foreign words, rare words (*gharīb*),

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dence, and so forth, and the semiofficial "foreign" sciences of mathematics, philosophy, logic, metaphysics, and medicine. Many other topics not taught there, such as archery, chess, hunting, minerals, magic, and pigeon breeding, are also covered;[7] there is even an *urjūza* on people who have turned into animals,[8] and, on a less exotic plane, 1,500 lines of *rajaz* by al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791) listing his teachers and transmitters.[9] *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* and other literary works were turned into verse,[10] and there are metrical histories,[11] and innumerable poems in praise of knowledge and every other branch of learning.

As Table 19.1 shows, poems in all fields already appear within the first two centuries of Islam, those in the left column representing the natural sciences and other non-linguistic disciplines. It is noteworthy that, for the earliest period, there are so few works in either column, some of which are of doubtful authenticity (indicated by an asterisk).[12]

The authors in the column on the right deal with the full range of linguistic topics, such as orthography, Quran recitation, and lexicography, as well as syntax and morphology. The list is as complete as possible up until the sixth/twelfth century, subject to the limitations of the available source material, including works known only from catalogue entries or quotations. From the seventh/thirteenth century the number increases rapidly, and there is no attempt at an exhaustive list.

While *urjūza*, *manẓūma* and *qaṣīḍa*, also *takhmīs*, *tashṭīr*, *bāʾiyya*, *lāmiyya*, and so forth, are reliable indications of poetic form, it goes without saying that not every work bearing the word *naẓm* in its title is in verse: the *Naẓm al-Qurʾān* of Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934), for example, deals with the structure of the

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and recitation (*tajwīd*). Versified exegesis (*tafsīr*) is rare. A cursory search in Ahlwardt turned up only two rather late authors who are said to have composed versified *tafsīr*, al-Sijilmāsī (d. 1057/1647, a prolific versifier, Brockelmann, *GAL* ii, 459) and Muḥammad b. Salāma (d. 1149/1736, not in *GAL*), but neither work could be confirmed, see Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, MS 939 nos. 107 and 111.

[7] See Endress, Wissenschaftliche Literatur ii, 471–478 and Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 57–59. The range was equally wide in Greek, see Effe, *Dichtung passim*.

[8] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, MS 8166/8.

[9] *Alfiyyat al-sanad*. See Reichmut, *Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī* 92–93, also with references to other autobiographical poetry.

[10] See Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 46–52 on *Kalīla wa-Dimna*; Endress, Wissenschaftliche Literatur 473 for *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*.

[11] Rosenthal, *Historiography* 179–185; Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 55–56.

[12] For sources on the scientific poems, see Endress, Wissenschaftliche Literatur 471, n. 78, also Sezgin, *GAS* iii, 308; iv, 120–121; v, 216–217 and vi, 122–123.

Quran,[13] the *Naẓm al-jumān* of al-Mundhirī (d. 329/941) is a biographical prose work,[14] and the *Naẓm al-jawhar* of Eutychius (d. 328/939) is a historical text also in prose.[15] The *Naẓm al-jawāhir fī l-alfāẓ* of Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh is a (late?) reworking of a fourth/tenth-century lexical treatise for secretaries (*kuttāb*), but whether it is in prose or verse could not be determined, and it has been omitted from the Table.[16] For works entitled *Naẓm al-jumal*, see the discussion below.

Certain kinds of poetry with grammatical content are excluded from consideration in this paper, and therefore not represented in the Table. These are: (1) eulogies of grammar (e.g., one attributed to al-Kisāʾī, d. 189/805);[17] (2) versified polemics (e.g., criticisms of al-Kisāʾī by al-Yazīdī, d. 202/818, and Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b. Ḥātim al-Bāhilī, d. 241/846);[18] (3) poetic debates in the *majlis*, mosque, or *madrasa*, such as the dismissive response of Muʿādh al-Harrāʾ (d. 187/803) to a versified attack on grammar by an unknown opponent,[19] or even by correspondence, as between al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989) and the *wazīr* Abū Jaʿfar al-Muṣḥafī about the words in the Quran containing *ḍ* and *ẓ*;[20] (4) versified public responses to grammatical inquiries (*masāʾil*), for example, by Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī (d. 521/1127);[21] and, (5) versified grammatical riddles.[22]

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[13] Brockelmann, GAL Suppl. i, 408.

[14] Sezgin, GAS viii, 194–195. There are at least two more works with the same title. See Brockelmann, GAL ii, 50 and Suppl. iii, 1251 (Addenda to Suppl. ii, 66); others show up on the internet.

[15] Ibid. Suppl. i, 148.

[16] Sezgin, GAS viii, 193. There are no details about the author, and the only manuscript (inaccessible for this paper) is dated 774/1372–1373.

[17] Quoted in al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh* ii, 267. A much earlier source, al-Bazzāz (d. 349/960), *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn*, is named in Sezgin, GAS ix, 129.

[18] Reported in al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas* 287–288, where also earlier sources are mentioned.

[19] In al-Zajjājī, *Majālis* 190–191 Muʿādh is identified, but not his opponent, and in a later version of the same incident (al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt* 136) the opponent is named as Abū Muslim, which is also the *kunya* of Muʿādh, so the two may have become confused.

[20] Reported in al-Suyūṭī, *Ashbāh* iii, 89–90.

[21] Ibid. iii, 80–84, reproduces three such *masāʾil*. Another work by Ibn al-Sīd, *al-Maṣāʾil* (cf. Brockelmann, GAL Suppl. i, 758) has been published by al-Sāmarrāʾī, but it is in prose.

[22] Cf. Carter, Grammatical riddles 178. That article does not explore the predecessors of Ibn Yaʿīsh in any depth, and several other works could now be added to the riddles of Ibn Hishām mentioned there. Even al-Khalīl is credited with a half-line of *wāfir*, in which he enigmatically conceals the plural of *balaṣūṣ* (a kind of bird). Abū l-Ṭayyib, *Marātib* 64. The grammatical riddles of Abū l-Haydhām al-ʿUqaylī, d. after 300/913, may be our earliest preserved collection of any size (Sezgin, GAS viii, 176).

Also left out of account are two other types of dialogue in prose which are very prominent in educational discourse. One is the familiar dialectic formula *in qīla … ujība/fa-l-jawāb* … (if someone says …, the answer is …), and its variant, *in qulta … qultu* … (if you said …, I would say …).

The other is the pedagogical catechism (*talqīn*) "teaching the answers to the questions."[23] It is rather uncommon in Arabic, but it was a well-established Greek practice,[24] used by Aristotle, and enthusiastically adopted in Syriac as early as Eusebius of Caesaraea (fourth century), so there is a real chance that it came into Arabic from Syriac in the early ʿAbbasid period, as Molenberg argues. As a prose genre, *talqīn* has no relevance to this paper, though there is a pleasant irony in the fact that the most famous grammatical poem of the Latin Middle Ages, the *Doctrinale* of Alexander of Villedieu (ca. 1199 CE), is a versification of a work that was originally in catechetical form, the *Ars minor* of Donatus.

For reasons which will become apparent, a narrow definition will be applied to the versified works examined in this paper. They must be pedagogical in intention, and cover the entire field of *naḥw* (i.e., syntax and morphology), as in the mature poems of al-Ḥarīrī, Ibn Muʿṭī, and Ibn Mālik.

By this definition, a number of works in the Table fail to qualify, and need no further consideration. The lexical poems of the second/eighth century, for example, are undoubtedly authentic,[25] and indeed one has been published (by Jaʿfar b. Bashshār al-Asadī),[26] but they are not pedagogical in the strict sense; rather, they are metrical lists of rare words, as their title, *Qaṣīda fī l-gharīb*, implies, and they function as a mnemonic reference source rather than a structured learning programme. It is said that Muʿādh al-Harrāʾ (d. 187/803, see above) "wrote poetry like a grammarian," but, judging by the one inscrutable line quoted as evidence, we can only infer that he wrote bad poetry full of obscure words, and there is no implication that any kind of grammatical pedagogical verse existed at this early date.[27]

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[23] Carter, Grammatical experiment (the MS on which that article was based has since been published). There is an eschatological dimension to this practice. Lane's *Manners* ii, 305–306, describes the office of the *mulaqqin*, whose job it is to "apprendre à un mort, qui vient d'être enterré, ce qu'il doit répondre aux questions des deux anges qui viendront l'interroger," as Dozy, *Supplément* s.v. *talqīn* paraphrases it. There was much less at stake for the student learning grammar by this method, but the principle was the same.

[24] See Molenberg, Questions.

[25] See Sezgin, *GAS* viii, 9, 23 and 115; several were known to Ibn al-Nadīm, who died between 380/990 and 388/998.

[26] Ibid. viii, 27 and ix, 311, also available online.

[27] The line is quoted in al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt* 135, and reproduced by al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh* iii, 288, who adds the remark *lahu shiʿr ka-shiʿr al-nuḥāh*, cf. Sezgin, *GAS* ix, 124. The verse appears

A single poetic work of syntax is recorded for the second/eighth century, a *Manẓūma* ascribed to al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 175/791), which has been published, but there is widespread agreement that the attribution to al-Khalīl is an anachronism, and it is anybody's guess when, and by whom, it was really composed. Intriguingly, two verses from it are quoted in a prose work, *al-Muqaddima fī l-naḥw*, said to be by Khalaf al-Aḥmar (d. ca. 180/796), see Table 19.2 (D),[28] but that work, too, may well be inauthentic.[29]

The hiatus in the third/ninth century is real. The poem on rare words by Yaḥyā b. Nujaym is the only work on any linguistic topic at all that was found in the sources consulted. Since he is named by Ibn al-Nadīm, there is no reason to doubt his existence,[30] but if, as seems likely, this work is simply a lexical compilation, like the earlier poems, it will not comply with our narrow definition of a pedagogical grammar.

A number of works in the Table by fourth/tenth-century authors will also fail the test. They include the *Qaṣīda* of Ibn Durayd, a tour de force in which all the difficult words are used in artificially created contexts, without analysis or pedagogical structure.[31] By the same token, the other lexical poetry in the Table by Ibn Durayd's contemporaries Niftawayhi (d. 323/935) and Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī (d. 351/962) can be excluded from the pedagogical category. On the grounds of their specialised contents, poems in the Table about Quranic recitation (Abū Muzāḥim, d. 325/937), morphology (Ibn Durayd, al-Fārābī, d. ca. 350/961), and orthography (al-Naḥḥās, d. 338/950) are also left out of account.

This leaves two serious fourth/tenth-century candidates for the authorship of versified pedagogical grammars. One is Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Qalfāṭ, an Andalusian poet who died in 302/914–915. In the 16 lines (*sarīʿ*)

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in *Lisān al-ʿArab, lemmata jīʾ, hīʾ*, illustrating, respectively, the calls used to summon donkeys to water and food, which can be added to the examples of calls to animals in *rajaz* already listed in Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 211–212. In passing we can also exclude here what was called "lawyer's poetry" (Makdisi, *Colleges* 268), i.e., *sajʿ* "rhyming prose," much favoured by jurists and theologians. As far as is known, *sajʿ* was never used as a pedagogical medium in grammar.

[28] *Muqaddima* 85–86, in *Manẓūma* 224–225 with minor variants. Quoted by al-Ṭanāḥī in Ibn Muʿṭī, *Fuṣūl* intro., 29.

[29] Al-Ṭanāḥī, ibid. intro 29–30, categorically rejects al-Khalīl's authorship of the *Manẓūma*. The editor of the *Muqaddima* briefly voices his own doubts about the attribution to Khalaf al-Aḥmar in his preface, on page 27, though there is some support for it; see Sezgin, GAS ix, 127.

[30] Yaḥyā ibn Nujaym was an acquaintance of al-Jāḥiẓ (ibid. viii, 80–81).

[31] The same is true of the morphological *Qaṣīda* of Ibn al-Dahhān (d. 569/1174); the instructional content is so allusive that it can only be extracted by means of commentary.

quoted by al-Zubaydī,[32] he certainly reveals his command of morphology, but he is descriptive rather than pedagogical, and merely enumerates the conflicting opinions of the Basrans and Kufans on the diminutives of difficult words. Furthermore, we shall never know whether this passage is part of a complete grammatical textbook; the only conclusion to be drawn is that it is not pedagogical, but rather, belongs to the well-documented genre of versified public disputation, of which a couple of examples have been given above.

The other is Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Manṣūr al-Yashkurī (d. ca. 370/980), from whom we have 185 verses, out of the original 2,911 verses, of an *urjūza* on a range of grammatical topics.[33] Al-Yashkurī is undeniably at home in all the relevant grammatical technicalities, and, for this reason, he was nominated by al-Ṭanāḥī as the first author of a versified grammar.[34] But, as we know from his preface to the poem, al-Yashkurī's purpose was the same as that of al-Qalfāṭ before him—to give an account of the differences of opinion between grammarians and their schools, not to create a comprehensive manual of instruction. Both poetic extracts can therefore be classified as didactic rather than pedagogical, a distinction which is not always clearly made in the secondary literature.

Even in the fifth/eleventh century the evidence of versified grammar is very sparse, just two names represented by two lines each. Those of al-Bārkhazī (d. 467/1075)[35] on semi-declinablity are in Table 19.2 (C), 2a, and of al-Naṭanẓī (d. 497–499/1103–1106)[36] on subordinating *fa-* in Table 19.2 (E). But, we cannot be sure whether these are quotations from a complete work or merely isolated couplets. Since neither author is credited with any full-scale textbooks in verse, the latter is more probable.

It is not until al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122) that a poetic treatment of grammar as a whole appears, the *Mulḥat al-iʿrāb*, and, based solely on historical evidence, he must be regarded as the author of the first comprehensive, versified grammatical textbook in the terms defined above. This may seem like a self-fulfilling prophecy, but the definition was so framed in order to differentiate purely pedagogical verse from the ubiquitous use of poetry for non-fictional matter of all kinds. By al-Ḥarīrī's time, the *madrasa* had evolved to the point where there was a demand for textbooks, and several key grammars in prose were written in response to this need, such as the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Bābashādh (d. 469/1077) and the *Mufaṣṣal* of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). Al-Ḥarīrī is the first to seize the opportunity to use verse as a pedagogical medium for the entire subject of grammar, covering the same range as the prose works, and with the same intention—to serve as a manual for students in the *madrasa*. As for his originality, it still remains to be established, by comparing it with works in other disciplines by his contemporaries, such as al-Nasafī's (537/1142) versification of al-Shaybānī's *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*[37] or the versification of al-Khiraqī's *Mukhtaṣar* by Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad al-Sarrāj (d. 500–502/1106–1108).[38]

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[32] Al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt* 304, reproduced in later sources. He is not in Brockelmann, *GAL*, but appears among the poets in Sezgin, *GAS* ii, 679 with addenda in ix, 309. However, he is not mentioned as a linguist in *GAS* viii or ix.

[33] This is the figure in the sources, for which see *GAS* ix, 172, 247, though Sezgin himself says 2,511, perhaps a slip of the pen. The 185 verses are in Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, *Tadhkira* 670–678, and have been published separately by al-Ṭanāḥī, details in *GAS* ix, 247; the work was not accessible for this paper.

[34] Ibn Muʿṭī, *Fuṣūl* intro. 30–32.

[35] Known as a poet, but no grammatical works are listed under his name in Brockelmann, *GAL* i, 252 and Suppl.

[36] Ibid. i, 288 and Suppl. He did write about language, but in Persian, and no grammatical poems are credited to him. However, he was noted for his enthusiasm for education. Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya* i, 528.

However, the *Mulḥa* remained without imitators for a century. The next complete versified grammar that we can be certain of is the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Muʿṭī (d. 628/1231), after which (the metaphor is unavoidable) the floodgates opened, and not only did new, original textbooks in verse begin to appear, but, in increasing abundance, existing prose grammars were turned into poetry.

Table 19.2 (A) lists the principal prose works that were versified, of which the oldest were either morphological (the *Muthallath* of Quṭrub, d. 206/821, first versification by al-Bahnasī, d. ca. 685/1286) or lexical (the *Faṣīḥ* of Thaʿlab, d. 291/904, first versified by Ibn Abī Ḥadīd, d. 655/1257, and the *Fiqh al-lugha* of al-Thaʿālibī, d. 429/1038, anonymous versification, MS dated 742/1341).[39]

The only works on syntax from this early period to be versified are the *Īḍāḥ* of Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987), with its supplement *al-Takmila* (both versified together by ʿIzz al-Dīn b. Maʿqil, d. 644/1246),[40] and the *Jumal* of al-Zajjājī (d. 337/949 or later, see further below). However, by the eighth/fourteenth century most of the major prose manuals of syntax, composed for the *madrasa* from the fifth/eleventh century onwards, had been versified, such as (in chronological order of versification) the *Mufaṣṣal* of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144, versifiers died 663/1265, 665/1257), the *Durrat al-ghawwāṣ* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122, versifier died 695/1296), the *Miʾat ʿāmil* of al-Jurjānī (d. 471/

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[37] Sezgin, *GAS* i, 425–426.

[38] Attributed to al-Sarrāj by the editor of the *Mukhtaṣar*, intro. vi [*w* in Ar. pagination], though it was not possible to trace further details in other sources.

[39] In Brockelmann, *GAL* i, 285, though what appears to be the same work with different catalogue numbers is in Sezgin, *GAS* viii, 234, there dated 744/1343.

[40] By this time the two works always appear as a single unit.

1078 or 474/1081, versifier active 790/1388), and the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Bābāshādh (d. 469/1076, versifier died 802/1399). Some works were versified more than once over the centuries, the *Mi'at ʿāmil,* for example, nine times,[41] and at least one grammarian, Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249), as well as writing a commentary on his own short prose textbook *al-Kāfiya*, also rendered it into verse.[42] Authors had now begun to compose independent textbooks in both prose and verse, for example, Ibn Muʿṭī (d. 628/1231), Ibn ʿUṣfūr (d. 669/1270), and Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), and we might interpret Ibn al-Ḥājib's act of self-versifying as an indication that the two modes of instruction had achieved parity within the teaching profession. In this regard Ibn Hishām (d. 761/1360) is conspicuous for having composed several grammars in prose, but only a single poetic work, a set of grammatical riddles.

The *Jumal* of al-Zajjājī is a special case. In view of its extraordinary popularity in al-Andalus, where it generated 50 commentaries and ancillary works,[43] including two commentaries in verse,[44] it is remarkable that only one versification of the text itself is recorded, entitled *Naẓm al-jumal*, by Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Mijrādī (or Ibn al-Mijrād) al-Salāwī (d. 819/1416).[45] The work has been published under the name of Ibn al-Mijrād, but could not be consulted for this paper; the author is well-known on the internet, from which it emerges that the poem is a *qaṣīda lāmiyya*.[46]

Table 19.2 (B) shows the early grammarians, up to the fourth/tenth century, who themselves never composed any versified textbooks, nor (impressionistically, still to be confirmed) did they ever quote any versified grammar in their own works,[47] unlike later authors. What is more, none of their works were ever versified, with the exception of the two already mentioned, the *Jumal* of al-Zajjājī, as well as the *Īḍāḥ* and *Takmila* of Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī. A striking historical discontinuity thus reveals itself; when serious versification began in the seventh/thirteenth century, it went back only as far as the *Jumal* and the *Īḍāḥ* + *Takmila*, and ignored all previous grammars.

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[41] Brockelmann, GAL i, 287 and Suppl. does not give the dates of all the versifications, but they continue until 1174/1760.

[42] Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis* MS 6599. For some reason he did not versify his other elementary (morphological) work, *al-Shāfiya*, though others did. Brockelmann, GAL i, 305 and Suppl.

[43] This is the raw figure arrived at in Binaghi, "Grammaire arabe" 122–124. In Sezgin, GAS ix, 89 we learn, anecdotally, that over 120 were produced in the Maghrib alone, and others in the Mashriq, of course, would bring the number even higher, but such a figure is not supported by the surviving manuscripts or bibliographical lists.

[44] One is the *Maqāṣid al-iʿrāb* by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Hā'im al-Maqdisī (d. 815/1412), MS Cairo ii, 162, described as a *manẓūma fī sharḥ al-jumal*. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of this paper for identifying the author, q.v. Brockelmann, GAL ii, Suppl. 155. The other is known only by name, *Raqm al-ḥulal fī naẓm al-jumal* by Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥimyarī al-Istijī (d. after 641/1244), "probably a versified commentary," according to Binaghi, op. cit. 44, 123.

[45] Brockelmann, GAL Suppl. ii, 336, and see Sezgin, GAS ix, 89 n. 2.

[46] It does not help that *Naẓm al-jumal* is also the title of a versified logical work by al-Khūnajī (d. 646/1249). Brockelmann, GAL i, 436. Further confusion arises with the *Jumal* of al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078), stated in GAL i, 288 and Suppl. to be a "pedagogical poem" (Lehrgedicht), but it is not a versified work at all, and the error remains a mystery.

The quotations 1–10 in Table 19.2 (C) illustrate the style and content of the poetry in a selection of verses on semi-declinability, chosen mainly for their brevity—there are, of course, longer treatments in works such as the *Mulḥa* of al-Ḥarīrī and the two *Alfiyya*s. Item 1a is from an Oxford MS,[48] 1c is quoted without attribution by Abū l-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbārī,[49] no. 10 is from Dublin,[50] and all the rest (1b and 2 to 9) have been conveniently brought together from various sources by al-Suyūṭī.[51] Item 1b sometimes appears without the first line, but the author could not be traced; the *Schawāhid-Indices*, following very late sources, attribute them to one Abū Saʿīd al-Anbārī al-Naḥwī, presumably the great-grandfather of Abū l-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbārī, who would have lived in the fifth/eleventh century (not the same person as Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī, d. 328/940). If this is correct, the three verses could be contemporary with those of al-Bārkharzī in 1a, almost doubling our meagre corpus of data for versified grammar in the decades immediately before al-Ḥarīrī.

Nos. 1a, 1b, and 1c are obviously variations of the same line. The differences are technically inconsequential, but it is hard to believe that they are merely random; perhaps, the order of terms was deliberately chosen (helped by the fact that several of them scan identically) to mark the author's distinctiveness from his rivals as a kind of copyright.[52] Since it is not possible to change the facts, rearranging them is the only way to display pedagogical individuality. A modern analogue is the search for what advertisers call the USP, or "unique selling proposition," by which virtually identical pieces of merchandise are made to appear different.

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[47] Al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989) did correspond about grammar in verse with a *wazīr*, see above, also with his revered teacher al-Rabāḥī (d. 358/968, *Ṭabaqāt* 335–340), but the poetry is not part of any textbook.

[48] Bodleian MS Poc. 383 (Uri 1067), fol. 209^v, and attributed (with some reservations) to ʿAlī al-Bārkhazī (467/1075); see above, n. 34.

[49] Ibn al-Anbārī, *Asrār* 307, and Ibn al-Anbārī, *Lumaʿ* 51.

[50] [*Al-Muqaddima*] *al-Luʾluʾa fī l-naḥw*, Chester Beatty MS 4959/3, fol. 46^r; see Brockelmann, *GAL* ii, 162 and Suppl., where the title varies. The catalogue number 4959/3 in Sezgin, *GAS* ix, 226, should be amended to 4959/2, which has been assigned to three different works, the second of which is the anonymous *Muqaddima* under discussion in *GAS*.

[51] Al-Suyūṭī, *Ashbāh* ii, 28–30.

[52] See Carter, Arabic literature 555–556.

Items 2 and 3 are both by Andalusians. Ibn Ṭāhir[53] stands out for nominating ten causes of semi-declinability (a possibility also hinted at by Ibn Maktūm in no. 9). The extra cause (*mā zīda fī ʿidda*) evidently involves augmentation and is probably intended to cover foreign proper names of more than three radicals, such as Ibrāhīm.[54]

The identification of al-Shāṭibī in no. 3 is problematic. Since al-Suyūṭī describes him as "the author of the *Shāṭibiyya*,"[55] we must assume he means [Abū] al-Qāsim b. Firruh (d. 590/1194),[56] whose *Shāṭibiyya*, however, deals with the Qirāʾāt, and no grammatical poems are attributed to him. Another Abū l-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī, who died in 783/1381,[57] did compose a *Qaṣīda lāmiyya fī l-naḥw*, but it is in a different metre (*basīṭ*) from the lines quoted here, and it is not referred to as the *Shāṭibiyya*. It is therefore impossible to decide which of the two scholars, if at all, composed these lines.

No. 4 is reliably attributed to Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn al-Naḥḥās[58] by his pupil Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, cited by al-Suyūṭī. The verse in no. 5 is sometimes quoted anonymously (e.g., by al-Suyūṭī), and it is not securely identified; some sources merely name "Ibn al-Naḥḥās" as the author, probably meaning the seventh/thirteenth-century Baḥāʾ al-Dīn. One rather late commentator[59] specifically identified him as the much earlier Abū Jaʿfar al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950),[60] composer of an *urjūza* on the writing of Quranic *ḍ/ẓ*, and often referred to as Ibn al-Naḥḥās. If this attribution is correct, we would have to regard these lines as a third specimen of fourth/tenth-century grammatical verse, alongside those of al-Qalfāṭ and al-Yashkurī mentioned above, but the weight of evidence favours the latter figure Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn al-Naḥḥās.

No. 6 is said by al-Suyūṭī to represent the "Kufan" position. In fact, all the terms agree with the orthodox, technical vocabulary except one, *ikhtiṣār* (abbreviation, curtailment), which, by elimination, must correspond to the *tarkīb/murakkab* of the "Basran" grammarians, denoting the formation of compound nouns such as *khamsata ʿashara* (fifteen). The term *ikhtiṣār* is not traceable in the obvious Kufan sources (e.g. the *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān* of al-Farrāʾ), and it may be no more than a metrically convenient, ad hoc coinage to express the notion that such compounds are formed by "abbreviating" two words into one without a conjunction, an analysis which is found in the grammatical literature.[61]

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[53] Ibn Ṭāhir is not in Brockelmann, *GAL*, and Sezgin, *GAS* ix, 61, has only a passing reference; see Binaghi, "Grammaire arabe" 66 for further sources.

[54] Ibn Mālik created a tenth category of his own, namely the suffix -*ā* on masc. proper names, e.g., *arṭā*; see Howell, *Grammar* i, 31, paraphrasing Ibn ʿAqīl on *Alfiyya* v. 669/670.

[55] Al-Suyūṭī, *Ashbāh* ii, 29.

[56] Brockelmann, *GAL* i, 408.

[57] Ibid. ii, 259.

[58] Ibid. i, 300 and Suppl.

[59] Al-Sijāʿī (d. 1190/1777, ibid. ii, 323), in his *Sharḥ qaṭr al-nadā* 117.

[60] Sezgin, *GAS* ix, 207–209.

Ibn Maktūm[62] is well represented in nos. 7, 8, and 9, and is cited elsewhere by al-Suyūṭī on other topics. Since all the quotations have different rhymes, they cannot be fragments of the same poem, and, in any case, no full-scale grammatical textbooks in verse are ascribed to him, so these are probably small, informal embellishments to his classroom activities. Note the conventional pedagogical style in the opening lines of no. 9 and Ibn Ṭāhir in no. 2.

No. 10 has the merit that it is the only specimen in our selection that can be verified as being part of a larger, complete work, confirmed in the manuscript consulted.

Item (D) is more significant for its spurious attribution to al-Khalīl (see above) than for its contents.

Item (E), by al-Naṭanzī, is likewise of interest only for its early date, as the contents are probably unoriginal (cf. those of the next quotation).

Fragment (F) appears in Howell, *Grammar* ii/iii 77, without attribution. It has the same metre as the grammatical *Qaṣīda lāmiyya*, said to be by al-Shāṭibī (see above), but comparison with line 2 of Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, MS 6753 confirms that it is not from that poem, though the contents are almost identical, with the terms rearranged in a manner similar to nos. 1a, 1b, and 1c above.

The quotation in (G) from al-Murādī was chosen because it is a short, complete poem on a specific topic,[63] which exists in a number of manuscripts, suggesting a degree of popularity. It is also interesting because the version quoted states that there are seven types of sentence which have a syntactic position/function,[64] although, as al-Suyūṭī points out, Ibn Hishām was of the view that there were nine, adding exceptive and topicalised sentences.[65]

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[61] It is not clear why this "Kufan" position appears in an Andalusian source (al-Ishbīlī d. 688/1299; see Brockelmann, *GAL* Suppl. i, 547); perhaps "Kufan" here denotes simply "non-standard terminology."

[62] Ibid. ii, 110 and Suppl.

[63] To this extent, the poem falls outside the narrow definition given above, that the work should cover the whole field.

[64] Al-Suyūṭī, *Ashbāh* ii, 16. The text is quoted as it appears in print; however, it may benefit from some further editing and exploration.

[65] Some manuscripts, e.g., Berlin 6877, 6878, do indeed give nine as the number in their first line, but they could not be inspected to see how the wording differs to accommodate the

The paper concludes with some thoughts on the origins of pedagogical verse in Arabic grammar and other disciplines, and the motives for choosing the medium of poetry for teaching.

Didactic poetry was used for scientific topics in ancient Greece, and imitated in Latin,[66] and, perhaps, the very early scientific poems in Arabic are connected with this tradition. But, it would be difficult to demonstrate an unbroken continuity between these poems[67] and the fully developed pedagogical genre of later centuries. Any acquaintance with the Greek originals can be ruled out.

A plausible hypothesis is that the Arabs were inspired to compose pedagogical verse by the Syriac-speaking Christians, themselves direct heirs of the Greeks, and, therefore, quite likely to have acted as intermediaries. However, the documentary evidence is scanty and mostly circumstantial, and no firm conclusions can be drawn from it. King has examined the close intellectual contact between Syriac grammarians and their Arab counterparts in the latter half of the eighth century,[68] well before Sībawayhi and his *Kitāb*, but he makes no mention of rhyming grammars, and both the broad question of the alleged debt of Arabic grammar to Syriac, and the narrower issue of the origin of versified grammars, remain unresolved.

Merx reports that the first Greek to write a grammar in verse was Nicetas Serrensis (or Serronius, 1030–1117).[69] In the light of the fact that versifications of the *Ars minor* of Donatus do not appear in Europe until the ninth century,[70] we may be justified in concluding that the procedure was mainly a post-classical phenomenon. But whether the relatively sudden appearance of metrical grammars in the Byzantine, Latin, and Islamic worlds (including Christian Syriac) involved any cultural borrowing, and, if so, in which direction, is a matter of conjecture.[71] In the absence of reliable textual indications to the contrary, we

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extra sentence types. It appears that, Ibn Hishām changed his position between his elementary *Qawāʿid al-iʿrāb* and the advanced *al-Mughnī*; see Gully, *Grammar* 230–231.

[66] Endress, Wissenschaftliche Literatur ii, 471, details in Effe, *Dichtung*.

[67] Which are all translations of dubious authenticity, apart from the theological work attributed to al-Shaybānī, cf. Brockelmann, *GAL* i, 172.

[68] See King, Syriac grammatical tradition.

[69] Merx, *Historia* 269; his source could not be consulted.

[70] Smaragdus, d. ca. 840, seems to be the earliest; cf. Grondeux, *Grammatica positiva*, on versified grammar in medieval Europe.

[71] Makdisi, *Colleges* 268, has little doubt that the "craze for versifying" in the Western pedagogy of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was influenced by Arab models, but direct interaction is not attested in either literary tradition. On the other hand, Rosenthal, *Historiography* 184, makes no claim that the "flood of rhymed histories" in Arabic, which began in the seventh/thirteenth century, was anything but an internal development, albeit with some potential Iranian precedents in the early stages; ibid. 180, n. 4.

must assume that the pedagogical *urjūza* and *qaṣīda* are only superficially connected, if at all, with the long Syriac tradition of the didactic *mimrē*, though they might possibly share the quality that both were intended to be spoken, rather than sung to musical accompaniment like artistic poetry (the matter needs further exploration).[72]

A historical framework for the emergence of versified pedagogical grammars in Arabic might be as follows:

(1) The relatively compact elementary grammars in prose of the early fourth/tenth century, typically the *Muwaffaqī* of Ibn Kaysān (d. 299 or 320/912 or 932) and the *Mūjaz* of Ibn al-Sarrāj (d. 316/928), defined the contents of the grammatical syllabus well before the *madrasa* system came into existence.

(2) The translation and assimilation of the Aristotelian *Organon* into the Islamic scheme of knowledge was completed during the fourth/tenth century, the period in which the principles of law and grammar, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *uṣūl al-naḥw*, were constructed using the new logical tools, and, significantly, the sciences were classified for the first time, in the *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm* of al-Farābī (d. 339/950) and the *Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm* of al-Khwārazmī (d. 387/997). The translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century introduced the Arabs to the notion of special metres for the teaching of medicine and physics. We cannot know what they would have understood from the reference to the scientific poetry of Empedocles in the translation by Mattā b. Yūnus (active 320–330/932–942), but his contemporary al-Fārābī explicitly recognises the link between poetry and pedagogy in a certain kind of what he calls "acoustic" verse (*shiʿr aqūstiqī*), designed especially for training musicians through learning by heart (*talqīn al-mutaʿallimīn li-ṣināʿat al-mūsīqār*). A few decades later, Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) comments on the superior effectiveness of poetry in "instruction" (*taʿlīm*), in whatever sense he had in mind.[73]

(3) The perfection of the educational system in the fifth/eleventh century in the institution of the *madrasa* created a physical and intellectual structure for all subjects in the curriculum of the Islamic sciences, gram-

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[72] Long after the period which concerns us here, the borrowing was in the other direction. Baumstark, *Christliche Literaturen* i, 105, sees echoes of Arabic rhyming prose (*sajʿ*) in the style of thirteenth-century Syriac didactic poetry, and in *Geschichte* 319, he notes the strong "Islamic" flavor in the poetry of Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286 CE), who did not, however, write a grammar in verse.

[73] The references to Mattā ibn Yūnus, al-Farābī, and Ibn Sīnā are from the passages edited in Badawī, *Fann al-shiʿr* 87, 155, and 171 respectively.

> mar being among them. Pedagogical inventiveness was duly stimulated. There was an efflorescence of new prose textbooks, and it was not long before the first original textbook in verse appeared, the *Mulḥa* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122, see above), followed by versifications of earlier prose manuals, notably, as already mentioned above, the *Īḍāḥ* + *Takmila* of Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987, the versifier d. 644/1246). The curriculum is now fully evolved, and education changed from, broadly speaking, informal tuition in mosques and private homes, to a publicly sponsored, "organised" programme in the *madrasa*, where each component had its own teaching materials, in prose and verse, produced in increasing quantity from the late seventh/thirteenth century. The zeal for versification was boundless. We are told that even dictionaries were turned into poetry by Ibn Muʿṭī,[74] while Zayn al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349) made a metrical (!) abridgment of al-Ḥarīrī's *Mulḥa*.[75]

There is still much to do when it comes to tracing the progress of rhymed grammar in the pedagogical system. Accounts of the education of ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231) do not mention versified grammars among the works he read,[76] which is not unexpected, as there were probably only two available in his lifetime, the *Mulḥa* of al-Ḥarīrī and the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Muʿṭī. A couple of centuries later, there is evidence that rhymed textbooks had by no means displaced the prose works. We learn from the *Barnāmaj* of al-Mujārī (d. 862/1458) that he studied the *Alfiyya*s of Ibn Muʿṭī and Ibn Mālik, but read other grammars in prose, for example, the *Jumal* of al-Zajjājī, the *Īḍāḥ* of al-Fārisī, the *Tashīl* of Ibn Mālik, the *Kāfiya* of Ibn al-Ḥājib, and several by Ibn Hishām, even though by his time a good number of them had been versified.

The formality of poetic diction was probably felt to add authority and solemnity to the teacher's performance, recalling the ancient use of *rajaz* for the proclamations of the pre-Islamic soothsayer, the *kāhin*.[77] Ullmann has drawn attention to a peculiarity of *rajaz* which might have made it more suitable for this purpose—namely, that it is one of the few metres that permits sequences of three short syllables,[78] increasing the range of available word patterns, while the *muzdawij* rhyming scheme frees the poet from the constraints of monorhyme. However, there seems to be just as much pedagogical poetry in other metres, so the formal features of *rajaz* alone can hardly have been the decisive factor.[79]

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[74] Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya* ii, 344.

[75] Ibid. ii, 227. Two others are listed in Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, at no. 6513.

[76] Makdisi, *Colleges* 84–85; Toorawa, Portrait.

[77] Cf. Saada, Structures 329, n. 2, who observes that all the most important statements in Arabic are made either in verse or rhyming prose.

[78] Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 61, fn. 1; the sequence is also possible in *sarīʿ*, *basīṭ*, and *munsariḥ*, but according to Ullmann's source (Bloch) it hardly ever occurs in those metres. Frolov, *Arabic verse* 160–161, adds that the form of words in rhyme was more flexible in *rajaz* than in the other metres.

We can also rule out simple ease of memorisation as the primary motive for pedagogical versification, though it may have been useful for beginners who were not expected to proceed much further.[80] To be sure, the claim was occasionally made that poetry was helpful for memorisation (e.g., in the opening lines of the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Muʿṭī), but students still had to learn by heart large quantities of prose, and grammars continued to be written in prose and memorised anyway.

Two professional reasons suggest themselves. Versification facilitated the innovative presentation of the familiar material, through which teachers could stand out from their rivals, as can be seen in Table 19.2. An impressive exhibition of self-conscious virtuosity is the metrical treatise on rhetoric by Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1433), in which the lines themselves contain, and thus exemplify, the rhetorical figures they are defining.[81] The form thus triumphs over the content, which we may compare with recent technological changes in classroom teaching in the West; where we once used chalk and blackboards, we have moved on, via felt-tipped pens and whiteboards, to overhead and slide projectors, and currently interactive whiteboards, Powerpoint, and USB data-projectors are in vogue (but who remembers the epidiascope?). All are being made redundant by the internet.

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[79] Ullmann's view (*Untersuchungen* 215) that *rajaz* was favoured for poetry that did not have to be taken seriously, including pedagogical verse, needs qualification. Obviously, the contents of an educational *urjūza* have to be factually true, but, perhaps, the use of *rajaz* indicates that the author is not aiming to create a work of high art. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 215–217, compares *rajaz* to German comic poetry and its whimsical wordplay; the English equivalent would certainly be the limerick.

[80] The secondary literature is divided; Rosenthal, *Historiography* 185, and Berkey, *Transmission* 28–29, emphasise the usefulness of poetry for memorisation, while Petry, *Civilian elite* 246–250, Chamberlain, *Knowledge* 145, and, significantly, Makdisi, *Colleges* 99–102, discuss memorisation in terms of prose works, with scarcely a mention of poetry (none at all in Makdisi, even though prodigious feats of memory are his main theme). Al-Zarnūjī (active after 593/1197) stresses the importance of repetition and gives advice on what foods and habits are good or bad for the memory, but he says nothing about poetry making it easier; see al-Zarnūjī, *Taʿlīm*, intro. 8–10. From the earliest days, memorisation was recognised as only a tool, with no value unless accompanied by rational processing; cf. Günther, al-Jāḥiẓ 23.

[81] Examples in von Mehren, *Rhetorik* 12. See Effe, *Dichtung* 230, for a similar procedure in Latin. Another opportunity to display linguistic skill was to turn verse into elegant prose (cf. Sanni, *Prosification*; Makdisi, *Humanism* 135–136.). One example from grammar (there may be more) is the conversion of Ibn Mālik's *Alfiyya* into prose by Zayn al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (Brockelmann, *GAL* ii, 140).

Second, the poems may have acted as an aide-mémoire, not so much for the student as for the teacher, as a type of lecture notes or course outline. Like the short prose textbooks, they would have been largely incomprehensible without the author's explanation delivered in the classroom. Often, the teacher would write a commentary on himself, padding out his CV with more publications, much as modern academics do today.[82]

Poetry could also be used as a pedagogical weapon. It is related that al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad got rid of a dull-witted student by sending him off to scan a line of verse:

> If you can't do something just leave it and move on to what you can do!

He knew that the student was incapable of scanning it, and the student would not even realise why that particular line of verse had been chosen.[83]

The literary standard of the pedagogical *manẓūma* is not greatly esteemed in the secondary sources, which perhaps is unfair. The present writer has himself made disparaging comments on the mediocre quality of the verse in Ibn Mālik's *Alfiyya*, and this is as good a time as any to retract them. Even Rosenthal is less than charitable on rhymed histories, concluding that "not many of them have been printed and few ever will."[84] Similar criticisms have been made of the *Doctrinale* of Alexandre de Villedieu, described as "2645 lines of rather barbarous hexameters."[85] However, there is little point in Nöldeke's scathing criticism[86] of al-Shāṭibī's versification of al-Dānī's treatise on the *qirāʾāt*, nor is it useful to characterise the evolution of textbooks in verse as "total sclerosis."[87] Such judgements are likely to hinder a constructive evaluation of what is, after all, a prominent feature of Arab education.

A more sympathetic approach is found in the anthropological perspective of Kilito's analysis of the *Mulḥa* of al-Ḥarīrī, which treats pedagogy as a transformative exercise in the course of which the neophyte, through instruction, effectively becomes a different person.[88] Not every pedagogical *urjūza* or *qaṣīda* would support this refined interpretation, but Kilito does bring out some important features of teaching and learning in the *madrasa*. Poetry is an artificial mode of speech aimed at manipulating and controlling the hearer's feelings, and by using verse to communicate the contents of the syllabus, the master creates both an intellectual and emotional bond with the student. The rhetorical tricks thus become functional. What looks like meaningless metrical padding, serving only to provide a rhyme, reinforces the lessons to be learnt by sheer formulaic repetition. Furthermore, the teacher imparts not only a body of knowledge but also an ethical code (*adab*) by introducing poetic and Quranic citations and religious propositions to illustrate the grammatical rules, all the while repeating the familiar pedagogical imperative verbs, which exhort the pupil to "remember" (*iḥfaẓ*), "understand" (*ifham*), "know" (*iʿlam*, *iʿraf*), and "acknowledge" (*iʿtarif*) the teacher's message.

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[82] Without the author's own prose commentary, the *Mulḥa* of al-Ḥarīrī would certainly be beyond the capabilities of the students who studied it with him; see below.

[83] See Carter, Another Khalīl 21–22. The line is from ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib (metre *wāfir*): *idhā lam tastaṭiʿ shayʾan fa-daʿhu * wa-jāwizhu ilā mā tastaṭīʿu.*

[84] Rosenthal, *Historiography* 179–185, esp. 185.

[85] Robens, *Short history* 85.

[86] Quoted at length in Brockelmann, *GAL* i, 409.

[87] Saada, Structures 329.

There was a justifiable pride in the ability to versify; it was a badge of linguistic competence in a community where mastery of Arabic was a prerequisite for entry into every profession. Nevertheless, the grammarians were quite capable of self-parody. One al-Muhallab[ī] (d. 572/1176–1177), much admired by al-Suyūṭī, was badly treated by his patron, who summarily removed him from his post as qadi of al-Bahnasā. On this, he composed a rueful couplet, punning on *ṣarf* as "dismissal, sending away" and "nominal declination, inflection," and on two of the nine conditions for semi-declinability, *ʿujma* "foreignness" and *maʿrifa* as "being known" and "grammatical definiteness," cf. Table 19.2, (C), which may be translated as follows:

> I've been "declined" for giving every word its proper ending by the causes nine.
> Had I but two of these, were foreign and well-known, there would be nothing to decline.[89]

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[88] Kilito, Discours didactique 88, n. 1, quoting Eliade. Nothing new here, of course, for the Sufi shaykh and his pliable, obedient *murīd*.

[89] Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh* iii 334, Arabic text:
ṣuriftu annī ṣaraftu min ʿilalin * tisʿin wa-annī uʿribu l-ḥurūfā
fa-layta lī khaṣlatayni: maʿrifatan * wa-ʿujmatan tamnaʿāniya l-ṣarfā
It is recounted that al-Shalawbīn[ī] (d. 645/1247) wrote a *tanwīn* on the name of a student when it was brought to him by a servant, knowing that when the young man saw it he would be clever enough to understand that this was his master's way of saying *ṣaraftuka*: "I hereby make you fully declinable and dismiss you." Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic poetry* 324.

The use of poetry in all metres for non-artistic works, both narrative and pedagogical, has never died out. We might wonder why, in another field, the prose paraphrase of the *Isagoge* by al-Abharī (d. 663/1264) had to wait so long to be versified by al-Akhḍarī (d. 953/1546),[90] but in grammar the process continued without interruption. Al-Jurjānī's *Mi'at ʿāmil* was first versified around 790/1388, then eight more times up to 1174/1760, and the first versification of the *Ājurrūmiyya* was completed in 901/1495, then again several times up to 1288/1871. The *Qawāʿid al-iʿrāb* of Ibn Hishām (d. 761/1360) was versified already by 795/1395, perhaps because it is an elementary work; his longer treatises took some time to achieve versification, the *Mughnī l-labīb* in about 880/1475, *Shudhūr al-dhahab* in 901/1501, and *Qaṭr al-nadā* in 1178/1764. Ullmann mentions several nineteenth- and early twentieth-century examples, though not from the field of grammar,[91] to which we can add the major achievement of the *Nār al-Qurā* by Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī, a grammatical *urjūza* first published in 1863.[92] What may be the longest ever specimen of the genre is a history of the world in 36,000 lines of *rajaz* by the Algerian Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī, who died in 1965.[93]

With such a large corpus, it is difficult to see the wood for the trees, and a number of assertions in this paper have been made in the anticipation that they will be overturned by better evidence. Little attempt has been made to review the technical contents of the poems, particularly with regard to the "school" of the author, or to classify them by their apparent level of difficulty and their place in the curriculum, still less to assess their aesthetic qualities. The geographical and numerical distribution of manuscripts has not been considered, though there are significant variations across the Maghrib/Mashriq divide. It would also be desirable to compare the production of versified textbooks in other subjects. Grammar is the propaedeutic science par excellence, and it is likely to have generated the greatest number of such works, but the core Islamic disciplines of law and theology also gave rise to a considerable body of pedagogical verse, and it would be interesting to find out whether these textbooks had any distinctive features, metrical or structural, reflecting the difference in their contents.

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[90] Still in print in the *Majmūʿ muhimmāt al-mutūn*, which contains many other pedagogical poems from this period, and is also available online.

[91] Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 59. His examples are all from Brockelmann, *GAL* ii, 140, and the topics are physiognomy (author d. 1887), inheritance, food, calendar (1915), prayers for travellers, hunting, and slaughter (1934).

[92] A couple of grammatical poems in the *wāfir* metre by a *muftī* of Jerusalem, composed in the 1850s, were published by Rosen, Proben.

[93] I. Merad and H. Busse in Fischer, *Grundriß* iii, 292; the poem is reported as lost. A dramatic *urjūza* of 877 verses on education is known, but does not appear in the author's collected works of 1997 (personal communication from Dr. Hassina Aliane, Research Centre on Scientific and Technical Information, Algiers). The figure of 36,000 might represent the hemistichs of a *muzdawij* poem, where it is common for the verses to be counted as two halves; cf. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen* 53; Frolov, *Arabic verse* 137. However, the two grammatical *Alfiyya*s are so called because they consist of approximately a thousand full lines (though Ullmann, op. cit. 58, insists on counting Ibn Mālik's *Alfiyya* as "2004 verses"). The term *Alfiyya* itself is obviously only an approximation; the "*Alfiyya*" of al-Zabīdī (see above, n. 9) consists of 1,500 full lines.

TABLE 19.1 Time line of works in "scientific verse" (dates are the death of the author)

Science and general topics	Linguistic topics
First-second/eighth century	
Tayādhuq (ca. 95/714) Medicine	Shubayl b. ʿAzra (ca. 140/757) Lex.
Khālid b. Yazīd (102/720) Alchemy	al-Sharqī l-Quṭāmī (150/767) Lex.
Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (139/756), Names of Byz. months	Jaʿfar b. Bashshār al-Asadī (active 150/767) Lex.
al-Fazārī (176–198/754–813) Astrology etc.	*al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (175/791) Synt.
*al-Shaybānī (189/804) ʿAqīda	
*Jābir b. Ḥayyān (ca. 200/815) Alchemy	
Third/ninth century	
ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (238/852) Meteorology	Yaḥyā b. Nujaym (ca. 215/830) Lex.
ʿAlī b. al-Jahm (249/863) History	
Ibn Abī Karīma (before 255/868–869) Zoology	
Tamīm b. ʿĀmir b. ʿAlqama (283/896) History	
al-Nāshī (293/906) Encyclopaedia	
Fourth/tenth century	
Jābir b. Ibrāhīm (4th/10th cent.) Astronomy	al-Qalfāṭ (302/914–915) Morph.
Ibn ʿUmayl (active ca. 300/910) Alchemy	Ibn Durayd (321/933) Lex., Morph.
al-Rāzī (313/925) Medicine	Nifṭawayh (323/935) Lex.
Aḥm. b. Muḥ. b. ʿAbd Rabbih (328/940) History	Abū Muzāḥim b. Khāqān (325/937) Tajwīd, Fuqahāʿ
Saʿīd Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (ca. 350/961) Medicine, Logic	Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī (328/940) Lex.
Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī (after 371/981) Astronomy	Abū Jaʿfar al-Naḥḥās (338/950) Orthography
	*al-Fārābī, Burhān al-Dīn (ca. 350/961) Morph.
	Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī (351/962) Lex.
	al-Yashkurī (ca. 370/980) Morph., Synt.

TABLE 19.1 Time line of works in "scientific verse" (dates are the death of the author) (*cont.*)

Science and general topics	**Linguistic topics**
Fifth-sixth/eleventh-twelfth centuries	
ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Mutanabbī (5th/11th c.) History	al-Shunaynī (5th/11th cent.) *ḍ* and *ẓ* in Quran
Ibn Sīnā (428/1037) Medicine, Logic, etc.	Ibn al-Bawwāb (423/1032) Calligraphy
ʿAlī Ibn Abī l-Rijāl (ca. 430/1040) Meteorology	al-Bārkharzī (467/1075) Synt.
Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad al-Sarrāj (500–502/1106–1108) Fiqh	Ḥusayn b. Ibr. al-Naṭanzī (497–499/1103–1106) Synt.
al-Ṭughrāʾī (515/1121) Alchemy	al-Ḥarīrī (516/1122) Synt.
al-Nasafī (537/1142) Fiqh	al-Baṭalyawsī (521/1127) Synt., Morph.
Ibn Ṭufayl (581/1185) Logic	al-Zamakhsharī (538/1144) Synt., Morph.
	al-Shantamarī al-Yāburī (553/1158), Lex., Synt.
	Ibn al-Dahhān (569/1174), Morph., Synt.
	Abū Bakr Muḥ. b. Ṭāhir (580/1184) Morph.
	Ibn Barrī (582/1187) Lex.
	al-Shāṭibī (590/1194) Morph., Tajwīd
	al-Muhallabī (592/1196) Synt.
	Ibn al-Zāhida (594/1198) Synt.
Seventh-eighth/thirteenth-fourteenth centuries (linguistic topics only)	
Ibn Abī Rabīʿ al-Ishbīlī (688/1289) Morph.	al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥm. al-Baghdādī (600/1204) Synt.
Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn al-Naḥḥās (698/1299) Morph.	Sālim b. Aḥmad al-Muntajab (611/1214) Synt.
Mālik b. ʿAr. al-Mālaqī (699/1300) Orthog.	Ibn Muʿṭī (628/1231) Lex., Morph., Synt.
Shams al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī (735/1335) Synt.	*Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥimyarī (641/1244) Synt.
Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (745/1345) Synt., etc.	al-Sakhāwī (643/1245) Morph., Synt.
Tāj al-Dīn Ibn Maktūm (749/1348), Morph., Synt.	ʿAlī b. Jābir al-Dabbāj (646/1248–1249) Morph.
Badr al-Dīn al-Murādī (749/1348), Morph., Synt.	Ibn al-Ḥājib (646/1249), Metrics, Synt.
Zayn al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (749/1348), Synt., etc.	Ibn ʿUṣfūr (669/1270) Synt.
al-Jamāl al-Surramarrī (776/1374) Synt.	Ibn Mālik (672/1274) Morph., Synt.
Abū Saʿīd Ibn Lubb (783/1381) Morph., Synt.	al-Qarṭājannī (684/1285) Synt.

TABLE 19.2 Sources and Data

(A). Major grammatical and linguistic works versified (in chronological order): Quṭrub *Muthallath*, Thaʿlab *Faṣīḥ*, Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī *Īḍāḥ* + *Takmila*, al-Thaʿālibī *Fiqh al-lugha*, al-Jurjānī *Miʾat ʿāmil*, Ibn Bābashādh *Muqaddima*, al-Zamakhsharī *Mufaṣṣal*, al-Ḥarīrī *Durrat al-ghawwāṣ*, al-Muṭarrizī *al-Miṣbāḥ*, Ibn al-Ḥajīb *Kāfiya*, *Shāfiya*, al-Zanjānī *al-Taṣrīf al-ʿIzzī*, Ibn Mālik *Tashīl al-fawāʾid*, al-Qazwīnī *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ*, Ibn Ājurrūm *Ājurrūmiyya*, Ibn Hishām *Qaṭr*, *Mughnī*, *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, *Qawāʾid al-iʿrāb*. The *Jumal* of al-Zajjājī is a special case.

TABLE 19.2 Sources and Data (*cont.*)

(B). The following early grammarians (up to fourth/tenth century) wrote no textbooks in verse: Sībawayhi and all his contemporaries, al-Kisāʾī, al-Farrāʾ, Thaʿlab, al-Māzinī, al-Jarmī, al-Mubarrad, al-Zajjāj, Ibn Kaysān, Lughda, Ibn Qutayba, al-Zajjājī, Ibn al-Sarrāj, al-Sīrāfī, Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī, Ibn Jinnī, Ibn Fāris, al-Rummānī, al-Qālī, al-Zubaydī.

(C). Selection of verses on the *mawāniʿ al-ṣarf*:

(1a) al-Bārkharzī (467/1057), *basīṭ*:

وصف وجمع وتأنيث ومعرفة   وعجمة ثم عدل ثم تركيب
والنون زائدة من قبلها ألف   ووزن فعل وهذا القول تقريب

(1b) Attributed to Abū Saʿīd al-Anbārī al-Naḥwī (fifth/eleventh century?), *basīṭ*:

موانع الصرف تسع كلما اجتمعت   ثنتان منها فما للصرف تصويب
عدل ووصف وتأنيث ومعرفة   وعجمة ثم جمع ثم تركيب
والنون زائدة من قبلها ألف   ووزن فعل وهذا القول تقريب

(1c) Anon., quoted by Abū l-Barakāt [Ibn] al-Anbārī (577/1181), *basīṭ*:

جمع ووصف وتأنيث ومعرفة   وعجمة ثم عدل ثم تركيب
والنون زائدة من قبلها ألف   ووزن فعل وهذا القول تقريب

---

(2) Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir (580/1184), *ṭawīl*:

موانع صرف الاسم عشر فهاكها   ملخصة ان كنت في العلم تحرص
فجمع وتعريف وعدل وعجمة   ووصف وتأنيث ووزن مخصص
وما زيد في عدة وعمران فانتبه   وعاشرها التركيب هذا ملخص

---

(3) Abū l-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī (590/1194), *ṭawīl*:

دعوا صرف جمع ليس بالفرد أشكلا   وفعلان فعلى ثم ذي الوصف أفعلا
وذو ألف التأنيث والعدل عدة   والأعجم في التعريف خص مطولا
وذو العدل والتركيب انخف والذي   بوزن يخص الفعل او غالب علا
وما ألف مع نون أخراه زيدتا   وذو هاء وقف والمؤنث أثقلا

TABLE 19.2 Sources and Data (*cont.*)

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(4) Attributed to Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn al-Naḥḥās (698/1299), *kāmil*:

وزن المركب عجمة تعريفها   عدل ووصف الجمع زد تأنيثا

---

(5) Also attributed to Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *basīṭ*:

اجمع وزن عادلا أنث بمعرفة   ركب وزد عجمة فالوصف قد كملا

---

(6) The "Kufan" position, from Ibn Abī Rabīʿ al-Ishbīlī (688/1289), *ṭawīl*:

إذا اثنان من تسع ألما بلفظة   فدع صرفها وهي الزيادة والصفة
وجمع وتأنيث وعدل وعجمة   وأشباه فعل واختصار ومعرفة

---

(7) Tāj al-Dīn Ibn Maktūm (749/1348), *basīṭ*:

موانع الصرف وزن الفعل تتبعه   عدل ووصف وتأنيث وتمنعه
نون تلت ألفا زيدا ومعرفه   وعجمة ثم تركيب وتجمعه

---

(8) Another by Ibn Maktūm, *ṭawīl*:

إذا رمت إحصاء الموانع للصرف   فعدل وتعريف مع الوزن والوصف
وجمع وتركيب وتأنيث صيغة   وزائدتي فعلان والعجمة الصرف

---

(9) Another by Ibn Maktūm, *ṭawīl* (cf. first line of no. 2):

موانع صرف الاسم تسع فهاكها   منظمة إن كنت في العلم ترغب
هي العدل والتأنيث والوصف عجمة   وزائدتا فعلان جمع مركب
وثامنها التعريف والوزن تاسع   وزاد سواها باحث يتطلب

---

(10) al-Jamāl al-Surramarrī (776/1374) *basīṭ*:

والمنع للصرف في الأسماء مع علل   تسع إذا اجتمعت ثنتان قد حصلا
جمع ووصف وتأنيث ومعرفة   وعجمة ثم تركيب وما عدلا
ووزن فعل ونون زيد مع ألف   فالجر كالنصب فالتنوين قد عز[لا]

TABLE 19.2 Sources and Data (*cont.*)

(D) Fragment attributed to al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (ca. 175/791), cited by Khalaf al-Aḥmar (ca. 180/796), *kāmil*:

فانسق وصِلْ بالواو قولك كله   وبلا وثم وأو فليست تصعب
الفاء ناسقة كذلك عندنا   وسبيله رحب المذاهب مشعب

(E) Fragment attributed to al-Naṭanzī (497–499/1103–1106) *basīṭ*,

جواب ما استفهموا بفاء   يكون نصبا بلا امتراء
كالامر والنهي والتمنى   والعرض والجحد والدعاء

(F) Anonymous fragment on subordinating *fa-* (*basīṭ*):

مُرْ وَادْعُ وَانْهُ وَسَلْ وَاعْرِضْ لِحَضِّهِمْ   تَمَنَّ وَارْجُ كذاك النفيُ قد كملا

(G) Stanza by Badr al-Dīn al-Murādī (749/1348) on sentence types, *kāmil*:

جمل أتت ولها محل معرب   سبع لأن حلت محل المفرد
خبرية حالية محكية   وكذا المضاف لها بغير تردد
ومعلق عنها وتابعة لما   هو معرب أو ذو محل فاعدد
وجواب شرط جازم بالفاء أو   بإذا وبعض قال غير مقيد
وأتتك سبع ما لها من موضع   صلة وعارضة وجملة مبتدئ
وجواب أقسام وما قد فسرت   في أشهر والخلف غير مبعد
وبعيد تخصيص وبعد معلق   لا جازم وجواب ذلك أورد
وكذاك تابعة لشيء ما له   من موضع فاحفظه غير مفند

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CHAPTER 20

Islamic Education Reflected in the Forms of Medieval Scholarly Literature: *Jamʿ*, *Tāʾlīf*, and *Taṣnīf* in Classical Islam

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It appears natural to us when scholarly approaches and methods of research, given to students during their education, are later reflected in their own scholarly works. This is especially the case in the system of traditional religious education. Classical Islamic texts plainly show how these approaches were put into practice by our medieval colleagues. This period is marked by the appearance of Persian scholarly literature proper, as well as its development as a discipline, along with that of Arabic, and provides ample material to trace the evolution of medieval Muslim scholarship.

This evolution is clearly seen in the forewords (*muqaddima*) to medieval written sources. As a rule, any medieval foreword written by its author in classical style (both in Arabic and in Persian), usually following a *khuṭba* (opening address), would set out answers to a few questions concerning the main text; who the author was, what motivated the author to start his work, what form his writing would take, and how he would tackle the task he had set for himself in writing his work. In other words, such a foreword was traditionally intended to clarify four main questions: who, what, why, and how. This is, of course, the most complete and standard arrangement of the medieval foreword, but it could be truncated for various reasons. My paper here deals with two of these questions: What and how was the medieval author going to write?

There were three main forms of writing, which comprised the majority of Arabic and Persian scholarly books during the Islamic Medieval Ages: *jamʿ* (collection), *tāʾlīf* (compilation), and *taṣnīf* (classification or composition). It is reasonable to label them forms rather than genres, since they cover all genres of Islamic scholarly literature (hagiographical, bibliographical, historic, theological, etc.). In most cases, the first two terms (*jamʿ* and *tāʾlīf*) either occur together in the foreword or *tāʾlīf* implies *jamʿ* as a self-evident and preliminary stage of the author's work. *Taṣnīf* normally stands apart, representing a quite different, and independent, form of writing. The same concerns the authors: they are named *jāmiʿ*, *muʾallif*, and *muṣannif*. Distinctions between

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them are clearly seen even in the first "Catalogue" (*al-Fihrist*) of early Islamic books, which was compiled by Ibn al-Nadīm in the fourth/tenth century, and can also be observed during the whole period of the Medieval Ages. Very generally, these distinctions are described by the late ʿAlī Akbar Dihkhudā in his Persian dictionary:

> A distinction is usually drawn between *muṣannif* and *muʾallif*. The title of *muṣannif* is given to one whose ideas and contents for a book stem completely or mostly from his own thoughts and are presented on his own initiative. However, the title of *muʾallif* is given to one who collects all or most ideas from others.[1]

It may seem puzzling, but no definitive comparative analysis of these distinctions has been written to date. They have not yet received the close scrutiny in studies of medieval Islamic literature that they certainly deserve. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why these terms are still considered, by many modern scholars, to not have any difference in meaning, or merely a difference too insignificant to deserve any scholarly attention. Even the most recent and careful studies of various genres of Islamic medieval literature,[2] together with the modern manuscript catalogues, disregard this original Arabic classification, or instead force it into some artificial classification. In my view, the accounts given by medieval scholars in the forewords to their books undoubtedly merit a fresh and comprehensive investigation; after all, these accounts show a key division in the Islamic written sources.

Such division, first of all, concerns the oral narratives or written evidence used by the author in his study. The famous Persian historian of the fifth/eleventh century Abū l-Faḍl Bayhaqī, states in his *Tārīkh*: "Accounts of the past are divided into two kinds, and no third one is considered for them: one should either hear them from somebody or read them from a book."[3]

Hence, a book about the past is to be written in the form of the primary or secondary *tāʾlīf*, when its author must choose between the oral or written sources; however, some slight combination of them seems to be possible.

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[1] Dihkhudā, *Lughatnāma*. All translations are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

[2] See, e.g., Franz, *Kompilation*.

[3] Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh* 366.

1 The Primary and Secondary *tāʾlīf*

In the case of the primary *tāʾlīf*, a medieval compiler (*muʾallif*) first had to collect material from oral and non-written sources—that is, either from living informants, reminiscent of a kind of modern interview, or from his memory. Then, he had to allot (*takhṣīṣ*) what was to be included and/or excluded, and finally, he had to arrange the collected material following a pattern already given by the existing tradition. The pattern did not imply any substantive analysis, but only synthesis.

The compiler of Abū Saʿīd b. Abī l-Khayr al-Mayhanī's hagiography says:

> چون جوهرِ آن عزیز را، قَدَّسَ اللهُ رُوحَهُ، چندین شرف بود، **مؤلف** این کلمات در مدت عمر طالب آثار وانفاس متبرک آن بزرگ می بود و در خاطر **جمع** میکرد و از کثرت علائق در **تألیف** این تکاسل می نمود.

> As there has been so much nobility in the essence of that dear man [Abū Saʿīd], the *compiler* (*muʾallif*) of these words has been searching for the blessed maxims and sayings by this great man and *collecting* them in memory during his lifetime. Being full of interest, however, he has shown his laziness in *compilation* of them.[4]

In the case of the secondary *tāʾlīf*, a compiler had to use the same approach, but apply it to the written tradition. That is, he had to collect material from written sources, make a final selection of material, and again, when presenting it, he had to follow the order that had been previously esablished as a genre pattern by the literary and scholarly traditions of his days, thus receiving the right to title his own compilation and to write a foreword to it.

While, in medieval Islamic literature, the primary *tāʾlīf* was applied mostly to the hagiographical genre (e.g., *maqāmāt*, *manāqib*, *tadhkirāt*, etc.), with its pattern obviously descending from the *ḥadīth* and *sīra* literature, the secondary *tāʾlīf* was the most widespread form in Islamic written tradition, and can be seen frequently in all of its genres.

For example, in the Persian hagiographical literature we can see a unique case when, after the death of Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband (d. 791/1389), the founder of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, four different hagiographic works were dedicated to him, compiled one after another. Two of them bear the same title—the *Anīs al-ṭālibīn wa-ʿuddat al-sālikīn* (*The companion of the seekers and outfit of the*

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[4] Zhukovskiy, *Ḥālāt* 6.

wayfarers)—but represent two different versions, known as the longer and the shorter. Both versions of the *Anīs* are a good illustration of the primary *tāʾlīf* compiled by a prominent deputy of Naqshband, Muḥammad Pārsā al-Bukhārī (d. 822/1420). He collected narratives and accounts, taken mostly from living informants and his own diaries. In the foreword to his *Risāla-yi qudsiyya* (*The essay on the holy sayings*), Pārsā both answers the questions “what” and “how” he is intending to write and makes a well-known reference to the hagiography (*maqāmāt*) of Naqshband.

First, Pārsā says that he is going to arrange his work (written in the *sharḥ* genre) in the forms of *jamʿ* and *tāʾlīf* with no presence of himself:

> باشد که در این کلمات گفتن و نوشتن وجود این ضعیف در میان نباشد، و این **جمع** و
> **تألیف** به برکت دعوات صالحه صاحب نظران سبب مزید درجات قربت گردد.

> Let there be no existence of this weak one [= an equivalent of “I”] in narrating and writing down these maxims, and let this collection (*jamʿ*) and compilation (*tāʾlīf*), thanks to the pious supplications by the men of vision, lead to increasing the levels of closeness to God.[5]

While telling a story about Naqshband, he then prevents himself from finishing it with this note:

> شرح قصه آن واقعه وسایر احوال عجیبه و کرامات غریبه ایشان در مقامات ایشان مسطور
> است که بعضی از اعزه اصحاب وخلص احباب ... به **جمع** و **تألیف** آن قصدی نموده اند.
> ان شاء الله، علی اکمل الوجوه و اجملها تمام گردد.

> An expanded story of that vision as well as his other wonderful states and amazing miracles were written in his *Maqāmāt*, since some of his dear companions and sincere friends have already set a purpose to collect (*jamʿ*) and compile (*tāʾlīf*) it. If Allāh so desires, it will be completed in the most perfect and excellent way.[6]

In contrast, in the case of two later hagiographies dedicated to Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband—the *Risāla-yi Bahāʾyya* of Abū l-Qāsim b. Masʿūd and the *Maqāmāt* of Abū l-Muḥsin Muḥammad Bāqir—we clearly see two patterns of the secondary *tāʾlīf* provided with the narratives and accounts taken from both versions of the *Anīs*, as well as from other written sources. Then, these accounts were rearranged by their compilers, who, according to the literary tradition, gained the right to give them new titles and supply them with their own forewords.

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[5] Pārsā, *Qudsiyya* 7.

[6] Ibid., 9.

Moreover, the famous poet and Naqshbandiyya shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492) combined the shorter version of the *Anīs* by Pārsā with the *Dhikr-i Quṭb al-aqṭāb khwāja-yi ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār* (*Mention of the Pole of poles khwāja ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār*), also written by Pārsā. Thus, Jāmī realized a well-known, but unfulfilled, intention of Pārsā by gathering the *Maqāmāt* of Naqshband and the sayings of his deputy ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār under one cover. Again, according to the literary tradition, Jāmī received the right to provide it with his own foreword, which he composed in the form of rhymed prose (*sajʿ*). Located before the foreword by Pārsā, Jāmī's foreword aimed to show plainly that such a combination of the two texts had never been compiled by Pārsā himself.[7]

As far as the historiographical genre is concerned, the predominant number of medieval historical works, both Arabic and Persian, have been written in the form of the secondary *tāʾlīf*. Here is just one typical example, taken from the foreword written by the famous Persian historian Ḥāfiẓ Abrū (d. 833/1431) to his *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*:

> چنین گوید **مؤلف** این **تألیف** 〈...〉 که 〈...〉 شاهرخ 〈...〉 این بنده را مأمور گردانید
> که از نسخ متفرق این واقعات را **جمع** گردانند ...
>
> The compiler of this compilation ... says that ... he was ordered by Shāhrukh to collect the historical accounts from various copies ...[8]

The secondary *tāʾlīf* was also applied to *al-kalām* (speculative theology) genre, especially to doxographical texts compiled in this genre. For instance, Muḥammad al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), in the foreword to his famous *Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-niḥal* (*The book of sects and creeds*), says:

> لما وفقنى الله تعالى لمطالعة مقالات اهل العالم ... والوقوف على مصادرها ومواردها واقتناص
> اوانسها وشواهدها، اردت ان اجمع ذلک في مختصر ... ومنهم من قسمهم بحسب الاراء
> والمذاهب وذلک غرضنا في **تأليف** هذا الكتاب.

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7 For more details see Khismatulin, Jāmī's statement.

8 Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Zubdat* 1–2.

> When God (Allāh) Most High had helped me to study the teachings of the world inhabitants … to become familiar with their sources and origins, and to extract the valuable and rare pieces of evidence from them, I desired to gather all of that into a compendium … Some of them have divided [people] according to their opinions and religious schools, and this is also my goal in compilation (*fī tāʾlīf*) of this book.[9]

Such a descriptive approach caused some editors of the *Kitāb al-Milal* to consider it the first impartial book, tolerant toward other religious schools and beliefs, that was written in *al-kalām* literature. However, the book was simply written in the form of the secondary *tāʾlīf* according to its pattern.

The same approach is clearly seen in the *tafsīr* (Quranic exegesis) literature. A prominent Shafiʿi scholar, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), in the foreword to his book *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (*The improvement in the Quranic sciences*), tells us about his forerunner in this field, Muḥammad al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392):

> بلغنى أن الشيخ الامام بدر الدين محمد بن عبدالله الزركشى ... ألف كتابا في ذلک حافلا،
> يسمى البرهان في علوم القرآن ... قال في خطبته: ” ... فاستخرت الله تعالى وله الحمد في وضع
> كتاب في ذلک جامع لما تكلم الناس في فنونه وخاضوا في نكته وعيونه ...“.

> I was informed that shaykh Muḥammad al-Zarkashī compiled (*allafa*) a voluminous book about it and gave it the title *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (*The proof on the sciences of the Quran*). He said in his *khuṭba*: "I sought an omen from God (Allāh) Most High—praise be to Him—in order to create a book on this topic which would gather together all that people had said about the Quran's different aspects and their profound discussions of its crucial points and topics …"[10]

I could illustrate how applicable the secondary *tāʾlīf* was in Islamic medieval literature with many similar citations, taken from forewords and various medieval books. But, suffice it to say, writing in the form of the primary *tāʾlīf*, a medieval scholar had to have a considerable number of living informants and narrators in order to gather information for his book from the oral tradition. While writing in the form of the secondary *tāʾlīf*, he either had to have the information at his disposal, or study, in the traditional way, a considerable number of the books written by his forerunners, in order to select material for his own compilation. In both cases, he had to follow the literary and scholarly patterns of *tāʾlīf*, which imply the preservation of the scholarly approaches to writing (the content, structure, and style), as well as the methods of argumentation.

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[9] Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal* 17–19.

[10] Al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān* i, 12. Cf. its new published English translation: al-Suyūṭī, *Perfect guide* xxvi.

2 *Taṣnīf*

The form of *taṣnīf* seems to have been the most interesting form of writing. In this form, the author, in order to advance his ideas, has to offer a new insight into the current literary and scholarly tradition. He has to change, or even challenge, it, and such innovations would be reflected in his book, either in form or content, or both. To accomplish this goal, he must have the right and skill to do so, which are both closely related to his religious and social status, especially when his writing touches upon confessional and theological issues. This is the book written by him in the form of *taṣnīf*.

This is how Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) describes different, and already existing, patterns of *taṣnīf* in his *Faḍāʾiḥ al-Bāṭiniyya* (*The infamies of the Batinites*):

> لتعلم أن الكلام في **التصانيف** يختلف منهجه: بالإضافة إلى المعنى غوصاً وتحقيقاً و تساهلاً وتزويقاً، و بالإضافة إلى اللفظ إطناباً واسهاباً واختصاراً وإيجازاً، بالإضافة إلى المقصد تكثيراً وتطويلاً واقتصاراً وتقليلاً. فهذه ثلاثة مقامات. ولكل واحد من الأقسام فائدة وآفة.
>
> You should know that the religious discourse in *taṣānīf* [pl. of *taṣnīf*] differs in its approach with regard to meaning—either in profundity and precision or in carelessness and meretriciousness; and with regard to expression—either in prolixity and elaborateness or in brevity and conciseness; and with regard to purpose—either in multiplying and prolonging or in restricting and reducing. These, then, are three standpoints, and each of these divisions has its own advantages and disadvantages.[11]

In the foreword to his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (*The revival of the religious sciences*), written in the juridical genre (*al-fiqh*), al-Ghazālī notes why his book stands apart from the books of his forerunners:

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[11] Al-Ghazālī, *Faḍāʾiḥ* 7.

> لقد **صنف** الناس في بعض هذه المعانى كتباً، ولكن يتميز هذا الكتاب عنها بخمسة أمور:
> الأول، حل ماعقدوه وكشف ماأجملوه؛ الثانى، ترتيب مابددوه ونظم مافرقوه؛ الثالث، ايجاز
> ماطولوه وضبط ماقرروه؛ الرابع، حذف ما كرروه واثبات ماحرروه؛ الخامس، تحقيق أمور
> غامضة اعتاصت على الافهام لم يتعرض لها في الكتب أصلاً.
>
> People have already composed (*ṣannafa*) several books on some of these aspects, but this book differs from them in five ways: First, by clarifying (lit. untying) what they have obscured (lit. knotted), and revealing what they have abridged. Second, by arranging what they have dispersed, and organizing what they have scattered. Third, by shortening what they have lengthened, and correcting what they have set down. Fourth, by deleting what they have repeated, and verifying what they have set down. Fifth, by scrutinizing ambiguous matters which have been unintelligible and never dealt with in any of those books.[12]

In his *Iḥyāʾ*, al-Ghazālī also gives a citation which shows how a traditional approach, applied to the genre of religious polemics, could be exchanged for a new one by a scholar, and why the new approach does not live up to the expectations of his colleagues, who are used to seeing the widespread and traditional scholarly pattern:

> هجر الحارث المحاسبي مع زهده وورعه بسبب **تصنيفه** كتاباً في الرد على المبتدعة وقال
> له: "ويحک! ألست تحكي بدعتهم أولا ثم ترد عليهم؟ ألست تحمل الناس **بتصنيفک** على
> مطالعة البدعة والتفكر في تلک الشبهات فيدعوهم ذلک الى الرأي والبحث؟"
>
> He [Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal] left al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, notwithstanding the latter's asceticism and scrupulousness, because of his composition (*taṣnīf*) of a book on the refutation of innovators, and told him: "Woe unto you! Don't you first narrate one of their innovations and then refute them? Don't you impel people by means of your *tasnīf* to study this innovation and to reflect on the doubts that call them to express their own views and debate them?"[13]

Hence, we can conclude that it was self-evidently common practice for a religious scholar of al-Muḥāsibī's time, when he was going to write a polemical treatise, to first refute an innovation, and then exemplify it. It was this pattern that, according to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Muḥāsibī changed in his book.

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[12] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* i, 4.

[13] Ibid., i, 88 and ii, 145.

Although the historiographic genre is represented mostly by books written in the form of secondary *taʾlīf*, nevertheless, in Persian literature, we have the very famous Ghaznavid chronicle—that is, the *Tārīkh* by Bayhaqī, cited above and written in the rare form of historical *taṣnīf*. On account of his position at the Ghaznavid court, Bayhaqī not only had access to state documents but also was well-informed about the inner life of the court, obtaining insider information. That is why he could offer a new approach to the description of historical events. Applying the term *taṣnīf* to his book, Bayhaqī explains why it differs from other chronicles compiled by his forerunners:

> در دیگر تواریخ چنین طول و عرض نیست که احوال را آسانتر گرفته اند و شمه بیش یاد نکرده اند، اما من چون این کار پیش گرفتم، می خواهم که داد این تاریخ بتمامی بدهم وگرد زوایا وخبایا بر گردم تا هیچ چیز از احوال پوشیده نماند ... در تاریخی که من می کنم، سخنی نرانم که آن بتعصبی و تزبدی کشد وخوانندگان این **تصنیف** گویند: ”شرم باد این پیررا!“ بلکه آن گویم که تا با من خوانندگان اندرین موافقت کنند وطعنی نزنند ...

> Other chronicles are lacking in such elaborateness since they have taken the historical events easier, mentioning just a little of them. But when I undertake this task, I would like to do complete justice to this *Tārīkh* (*Chronicle*) by sweeping the dust from every nook and cranny for nothing of these events to remain hidden … In the *Tārīkh* which I am writing, I shall not say a word that would lead to bigotry and foaming at the mouth and so that the reader of this *taṣnīf* would say: “Shame on this dodderer!” Instead, I shall say something in what the reader would agree with me and would not reproach me for anything.[14]

His chronicle is considered by modern scholars, not to have become a model that other medieval historians followed, but rather a kind of "best seller" in the intellectual market of its time.

In Arabic literature, we also have the same rare sample of historical *taṣnīf* with the same valid claim to its originality, the *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* (*The book of examples*), with its *al-Muqaddima* written by Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406). In the excerpt cited below, the author not only looks at his book, as composed in the form of *taṣnīf*, but also tries to prove such a statement in the form of rhymed prose (*sajʿ*):

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[14] Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh* x, 179.

When I had read the books of others	لما طالعت كُتُب القوْم
and probed into the recesses of yesterday and today,	وسَبَرت غور الأمس واليوْم،
I shook myself out of that drowsy complacency and sleepiness	نبّهت عينَ القريحة من سنة الغفلة والنوْم،
to exhibit my own *taṣnīf*, although I am a bankrupt trying to sell it as well as I could.	وَسِمْت **التصنيف** من نفسي وأنا المفلس أحْسِنُ السوْم،
Thus, I composed a book on history	فأنشأت في التاريخ كتاباً،
to lift a veil from conditions as they arise in various generations …	رفعت به عن أحوال الناشئة من الأجيال حجاباً ...
I followed an unusual way to arrange and divide it [the book] into chapters	وسلكت في ترتيبه وتبويبه مسلكاً غريباً،
by inventing a remarkable method, an innovative pattern and style from the various possibilities …[15]	واخترعته من بين المناحي مذهباً عجيباً وطريقةً مبتدَعةً وأسلوباً ...

Because of the innovative pattern applied by Ibn Khaldūn when writing his historical chronicle, he is considered by some modern researchers as the founder of social studies, and also as the father of political studies, and so on.

Three more points should be stressed here. First, any *muṣannif* could, at the same time, be a mere *mu'allif*, but not vice versa. That is why we find that some medieval Muslim authors have an incredibly large number of books attributed to them. For example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) is said to have composed over 200 writings, and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī over 600 writings. This means that most of these pieces of writing have simply been compiled by the scholars, following a traditional pattern, and "borrowing" freely from books written by their colleagues.

The second point takes into consideration the specific features of the classical system of Islamic education. When a student had to scrutinize a considerable number of different books by making notes on, copying, and even memorizing them, the contents of these books remained in his memory.[16] Thus, it seems to have been unnecessary for him to have the hard copies of the books in hand while writing his own scholarly compilation. He just had to use his own memory. Hence, we come closer to the problem of the so-called "hidden borrowings" which are so often seen in medieval Islamic literature, but, perhaps, were not considered by medieval scholars as such.

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[15] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* 8–10.

[16] For more detail and bibliography, see Günther, Assessing 75–98.

The third point concerns one author's references to a *taṣnīf* that was written by another. These kinds of references must be read critically and receive additional verification. Often, they were made by the former to simply respect or implicitly underline the high religious status of the latter.

3 Conclusions

To sum up these observations, it is necessary to emphasize that, on the one hand, each *jamʿ* or *tāʾlīf* is intended to deal with merely a synthesis of information taken from either oral or written sources. For centuries, such a form was applied to the literary and scholarly patterns in medieval Islam, implying the preservation of scholarly approaches to writing, as well as methods of argumentation.

The originality of such compilations is presented, first, by the compiler's selection of sources. Most of the compilations are intended to clearly demonstrate the religious and legal school to which the compiler-*muʾallif* belongs. Second, the minimum simplified analytics appears in the compilation since the *muʾallif* has to arrange the selected material following the logic and pattern already preset by the genre in which he works.

On the other hand, each *taṣnīf* is expected to represent a sort of analysis of gathered information, thus providing sufficient reason to consider it as a literary and scholarly alternative to the first two forms. It aimed to offer a new approach to the existing literary and scholarly traditions, or a new insight into them, either expressed by its author-*muṣannif* explicitly or introduced by him practically, through the composition itself. In the latter case, we can expect to see substantial changes in the form, structure, and content of his writing, in comparison to previous and widespread scholarly patterns, used by his forerunners in the same field of study. As a consequence, these changes lead us to a new original pattern offered by this *muṣannif*.

For example, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī was compelled to include the contents of and the forewords to the books composed by some of his famous colleagues in Quranic studies into his *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, in order to *explicitly prove*, by means of such illustrations, that his book contains something original and is written by him in the form of *taṣnīf*. He concludes in his prologue:

> قوى العزم ... على ابراز ما أضمرته وشددت الحزم في انشاء **التصنيف** الذى قصدته ... ورتبت أنواعه ترتيباً أنسب من ترتيب البرهان ... وسميته بالاتقان في علوم القرآن وسترى في كل نوع منه، ان شاء الله تعالى، مايصلح أن يكون **بالتصنيف** مفرداً.
>
> Being strengthened in my intention … to publish what I had in mind, I made firm my determination to write a composition (*taṣnīf*) I had aimed to do … I arranged its chapters in a way more suitable than that of al-Burhān … and entitled it *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*. If God (Allāh) Most High so desires, you will see in each of its chapters what deserves a separate composition.[17]

All the evidence given implies that comparative analysis of the forms of Islamic literature, first of all, enables us to reveal some of the most typical literary and scholarly patterns used by medieval authors in their *tāʾlīf*-compilations. Then, it allows us to identify the Medieval literary forgeries and false attributions which were made intentionally and tried to imitate these forms.[18] And finally, it also helps us to gauge the broader cultural significance of certain fundamental trends in the development of *taṣnīf* compositions—namely, why this or that type of *taṣnīf* has arisen, and why it has become so popular or, on the contrary, unpopular in the given historic period or particular region.

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[17] Al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān* i, 14–15; Cf. al-Suyūṭī, *Perfect guide* xxviii.

[18] For more detail see: Khismatulin, The Persian mirrors.

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CHAPTER 21

Primary Schoolteachers between *Jidd* and *Hazl*: Literary Treatment of Educational Practices in Pre-modern Islamic Schools

Antonella Ghersetti

This study focuses on representations of elementary schoolteachers (s., *muʿallim*) and their educational practices as they are transmitted in literary sources. Although very different in content, aims, and tone, the sources of a legal and literary nature each reflect, in their own way, the practices and the habits connected to primary education. Both can give interesting glimpses into the way primary schools worked in the Islamic tradition, and thus contribute to a better understanding of the practices and customs of everyday life at the *kuttāb* (elementary school, or Quran school). Our article aims to link the two types of sources and to place at their intersection the jocular representation of some schoolmasters' practices in the pre-modern period. In fact, literary sources and anecdotes, in particular, show a certain correspondence between the shortcomings the *muʿallim*s are accused of and the obligations they must abide by, as described in the sources of a legal and normative nature. Our hypothesis is that the literary treatment of the image of schoolmasters and their educational practices, when compared with norms and good practices recommended in the non-literary sources, is in great part grounded in the process of parody, consisting in a nearly systematic reversal of the duties prescribed to elementary schoolteachers, especially their duty to teach the sacred text and the fundamentals (writing and reading), and to engage in pious and respectable conduct. In other words, literary texts are a reflection of reality, and their parodic representations are grounded in the gap between (good) theory and (bad) practices. In so doing, we assume that primary school education is characterized by a remarkable continuity; this explains the rather long period covered by the sources we take account of. The corpus will include two kinds of texts, narratives selected from *adab* works and texts with a legal and prescriptive orientation. Only material concerning the elementary education of "common people" will be taken into consideration; stories, anecdotes, and general passages pertaining to, or representing, princely and royal education will not be considered, on the basis that these show traits specific to a limited and very elitist milieu. Private tutors were also well-known scholars. As

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al-Jāḥiẓ clearly says, princely education was entrusted to prominent personalities, like al-Kisāʾī or Quṭrub, who have nothing or very little to do with the average *muʿallim*, and who are clearly separate from the lowest ranks of the educator's craft.[1]

1 Elementary Education in the Arab World: An Overview

Compared to the rich primary and secondary literature covering principles and practices of higher education (i.e., education following the *kuttāb*'s stage) in the Arab world, the qualifications and activity of the primary schoolteacher (*muʿallim*, *muʾaddib*, etc.)[2] and the educational principles and practices of the primary school (*kuttāb*, *maktab*)[3] seem to have received little attention. The conditions and practices of primary education in the Islamic world have been summarized by Goldziher (he is still the more specific scholar on the topic), and, more cursorily, by Munir-ud-din, Tritton, and Shalaby.[4] More recently, the specific issue of motivation of children has been addressed by Hassim.[5] In the Arab sources, the scanty interest shown toward methods and practices of primary education is perhaps due to the fact that "the ways and aims of elementary education are established and no longer need much literary discussion."[6] The same lack of attention can be seen in the materials dealing with the professionals involved in educational activities at this stage (i.e., primary schoolteachers). The treatises devoted to their profession are very few indeed, and only rare references to them are found in the several studies dedicated to education in Islam, which tend, rather, to be focused on higher education. The pre-modern biographical sources are rich in details regarding the professional profiles of the teachers involved in higher education, but they are almost all silent on the figure of the *muʿallim*; this could lead us to assume that this profession was not considered worthy of mention. "One cannot help noticing whilst reading T.B. [*Tarīḫ Baġdād*] that, whereas the biographies of the tutors (al-Mu'addib) are present in considerable numbers, those of the teachers (al-Muʿallim and al-Mukattib) are practically missing. […] This could lead one to the conclusion that it was not very important to be an elementary school teacher."[7] All in all, the status of the *muʿallim*, and the salary he received, were not considered a profession to be worth studying for. In this light, the following anecdote, related by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, seems particularly meaningful:

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[1] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* i, 250–252.

[2] In the chapter on elementary school training Munir-ud-din (Munir-ud-din, *Muslim education* 40–51) also deals with terminology. He says that the teacher was called *muʿallim* (which was also applied as an honorary title to the very first teacher in the respective branches of knowledge), *mukattib*/*muktib* (always used to mean a teacher in an elementary school), and *muʾaddib* (normally used for a tutor, primarily a private appointment). His observations are based on the status of scholars depicted in the reports and biographies contained in *Tārīkh Baghdād* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), and therefore contain terms specific to his milieu. Lane, *Manners* 66, attests to the extensive use of the word *faqīh*, and the term is also extensively used in al-Ḥanafī's *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* (see below), which could hint at the Egyptian origin of this anthology.

[3] Munir-ud-Din, *Muslim education* 41, observes that *kuttāb/maktab* seem to be used interchangeably for elementary school, but in the sources there is some evidence of controversy regarding the name. Al-Mubarrad prefers *maktab* (noun of place), whereas *al-kuttāb* refers to the students of such an institution, as attested in *Lisān al-ʿArab* and *Tāj al-ʿarūs* (see also Shalaby, *History* 18). Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 36/656) reports having attended a Persian *kuttāb*, which would be the first attestation of this word. Among the sources consulted, *maktab* seems to be used mostly in the Egyptian ones (e.g., al-Haytamī summarized in Jackson, Discipline; al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*).

[4] Goldziher, Education, is the only one who focuses his attention on elementary schools; others, like Munir-ud-Din, Tritton, and Shalaby, only dedicate minor sections of their studies to the subject. Some interesting remarks on elementary education, in the larger frame of educational theories, can be found in Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 290–293. In the same chapter the author also makes some interesting remarks on the influence of the Greek tradition on education in Islam. Cf. Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 284–289. Cook and Malkawi, *Classical foundations*, also provide useful materials (Arabic texts and English translations) on educational theories and practices, some of them relevant to primary education.

> Abū Hanīfa said: "When I made up my mind to learn, I started investigating the various branches of knowledge and asking what I would gain by learning them. [He asked for the advice of some expert people and, after having discarded different possibilities, he came to *naḥw* (grammar) and says] Then I thought I would learn al-Naḥw. I asked about my lot if I shall learn al-Naḥw and al-ʿarabīyya and they said: 'You will become al-Muʿallim (a teacher of boys) and earn two to three Dinārs a month.' I said 'This has no good future either.' "[8]

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[5] Hassim, *Elementary education*.

[6] Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 298; see also Richards, Primary education 224: "Educational theory and practice of primary *maktab* were not much an issue in the Mamluk period." Rosenthal's statement refers to Ibn Jamāʿa's treatise (early eighth/fourteenth century), but, in fact, one has the impression that elementary education's contents and aims were taken for granted, even in earlier periods.

[7] Munir-ud-Dīn, *Muslim education* 45.

[8] Trans. Munir-ud-Dīn, *Muslim education* 172, from *Tārīkh Baghdād*; see also Tritton, *Materials* 77.

Al-Jāḥiẓ sadly recalls the poor salaries of teachers who were complaining about the difference between their competences and their pecuniary payment:

> A man who knows grammar, prosody, the laws of inheritance, writes a good hand, is good in arithmetic, knows the Quran and can recite poetry and is employed as instructor earns much less than somebody who is only equipped with the ability of talking well.[9]

Considering the list of skills, here reference is probably made to a tutor occupied in higher education, but the point remains that knowledge is not well-paid.

The sharp division between elementary and advanced education in the premodern Muslim world is clearly reflected in sources focused on educational practices and theories, and in the information about teachers' careers and activities. As Giladi underlines, the wealth of titles found in bibliographical compilations, such as *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, shows that there was a keen interest in learning, teaching, and the training of a person's character.[10] Nevertheless, this interest does not apply to every level of the educational system; treatises on learning in general often have a philosophical bias, and those on higher education, such as *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ wa-l-mutakallim* by Ibn Jamāʿa (d. 733/1333), deal with elementary education only incidentally. To use Rosenthal's words, authors often concentrate on "religion-related education,"[11] like al-Zarnūjī (fl. ca. 620/1233) in his *Kitāb Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim*, or on ethical training, like al-Ghazālī, who showed only a passing interest in the education of children at elementary school.[12] Among specific treatises on children's education in premodern Arab civilization, the best known are probably the treatises of Muḥammad b. Saḥnūn (d. 256/870)[13] and al-Qābisī (d. 403/1012). The second depends heavily on the first, and contains it almost in its entirely, but has some additional notes and a different arrangement. Both are works of a legal nature and consist mostly of *ḥadīth* and legal opinions answering specific questions. Other useful works can also be mentioned, like *Taḥrīr al-maqāl* by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567), "actually, a *fatwā* (legal opinion),"[14] or *Jāmiʿ jawāmiʿ al-ikhtiṣār wa-l-tibyān fīmā yaʿriḍu lil-muʿallimīn wa-l-ṣibyān* by Ibn Abī Jumʿa al-Maghrāwī al-Wahrānī, completed (probably in Tlemcen) in 898/1493, which deals with legal issues.[15]

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[9] Tritton, *Materials* 25.

[10] Giladi, Theories 6. For an overview of some benchmarks for Islamic theories of education, see Günther, Be masters.

[11] Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 289.

[12] Speaking of children and parental duties, al-Ghazālī insists on the acquisition of virtues and knowledge relevant to religious precepts; consequently, the school curriculum must also correspond to this principle, and the study of the Quran should precede any other kind of study. On al-Ghazālī's theories on education, see the concise summary of Giladi, Theories, and the translation of Bencheneb in al-Ghazālī, Lettre. Gardet, Notions (based on the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* sections on education), emphasizes al-Ghazālī's ethical approach to education and states that apparently he does not distinguish between moral and intellectual virtues.

[13] A recent biographical sketch of Ibn Saḥnūn and his intellectual milieu is Adang, Intra- and

If we must rely on literature dealing with education theories, we could infer that, in the Western part of the Muslim world, there was greater interest in the science of education, and particularly primary education, than was the case in the East: it is meaningful that three out of the four works mentioned above were written by Maghribi authors.[16] This seems true also true in more recent times, as shown by the existence of a short anonymous work of pedagogy written in the early eighteenth century, probably in Morocco, and translated by Bencheneb in 1897.[17] Even a historian like Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) shows a remarkable interest in matters relating to education, including primary education. In his *Muqaddima* he describes the different types of educational approaches in the Muslim empire, underlining that while in the Maghrib the teachers focus exclusively on the teaching of the Quran and its recensions and readings (neglecting *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, and *shiʿr*), in al-Andalus the Quranic text is taken as the starting point for developing linguistic and literary skills, while in Ifrīqiya there is a combination of the Quran and traditions.[18] He also makes some interesting remarks on how to treat the pupils. He recommends avoiding violence and rude treatment, and respecting children, lest they get accustomed to lying out of fear of being beaten. Ill-treatment, in his view, results in spoiling the moral disposition of young people and drives them to corruption. He also states that both teachers and fathers must not be despots ruling over

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interreligious; Günther, Advice, al-Ḥijāzī, *Madhhab*, and Ismail, Muḥammad ibn Saḥnūn, focus on his role in the field of education.

[14] Jackson, Discipline 19; for a detailed presentation of the contents see Jackson, Discipline.

[15] On this Maliki jurist (d. 917/1511) see Stewart, Identity esp. 289–293 for the treatise on elementary education.

[16] Goldziher, Education 205, remarks, "In the discussion of problems of education the literature of the Western Islām (the Maghrib) takes the lead." Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 292, seems to put forward a "legal oriented" hypothesis for this imbalance between East and West, and tentatively suggests that such "practical problems may not have been of equal appeal for scholars of the other [i.e. non-Malikite AG] schools."

[17] Bencheneb, Notions. The work draws largely from Ibn al-Ḥājj's *Madkhal al-sharʿ al-sharīf*.

[18] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* 594–595.

their pupils and offspring, and they must not exaggerate their punishments of them;[19] elsewhere, he suggests a gradual progression in teaching.[20] It is also worth considering that, as Goldziher keenly observes, in Andalusian Islam "a higher value was placed upon the function of the teacher than was the case in the East."[21]

If a systematic treatment is not frequent, it is also true that many ideas and remarks concerning education are "scattered in the writings of medieval Muslim thinkers, sometimes in utterances accumulated in whole chapters or whole treatises dealing with one or another aspect of education."[22] For instance, some interesting remarks can be found in medical works; chapter 22 of the treatise on pediatrics, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān*, by the Tunisian physician Ibn al-Jazzār (d. 395/980), focuses on children's education, notably on their innate attitude to be instructed, their character, and their attitude toward good or bad moral habits.[23] Other considerations on the education of children can also be found in the *Fürstenspiegel* or mirror of princes literature; in the *Kitāb al-Darārī fī dhikr al-dharārī* by Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262), chapter seven is devoted to the recommendations that parents must give to their offspring's teachers.[24] Some remarks concerning the qualifications of primary schoolteachers and their tasks are also scattered throughout *adab* anthologies, like in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, which has a section on the education of children (*taʾdīb al-ṣaghīr*),[25] or even in encyclopedic works. In a passage from the *Nihāyat al-arab*, focused on the different types of handwriting, al-Nuwayrī briefly deals with the methods of teaching the fundamentals of reading and writing and the progression of the learning process. The passage also contains a concise portrait of the *muʾaddib*, who must be pious and honest lest the *muḥtasib* prevents him from teaching.[26] Jurists' moralizing works, such as *Madkhal al-sharʿ al-sharīf* by the Egyptian Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336) or *Muʿīd al-niʿam wa-mubīd al-niqam* by Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370), can also be useful for getting an idea of educational practices, even if they are focused mostly on higher education; their interdictions and recommendations, mostly concerning practices considered reprehensible, can be taken as clues to practices in use in their society. Other useful indications concerning primary education can be found in *ḥisba* treatises, even if these only seldom show a specific interest in primary education.[27] *Nihāyat al-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba* by the judge and physician al-Shayzarī (circa the fourth quarter of the sixth/twelfth century) and Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's (d. 729/1329) *Maʿālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*[28] both have a chapter devoted to boys' instructors. They briefly describe the places where schools must—or must not—be placed and the subjects that must—or must not—be taught; emphasis is put on the moral traits of the educator and on his behavior with the children. Also, legal sources such as *fatwā*s like *Taḥrīr al-maqāl* by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, already mentioned above, which is focused on the educational and administrative problems of orphanages, can provide interesting information on the content and context of elementary education. Contracts between parents and teachers can also be relevant, for they specify the topics to be taught (usually manners, and, in particular, decent and dignified behavior, religious duties, writing, and the Quran, and also which Quranic readings and which school of law), along with other aspects of the teacher's activity, such as his behavior and the educational methods he should use.[29] For the Mamluk period, *waqfiyya*s, like those edited by Richards and Haarmann, also help shed light on the matter; they contain useful information on teachers' qualifications, on curricula, and on practical details, such as the acquisition of writing materials.[30]

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[19] Ibid., 597–598, quoting from the *Kitāb fī ḥukm al-muʿallimīn wa-l-mutaʿallimīn* of Muḥammad b. Abī Zayd; we have not been able to identify the book or the author.

[20] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* 589–592.

[21] Goldziher, Education 202.

[22] Giladi, Theories 4.

[23] Ibn al-Jazzār, *Siyāsat al-ṣibyān* 113–116 (trans. Lucchetta, *Libro del governo* 80–83). Advice is focused on the ethical side (education to virtue is necessary), more than on methods and programs of learning; there is no clue as to the typical Muslim education.

[24] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Darārī 38–39. On this treatise, see Eddé, Représentation.

[25] Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd* ii, 271–273.

[26] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* ix, 135. Cf. Tritton, *Materials* 12.

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[27] Some of them deal with educational matters only in the frame of higher education, like the treatise of al-Sunāmīʿ, which has a chapter on teachers of scholastic theology. Cf. al-Sunāmīʿ, *Theory* 97.

[28] Both authors were probably Egyptian. Al-Shayzarī's manual constituted the basis of the later *ḥisba* manuals, including Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's work, which appropriated much of the former's material. Both manuals have specific chapters dedicated to the instructors of boys (*muʾaddibū l-ṣibiyan*), chs. 38 and 46, respectively.

[29] These are the contents of the contract of 500 h. approx. quoted by Tritton, *Materials* 26. Hassim alludes many times to the fact that elementary education was primarily based on an agreement between father and schoolteacher (Hassim, *Elementary education*, *passim*).

[30] Haarmann, Endowment deeds 31, duly underlines the significance of *waqfiyya*s for the social and economic history of the institutions or learning and teaching in Egypt and Syria in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See also Richards, Primary education. Other types of documents, like children's exercise books, could also be useful. These types of sources have been used to learn about the methods of primary education in Jewish medieval Oriental communities. Cf. Olszowy-Schlanger, Learning 7.

2 Elementary Education: Practices and Methods

Elementary education was seemingly well-established by the early Umayyad period, and the existence of *kuttāb*s and *muʿallim*s is even attested in earlier periods.[31] Immediately after the rise of Islam, the insistence on the religious character of primary education was far less firm than in the following period. Shalaby hints at the existence of primary schools especially devoted to the teaching of reading and writing only, separate from religious instruction.[32] The literary sources summarize the main points of primary education up to the Umayyad period in a few, practical instructions. Al-Ḥājjāj is said to have suggested to his children's teacher (*muʾaddib*), "Teach my sons swimming before writing: they can always find somebody who writes for them, but nobody who swims in their place."[33] Instructions of other prominent men, like the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb also had a practical slant: "Teach your son swimming, horsemanship, famous proverbs and good poetry;"[34] or, "The first duty of fathers is to teach their sons writing arithmetic and swimming." The insistence is on favoring utility over theoretical matters: "Do not teach children more grammar than will save them from doing bad; anything beyond this will divert them from what is more useful."[35] It is curious that swimming was recommended, with other practical skills, along with writing and arithmetic; Goldziher thinks that the insistence on swimming, clearly in contradiction with the natural environment of the Arabs, was probably due to the influence of foreign views.[36] This seems to match the hypothesis put forward by Lecomte, who, comparing school life in the Byzantine Empire and the Muslim world, arrived at the conclusion that elementary education in Islam was "Arabic" and "Islamic" only in content, while methods and programs largely drew from a common Mediterranean background.[37] Tritton reduces educational theories for the *kuttāb* to some basic tenets: "Begin at the beginning and do not confuse the mind with too many new ideas at once is almost the sum of it … do not weary minds but do not neglect them."[38]

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[31] Goldziher, Education 199. Shalaby, *History* 20, n. 5, puts forward the hypothesis that the Quranic *kuttāb* as an institution stems from education in the palaces and goes back to the times of al-Ḥajjāj.

[32] Shalaby, *History* 17–19, states that in the early days of Islam two separate systems of primary education existed, one devoted to the teaching of reading and writing, and the other to the teaching of the Quran and religious duties. He also criticizes some scholars, Goldziher in particular, for mixing up the two, due to the common word (*kuttāb*) used to refer to the elementary school. The passages mentioned to support his hypothesis seem nevertheless have been misinterpreted; they also go back to later periods and probably refer to the professional training of clerks.

[33] Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* ii, 166.

[34] Al-Ḥajjāj suggested to people of al-Shām, "Teach your sons swimming, shooting and horsemanship." Cf. Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* ii, 168. See also Shalaby, *History* 22; and Tritton, *Materials* 2–3.

[35] Tritton, *Materials* 3. Grammar can be even more dangerous; stupidity was also often associated with the thorough knowledge of grammar, and the grammarians are harshly ridiculed in *adab* works.

[36] Goldziher, Education 200. Even al-Ghazālī, in spite of the strongly ethical bias of his approach to education, mentions swimming among the recommendations that a father should give to his son's preceptor. Cf. al-Ghazālī, Lettre 109.

With the passing of the years, elementary education seems to have acquired an increasingly stronger religious and ethical character, and could be seen essentially as religious education,[39] even if the stress on the teaching of the Quran varied in relation to the type of source and its geographical provenance. In this sense, non-literary sources mirror the practice of elementary education much more than the *adab* collections or the *Fürstenspiegel* literature. A quick glimpse at *ḥisba* treatises and texts written by jurists in a normative perspective (*fatwā*s or treatises aiming at ethical correction), or at *waqfiyya*s, allows us to see what was prescribed to schoolmasters in terms of contents and methods of teaching, and in terms of ethics and behavior as well. The *muʿallim* had to make his pupils learn short chapters of the Quran, the alphabet (letters and vowels), the orthodox articles of faith, the basics of arithmetic, proper (i.e., not foolish or immoral) letter writing, poetry, and good handwriting. The teacher must first of all teach the Quran and religious precepts and usages, then train children in reading, writing, and the fundamentals of arithmetic. The teacher should teach children to pray with the community and to honor their parents.[40] The teacher must not teach anything before the Quran; *ḥadīth*s and matters of belief (*ʿaqāʾid*), only when it is appropriate for the pupils, and if he does so it is to be prudently done. He must teach the outstanding pupil to write down the Quran on tablets and carry the volume (*muṣḥaf*).[41] Poetry was admitted only if chaste, whilst erotic or immoral poems and poets were often overtly blacklisted by al-Shayzarī, Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, and Ibn al-Ḥājj. The standard curriculum of elementary school is well summarized in some documents from the Mamluk period, whose contents mirror the advice of al-Shayzarī and Ibn al-Ukhuwwa. There, it is said that the teacher (*muʾaddib*) should teach the orphans "what they can manage to learn of the Noble Quran and instruct them in what they are able to learn of the Arabic script and alphabet" and arithmetic.[42] Gentle treatment of pupils and light punishments are also recommended in the same documents.

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[37] Lecomte, Vie scolaire 330–331. This hypothesis could be proven by the loan words *qalam* and *falaqa* (an instrument used for punishment). On the etymology and the use of *falaqa* see Canard, Vie scolaire 331–336.

[38] Tritton, *Materials* 7.

[39] "C'est la religion qui, chez les Arabes, a créé les écoles" (Bencheneb, Notions 267; but cf. Shalaby's opinion above, n. 32); "Islām … introduced among them [the Arabs] the elements of education" (Goldziher, Education 198). This is something taken for granted insomuch that, reading the sources, one often has the impression that the word *muʿallim* is in fact an elliptical expression for *muʿallim Qurʾān*; this is evident in al-Qābisī's *Risāla*.

[40] Al-Shayzarī, *Book* 119; Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Maʿālim* 171 (Ar.) / 60 (Eng.).

[41] Al-Subkī, *Muʿīd* 185.

According to the remarks of Ibn Khaldūn, Mālikī (i.e., Maghribi) sources, much more than others, seem to insist on the almost exclusive teaching of the Quran. Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Qābisī prescribe, as compulsory subjects constituting the *muʿallim*'s obligations: the *iʿrāb* of the Quran; its vowelling (*shakl*); spelling (*hijāʾ*); the science of pauses and the slow recitation of the Quran (*tawqīf* and *tartīl*); the accepted readings (Nāfiʿ and others); the sermons (*khuṭab*, on request); manners (*adab*), which are considered a religious duty; and, prayers. The teacher is not obliged to teach computation (*ḥisāb*), poetry,[43] or linguistic subjects (grammar, *gharīb*), unless specifically included in the contract; further topics (*ʿilm al-rijāl, ayyām al-ʿarab*) can also be taught.[44] To summarize, as a later Moroccan treatise states, the teacher must teach "everything necessary for religion" (reading, writing, the Quran, religious precepts, theological fundamentals, etc.), and is therefore required to have a perfect knowledge of the Quran and of its readings. This is an unavoidable condition for receiving his salary, which is to be considered illegal if he does not meet this requirement.[45] The *muʿallim*'s professional and moral qualifications also had to respond to these requirements, and the behavior of the teacher and his ethics also frequently was discussed in the sources. In a specific chapter from *al-Darārī*, Ibn al-ʿAdīm gives advice for teachers and exemplifies the skills that were required to be a good schoolteacher. In this chapter, the *mu'addib* is warned that his conduct must be exemplary, since children will imitate him. He also must keep them away from women's conversation. He must teach them the Quran, some chaste poetry, wise sayings, and the lives of wise men. The teacher must teach the Quran without putting them off or leading them to give up, and he must approach new topics only once the old ones are completely assimilated.[46]

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[42] *Mā yaḥtamilūna taʿallumahu min al-khaṭṭ al-ʿarabī wa-ḥijāʾihi* … (Richards, Primary education 225); *mā yaḥtamilūna taʿallumahu min al-qurʾān al-khaṭṭ wa-l-ḥijāʾ wa-l-istikhrāj wa-l-ādāb* (Haarmann, Endowment deeds 45–46, ll. 582–593, which also contain useful information about days of vacation, punishments, and the schoolmaster's morality and skills).

[43] In later sources (Bencheneb, Notions 282 [Ar.] / 273 [Fr.]), the teaching of poetry is even forbidden a priori, independent of its nature.

[44] Al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 112–115 (Ar.) / 99–102 (Fr.).

[45] Bencheneb, Notions 281 (Ar.) / 272 (Fr.). Later, the curriculum of traditional education in Egypt is outlined by Lane (Lane, *Manners* 67): boys are taught, first the letters of the alphabet, then the vowels and the other marks, the letters' numerical values, simple words, the names of God, and in the end, the Quran. At the completion of any stage, the pupil's father offers some money and some presents to the master. Seldom has a master taught writing, since this is done by a *qabbānī*.

Other precepts concerning moral qualifications and behavior are the following: the schoolteacher must not use any of the boys for his own needs,[47] nor send them to his house when it is empty, nor send them with a woman to write a letter, nor teach a woman.[48] Following Ibn Sīnā's advice, he should be intelligent, religious, understand the training of character, be approachable but not too familiar with the boys, and not austere; he must not offend the children.[49] In general, a teacher must be of good character, otherwise the *muḥtasib* can stop him from teaching; it is more important for the teacher to be orthodox than to have a detailed knowledge of religious subjects.[50] Teachers must be sound in their faith (*ṣaḥīḥ al-ʿaqīda*), and the primary obligation for the tutors of the pupils is the inspection of the faith of the *muʿallim*, then his religion (*al-dīn fī l-furūʿ*).[51] He must be pious, chaste, God-fearing, and—if not married—middle-aged. He must be acquainted with reading, he must not offend his pupils, or be too serious or too cheerful, and he must not beat them or let them beat each other. He must not talk too much with passersby, and he must keep the pupils separated when they go to the restrooms. He must not employ the children in the private service of his household. Boys should not bring food or money with them, and the master must not share food with the boys. He must not laugh with them,[52] nor be too familiar with them, nor lose their respect; he must be impartial and not treat the rich and the poor differently.[53]

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[46] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Darārī 38. This section draws much material from the "*Waṣāyā l-muʿallimīn*" section in Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* ii, 166–168.

[47] Autobiographical literature attests that this was often the case: in relation to the schoolmasters' habits of making pupils perform all kinds of chores for their private purposes, see the personal witness of Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī in Stewart, Humor 56–57, 59. Autobiographies can give interesting insights into the practices of elementary education from the pupil's point of view; see, e.g., Reynolds, Childhood 382, 383, 387.

[48] Al-Shayzarī, *Book* 120; Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Maʿālim* 171 (Ar.) / 60 (Eng.).

[49] Al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 128–129 (Ar.) / 117–118 (Fr.); see also Tritton, *Materials* 21.

[50] Tritton, *Materials* 12–13.

[51] Al-Subkī, *Muʿīd* 185.

[52] But some, like Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī, recommended a moderate use of humor "in order to relieve boredom" (Stewart, Humor 54).

[53] These precepts are largely based on Ibn al-Ḥājj's treatise, largely resumed in the Moroc-

Other aspects of life at school are carefully regulated. A certain attention is devoted to punishments. They should, in principle, be moderate, and are in any case described in detail: the teacher should beat children when they are ill-mannered, use bad language, or act against Islamic law, but only with a middle-sized stick, and only in the lower parts of the legs.[54] Later too, corporal punishments were recommended, but they were strictly regulated. In a treatise, presumably written at the beginning of the eighteenth century by a Moroccan scholar, probably a jurist, it is said that punishment should be proportionate to the bad behavior, and that the teacher could give not more than three to ten, one to twenty, or three to seven strokes of leather strap on the sole of the foot; too many strokes were not approved, as they hindered the learning process.[55] This insistence on corporal punishments clearly illustrates the authoritative relationship between teacher and students, which characterizes the entire educational process in pre-modern Islam, just as much during the course of a student's primary education as later on.[56]

Venues are also carefully regulated. Teachers should acquire teaching premises on thoroughfares or near markets; in any case, they must not teach in mosques,[57] "a school must be in a dwelling house or a shop and might be moved if this did not inconvenience the parents."[58] Lane testifies that schools were numerous, and they were placed near mosques, fountains, and drinking places for cattle. Some parents employed teachers at home,[59] and it was common practice to conjoin the *maktab* and fountains.[60] *Kuttāb*s were also appended to some pious institutions, such as as *zāwiya*s and *khānqah*s, or to *madrasa*s.[61]

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can treatise edited and translated by Bencheneb, Notions, and summarized in Goldziher, Education 203; Tritton, *Materials* 17.

[54] Al-Shayzarī, *Book* 120; Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Maʿālim* 171 (Ar.) / 60 (Eng.).

[55] Bencheneb, Notions 282 (Ar.) / 273–274 (Fr.).

[56] "The instructional framework envisaged by medieval Islamic texts on pedagogy reinforced an authoritative relationship between a shaykh and his students, a relationship whose way has been prepared during the course of a student's primary education" (Berkey, *Transmission* 35; an indirect hint at this "subservient relationship" is also found in Ibn Khaldūn's advice to teachers not to punish their students "with injustice and tyrannical force." Berkey thinks that the scope of this advice is significant since it is directed at masters of students, servants, and slaves).

[57] E.g. al-Shayzarī, *Book* 119; Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Maʿālim* 59; Bencheneb, Notions 281 (Ar.) / 272 (Fr.).

[58] Tritton, *Materials* 13. Hassim refers to the "basic and inexpensive infrastructure of the *katātīb*," quoting the anecdote of a teacher supervising his students "whilst riding on a donkey" (Hassim, *Elementary education* 183).

[59] Lane, *Manners* 65–69.

[60] Goldziher, Education 204.

[61] In the *zāwiya* of Zayn al-Dīn Ṣidqa, students also served as instructors in the institution's

They had to be hired and paid for by the teachers themselves, unless they were part of pious institutions, and in a few cases depending on the number of pupils and other variables.[62]

The continuity, in terms of prescriptions, topics, educational approach, methods of teaching, punishments, and the like, is striking to those who consult the normative sources at our disposal for studying elementary education in the pre-modern period. There is wide agreement that primary education in the Muslim world was characterized by a remarkable consistency regarding curricula, methods, and educational attitudes. The short, anonymous Moroccan treatise edited and translated by Bencheneb contains precepts closely corresponding to those found in earlier sources. This impression is further strengthened by a comparison with later sources. Comparing the treatise of Ibn Saḥnūn, the biographical accounts of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in *al-Ayyām*, and an overall sketch on education by Salama, Lecomte emphasizes such continuity and defines educational methods as immutable (“caractère immuable des méthodes pédagogiques du *kuttāb*”).[63] The firsthand account of Zwemer, an American missionary and scholar who lived in the Arabian Peninsula for a long time, shows that the methods and content of primary school education in the early twentieth century in Saudi Arabia closely resembled those of the past centuries.[64] It must be stressed that anecdotes and narratives found in literary sources also show a noteworthy unity in that they propose the same *topoi* of the *muʿallim* and the same images of the elementary school life over a long span of time.

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primary school; cf. Berkey, *Transmission* 75, 81. “The primary school teacher attached to the *madrasa* of Jawhar al-Lālā was required, in addition to his normal duties in the school’s *maktab*, to instruct Sufis ‘and others’ [people from the quarter] in the art of writing”; cf. Berkey, *Transmission* 71.

[62] Al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 144–145 (Ar.) / 133–134 (Fr.).

[63] Lecomte, Vie scolaire 325. On continuity and resistance to change, both in the curriculum and in the practices, also see Hassim, *Elementary education* 141, 154, 159, 197–198, and *passim*.

[64] Zwemer intersperses his books with very partial views and gives personal assessments, quite harsh to our eyes, but offers a vivid representation of the social and cultural situation of the Arabian Peninsula. “There is a great abundance of schools at Mecca but no education. Everything is on the old lines, beginning and ending with the Koran. The youth learn to read the Koran not to understand its meaning […]. Grammar, prosody, calligraphy, Arabian history, and the first elements of arithmetic, but chiefly the Koran commentaries and traditions, traditions, traditions, form the curriculum of the Mohammedan college.” Zwemer, *Cradle* 43. Interestingly, firsthand information on the methods of teaching in those schools are also given elsewhere; see, e.g., Zwemer, *Cradle* 44, and Zwemer, *Childhood* 135–139.

3 Elementary Education: Literary Treatments

The many caustic proverbs and anecdotes circulating about *muʿallim*s in *adab* literature point to the fact that the *kuttāb* teachers were often despised.[65] The representations the literary sources contain may reflect a reality, in the sense that the extreme disrespect toward teachers attested to in the texts could mirror the fact that they had very low social status.[66] But, it is also true that the literary sources, and in particular *adab* works, accentuate the burlesque representation of the shortcomings and blameful behavior of the *muʿallim*s, and obviously make a mockery of them in order to achieve a comic effect, most often based on a parodic treatment.

Parody consists of a process of reversal of texts, images, or norms. These are represented in a distorted way, emerging, however, in the parodic fashion. In fact, the questions connected with primary school education and, in particular, with the traits and behavior of educators contained in the normative sources, are all echoed, in a parodic vein, in the stories featuring the *muʿallim*. Taking this assumption as the starting point, we will try to pinpoint the norms underlying this reversal and understand the reasoning at the core of this critical attitude toward primary schoolteachers, which is also extended—even if to a different degree—to other categories of learned men.

Our point of departure will be an unpublished *adab* work from the premodern period that shows a striking continuity with earlier sources in regard to aim, tone, and content: *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ wa-salwat al-ghurabāʾ* (*The recreation of the men of letters and the consolation of strangers*).[67] This is a collection of anecdotes arranged in 28 chapters. In terms of its arrangement and content, the work bears a close resemblance to al-Ābī's (d. 421/1030) *Nathr al-durr*. *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* was rather successful[68] and deserves attention as an exemplary compilation of a late period; it was used extensively for European translations of jocular prose (Von Hammer; Basset), "thus contributing to the European conception of Arabic humor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."[69] The author, a certain Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Iyās al-Ḥanafī, compiled it probably in the middle of the eleventh/seventeenth century. The compiler draws his materials from earlier sources in such a repetitive way that it proves almost impossible to distinguish between ancient and later sources, so *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* is a prime example of the conservative character of these narratives, and of the continuity of the narrative tradition. The first chapters are dedicated to learned men (*ʿulamāʾ*, *fuqahāʾ*, teachers, and grammarians), while the ones following are focused on some recurrent stereotypes, such as fake prophets, thieves, misers, parasites, and disagreeable people (*thuqalāʾ*), or contain popular sayings and jocular characters. Chapter two is wholly devoted to *muʿallim*s, who are depicted in an extremely disrespectful way.[70] The stories contained in this section are clearly in line with the acidic representation of elementary schoolteachers offered by earlier sources, in which the *muʿallim* is the object of a wide gamut of prejudices, and true contempt is expressed in many ways, and in various genres (anecdotes, sayings, or proverbs). *Adab* sources in general contain extremely scornful representations of *muʿallim*s and teem with stories of foolish, cruel, lazy, ignorant, and greedy schoolmasters. In spite of some more positive positions toward the function and status of elementary teachers (mostly, but not exclusively, expressed by al-Jāḥiẓ), mockery is by far the most widespread attitude one can find in these texts, which insist on some specific shortcomings: schoolteachers are ignorant, witless, intellectually and morally poor, greedy, cruel, and lazy.[71]

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[65] On the literary representations of elementary schoolteachers see Ghersetti, "Wick." On the "stupid" teacher also see Hassim, *Elementary education* 145–151.

[66] Even if primary school educators were held in high esteem at the beginning of Islam, their status progressively decreased with the development of the system of higher education in later times. In Mamluk Cairo a list of the non-academic functionaries hired by most schools, with lower stipends, "reads like a list of employment opportunities for unassuming or only partial educated *ʿulamāʾ*: muezzins, assistants to the *khaṭīb* […] a primary school teacher (*muʾaddib*) and his assistant (*ʿarīf*)." Berkey, *Transmission* 198. For the social status of primary schoolteachers, see Shalaby, *History* 120–121; Goldziher, Education 201–202; Tritton, *Materials* 8. Tritton is a valuable source containing a lot of useful information, but unfortunately the author mentions the sources he draws from so vaguely that seldom can the reader identify the source of the wealth of data piled up in his pages. It must be noted that all the statements found in these essays are based on literary sources, whose tones are often jocular.

[67] The work, still unpublished, is contained in a number of manuscripts; for this article we used the one preserved in the British Library (Or. 1357, undated).

The parodic representation of elementary schoolteachers in *adab* sources is based on two core notions, stupidity and ignorance. First of all, teachers are depicted as stupid and brainless. The etymology of this adjective (brainless = without brain) could be taken at face value, if we rely on the anecdote related by Ibn al-ʿAdīm in his *al-Darārī*: "A man sent his son to buy a cooked sheep's head. On his way home, the boy ate the eyes, ears, tongue and brains and gave the remainder to his master, who asked angry questions. The boy defended himself by saying that the beast had been blind, deaf and dumb. But the brains, where are the brains? It was a teacher."[72] Proverbs also follow the same path; the saying "more stupid than a schoolmaster" (*aḥmaq min muʿallim*) had an extremely wide circulation. Is it not by chance that the chapter on *muʿallim*s in *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* opens with a peremptory statement about their intelligence, expressed in mathematical terms; the intellect of 60 weavers is equivalent to the intellect of a woman, and the intellect of 60 *muʿallim*s is equivalent to the intellect of a weaver, and this means that the intellect of a schoolteacher is tantamount to a very small fraction[73] of a woman's intellect, which, by the way, is one of the lowest on the scale, coming just before animals' intellect.[74] In other passages of *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, the expression *qillat al-ʿaql*, referring to a *muʿallim*, also recurs more than once and, quite interestingly, in the mouth of women,[75] like in the following anecdote featuring a rich *muʿallim* who takes measures to face his wife's hard labor. When the midwife brings him his child (a boy), he enters his wife's room exclaiming triumphantly: "Were it not for the fee I paid to the midwife, you would have given birth to a girl, as you are used to!" Hearing these words, his wife starts laughing for his *qillat al-ʿaql*. In fact, the story also tells that he paid the midwife a huge fee in order to accelerate the delivery, ordering her to deliver a boy (!).[76] The stupidity of schoolteachers manifests itself in many ways. In some cases, it consists in having good intentions but making the wrong choice or, in other terms, in "thinking well but acting wrongly," which corresponds to the standard definition of stupidity found in other *adab* sources.[77] This is the case of the anecdote featuring a *muʿallim* who, spurred on by good intentions, utters speeches completely inappropriate to the occasion. In the story, a teacher tries to console a neighbor suffering from an eye disease by mentioning the reward God gives to those who suffer (*mā aʿadda llāh li-man ibtalā*). He says: "If only you knew how God will reward you for your pain, you would ask him to strike your hands, your feet, your neck." Obviously, the pious neighbor does not appreciate the omen and gives a witty reply: "This was a very effective consolation from you: I thank God who took away my eyesight, but left me my intellect!"[78] It is clear that in these cases two crucial matters and favorite topics of *adab* literature are at stake: intelligence, represented by its reversal or its deficiency—stupidity—and rhetorical skill. Stupidity can also bring forth extreme cases of self-mutilation, like in the story of the schoolteacher who tries to assess the utility of the organs God has given to men (ears, eyes, etc.) and, finding out that his "two eggs" are not of any use, emasculates himself without hesitation.[79] The same story is also found in the Bulaq edition of *The thousand and one nights*.[80] The point of this story seems to be the inability of educators of a lower rank to deal with high theological matters they are not prepared to tackle. Foolishness in this case seems to be a kind of haughtiness consisting in handling too highly specialist knowledge, without having the intellectual resources to do so.[81]

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[68] On the tradition and reception of *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, see Marzolph, *Arabia ridens* i, 67–72.

[69] Marzolph, Nuzhat al-udabāʾ.

[70] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 7b–12a.

[71] The *ḥadīth*s blame them for being deficient in pity for the orphans, churlish toward the poor, and hypocritical (Goldziher, Education 202). The *ḥadīth* related by Ibn Saḥnūn (Ibn Saḥnūn, *Ādāb* 89 = Lecomte, Livre 87) condemns teachers who beat their pupils. The charge of hypocrisy was so deeply rooted that, if we trust the sources, reputed judges, such as Ibn Shubruma (d. 144/761) or Yaḥyā b. Aktham (d. 243/857), refused to accept teachers as satisfactory witnesses (Goldziher, Education 202; Ghersetti, "Wick" 77).

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[72] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Darārī 33 (quoted in the abridgment of Tritton, *Materials* 8).

[73] One teacher's intellect would be tantamount to 1/200 of a woman's intellect, which does not seem a correct calculation.

[74] See, e.g., Ghersetti, "Wick" 93.

[75] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 9b and 11a.

[76] Ibid., BL Or. 1357, ff. 10b–11a. Rich schoolteachers never feature in the stories; the only notable exception that could be found is this one. It must be stressed that the protagonist lacks any professional characterization and could be a waver or a merchant as well. The only trait he has in common with the literary *muʿallim* is foolishness, which—we suspect—is the reason why he is defined as "schoolteacher."

[77] See Ghersetti, Ḥumq 85.

In other cases, foolishness seems to merge with ignorance.[82] One of the major topics in the scathing representation of schoolmasters is their ignorance of the fundamentals of elementary education, which they were expected to transmit to their pupils. This was a widespread point, perhaps grounded in reality, as we can infer—from a later period—from Lane's words. In his *Manner and customs of the modern Egyptians*, he writes: "The schoolmasters in Egypt are mostly persons of very little learning. Few of them are acquainted with any writing except the Kur-án and certain prayers."[83] What is astonishing is that Lane goes on to say, "I was lately told of a man who could neither read nor write succeeding to the office of a schoolmaster in my neighborhood," and then narrates the very same anecdote about the woman and the letter opening from the second chapter of *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* (see below).[84] As a matter of fact, if the first charge against teachers is that of foolishness,[85] the second frequent defect they are blamed for is blatant ignorance. Ignorance could be of reading, writing, arithmetic, or, more seriously, of knowledge of the Quran, and of the basic notions of religious or legal precepts, thus covering all the points that were part of the elementary school curriculum and, consequently, the competencies required of the teachers. The anecdote opening the second chapter of *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* features a man who could not read or write and used to live by his wits.[86] One day he decides to open a *maktab*: he puts a huge turban (*ʿimāma*) on his head[87] and appends some sheets of paper to write on (*awrāq muktataba*) and some boards (*alwāḥ*) on the walls.[88] Passersby, seeing these emblems, imagine that he is a clever teacher. Thus, they start sending him their children, so that in the end he has a lot of pupils. The man is obviously a supporter of "self-learning methods," since he has the habit of telling one of his pupils "read" and to another "write," and lets them learn by themselves while he sits down idle. One day a woman asks him to read a letter sent by her husband, who is away. He first tries to escape under the pretext that he must go to the prayer, but, when she insists, he takes the letter, turns it upside down, turns it again, shakes his head, frowns, and looks so angry and exasperated that the woman is convinced that her husband is dead. One of her neighbors, seeing her distress, reads the letter, which in fact relates that her husband is coming home. When the woman begs the teacher to explain why he let her believe that her husband was dead, he cunningly justifies his wrong interpretation of the letter, and thus is excused by the poor woman. The initial situation seems to be a parodic reversal of the criticism against advertisement, clearly expressed by some particularly rigorous authorities; it was considered unworthy of the profession that a teacher should draw attention by setting up placards on the walls.[89] The habit of looking for clients was perhaps due to the poor salaries the teachers received for their services, which is perhaps the reason for the tough competition between schoolmasters. The "self-learning methods" the ignorant teacher has recourse to suggest the acceptability of letting the pupils dictate to each other, a point often discussed in legal sources. This practice was normally accepted, but only on certain conditions; the help of an instructor, or a more knowledgeable fellow student, was considered acceptable, only if beneficial to the pupil. On the contrary, the absence of the teacher's supervision, and the transfer of the entire responsibility for teaching to the pupils, were not accepted.[90] But the main point is the ignorance of the *faqīh*, and, as a consequence, his inability to meet his basic obligations, which are teaching the Quran, writing, and reading. Here in particular, writing and reading are questioned, while the other basic obligation (teaching the Quran) remains in the background (but is dealt with in another stock of anecdotes).

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[78] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, f. 11a. A story based on an analogous process is the one in which a *muʿallim* writes to his brother to inform him that everything was fine: their house collapsed, their parents, brother, and slave were dead, and only he, the donkey, and the bull were alive and well. Ibid., BL Or. 1357, f. 11b.

[79] Ibid., BL Or. 1357, ff. 10a–b.

[80] For other versions see Ghersetti, "Wick" 90; see also Chauvin, *Bibliographie* vi, 137, n. 288.

[81] On this point, see Szombathy, Ridiculing.

[82] On the relationship between the shortcomings of intelligence and ignorance in Ibn al-Jawzī's *Akhbār al-ḥamqā wa-l-mughaffalīn*, see Zakharia, Savoir.

[83] Lane, *Manners* 67.

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[84] In the footnotes he adds that he found an extremely similar anecdote in the Cairo edition of *The thousand and one nights*. His comments are highly informative: "either my informant's account is not strictly true, or the man alluded to by him was, in the main, an imitator. The latter is not improbable, as I have been credibly informed of several similar imitations, and of one which I know to be a fact." Lane, *Manners* 562, n. 6.

[85] Eight out of fifteen textual units (stories plus sayings) of the text are focused on this; this proportion corresponds to the rest of the narrative and non-narrative material found in *adab* literature revolving around the shortcomings of schoolteachers.

[86] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 8a–9a.

[87] Lane, *Manners* 66, cites among the gifts the teachers receive, "a piece of white muslin for a turban."

[88] Of what building, it is not specified, but we can suppose it was his house. It was common practice to teach in houses or in shops, and it was a permitted practice to teach at home. The display of the scholar's paraphernalia, in contrast with one's ignorance, is also attested in the autobiography of Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī (Stewart, Humor 57).

A similar story features a teacher who makes gross mistakes in reading, in particular misinterpreting the diacritical points on letters, with heavy consequences for the meaning of the message he was asked to read. This is a phenomenon often represented in the anecdotes; here, the situation worsens when the teacher plays down his ignorance by cheerfully stating that his mistake was not so serious, since between the correct reading (and hence the correct meaning) and his misinterpretation "there are only the dots." The story ends with a commentary on his foolishness (*qillat al-ʿaql*), which arouses an indulgent laugh in the woman who asked him to read the letter.[91] These stories focus on one aspect of the—real or supposed—ignorance of schoolteachers; the absolute or relative incompetence in reading. This is also a matter of discussion in the legal sources, but in relation to the mistakes made by the pupils; being unable to read correctly means the pupil deserves severe punishment from the teacher.[92] It is a kind of gentle mockery, to find in the anecdotes the same type of mistakes, but attributed to the teachers themselves, who nobody can correct or punish. However, the point of the second anecdote mentioned is not so much the teacher's ignorance as his unconsciousness of its seriousness and the thoughtlessness he shows in laughing at his mistakes. Blatant ignorance and a thoughtless attitude toward his own mistakes is something an educational professional can be criticized for in general, but it becomes much more serious when related to the sacred text, which—as we have seen before—remains the main topic in the curriculum.

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[89] "Advertisement was forbidden … he should not write papers and fix them to the building" (Tritton, *Materials* 18); Goldziher, Education 204, on the basis of Ibn al-Ḥājj's *Madkhal.*

[90] There was not full agreement on this among the jurists: Ibn Saḥnūn, *Ādāb* 122–123 (Lecomte, Livre 99) does not raise any objection against this practice; see also al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 140 (Ar.) / 129 (Fr.); al-Haytamī (Jackson, Discipline 28) seems more cautious.

[91] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 9a–9b.

[92] For instance, al-Qābisī (al-Qābisī, *Risāla* ar. 129/fr. 118) quotes, among the deficiencies in the reading skills of the pupils, "mistakes in the diacritical points (*ghalaṭihi fī nuqaṭihi*)," along with "*naqṣ ḥurūfihi, sūʾ tahayyujihi, qubḥ shaklihi*" and others. The whole is of course referred to the reading of the Quran.

The disrespectful attitude of teachers toward the Quran, and their habit of tinkering with the text, intentionally or not, is also something very vividly represented in the stories.[93] The points they are reproached for are ignorance, or a very approximate knowledge of the Quran, the habit of taking Quranic quotations without the appropriate seriousness, and of interpreting them at their face value, as if they were pieces of everyday speech (for instance, giving coarse replies to Quranic quotations) and, in general, their very rude or unorthodox attitude toward the sacred text. Schoolmasters also often feature as failing in their primary duty, teaching the Quran to their pupils, obviously a serious matter. In this story a certain *al-ḥāfiẓ* (who, in fact, should be read as al-Jāḥiẓ, on whose authority the anecdote is quoted in earlier sources) relates: "I passed by a schoolteacher (*muʿallim ṣibyān*) and a child asked him to dictate 'Upon thee shall rest the curse, till the Day of Doom!' (Q 15:35).[94] Thereupon, he replied, 'And upon you and your parents!'"[95] Similar, is the anecdote in which the *muʿallim* gives a coarse answer to a child asking to dictate to him "I desire to marry thee" (Q 28:27) and says: "And I want to marry your fucking mother."[96] Both stories represent the violation of the very first duty of a *muʿallim* (i.e., teaching the Quran),[97] but also show a very irreverent attitude toward the sacred text.[98] As a matter of fact, these anecdotes can be interpreted both as tokens of ignorance, because the schoolmaster does not grasp the quranic quotation, and of a deliberate misuse of the text, consisting in taking it at face value and giving a harsh reply. This clearly contradicts the moral requirements that are expected from a teacher, who must first of all be pious and behave correctly. A story in a similar vein, but with different implications, is the one that features a man who asks a *faqīh* where the prescription for fasting must be looked for in the Quran. The *faqīh* replies with an erroneous quotation, denoting perhaps misogyny: "And for you a half of what your wives leave" (Q 4:12), which concerns heritage. The right reply would have been, "O believers, prescribed for you is the Fast" (Q 2:183), that prescribes the obligation of fasting.[99] This wrong quotation violates two basic obligations: the teaching of the legal precepts, since mixing up the correct references could lead to serious misunderstandings; and the teaching of the Quran, which in principle should rest on a faultless familiarity with the text. A third aspect of the story to be taken into account, which has less to do with professional obligations, is the hint at the conjugal unhappiness caused by greedy wives.[100] This makes the interplay between the believer, who asks for legal information, and the professional, who should give it but moves toward a mocking tone (inappropriate for a dignified person, which a teacher should be) and completely non-sensical. The last anecdote of the chapter also revolves around messy Quranic quotations, but in connection with a much more mundane and concrete issue: the delayed payments of the salaries on the part of the pupils' parents. The story features a schoolteacher combining the verses of diverse Quranic Suras in a kind of odd mosaic. This goes against the thorough knowledge of the Quran that is required of a schoolmaster (to receive a salary on the teacher's part, when he does not know the Quran, is considered illegal); his task of gradual teaching and memorization of the Suras is also violated.[101] The story goes as follows: A *muʿallim* dictates to one of his pupils the verses of five different Suras combined together. When he is severely reprimanded for this incompetence (*adkhalta sūra ilā sūra*!), he pleads the irregular payment of his salary on the part of the child's father (*abū*

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[93] As Rosenthal states (Rosenthal, *Humor* 28–31), "jokes at the expenses of orthodox Islam" are something typical of Islamic humor, even if mostly in its earlier period.

[94] Quranic verses are quoted in Arberry's translation (Arberry, *Koran interpreted*).

[95] The story is probably drawn from al-Ābī's *Nathr al-durr*; parallels quoted in Ghersetti, "Wick" 84. "Al-Jāḥiẓ" in this chapter is always misspelt *al-ḥāfiẓ*.

[96] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 10a. For other versions, see Ghersetti, "Wick" 84–85.

[97] There is a particular insistence, in all the sources, on the priority of teaching the Quran before any other subject matter (see al-Ghazālī, trans. Bencheneb, Lettre 109). One notable exception in this connection is Ibn Khaldūn: he agrees with Ibn ʿArabī who maintains that it is unreasonable to make the children read a text that they are not able to understand (Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* 596), and suggests starting by teaching writing and reading, and to teach the Quran only later, when the pupils are familiar with the fundamentals.

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[98] On the use (or misuse) of religious intertext in *adab* see Malti-Douglas, Playing; this is an example of how religious materials are "assimilated into the *adab* texts in ways that apparently subordinate them to the *adab* spirit" (ibid., 52).

[99] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, f. 9a.

[100] Or, alternatively, a hint at the fact that wives tend not to fast during Ramaḍān. I thank the anonymous reviewer who suggested this interpretation.

[101] Al-Qābisī, quoting Ibn Saḥnūn, overtly forbids teachers to pass from one sura to another one if the pupils have not acquired a perfect knowledge (*bi-iʿrābihā wa-kitābatihā*) of the first (al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 133 [Ar.] / 122 [Fr.]).

hādhā l-walad yudkhil ujrat shahr fī shahr).[102] This is only one example of a recurring motif in the stories on elementary schoolteachers, where the irregular payment (or even no payment at all) of their salary is frequently hinted at in a comic vein. The topos probably mirrors a reality, confirmed by the economic concern that one can also frequently find in legal treatises. As Rosenthal says, reading the treatises of Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Qābisī, one has the impression that "the economic concerns of the teacher were uppermost in the minds of these early Malikite jurists when they wrote their works."[103] This issue is not absent from sources from other periods, regions, and legal orientations, for instance, al-Haytamī's *Taqrīr al-maqāl*. Apart from lengthy discussions on the permissibility of accepting remunerations for teaching the Quran, which holds first place, in these works, long sections are dedicated to the reductions of salaries in cases of absence or failure to perform up to standard, or on the permissibility of accepting gifts. To give an example, the treatises of Ibn Saḥnūn and al-Qābisī contain long paragraphs on different cases imposing or allowing the suspension of payment of the teacher's salary. Even if, in principle, the teaching of the Quran had to be gratuitous, the practice of paying a salary to a teaching professional was legally accepted and even prescribed in some *akhbār*;[104] from this point of view the *muʿallimūn* were considered wage-earners like others of minor prestige, laundrymen, for instance (which obviously did not contribute to raising their social status), and were thus treated as such.[105] Once more, narratives featuring the *muʿallim* at work mirror—in a comic vein—situations that are carefully regulated in works of a legal nature.

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[102] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 11b–12a. This could be an example of what Malti-Douglas defines as "redirecting the religious text" to one's desires (Malti-Douglas, Playing 54, 57).

[103] Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 292. This is also visible in al-Wahrānī's treatise, where several passages are devoted to the payment of the schoolteacher's remuneration (*Jāmiʿ jawāmiʿ* 21, 22, 27, 28, and *passim*).

[104] Ibn Masʿūd insisted on the necessity of hiring teachers to instruct the believers' children: *lā budda lil-nās min muʿallim yuʿallim awlādahum, wa-yaʾkhudh ʿalā dhālika ajr, wa-law dhālika kāna l-nās ummiyyīn*. Al-Qābisī clarifies that *ummiyyīn* specifically refers to ignorance of the Quran (al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 100 [Ar.] / 86 [Fr.]; Ibn Saḥnūn, *Ādāb* 82 = Lecomte, Livre 83).

[105] One can find in the sources some revealing analogies: al-Haytamī, for instance, compares teacher contracts to laundryman contracts; cf. Jackson, Discipline 22. Terminology is also significant since al-Haytamī oscillates between *juʿl* (used when only services actually rendered are paid) and *ijāra* (used when time devoted to the services is paid), which is clearly referring to different types of contract. Also meaningful is the applicability to the teachers of a *ḥadīth* focused on the remuneration of slaves (*mamlūk*). See al-Qābisī, *Risāla* 128 (Ar.) / 116 (Fr.).

Apart from teaching the Quran, writing, and reading correctly, other violations of prescriptions concerning the *muʿallim*'s activity and attitude are represented in the stories. Teaching religious obligations, such as prayers, is also represented in a jocular vein, implying a reversal or at least a curious interpretation of the precepts; an example is the story in which the *muʿallim* lies down on the ground and feigns death in order to teach his pupils the prayer for the dead.[106] Other anecdotes question the educator's attitude toward his pupils, that in principle he should not be too familiar. There are stories where educators show a childish attitude, inconsistent with the dignity their position requires, and where the pupils make a fool of their teacher in a very disrespectful or even coarse way, clearly infringing on the distance they should keep. One of these stories features a pupil relating to his master the following: "Yesterday I saw you in my dreams: you were covered in honey, and I was covered in shit." The master attempts a moralizing interpretation and says: "This is the clothes God dressed me in for my good deeds, and that is the clothes God dressed you in for your bad deeds." "Yah Master, wait to hear the rest of my dream: I was licking you, and you were licking me," adds the child.[107] Obviously, in this case the relationship between educator and pupil is not ruled by the principles recommended in the treatises, which strongly suggest educators not be too familiar with the pupils.

The representations of the *muʿallim* show relatively scant attention to the ethical side of education and the moral requirements of teachers. As a matter of fact, rather than reflecting the theoretical side of educational activity, *adab* sources and their parodic treatment of the *muʿallimūn* seem more inclined to reflect the practical side of education that is widely dealt with in legal, prescriptive sources. The literary treatments thus reverse a paradigm given in the prescriptions of works aimed at regulating the school activities and dictating the "right path" to its participants in relation to interactions between teacher and pupil, corporal punishments, and practical matters, such as salaries, and the skills and the behavior of the *muʿallim*.

4 Conclusions

The mockery of the *muʿallim* and his professional activity found in the literary sources can be seen as a systematic reversal of the norms of practical character dictated by works with a legal orientation. Due to their parodic treatment, anecdotes on schoolmasters can thus contribute to a better understanding of educational practices and, more generally, to the significance of learning and knowledge in the pre-modern Islamic world. The two main charges brought against the *muʿallim*, foolishness and ignorance, can be considered two sides of the same coin: a wrong relationship with knowledge, which is a main point in treatises devoted to higher, religious-oriented education, such as those of Ibn Jamāʿa or al-Zarnūjī.[108] From this viewpoint, the withering portrait of the *muʿallim* could probably be compared to jocular representations of learned men of other categories that are frequent in *adab* sources, in which the components of the scholarly class were often ridiculed (and this trend is not absent from the classical world either):[109] grammarians, *ʿulamāʾ*, *muḥaddith*s, and other learned figures are criticized, above all, for their use of bombast, which conflicts with the everyday life situations they feature in, but also for their materialism, immoral behavior, or ignorance, which clashes with their show of moral rigor and lofty intellectual standing.[110] The "jocular" schoolmasters were clearly considered a category apart from learned men of higher status; nevertheless, they are represented side by side with their more successful colleagues because of the distorted relationship with knowledge that they must all share, even if in different measures. In their jocular representations, all of these men seem to underestimate, in various degrees, their ignorance. The shortcomings hinted at in the literary representations could thus be interpreted as signs of a deplorable lack of interest in learning and knowledge, something which, in light of the Prophet's exhortation to search for knowledge, is no doubt a negligence toward one of the strongest Islamic precepts, which is even more crucial in people, such as primary school educators, who are charged with the initial transmission of religious education to children.

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[106] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 9b. For other versions see Ghersetti, "Wick 86."

[107] Al-Ḥanafī, *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ*, BL Or. 1357, ff. 9b–10a. A similar version featuring Ashʿab and his mother is found in *al-Aghānī*, quoted by Rosenthal, *Humor* 64.

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[108] As suggested by Zakharia, Savoir, foolishness, when related to learned men, appears to be more the consequence of a lack of curiosity or modesty or fondness for knowledge, than an innate characteristic.

[109] Goldziher, Education 202. For instance, the *Philogelos*, the oldest existing collection of jokes written in Greek—probably in the fourth century CE—also contains parodic representations of teachers and scholars, and the work teems with pungent anecdotes on highbrows.

[110] In the ʿAbbasid period, these satirical representations could stem from the critical attitude of the members of a "new, highly civilized, urbanized and frivolous literary culture" toward the "more solemn models of speech, lifestyle and culture" and in this sense do not represent the voice of a lower class (Szombathy, Ridiculing 116–117). This hypothesis seems justified for some categories of learned men but leaves out the category of lower-rank professionals like elementary schoolteachers.

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CHAPTER 22

The Metaphor of the Divine Banquet and the Origin of the Notion of *Adab*

Luca Patrizi

The Arabic word *adab* is a polysemous term, which has the primary meaning of good behavior and etiquette. In its intellectual sense, *adab* goes back to the sum of profane knowledge acquired by a cultivated Muslim, or to the general knowledge needed to fulfil a precise social function. In its ethical sense, *adab* has come to mean good education, courtesy, and urbanity. This term has a long and complex history and was formed through an equally complex process of linguistic influences.[1] In addition to showing the formation of this term and its effects, in this article I will try to highlight the relationship between knowledge and education in the semantic field of *adab*.

1 *Adab* according to the Arabic Linguists

In the first dictionary of classical Arabic, the *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* by Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 175/791, or 170/786, or 160/776), we find a brief definition concerning the Arabic sense of the term *adab*:

> The *adīb* is the educator that educates the others (*muʾaddab yuʾaddibu ghayrah*) or is educated from the others (*yataʾaddabu bi-ghayrih*); the *ādib* is the host (*ṣāḥib al-maʾduba*), who entertains the guests (*aduba al-qawm adba*); *al-maʾdūba* is the woman that prepares the repast (*al-ṣanīʿ*); *al-maʾduba* or *al-maʾdaba*, the banquet, is the invitation to the meal (*daʿwa ʿalā al-ṭaʿām*).[2]

Beginning with the *Kitāb al-Alfāẓ* by Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244/858), the linguists relate a saying by the renowned Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, ʿAbdallāh b. Masʿūd (d. 32/652–653), from the collection of al-Darīmī (d. 255/

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[1] Patrizi, *Banchetto divino*.

[2] Al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* i, 60.

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869): “Verily this Quran is God’s Banquet (*maʾdubat Allāh*) on earth, so learn thoroughly from His Banquet.”[3] Ibn al-Sikkīt then comments: “That is to say: to which He has invited His servants. The banquet (*maʾdaba*) is also called *madʿā*.”[4] After Ibn al-Sikkīt, Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), in his *Maqāyīs al-lugha*, also quotes the saying of Ibn Masʿūd, emphasizing the relation between *adab* and the idea of “inviting people to a banquet.”[5] Thus, in the opinion of the first Arabic lexicographers, the two most ancient meanings of the root ʾ*-d-b* seem to be “education” and “invitation to a banquet.” Even later dictionaries, such as the *Lisān al-ʿArab* by Ibn Manẓūr (711/1311–1312) or the *Tāj al-ʿArūs* by al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1205/1790), include entries on *adab*, which highlight the semantic relation between *adab* and *maʾduba*, based on the already mentioned saying of Ibn Masʿūd.

The root of the word *adab* is not found in the Quran. In pre-Islamic literature, as well as in the *ḥadīth*, its use is limited exclusively to the sense of “invitation to a banquet,” “education,” “correction,” and “punishment” (*addaba*, *taʾdīb*).[6] This last use is probably very ancient, since it was already in use among the nomads of the Arabian Peninsula to indicate the domestication of animals. This original significance was probably used metaphorically to define the education of people and thereafter of their own souls, the *adab al-nafs*. We can in fact maintain that a significant portion of the Islamic lexicon comes from the environment of the Arabians of the desert. We can give here the well-known example of the word *sharīʿa*, whose etymology is “a watering-place for both men and beasts.”[7]

2 *Adab* according to Western Scholars

Concerning the origin of the word *adab*, most contemporary scholars of Arabic literature do not accept the classical opinion of Muslim scholars, preferring the theory initially outlined by Vollers[8] and then broadly developed by Nallino.[9] According to this theory, the word *adab* would derive from the term *daʾb*, meaning *sunna* or custom, a frequent term in the lexicon of pre-Islamic poetry; from *daʾb*, a plural *ādāb* would be produced, from which the singular

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[3] Al-Darīmī, *Musnad* 2079–2080 (3357); other versions 2073–2074 (3350), 2093 (3364, 3365).

[4] Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Kitāb al-Alfāẓ* 456.

[5] Ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyyāʾ, *Muʿjam* i, 74–75.

[6] Bonebakker, Arabic literature 405–410.

[7] Lane, *Lexicon* iv, 1535.

[8] Vollers, *Katalog* 180.

[9] Nallino, Letteratura araba 1–20.

adab would subsequently be derived. Nallino supports this theory with some examples of similar linguistic processes. Gabrieli,[10] Meier,[11] Pellat,[12] and Böwering[13] all accept Vollers's theory. Bonebakker returned to the issue in depth, affirming that *sunna* is one of the possible connotations for the term *adab*, but that there is simply not enough textual material to support its being the primary meaning. In his opinion, this etymology is based on unconvincing interpretations of a non-representative corpus drawn from pre-Islamic and first-century poetic material, which he also analyzed, sometimes drawing different conclusions from the preceding studies. Bonebakker argues that other ancient uses of the root *ʾ-d-b* demonstrate that in the Arabic poetry of the first centuries of Islam it was also used with the meaning of "to entertain." He therefore sees a relationship between the meaning of "custom" and the meanings of *maʾduba* and *ādib* as "a banquet in which the good customs of hospitality are respected" and "a host that respects the good customs," not excluding, in the end, a correlation between the two meanings.[14] Later, Roger Allen affirms that the concept of *adab* has undergone a series of transformations in meaning through the centuries, from the etymological sense of "invite someone to a meal," to the semantic development of "an intellectual nourishment," given that education and good manners are related to the idea of the banquet.[15] Even Geert Jan van Gelder, in the introduction to his study on the role of food in classical Arabic literature, admits a relationship between the notion of a banquet and the notion of *adab*:

> The Arabic word *adab*, today meaning "literature," and sometimes used in the Classical period for something like "belles-lettres," means "erudition" but also "good manners, etiquette." The many works that we are wont to call "typical works of *adab*" regularly possess a moralistic component, not too obtrusively or persistently, but unmistakably present in the background. Just as eating is, ideally, both sustaining and pleasant, so is *adab* instructive and entertaining at the same time. The connection between eating, ethics and literature is visible symbolically in the apparent etymological link between *adab*, "literature/good behavior," and *maʾduba*, "meal or banquet for guests."[16]

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[10] Gabrieli, Adab.

[11] Meier, Book of etiquette 49–50.

[12] Pellat, Variations 19–21.

[13] Böwering, *Adab* literature 65.

[14] Bonebakker, Arabic literature 409–410.

[15] Allen, *Literary heritage* 220–221.

[16] Van Gelder, *God's banquet* 3.

Finally, in an assessment concerning the state of research on the notion of *adab*, Stephan Guth laments the fact that, despite the obvious correspondences with some Western notions, none of the past studies has attempted a systematic, culturally comparative approach.[17]

Therefore, after a period in which scholars did not take the opinion of Muslim linguists and thinkers seriously concerning the etymology of *adab*, more recent scholarship has taken this opinion into consideration. These scholars have once again taken up the question, and this time the accounts of Muslim lexicographers have been seriously reconsidered. Unfortunately, this has not been accompanied by more substantive analysis. Actually, if we consider this issue from a broader cross-cultural perspective, we discover the same formative process of similar notions in the context of other ancient civilizations. In fact, the notion of a divine or sacred ceremonial banquet in the history of ancient civilizations is quite widespread, finding its origin in the archetype of the "Divine Banquet" or "Divine Hospitality," which had a strong influence on the religious and cultural contexts of a number of different civilizations. I will use the notions of "Divine Banquet" and "Divine Hospitality" because they are widely known in the scientific literature of religious studies, although, as we shall see, there are different perspectives regarding their theological interpretation.

3 The Metaphor of the Divine Banquet and Divine Hospitality

In the Greek tradition, we can already find traces of the notion of the "Banquet of the gods" in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The gods are invited by men to a sacred banquet, named *Theoxenia*, "Divine Hospitality." This ritual constitutes the origin of the Roman practice of *Lectisternium*, in which the statues of the gods, depicted reclining on a couch (hence the origin of the name *Lectisternium*, which means "to hang out the beds"), were positioned around the food offerings. A version of *Lectisternium* was the *Epulum Jovis*, a festival dedicated to Jupiter where statues of the gods were placed in the most honorable place at the table during convivial banquets, thus allowing the population to symbolically share their own table with them.[18]

From the notion of the sacred banquet, the practice of the civil ritual banquet developed in Greek, and then Etruscan and Roman, environments. Then, from the practice of the civil banquet developed the practice of the convivial and symposial banquet, a meeting in which participants gathered around a table laden with food and drinks in order to discuss philosophical and cultural topics. The idea here is that food is a metaphor for knowledge; from the idea of eating and drinking together, as shown for example in the etymology of symposium (from the greek *syn*, together, and *posion*, drink), there probably developed the idea of discussing or exchanging intellectual and philosophical opinions. This meaning, in the contexts of research and science, remains to this day a synonym for "conference." This practice took a literary form starting with the *Symposium*s of Plato (347 BCE) and Xenophon (354 BCE). Other famous examples include *The banquet of the seven wise men* of Plutarch (120 CE), *The Symposium* of Lucian of Samosata (after 180 CE), and *The Deipnosophistae* or "The Banquet of the learned" of Athenaeus of Naucratis (after 192 CE), the latter being the ancient Greco-Roman text that perhaps most resembles, in its themes and structure, the texts of classical Arabic *adab* literature. This Greek literary tradition influenced later literature in the Christian medieval period: we can mention the well-known *Banquet* of Dante Alighieri (1321 CE), in which the metaphor of knowledge is clearly expressed and culminates in the famous line: "Oh, blessed are those few who sit at that table where the Bread of Angels is eaten."[19]

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[17] Guth, Politeness 24–25.

[18] Kane, Mithraic cult meal ii, 328–329.

In the context of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations, from Mesopotamia to the Jewish tradition, we find several remarkable references to this notion.[20] In Hebrew literature there is a recurring use of the word *marzēaḥ*, "banquet or symposium," over a vast span of time, from the first epigraphic occurrence at Ebla in the third century BCE to Madaba in the sixth century CE, via Ugarit, Emar, Moab, Phoenicia, Elephantine, Nabataea, Petra, and Palmyra. We also find this term in two passages from the Hebrew Bible, Amos 6:4–7 and Jeremiah 16:5; the first passage describes this practice in detail and contains striking Greco-Roman characteristics. The most interesting occurrence is found in Madaba. The origin of this city, located on the King's Highway in current-day Jordan, near Mount Nebo, is very ancient; it is mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible.[21] Some mosaics were discovered during excavations of the ruins in this city. One of them, the so-called "Map of Madaba," depicts the ancient Holy Land, indicating the major biblical sites between Egypt and Palestine. In the mosaic, depicted near Madaba, is a "house of the banquet" (*bet marzēaḥ*) that scholars have variously sought to identify, without reaching a definitive solution.[22] The surprising coincidence, which seems not yet to have been noted by scholars, is that in Arabic the name of this city is *Maʾdabā* (with a lengthening of the *tāʾ marbūṭa*, simplified most of the time as *Mādabā*, without the *hamza*), precisely the Arabic word for "banquet." What this might mean is hard to say. Perhaps this was a specific site where sacred ancient ritual meals were held, the name being the only remaining trace of this. However, what we can assert with certainty is the extreme antiquity of this term in the Semitic context, given the occurrence of the word in the Hebrew Bible.

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[19] For the quotation, see Verdun, Bread 63.

[20] Burkert, Oriental symposia 7–24.

[21] Numbers 21:30; Joshua 13:9, 16; 1 Chronicles 19:7; 1 Maccabees 9:36; Isaiah 15:2. The city's name in Hebrew is "מידבא"; McLaughlin, Marzēaḥ 64.

At the end of the nineteenth century, William Robertson Smith, in his seminal and controversial "Lectures on the religion of the Semites," offered an analysis of the relationship between the sacrifice and the sacred banquet in the Semitic religions, including the religions of pre-Islamic Arabia, in which we can observe clear similarities with the classic Greco-Roman religions. Smith argues that sacrifice has an evident communal and social character; in both public sacred celebrations and private sacrifices the sacrificed meat is consumed with guests. He adds that, in the Semitic context, the action of consuming food with other persons carries an ethical value; through this act the participants are joined by a bond of friendship, brotherhood, and mutual obligation.[23]

Other studies have examined the development of the notion of Divine Hospitality in the Hebrew Bible.[24] According to Robert Carlton Stallman, the language concerning God in the Pentateuch utilizes a metaphorical perspective that portrays God as a host who invites men to be his guests. From this perspective, the cosmos is God's house, into which he invites the creatures to a banquet. In the first phase, in Eden, the first man contradicts the rules of Divine Hospitality by eating what is not allowed and is therefore rejected and forced to provide his sustenance through his own strength. The relationship between nutrition and knowledge here is evident. If we observe the well-known symbolism of the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," which "is in the midst of the garden," its fruits are forbidden by God to the first man, but the snake tempts the first woman, claiming that her eyes will be opened, and she will be similar to God. The woman eats from the Tree, judging this action as "desirable for gaining wisdom," and finally God affirms, "now the man has become like one of us, in knowing good and evil."[25] Stallman argues that this language, which is rich in metaphors related to food, and bound to the promise of the Holy Land, is articulated through the notion of Divine Hospitality. Likewise, during the 40-year period in the wilderness, God feeds Moses and his people with a divine food that comes down from heaven. Finally, in Isaiah (25:6–8) we find a reference to a banquet that God will prepare for men on the Day of Judgment, an event also mentioned in Ezekiel (39:17–20) and the Book of Revelation (19:17–18).

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[22] Piccirillo and Alliata, *Madaba map*.

[23] Robertson Smith, *Lectures* 264–266. This theory, which I consider very interesting, has been subjected to strong criticism from some scholars; see, e.g., Thompson, *Penitence*. On sacrifice, food, community banquets, and the relationship with ethics in ancient China, see Sterckx, *Food*, where the author shows that the language concerning food in ancient China is often used to express social and political values, as well as moral concepts.

[24] Stallman, *Divine hospitality*; Navone, Divine 329–340.

Alfred Marx offers a more complex view of Stallman's paradigm without changing its deeper meaning. In a first ancient phase, exemplified by the sacrificial activities in the Temple of Jerusalem, God is invited to take part in a common meal with the believers, while in a second phase, the paradigm is reversed. In the chapter titled "Du sacrifice au repas sacramental," Marx claims that, because of the Israelites' inability to perform the sacrifice in the temple that was destroyed in 70 CE, the sacrifice in Judaism was spiritualized, replaced by individual prayer performed at the same times as the daily sacrifices. As for the social dimension of the sacrifices, these are replaced by the "sacred meal." In the religion of the Essenes we find examples of the communal "sacred meal," which consisted of bread and wine, consumed during the reading of and meditation on passages of the Holy Scripture. Marx says that, in this kind of sacrifice, the features are reversed; here, it is God who offers the sacred meal to men, and the flesh and the blood become the bread and the wine in remembrance of the gift of bread and wine by Melchizedek to Abraham. Marx also adds that the sacred meal is a foretaste of the Jewish eschatological banquet, the "Banquet of the Righteous," where the righteous will eat the meat of the defeated Leviathan in the afterlife. The last stage of this process is the establishment of the Jewish family table, where the table stands in place of the altar and the food in place of the sacrificial meal.[26] From this institution developed the so-called "table literature" in Judaism. This literature has been thoroughly investigated by Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus, who worked on the *Shulhan Shel Arba* (*The table with four legs*) of Bahya ben Arba. This work is divided into four parts. The first is related to the exposition of Jewish rituals related to food; the second, to a mystical interpretation of the act of eating; the third, to the rules and good manners of the table; and the last, to the messianic banquet. The research of Brumberg-Kraus is important for understanding the symbolic and literary continuity of the notion of the symposium, as well as its practice, in the Jewish and Christian environment. He complains that, until now, scholars have addressed this issue with a certain conservative attitude, isolating respective research fields into separate compartments.[27]

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[25] Genesis 2–3.

[26] Marx, *Systèmes sacrificiels* 214–220.

Concerning the connection between the Greco-Roman notion of the banquet-symposium and the notion of the Christian Eucharist, we have some interesting studies, among which the most representative is “From symposium to Eucharist” by Dennis Smith.[28] The link between the notion of Eucharist and the Divine Banquet is clear; in imitation of the Last Supper, a Jewish Passover banquet transposed in a metaphor, the Eucharist is a repast in which the Lamb of God is consumed on an altar prepared as a table. In fact, the text of the Catholic mass recites, “Happy are those who are called to his supper.” Much later, Thomas Aquinas wrote the text of a song that is part of the Catholic liturgy, in which he defined the Eucharist as “*sacrum convivium*.”[29]

4 The Divine Banquet and Divine Hospitality in Islam

In the same vein as described above, we can now propose some considerations about the role of the theological metaphor of the Divine Banquet and Divine Hospitality in Islam, about which we find clear references in the Quran, the *ḥadīth*, and religious and mystical literature. This will show the strong influence of this metaphor on the origin and development of the notion of *adab* in Islam. However, it should be pointed out that the terminology related to these notions in the Islamic sources implies the Quranic term *māʾida* (the Banquet) and the expression *maʾdubat Allāh* (God’s Banquet), as we shall see. Furthermore, Islamic theology does not allow the audacious metaphors mentioned previously, in which the Divine and the human can occasionally become table companions.

First of all, in the Quran, in Sura *al-Māʾida* Jesus prays to God asking for a banquet (*māʾida*) following the request of the apostles. According to Arab linguists, this term has two senses: a dining table or banquet, synonymous with *maʾduba* because, an empty table is called *khiwān*, or simply some food, even without the table.[30] A table could also mean a simple tablecloth of leather (*sufra*). In his *Tafsīr*, al-Raghīb al-Iṣfahānī (d. 502/1108) comments on this passage:

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[27] Brumberg-Kraus, *Memorable meals*.

[28] Smith, *From Symposium*.

[29] Gorevan, O Sacrum convivium.

[30] Lane, *Lexicon* vii, 2746.

> Some Sufis interpret this verse metaphorically, saying that *al-māʾida* indicates the realities of knowledge (*ḥaqāʾiq al-maʿārif*), and similarly, in fact, the Prophet said: "The Quran is the banquet of God on earth,"[31] and from this notion comes the origin of *adab* and *maʾduba* from the same root, because food is the nourishment of the body (*ghadhā al-badan*), as science is the nourishment of the spirit (*ghadhā al-rūḥ*).[32]

The same author reaffirms this interpretation of the term in his *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*:

> There are those who say that they have asked for food, but others say they have asked for science (*ʿilm*), and they called it *māʾida* because science is the nourishment of hearts (*ghadhā al-qulūb*) as food is the nourishment of bodies (*ghadhā al-abdān*).[33]

According to the Quran, God created the earth as a house, with a floor, ceiling, and columns. He then introduced man into it, taking care of him as a host would, by providing him with the sustenance of water, which he sends down to give life to the earth and produce nourishment.[34] The divine invitation, the imperative *kulū*, "eat," is given more than 30 times in the Quran, often with the exhortation to thank God for this sustenance.[35] To describe the descent of the human livelihood, especially water, the Quran uses the same root as it does for the descent of the sacred texts, the manna, and the *māʾida*: the verb *nazala*.[36] There is a passage in Sura *al-Nahl*, "The bees," in which we observe in detail the analogies between revelation and nutrition in the Quran.[37] First, we see the descent of the revelation par excellence, the Book, the name given in the Quran to the revelation in general. Second, we see the descent of sustenance from heaven to men in the form of water. This water makes the vegetation grow, and the vegetation becomes food for the animals, from the bellies of which God brings forth, as from a spring, a special drink: milk. This water also produces fruits, which become both food and drink for men. So, it is always through the descent of water, as with the descent of revelation, that human sustenance originates. Another kind of sustenance in the Quran is the food and drink that the Quran promises to the blessed, specifically within the framework of veritable heavenly banquets. However, there is some historical background to the imagination and practice of the banquet in the ancient world and in the Arab environment that is worth noting. According to Dennis Smith,

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[31] As we saw (*supra*, fn. 3), in reality, this *ḥadīth* is attributed to ʿAbdallāh Ibn Masʿūd.

[32] Al-Raghīb al-Iṣfahānī, *Tafsīr* 497–498. In the *tafsīr Rūḥ al-bayān* by Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī al-Brusāwī (d. 1137/1725), the same statement is said to be reported by the *tafsīr* of the "*Qāḍī*," a name which usually refers to al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsā (d. 544/1149), and attributed, also in this case, to "some Sufis," see al-Brusāwī, *Rūḥ al-bayān* ii, 470.

[33] Al-Raghīb al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt* 477–478.

[34] Cf., e.g., Q 2:22, 40:64.

[35] Cf., e.g., Q 23:51.

[36] Q 2:22, 10:59, 14:32, 16:10–11, 40:13, 45:5.

[37] Q 16:64–69.

> Dining customs as a form of social code can be said to be present in all structured societies in all historical periods. […] The idea that sharing a meal together creates a sense of social bonding appears to be a universal symbol. […] The peoples of the Mediterranean world of the period circa 300 B.C.E. to circa 300 C.E. tended to share the same dining customs. That is, the banquet as a social institution is practiced in similar ways and with similar symbols or codes by Greeks, Romans, Jews, Egyptians, and so on. […] One indicator of common table customs for the ancients was the universal practice of reclining at table.[38]

Some theories link the act of reclining to eat with remote "nomadic" practices of Iranian or Syro-Aramaic origin, even if the most ancient source is always traced back to Indo-European rituals.[39] Smith adds that the first examples of this practice's use can be found in the Near East, not among nomadic peoples, but among settled peoples, and connected not with poverty or simplicity but with "luxury, wealth and power."[40] The oldest iconographic examples can be found in Assyrian reliefs, where it is in fact the king who reclines, surrounded by various symbols of power and luxury. According to some scholars, this practice was transmitted from the Assyrian to the Greek world, along with its social code and rules. In Greek archaic reliefs, the deceased is represented in the act of reclining, with the same iconography linked to luxury and power.[41] Directly connected to this custom of reclining in the classical Greco-Roman world, indeed in the ancient Mediterranean as a whole, including the Eastern part, was the custom, at least on festive occasions and banquets, to eat in a room called, in Latin, the *triclinium*, from *tris-kline*, "three beds." Even the single bed took the name *triclinium*, resembling a kind of sofa with a cushion placed to one side. The three beds were positioned on three sides of a central table, with the fourth side left free for the service. This was the minimum arrangement in the rooms reserved for special guests, while for larger gatherings there were ampler rooms with many *triclinia* placed along the walls and a table in the middle. It was also customary to eat on stone *triclinia* or on *stibadia* (s., *stibadium*), mattresses placed outdoors in home gardens. People, at least according to the iconography that has come down to us, lounged on these couches and leaned on the pillows on one side.[42] Their arrangement depended on the importance of the people who took part in the banquet, and it was regulated by very strict social norms.[43]

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[38] Smith, *From Symposium* 14.

[39] Burkert, Oriental symposia 18.

[40] Smith, *From Symposium* 18.

[41] Ibid., 14, 18.

If we look to the *ḥadīth*, however, the Islamic tradition seems to move away from the practice of reclining; the custom was to eat on a cloth of skin on the ground. The terms *maʾduba* and *māʾida* in the *ḥadīth* are doubtlessly related to this kind of cloth, also called *sufar* or *sufra*, "travelling tablecloth." This Islamic moralizing trend may indicate that, in the context of Arabia, there were still contemporary practices of the convivial banquet. Judging from the funerary art of the Arab civilization of the Nabataeans, for example, we see indications of this.[44] Certainly, in the context of civilizations contemporary to the nascent Islamic civilization, especially the Byzantines and the Persians, the practice of court ceremonial feasts and convivial banquets was still in use. Some *ḥadīth*s show the custom of the Prophet Muhammad concerning the meals in contrast:

> The messenger of God said: "I do not eat reclining (leaning on something) (*lā ākulu muttakiʾā*)."[45]
>
> Anas (ibn Malik) transmitted: "As far as I know, the Prophet has never eaten in a *sukurruja*,[46] he never ate thin bread well-cooked, and has never eaten sitting at a table (*ʿalā khiwān*)." They asked to Qatada: "So on what did he eat?" He said, "On a tablecloth of skin (*sufar*)."[47]
>
> The Prophet said: "Do not eat on plates of gold and silver, and do not wear clothes of silk or brocade (*dībāj*), because these are things for them [the unbelievers] in this world, and for you [the believers] in the afterlife."[48]

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[42] Dunbabin, Triclinium 121–136.

[43] Smith, *From Symposium* 33–34; Dunbabin, Triclinium 123.

[44] Wadeson, Nabataean tomb complexes 9–10.

[45] Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* iii, 435 (5398–5399).

[46] The *sukurruja* is a large dish of Persian origin.

[47] Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* iii, 433 (5386); iii, 438–439 (5415).

[48] Ibid., iv, 21 (5632–5635).

Indeed, the imagery of the afterlife's heavenly banquet in the Quran shows a number of analogies with the imagery of the classical convivial banquet: the believers will reside in luxuriant gardens, richly adorned with silk dresses and gold bracelets, and sit on couches; gold trays full of fruits and bird meat will circulate among them; and young cup-bearers will serve them pure beverages—including wines perfumed with musk—in gold, silver, and crystal cups.[49] In these passages of the Quran we can find clear references to the *triclinia* of the convivial banquet; *arīka* (pl. *arāʾik*), *sarīr* (pl. *surur*), and *firāsh* (pl. *furush*) are considered to be almost synonymous by Arab linguists and can mean either "couch" or "bed." Some Arab linguists propose for the first term an Abyssinian origin, or Yemeni, while some modern Western linguists argue for a Persian origin.[50] In Q 52:20 the beds (*surur*) are "*maṣfūfa*," positioned in a row, lined up, and they are defined in Q 56:15 as "*mawḍūna*," a word that means "to fold," and can recall the idea of beds made of woven fibers, but in this form is used to indicate a particular chain mail made of iron and composed of mails joined two by two, in a more solid way than usual, and thus may refer to the fact that the beds are joined together, as in the iconography of the classic *triclinium*.[51] The fact that the blessed who sit on beds are often described as "facing each other (*mutaqābilīn*)," calls to mind the arrangement of the *triclinium*. Clearly, this is the Arabic equivalent of the *triclinium* and *stibadium* that were seen previously. Other details include pillows (*namāriq*),[52] carpets (*zarābī*),[53] and precious implements, such as gold trays (*ṣiḥāf min dhahab*),[54] goblets (*kaʾs*, pl. *kuʾūs*),[55] cups (*kūb*, pl. *akwāb*),[56] jugs (*ibrīq*, pl. *abārīq*),[57] and precious tissues (*istabrak*[58] and *sundus*).[59] As we can see, this is the imagery of the classic convivial banquet, with a definite Persian character, since most of the terms relating to paradise in the Quran appear to be derived from Middle-Persian, or Pahlavi, including the term *firdaws*, "heaven," which comes from the Avestan word *pairidaēza*, and was also introduced into Greek to describe the Persian gardens by Xenophon.[60] Also the word *ḥūr*, which refers to the young maidens of Islamic paradise, is of Persian origin, according to some scholars.[61]

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[49] Q 18:31, 37:40–50, 38:49–54, 44:51–55, 52:17–25, 55:54, 55:76, 56:10–34, 76:11–21, 88:8–16.

[50] Lane, *Lexicon* i, 50; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 52–53.

[51] Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français* ii, 1558–1559 (*w-ḍ-n*).

[52] Q 88:15, from Persian; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 281.

[53] Q 88:16, probably from Persian; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 150–151.

[54] Q 43:71.

[55] Q 37:45; 52:23; 56:18; 76:5, 17; 78:34; from Persian, Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 245–246.

[56] Q 43:71; 56:18, 76:15; 88:14, from Greek; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 252.

[57] Q 56:18, from Persian; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 46–47.

[58] Q 18:31, 44:53, 55:54, 76:21, from Persian; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 58–60.

[59] Q 18:31, 44:53, 76:21, from Persian; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 179–180.

These are the characteristics of the heavenly eschatological banquet in Islam, which is clearly a celestial image of the classical convivial banquet. There are even references to the presence of young *ephebos* (*ghilmān*,[62] *wildān*[63]), which was customary, as is well known, especially in the Greek environment. Islamic mysticism in particular will utilize this imagery in its spiritual metaphors, especially in Persian Sufi poetry.[64]

Moreover, the metaphor of the Divine Banquet finds an ideal configuration in Islamic religious form and in the mission of the Prophet, making explicit the ultimate reference to spiritual knowledge. This is evident in several *ḥadīth*s:

> Jābir b. ʿAbdallāh narrated: The angels came to the Prophet while he was asleep. Some of them said, "He's sleeping." Others said, "His eyes are sleeping but his heart is awake," and then they said, "We have a parable for your companion, let us narrate to him this parable." … They said: "The parable is that of a man who built a house, then put a banquet (*ma'duba*) in it, and then sent a messenger (*al-dāʿī*) to invite: people who answer to the invitation enter the house and eat from the banquet, while those who do not answer the invitation do not enter the house and do not eat from the banquet." … And then they said: "The house is the Paradise, the one who calls is Muḥammad, and whoever obeys Muḥammad obeys God, and whoever disobeys Muḥammad disobeys God, and it is Muḥammad who is the one who discriminates amongst men."[65]

We find the same *ḥadīth* in other collections, with slight differences:

> God is the master (*sayyid*) [of the house], Muḥammad is the one who invites (*al-dāʿī*), the house is Islam, and the banquet (*ma'duba*) is Paradise.[66]
>
> A lord (*sayyid*) built a palace (*qaṣr*), then he put a banquet (*ma'duba*) in it, and invited men to eat and drink from it … (The Prophet) said: "The

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[60] Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 223–224.

[61] Q 44:54, 52:20, 55:72, 56:22; Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 117–120.

[62] Q 52:24.

[63] Q 56:17, 76:19.

[64] Bruijn, *Persian Sufi poetry* 65–69.

[65] Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* iv, 360 (7281).

[66] Al-Darīmī, *Musnad* 171 (11).

> Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*) has created the Heaven and has invited his servants to it; those who answer will enter Paradise, those who not answer will suffer the punishment."[67]
>
> One day the Prophet came to us and said: "Verily I saw in a dream [the angel] Gabriel near my head and [the angel] Michael next to my feet, each telling the other: 'Let's tell him a parable,' and they said 'Listen! Your ear has heard and your heart has understood! Indeed, it is similar to you and your community, a king who made for himself a residence (*dār*), then he builds a house (*bayt*) in it, and he puts a banquet (*māʾida*) in it, and then he sends a messenger (*rasūl*) to invite people to the meal (*ṭaʿām*), and among them there are those who answered messenger and those who did not answer. God is the King, the residence is Islam, the house is Heaven, and thou, O Muḥammad, you are the messenger (*rasūl*), and whoever answers you enters into Islam, and those who enter Islam enter Heaven, and who enters into Paradise eats from it.' "[68]

There is an evident analogy between this saying and the evangelical parables concerning the wedding feast of the king's son, and especially with the parable of the man who invites people to the banquet in Luke 14:12–24. We can also see similarities with a passage from Proverbs in the Hebrew Bible, in which Wisdom built a house for herself and sends maids to invite people to the banquet.[69]

There are other *ḥadīth*s concerning the metaphor of the banquet that are considered apocryphal. The first, which is quite interesting, is reported in the *Kitāb al-Hawātif* by Ibn Abī Dunyā (281/894). It relates a meeting between the Prophet Muhammad and the prophet Elijah, during which a prepared table comes down to them from the sky. Elijah, when asked about the origin of the table, affirms that it comes down for him every 40 days.[70] The clear reference is to the Quranic episode narrated in Sura *al-Māʾida*. In the second, the Prophet Muhammad affirms:

> The one who will fast 30 days of the month of Rajab, God will make for him a banquet (*māʾida*) in the shade of the Throne.[71]

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[67] Ibid., 172 (12); al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ al-kabīr* iv, 542 (2861).

[68] Ibid., iv, 540 (2860).

[69] Proverbs 9:1–18.

[70] Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Kitāb al-Hawātif* 78–79; cf. Hassan, Cène 219–247.

[71] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-Mawdūʿāt* ii, 577.

We can relate another interesting saying about Divine Hospitality from Shiite *ḥadīth* collections, which report a sermon (*khuṭba*) of the Prophet Muhammad transmitted by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib:

> (*Ramaḍān*) is the month in which you are invited to the hospitality of God (*ḍiyāfat Allāh*).[72]

5 Knowledge (*ʿilm*) and Education (*adab*)

We have previously mentioned the saying of ʿAbdallāh Ibn Masʿūd, which compares the Quran to God's Banquet (*maʾdubat Allāh*), from which the believers can draw knowledge. This knowledge (*ʿilm*) is precisely the link between the metaphor of the Divine Banquet and the notion of *adab*, as we can observe from another saying related by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014) and attributed to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742):

> Verily this knowledge (*ʿilm*) is God's education (*adab Allāh*), through which He has educated his Prophet, and through which the Prophet has educated his community.[73]

This resonates with the famous saying attributed to the Prophet, "My Lord has educated me and so made my education most excellent" (*addabanī rabbī, fa-aḥsana taʾdibī*).[74] Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, commenting on this last *ḥadīth*, offers his own interpretation of the metaphor of the banquet and its relation to the notion of *adab*:

> The first thing that God has commanded to his servant is to gather (*jamʿ*), and this is *adab*. *Adab* derives from "banquet" (*maʾduba*), which is gathering to eat. Similarly, *adab* is to put together all that is good. The Prophet said: "God has taught me *adab*," in other words, he put together in me all the good things, and then he said: "And then he perfected in me the *adab*." In other words, he made me a receptacle for every good thing.[75]

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[72] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmal* 26.

[73] Al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī, *Maʿrifa ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* 247–248 (115).

[74] Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya* i, 4; al-Suyūṭī, *Durar* 9.

[75] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt* ii, 640.

These sayings, together with the passages mentioned above, in which a strong link between nutrition, knowledge, and education is evident, highlight the correlation between knowledge, teaching, and education in classical Islamic thought. In particular, this correlation emerges from the analysis of the different connotations of the notion of *adab*.

6 The Persian Convivial Banquet (*bazm*)

In the Iranian environment, the imagery connected to the notion of the Divine Banquet also influenced the practice of the convivial banquet. This practice reached its ritual and symbolic apex under the Sasanian dynasty, with Mazdaism as the official religion of the royal court. The information available to us comes from the few remaining Pahlavi texts, and especially from texts written in Persian and Arabic during the Islamic period. The royal banquet is called *bazm*, a word that remained in use through the development from Pahlavi to Persian. According to scholars it derives directly from the ancient Mazdean banquet, linked to the cosmogonic "sacrifice of the bull." The *bazm* was the center of political and social life in Iran; it apparently remained unchanged for more than four centuries in Iranian courts, despite the passage from the Sasanid Empire to the Islamic empire. The most important *bazm* took place on special calendar days, such as the great ancient Iranian festivals of Nowrūz, Mehregān, and Sada, and lasted up to three days. The *bazm* was governed by very precise rules, which were related to courtly and social rank. There was also a special type of *bazm* for the innermost royal circle (*khāṣṣegān*), which took the name of *majlis-e Khosrovānī*, in reference to Chosroes I, Khosraw Anūshīrwān (531–579), the most celebrated Sasanid ruler.[76] In Islamic tradition, Khosraw is considered to be one of the wise sovereigns, and some edifying sayings are attributed to him.[77] In the *Shah-nameh* by al-Firdawsī (d. 411/1020), we see seven legendary *bazm* sessions at the court of Chosroes I.[78] Moral, courtly, literary, and state issues were discussed at these *simposia*, and all was accompanied by food, young cup-bearers carrying wine, music, and singing. The whole ceremony was regulated by a strict protocol, and each movement was subject to the rules of Iranian *adab*, which took the name of *ēwēn* in Pahlavi and *āyīn* in Persian. During the ʿAbbasid era, the court of Baghdad, under the sultan al-Maʾmūn (813–833), adopted the entire *bazm* ceremony, including the foods, wine, cup-bearers, and music, and renamed it *majlis*, which means session or sitting.[79] Beginning in the ʿAbbasid era, this term, which in pre-Islamic epochs indicated the reunion of the tribal chiefs, designated any session of religious teaching, as well as meetings consecrated to rhetorical interreligious disputes.[80]

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[76] Cfr. Melikian-Chirvani, Iranian *bazm* 95–119. The author begins by affirming that the word *bazm* has no equivalent in Western languages because this practice has no equivalent outside Iranian culture, but it is clear that it is the same notion of convivial banquet (symposium, *marzeaḥ*) spread with different names in every part of the ancient world, as we have seen. For the role of the *bazm* in Armenian Arsacid court, cf. Garsoïan, Prolegomena 183–184.

[77] Some collections report the following saying of the Prophet (Muhammad): "I was born in the time of a righteous king," referring to the fact that the he was born nine years before the death of Chosroes I. Even if this saying has been considered unauthentic by some Islamic scholars, it is interesting to notice that this idea penetrated the religious milieu; cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-imān* iv, 1836.

7 Formation of the Notion of *adab*

As we have seen, the pre-Islamic and the first/seventh-century notion of *adab* in Arabic was linked essentially to the meaning of "education," "correction," and "punishment," while the root *ʾ-d-b* was also used with the meaning of "invitation to the banquet," the etymological meaning according to Arabic linguists.

From the beginning of the third/ninth century, Islamic religious literature also began to use the term *adab* with the meaning of "norm," "rule of good behavior," "rule of the accomplishment of religious practices and the reading of the Quran," "attitude of respect toward the religious authority," "rule of behavior between master and disciple during teaching (*adab al-dars*)," and "rules for the accomplishment of the function of the judge (*ādāb al-qāḍī*)." This is a new usage that one might call "technical." The first appearance of this notion in religious literature is in the works of Imām al-Shāfiʿī (d. 188/820), who, for example, is the first to use the formula *ādāb al-qāḍī* in the title of a treatise attributed to him.[81] The source of this semantic enrichment can be traced to the court secretaries, the *kuttāb*, the Persian *mawālī* who were well-known translators and transmitters of Persian state and cultural heritage.[82] The first "technical" uses of the term *adab*, in fact, can be found in the texts of the first *kuttāb*, in the passage from the Umayyads to the ʿAbbasids. The first secretarial letters in the Arabic language are ascribed to the Persian *kātib* Sālim Abū l-ʿAlāʾ (after 126/743), chief secretary of the Umayyad caliph Hishām Ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik (r. 105–125/724–743).[83] The translation from Greek (or Persian)[84] of the legendary letters of Aristotle to Alexander the Great is also ascribed to him. This translation later contributed to form the *Sirr al-asrār*, the "mirror of princes," known in the West under the title *Secretum secretorum*.[85] In the *Sirr al-asrār*, we can find four occurrences of the root *adab*, the first in the classical Arabic sense of "punishment" (*al-adab al-alīm*, 82), the second in the sense of "education," connected to the term *murūʾa* (84), the third in the plural, in connection with "knowledge" (*al-ādāb wa-l-ʿulūm*, 84), and the fourth and last occurrence in the formula, "*adab al-akl*" (90), which we can translate as "rule, good manners in eating." This last usage could be the first occurrence of the technical notion of *adab* in Arabic literature. Other ancient occurrences can be found in the letters of the disciple of Sālim Abū l-ʿAlāʾ, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib (d. 132/750),[86] and, in particular, in the work of the renowned disciple of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 139/757).[87] The terminology of his *Adab al-kabīr* is clearly influenced by Sasanian technical terminology, often being a direct transposition of Persian into Arabic.[88] This terminology, which entered Islamic religious literature through al-Shāfiʿī, had a considerable influence on Islamic technical terminology.[89]

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[78] Warner and Warner, *Shahnama* vii, 268–312; in his note the editor affirms (280): "If the number seven were not such a favourite in Persian story one might suggest that the Seven Banquets of Nushirwan originated in a perverted reminiscence of the seven Greek philosophers who were entertained for a while at his court when Justinian closed the schools of Athens and that Buzurjmihr himself is not much more than a native composite reproduction of those hapless and disillusioned sages."

[79] Khaleghi-Motlagh, Adab in Iran.

[80] Madelung, Madj̲lis; Lazarus-Yafeh et al., Majlis.

[81] Al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm* viii, 299–300.

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[82] Latham, Beginnings 154–179.

[83] ʿAbbās, *Ibn Yaḥyā al-Kātib* 303–319. "Sālim, just like his protégé, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā, was of Persian descent, and he and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd introduced Persian stylistic and other elements in the Arabic epistolary style they were developing." Gutas, "Novels" 65.

[84] Gutas, "Novels" 65.

[85] Al-Badawī, *Uṣūl al-yunāniyya* 65–171. The most recent contributions on this issue are Maróth, Correspondence 231–315; Gutas, "Novels" 59–70.

[86] ʿAbbās, *Ibn Yaḥyā al-Kātib*.

[87] "[T]he Iranian genius Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ […] can be described as the true creator of this enlarged conception of *adab*." Gabrieli, Adab.

[88] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Adab al-kabīr 39–106.

[89] Lowry, *Islamic legal theory* 87, 167–169.

8 Conclusions

The milieu of the Persian *kuttāb* represented the perfect environment in which the polysemous notion of *adab* developed from the encounter between the Arabic notion of *adab* as education and the etiquette of the Sasanian court. This notion then won great success in the Islamic religious and cultural context, expanding its semantic meaning to include, in modern Arabic and Islamic environments, the idea of "literature" and "culture" in a wide sense. The *kuttāb* probably chose this term for its ancient meaning, that of the "invitation to the banquet," and metaphorized it to mean an "invitation to knowledge," supported by some *ḥadīth*s in which the Quran was likened to the God's Banquet. This meaning must not have escaped the *kuttāb*, soaked as they were in Sasanian culture, considering their deep knowledge of the etiquette of the royal *bazm* and its cultural implications, which they introduced into Islam through their incorporation of the notion of *adab*. Even in later works of classical *adab* literature, the link between *adab* and *maʾduba* will be highlighted, like in *al-Bukhalāʾ* by al-Jāḥiẓ (255/868–869),[90] or *al-Kāmil* by al-Mubarrad (285/898–899).[91] In his *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, Ibn Qutayba (276/889) introduces his text as a table (*māʾida*), laden with different culinary flavors to satisfy the diverse appetites of the eaters, suggesting a close correlation between literature, knowledge, and nutrition.[92]

Therefore, the metaphor of the Divine Banquet, as it appears in other civilizational contexts, also played a significant role in Islam in the construction of the imagery bound to the acquisition of knowledge, education, and culture.

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[90] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 213.

[91] Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil* 958.

[92] Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* i, *lām*.

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CHAPTER 23

Wisdom and the Pedagogy of Parables in Abraham Ibn Ḥasday's *The Prince and the Ascetic*

Jessica Andruss

As the centers of Jewish learning shifted from Islamic al-Andalus to the Christian territories of northern Spain and southern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Jewish intellectuals turned their attention to translating the classic works of Arabic scholarship into Hebrew.[1] In their efforts, they translated Arabic philosophy, science, and literature not only into a new language but into a new cultural context as well. One figure in this translation movement was Abraham ben Samuel ha-Levi Ibn Ḥasday of Barcelona (fl. early thirteenth century).[2] Ibn Ḥasday was an accomplished belletrist, prolific translator, engaged community leader, and active participant in the intellectual controversies of his day. The catalogue of texts that Ibn Ḥasday translated evinces his enthusiasm for philosophy and his preoccupation with themes of knowledge and pedagogy. He translated at least two of Maimonides's works, *The book of commandments* and the *Epistle to Yemen*, as well as an Islamic ethical text, al-Ghazālī's *Scales of justice*, and two Neoplatonic texts, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Book of the apple* and Isaac Israeli's *Book of the elements*.[3] Perhaps the most popular of his many translation projects was his rendition of the tales of the Buddha into Hebrew.[4] Known in Arabic as *Kitāb Bilawhar wa-Būdhāsaf*, and

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[1] On this translation movement, see Freudenthal, Arabic into Hebrew; Freudenthal, Arabic and Latin; Harvey, Arabic into Hebrew; Ivry, Philosophical; Robinson, Ibn Tibbon family; Twersky, Social; Zonta, Translations.

[2] On Ibn Ḥasday and his works see Ferre, Ibn Ḥasday 493–494; Schirmann and Fleischer, *Hebrew poetry* 256–278; Gottstein, Methods 210–216; Decter, Qur'anic quotations; Twersky, Social 201; and Zonta, Translations 28.

[3] Ibn Ḥasday's translation of Maimonides's *Book of the commandments* (Hebr. *Sēfer ha-Miṣwōt*) is lost, known only from citations in other works. His translation of the Epistle to Yemen (Hebr. *ʾIggeret Tēmān*) exists in two mss. and several fragments, which Halkin references in his critical edition (1952). His translation of al-Ghazālī's *Mizān al-ʿamal* (Hebr. *Sēfer Mōʾznê Ṣedeq*) remained popular among European Jewry, as did his translation of *The book of the apple* (Hebr. *Sēfer ha-Tappûaḥ*), in *Likkutei ha-Pardes* (1519), whose attribution to Aristotle was rejected by Maimonides. He translated Isaac Israeli's *Book of the elements* at the request of David Kimḥi (Hebr. *Sēfer ha-Yĕsôdôt*).

[4] Ibn Ḥasday's Hebrew version enjoyed wide circulation and great longevity, eventually serv-

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familiar in the West as *Barlaam and Josaphat*, these tales circulated widely in the Islamic world from the eighth century onward.[5] In his version, titled *The prince and the ascetic* (*Ben ha-melek wĕ-ha-nāzîr*), Ibn Ḥasday artfully employs a host of literary techniques in order to reshape the classic tales into a discourse on knowledge, education, and the attainment of wisdom through the study of parables.

Ibn Ḥasday's composition belongs to a long tradition of adapting and transmitting the tales of the Buddha.[6] The original tales were of South Asian provenance, and even the latest versions retain variations of Sanskrit personal and geographical names.[7] However, long before the tales reached Ibn Ḥasday in early thirteenth-century Barcelona, they had become narratives inspired by the central episodes of the Buddha's life story and teachings rather than direct translations from a Sanskrit original. As the ancient tales migrated from the Buddhist context of India to the Manichean communities of Persia and the Arabic-speaking peoples of the Islamic world, they were imprinted with the religious perspectives and literary tastes of the translators, scribes, and copyists who transmitted them.[8] Certain episodes slip from one version, and are replaced by a local narrative or a spiritual teaching imported from a sacred text, and certain themes are developed or dropped to reflect the inclinations of the community. Thus, the extant Arabic versions vary in their content, pointing to a rich transmission history in which the tales were continually translated,

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ing as the basis for a Judeo-Persian translation in the seventeenth century (see Yasharpour, *Judeo-Persian adaptation* 53–58) and a modern Catalan translation by Calders i Artís (1987). Modern editions of the Hebrew are by Habermann (1950) and, most recently, Oettinger (2011). The English translations below are my own, with references given to the Oettinger edition.

[5] Arabic editions include Gimaret, *Kitāb Bilawhar* (1972) and his French translation, *Bilawhar et Būḏāsf* (1971); Hommel, *Barlaam-Version* (1887).

[6] There is extensive literature on the reception history of the tales of the Buddha. Early efforts to trace their transmission were conducted by Lang, who proposed a migration from an original Indian Buddhist tradition in Sanskrit to a Manichean version in Persian, and from there to an Arabic version, from which several other Arabic versions, as well as Georgian and Hebrew compositions, resulted. The Greek and Latin versions, known as *Barlaam and Ioasaph* or *Barlaam and Josaphat*, respectively, descend from the first Georgian version. See Lang, *Wisdom* 65 and Lang, *Balavariani* 9–13. A revised genealogy, which rejects a Manichean stage and dates the Persian manuscripts later than the Arabic ones, is proposed by De Blois, On the sources 26.

[7] Lang includes a list of such proper names in *Wisdom* 39. The name *Būdhāsaf* (and the scribal corruption, *Yūdhāsaf*, which gave rise to the western versions of the name) derives from the Sanskrit word *Boddhisatva*; see De Blois, On the sources 13.

[8] On the differences between scribes and copyists, as well as medieval notions of collective authorship, see Beit-Arié, Publication 225–247.

adapted, and revised.[9] Nevertheless, the structure and frame story of these adaptations remain remarkably consistent; each version includes a series of edifying parables set within a frame narrative that draws on the saga of the young Buddha and his ascetic path.

Ibn Ḥasday's Hebrew version likewise replicates the narrative and structure of its predecessors. It opens with an Indian king whose court astrologers reveal that his future son will one day renounce his royal responsibilities to live as an ascetic. Four omens will portend the prince's abdication: he will encounter an aging man, an ailing man, a dying man, and an ascetic. Anxious to prevent these encounters, the king rids his land of ascetics and builds a palace compound in which to confine his son and shield him from all evidence of human suffering. In spite of the king's precautions, the prince eventually leaves the palace, encounters the four suffering men, and, unable to find consolation in the luxuries of the palace, he forfeits kingship and embarks on his journey toward wisdom. In the Buddhist narrative, the prince's journey is solitary, and he achieves enlightenment on his own, while in the medieval versions, the prince finds a teacher—called Bilawhar or identified simply as "the ascetic" (Ar.: *al-nāsik*; Hebr.: *ha-nāzîr*)—to guide him on his quest. This spiritual teacher instructs the prince in moral and esoteric truths by telling him stories and training him to recognize their hidden meanings. Thus, the ancient life story of the Buddha provides the framework for an eclectic and ever-expanding collection of parables through which the prince—and, by extension, the reader—attain wisdom.

In the major plot points of the frame narrative, Ibn Ḥasday's Hebrew version is faithful to the Arabic tradition that he translates.[10] He worked directly from a written Arabic source, apparently favoring cognate words in his translation and straightforwardly presenting himself as *ha-maʿtīq*, the "translator" of the text.[11] Yet Ibn Ḥasday's project far surpasses a simple exercise in Arabic-to-Hebrew translation. Rather, *The prince and the ascetic* contains innumerable creative additions; Ibn Ḥasday weaves in biblical phrases and philosophical maxims from the Greco-Arabic tradition, produces six original chapters (9, 17, 27, 29–31), and seals the work with a lengthy translation of the Arabic Plotinus on the soul (chaps. 32–35).[12] He omits certain passages and rearranges the order of others, and he converts the entire text into a new literary form—the *maqāma* (Hebr.: *maḥberet*), a narrative genre consisting of rhymed prose and short metered poems. Ibn Ḥasday thus embraces the full creative potential of translation.[13] With literary skill, philosophical sense, and a robust dose of "translators' license," Ibn Ḥasday masterfully reshapes the classic narrative in order to explore themes of wisdom and knowledge, and to emphasize the pedagogical value of parables. In the ancient tales of a prince who learns through parables, Ibn Ḥasday finds a ready medium to express a medieval philosophy of education.

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[9] Scholars have catalogued the variations between versions. See, e.g., S.M. Stern and Walzer, *Buddhist stories*; Gimaret, Traces; and most recently, De Blois, On the sources 7–26.

[10] Ibn Ḥasday's precise Arabic source is unknown, but Stern has noted its similarity to the Bombay lithograph of 1306/1889 (S.M. Stern, Review of Lang 151). This manuscript forms the basis of Gimaret's edition, which he links to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, a brotherhood of sages active in tenth-century Basra with possible connections to the Ismaʿili movement. De Blois rejects Gimaret's Ismāʿīlī attribution; see De Blois, On the sources 7.

[11] Ibn Ḥasday, *Prince* 1; Gimaret, *Bilawhar* 47–50.

Ibn Ḥasday's distinct approach to *The prince and the ascetic* is informed by the cultural circumstances in which he conducted his literary work. He lived during a period of transition and controversy in the Jewish world, and the intellectual and pedagogical issues that he foregrounds in *The prince and the ascetic* were highly relevant to the debates that raged within the Jewish community. As Jewish cultural centers migrated from Islamic al-Andalus to Christian Spain, the Andalusian traditions of literature and philosophy confronted the strands of pietism, mysticism, and Talmudic study that defined the Jewish academies of the north, and bitter conflicts erupted over the question of what texts were worthy of study and what pedagogies were appropriate. In these decades of cultural crisis, recurring controversies over the place of philosophical speculation and allegorical interpretation in Jewish education were particularly volatile, bringing a series of bans and counter-bans on philosophical study. These controversies frequently revolved around the writings and legacy of the philosopher-rabbi Moses Maimonides (ca. 1138–1204).[14] To both his advocates and his opponents, Maimonides represented the apex of rationalist philosophy and its inclination toward the allegorical interpretation of sacred and traditional texts.[15]

Ibn Ḥasday's own Barcelona was tensely divided between supporters of Maimonidean rationalism and those who fought vehemently against such philosophical approaches. Ibn Ḥasday and his brother Judah used their position as communal leaders to defend Maimonides's reputation and advocate for the punishment of his detractors. In a circular to the Jewish communities of Castile and Navarre, they proudly championed the cause of philosophy and Maimonidean hermeneutics.[16] Beyond his advocacy in the political realm, Ibn Ḥasday sought out other avenues for promoting a broad range of philosophical approaches. In his career as a translator, Ibn Ḥasday made no secret of his appreciation for philosophy and his commitment to ushering the Arabic philosophical tradition into a new era of Jewish intellectual life. In his Hebrew translation of the tales of the Buddha, Ibn Ḥasday affirmed his philosophical and pedagogical interests in a decidedly literary framework, expressing his support for a Maimonidean-style program of philosophical instruction through the study of parables.

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[12] Ibn Ḥasday, *Prince* 206–220. Gimaret, *Bilawhar* 47–50. For the Neoplatonic discussion of the soul, see S.M. Stern, Ibn Hasday's Neoplatonist.

[13] Robinson highlights this creative role as the most important characteristic of medieval Jewish translators: "They were masters of language, of course, and fine technical scholars, but they were also creative, using their vast erudition to stimulate change and innovation in their native culture." Robinson, Ibn Tibbon family 223.

[14] On Maimonides's Andalusian background, see Stroumsa, *Maimonides*.

[15] On the Maimonidean Controversies, see Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish culture*, esp. ch. 4; Silver, *Maimonidean criticism*, ch. 2; Baer, *History* 96–110.

1 A Narrative Treatise on Knowledge

Our discussion will focus on the sixth chapter of *The prince and the ascetic*, in which Ibn Ḥasday most dynamically articulates his preoccupation with knowledge and education. This chapter, which presents an intellectual profile of the prince on the eve of his ascetic education, is a turning point within the frame narrative. As the chapter opens, the prince is predisposed to knowledge but stymied by his confinement in the palace.[17] In a series of vignettes, he demonstrates his ever keener insights and intellectual abilities: he decides to value his own reasoning over the explanations of his elders; he intuits that imprisonment impairs his learning and develops a strategy to secure his release; he observes human suffering and learns that death awaits all creatures; he reasons that knowledge may assuage his sorrow; and, he determines that he must acquire a teacher in order to attain the greatest possible wisdom.

The narrative, of course, is fertile ground for a meditation on knowledge, and the plot elements that address education and wisdom are not Ibn Ḥasday's innovation. In every version of these tales, from Ibn Ḥasday's immediate Arabic source to the Buddhist tales that ultimately inspired it, the text chronicles the experiences that lead the young prince to greater awareness, explores the nature of his erudition, outlines his process of attaining knowledge, and establishes him as a model of wisdom. Ibn Ḥasday develops these core themes in order to make the text speak to his community, leading his readers to consider the prince's intellectual journey in light of their own educational concerns. From this dynamic encounter between text and translator, a novel perspective on knowledge emerges, and Ibn Ḥasday's text becomes a narrative treatise on the value of parables in Jewish education.

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[16] Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish culture* 70–72; Silver, *Maimonidean criticism* 174–175.

[17] Ibn Ḥasday, *Prince* 56.

In order to transform the text into a medieval Jewish discourse on knowledge, Ibn Ḥasday uses a variety of literary techniques, ranging from subtle shifts in language and deft intertextual references to the bold insertion of new narrative content. In one passage, he interpolates a tale about "the righteous Joseph" in order to illustrate the prince's ability to draw practical and philosophical instruction from stories. When the prince confronts his father, in an attempt to negotiate his release from the palace, the king justifies his son's confinement as a demonstration of paternal care. The prince rejects this explanation by applying a story about Joseph to his own situation, and tells his father:

> Know this, my lord: I heard that one smooth talker said to the righteous Joseph, "Know, O Prophet of God: I love you more than every companion and redeemer." Joseph said, "Human love (*ʾahăbat hā-ʾănāšîm*) has brought me nothing but difficult torments. My father loved me, but my brothers were jealous of me. They kept silent [about it] until they threw me into a pit of scorpions and snakes, and after that they sold me as a slave. … Therefore, I do not want anyone to love me except for *He that creates the wind and He that forms the mountains*" (cf. Amos 4:13).[18]

By depicting the prince's ability to learn from stories, Ibn Ḥasday indicates his aptitude for a curriculum of attaining wisdom through the study of parables. The capacity to recall narratives and interpret them effectively is an essential skill throughout *The prince and the ascetic*, since parables are the ascetic's primary tool for instructing his royal student. Here, the young prince's invocation of Joseph's trials demonstrates his predisposition for learning from parables. Moreover, in selecting this particular narrative, Ibn Ḥasday's prince displays an astute sense of diplomacy, as well as an early inclination toward philosophical asceticism. While there are many tales of harm intentionally caused by love, the prince chooses a story that casts no suspicion on his father's goodwill. He has no reason to doubt the sincerity of his father's love, but he recognizes that even genuine paternal affection will impede his path toward wisdom. By invoking and interpreting a tale in which a father's love unwittingly opens the door to harm from another source, the prince simultaneously exonerates his father and asserts the supremacy of divine love over human affection.[19] This brief episode models, in miniature, the full heuristic function of parables, and thereby illustrates the recurring pedagogical argument of *The prince and the ascetic*: parables are a vital teaching tool when they are remembered correctly and interpreted perceptively.

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[18] Ibid., 61. The story has a biblical and Quranic backbone, and the description of Joseph's pit as teeming with scorpions and snakes appears in *Genesis Rabbah* 84:16, but the full combination of elements seems to have been crafted specifically for this narrative. Throughout my translation of *The prince*, I have followed the convention of basing English biblical citations on the King James Version of the Bible in order to emphasize the archaic aspect of biblical diction within Ibn Ḥasday's medieval prose.

As the chapter advances, the issues that consume the prince and his methods for contemplating them become increasingly sophisticated. His dissatisfaction with his own situation evolves into a profound distress over the fate of all created beings. By the chapter's end, the prince realizes that he must consult with someone wiser than he, a teacher who will "guide him along the straight path and direct him to the right position."[20] He reveals this desire to the palace guard, who has become his confidant, and the guard introduces him to the only ascetic who remains in the kingdom. This ascetic becomes the prince's teacher and spiritual guide, and, in the remainder of *The prince and the ascetic*, he conducts the prince through a rigorous course of study based largely on the interpretation of exemplary fables. These parables lead the prince to moral excellence and scientific awareness and, ultimately, to a deep engagement with esoteric philosophy. Yet the prince does not begin this advanced curriculum without knowledge. As Ibn Ḥasday consistently demonstrates in the sixth chapter of the frame narrative, the prince is already predisposed toward knowledge: he has benefitted from the initial training of the palace curriculum, he is exceptional in his faculties of insight, observation, and reasoning, and he appreciates the power of parables.

1.1 *Shaping the Discourse on Knowledge through Language, Genre, and Biblical Citation*

Ibn Ḥasday establishes the pedagogical value of parables within the frame narrative itself, even before presenting the anthology of parables that constitute the main didactic passages of *The prince and the ascetic*. While the addition of narrative material, such as the Joseph story, aids Ibn Ḥasday in transforming the text into a medieval educational treatise, it is through his literary and linguistic choices that Ibn Ḥasday most subtly and consistently shapes the discourse on knowledge to resonate with the precise intellectual concerns of his era. Specifically, Ibn Ḥasday's use of the Hebrew language, the *maqāma* genre, and biblical citation enable him to formulate a narrative treatise on wisdom that is as much indebted to the intellectual preoccupations of thirteenth-century Barcelona as it is to the ancient tales of the Buddha.

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[19] For Jewish attitudes about divine love in thirteenth-century literature, see Vajda, *Amour* 233–236.

[20] Ibn Ḥasday, *Prince* 67.

Ibn Ḥasday flags the intellectual value and philosophical content of the tales by translating them into Hebrew. The Jewish world of Ibn Ḥasday's time was in the midst of a linguistic revolution, in which the intellectual capacities of Hebrew were freshly appreciated.[21] For centuries, the primary language of Jewish learned discourse had been Arabic, and only poetry was composed in Hebrew. This longstanding linguistic division began to break down when the Jewish cultural centers of al-Andalus relocated to the Christian territories, where Hebrew suddenly assumed the cultural role that previously had been dominated by Arabic.[22] This shift occasioned a vigorous translation movement, in which eminent Jewish scholars trained in the Arabic tradition emigrated northward and rendered the classics of Arabic learning into a new Hebrew idiom. The translation movement granted Arabic-to-Hebrew translators and their patrons tremendous influence over the shape of the emerging Hebrew intellectual canon: as the Jewish community became increasingly monolingual, the Arabic texts that were translated into Hebrew continued to inform Jewish discourse, while those that remained in Arabic slipped from Jewish scholarly consideration altogether. Keenly aware of their decisive role in shaping Jewish intellectual culture, the major families of translators—the Ibn Tibbons in Lunel and the Kimḥis in Narbonne—carefully selected which texts to translate and transmit.[23] These translation families were prominent supporters of Maimonides and proponents of philosophical and scientific learning from both Jewish and non-Jewish sources.[24]

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[21] The medieval attitudes toward Hebrew reflect an ongoing Jewish Shuʿūbiyya movement, in which the value of Hebrew over Arabic was asserted. See Roth, Jewish reactions; Halkin, Jewish attitude; and, on Shuʿūbiyya more generally, Goldziher, *Muslim studies* 137–198.

[22] Drory, Literary contacts 292–293; Freudenthal, Arabic into Hebrew 124–126.

[23] Twersky, Social 196–202. On these translation circles, see Robinson, Ibn Tibbon family 193–224; Talmage, *Apples* 3–70; Cohen, Qimhi family 345–388; and Schwartz, *Central problems* 227–233.

[24] David Kimḥi (ca. 1160–1235) commissioned Ibn Ḥasday's translation of Isaac Israeli's *Book of elements*. See Talmage, *Apples* 4–5; Twersky, Social 201; and Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli* 133–134.

By rendering an Arabic text into Hebrew, translators like Ibn Ḥasday enacted their conviction that philosophical learning could be communicated and cultivated in a Jewish language. The confidence that Hebrew was an appropriate vehicle for all subjects of discourse—coupled with the thriving tradition that foreign wisdom was originally taught by biblical sages like Solomon—solidified Hebrew's reputation as a scholarly language in the medieval period.[25] The production of a philosophical library in Hebrew further reinforced the associations between the Hebrew language and philosophical study. Thus, in Hebrew translation, Ibn Ḥasday's *The prince and the ascetic* lays claim to philosophical import over and above its literary significance.

Clearly, however, the literary features of Ibn Ḥasday's composition also contributed to its force as a treatise for and about the attainment of wisdom. Ibn Ḥasday composed *The prince and the ascetic* in the form of a *maqāma*, a genre of rhymed prose interspersed with short metered poems, which was considered to be an ideal educational vehicle.[26] The Arabic *maqāma* emerged in the tenth-century Islamic East and flourished alongside other literary forms in al-Andalus. As the Arabic form declined, the Hebrew *maqāma* arose, becoming the literary vogue in northern Spain from the mid-twelfth through the fifteenth centuries.[27] The most celebrated master of the Hebrew *maqāma* was Ibn Ḥasday's contemporary, Judah ben Solomon al-Ḥarīzī of Toledo (ca. 1165–1235).[28] Like Ibn Ḥasday, al-Ḥarīzī was a philosophically minded translator and belletrist who contributed prodigiously to the Arabic-to-Hebrew translation movement, rendering works of *adab* and *falsafa* with equal aplomb, and enthusiastically translating the writings of Maimonides.[29] Yet al-Ḥarīzī is best remembered for his skill and artistry in composing *maqāmāt*. He produced a Hebrew adaptation of the famous Arabic *maqāma* collection of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥarīrī of Basra (ca. 1054–1122), which he called *Maḥbĕrôt Itti'el*, then composed his own volume of 50 original Hebrew *maqāmāt*, the *Sēfer Taḥkemoni*.[30]

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[25] Talmage, *Apples* 7, n. 16 and bibliography there; Sirat, *Jewish philosophy* 7.

[26] On the *maqāma*, see Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Nemah, Andalusian *Maqāmāt*; Katsumata, Style; Drory, Literary contacts; Drory, Maqama; and Decter, *Iberian Jewish literature* 157–174.

[27] The question of Arabic influence on the Hebrew *maqāma* is complex, in part because the Hebrew genre arose after the peak of Arabic-Jewish cultural contact. Drory argues that the emergence of Hebrew *maqāmāt* was driven by a breakdown in Arabic literacy and the resulting transfer of Arabic learning into Hebrew (Drory, Literary contacts). Decter finds additional sources for Hebrew rhymed prose in European Romance texts that Jews encountered independently of Arabic influence (Decter, *Iberian Jewish literature* ch. 4). Fleischer locates the origins of the Hebrew *maqāma* in a shifting literary market; outside the court culture of al-Andalus, the poets of Christian Spain attempted to write for a popular audience while praising courtiers indirectly by dedicating long narrative texts to their absent patrons (Fleischer, "Gerona School" 38–40).

[28] See Decter, *Iberian Jewish literature* ch. 6; Drory, al-Ḥarīzī's *Maqāmāt* 66–85; Lavi, *Study*; Lavi, Rationale; Tanenbaum, *Soul* ch. 9.

[29] Al-Ḥarīzī's translation of *The guide of the perplexed* was edited by Scheyer and Schlossberg

The pioneers of the Hebrew *maqāma* tradition were inspired by Arabic paradigms, but the Hebrew genre came to differ markedly from its Arabic predecessors. Whereas the earliest *maqāmāt* were primarily oral entertainment, by the time of al-Ḥarīrī the genre was appreciated as written, scholarly literature, transmitted in authoritative versions and seriously studied.[31] Hebrew *maqāmāt* continued along this literary trajectory, and, by the time of al-Ḥarīzī and Ibn Ḥasday, the intellectual value of *maqāmāt* was firmly established, and the texts were accepted as scholarly literature, worthy of attentive study and careful transmission. The witty and comical aspects of the genre, which persist to varying degrees in Hebrew *maqāmāt*, were lauded as the genre's primary pedagogical asset. As al-Ḥarīzī explains in the preface to his *Taḥkemoni*,

> This book became one of the most useful of all written books of its kind because its amusing anecdotes and charming stories are an incentive to ignorant souls and an encouragement to distracted hearts to study the Hebrew language and penetrate its wonderful secrets and extraordinary subtleties.[32]

Al-Ḥarīzī's confidence in the educational potential of the *maqāma* was boundless. He outlines an ambitious linguistic program in which his *maqāma* collection will revive the Hebrew language, defend its honor, and enable Arabic-speaking Jews to acquire their ancestral tongue.[33] The acquisition of Hebrew is, in fact, the linchpin of a comprehensive pedagogical program; knowledge of Hebrew opens the doors to the wisdom that this language best conveys. Jew-

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(1851–1879), and his translation of the *Introductions to the commentary on the Mishnah* was edited by Rabinowitz (1961). The translation of the *Guide* was commissioned by Jonathan ha-Kohen, who found Samuel ibn Tibbon's earlier translation too difficult. Although al-Ḥarīzī's translation was enthusiastically received, Samuel ibn Tibbon attacked it in his revised translation and glossary, *Perush ha-millim ha-zarot* (see Yahalom's introduction to al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemoni* vi–vii).

[30] *Maḥbĕrôt Itti'el* was edited by Peretz (1951). *Taḥkemoni* was edited most recently by Yahalom and Katsumata (2010); an English adaptation was written by Segal (2001).

[31] Drory, Maqama 291.

[32] From the Arabic dedication to *Taḥkemoni*, published in Drory, Hidden 18–19, and in English translation in Drory, Literary contacts 289–290.

[33] Drory, Literary contacts.

ish intellectuals in al-Ḥarīzī's circle thus charged the *maqāma* with a profound instructional mission.[34] It is in this spirit that Ibn Ḥasday's decision to craft *The prince and the ascetic* as a Hebrew *maqāma* further marks the text as a curriculum for attaining wisdom.

The *maqāma* structure also provided abundant opportunities for Jewish belletrists to cite verses from scripture. Freed from the constraints of strict meter, authors of Hebrew *maqāmāt* were at liberty to incorporate biblical words, phrases, and verses into their rhymed prose without concern for set syllabic patterns.[35] Ibn Ḥasday embraced the literary and philosophical possibilities of the genre, and throughout the sixth chapter of *The prince and the ascetic*, he uses biblical allusions to direct the reader's attention to his perspective on parables as a source of knowledge.

The sixth chapter is saturated with biblical citations. Although the bulk of them create a purely decorative effect, lending the elegance of biblical style to the medieval text, several prominent allusions enable Ibn Ḥasday to formulate his pedagogical points quite sharply. Such allusions correspond to the last of the three types of biblical citation that Ross Brann has identified in medieval Hebrew poetics dating back to the tenth century. According to Brann's typology, stylistic citations flavor the medieval prose with a biblical zest that readers appreciate, even when they are unaware of the biblical context in which the citation appears. In Brann's other two categories of citation, by contrast, the reader must be familiar with the full biblical context in order to grasp its meaning within the medieval text. These kinds of biblical citations "confer upon the line of poetry, or deflect from it, the associations, thematic content, context, and meaning of the original biblical passage"[36] and lead the reader to a nuanced understanding of the medieval text. Ibn Ḥasday constructs and conveys a particular view of knowledge by embedding such substantive citations into *The prince and the ascetic*. This essay will consider two such examples in detail. First, the allusion to Proverbs 1:1–6 establishes the wise man of Proverbs as a model for the prince and situates *The prince and the ascetic* in the corpus of biblical wisdom literature. Second, the citation of 1 Kings 10:1, read alongside the earlier citation of Proverbs, establishes parables as an appropriate form of pedagogy within the context of *The prince and the ascetic*, and within Jewish education more broadly.

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[34] On the role of the *maqāma* in the Jewish Shuʿūbiyya movement, see Roth, Jewish reactions 82–83.

[35] Segal, "Maḥberet" 18.

[36] Brann, *Poet* 40–41.

2 Wisdom and the Interpretation of Parables: Proverbs 1:1–6

At the beginning of the sixth chapter, Ibn Ḥasday alludes to Proverbs 1:1–6 in order to place the interpretation of parables at the center of his pedagogical program. The chapter opens with the narrator's description of the prince's intellectual gifts:

> The prince blossomed in splendor; he grew in righteousness (*ṣādîq*), beauty, and glory. His intellect (*śīklô*) and his perfection increased, as did his ethical conduct (*mûsarô*) and the quality of his counsel, for he was receptive (*lāqaḥ*) to instruction (*mûsar*), wisdom (*ḥokmā*), knowledge (*daʿat*) and strategy (*mězīmmā*).[37]

While praise for the prince's beauty and intellect appeared in the Arabic versions that Ibn Ḥasday ostensibly translates, his vocabulary and word order point beyond his Arabic source, to the Bible itself.[38] The biblical book of Proverbs opens by describing the wisdom of parables in identical terms:

> The proverbs (*mišlê*) of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; to know (*lādaʿat*) wisdom (*ḥokmā*) and instruction (*mûsār*); to perceive the words of understanding; to receive (*lāqaḥat*) the instruction (*mûsār*) of intellect (*haśkēl*), justice (*ṣedeq*), and judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge (*daʿat*) and discretion (*mězīmmā*).[39]

Ibn Ḥasday invokes Proverbs 1:1–4 by embedding its key terms in reverse order, creating a virtual chiasmus:

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[37] Ibn Ḥasday, *Prince* 56.

[38] Without knowing Ibn Ḥasday's exact source text, it is difficult to fully evaluate his transformation of the text. Nevertheless, the extant Arabic versions suggest that Ibn Ḥasday situates his translation between the Arabic source and the biblical verses. The Arabic versions emphasize the prince's beauty more than the Hebrew, but they likewise refer to his wisdom. Ibn Ḥasday's *mûsar* and *ḥokmā*, then, predictably translate the *adab* and *ʿilm* of the extant Arabic versions (Gimaret, *Kitāb Bilawhar* 25; Hommel, *Barlaam-Version* 32).

[39] Prov 1:1–4.

Proverbs	***The prince and the ascetic***
mišlê	
ḥokmā	*ṣedeq*
mûsār	*śēkel*
lāqaḥ	*mûsar*
mûsār	*lāqaḥ*
śēkel	*mûsār*
ṣedeq	*ḥokmā*
daʿat	*daʿat*
mĕzīmmā	*mĕzīmmā*

At first blush, Ibn Ḥasday's representation of a wise person seems to follow that of Proverbs so closely that the biblical allusion offers nothing but stylistic embellishment. Yet the biblical verses contribute a crucial element to Ibn Ḥasday's argument—namely, that the key to attaining true wisdom is the study of parables. The biblical passage explicitly invokes parables—specifically, the proverbs of Solomon that follow—as the source of this multifaceted wisdom. Through this biblical citation, Ibn Ḥasday indicates that the prince of his narrative will likewise attain wisdom through the parables that follow. Thus, Ibn Ḥasday aligns his medieval collection of edifying fables with the ancient collection of Solomon. Like the biblical book of Proverbs, *The prince and the ascetic* contains an array of parables and illustrates how the prince studies them to become wise.

A medieval reader who perceived Ibn Ḥasday's allusion to Proverbs would likely recall the entire biblical pericope in which it appears. That passage continues:

> A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: to understand a proverb (*māšāl*) and the interpretation (*mĕlîṣā*); the words of the wise, and their dark sayings (*ḥîdōtām*).[40]

This passage defines wisdom as the ability to increase learning by understanding *māšāl* (pl. *mĕšalīm*) and *ḥîdā* (pl. *ḥîdôt*). These biblical terms, which have a complicated history, came to occupy a central place in Ibn Ḥasday's pedagogy and in the wider medieval intellectual discourse. In the Bible, the word *māšāl* refers to a range of figurative discourse including metaphor, simile, allegory, proverb, and wisdom saying—the book of Proverbs itself is entitled *Mišlê*—while the word *ḥîdā* has been translated into English variously as a proverb, a riddle, a dark saying, and a hard question.[41] The words *māšāl* and *ḥîdā* appear together throughout the Bible, suggesting that both words should be understood, in general, as dicta that require explication or interpretation.[42] In rabbinic literature, the *māšāl* is a parabolic narrative, often accompanied by its application or interpretation, which the sages crafted in order to instruct and explain.[43] In Ibn Ḥasday's time, Hebrew writers used the word *māšāl* to refer to fictional narratives.[44] Indeed, the medieval Jewish literary world produced a preponderance of collected adventure tales and wisdom stories in Hebrew circulating under the title of *Měšalīm*. Many bear striking similarities to Ibn Ḥasday's own composition, *The prince and the ascetic*, and blend ethical instruction into their storytelling.[45] Finally, as discussed in detail below, the terms *māšāl* and *ḥîdā* gained special nuance in the discourse of Maimonides and his followers. These philosophically minded scholars invoked *māšāl* and *ḥîdā*, often in the context of Proverbs 1:1–6, in order to explain biblical and rabbinic language as symbolic discourse, allegories, or narrative enigmas that convey esoteric truths for the wise to discern. Thus, Ibn Ḥasday's references to *māšāl* and *ḥîdā*—terms that were as richly suggestive in his own day as in the biblical text that he cites—further alert the reader to the intellectual significance of his composition.

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[40] Prov 1:5–6.

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[41] For surveys of both terms in their biblical context, see Beyse, Māšāl i 64–67, and Hamp, Chîdhāh 320–323. The range of translations for *ḥîdā* are attested in the King James Version of the Bible: proverb (Hab 2:6); riddle (Jgs 14:13, Ezek 17:2); dark saying (Prov 1:6, Ps 68:2, Num 12:8; Dan 8:23); and hard question (1 Kings 10:1). The choice of translation in any given passage seems to be dictated by context.

[42] Yadin, Samson's Ḥîdā 414.

[43] See, e.g., D. Stern, *Parables*.

[44] Drory, Literary contacts 293 n. 19.

[45] An early example is *Mišlê Saʿīd b. Bābshād* (ed. Fleischer, 1990; see Tobi, *Proximity* 345–355), a collection of parables and moral proverbs in rhymed couplets from tenth-century Iraq or Persia, likely influenced by the encyclopedia of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ. Prominent examples emerge in Christian Spain and France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, e.g., *Meshal ha-Kadmoni* (ed. Loewe, 2004; see Scheindlin's introductory remarks to Sorcerer 295–297), a framed *maqāma* collection of animal fables written by Isaac b. Sahula; *Mishle Shuʿalim* (ed. Habermann 1946; trans. Hadas 1967; see Schwarzbaum, *Mishle shuʿalim*), animal fables of European provenance adapted by Berechiah Ha-Nakdan; *Mišlê Sendebar* (ed. and trans. Epstein 1967), the translation of an Arabic text with a frame story in which an Indian king retains a sage to instruct his son, who learns from the exemplary tales that follow; and *Sefer ha-Meshalim*, a *maqāma* collection on love and wisdom composed by Jacob ben Elʿazar of Toledo (see Decter, *Iberian Jewish literature* 136–156 and bibliography there). For a précis of some of these texts and their connections to Arabic literature, see Brinner, Popular literature 68–69.

The allusion to Proverbs 1:1–6 illuminates several elements of the pedagogical argument that Ibn Ḥasday expresses throughout the frame narrative. First, the biblical reference introduces the wise man of Proverbs as a model for Ibn Ḥasday's prince, who will also increase his learning by reflecting on proverbs and their interpretations and the enigmatic sayings of wise men. Second, the biblical passage presents a circular, almost paradoxical, path toward knowledge that also underlies Ibn Ḥasday's text. The study of parables leads a man to wisdom, and a wise man is defined by his receptivity to the hidden meanings of parables. It takes wisdom to gain wisdom. The sixth chapter of Ibn Ḥasday's *The prince and the ascetic* likewise suggests this circular path; the prince is predisposed to knowledge—his intellect and conduct already exceptional—and yet the story of his quest for wisdom has only just begun. The prince's preliminary education is the prerequisite for his esoteric education. These two points—that the learned man of Proverbs is a prototype for Ibn Ḥasday's prince, and that both figures simultaneously possess knowledge and yearn for it—arise from the parallels between the biblical verses and the medieval narrative.

The third point, however, emerges from a disjunction between the cited and citing texts. Proverbs and *The prince and the ascetic* are self-referential; in both cases, the preface or frame story establishes the connection between proverbs and wisdom as a way of indicating the didactic purpose of the parables that it introduces. Yet the parables of *The prince and the ascetic* do not derive solely from biblical material, but rather from the global storehouse of fables that Ibn Ḥasday adapts and transmits from his Arabic source. As the tales travelled across the Islamic world, passing into Persian and Arabic, the core Buddhist tales were supplemented and modified by narratives of Manichean, Islamic, Jewish, and Christian provenance. The full extent of this cosmopolitan background may have been lost on the medieval scholars who transmitted the tales, but they were quite conscious of the narrative's foreign origins, which informed their high estimation of Indian wisdom.[46] By contrast, the parables found in the biblical book of Proverbs were lauded as a divinely inspired, purely Hebraic, and distinctively Jewish treasure.[47] By applying the introductory verses of Proverbs to the parable collection of *The prince and the ascetic*, Ibn Ḥasday effectively equalizes biblical and foreign wisdom, naturalizing the exotic tales of the Buddha in such a way that *The prince and the ascetic* becomes an extension of biblical wisdom literature.

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[46] See Melamed, Image. Note, as well, the prevalence of wisdom texts claiming Indian origins, e.g., *Mišlê Sendebar* and *Kalila wa-Dimna* (Hebr. ed. by Derenbourg, 1881), on which see also De Blois, *Burzōy's voyage*.

[47] In contrast to pre-modern exegetes, who emphasize the Solomonic authorship of Pro-

Biblical wisdom literature—namely, the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job—provides the pattern for Ibn Ḥasday's text. To be sure, the affinities between the Indian prince and the protagonists of Ecclesiastes and Job, who seek knowledge as an antidote to suffering, were not Ibn Ḥasday's invention. Yet Ibn Ḥasday actively and creatively draws on motifs and modes of expression from biblical wisdom literature to reinforce these parallels. Verses from the wisdom corpus constitute the main source of Ibn Ḥasday's biblical citations throughout the sixth chapter. By concentrating his biblical allusions on a common body of material, Ibn Ḥasday forges a link between his text and the themes of biblical wisdom.[48] In this way, he simultaneously accepts the biblical model of learning and recasts it in a medieval mold.

2.1 *Pedagogy and Parable: King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1)*

Parables constitute the core of *The prince and the ascetic*, and the frame story underscores the broad pedagogical value of these exemplary narratives. In one episode in the sixth chapter, Ibn Ḥasday shows how the prince shrewdly employs enigmatic narratives in order to test the discretion, loyalty, and knowledge of his eventual confidant. At this point in the narrative, the prince is restless and troubled by his ignorance about the reasons behind his confinement. He suspects that one of his father's officers possesses the information he seeks, but he worries about the consequences of exposing his doubts to this palace guard without first verifying his integrity and knowledge. Thus, the prince first "came to prove him with hard questions (*ḥîdôt*)." This phrase is a near-exact citation of the biblical verse in which the Queen of Sheba tests King Solomon's knowledge by presenting him with *ḥîdôt* (1 Kings 10:1).[49] In the biblical narrative, the Queen of Sheba has heard reports of Solomon's wealth and wisdom, but she disregards the rumors of his wealth until she has viewed it with her own

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verbs, modern biblical scholars note the book's indebtedness to its ancient Near Eastern context. See, e.g., Dell, *Proverbs* 18–50; the essays collected in Perdue, *Scribes* and Clifford, *Wisdom*; as well as the survey of the book's "international background" in Whybray, *Proverbs* 14–18.

[48] On the technique of citing from a common biblical source in order to foreground its themes within the *maqāma*, see Segal, "Maḥberet" 17–18.

[49] Ibn Ḥasday's phrase differs from the biblical verse by only one letter, changing the verb from feminine to masculine.

eyes, and she ignores the reports of his wisdom until she has tested it with *ḥīdôt*. This episode demonstrates that *ḥîdôt*—enigmatic narratives of some kind—provide a way for the wise to elicit or evaluate the knowledge of others. The biblical passage refrains from revealing the content of these *ḥîdôt*, which contributes to the exegetical difficulty of establishing the precise meaning of the word. By contrast, contemporary midrashic literature does not hesitate to supply what the biblical text withholds, imaginatively depicting the Queen's *ḥîdôt* as riddles, verbal puzzles, and other mental challenges that Solomon cleverly solves.[50]

While Ibn Ḥasday was certainly familiar with such traditions about the meaning of *ḥîdôt*, he follows the biblical model of nondisclosure. Without revealing the content of the *ḥîdôt* that the prince uses to test the knowledge of his father's officer, Ibn Ḥasday indicates that the prince is satisfied with what he learns through the officer's response to his enigmatic narratives. Just as the biblical Queen of Sheba is convinced of Solomon's wisdom, so the prince is convinced that his father's officer will tell him the truth about the circumstances of his confinement. The prince's evaluation proves correct: the palace guard, whom Ibn Ḥasday describes as "a good man, of rare intellect and understanding," guides the prince's efforts to learn and eventually introduces him to the ascetic who further develops his intellectual gifts.[51] Through the exchange of *ḥîdôt*, the prince sees his own wisdom reflected back to him, and ascertains that the officer is wise and trustworthy. Yet the absence of specific content suggests that mere familiarity with parables does not enable a person to become wise. Rather, parables must be interpreted correctly in order to have pedagogical value.

It is through this emphasis on the proper interpretation of parables that Ibn Ḥasday's *The prince and the ascetic* proves relevant to the intellectual controversies that marked thirteenth-century Jewish life in northern Spain and southern France. In this period of transition from Andalusian intellectual ideals and educational models to a new Jewish culture that integrated the traditional disciplines of the northern communities, arguments about the role of parables and the validity of allegorical interpretation acquired unprecedented urgency. These debates focused on the meaning and ramifications of Maimonides's philosophical writings, which were appearing in Hebrew translation at that time.[52] Ibn Ḥasday and other supporters of Maimonidean rationalism defended techniques of allegorical reading, while the anti-Maimonideans railed against the philosophical reinterpretation of traditional texts.

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[50] See, e.g., Visotzky, *Midrash* 18–19. This collection of rabbinic teachings about Proverbs was compiled in the ninth-century Islamic East and circulated widely in thirteenth-century Spain. Like Ibn Ḥasday, this midrashic collection cross-references the Queen of Sheba's *ḥîdôt* in an effort to explore the meaning of the word *ḥîdôt* in Prov 1:6. The Midrash unequivocally declares that *mĕšalīm* and *ḥîdôt* are one and the same.

[51] Ibn Ḥasday, *Prince* 57. In one instance Ibn Ḥasday refers to the palace guard as *ḥāber*, recalling the character of the same title from *Kitāb al-Kūzarī*, a Judaeo-Arabic narrative by the Andalusi poet Judah Halevi (ca. 1075–1141) that was translated into Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon (ca. 1120–1190). In that work, the *ḥāber* instructs a foreign king, newly converted to Judaism, in Jewish history and dogma.

2.2 *Parables in* The prince and the ascetic *and the Maimonidean Tradition*

Maimonides promoted the interpretation of parables and insisted that holy writ could, and often needed to be, interpreted according to its hidden meaning. Thus, *ḥîdā* and *māšāl* became bywords in the Maimonidean corpus, and Maimonides invokes Proverbs 1:6 as the definition of wisdom throughout his writings.[53] Perhaps the most foundational reference appears in the introduction to the *Guide of the perplexed*, where Maimonides introduces his hermeneutical theory by way of Proverbs 1:6. He asserts that "Solomon began his book: *To understand a proverb, and a figure; The words of the wise and their dark sayings*" in order to teach that "an understanding of the parables, of their import, and of the meaning of the words occurring in them" is the key to understanding the truths expressed by the biblical prophets.[54]

The proclivity for speaking in parables was not limited to the prophets. In his famous preface to the commentary on Mishnah tractate Sanhedrin chapter 10, Maimonides states that the rabbinic sages, on whose words Jewish tradition was established, also spoke in "riddle and parable" (*ḥîdā wĕ-māšāl*). These ancient sages followed Solomon's model by expressing sublime truths through parable and analogy, and those who have attained wisdom recognize that certain rabbinic teachings must be understood figuratively. Again, Maimonides invokes the proof text from Proverbs to which Ibn Ḥasday alludes, defining the wise by their ability "to understand an analogy (*māšāl*) and a metaphor; the words of the wise, and their riddles (*ḥîdôtam*)."[55] Spiritual truths cannot be communicated literally; only proverb, allegory, and parable will lead the seeker to wisdom.

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[52] See Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish culture* and, on the reactions of southern French Jewry to the steady translation and wide acceptance of Maimonidean works, see G. Stern, *Philosophy* 26–48.

[53] See Klein-Braslavy, Maimonides' interpretation.

[54] Maimonides, *Guide* 11.

[55] Maimonides, *Reader* 409.

The verses from Proverbs encapsulate Maimonides's concept of wisdom and erudition in all eras. Maimonides assures Samuel ibn Tibbon (ca. 1165–1232) that he is qualified to translate the *Guide of the perplexed* from Arabic to Hebrew on the grounds that "the Almighty has endowed you with an understanding heart to comprehend similes and parables, the epigrams of the wise and their riddles. […] You have the capacity to delve into the depth of a subject and reveal its hidden meaning."[56] With this biblical allusion, Maimonides compares both himself and his translator to King Solomon, the paradigmatic wise man. Like Solomon, Samuel ibn Tibbon has an understanding heart that enables him to comprehend metaphorical discourse, and in this case, the metaphorical discourse flows from the pen of Maimonides himself. Like the biblical book of Proverbs, the *Guide* presents truth in the form of parables; like Solomon, Samuel ibn Tibbon is capable of interpreting them according to their hidden—and philosophically true—meaning. These comparisons to Solomon are hardly accidental. For Maimonides, Solomon was the wise man par excellence, a metaphysical philosopher who established the pedagogy of teaching from parables.[57] The rabbinic sages followed Solomon's example by expressing sublime truth through allegory and analogy, and Maimonides likewise continues the tradition of communicating wisdom through riddle and parable.[58]

For Maimonides, *māšāl* and *ḥîdā* have a multifaceted pedagogical value. By using familiar imagery, the parable renders complicated biblical and rabbinic teachings comprehensible; by speaking enigmatically, the riddle simultaneously conceals esoteric truths from the simple and conveys them to the wise.[59] The leading Maimonidean intellectuals of the day, David Kimḥi and Samuel ibn Tibbon, explain the complex pedagogical role of *māšāl* and *ḥîdā* in similar terms. David Kimḥi, who was Ibn Ḥasday's patron, identifies two aspects of the *māšāl*: it compares one thing to another in order to elucidate it and, like *ḥîdā*, it conceals profound truth.[60] Ibn Tibbon interprets the *māšāl* and *ḥîdā* of Proverbs 1:6 as a pedagogical statement about how Solomon's book of allegories provides instruction at the appropriate level for any student. The uneducated student will attain knowledge by focusing on the surface meaning of the parables, while the wise student will increase his wisdom by discerning the parables' hidden meaning. As for the men of understanding, "In addition to understanding the allegories' concealed meanings, [they] learn from them how to make other people understand these (and other) allegories."[61] Thus, the wisest men are not just philosophers but philosophical pedagogues; they comprehend allegories and, in so doing, they discover methods of teaching the truth to others.

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[56] Maimonides, *Letters* 131–132.

[57] Klein-Braslavy, *King Solomon* and Klein-Braslavy, King Solomon.

[58] Klein-Braslavy, Interpretative riddles.

[59] Cohen, *Three approaches* 193–196. On the concealing function of the parable, see Diamond, *Maimonides*. J. Stern highlights a third pedagogical purpose of parables in Maimonides's writings: the philosopher's own understanding of esoteric matters is partial and unsustained, rendering him unable to express these truths discursively (J. Stern, On education 120–121).

[60] Cohen, *Three approaches* 140–141.

The anti-Maimonideans of Ibn Ḥasday's generation feared the social and legal consequences of encouraging ordinary Jews to understand biblical and rabbinic texts allegorically.[62] They restricted the study of philosophy and imposed severe penalties on those who defied their injunctions. In the midst of great tension between the advocates of philosophical and traditional strategies of reading, Ibn Ḥasday actively sided with the Maimonideans, advancing the interpretation of parables as the key to attaining the correct, philosophically true, understanding of traditional texts. By reminding ourselves of Ibn Ḥasday's engagement in the Maimonidean controversies, we gain a deeper appreciation of his work as translator, littérateur, and philosophically minded pedagogue. Like his fellow Arabic-to-Hebrew translators, Ibn Ḥasday was committed to bringing the intellectual ideals of al-Andalus into the burgeoning cultural centers of northern Spain and southern France. In the tales of the Buddha, he found an appealing literary framework for upholding and exploring the Maimonidean principle of acquiring knowledge through the interpretation of parables.[63] Ibn Ḥasday thus places himself in the lineage of great thinkers that Maimonides presents in his Mishnah commentary: the biblical sages spoke in parables and the ancient rabbis followed their example, and a few wise men in every generation recognize that authoritative teachings have a hidden meaning.[64] By rendering *The prince and the ascetic* as a narrative treatise on the acquisition of wisdom, Ibn Ḥasday continues the pedagogical tradition established by Solomon, embraced by the sages, and advanced by Maimonides: the tradition of imparting philosophical truth through parables.

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[61] Robinson, *Commentary* 228.

[62] See, e.g., D. Stern, *Parables* 67–86; Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish culture* esp. ch. 3.

[63] Literary expressions of support for or opposition to Maimonides were not without precedent. Al-Ḥarīzī defended Maimonides and the *Mishneh Torah* in several poems and a chapter in the *Taḥkemoni* (Tanenbaum, *Soul* 210–211), while R. Meshullam Dapiera composed ten polemical poems against Maimonides (Fleischer, "Gerona School" 46).

[64] Maimonides, *Reader* 408–409.

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PART 6

Travel, the Exact Sciences, and Islamic Learning

⁂

CHAPTER 24

War and Travel, Patrons and the Mail: The Education of Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048)

Barbara Stowasser

The focus of this study is an eleventh-century Central Asian Muslim scientist, Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī.[1] His education and early professional activities occurred in his native area of Transoxiana, and also in Iran. In his mid-forties, he was transferred to Afghanistan, where he did most of his mature work. Al-Bīrūnī's work is deeply grounded in the legacy of Hellenistic science and some older Middle Eastern and Asian scientific traditions, as well as the Arabic-Islamic scientific culture that preceded his own time. This process is discussed in the first part of this paper. In al-Bīrūnī's time (late fourth/tenth to mid-fifth/-eleventh century), Eastern Iran and Central Asia were places of major political fragmentation and unrest. The question of how al-Bīrūnī pursued a brilliant educational and professional career under these difficult conditions represents this paper's second theme.

1 Al-Bīrūnī's Biography

Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. ca. 442/1050) was one of the most brilliant astronomers, geodesists, natural scientists, and intercultural historians of his time. He was born in 362/973 to an Iranian family living on the outskirts of Kāth, the capital city of Khwārazm, located on the east bank of the Amu Darya River (ancient Oxus, later Jayḥūn; now in the Republic of Uzbekistan). Very little is known about his upbringing, except that he carried out his earliest scientific projects under the patronage of the ruling house of Kāth, the Banū ʿIrāq, or Āfrīghīd Khwārizmshāhs. His many works on mathematics and astronomy, calendars, cosmology, and more were written in Arabic, leading his later biographers to

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[1] Bosworth, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, i, Life; Pingree, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, ii, Bibliography; Saliba, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, iii, Mathematics and astronomy; Pingree, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, iv, Geography; Anawati, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān; Pingree, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, vi, History and chronology; de Blois, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, vii, History of religions; Lawrence, Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān, viii, Indology.

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assume that he first learned Arabic by the traditional methods of the *kuttāb*. He explained his choice of Arabic as his preferred professional language with the fact that it was the language of the Quran and of the Islamic realm as a whole; more specifically, Arabic had become the repository of the sciences from all parts of the world and thus provided the established idioms and terminology for any scientific enterprise (while Persian was "not a language of science" but mainly suited for "historical epics and night conversations").[2]

After his early, formative years in Kāth, the violent end of the Āfrīghīd Khwārizmshāhs (385/995) forced al-Bīrūnī to relocate and look for employment elsewhere. Similar crises were to happen frequently during the early part of his life, as the volatile political situation in Eastern Iran and Central Asia forced him to move between the courts and patronage of competing dynasties in the region, such as the Samanids, Buyids, Ziyarids, and various Khwārazm-Shāhs. First, he went to Buyid-controlled Ray in Iran, where he unsuccessfully tried to work for a while without support from a patron. In 387/997, he briefly joined the court of the Samanid *amīr* Manṣūr b. Nūḥ in Bukhara, upon whose death (in 389/999) he was recruited to work for the Ziyarid *amīr* of Tabaristan and Gorgān (located southeast of the Caspian Sea in Iran), Shams al-Maʿālī b. Qābūs b. Wushmagīr (r. 366–371/977–981 and 388–403/998–1012/13). A few years later, he transferred to Khwārazm's new capital, Gurganj (Ghurghānj), located west of the lowest reaches of the Amu Darya River (now in the Republic of Turkmenistan). There, his work was supported by the Maʾmūnid dynasty of the Khwārazm-Shāhs, specifically by al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Maʾmūn (r. 387–399/997–1009, whose father, Abū ʿAlī Maʾmūn b. Muḥammad, had annexed Kāth in 385/995), and then Abū l-ʿAbbās Maʾmūn b. Maʾmūn (r. 399–408/1009–1017).

In 408/1017 al-Bīrūnī was taken captive when Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna (now Ghazni, in Afghanistan) conquered the Kāth/Gurganj area; al-Bīrūnī was then forced to relocate to Ghazna to serve as an engineer, astronomer, astrologer, and all-around scientist at Sultan Maḥmūd's court. After the sultan had conducted several military campaigns in India, al-Bīrūnī himself was permitted to spend considerable time on the subcontinent, learning some Sanskrit and studying Indian scientific and religious sources, which resulted in his book on India (421/1030). While his relationship with Sultan Maḥmūd (d. 421/1030) seems to have been problematic, al-Bīrūnī's relations with the two successors to the throne, Masʿūd (d. 432/1041) and Mawdūd (d. 440/1048) were much improved.

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[2] Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-Ṣaydana* chs. 4 and 5.

The topic of time, scientifically determined as well as culturally defined, is a recurring theme in many of al-Bīrūnī's works. He wrote on calendars (390/1000), shadows (time measurement by way of trigonometric calculation of solar altitude, 412/1021), geodesy (416/1025), astronomy and cosmology (e.g., in the *Canon Masʿudicus*, 422/1031), and mathematics (especially trigonometry), as well as on gemology, physics, chemistry, mechanics, and pharmacology.

2 Al-Bīrūnī's Education, Sources, and Modes of Intellectual Networking

How did al-Bīrūnī acquire the knowledge on which to base his extensive scientific, astronomical, and intercultural masterpieces, and what enabled him to be so productive in the politically divided, frequently war-torn places in Eastern Iran and Central Asia, where fate had placed him at this volatile time? There are many reasons. Some derive from the impact of older, inherited structures of civilizational coherence, whose ideas, discoveries, skills, and accomplishments transcended historical and regional boundaries and came to resonate in the cultures of the vast area of "the East" (which stretched from Greece to Egypt, and from Iraq to India and China). Prominent among these inherited structures for al-Bīrūnī was the interregional and interethnic unity of the Islamic realm in terms of religious ritual and faith, legal doctrine and practice, and—perhaps, especially—the acceptance and use of the Arabic language and its long heritage as the idiom of many cultures' worth of learning. The fact that al-Bīrūnī, full citizen of the Islamic realm, was proficient in this *koine* (lingua franca) permitted him to reap the benefit of the Arabization of ancient and classical knowledge from Asian and African, but primarily Greek and Persian, sources, in Baghdad and elsewhere.

2.1 *The Translation Movement*

Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809), patron of the first great research library, *Bayt al-Ḥikma* (House of Wisdom), and the first teaching hospital in Baghdad, supported the collection and translation of foreign philosophical and scientific texts from both the East and West. The early generation of scientist-translators was soon followed by schools of editors and exegetes who glossed and polished the texts. Hārūn al-Rashīd's younger son al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833) expanded the research library into a famed research center of the same name; perhaps, he was inspired to do so by an earlier academy in Jundishapur (Khuzestan province, southwest Iran), which the Persian ruler Khosrow Anūshīrwān I (d. 579 CE), or one of his ancestors, had established to gather Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Indian, and Far Eastern knowledge as resources for Iranian scholarship.

In Baghdad and elsewhere, “translation” meant the need to observe, identify and certify, weigh and measure, critique, doubt, prove or disprove, and improve or replace; in this manner, Arabic-Islamic science became an empirical (rather than a contemplative) enterprise that generated new theories and concepts, and also entirely new disciplines. Al-Maʾmūn’s House of Wisdom is said to have been all of the following and more: think tank and academy, university, library and translation center, archive and laboratory, observatory and hospital, intellectuals’ club, and scholars’ living quarters for the world’s finest scholars of several generations. The last and most expensive pieces of this endowment were al-Ma’mūn’s observatories, one on Mount Qāsyūn in Damascus and the other in the al-Shammāsiyya quarter in Baghdad. Financially supported by a ruler, or else by administrators, professionals, or rich scientists, like the third-/ninth-century Banū Mūsā (the three sons of Mūsā b. Shākir) in Damascus, scholars translated and decoded and interpreted or further developed works by the great masters of the past. Princely courts in other parts of the Islamic world would likewise strive to attract and sponsor scholars and artists, often across regional lines, so that the eventual fragmentation of the ʿAbbasid state and its centralized tax structure produced an increase in the number of cultural activity hubs. The Samanid dynasty, for example, was famous for commissioning translations into Arabic, and also into Persian; a branch of the family created and owned the legendary library at Bukhara.[3]

By the late fourth/tenth and early fifth/eleventh centuries, when the Arabic translations of Greek mathematics and astronomy passed to al-Bīrūnī in Khwārazm, and the Arabic translations of Greek philosophy and medicine passed to Ibn Sīnā in Bukhara, those Hellenistic texts had been Arabicized to a degree that they appeared to their new protagonists as “Arabic science.”

2.2 *The* madrasa

Civilizational coherence—that is, the stability of the Islamic cultural system—also rested on community-wide educational institutions that bore strong transregional similarities. Initially these were the mosque schools and colleges, joined in the fifth/eleventh century by the *madrasa* educational system. Originally founded by the Seljuqs in the fifth/eleventh century to educate a new elite of theologically “orthodox” and legally “conservative” administrators for the state, the *madrasa* curriculum on the whole emphasized al-Ashʿarī's *kalām* in theology and al-Shāfiʿī's jurisprudence in *fiqh*.

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[3] Goodman, *Avicenna* 8–11.

The question remains whether the "rational"/"foreign" and the "religious"/ "Islamic" sciences held equal rank in the classical pedagogical tradition. In a recent article on the objectives, courses, and conduct of Islamic learning, Sebastian Günther compared the educational philosophies of the political philosopher and logician al-Fārābī (d. 350/961) with those of the Sunni jurist, theologian, and mystic al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).[4] While al-Fārābī gave equal weight to both "foreign sciences" (grounded in Greek philosophy and science) and "religious sciences" (based on the Quran and its interpretation), al-Ghazālī affirmed the supremacy of the religious disciplines and ranked the natural sciences lower, but also declared them indispensable for the welfare of society.[5]

Were the natural/rational/foreign sciences, then, part of the core curriculum of the *madrasa*s? And, if they were not, did it matter? This question is still hotly debated because it relates to an old but long-lived Orientalist theory of knowledge construction in classical Islam. Since at least the late thirteenth/nineteenth century, Western orientalists (such as Renan in 1883 and Goldziher in 1915) had rewritten the history of Islamic science, stipulating a historical, cultural cleavage between the "Islamic" (religious) and the "foreign" (largely Hellenism-derived) sciences that privileged the former at the latter's expense. According to this Orientalist paradigm, the foreign sciences, mistrusted by an ever-stricter "Islamic orthodoxy," existed and survived (until their early demise) not because of Islam, but in spite of it. *Madrasa*s did not teach science, because science was something marginal and culturally precarious.

Clearly, this Orientalist view of Islamic learning was transplanted from a larger Eurocentric worldview, grown of European Enlightenment roots that posited a systemic opposition between religion and science in medieval and post-medieval civilization. Revisionist historians of Islamic science and others have recently insisted that the *madrasa* curriculum often included more than Arabic language sciences, theology, and jurisprudence, meaning that its students could also study *some* mathematics, geometry, medicine, astronomy, logic, and various other branches of the "rational" (or "foreign") sciences at these institutions. This may well be true, but it may not have mattered all that much, since on the whole, mosque schools and *madrasa*s were not the types of academies where scientists like al-Bīrūnī needed to find their proper training, because they found it elsewhere.

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[4] Günther, Principles.

[5] Ibid., 27. See now also Günther, "Nur Wissen" 255–256.

Muzaffar Iqbal, a strong advocate of a robust science tradition in classical Islamic culture, has called for a “delinking” of the *madrasa* system from the question of scientific research. According to Iqbal and many others, there is no reason to assume that the *madrasa*s were, or should have been, the natural basis for the Islamic scientific tradition. This assumption, says Iqbal, rests on two faulty identifications, one that defines the *madrasa* per se as “the [only] Islamic institution of higher learning,” and another that declares it the equivalent of the Western university.[6] Iqbal then proceeds to sketch out some alternative, autonomous structures of teaching and studying science in classical Islam: tutorials and discipleships, local (grounded) as well as global (mobile) teacher-student and collegial relationships, long-range instruction and joint research projects by way of the mail, and self-study in princely libraries.[7] Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī’s educational history presents examples of all of these venues, as well as several more.

2.3 *The Written Word*

By al-Bīrūnī’s time, Islamic civilization was literate; indeed, it was a flourishing culture of the book. As the various educational institutions produced readers as well as writers, technology produced the means to distribute the texts and make them widely accessible. In the already flourishing, mainly papyrus-based manuscript culture of the eighth century, a major leap forward occurred in Samarqand in 134/751, with the introduction of paper making. By the mid-fourth/-tenth century, almost everyone with any education used paper for all activities involving the written word. Available through mass production, the new technology generated an unprecedented literacy. People from all walks of life read books and purchased books; professional booksellers (the *warrāq*s) and also many members of the educated elite maintained private libraries.

Manuscripts written on paper were relatively affordable, movable, and hence ubiquitous, so that scholars not only shared the same canon of classical texts but also kept abreast of each other’s written work. Al-Bīrūnī copiously quoted his sources from among the “classical canon” of pre-Islamic as well as Arabic-Islamic science; prominently quoted, for example, are the mathematicians and astronomers Muhammad al-Khwārazmī (d. ca. 236/850), al-Farghānī (d. ca. 247/861), and Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Baghdādī, known as Ḥabash al-Ḥāsib (d. 293/906), all pertaining to the Eastern part of the Islamic world and all of whom had preceded al-Bīrūnī in checking the parameters of Ptolemy's (d. ca. 180 CE) *Almagest*. A partial list of al-Bīrūnī's connections with contemporary scientists, especially the scholars with whom he collaborated during the various stages of his career, is provided in what follows.

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[6] Iqbal, *Science* 155–159.

[7] Ibid., 159–163.

2.4 *Research Libraries, Observatories, Think Tanks*

Libraries were typically created and maintained by religious endowments (*awqāf*) or other special funding from a ruler or another wealthy individual. Depending on the intention of the donors, and the nature of the books, library access could vary from open to severely restricted. Libraries attached to mosques, and even *madrasa*s, tended to emphasize books on the religious sciences; they were usually *waqf*-supported—that is, created "for the benefit of Muslim society," and hence in the public domain.[8] On the other hand, libraries owned by individuals retained a more exclusive character, even where the owner permitted their use by scholars—that is, men of science and letters. According to Johannes Pedersen, it is not known whether the *Bayt al-Ḥikma* library in ʿAbbasid Baghdad was accessible to anyone other than the caliph himself and those to whom he specifically permitted admittance.[9] Al-Ḥakam II's (d. 366/976) library, located in his palace in Cordoba (that his successor, Hishām, purged of some of its "heretical" holdings), was not accessible to the general public.[10] In al-Bīrūnī's time and geographical region, five of the Buyid rulers or their viziers (ʿAḍud al-Dawla in Shiraz, Rukn al-Dawla in Ray, Sharaf al-Dawla in Baghdad, and Fakhr al-Dawla and Majd al-Dawla in Ray) maintained splendid libraries that included collections of the "ancient sciences,"[11] but access was restricted.

For a student of philosophy and the sciences, to gain access to a princely library was a privilege that could determine the quality of his later career. At age 18, the young Ibn Sīnā was brought to consult with the court physicians when the Samanid ruler of Bukhara, Nūḥ b. Manṣūr (r. 365–387/976–997), fell gravely ill. Upon his recovery, he appointed Ibn Sīnā to his staff as a physician, which gave him access to the royal library. He is said to have spent a year working through its holdings, systematically requesting works from the catalogue; thus, he gained access to books previously unknown to him, not even by title.[12] On the other hand, confiscation of a private library was a severe form of punishment, as in the case of the philosopher al-Kindī (d. ca. 252/866), who (perhaps because of collegial slander by the Banū Mūsā, or perhaps because of his Muʿtazilite leanings) fell into disfavor with the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil and was then temporarily deprived access to his own extensive book collection.[13]

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[8] Pedersen, *Arabic book* 126.

[9] Ibid., 115.

[10] Ibid., 120.

[11] Ibid., 120–124.

[12] Goodman, *Avicenna* 8–18.

In Kāth, in the year 380/990, when the 17-year-old al-Bīrūnī obtained the patronage of his teacher and lifelong friend Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq, who was a member of the Khwārazmian royal family, his privileges included access to their library and other educational facilities. Kāth and Gurganj both also had schools known as “the Great Sultani schools,” which are said to have each contained an observatory.

In Ray, where al-Bīrūnī tried to work for a while without support from a patron, the Buyid ruler Fakhr al-Dawla (ruled in Rayy, 365–387/976–997) had built an observatory on a mountaintop above Ray in the year 384/994, just prior to al-Bīrūnī’s arrival in the city a year later. This observatory had a very large sextant (60-degree meridian arc), with a radius of about 20 meters, so that the court astronomer al-Khujandī (d. 390/1000) could measure the altitudes of celestial bodies to determine latitude and longitude, and record the sun’s transit to measure the obliquity of the solar ecliptic, proving that the obliquity of the ecliptic is not constant but declines continuously with the course of time. Al-Bīrūnī, who worked and studied with al-Khujandī in Ray, and thus appears to have had access to the research site, stipulated that al-Khujandī’s calculations, including of the latitude of Ray, were faulty, since the sextant had settled into the ground under its heavy weight, which threw off its measurements. Al-Bīrūnī’s allegation was almost certainly correct, but he was still unable to gain a position at Fakhr al-Dawla’s court.[14]

In Baghdad, the Buyid ruler Sharaf al-Dawla (r. 372–379/983–989) had built an observatory under the directorship of the astronomer Abū Sahl al-Qūhī (d. 405/1014). Even though al-Bīrūnī never visited Baghdad, he had academic connections there to Abū l-Wafāʾ al-Būzjānī (d. 388/998), who worked at the Baghdad observatory as the chief astronomer; he was the teacher of al-Bīrūnī’s teacher Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq, and it was with al-Būzjānī that al-Bīrūnī coordinated the mutual timing of the lunar eclipse in the year 387/997, with the aim to find the difference in longitude of their respective locations (al-Bīrūnī in

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[13] Adamson, *al-Kindī* 20–21.

[14] Al-Bīrūnī later wrote a monograph on Fakhr al-Dawla’s sextant: *al-Suds al-Fakhri*, listed in Kamiar, *Bio-bibliography* 67. Al-Bīrūnī also discussed the issues in, e.g., his 416/1025 book *Determination of the coordinates* 70–84; cf. Kennedy, Biruni; Scheppler, *al-Biruni* 50–53.

Kāth and al-Būzjānī in Baghdad).[15] Clearly, this collaborative project was carefully arranged beforehand, most probably by mail. (The experiment duplicated an older one carried out in Baghdad and Mecca under the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn).

When (around 394/1004 or later) al-Bīrūnī returned to Gurganj to work at the court of the Ma'mūnids, he did so as member of a select group of specialists: Abū l-Khayr Khammār (d. 441/1049) worked in medicine, Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and his teacher Abū Sahl Masīḥī (d. 401/1011) were the specialists for Greek philosophy and science, al-Bīrūnī's former mentor Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq was the resident mathematics expert, and al-Bīrūnī was put in charge of astronomy. He requested that an observatory be erected in Gurganj, where he observed solar median transits and other phenomena. This was a "think tank" of the first order since these elite scholars worked together closely, collaborated on projects, and competed quite fiercely with one another. The academy fell apart after the death of al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ma'mūn (399/1009), when his successor Abū l-ʿAbbās Ma'mūn b. Ma'mūn's weakness (r. 399–408/1009–1017) set the stage for the area's conquest by the Ghaznawids in 408/1017.[16] Ibn Sīnā and Abū Sahl left Gurganj in or around 402/1012, and thus avoided deportation to Ghazna, while Sultan Maḥmūd took several thousand prisoners, in addition to Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq, Abū l-Khayr Khummār, and al-Bīrūnī, with him to Ghazna in 408/1017.

Information on the educational facilities in Ghazna is scant. In his (mostly laudatory) work on *The life and times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*,[17] Muhammad Nazim describes the sultan's ambition to build spectacular library holdings in his capital by confiscating books obtained during military campaigns, such as parts of the famous library at Ray, which he conquered in 420/1029.[18] He built a university at Ghazna that had a vast collection of valuable books on all branches of literature; when he had captured a town, all rare volumes found in the libraries were transported to Ghazna.[19] He founded a splendid mosque in Ghazna in 409/1018 and attached a library with works of rare value collected from all parts of the empire, as well as a university with rich endowments for the expenses and salaries of professors and students.[20] Of his brother Naṣr (commander of his troops in Khorasan and also the governor of Sistan), it is said that he had founded the first *madrasa* in Ghazna.[21] What is certain, however, is that Sultan Maḥmūd's court provided al-Bīrūnī with an observatory and an array of sophisticated observational instruments, some of them al-Bīrūnī's own inventions.

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[15] Shamsi, Ibn Ahmad al-Bayruni. Similar observations and measurements had been carried out in ʿAbbasid Baghdad and Mecca during the reign of caliph Ma'mūn (d. 218/833).

[16] Scheppler, *al-Biruni* 59.

[17] Nāẓim, *Sulṭān Maḥmūd of G̲hazna*.

[18] Ibid., 82–83.

[19] Ibid., 158–159.

[20] Ibid., 166.

Aside from Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq and Abū l-Khayr Khummār, we have even less information on the number, identities, and specializations of scientists at the court in Ghazna, and whether they fulfilled a "think tank" function. The sultan is said to have been a poet and legal author of some repute; he took part in the religious and literary discussions of the scholars at his court and was a renowned patron of the poets among them, Firdawsī, ʿUnṣurī, Farrukhī, ʿAsjadī, and Ghadāʾirī. (His shabby treatment of Firdawsī is blamed on ʿUnṣurī's intrigues against him.)[22]

Yet, even if al-Bīrūnī did perhaps perform his work at the Ghazna court without the support and collaboration of a large group of fellow scientists, there were other opportunities for potential "think tank" input from travelers, as well as members of the administration, such as data provided by Central and East Asian embassies from the Qata Khan and Ighur Khan that arrived in Ghazna in 417/1026,[23] or the advice of the prominent Ghazna administrator Abū Sahl ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. ʿAlī b. Nūḥ al-Tiflīsī (whom al-Bīrūnī calls "the master") that he should undertake a study of India.[24] Many of the sultan's courtiers traveled with Maḥmūd on his 17 campaigns between 391/1001 and 417/1026 to the eastern regions of the Punjab and Kashmir, and their news may have stirred al-Bīrūnī's interest in Indian culture, society, religion, literature, mathematics (arithmetic), and scientific theory, which prompted him to learn Sanskrit while still in Ghazna. Between 411/1020 and 420/1029, he was permitted to travel several times to India, where he met and collaborated with Hindu scholars; later, he remained in contact with some of them through correspondence. The result was al-Bīrūnī's anthropological and scientific study on India (421/1030).[25]

2.5 *The Local and the Global: Tutors, Teachers, Correspondences*

There are several models of how young scientists received their first training. Some were instructed within their own family; of the astronomer al-Būzjānī (d. 388/998), for example, it is known that he was first taught mathematics by two of his uncles, Abū ʿAmr al-Maghāzilī and Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAnbasa.[26] Others found tutors with special skills in their neighborhoods, such as Ibn Sīnā, who was first sent to study arithmetic with an Indian greengrocer in Bukhara who knew about the new Indian decimal system and the concept of zero.[27] Since his family was well-to-do, and because of his father's own speculative bent, Ibn Sīnā was tutored at home, in the Arabic linguistic, theological, and legal disciplines; he also received instruction from a philosophy teacher, al-Natīlī.[28] This information was first dictated in autobiographical form by Ibn Sīnā to his disciple al-Jūzjānī, and al-Jūzjānī passed the account down after Ibn Sīnā's death.[29] No such details have been transmitted about al-Bīrūnī, leading some to think that, at the outset, he may have been largely self-taught. At the age of 17 he was invited to study mathematics and astronomy under the supervision and patronage of Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq, who was related to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿIrāq, ruler of Kāth. This prince was only a few years older than al-Bīrūnī but was so highly educated that he became his tutor, introducing him to Euclidian geometry and Ptolemean astronomy. Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq himself had been the student of the Persian astronomer Abū l-Wafāʿ al-Būzjānī (d. 388/998) who in 348/959 had moved to Baghdad. Networks of teachers and teachers' teachers connected scholars like an invisible, organizational web; since scholars—by professional inclination or necessity—were also mobile, the network often connected them at considerable geographical distance.

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[21] Campo, *Encyclopedia* 388.

[22] Nāẓim, *Sulṭān Maḥmūd of G͟hazna* 156–158.

[23] Ibid., 236.

[24] Sachau, *Alberuni's India* 5 and 7; also Scheppler, *al-Biruni* 98.

[25] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*.

Teaching relationships often worked both ways, and the former tutor and his pupil reversed roles. Among the works published under al-Bīrūnī's name, for example, a number of tracts were written under his direction by Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿAlī b. ʿIrāq, by Ibn Sīnā's teacher Abū Sahl ʿĪsa b. Yaḥyā al-Masīḥī (who may also have taught al-Bīrūnī), and by Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Jīlī.[30] It is said that al-Bīrūnī spoke of his own writings as "his children" and of the writings supplied by others as "his adoptive children."

Personal acquaintanceship, colleagueship, and joint projects, at some point or another, were an important resource that could be maintained by "position papers," locally debated between author and addressee, or sent by the post if the scholars had moved far apart. One of the best-known examples of academic-debate-by-written-text is the voluminous correspondence between al-Bīrūnī and his colleague Ibn Sīnā (and the latter's master-student ʿAbdallāh al-Maʿṣūmī), in which al-Bīrūnī argues for the inductive approach in scientific research and argues against Ibn Sīnā and the Aristotelian method of deductive reasoning.[31] Also extant are numerous tracts of communications from Abū Naṣr Manṣūr b. ʿIrāq to al-Bīrūnī,[32] a discussion of Abū Naṣr Manṣūr's two theorems of spherical trigonometry written by al-Bīrūnī to Abū Saʿīd al-Sizjī (d. 411/1020)[33] (inventor of the heliocentric astrolabe that al-Bīrūnī was familiar with),[34] and undoubtedly many more. Interregionally, such communications could be sent to the first addressee by post. State postal systems were typically organized and controlled by government agencies that were also in charge of the ruler's secret agents,[35] but scholars and merchants had additional and more informal venues of communication provided by the travelers, traders, scholars, and pilgrims of their acquaintances.

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[26] Campo, *Encyclopedia* 113.

[27] Goodman, *Avicenna* 12; Khan, *Avicenna* 38.

[28] Goodman, *Avicenna* 12.

[29] Ibid., 11–12.

[30] Kamiar, *Bio-bibliography* 54, 57, 60, 126.

3 Conclusion

Al-Bīrūnī's professional network included many, if not most, of the Mespotamian, Iranian, and Central Asian scientists of his own time. Scholarship in the classical age was by nature a mobile enterprise, as both the scholars and their works tended to leave their mark quite quickly beyond the area of first emergence. This indigenous mobility was accelerated (as well as sometimes thrown off-kilter) by the wars that engulfed these areas in al-Bīrūnī's time. Destructive and debilitating as they surely were, the wars also threw scientists together (in sometimes unwelcome ways), created areas of new connectivity, and could open windows to new theories and ways of thinking, and even to other cultures. Al-Bīrūnī's involuntary mobility and that of his Asian colleagues added to the interculturality of his work, while the use of Arabic as the accepted idiom of all learning permitted him to function in vastly different locations.

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[31] Nasr and Mohaghegh, *As'ila*; Berjak and Iqbal, Ibn Sina; Kamiar, *Bio-bibliography* 85; Nasr, *Cosmological doctrines* 110.

[32] Rasa'il Abu Nasr ila l-Biruni, in Kamiar, *Bio-bibliography* 117–125, 178, 179.

[33] Ibid., 70.

[34] Scheppler, *al-Biruni*, 84–85, 87.

[35] Nāẓim, *Sulṭān Maḥmūd of G͟hazna* 142–146.

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CHAPTER 25

Variants of Galenism: Ibn Hindū and Ibn Riḍwān on the Study of Medicine

Lutz Richter-Bernburg

In the field of the history of medicine in formative and medieval Islam, the theory and practice of instruction and training has not exactly been a neglected subject.[1] It is taken up here again in the hope that a renewed examination of some of the "usual suspects" among sources might still yield further information and thus help us to arrive at a more nuanced and rounded representation of the realities beyond the written and monumental documents.[2] Within the limited space of this paper—a comprehensive treatment being beyond reach at any rate—just two, predictably partisan rather than disinterested, witnesses will be examined, Ibn Hindū and Ibn Riḍwān. Their testimony, it is hoped, will prove to be of significance, beyond their stated or unstated intentions.

As early as around the turn of the fifth/eleventh century—a period that, in retrospect, appears to abound in medical, or at least medico-literary, talent and creativity[3]—medicine did not enjoy the unqualified support in society that its advocates thought was its due. Even granting that the very act of verbalizing

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[1] Editions and studies of some outstanding sources will be referred to below; the following titles amply serve introductory purposes: Pormann and Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic medicine* 218a [subject index], *s. v.* education; Bürgel, *Ärztliches Leben* (an intermittently, if not to say randomly, updated version of Bürgel's *Habilitationsschrift* ["second book" in American parlance] of 1968) esp. 95, etc. (Bürgel's study should be consulted along with the present paper, where his at times unfounded propositions and inferences will only on occasion be expressly engaged); Weisser, Unter den Künsten 3–25 (includes important bibliography).

[2] The frequently observable multifunctionality of pre-modern Islamic types of buildings permits next to no conclusions as to specific purposes, including the more elaborately appointed among preserved hospitals; cf. Hillenbrand, *Islamic architecture* esp. 617 (index of individual monuments), *s. vv.* Divriği, Edirne, *külliye, madrasa*, mosque; 639 (subject index), *s. v.* Hospitals; Rogers, Saldjūkids esp. 964; Mayer, Feldstudien 289–304 (Taf. 49–51); Jacobi et al. (eds.), *Pascal Coste* esp. 103, 125–127 (the same hospital as in Mayer, Feldstudien, established by Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāʾūn, from 1284–1285); Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo* 244–246, no. 36 (hospital of Sultan al-Muʾayyad from 1420). The hospitals'—eventual, not uniform—function as teaching institutions was repeatedly, and reliably, documented in foundation deeds (*waqfiyyāt*) as well as narrative accounts; cf. Issa Bey, *Histoire* esp. 61–69 (partial translation of a founding deed).

[3] Here it is sufficient to refer to Ullmann, *Medizin*, and *GAS* iii.

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and committing their knowledge and concerns to writing may have reinforced and inflated the given authors' sense of urgency, they cannot have veered too far from reality as it was perceived by their intended audience, or else they would have lost them immediately. Thus, the texts discussed here will, with some latitude and allowance for literary conventions, be accepted as fundamentally realistic.

Opposition or reservations were voiced in the most disparate quarters—if anachronistic flippancy be forgiven, across a broad spectrum from "right" to "left." Although its usefulness should have been self-evident to each and every individual in their right mind, as Ibn Hindū and numerous other advocates of medicine assert, the very possibility of its existence, and if not that, its permissibility or yet again, its scientific standing was cast into doubt.[4] Here, its defense against certain theological positions does not have to be rehearsed.[5] However, another point raised against the claims of its practitioners was its ambitiousness and reconditeness, which Ibn Hindū rebutted with reference to the divine gift of the overarching human intellect; it mastered far more obscure arts, such as astronomy and music.[6] Obviously, comprehensive medical expertise could not be achieved within one individual's lifetime, thus books had to be written in order for future generations to bring medical knowledge to perfection. Representatives of "academic" medicine unanimously emphasized the importance of *reading* the subject before engaging in its practice, and that usually meant studying under a teacher;[7] autodidacticism was frowned upon, as Ibn Riḍwān's exceptional case illustrates (see below). Even the prodigious Avicenna did not, as he would have us believe, study medicine purely on his own.[8]

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[4] Ibn Hindū, Abū l-Faraj ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (335–423/946–1032; see Biesterfeldt, Ibn Hindū 125–127, and Khalīfāt, *Ibn Hindū* esp. 53, for his date of death—on the authority of Ibn Hindū's son and as recorded by Ibn al-Najjār), *al-Miftāḥ* esp. 7 etc. (ch. 2); cf. Ibn Hindū, *Key*. As for the debate over medicine's scientific dignity, see Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, *al-Shukūk*, and cf. Richter-Bernburg, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Fārābī 119–130. Also pertinent is Avicenna's well-known seeming *braggadocio* about medicine in his "autobiography;" see Gutas, *Avicenna* esp. 16–17, 216; Gutas, Avicenna II. Biography 67–70. More on this below.

[5] See Richter-Bernburg, Magie 61–75, esp. 62–64; Richter-Bernburg, Medicine 44–57, esp. 48–52. Bürgel, *Ärztliches Leben* 33, first faithfully presents Ibn Hindū's spirited defense of medicine against the various detractors he paraded, only to conclude with the accusation that his and his coevals' imprecise, vague notions about the process and chances of therapy basically differ but little from those of "prophetic" medicine (… etwas verschwommenen Weise, die im Grunde sich von dem Standpunkt der Prophetenmedizin kaum unterscheidet). Not only are Bürgel's qualifiers (verschwommen, im Grunde, kaum) themselves so vague as not to advance the argument, but his allegation is fundamentally anachronistic, implicitly demanding that medieval (mono)theistic philosophers and scholars of medicine and "physics" share contemporary principles of philosophical and scientific inquiry.

[6] *Al-tanjīm* (starcraft) here primarily refers to mathematical astronomy, judicial applications taking last place among its achievements (Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 16:18–17:3). Music similarly figures as a demanding subject in Avicenna's scholarly career; see Gutas, *Avicenna* 216.

As for the precedence of theoretical study over "clinical" training, apart from the pragmatic utility of theoretical knowledge, it has to be kept in mind that such book knowledge was also a mark of distinction, translating into material advantages, between "academically" educated physicians and others, who were self-taught or simply had acquired their skills by "learning on the job."

Understandably, emphasis on the distinction between practical healers and literate physicians was a recurrent motif in introductory and deontological writings. Needless to say, their tenor was a disparagement of the healers' activity and a belittlement of their undeniable successes—even more pronouncedly in the case of female healers.[9] Indignation at such practitioners' popularity was a recurrent motif, plausibly not least because of the venerable, and evident, Galenian pedigree of such indignation; beyond that, the actual validity of the respective authors' strictures is hard to ascertain. Abū Bakr al-Rāzī in this, as in so many other respects, appears to transcend conventions by admitting that he learned from the, however limited, expertise of "old wives and herbgatherers."[10] On the other hand, physicians understandably felt the need to defend themselves against (certainly not always baseless) charges of quackery, avarice, and other transgressions generated by the chances and risks inherent in the profession.

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[7] To quote just one statement by a medical author from the period, al-Qumrī (on whom see the next note), which could no doubt easily be multiplied, but which may have to be taken with a grain of salt, being prominently placed in the proem of his compendium, *Kitāb Ghinā wa-munā* (*Sufficiency and wishes fulfilled*, WMS Arabic 408, fol. 1b; Taqī al-Dīn, *al-Qumrī wa-kitābuh* 533–558, esp. 543). The writer, while attending on professionals, engaged in intense "literary" studies, before he took up medical practice; however, in pursuing his practice, he still continually had to peruse numerous books, which finally propelled him to compile for himself and later Muslims a manual on therapy that could be taken along for handy reference wherever he went. His repeated mention of the pandects, *kanānīsh*, from which he learnt, is just one more illustration of the situation Ibn Riḍwān later railed against (see below). Al-Qumrī declares that since his boyhood years (*ṣibāya*) he was motivated by a love of "physics" (*al-ʿulūm al-ṭabīʿiyya*) and especially the "science of medicine" (*ʿilm al-ṭibb*) for its curative and preventive power and the benefits it confers on its practitioners in this world and the hereafter. Regardless of the social mediation of the author's opinions, the Galenian echoes of which are not to be missed, he presents them in a quietly self-assured way, without a hint of defensiveness.

[8] See Gutas, *Avicenna*; Avicenna's two teachers were Abū Manṣūr al-Ḥasan b. Nūḥ al-Qumrī and Abū Sahl ʿĪsā b. Yaḥyā al-Masīḥī, for whom, in addition to Gutas's references, see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 327:-10, etc., 328:14–16; about Avicenna's studies with al-Qumrī, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa learnt from ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. ʿĪsā al-Khusrawshāhī (d. 652/1254) in Damascus (see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* ii, 173–174, esp. 173:8–9; cf. Ullmann, *Medizin* 147, 236, and *GAS* iii, 319), whereas his indirect information about al-Masīḥī's influence on Avicenna (*qīla*) implies a much closer relationship: Avicenna is said to have written and circulated medical books under his teacher's name (cf. Dietrich, al-Masīḥī).

[9] E.g., Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 59:3–4; Ibn Jumayʿ, *Risāla* esp. 18, 28–31, 32–34, paras. 47–49, 86–93, 98–102.

While Ibn Hindū[11] and Ibn Riḍwān, the two writers on whom the lens will be trained in the following, cannot be said to have escaped attention to date, obviously it is here contended that returning to their works with a focus on medical education will repay the effort.[12] Regrettably, constraints of time and space have not permitted us to include also, as would have suggested itself, Ibn Riḍwān's avid exploiter, Ibn Jumayʿ.[13] Obviously, qua medical authors, all of them habitually adhered to certain Galenian presuppositions, such as the close relationship between medicine and general philosophy.[14] The epistemic problematic of this relationship, as positively engaged by al-Rāzī or negatively by al-Fārābī, to name just two prominent representatives,[15] will not be considered here, nor will our focus be on Avicenna's ambivalent attitude.[16] Still, the two selected writers' shared Galenian affiliation—more on this subject soon—did not preclude a variance in their actual expositions of the study and practice of medicine. Moreover, programmatic attachment to ideals coexisted with a measure of acceptance of less-than-ideal reality.

Galenism, which has just been alluded to as the common denominator of "academic" Islamic medicine, obviously cannot be understood as an unchangeable, transhistorical doctrinal entity. The better informed among Arabic medical authors[17] knew the difference between the master—"our teacher," in Isḥāq b. ʿAlī al-Ruhāwī's words[18]—and late antique Alexandrian Galenism, with its limited curriculum of a narrow canon of works and, in all likelihood, of the mere "summaries" (*jawāmiʿ*) compiled on the basis of this canon.[19] But in spite of such awareness and the abundance of Galenian translations, the Alexandrian scholastic mold proved too strong to be broken. Ibn Hindū, who does not appear to have been a slavish follower of tradition for its own sake,[20] is a vivid case in point—as is Ibn Riḍwān (more on him below)—and likely *tutti quanti*, if a guess be hazarded. The grip of the dominant intellectual and ideological "superstructure" was just too tight to countenance deviation—in Ibn Hindū's words, "Breach of *the consensus of the savants* counts as stupidity" (*kharq ijmāʿ al-ḥukamāʾ maʿdūd mina l-khurq*).[21] Further playing down disagreement by referring to the common purpose of imparting medical knowledge, Ibn Hindū effectively overruled his own—and his revered teacher, Abū l-Khayr b. al-Khammār's[22]—objections to the Alexandrian sequence of study of the Galenian "Sixteen." In support of his and Abū l-Khayr's argument from didactic logic, Ibn Hindū could not have appealed to a better witness than Galen himself, whom he quotes as having given precedence to anatomy before proceeding to physiology,[23] and to the scholastic consensus that instruction most fruitfully begins with what is proximate and “the last in thought.”[24] But Abū l-Khayr’s reservations to the Alexandrian program, as quoted by Ibn Hindū, also concerned its disciplinary core, excluding as it did nutrition, *materia medica*, and “environment” (*al-aghdhiya wa-l-adwiya wa-l-ahwiya*).[25] Ibn Hindū’s attitude is more lenient; he readily grants the Alexandrians solid reasons for the selection and ordering of their “Sixteen:” for one, they thought of their canon as only an abridgment in the study of medicine, not as all-encompassing.[26] Further, they included in it those books of Galen that students could not master on their own, but which needed to be discussed with and explained by teachers. Armed with the knowledge and competence thus acquired, they could then continue studying on their own and tackle the books Abū l-Khayr mentioned.[27] In answer to a virtual questioner, Ibn Hindū goes so far as to explain, by way of example, the order of precedence in the Alexandrian corpus, but actually only of the first four titles. Precedence was either based on intrinsic merit—such as with *De sectis* as the indispensable preparatory “housecleaning” of the student’s mind, and *Ars medica* as the introductory survey of the discipline—or it depended on the given text’s position relative to the preceding one—such as *De pulsibus ad tirones* following *Ars medica* and *Ad Glauconem* in turn following the “Lesser pulse.” Yet, after conceding this much, Ibn Hindū reverts to

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[10] Here, only his monograph on the subject will be cited, *Kitāb fī l-asbāb al-mumīla li-qulūb kathīr min al-nās ʿan afāḍil al-aṭibbāʾ ilā akhissāʾihim* (*The reasons which turn the hearts of many men away from the most excellent toward vile physicians*); see Steinschneider, Wissenschaft 570–586, esp. 586, and Steinschneider, Nachtrag 560–565.

[11] See Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ*.

[12] Ibn Riḍwān repeatedly returned to the subject (see below), presumably also for biographical reasons (i.e., his less than customary autodidacticism).

[13] See Ibn Jumayʿ, *Risāla*; cf. Iskandar, Review 110–111, and Meyerhof, Sultan Saladin's physician 169–178. Iskandar specifically points out Ibn Jumayʿ's unacknowledged, unrestrained spoliation of Ibn Riḍwān.

[14] Ibn Hindū's disagreements with Galen cannot without qualification be called polemical, as Bürgel appears to be doing (Bürgel, *Ärztliches Leben* 131–132, 134[–138]), nor "condescending" (ibid., *bis* [!]); even if Ibn Hindū's perspective can be called philosophical rather than medical, his attitude is entirely different from, e.g., the Aristotelian superiority of an al-Fārābī (see Richter-Bernburg, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Fārābī 119–121) or Averroes; see Ibn Rushd, *Kitāb al-Kulliyyāt* 37–103, esp. 92/81:1, etc., 93/82:-5–94/83:3 and cf., on the basis of an expanded version, *Averrois Colliget*, liber II, fols. 9^{va}–17^{va}, *passim*, esp. 16^{vb}:-10, etc., 17^{ra}:-1–b:10; Richter-Bernburg, Medicina 90–113, esp. 93 and ns. 7–8.

[15] See fn. 14.

[16] See Gutas, *Avicenna*, and Richter-Bernburg, Medicina, esp. 95–96, ns. 10–14.

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[17] Merely by way of example, see Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* esp. 60:5–61:1; Ibn Riḍwān, *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* (grateful acknowledgment is due to Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt for sharing photographs), fols. 111^b–120^b, esp. fols. 118^a–120^b. Ibn Riḍwān especially holds against the commentators and summarizers that they distort Galen's "import" (*maʿānī*) and furthermore introduce matter not germane to Galen's train of thought (see here below).

[18] See, e.g., al-Ruhāwī, *Adab al-ṭabīb* 171:8.

[19] For a recent survey of late Alexandrian medical instruction see Overwien, Der medizinische Unterricht 2–14, 265–290 (bibliography); cf. Adamson, Overwien, and Strohmaier, Alexandria 2–6. In the Arabic tradition, Ibn Riḍwān was not alone in his criticism of the Alexandrian "Summaries" (see below), as witnessed by Ibn Hindū's reference to Alexandrian "claims" (*zaʿamū*) that the "Summaries" could replace Galen's original texts (Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 63:13–15).

[20] After expressly calling the Alexandrian course of study "pedagogic" (*taʿlīmī*), which would seem to indicate approval (but see below), he prefaces his account of it with a reference to his and his teacher Abū l-Khayr's criticism of its failings and shortcomings (*min ikhlālihim bi-l-wājib wa-taqṣīrihim*). Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 60:5–11.

[21] Ibid., 65:14; for the following see 65:6, etc.

[22] On Abū l-Khayr al-Ḥasan b. Suwār (331–421/942–1030 [?]), see Lizzini, Ibn al-Khammār 88–92.

[23] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 63:18–19 (see Galen, *De ordine librorum suorum* ii, 4 [ed. Boudon-Millot 92, 108–109, ns. 4–5/ed. Müller 84:13–85:12]); however, Ibn Hindū or Abū l-Khayr either did not know their Galen very well or only selectively quoted what suited their argument, since he himself enumerated as the first in three of his introductory works *De*

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sectis, *De pulsibus* and *De ossibus* in *De ordine librorum suorum* (as above); in *De libris propriis* i, 4–5 (ed. Boudon-Millot 137, 182, ns. 6–7/ed. Müller 94:9–10), second and third place are reversed, as similarly occurs elsewhere in Galen (Müller, ibid., lxix–lxx; *Ars medica* xxxvii, 9 [ed. Boudon 389, 443, n. 5]); cf. Boudon, Œuvres 1421–1467. In any case, Galen considered sphygmology also to be of prime importance for beginners, as witnessed by his—later realized—plan to prepare a synopsis of his four treatises on the subject (*Ars medica*, ed. Boudon 410:1–9). Given that Ḥunayn also remarked on the Alexandrians’ deviation—primarily neglecting anatomy—from Galen’s own preferred sequence of study of his works, it would seem likely that Abū l-Khayr’s views derived from the same tradition as Ḥunayn’s—if not indeed directly from him; see Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq, *Risāla* 19:1–3, and cf. Iskandar, Reconstruction 235–258, esp. 237. On *De libris propriis* in Arabic (*Fīnaks* or *Fihrist kutubih*) see GAS iii, 78–79, no. 1.

[24] On “the last in thought,” see Stern, “First” 234–252; Olsson, *Ḥudūd* in al-Kindī 245–260, esp. 252–253 and n. 32.

[25] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 63:16–18; Abū l-Khayr’s criticism, which he diffidently formulates as his “opinion” (*aẓunnu*), is directed at the Alexandrians *gathering* these texts into their “Sixteen,” not at their *summarizing* them, as is evident in *jamaʿū … al-khams fī kitāb wāḥid* (“gathered … five into one book,” 62:9) versus *ittakhadha … lahā jawāmiʿ* (“prepared summaries of them,” 63:13–14).

[26] Ibid., 60:15–16; a certain distancing note is sounded by the verb *ẓanna* (“[the Alexandrians] *opined*” [emphasis added]), whether Ibn Hindū copied it from Abū l-Khayr or thought of it himself.

[27] Ibid., 64:2–11.

Abū l-Khayr's alternative order as the disciplinarily proper one.[28] Still, as said above, he ultimately yields to established consensus.

Clearly, Ibn Hindū's outline of the progress of medical study depends on his teacher Abū l-Khayr and, whether through him or other unnamed authors, on the late antique Alexandrian tradition rather than on direct, intensive engagement with the range of pertinent literature—primarily, Galen—as it did for Isḥāq al-Ruhāwī or Ibn Riḍwān. However, as will be shown below, all of his fervent Galenism did not stop Ibn Riḍwān from following the Alexandrian curriculum of the "Sixteen" in his own production of commentaries. Actually, far from voicing even the muted criticism of an Abū l-Khayr or, in his wake, an Ibn Hindū, he remained entirely beholden to their selection.

After dwelling at relative length on the Alexandrian system of medical instruction, Ibn Hindū briefly treats propaedeutics. Here, logic takes precedence, true to Galen's own precepts, although again not with direct reference to the Pergamene's own statements.[29] Ibn Hindū insists on the prospective medical student's thorough training in logic; logic, the indispensable tool of any discipline, is even more essential, he appears to be implying, for medicine because of its close relationship, indeed partial identity, with philosophy.[30] The ethical preconditions the future doctor must meet are given short shrift by Ibn Hindū—again, in contrast to, e.g., Isḥāq al-Ruhāwī, Ibn Riḍwān, and obviously Galen himself—which may once more imply his relative distance from Galenian studies.[31] Similarly, geometry and astronomy figure only as minor subjects to be taken up at discretion before or after the intensive course of logic. However, the mention of geometry brings to Ibn Hindū's mind the famous, if apocryphal, inscription over the gate to Plato's academy: *man lam yuḥsini l-handasa, fa-lā yadkhulanna majlisanā* (let no one ignorant of geometry enter our common room).[32] The very fact of his association betrays, once again, his being steeped in the tradition of Alexandrian philosophical instruction, where from Philoponus to the very end, the presumed inscription regularly appears in isagogic writings. Conversely, Ibn Hindū's appeal to such philosophical testimony, instead of quoting an appropriate passage from Galen, illustrates his relative distance from medicine.

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[28] Ibid., 64:12–65:6.

[29] More than once, Galen emphasizes the importance of his *De demonstratione* as a propaedeutic to medical and philosophical study, as in the conclusion of *Ars medica* (xxxvii, 14 [ed. Boudon 392, 447, n. 5]) and in *De ordine librorum suorum* at the end of the first chapter (i 12 [ed. Boudon 91, 106–107, n. 1/ed. Müller 82:20–83:6]); cf. *De libris propriis* xiv, 8 (ed. Boudon 165–166, 220, n. 1/ed. Müller 117:16–20).

[30] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 65:15–18, 67:10–11.

[31] The end of the ninth chapter of *al-Miftāḥ* reads like a swift tying-up of loose ends (*al-Miftāḥ* 66).

[32] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 66:10–13; on the Greek tradition of the "inscription" see Saffrey, ΑΓΕΩΜΕΤΡΗΤΟΣ ΜΗΔΕΙΣ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ 67–87; Fabian Käs, relying on Liddell-Scott, lists only "Elias's" commentary on the *Categories*; see his review of Tibi's translation 236–239, esp. 238. However, the earliest attestations date back to the fourth century, see Saffrey, ΑΓΕΩΜΕΤΡΗΤΟΣ ΜΗΔΕΙΣ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ 68, 71–76. In the Arabic tradition, to name just one example, Ibn Khaldūn

This distance should not be construed as philosophical superiority, as encountered, for example, in al-Fārābī.[33] Ibn Hindū's occasional criticism is constructive; it is not meant to belittle medicine or Galen as its prime representative. It is with unreserved agreement that he quotes Galen's celebratory argument for medicine as the best of arts that is found in his *Kitāb al-Ḥathth ʿalā l-ṣināʿāt* (*Book of exhortation toward the arts*).[34] With some emphasis, Ibn Hindū introduces Galen's twofold argument for medicine as the "best of the arts" as a verbatim quotation (*wa-qad qāla Jālīnūs … kalāman ḥakaytuhū bi-lafẓih, …*) and assesses it as a statement of the intrinsic, essential nobility of medicine. Only then does Ibn Hindū turn to an enumeration of its accidental, worldly benefits. The entire quotation raises the vexing question of his source, given the fact that this passage is lost in Greek.[35] It would have

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includes a report about the alleged (*zaʿamū*) inscription on "Plato's door" in his account of geometry and adds, on the authority of "our teachers" (*shuyūkh-nā*), an encomium on geometry's purifying effect on the mind, which is compared to that of soap on dirty clothes. Thus, the emphasis has shifted in a more negative, reparative direction from Ibn Hindū's purely positive praise of geometry as intellectually enlightening and paving the way to understanding syllogistic reasoning. The wording of the inscription—*man lam yakun muhandisan, fa-lā yadkhulanna manzilanā*—also differs from Ibn Hindū's, which would suggest several lines of transmission in Arabic.

[33] See above, fn. 14.

[34] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 26:3–27:3; the title Ibn Hindū quotes differs from those used by Isḥāq al-Ruhāwī—(*maqālat-h*) *fī l-ḥathth ʿalā taʿallum ṣināʿat al-ṭibb* (exhortation toward the study of the art of medicine; *Adab* 171:-5)—and Ḥunayn, who has (*kitāb-h*) *fī l-ḥathth ʿalā taʿallum al-ṭibb* (exhortation toward the study of medicine; *Risāla*, no. 110). Rather, it is reminiscent of al-Bīrūnī's wording (*kitāb al-ḥathth ʿalā taʿallum al-ṣināʿāt*; *India*, 16:18 [Ar.]/ 34–35 [Eng.]) and the Cairene manuscript heading *mukhtaṣar maqālat Jālīnūs fī l-ḥathth ʿalā taʿallum al-ʿulūm wa-l-ṣināʿāt* (Kraus, Kitāb al-Akhlāq li-Jālīnūs 4–5). As we will see, however, the extant version in the Cairo "abridgment" can safely be ruled out as the exemplar of Ibn Hindū's paraphrases.

[35] Ed. Barigazzi 150:16–20; ἐκ τούτων οὖν τινα τῶν τεχνῶν ἀναλαμβάνειν τε καὶ ἀσκεῖν χρὴ τὸν νέον, ὅτῳ μὴ παντάπασιν ἡ ψυχὴ βοσκηματώδης ἐστί, καὶ μᾶλλόν γε τὴν ἀρίστην ἐν ταύταις, ἥτις ὡς ἡμεῖς φαμεν ἐστὶν ἰατρική. τοῦτο δ' αὐτὸ δεικτέον ἐφεξῆς (Now from among these arts [that kind of] young men whose soul is not entirely brutish must take up one and practice it—and rather the best among them, which we maintain, is medicine. Precisely this we have to demonstrate forthwith; ed. Boudon 117). Here, the editor posits a paragraph break, after which the adumbrated demonstration would have begun. Neither the fact that Ḥunayn quantifies Galen's work as a single "treatise" (*maqāla*) nor al-Ruhāwī's matter-of-fact ref-

immediately followed the last extant, incomplete sentence. Obviously, it cannot be ruled out that Ibn Hindū here, as elsewhere, depends on an intermediate author, although his express reference to the title of Galen's treatise might indicate otherwise—admittedly, this is no more than a plausible guess. What can safely be said is that he could not have taken this passage from the "Cairene abridgment," because that version breaks off after about half the preserved Greek text.[36] The other unequivocal relation from the *Protrepticus* concerns the two figural—Galen refers to pictorial as well as sculptural—representations of Tyche and Hermes, although the heavily didactic, enumerative rendition may point to a reworking, possibly Ḥunayn's catechesis, as *Vorlage* rather than Galen's original.[37] Here, it is Hermes's presence that unequivocally rules out the Cairene version as source.[38] Ibn Hindū's account of Asclepius's posthumous deification[39] or "angelification," since it reached him toned down in a suitably anodyne mode, also ultimately derives from the *Protrepticus*;[40] however, since it occurs in the section extant in Greek, its appearance in Arabic does not help settle the question of the original extent of Ḥunayn's Syriac and Ḥubaysh's Arabic versions—nor does the abridgment in Ibn Hindū indicate his proximate source. In Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa's *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ*, the Pythian oracle to Lycurgus, which after some hesitancy pronounces him divine rather than human, appears transferred to Asclepius;[41] again, as part of the *Protrepticus*'s first section, it does not contribute to delimiting the original Arabic redaction. Yet, Ibn Hindū presents us with two even more tantalizing Galenian snippets

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erence to it suggest anything about the extent of these two authors' respective versions, or in other words, their covering part or all of what is lost in Greek (*pace* Boudon, *Œuvres* 5–6, n. 6). Ḥunayn, who otherwise regularly comments on textual losses, does not note any irregularity about the *Protrepticus*—which, admittedly, dangerously approximates an argument from silence. Neither does the fact that he "summarized" it in a catechetic format provide positive proof of the textual integrity of his *Vorlage*. Al-Ruhāwī pointedly recommends Galen's *Protrepticus* along with several other isagogic works to students of medicine; if the version available to him had lacked the crucial section on medicine, he could be charged with negligence, having failed to verify his evidence first. If, on the other hand, to further draw out the line of speculation, he never set eyes on the *Protrepticus*, but merely copied from an—unknown—source, he would be even more grossly irresponsible.

[36] Ed. Barigazzi 78.

[37] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 5:18–7:2; cf. ed. Barigazzi 116–119 (with Italian translation).

[38] Ed. Barigazzi 78.

[39] Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 27:12–15.

[40] Ed. Barigazzi, 132:15–20/133 (trl.).

[41] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 10:-2-ult.; cf. *Protrepticus*, ed. Barigazzi 132:22–134:2/133–135 (trl.); al-Bīrūnī, *India* 16:18–17:1 (Ar.) / 35 (Eng.), quotes this passage from a version which conscientiously reproduces the Greek—except for, again, toning down to *ʾlh* v what in Greek is straightforwardly "divine."

in his plea for the nobility of medicine; immediately before his reference to Asclepius's "angelification," he mentions Melampus and Podaleirius as heroic physician-kings. Whereas neither passage can be located in Galenian works extant in Greek, it would seem plausible to assign them to the lost section of the *Protrepticus*, and circumstantial evidence can be marshalled in support of this hypothesis. Elsewhere, Galen refers to Melampus's use of "white hellebore" (most probably *Veratrum album*) to cure the Proetids' atrabilious mania as commonplace Panhellenic knowledge.[42] Podaleirius does not figure in Galen's writings as preserved in Greek—nor does his brother Machaon—but Galen's elder contemporary Aelius Aristides knows about Podaleirius's Carian connections—not to mention the very fact of his encomium on both of Asclepius's two sons for their not exclusively medical, but equally civic, prowess.[43] Thus, no leap of the imagination is required to posit Galen's familiarity with the traditions reflected in Aristides.[44]

Unsurprisingly, in view of the collective as well as individual constraints shaping Ibn Hindū's approach to medicine, practical, or "clinical," training hardly plays a role in his outline of medical study. It appears casually thrown in, between his mention of the cursory reading of geometry and astronomy and his comment, as if by afterthought, that geometry might either precede the study of logic or follow it, before reading medicine itself. Moreover, he reduces "clinical" study to "observation," through which "training" comes about, and through the mediation of which "the delivery of medical actions from the potential to the actual is facilitated."[45]

Not least on account of his circumstantial self-statement as a "self-made man" and his polemical penchant, Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Riḍwān, the second witness to be called to the stand here, has continually attracted scholarly interest.[46] In the present context, his professed, even pugnacious, Galenism will be examined through the lens of his pronouncements on medical education;[47] however, no exhaustive scrutiny of his writings will be conducted to assess his overall dependence on Galenian and other classical texts.

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[42] *De atra bile*, ed. de Boer, 85:25–29 (= ed. Kühn v, 132).

[43] *Oratio* xxxviii [vii Dindorf] 13, 18, ed. Keil 313–319, esp. 316:6–11, 317:13–19 (= Behr ii, 230–234; Goeken 394–397); cf. Kenner, Podaleirios esp. 1133.

[44] In *De optimo medico cognoscendo* (ed. Iskandar as *Kitāb Jālīnūs fī l-miḥnati l-latī yuʿrafu bi-hā afāḍilu l-aṭibbāʾ* 40:11–42:2/41–42 [trl.]), Galen refers, anonymously, to some physician-rulers among the heroes (*al-mutaʾallihīn*) of yore. In Greek, the narrative of Podaleirius being washed ashore on the Carian coast after a shipwreck and of his subsequent good fortune there has been preserved only in Stephanus Byzantius (fl. mid-6th c.), who here names the late classical Ephorus Cumaeus (Jacoby, *Fragmente* 70 F 167 [= ii a, p. 93, no. 167]) and an *Anonymus* (ibid., 742 F 2 [= iii c, pp. 719–720, no. 742/2]: Eudoxus Cnidius??) as sources; see his *Ethnica* i, 382, no. B 187: Bybassos, and iv 236, no. Σ 328: Syrnos; as a reward for Podaleirius healing his daughter Syrna, king Damaithus granted him her hand and rule over the Carian Chersonesus, where subsequently Podaleirius founded two cities, Bybassos in memory of the goat herd who saved him, and Syrnos in honor of his spouse.

[45] *Thumma yaʾkhudhu fī l-mushāhadati l-latī bi-hā takūnu d-durbatu wa-bi-tawassuṭihā yashulu ikhrāju l-aʿmāli l-ṭibbīyati ilā l-fiʿli mina l-quwwa*. Ibn Hindū, *al-Miftāḥ* 66:8–9.

Ibn Riḍwān did not, as briefly noted above, deviate from the Alexandrian syllabus, but to state only that much would still misrepresent him. Right away, a slight caveat has to be raised, since only in the putatively last of the three works here examined, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, does he exhibit familiarity with the Alexandrian syllabus. The Alexandrians' "Sixteen" elicit his praise not only for their intrinsic quality but also for their isagogic virtue.[48] In Ibn Riḍwān's view, the sharp adept will derive such delight from them and conceive of such eager curiosity that he will, on his own, continue his Galenian studies and read the master's works on related subjects.[49] Yet for Ibn Riḍwān, the Alexandrian sexadecimal collection of Galen's works—together with a tetralogy of Aristotle's logic and another of Hippocratic writings[50]—served a far more fundamental historical function; it secured the survival of medical instruction, ultimately of medicine itself, at a time when love of learning and application to scholarship were nearing extinction.[51] Thus, there is no trace in Ibn Riḍwān of even the muted criticism concerning the Alexandrian curriculum that Abū l-Khayr and, in his wake, Ibn Hindū embarked on.

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[46] Ibn Riḍwān dates his nativity, which he appends to his commentary on Ptolemy's *Apotelesmatics* or *Tetrabiblos* ("Liber quadripartiti," esp. fols. 105^{ra}, 106^{vb}:-6, etc.), to A.Y. 356 or more precisely, to—as calculated—15 January 988 (Egidius de Tebaldis [?], whose Latin Goldstein, Horoscopes 139, terms "too corrupt to be useful," miscomputes the year). Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy*, reproduce the nativity, including the Yazdagirdī year (verso of Ar. 91), but cling to the erroneous date of 388/998 (Eng. 12). For further details, as well as general information on Ibn Riḍwān see, with ample references, Biesterfeldt, ʿAlī ibn Riḍwān 281–294, esp. 283–285 (with notes); Biesterfeldt, Ibn Riḍwān. Separate mention is due Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* [cf. Schacht, Ibn Riḍwān]; Lyons, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 65–71; Goldstein and Pingree, Horoscopes 113–144, esp. 139–140; Dols and Gamal, *Medieval Islamic medicine*; Conrad, Scholarship 84–100; Seymore, *Ibn Riḍwān*; Das, Hippocratism 155–177 (to be fine-tooth-combed).

[47] References to pertinent passages in Ibn Riḍwān will not be exhaustive or enumerate every parallel occurrence; for his exclusive Hippocratism/Galenism, with a nod—in Galen's wake—to Dioscorides, see, possibly in chronological sequence from 436/1044–1045 onward, (1) *al-Taṭarruq* esp. 27:156–167, 31:220–222, 33:232–236. In his *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 117a (ch. 4), the undated second of his three works here under discussion, he confirms his position, if more circumstantially and apparently on the basis of more extensive information about—late classical—Alexandria: the two men perfected medical instruction and their works are so voluminous that there is no time left to study works by later commentators and summarizers—which are filled with errors liable to mislead inexperienced readers' minds. In conclusion (fol. 120b:19, etc.), he enjoins the aspiring learner solely to study Hippocrates and Galen, and if under a teacher, he should hold the teacher to explicate their works for him without deviating ever so slightly from the two authors' intentions. If the teacher does not comply, the student should leave him. If, on the other hand, the student was to teach himself, he should first apply himself to logic; only then should he begin his medical reading and proceed slowly, examining himself scrupulously on his mastery of the previous subject before proceeding to the following work. In the third book, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* esp. 62:6–9 (cf. 89:-2–90:15 [verbosely], 103:5–7, 138:14–15, and Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 20–28), Ibn Riḍwān again, from the preface onward, strikes a similar note; [mere] logic made him understand (*fa-waqaftu bi-l-manṭiq*) that "summaries" (*jawāmiʿ*) and commentaries (*tafāsīr*) could be dispensed with. Accordingly, the medical titles he owned himself and listed in his autobiography (*apud* Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* ii, 100:-2–101:1) comprised "Hippocrates's and Galen's books" on medicine and their "equivalents" (*mā jānasahā*), such as Dioscorides's "Herbs" (*al-ḥashāʾish*: *materia medica*), the books by Rufus, Oribasius, and Paul, and al-Rāzī's "Continens" (*al-Ḥāwī*; see below); four books on agronomy and pharmacy are not specified.

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[48] See Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 108:3–11, 109:10–12, 110:10–19, 112:12–4,16–113:4.

[49] In Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa's quotation (*ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 106:2–4), Galen's name appears instead of Hippocrates's, as in the printed edition (108:5–7), but it is a venial slip, since Ibn Riḍwān expresses himself in similar terms with respect to the study of Galen's "Sixteen;" see ibid., 108:13, 109:10–12, 112:-4–5.

[50] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 107:7–10, 108:3–5, 7–9; on the Hippocratic tetralogy, see below.

[51] Ibid., 113:4–6; in *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb*, Ibn Riḍwān has the decline of learning and "philosophical virtues" (*al-faḍāʾil al-falsafiyya*) commence at some unspecific date after Galen and views Oribasius's compilations (*kanānīsh*, glossed as "collections") as a response (fol. 117a:-2–b:6). The process continued inexorably and took medicine with it; at some later date, Paulus (Aegineta), in his turn as a writer of pandects, tried to stem the rise of "vices" (*radhāʾil*, fol. 117b:6, etc.). Whereas Ibn Riḍwān neutrally reports on Oribasius and Paulus, it is the later unnamed authors of *kanānīsh*, and even more so their mindless self-styled followers, who draw his censure (through fol. 118a:21). Still lower degradations are represented by the Alexandrian authors of commentaries (*tafāsīr*) and "summaries" (*jawāmiʿ*); they, too, were motivated by the rampant disregard of virtues they witnessed, but both of the two formats of writing were marred by fatal flaws. The commentaries did not include the entire source texts, and they, as well as the "summaries," distorted Galen's intentions through misunderstandings and the introduction of extraneous matter. Thus, they grievously lead unwitting readers astray (fols. 118a:21–120a:7). Ibn Riḍwān goes so far as to qualify the insidious influence of those commentaries and "summaries" on students as the major cause of the obliteration of medicine's "beautiful features" (*maḥāsin*) and argues his point at length by pointing out distortions of Galen in such authors as Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī, Ḥunayn, and Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Baghdādī (fol. 120a:7–b:19). In his *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb*, "the Alexandrians" only figure as authors of commentaries and "summaries," not yet as the editors of the sexadecimal canon, nor are they featured in this role in *al-Taṭarruq* esp. ll. 39–40 (Ar.) / 61–63 (Ger.). Ibn Riḍwān's partial ignorance of the Alexandrian iatrosophists is also reflected in Ibn Buṭlān's polemic of 441/1050 in which he somewhat too eagerly lambasts Ibn Riḍwān for his blanket rejection of the Alexandrians' endeavors as commentators and summarizers. He conveniently imputes ignorance of the Alexandrian authors' names to his opponent, ignoring his, at least debatable, point about their fidelity to the source-texts; see Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 47:5, 59:14–60:5 (Ar.) / 16, 93–94 (Eng.).

Ibn Riḍwān appears to have been at least superficially familiar with Galen's *De ordine librorum suorum* (*Maqāla fī tartīb qirāʾat kutubih*),[52] but in *al-Nāfiʿ* he somewhat condescendingly calls deference to the curriculum it outlines "nice" (*ḥasan*), whereas hewing to the Alexandrian line was "more germane" (*akhaṣṣ*).[53] Actually, while programmatically advocating the exclusive study of Hippocrates's and Galen's works,[54] Ibn Riḍwān, in the Alexandrian tradition, still contributed to the production of commentaries and handbooks (*kanānīsh*), which was a genre he, as we have seen, harshly criticized when it suited him.[55] Evidently, the truism that criticism of others comes much more easily than criticism of oneself also holds for *ṣāḥibinā* Ibn Riḍwān,[56] but in *al-*

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[52] See GAS iii, 79, no. 2; in *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb*, Ibn Riḍwān paraphrases it concerning the course of Galen's own studies (fol. 116a:-3–116b:2). In the supposedly earlier *al-Taṭarruq*, he still refers to Galen's *De ordine* as the self-evident guideline for the study of the Pergamene's works (ll. 39–40 [Ar.] / 62–65 [Ger.]) and contrasts this situation with the apparent disorder in the list of 55 Hippocratic titles received courtesy of Yaḥyā b. Saʿ īd (ibid., ll. 41–73 [Ar.] / 65–100, 43–48 [Ger.]). For *al-Nāfiʿ*, see the following note.

[53] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 102:14–17; Ibn Riḍwān's wording does not quite fit the passage as it stands, as though it either were an uncorrected draft or had subsequently suffered corruption. Neither does he fulfil his stated intention to transmit the order of Galen's books from Galen's own treatise on the order of reading them, nor is this the concluding chapter of *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* (*Wa-idhā farighnā min hādhā l-kitābi fa-qad baqiya ʿalaynā minhu shayʾun ākhar, wa-huwa an nukhbira bi-tartībi kutubi Jālīnūsa fī l-maqālati l-latī dhakara fī-hā †tartība qirāʾatihī kutuba Jālīnūs†* [homoeoteleutic corruption? Conjectural correction: *tartība*] *qirāʾatihā wa-in shiʾta an taqraʾahā ʿalā tartīb Jālīnūs, fa-inna dhālika ḥasan. Wa-in shiʾta an taqraʾahā ʿalā mā rattabahū aujuhu l-aṭibbāʾi bi-l-Iskandariyya, fa-inna dhālika akhaṣṣ*). As for *ḥasan*, Ibn Riḍwān applies it to the Alexandrians' sexadecimal selection in an entirely appreciative manner, calling it a "beautiful device" (*ḥīla ḥasana*), by which they "revived the art of medicine" (*aḥyau ṣināʿat al-ṭibb*) and for which all subsequent physicians, philosophers, "and others" are obliged to them (see fn. 49). Of course, in the discipline of "tradition" (*ḥadīth*), *ḥasan* is a middling category. See, e.g., Robson, Ḥadīth 23–28, esp. 25.

[54] See fn. 47 for references to *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*.

[55] See fn. 51; on Ibn Riḍwān's own literary output see, on the basis of Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* ii, 103:-10–105:16, Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 41–49 (Eng.), and for his commentaries, common places, etc. from Greek authors, GAS iii, 421 [Index], s. v. ʿAlī Ibn Riḍwān.

[56] For the moment, it will have to be left undecided whether or not Ibn Riḍwān was aware of Galen's treatise *De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione* or, more to the point, its Arabic version, which was prepared on the basis of an already truncated Greek text (Ḥunayn, *Risāla*, 39–40, no. 118 [Ger.] / 48:17–49:4 [Ar.]; Bergsträßer, *Neue Materialien* 48:27–29, no. 118). The wording of its title differs (*Mā turjima* and *Materialien*, ibid.); al-Nadīm in *al-Fihrist* quotes it as *Kitāb Taʿarruf al-marʾ ʿuyūb nafsih*. Early on in his disqui-

Sharaf he does argue his case against Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī and Ḥunayn on the basis of quotations from two of his own works, *On the disagreement between Aristotle and Galen* (*Kitāb-nā fī khtilāf Arisṭūṭālīs wa-Jālīnūs*)[57] and his commentary on Galen's *On sects* (*Fī l-firaq*).[58] On principle, he justified his activity as a commentator on the grounds that he merely explicated Galen's or Hippocrates's intended meaning, in contrast to the authors he directs his criticism at, and that, again in contrast to them, he mastered logic. Therefore, he peremptorily dismisses every post-Galenian author.[59] Further, in his own self-perception, he most certainly conformed to his counsel to would-be medical authors in the post-Galenian period, that—on the foundation of a decent general education—they embark on composing works of their own or compiling memoirs for handy reference in old age only after a thorough study of Hippocrates and Galen and long "clinical" experience.[60] And anybody competent in logic could easily produce "summaries" (*jawāmiʿ*) of whatever of Galen's works for his own use.[61]

Before continuing on the subject of "clinical" practice in Ibn Riḍwān's writings, a few remarks may be interposed concerning his views on propaedeutic studies. Expectedly, Galen's example looms large—but perhaps not large

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sition, Galen refers to Aesopus on the difficulty of perceiving one's own faults in contrast to the easy perception of those of others (ed. de Boer 6, ch. 2:7–8); the same passage was paraphrased by al-Rāzī (see http://www.alwaraq.net/Core/SearchServlet/searchabsone?docid=559&searchtext=INi52YrZiNioINmG2YHYs9mH&option=2&offset=1&WordForm=1&AllOffset=1 [last accessed: 25 February 2019]) and by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (see http://www.alwaraq.net/Core/SearchServlet/searchabsone?docid=69&searchtext=INi52YrZiNioINmG2YHYs9mH&option=2&offset=1&WordForm=1&AllOffset=1 [last accessed: 25 February 2019]), to name just two instances from among several other references to this work (such as in *al-Ḥāwī*, also by al-Rāzī, or in Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*).

[57] *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 119a:19–b:13. Here, Ibn Riḍwān expresses himself as the harmonizer of Aristotle's and Galen's disagreements, which in spite of the title "Disagreement" would rather suggest "mediation" (*tawassuṭ*); see Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* Engl. 43 (no. 26, with n. 33), 47 (no. 77, with n. 55), 110 (Ar. 75 the pertinent passage is omitted). Whereas in Schacht and Meyerhof, the precise title of Ibn Riḍwān's "Disagreement" does not occur, it appears to have been current, as witness ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī's refutation of it (*apud* Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa ii, 212:9–10).

[58] *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 119b:-5, etc.; according to Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, he completed it Thursday, 26 [thus to be corrected] Dhū l-Ḥijja 432/27 August 1041. Galen's *De sectis* being the introductory text par excellence, it was repeatedly treated by Alexandrian authors. See Pormann, *Alexandrian Summary* ii, 11–33; Overwien, Spätantik-alexandrinische Vorlesung 293–337.

[59] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 127:-8–6.

[60] Ibid., 126:15–20, 127:14, etc., 139:5–13; cf. Ibn Riḍwān, *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 120a:1–7.

[61] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 90:11–12.

enough. In *al-Taṭarruq*, Ibn Riḍwān relies on Galen's witness concerning his general education and his taking up medicine at age 16 in response to his father's veridical dream;[62] in Ibn Riḍwān's account, ostensibly also derived from Galen himself, it took him three years to complete his studies.[63] Not to mention that either Ibn Riḍwān or his source must have misunderstood Galen concerning the alleged triennium, he did not see fit, either here or (presumably) later in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, to compare and contrast his own, much less privileged, upbringing and circumstances of study, which he detailed in his "autobiography," with Galen's and to formulate conclusions on that basis—except in a polemical context.[64] When he addressed the intended readership of *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, medical autodidacts, Ibn Riḍwān recommended it as charting the shortest possible route to medical proficiency, without, however, committing himself to a definite time span.[65] If a bit of speculation be hazarded, by then Ibn Riḍwān might simply have become more familiar with Galen, who, as concerns medical or, more precisely, surgical practice, still considered himself "young" at the age of 28, when he was appointed physician to the Pergamene gladiators.[66]

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[62] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Taṭarruq* ll. 14–21 (Ar.) / 22–32, and 42 (Ger.); the reference is to Galen's *De ordine librorum suorum* iv, 3–5 (ed. Boudon 99–100, 124, n. 2–3/ed. Müller 88:15–17).

[63] In *De elementis secundum Hippocratem* vi, 26 (ed. de Lacy 110:8–10), which was written after his return to Rome in 169 (Ilberg, Ueber die Schriftstellerei 489–514, esp. 504–505), Galen refers to a somewhat heated exchange he had as an 18-year-old with an instructor but in no way intimates that he considered his studies completed at that time; to the contrary, after his father's death in 148 or 149, he set out travelling in search of advanced medical instruction; see Nutton, Chronology 158–171, esp. 162–163. This did not mean that he had not tried his hand at writing by this time; in *De libris propriis* ii, 1–7 (ed. Boudon 140–141, 191–193, ns. 6–9 and 1/ed. Müller 97:6–98:11) he mentions three minor tracts, one in obstetrics and two in ophthalmology, from his teenage years in Pergamum, and three more, on the motion of the chest and lungs, written in Smyrna while studying with Pelops (Ilberg, Ueber die Schriftstellerei esp. 489–492).

[64] For excerpts from his autobiography see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* ii, 99:-15–101:4 (cf. Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 34–40; ibid., 50–51, a translation from *Tetrabiblos* fol. 105$^{\text{rb–vb}}$); for his sparring with Ibn Buṭlān see Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* esp. 34–84 (Ar.) / 70–118 (Eng.). In his unmistakably self-satisfied memoir, he asserts having set himself to study at the age of six and having begun reading medicine and philosophy at fourteen; besides earning his livelihood, he pursued his studies until the age of thirty-two, when he became generally recognized (*ishtahartu … bi-l-ṭibb*; probably it was then that al-Ḥākim appointed him "surgeon general," Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* ii, 101:6–7).

[65] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 62:11–18.

[66] *De compositione medicamentorum per genera* (*Fī tarkīb al-adwiya bi-ḥasab ajnāsⁱhā: Qaṭājānis*; GAS iii, 120, no. 64 II), ed. Kühn xiii, 599:10–13; cf. Nutton, Chronology 158–171, esp. 162–164. Ibn Jumayʿ, *Risāla*, ed. Fähndrich arab. 42–43, para. 130, also refers to Galen's

Ibn Riḍwān cites Galen's broad liberal arts education, encompassing both *humaniora* and mathematical disciplines, affirming it as a prerequisite of medical studies. However, in view of the positions he articulates in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, the question poses itself of whether Ibn Riḍwān actually did understand Galen or just payed lip service to him for momentary debating advantage.[67] Certainly, he well-nigh dismisses the study of language and literature out of hand,[68] and accords mathematics and logic only marginally higher recognition, although in the preface he embraces Galen's injunction that the prospective medical student first acquire a solid competence in logic and geometry before taking up medicine itself.[69] Ibn Riḍwān even goes so far as to quote—at least approximately—from *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* that Galen only considered two kinds of readers able to understand him, those trained in geometry and those trained in logic; therefore, he deferred his own reading of medicine until after mastering geometry and logic. Yet, however prominently geometry may figure in *De placitis*, no precise equivalent of Ibn Riḍwān's Arabic rendering can be identified in the Greek original.[70] Overall, Ibn Riḍwān's attitude to "general" as well as mathematical and logical education may only superficially agree with Galen's, nor be entirely consistent. Rather, if the generalization be permitted, his arguments appear situationally adaptable. Far more modestly than the Pergamene, Ibn Riḍwān advocates some basic competence limited to the "principles" of the respective disciplines.[71] Specifically, he warns against logical acrobatics for the sake of mere polemic[72]—which rings an ironic note given the author's own propensity in that direction. He will instantly indulge

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Pergamene appointment at "not even thirty years of age," upon being recommended by his industry and application.

[67] In an attack on Ibn Buṭlān, Ibn Riḍwān measures him—and finds him pitifully wanting—against Galen's *compleat* physician, in whom all the virtues come to perfection, the mathematical, natural, and metaphysical sciences, the art of logic, medicine, righteous actions, and beautiful character (*takāmalat fīhi l-faḍāʾilu kulluhā l-latī hiya l-ʿilmu l-taʿlīmī wa-l-ṭabīʿī wa-l-ilāhī wa-ṣināʿatu l-manṭiq wa-l-ṭibb wa-ṣāliḥu l-aʿmāl wa-maḥāsinu l-akhlāq*; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 77:12–78:2 [Ar.]).

[68] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 123:9–18.

[69] Ibid., 62:1–6.

[70] See Biesterfeldt, ʿAlī ibn Riḍwān 288, n. 40; without much concern about the lack of a precise parallel, Strohmaier suggests an approximately corresponding passage from book eight (*De placitis*, ed. De Lacy 45, no. 4; for viii 1.13–26 see ibid., 482:21–486:16 [Gr.] / 483–487 [Eng.], with commentary 683–684). If Ibn Riḍwān be credited with correct recollection, his source may have been Ḥunayn's, as can be surmised, didactically streamlined "summary" (*jawāmiʿ*), rather than Galen himself (see Strohmaier, ibid., 43, 45).

[71] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 98:2–8, 123:-4–125:2; cf. Lyons, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* esp. 70.

[72] *Wa-tawaqqa* [...] *an taqaʿa fī l-hadhayāni l-ʿinādī*; Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 98:5 and 102:-3–103:3.

it in two chapters on the alleged fallacies of the two most accomplished "modern" medical authors, Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī; significantly, they are the longest in the entire book.[73]

Elsewhere in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* he reduces his demands on delving into logic and "physics" (*al-ʿilm al-ṭabīʿī*) to "a little" (*qalīlā*).[74] In good Hippocratic and Galenian fashion, though, he time and again insists on the prospective physician's moral integrity as a sine qua non;[75] anybody found wanting on this score should be barred from medical study, even if their understanding sufficed "ten thousand times."[76] It is the same intention that, in his recurrently expressed view, informed the obscurity of exposition in the Hippocratic corpus and, to some degree, also in Galen's works, serving as a certain *disciplina arcani* vis-à-vis a laity of uncertain qualifications.[77]

To return to Ibn Riḍwān's position on medical practice, he and others have often been criticized for its relative neglect in favor of book learning and memorization.[78] However, in *al-Taṭarruq*, as well as in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, he repeatedly stresses the importance of practical training and experience. In the former, he argues with reference to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* on the principle of medicine being a "practical art" (*ṣināʿa fāʿila*),[79] whereas in the later work he emphasizes the need of the diagnostician to perform all the ministrations needed when no specialist—pharmacist, oculist, phlebotomist, surgeon, dietician, etc.—is at hand.[80] Obviously, such competence is contingent on intensive previous training.[81] Accordingly, its position in the Alexandrian curriculum, along with the first tetralogy, reflects its indispensability.[82]

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[73] See Lyons, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* esp. 70.

[74] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 125:5–7.

[75] Ibid., 62:13–17, 97:2–98:2, 125:7–10; cf. Ibn Riḍwān, *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 114b:8, etc.

[76] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 62:14–15.

[77] Ibid., 79:5–6, 85:3–7; Ibn Riḍwān, *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 115b:-11–-10 (here attributed to Hippocrates's ancestors on Cos), 116a:15–16, 116b:12–17; Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Taṭarruq* ll. 6–13 (Ar.) / 8–20 (Ger.).

[78] E.g. by Lyons, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* esp. 71; but cf., for a random witness, Ṣāʿid ibn al-Ḥasan (whose work will not be further examined here) on the crucial importance of clinical experience, only to be acquired in hospitals (*bīmāristānāt*). There, the physician was exposed to rare syndromes that he had never heard or read about; he was to take them down in his "notebook" (*dastūr*) as an aide-mémoire for himself and others; see Spies, *at-Tašwīq* fols. 22b:12–23a:7.

[79] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Taṭarruq* 14–15, ll. 32–38 (Ar.) / 52–61, and 43 (Ger.).

[80] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 125:10–126:4.

[81] Ibid., 102:-5–-3, 103:7–10; the following lines (11–20) deal with the physician as a practical dietician.

[82] Ibid., 109:6–10; cf. Ibn Jumayʿ, *Risāla* 17–18, 39, 42–43, paras. 42, 44, 46, 120, 129, 131 (Ar.).

Apparently, over time, if the hypothetical sequence of Ibn Riḍwān's three works here examined be accepted, he came to make various allowances for students of limited abilities. In the Alexandrians' Galenian curriculum, as outlined by him, he notes with apparent approval that the successful completion of the first course unit, a quartet of introductory treatises, already qualifies a beginner for providing what might perhaps be called primary health care.[83] Further, the suggested reading with which Galen concludes *Ad Glauconem*, the last part of the initial quartet, offers the eager aspirant guidance for his "graduate studies."[84] For the complete physician, on the other hand, the quartet serves as a compendium for review.[85] Thus, in practice, Ibn Riḍwān proposes a tiered system in which other "specialists" of partial competence, such as oculists, wound-dressers, or minor surgeons, also have legitimate places.[86] Still, in concluding his *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, he exhorts his ideal reader with a measure of optimism to apply himself conscientiously in order to approximate Galen's excellence and perfection in medicine and philosophy.[87]

Above it was said that the three works by Ibn Riḍwān that have been focused on here represent different stages in his medico-historical knowledge; regardless of whether their suggested sequence be accepted, the relative position of the two corpora the author is most concerned with, the Hippocratic and the Galenian, definitely varies. In *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, the author discusses Galen's "Sixteen" at much greater length than the equally Alexandrian Hippocratic quartet; the four titles—*Aphorisms; Prognostics; Epidemics; Airs, Waters, Places*[88]—are dutifully accorded a privileged position, but the author quickly passes on to a detailed discussion of the "Sixteen." The order of study of the Hippocratic tetralogy, or its relationship to the twelve works he had singled out in a previous chapter, "On the intentions of Hippocrates's books and the direction of his instruction,"[89] remains unclear, except that the Alexandrian quartet is clearly presented as introductory; as for his own dodecalogy, its order obviously reflects entirely different, and unspoken, criteria. At an even more fundamental level, Ibn Riḍwān does not attempt to integrate Hippocratic works into a structured syllabus, which in his view appears to be limited to the Galenian "Sixteen." His narrow perspective may also explain, at least partially, his lack of concern about the variance of pedagogic approaches underlying the selection of the Alexandrian quartet on the one hand and his own choice on the other. The twelve works included are in this order: (1) *On the fetus*;[90] (2) *On the nature of man*; (3) *On airs, waters, places*; (4) *Aphorisms*; (5) *Prognostics*; (6) *On the diseases of women*; (7) *Epidemics*;[91] (8) *On humors*; (9) *On nutriment*; (10) *The law*; (11) *On joints*; and (12) *On injuries of the head*.[92] Ibn Riḍwān here only indirectly admits that, as proven by the manuscript evidence, he used Galen's commentaries on these works for the compilation of his own "common places" (*fawāʾid*).[93] Also, the extant collection represents a somewhat different set of twelve works than those listed by Ibn Riḍwān in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*. A majority of nine titles (nos. 1–9) are identical and follow the same sequence, with two exceptions: the pseudo-Galenian commentary on the pseudo-Hippocratic *Heptads*[94] is inserted after (3), and *On regimen in acute diseases*, after (5). Items (10–12) are omitted in favor of "The physician's establishment" (*Qāṭīṭriyūn* or *Ḥānūt al-ṭabīb* [*De officina medici*]).[95] While the chronology of Ibn Riḍwān's writings cannot at present be examined in detail, the omission of *De officina medici* in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, along with the other differences from the Cantabrigian dodecad, would seem to indicate that *al-Nāfiʿ* represents an earlier, "pre-Cantabrigian" stage in Ibn Riḍwān's Hippocratic studies. In any case, the positioning of *De officina* at the end of the Cambridge *collectanea* does not reflect the isagogic function *De officina* had, if not for the Hippocratic author himself, then for his commentators, including Galen, and of which Ibn Riḍwān also took cognizance.[96]

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[83] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 108:12–16 (*apud* Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 105:-1–106:21).

[84] Ibid., ll. 18–19; in concluding the second section of *Ad Glauconem*, Galen refers to the larger *De methodo medendi* and his two works on compound medicines, *De compositione medicamentorum per genera* (by modes of preparation) and *secundum locos* (by [ill] body parts), ed. Kühn xi, 145–146 (= Johnston, *On the constitution* 558–559). Some pages before (Kühn 139/Johnston 550/1), at the beginning of his discussion of cancerous growths, Galen refers to *De naturalibus facultatibus*; three other works figured in *Ad Glauconem*, but none of them close to the end (*De diebus decretoriis, De anatomicis administrationibus* and *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis*; Kühn 66, 112, 118 / Johnston 438/9, 508/9, 516/7).

[85] *Apud* Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 106:20–21; the corresponding passage in al-Sāmarrāʾī's edition of *al-Nāfiʿ* may be corrupt (as in Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 109:9–11).

[86] Ibn Riḍwān, *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 117a:14–15.

[87] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 157:-7–-5; cf. the end of the preface, ibid., 62:-5, etc.

[88] Ibid., 108:3–7 (cf. above, with n. 50); for the Hippocratic titles see GAS iii, 28–29, 32, 34–35, 36–37, nos. 2, 3, 5, 8.

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[89] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 79–81.

[90] Ibn Riḍwān uses the singular instead of the more common plural *al-ajinna* as the title of the Arabic version, which combines the two works *De generatione* and *De natura pueri* (GAS iii, 38, no. 10).

[91] The title he quotes, "On acute diseases" (*Fī l-amrāḍ al-ḥādda*) would suggest *De diaeta acutorum* (also known as "Barley-water" [*Māʾ al-shaʿīr*], GAS iii 33, no. 4) rather than "On epidemic diseases" (*al-amrāḍ al-wāfida*, ibid. 34–35, no. 5), which title may have been elided by corrupt transmission; in any case, Ibn Riḍwān's following commentary, based on Galen, clearly refers to *Epidemics* and Galen's assessment of the variant genuineness of its seven "books." If Ibn Riḍwān's numbering of the second and third books is taken seriously, it is based on Galen's suggested reversal of their sequence, making the genuine third book the second (and the sixth the fourth, separating off books four and five altogether); Galen himself, however, usually follows the conventional numbering. In his and previous commentators' view, books "two" and "six" were possibly notes taken by Hippocrates's son Thessalus on the basis of his father's authentic utterances (Vagelpohl 12–13; Vagelpohl and Swain 15–17, 274:15–278:2, 616:9–15, and 16, n. 5–6, with refs. to other relevant passages).

[92] In Sezgin's list of Hippocratica (GAS iii, 28–42), they are nos. 10, 9, 8, 2, 3, 17, 5, 6, 16, 11, then ibid., 45, separate nos. 2, 1.

[93] Vagelpohl and Swain i, 57 with ns.; ref. is to codex Cantabr. Dd. 12. 1.

[94] GAS iii, 40–41, no. 14.

[95] Ibid., 36, no. 7.

Returning to *al-Taṭarruq*, which as heretofore suggested preceded *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*, the evidence at first glance appears to cast doubt on our relative chronology. In *al-Taṭarruq*, the author appears familiar with alternative systems of structuring the study of Hippocratica, either according to the "empiricists" (*aṣḥāb al-tajārib*) or according to the "dogmatists" (*aṣḥāb al-qiyās*);[97] the former sequence begins with "the practical books" (*al-kutub al-ʿamaliyya*), of which the very first is *Qāṭīṭriyūn* or *Ḥānūt al-ṭabīb*. It is followed by (2) *Kitāb al-Kasr wa-l-raḍḍ* (*Book of fracture and contusion*); (3) *Kitāb al-Jabr* (*Book of bone-setting*); (4) *Kitāb al-Jirāḥāt* (*Book of wounds*); and "the remaining practical books" in proper order. Only then, beginning with *Kitāb Ṭabīʿat al-insān* (*Book of the nature of man*), the writings, which Ibn Riḍwān further down calls "the books of the science of this art" (*kutub ʿilm hādhihi l-ṣināʿa*), are to be taken up in an—unspecified—appropriate order. The "dogmatic" system proceeds in reverse, "Nature of man" taking precedence, before the student continues in the—allegedly—mentioned order; *Aphorisms* and *Prognostics*, which expectably figure here—alone of the "scientific" titles—are to be memorized. Then, the study of the—earlier called—"practical books," beginning with *De officina*, follows the order dictated by "practice" (*al-ʿamal*).

Whichever authority Ibn Riḍwān derived this outline of Hippocratic study from (a question not to be answered here), he cannot at the time of writing *al-Taṭarruq* have been aware of Galen's position as quoted in his "Glosses,"[98] nor does his sketchy exposition in *al-Taṭarruq* agree with his presentation of the subject in *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ*.[99] His merely superficial knowledge, when compared to the circumstantial treatment in *al-Nāfiʿ*, is also apparent in his selection of four foundational textbooks that are indispensable to the practitioner, (1) *Aphorisms*, (2) *Prognostics*, (3) “Crisis” (*Kitāb al-Buḥrān*), and (4) “Method of healing” (*Ḥīlat al-bur*ʾ), two each of the best-known Hippocratic and Galenian titles.[100] As the inquiry with his “colleague” (*rafīqī*) Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd in *al-Taṭarruq* shows, Ibn Riḍwān was then well aware of the limits of his information on the Hippocratic corpus.[101] His lack of background also shows in his bafflement at the evident disorder of the long list of titles that he quotes courtesy of Yaḥyā, who was translating it for him from Greek. In his own opinion, his inability to give some logic to the “index” (*fihrist*) of titles merely derived from the fact that he had not yet succeeded in acquiring all of them, with twelve still missing from his collection. His feeble attempt to outline a course of Hippocratic study was dealt with above.[102]

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[96] *Qāṭīṭriyūn*, ed. Lyons 100:10–11, 16–17. Galen's commentary itself being incomplete in Arabic, see also Galen, ed. Kühn xviiib, 632 (cf. his commentaries on *Aphorisms*, ed. Kühn xviib, 351:13–14, and on *Prognostics*, ed. Kühn xviiib, 23:6–9 [= ed. Diels, Mewaldt, and Heeg 209:17]).

[97] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Taṭarruq* ll. 74–83 (Ar.) / 101–118 and 43–49 (Ger.).

[98] See above, with fn. 96.

[99] See above, with fns. 88–93.

In short, the cumulative evidence of *al-Taṭarruq* still tends to support the relative chronology proposed above, with *al-Nāfiʿ* postdating *al-Sharaf* and *al-Taṭarruq*, and the Cantabrigian dodecad in turn postdating *al-Nāfiʿ*.

Ibn Riḍwān’s feisty “classicism” notwithstanding (which made him, at least in marked contexts, dismiss almost every author since Galen and a fortiori those of the Islamic period[103]), he did not hesitate, when he found it convenient, to profess adherence to Plato’s and—Plato-critically deployed—Aristotle’s famous maxim that truth commands more loyalty than even the most cherished friends[104] or, in the late antique (Latin) condensation, *amicus quidem Socrates, sed magis amica veritas*.[105] However sharply Ibn Riḍwān criticized the Alexandrian authors of “summaries” and commentaries[106] or belittled the achievements of the best of the Arabic authors, Ḥunayn[107] and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī,[108] not to mention al-Majūsī[109] and Ibn al-Ṭayyib,[110] he did in principle accept—and actually exercise[111]—criticism of even the most revered forebears in the interest of the “attainment of truth” (*li-idrāk al-ḥaqq*).[112] Now, it cannot come as a surprise that the authorities he calls on in support are all pre-Islamic. First, as just noted, he held that the further medical authors were removed in time from Galen, the lower the quality of their writing, which automatically disqualified physicians from the Islamic period; second, since he charged al-Rāzī with grossly misunderstanding Galen, he could not very well introduce him as witness.[113] Apart from that, al-Rāzī, by far the superior mind, likewise relied on the Aristotelian maxim, and yet had problems translating this noble principle into practice.[114] In Ibn Riḍwān’s case, it is difficult not to attribute his sudden embrace of the notion of scientific progress to momentary polemical impulse rather than to a sustained epistemological position. The limits of his notion of historical progression are also demonstrated by his dismissal of the increase in *materia medica* since Dioscorides and Galen,[115]

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[100] See above, fn. 88, for the two Hippocratic works; on Galen’s *De crisibus* (in Arabic frequently, as here, in the singular) and *De methodo medendi*, see *GAS* iii, 95 and 96–98, nos. 18 and 20.

[101] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Taṭarruq* ll. 41–74 (Ar.) / 66–101 and 43 (Ger.).

[102] With fn. 97.

[103] E.g., Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 127: 6.

[104] Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 75:11–76:6 (Ar.); see Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics* I.4, 1096a16–17; cf. Richter-Bernburg, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Fārābī 122 with ns. 4 and 5.

[105] [sc. *Aristotelis*] *Vita Latina*, sections 27–28, 33, in Gigon (ed.), *Aristotelis Opera* iii, 33a (= Düring, *Aristotle* 151–158). For the corresponding Greek, e.g., φίλος μὲν ὁ ἀνήρ, φίλη δ’ ἡ ἀλήθεια· ἀμφοῖν δὲ φίλοιν ὄντοιν, ὅσιον προτιμᾶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, or: φίλος μὲν Σωκράτης, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον φιλτάτη ἡ ἀλήθεια, see *Vita Marciana* (Gigon [ed.], ibid., 30b:24–27 and 30a:45–b:2) and *Vita graeca vulgata*, sec. 8–9 (ibid., 35a; Düring, *Aristotle* 131–136). Other than these Greek and Latin *testimonia*, the source(s) of both al-Rāzī (see below, n. 106) and Ibn Riḍwān substitute Plato for Socrates; without further scrutiny, tentative reference might be made to Alexander of Tralles’s Aristotelian paraphrase φίλος μὲν ὁ Πλάτων, φίλη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια, δυοῖν δὲ προκειμένων προκριτέον τὴν ἀλήθειαν (*Therapeutica* V 4, ii, 155:21–22; cf., e.g., John [Ioannes] Philoponus, *De aeternitate mundi* 30:15–31:7 and 248:7–19). Whether out of a sense of duty toward “the philosopher” or out of literary sensibility, Ibn Riḍwān introduces his or his source’s—pedestrian—paraphrase of Aristotle with a cautionary

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note: “Aristotle said—of which the meaning rather than the wording is this” (*mā hādhā maʿnāhu dūna lafẓih*); indeed, the following sentence, *al-ḥaqqu wa-Aflāṭunu lanā ṣadīqān, wa-naḥnu nuqaddimu ṣadāqata al-ḥaqqi ʿalā ṣadāqati Aflāṭun*, is a far cry from the gnomic concision of the *Vitae*. Al-Rāzī’s quotation—*ikhtalafa l-ḥaqqu wa-Falāṭun wa-kilāhumā lanā ṣadīqun illā anna l-ḥaqqa lanā aṣdaq min Falāṭun*—being none the more elegant might indicate that the translator(s) did not perceive the Greek as a potential template of a pithy saying in Arabic.

[106] See above, with fn. 57.

[107] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 130–139, cf. 127:-5–6; see Strohmaier, Ḥunayn b. Isḥāḳ al-ʿIbādī 578–581; Monferrer Sala, Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq al-ʿIbādī 768–774.

[108] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 143–157, cf. 127:3, -5–7; see, e.g., Richter-Bernburg, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Fārābī 119–130; Goodman, al-Rāzī 474–477.

[109] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 139:1–4; see Micheau, ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Mağūsī 1–15.

[110] Ibn Riḍwān, *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 120b:10–20; see Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 74:20–75:8 (Ar.) / 109–110 (Eng.). Cf. ibid., 39, 43, no. 21 (Eng.) [= IAU ii, 101:17–20, 104:1–2: *Kitāb fī anna afḍal aḥwāl ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ṭayyib al-ḥāl al-sūfisṭāʾiyya*, in five sections]; Faultless, Ibn al-Ṭayyib 667–697.

[111] See Lyons, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* esp. 70.

[112] See Schacht and Meyerhof, *Controversy* 75:11–76:6 (Ar.).

[113] Yet, unavowedly, he might have done precisely that, as his account of late antique criticism of Aristotle (and Galen), barring further research, appears to intimate. See Richter-Bernburg, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Fārābī 122–123 with ns. 16 and 17.

[114] Ibid., 127–130.

[115] Ibn Riḍwān, *al-Kitāb al-Nāfiʿ* 87:-5–88:14; his argument is that a multiple of the about 60 simples added since antiquity had simultaneously fallen into oblivion. In *Fī Sharaf al-ṭibb* fol. 117a:-8–-6, he does not engage in such a contest of numbers, but argues that

not to mention his ignorance of epidemiological change (e.g., concerning smallpox and measles).[116]

To conclude, perhaps anticlimactically, the two above-examined representatives of ancient learning from the formative, pre-Turkic period of Islam concurringly illustrate, their substantial differences notwithstanding, the tight hold late Alexandrian Galenism, or what its Islamic(ate) successors took it to be, was able to maintain over them, superseding that of its alleged fountainhead, Galen himself; at least at the prescriptive level, none of their Galenian studies succeeded in breaking the Alexandrian mold. Certainly, in Ibn Riḍwān's case, some tension, if not outright contradiction, exists between his pronouncements and actual practice—not to mention his stylistic carelessness and material inconsistency. However, he cannot be accused of neglecting the importance of clinical training; although, to name just two random examples, both Ṣāʿid b. al-Ḥasan and Ibn Jumayʿ advocated it more forcefully. Nor did Ibn Riḍwān consistently argue for the superiority of autodidacticism over study with a—competent!—teacher.

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medical instruction, as perfected by the two masters, Hippocrates and Galen, is concerned with "generalities" (*al-kulliyyāt*) or principles, not with innumerable "particulars" (*al-juzʾiyyāt*). Those they did mention exemplarily facilitate comprehension of similar phenomena.

[116] Richter-Bernburg, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and al-Fārābī esp. 128; Richter-Bernburg, al-Razi's (Rhazes) medical works esp. 388.

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CHAPTER 26

Teaching Mathematical and Astronomical Knowledge in Classical and Post-Classical Islamicate Societies

Sonja Brentjes

Teaching was an important ingredient in the spread and maintenance of mathematical and astronomical knowledge in Islamicate societies.[1] It took place on different levels and in a diversity of cultural contexts. Despite this, documentation of these levels and contexts is fragmented. Children's exposure to counting, calculating, or handling simple geometrical figures took place at home or in small schools that were either financed through a personal *waqf*, or attached to a big foundation or to the *zawiya* of a saint. Such small schools are attested to in a few large cities in the classical period by travelers from al-Andalus and in the postclassical period in the biographical dictionaries of authors like Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497); their attachment to royal *wuqūf* is known from the Ottoman period and to *zawiya*s from the Maghreb. There are no systematic studies either of the architectural and other material remains of these elementary schools, or of the information contained in biographical dictionaries and historical chronicles. In all, very little study of the history of teaching in either of the two periods has been undertaken. The focus on advanced mathematics and astronomy, in conjunction with the need to edit and translate mathematical and astronomical texts, has acted as a major obstacle to any other historical investigation in the realm of the history of mathematics and science. Comparable obstacles in Islamic or related studies are the primary interest in religious disciplines and literature. Those who write about *madrasa*s often ignore, undervalue, or misconstrue the data provided in the sources about teaching the non-religious sciences. In the last decade or two there has been a greater interest, at least among historians of mathematics in Islamicate societies, in the how, where, and what of such teaching. This is true, in particular, for studies of the Maghreb, which even extended to the sub-Saharan south, as *Les sciences arabes en Afrique, Mathématiques et astronomie* IX*ème*-XIX*ème siècles* by Ahmed Djebbar and Marc Moyon demonstrates.

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[1] For more on the topic of this contribution, see also Brentjes, *Teaching and learning*.

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In this paper, I will outline what we know so far about the teaching of mathematical and astronomical knowledge in the classical, as well as the postclassical, period and highlight some of the issues that deserve further attention. My primary focus in the postclassical period is the realms of the Ayyubids and Mamluks, and my paper is limited mainly to urban centers and the material assembled in well-known biographical dictionaries. These limitations indicate unambiguously how much needs to be done before we can say we understand the main features and trends of teaching mathematical knowledge in Islamicate societies up to the end of the eleventh/seventeeth century.

1 Teaching in the Classical Period

There can be no doubt that the mathematical sciences were intensely taught in the classical period, although there are not many documents testifying to teaching activities. Hence, while we can conclude from the high production of mathematical texts from the ninth to the twelfth centuries that a good number of these authors had learned at least the basics of the mathematical sciences from teacher(s), we have only scanty material available for describing the loci and forms of such teaching. What we do know comes from the occasional remark, for instance by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990), Aḥmad b. Yūsuf Ibn al-Dāya (d. ca. 341/952), and Ẓāhir al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1169), or from autobiographical statements, like those by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and Ibn Yaḥyā al-Samaw'al al-Maghribī (sixth/twelfth century). Families of the social upper classes usually hired house teachers for their (male) children, who, at times, also taught Euclid's *Elements* and later Ptolemy's *Almagest*. Young men such as ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿUthmān al-Qabīṣī (fourth/tenth century) traveled to acquire knowledge and for a time served a master while studying these and other texts with him. And there were circles of discussion and investigation, like that of ʿAbbās b. Saʿīd al-Jawharī (third/ninth century), for those who had passed these stages of education.

As for the methods of teaching, two types of documents exist that give us some access to them. One type encompasses texts on mathematical and related subjects, which carry statements about *imlāʾ* and *samāʿ*. The other type consists of texts directly addressing the question of how to enable students to become creative mathematicians. The only scholar of the classical period that I know of who had a high output in the mathematical sciences texts carrying either an *imlāʾ* or a *samāʿ* is Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288/901). His *Kitāb al-Qarasṭūn* exists in four manuscripts. Two end with an *imlāʾ*, and one begins and ends with a *samāʿ*.[2] The other one is an introductory explanatory survey of Euclid's *Elements*.[3] It is characteristic of the research orientation of the history of mathematics in classical societies that this kind of information has not received any appreciation so far, although three of the four extant manuscripts of the *Kitāb al-Qarasṭūn* have been known for almost a century and have been edited (at first partially, later fully) and translated. The involvement, if not the origin of this work on balance, and mechanical knowledge, in an environment of teaching and scholarly discussion is, however, highly significant for understanding the complexity of the appropriation and adaptation of knowledge from other cultures. One could call this work cutting-edge research for its time. In it, Thābit formulated a theory of the balance on the basis of fragmentary Greek texts on the subject that had been translated into Arabic, probably in the first half of the ninth century, and he had been the editor of one, the pseudo-Euclidean *Kitāb al-Thiql wa-l-khiffa*. The note of *imlāʾ* that was written on one copy of Thābit's commentary on the aims of Euclid's *Elements* points in a similar direction—namely, that the appropriation of ancient scientific literature took place in a teaching environment. This note signifies that, in addition to educating the young sons of Muḥammad b. Mūsā (died second half of the third/late ninth century) and training students in the art of translating, Thābit apparently invested a good amount of his work as a teacher in reading his own research texts to interested audiences, explaining their content to them (as some of the comments found in the copies of the *Kitāb al-Qarasṭūn* suggest), and answering, in written form, their questions about various points made by ancient authors, Aristotle in particular.[4] The third aspect of interest are the forms of teaching and their agreement with those applied in the religious disciplines up to the eleventh century. These forms of teaching, according to Gacek, included *imlāʾ* (dictating) and *samāʿ* (aural instruction).[5] This indicates that there were no substantial differences in teaching between the different fields of knowledge, including the sciences. The changes arising in the mathematical sciences, due to their integration into the *madrasa*s and similar forms at the end of the classical period, thus cannot have been as substantial and far reaching as has been thought. The only form important in the acquisition of religious knowledge that has not been confirmed (yet) for the mathematical sciences before their incorporation in the activities of *mudarrisūn* is learning entire texts by heart. However, once they had been given a space in *madrasa*s and other institutions, learning mathematical and astronomical texts by heart became a third standard method of education.[6]

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[2] MSS Cracow, University Library, Or. 258, f 224^{r}; Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Or 118, f 71^{r}, London, British Library, 767, f 208; Jaouiche, *Livre du Qarasṭūn* 168–169.

[3] MS Tehran, Malik Museum, 3586, f 5a.

[4] Sabit ibn Korra, *Mathematical treatises* 12, 20–21, 24, 243–247, 278–284, 321–328, 353–355, 365–367, 380–381.

[5] Gacek, *Arabic manuscripts* 52–54.

Thābit b. Qurra wrote his introductory comments on the Euclidean *Elements* for a member of the Ibn Wahb family, from which four viziers of the ʿAbbasid caliphs came.[7] The treatise is known under at least three different titles:

- *Book of Abū l-Ḥasan Thābit b. Qurra, written for Ibn Wahb, on how to proceed when solving geometrical problems*;
- *Treatise on how to proceed for achieving true geometrical* (*statements that are*) *searched for*; and
- *On the reason according to which Euclid had ordered the theorems of his book in that order and on the manner to solve that which goes back to the theorems in Euclid's book after understanding it*.

All three titles reflect the first part of Thābit's text, in which he summarizes a discussion he had had with Ibn Wahb about why Euclid had not ordered his propositions by pairs, proving first one theorem and then its opposite. Ibn Wahb was of the opinion that this "disorderly" presentation followed from the tools Euclid needed in each proof and hence had to state and prove them first.[8] Thābit replied that he thought this order resulted from a didactic goal—namely, so that a beginner who had no previous knowledge of geometry could understand these matters. Once a student had progressed and was familiar with the *Elements*, teaching could proceed differently—namely, by applying the acquired knowledge to prove other theorems and rules needed in geometry.[9] In particular, Thābit thought, mastering the content of the *Elements* was necessary if the student wished to reflect on the concepts and theorems of geometry, show their existence, and establish their construction. In this second phase of geometric education, the student should learn more than just how to apply the definitions, axioms, and postulates. Instead, he needed to learn how to select, from the available concepts and theorems, what was necessary for solving a specific problem or finding a particular proof. Furthermore, and this is the content of the text that Thābit wrote by the request of Ibn Wahb, the student must learn how to do research.[10] Thābit agreed and proposed to carry out the task of presenting a few true geometrical statements, and discussing the concepts and methods needed for proving them, as models, which anybody wishing to solve geometrical problems and establish something new according to his capacity could apply in the form of an analogy.[11] The main body of the text deals with constructions of mechanical devices, determinations of magnitudes, positions, properties, qualities, claims, and the theorems that can be derived.[12] The examples Thābit chose for his discussion are all elementary, and most are taken from the *Elements*, for instance, the construction of a rectangular triangle, the determination of the area of a triangle with known sides, or the proof that the tangent and the chord of a circle cannot have the same midpoint.[13]

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[6] Ibn Khallikān's claim that Ibn Sīnā had learned "things from arithmetic, geometry, and algebra by heart" seems to contradict this judgment at first glance but should not be taken literally, nor should it be confused with the method of memorizing entire texts. Not only does it contradict the claims of the philosopher's autobiography, however stylized and programmatic this may be, learning the basics of a mathematical domain by heart, in particular in the early stages of education, as described in the autobiography, makes sense and differs from memorizing an entire text. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt* ii, 157.

[7] Sabit ibn Korra, *Mathematical treatises* 54, 331, fn 1. The addressee of this text was probably not al-Qāsim b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Sulaymān b. Wahb, as suggested by Rozenfeld, since al-Qāsim became vizier only in 288/901, the year of his father's, and predecessor in office's, death, and Thābit's as well.

[8] Sabit ibn Korra, *Mathematical treatises* 54–55.

[9] Ibid., 55.

Enabling students to be creative and productive mathematicians was also the goal of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Sijzī in the fourth/tenth century. He wrote the *Kitāb fī tashīl al-subul li-stikhrāj al-masāʾil al-handasiyya* (*Book on making easy the ways of deriving geometrical problems*), which introduces students to different methods for solving known problems, as well as finding new knowledge. Apparently similar to many other geometry experts in the ninth and tenth centuries, al-Sijzī opines that

> [i]t is necessary for someone who wants to learn this art to thoroughly master the theorems which Euclid presented in his *Elements*. For between mastering the thing and the thing itself there is a very deep gap. It is necessary that he has a very thorough idea of their genera and their special properties, so if he needs to look for their properties he is well-prepared to find them. If he has to do any research, then it is necessary for him to study and visualize in his imagination the preliminaries and the theorems that are of that genus, or that have (something) in common with it.[14]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 55–56.

[14] Al-Sijzī, *Treatise* 2–3.

Then the author discusses the meaning of preliminaries, special properties, and other concepts, and names the methods that a student needs to learn in order to become a successful mathematician. Finally, al-Sizjī turns to specific examples in order to help the reader of his instruction manual to truly understand the manual's essence.

> Since we have presented and mentioned these things in a loose manner, let us now bring for each of them examples, so that the researcher learns their true natures. For one can speak about this art in two different ways: first, abstractly, in a deceiving and illusory manner; and secondly in a profound way, with clear explanations and the presentation of examples, so that it is perceived and understood completely.[15]

1.1 *The Intermediary Centuries*

There is almost no known data concerning teaching any of the mathematical sciences from the eleventh to the early thirteenth centuries, except for the fact that they obviously were taught since advanced level mathematical, as well as elementary, texts continued to be written in that period. Moreover, probably beginning in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, a few scholars in al-Shām, the Jazira, and western Iran with strong mathematical interests engaged, to various degrees, in editing, rewriting, and recompiling a number of mathematical and astronomical texts, which the student had to read and understand if he wished to study Ptolemy's *Almagest*. These collections of texts are commonly known as *al-Kutub al-mutawassiṭāt* (*The middle books*). These activities apparently were related to teaching and may reflect the entrance of the mathematical sciences into the realm of the *madrasa*. Such an interpretation is strengthened by the fact that similar efforts to compile teaching material can be seen in this period in the philosophical sciences, written partly by the same authors who produced editions of the mathematical and astronomical works of ancient authors. Although, because of a lack of research, it is not really clear when, where, why, and how *madrasa* teachers began to expand their teaching activities to mathematical and astronomical subjects and treatises, the transformation of these sciences into acknowledged components of urban education was achieved, at the very latest, in the late thirteenth century in Syria and Egypt, and perhaps in the fourteenth century in other regions. In the following sections, I will discuss major features of the way in which al-Bīrūnī's education unfolded and its consequences for the status and vivacity of these sciences.

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[15] Ibid., 6.

1.2 *The Teaching of Mathematical and Astronomical Knowledge at* **madrasas**

A number of questions need to be raised and studied in order to understand the basic facts and conditions of teaching mathematical and astronomical knowledge at *madrasa*s and similar institutions. The first issue naturally concerns the dating of the process. When did the inclusion of such texts into classroom work at a *madrasa* begin, and where? Who were the first teachers and students, and why did they decide to undertake such activities? When and where did the first centers for teaching any of the mathematical sciences emerge? Was the integration of these sciences into the regular curriculum a process of diffusion or a process of multiple beginnings? What types of networks were created between teachers, students, patrons, and bureaucrats? How did certain treatises become canonical across large regions, while others acquired a more limited regional relevance? What was taught—a discipline, a set of skills, a number of texts, or social connectivity? How was mathematical and astronomical knowledge taught and learned? From which social groups did students and teachers of mathematical and astronomical knowledge come? What did such students do with the acquired knowledge later in their lives? What type of reputation did mathematical and astronomical knowledge bring to its practitioners? Where was the place of astrology in such teaching? What ties connected classes on mathematical and astronomical knowledge with the dominant objects of *madrasa* teaching (i.e., *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-dīn*, *kalām*, and languages)? How were changes of subjects, methods, and literature achieved in such contexts?

It is clear that I cannot touch upon all of these questions in my paper, let alone try to offer answers to them, even if only preliminary ones. But I will discuss the kind of information known to me, so far as that allows me to formulate these questions and sketch possible answers or directions for later research.

It has been known for a long time that several mathematical texts were copied during the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries at *madrasa*s. For instance, one of the three extant copies of the ninth-century translation of Theodosius's *Spherics*, ascribed to an anonymous translator and Thābit b. Qurra as editor, was copied as early as 553/1158 in the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* at Mosul.[16] On 13 Jumāda 612/9 September 1215, a great-great-great-grandson of the Seljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (408–485/1018–1092) copied, at the first and most famous and influential *madrasa* founded by his ancestor in Baghdad, a collection of mathematical texts by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Sijzī (d. after 388/998) and Ibn al-Haytham (d. 440/1048). At the same *madrasa*, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) introductory textbook on *ʿilm al-hayʾa* was copied in 683/1283.[17] From 681/1282 to 684/1285, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 711/1311) dictated his *Nihāyat al-idrāk* twice, and his teacher's, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's, *Taḥrīr* of Ptolemy's *Almagest* once, to students at the Gök *madrasa* in Sivas. Only a few decades later, Shīrāzī's and al-Ṭūsī's astronomical works were taught at *madrasa*s in Sivas (Dār al-Shifāʾ) and Konya (Sahib Atā Medresesi).[18]

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[16] These are the only three copies of the ninth-century translation into Arabic that are extant. Other extant copies from Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's edition were made in the thirteenth century. Theodosius, *Sphaerica* 5.

These notes found in colophons suggest that the process of integration began around the middle of the sixth/twelfth century, somewhere between Baghdad and eastern Anatolia, maybe indeed in the Jazira itself. It gained acceptance in the course of the seventh/thirteenth century in precisely this region, partly as a result of scholarly mobility, as in the case of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, partly as a result of new groups establishing themselves as rulers and copying important elements of the dynastic policies, including the domain of culture, of their predecessors. Such was the case for the Ayyubids in Syria and Egypt—who emulated Zangid practices but in some sense also their predecessors, the Fatimids—or for the Timurids in Central Asia and Iran, who stylized themselves as Chinghizids. The Ayyubids patronized scholars, in particular physicians, from the courts of the two previous dynasties and engaged in a very active policy of patronage for a broad range of scholars (including those of the philosophical and mathematical sciences), and of financing *madrasa*s.[19] *Mudarrisūn* like Ibn Fallūs (d. 637/1239) taught at *madrasa*s in Damascus and Cairo, in addition to writing brief introductions to or surveys on *fiqh*, medical, algebraic, arithmetic, and geometry texts for their peers or students.[20] In particular, the case of this Hanafi judge and *madrasa* teacher, with close ties to the Ayyubid princes, demonstrates that teaching the mathematical sciences in the *madrasa*s of central Ayyubid strongholds was not frowned upon during the second and third decades of the thirteenth century. His conflicts with the princes arose not from his interest in or teaching of those sciences but from his refusal to give them a *fatwa* permitting the consumption of date wine.[21] Hence, we can assume that teaching mathematical knowledge at *madrasa*s was an acceptable activity for a *mudarris* in the Ayyubid territories from at least the first third of the thirteenth century. Outside the Ayyubid territories, Kamāl al-

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[17] Ragep, *al-Ṭūsī's memoir* i, 77.

[18] İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, lxxviii.

[19] Brentjes, Ayyubid princes 342–344.

[20] Brentjes, *Zahlentheoretische Werk* i, 58–59.

[21] Brentjes, Reflections 25; al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris* i, 540.

Dīn b. Yūnus (d. 639/1242) taught at a Shafiʿi *madrasa* in Mosul on a broad range of subjects, including mathematics and other ancient sciences. He is the first *mudarris* mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa performing such activities affiliated to a *madrasa*.[22]

Another way to approach the unexplored territory of the origins and genesis of the integration of mathematical knowledge in the teaching activities of *mudarrisūn* is to study colophons, *ijāza*s, and other notes in manuscripts. While a systematic investigation of this kind is a project for the future, some examples are well known. Shafiʿi *madrasa*s, like the Niẓāmiyya in Mosul, apparently were among the first in the Seljuq realm to have classes on mathematical topics taught around the middle of the sixth/twelfth century. Those in Baghdad followed suit during the thirteenth century. *Madrasa*s in eastern Anatolia saw classes of this kind as a result of scholars migrating from the Ilkhanid courts. The spread of mathematical education to *madrasa*s of other *madhhab*s took place in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In Ayyubid Damascus, Hanafi *madrasa*s, like those of Ibn Fallūs, were the first to open their gates to the dissemination of mathematical knowledge. In other Ayyubid cities, Shafiʿi *madrasa*s dominated the landscape. Thus, it is more than likely that they were the main loci for teaching mathematical knowledge. However, the available sources, like the biographical dictionaries of Ibn al-Qifṭī or Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, do not provide sufficiently unequivocal information in this regard. One has to turn to Mamluk sources to obtain a clearer picture. It is even more difficult if one wishes to survey the spread of mathematical classes beyond Egypt and Syria.

Colophons only occasionally name a *madrasa* and even less so its *madhhab*. The same applies to specialized biographical dictionaries, like those of Ibn al-Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa. Ibn al-Qifṭī presents only one case where the context suggests that he participated in sessions teaching a scholar's writings on the philosophical sciences at a *madrasa* in Cairo. The professor was Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. ca. 631/1233), who had arrived in town in 592/1195, and had settled in the ʿIzziyya *madrasa*. Ibn al-Qifṭī says nothing about the affiliation of this *madrasa*, while he previously informed his readers about al-Āmidī's shift in legal affiliation from the Hanbalis to the Shafiʿis. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa took a similar approach to this matter. In the three cases where he proclaims that some scholar taught at a *madrasa* and also taught various philosophical sciences, including natural philosophy, he does not directly specify the scholar's *madhhab*. His readers would nonetheless have understood, in broad terms, the legal affiliations of the teacher, either due to the scholar's reputation or due to the name of the *madrasa* given in two cases—the ʿĀdiliyya and the ʿAdhrāwiyya.

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[22] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 272.

1.3 *Institutions*

As these references to Ibn Fallūs and Kamāl al-Dīn b. Yūnus indicate, mathematical sciences were part of *madrasa* teaching, at least in some instances, at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the Jazira, Syria, and Egypt. It is, however, largely unknown when this process of integration, which was to dominate most of the postclassical period, began in other regions. Biographical dictionaries and historical chronicles before 600/1204 usually say very little about the sciences beyond the religious, and occasionally the philological, disciplines. An example of this is Abū Isḥaq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Azhar al-Ṣarīfīnī's (d. 641/1243) epitome of Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Ghāfir b. Ismaʿīl al-Fārisī's (d. 529/1134) *Tārīkh Nīsābūr*. The first part, covering the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries, contains 1,278 biographical entries. In these entries, 22 *madrasa*s, specified by name, are mentioned. In addition, the general term *madrasa* appears another five times. A library is referred to once, and 53 other buildings are mentioned (*masjid*s, *mashhad*s, *khānaqāh*s, etc.), where teaching of religious and philological knowledge took place. In none of these localities is the teaching of mathematical, medical, or philosophical knowledge mentioned. We know, however, from other sources, such as Ẓāhir al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, that the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* of Nishapur, for instance, held philosophical texts by Ibn Sīnā and that there were circles teaching his philosophy.[23] Thus, the silence of the two Iranian historians about possible teaching activities in the *madrasa*s of Nishapur or Marv and similar institutions, in regards to the mathematical sciences, does not necessarily signify that no such teaching occurred. Its relative insignificance as a cultural phenomenon until the end of the eleventh century, at least for these two cities, is emphasized by the very low number of occupations and intellectual interests in the nearly 1,300 biographies that fall under the mathematical sciences. Only one *ḥāsib*, one *al-falakī*, one *al-shaṭranjī*, and four *al-farāʾiḍī*s are mentioned. For none of them is any explanation given concerning their own education in the mathematical sciences, or their later teaching or other relevant activities in them.[24] Two scholars with mathematical interests or writings appear without any reference other than to their names. While a slightly more extensive description is given in their case, teaching activities are not touched upon. The first of them is ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī (d. 514/1120), who is praised as *baḥr al-ʿulūm* (the ocean of the sciences, or, in a less modernizing terminology, the areas of knowledge).[25] He is said to have profited from Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) in regard to some problems of calculation in *farāʾiḍ, dawr*, and *waṣāyā* (i.e., in the determination of inheritance shares, legates, and testaments).[26] Before coming to this point, the text reports that al-Qushayrī extended (*imtadda ilā*) al-Juwaynī's *majlis* and persevered in al-Juwaynī's tutelage and companionship night and day.[27] While it is of course not said explicitly, this general context suggests that this scholar acquired his mathematical knowledge also during these acts of study and companionship. The second scholar whose biographical entry contains a reference to mathematical knowledge is the leading Ashʿari *mutakallim* Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), who is well known as the author of two mathematical treatises, one on the disciplines of arithmetic (calculation methods in various systems, algebra, number theory), the other on elementary geometry. In particular, his treatise *al-Takmila fī l-ḥisāb* demonstrates his respectable intimacy with mathematical themes, their problems, and the methods of his time. In his entry, al-Baghdādī is said to have taught, in Nishapur, 13 areas of knowledge, without specifying them, and to have held a *majlis* of dictation in the ʿAqīl mosque where he lived.[28] There is a chance that he also taught or dictated his two mathematical works among his 13 disciplines. All that is said about him in this regard, however, is merely that he was excellent in arithmetic.[29] The situation is not much different for the physicians and oculists who have entries in the *Intikhāb*. In only one out of the seven biographies for members of the medical professions does al-Ṣarīfīnī say anything at all about the physician's teachers. Abū Faḍl Masʿūd b. Saʿīd al-Nīlī (died fifth/eleventh century) came from a "family of *ʿilm, ḥikma* (philosophy?), medicine, and virtue" and "read medicine with his father and Abū l-Qāsim b. Abī Ṣādiq and others beside the two and wrote about his father's (books)."[30] Hence, in this approach to biographical writing it is not merely the mathematical sciences that are underrepresented; medicine, while clearly more appreciated by the two authors, also held a minority position and was mentioned only insofar as its practitioners also studied *ḥadīth*, or at least some of the other religious disciplines. Moreover, the biographical entries in general indicate that teaching, as such, and its elements did not receive much specific attention.

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[23] Al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh ḥukamāʾ al-Islām* 117, 119, 124.

[24] Al-Ṣarīfīnī, *Muntakhab* 281, 380, 455, 496, 570, 609, 663, 703.

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[25] Ibid., 498–499.

[26] Ibid., 498.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 545.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 664.

The situation seems to change significantly only in the course of the following two centuries (the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth). Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), for instance, integrated all major, and a good number of minor scholars into his biographical dictionary *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, who are still known today, and who were productively engaged in the mathematical sciences, medicine, and philosophy. In this work, compiled sometime between 654/1256 and 673/1274, these groups of scholars are prominently visible. They appear as fully respectable members of the scholarly world in different Islamicate societies between the second/eighth and the seventh/thirteenth centuries. They are praised, lauded, and criticized. Their teaching activities, however, are of secondary consideration compared to their writings and their affiliations to important patrons. This is particularly true for scholars who lived before the seventh/thirteenth century. For his own time, Ibn Khallikān reports, often in bits and pieces, about teaching. In Abū l-Wafāʾ's (d. 387/998) entry, for instance, we read:

> Our Shaykh, the most eminent scholar Kamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Fatḥ Mūsā b. Yūnus, may God protect him with His Grace, (who) is accomplished in this field (i.e., geometry), went to great length in describing his books. He relied on them in many of his studies. He needed what he had said. He owned a number of his works. From him (i.e., Abū l-Wafāʾ) there is a very useful book on the determination of chords.[31]

In Kamāl al-Dīn's entry, Ibn Khallikān describes teaching situations, often in quite general terms, but he also occasionally includes some particularities. Classes on geometry, astronomy, or the theory of music appear here too. The general remarks, that a former *masjid* was called al-Madrasa al-Kamāliyya because Kamāl al-Dīn had stayed there for such a long time, that the *fuqahāʾ* swarmed around him once they discovered his virtue, and that he was singular in the mathematical sciences, are all strung together, one after the other, with further statements of excellence, in one sentence.[32] This can be taken as an indication that the mathematical sciences were indeed part and parcel of Kamāl al-Dīn's activities in the *madrasa*, not only when he wrote his own treatises but also when he was in the classroom. This assumption is supported by later statements about Kamāl al-Dīn's students. Among his students were Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1265), who read Ptolemy's *Almagest* with him and worked as his repetitor in the Badriyya *madrasa*; ʿĀlam al-Dīn al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), who, in addition to the *Almagest*, also studied Euclid's *Elements* and music with Kamāl al-Dīn; and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and Theodore of Antioch (d. 580/1185), who, in addition to the mathematical sciences, studied philosophical works with Kamāl al-Dīn.[33] Most of these students of Kamāl al-Dīn were not from his hometown, Mosul, but came from more distant cities, or set up their traveling route intentionally to cross his path.

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[31] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt* v, 167.

[32] Ibid. 312.

More prominent, and more clearly related to studies and teaching, in addition to composing texts, are entries in Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ*. Designed not as a survey on deceased eminent men throughout history but as a depiction of the author's own time, network, and preferences, most of its entries give a good summary of the fields of knowledge each scholar, administrator, or "state" official had studied in his childhood, youth, and adulthood, whether he became a teacher himself, and which books or themes he taught, whether he had contributed to the reservoir of studying material by writing commentaries and other kinds of treatises, and which social relations he had established during his lifetime. Since the biographies of all men and women in this dictionary are constructed, in principle, according to the same scheme (except for those that are too short to follow it through), teaching and studying the mathematical sciences appear clearly as an integral part of the scholarly world of the *mudarrisūn*. In contrast to the classical period, when the majority of scholars known for their mathematical heritage worked at courts as astrologers, physicians, philosophers, administrators, or historians, or in other, more general, courtly functions, in fifteenth-century Mamluk Egypt, Syria, and the Hejaz most such scholars were affiliated to institutions of piety and teaching. Typical examples of this integration are the biographies of scholars whose names contained the term *muwaqqit*, who often were affiliated in such a position with a mosque or a *madrasa*, although it was not their main source of income, or their highest-ranking position, and who taught, among other things, *ʿilm al-mīqāt*. One of the most productive and famous *muwaqqitūn* in Cairo was Ibn al-Majdī (d. 850/1447). In addition to the Quran, *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, Arabic, and grammar, he studied

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[33] Ibid., 313–314; Kedar and Kohlberg, Intercultural career 166, 175.

> arithmetic and inheritance calculations with al-Shams al-ʿIrāqī and al-Taqī b. ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī … and *ʿilm al-mīqāt* with al-Jamāl al-Māridānī … He became the head of the people in the fields of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy (*al-hayʾa*), inheritance calculations, and the science of the time (*ʿilm al-waqt*) without intent … The leading men in town (*aʿyān*) of all *madhhab*s, one rank after the other, learned from him.[34]

Several of al-Sakhāwī's own teachers took classes with Ibn al-Majdī, among them a later *muwaqqit*, al-Badr al-Māridānī, as well as al-Sakhāwī himself.[35] Then follows a long list of texts authored by Ibn al-Majdī, which allows some glimpses into what the preferred classroom texts were in the second half of the eighth and the first half of the ninth/second half of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries. The best appreciated texts, according to this and other lists in al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary, were Ibn al-Bannāʾ's (d. 721/1321) *Talkhīṣ fī ʿilm al-ḥisāb* and works such as *al-Risāla al-kubrā* by Ibn al-Majdī's teacher al-Jamāl al-Māridānī. Several of his own texts became canonical teaching texts and where read and commented on in Cairo and other cities until the nineteenth century.[36] In addition to these specialized treatises, Ibn al-Majdī also wrote books on *ḥadīth* and *fatwa*s, which al-Sakhāwī explicitly appreciated.[37] Indeed, Ibn al-Majdī was primarily a *mudarris* and taught *fiqh*. In addition to this, he gave many classes on the various mathematical and astronomical topics that were relevant to *ʿilm al-mīqāt* and to the understanding of astronomical handbooks. In these classes, he taught most of those who later became either *muwaqqitūn* or teachers of the mathematical sciences.[38] The overwhelming majority of these students came either from Cairo itself or cities in the Mamluk realm, a significant change in comparison to Kamāl al-Dīn. A further change from Kamāl al-Dīn to Ibn al-Majdī consisted in the sources, and some of the methods, used in the classroom. The texts mentioned the most frequently in Ibn Khallikān's biography of Kamāl al-Dīn are Euclid's *Elements* and Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and the most often mentioned method was problem solving or the discussion of problems/difficulties. Ibn al-Majdī also taught Euclid's *Elements*, but more often his own works, those of his teacher and other *muwaqqitūn*, as well as Ibn al-Bannāʾ's *Talkhīṣ*. Problems that were solved referred primarily to *zīj* works (i.e., astronomical handbooks), in particular, those referring to the Sun and the Moon. Other teaching methods beyond the reading, listening, and memorizing (fully or in part) of texts are not mentioned.

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[34] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ* i, 300.

[35] Ibid., 300–301.

[36] Charette, Ibn al-Majdī 562.

[37] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ* i, 301.

[38] Charette, Ibn al-Majdī 561.

The complexity and completeness of information about the activities of a *mudarris-muwaqqit* in the mathematical sciences illustrate the far-reaching changes that took place between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries in regard to teaching mathematical knowledge. While there was no such information in the *History of Nishapur*, in al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary many biographical entries include them. The best teachers, like Ibn al-Majdī, are highly esteemed, as his invitation to the Mamluk sultan, the glowing terms of al-Sakhāwī's description of his life, and the number of prominent scholars outside the mathematical sciences in his classes on arithmetic and related themes indicate. Teaching mathematics was no longer limited to the one exceptional teacher. It had become an accepted element of teaching in general. This change in the quantity, depth, and tonality of the information provided about teaching mathematical knowledge in Cairo, Mecca, or Damascus under the Mamluks speaks loudly in favor of such an interpretation of al-Sakhāwī's biographical narrative.

Parallel to teaching mathematical knowledge in *madrasa*s or having it taught by *mudarrisūn*, other religious institutions were headed by men who gained a reputation for their interests or achievements in these disciplines. Ibn al-Athīr (d. 631/1233), for instance, reports that in the year 453/1061 ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Shimshāṭī died in Damascus, and he was famous for his knowledge in geometry and mathematics in general as well as philosophy. This person was also known for his connection with the *ribāṭ* at the city's Friday mosque (i.e., the Umayyad mosque).[39] In fourteenth-century Damascus, the mathematical sciences were also studied at houses specifically dedicated to the study of *ḥadith* and at the Umayyad mosque itself. The Umayyad mosque was a place that offered, in addition to inheritance mathematics and more generally arithmetic classes, also ones on *ʿilm al-mīqāt*.

A subordinate institution, relevant for its potential for holding classes on mathematical knowledge, was the library. Again, the biographers of the philosophical, medical, and mathematical sciences do not provide us with many details about who gave the money for buying books and who decided which ones to buy. Usually it is assumed that *madrasa* or mosque libraries arose from the donations of former professors or students or, in particular cases, from a broad range of courtly, scholarly, and other donors. This was, however, not the only form in which such libraries were built. Ibn al-Qifṭī, for instance, reports on the apparently systematic efforts of one ʿAbbasid caliph to regularly furnish two of Baghdad's educational institutions, the Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* and the Seljuq Khatūnī *ribāṭ*, with books donated from the palatial libraries. For this purpose, al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (r. 575/1180–621/1225) appointed Abū Rashīd Mubashshir b. Aḥmad al-Rāzī al-Baghdādī (d. 589/1193) a scholar in his trust. This scholar was particularly famous for his knowledge of the mathematical sciences (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, *hay'a*, and commercial and/or legal problems) and thus had received the epithet *al-ḥāsib* (the calculator). Ibn al-Qifṭī specifies that he taught and that people accepted his teachings, thereby learning from him.[40] Although, as is often the case, the biographer does not present us with any specific details about the chosen books or the subject matter of Abū Rashīd's classes, Ibn al-Qifṭī's focus on the scholar's knowledge of and fame in the mathematical sciences suggests that at least some of the books and his classes belonged to these fields of knowledge.

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[39] Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* viii, 356.

1.4 *Textbooks*

A problem that has often irritated historians, and has led them astray in their evaluation of the intellectual trends in postclassical Islamicate societies, is the existence of a huge number of elementary texts in all disciplines. This phenomenon has been qualified by the terms "decline" or "decadence," which do not capture the nature of the production of many thousands of introductions in or surveys of the very basics of a given field of knowledge. It is easy to recognize the inappropriateness of such a judgment when one studies these texts from the angle of a history of teaching. By far, most of them were either produced by *madrasa* teachers or their students. The rest reflect efforts by autodidacts or by highly qualified scholars who wanted to "modernize" century-old, highly appreciated texts that were considered obligatory reading material for all serious students of astronomy and astrology, or to compose preparatory treatises for beginners. Many such elementary texts were of a local or even personal relevance, but some of them became successful standard classroom material for a larger region and a longer period of time.

Prime examples of textbooks that were taught in many cities and schools in Egypt, Syria, Anatolia, Iran, Central Asia, and India are Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) re-editions of mathematical and astronomical works by Aristarchus, Autolycus, Euclid, Archimedes, Theodosius, Hypsicles, and Ptolemy, plus Arabic texts by the Banū Mūsā (third/ninth century) and Thābit b.

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[40] Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Tārīkh* 113.

Qurra, produced in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Al-Ṭūsī's *taḥrīr* of Euclid's *Elements* and *The middle books* entered the realm of *madrasa* teaching in the postclassical period, replacing the older versions. The variations in the composition of the latter point to local and personal differences of teaching and learning. A second author, who had pursued the same kind of project in the thirteenth century, albeit of a smaller scope, was Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Abī l-Shukr al-Maghribī (d. 682/1283). He wrote a *taḥrīr* of Euclid's *Elements*, an *iṣlāḥ* of Menelaus's work on spherical geometry, and a *tahdhīb* of Apollonius's *Conics*, as well as of Theodosius's *Spherics*.[41]

A somewhat different project was the production of epitomes of works by leading Islamic scholars across almost all the major fields of knowledge, from philosophy and *uṣūl al-dīn* to the mathematical sciences and medicine. A main representative of this approach in the seventh/thirteenth century was Najm al-Dīn Ibn al-Lubūdī (d. ca. 664/1265). He wrote such epitomes in the four mentioned domains of books by Ibn Sīnā, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Euclid, and an anonymous author on the two *aṣl*.[42] That al-Lubūdī's view on teaching material in the mathematical sciences was, however, not profoundly different from that of al-Ṭūsī and Ibn Abī l-Shukr is indicated by a further book of his, *Ghāyat al-ghāyāt fī l-muḥtāj ilayhi min Ūqlīdis wa-l-mutawassiṭāt*.[43] Unfortunately, none of Ibn al-Lubūdī's mathematical works are extant. Hence, it is impossible to see whether the differences in literary genres also reflect differences in teaching methods and goals.

The most successful writers of mathematical and astronomical texts among *madrasa* teachers were Ibn al-Bannāʾ, Ibn al-Hāʿim (d. 815/1412), Qāḍīzādeh al-Rūmī (d. 832/1429), Ibn al-Majdī (d. 851/1447), ʿAlī Qushjī (d. 879/1474), Sibṭ al-Māridānī (d. ca. 900/1495), Niẓām al-Dīn al-Birjandī (d. ca. 931/1525), and Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1031/1622). The following tentative list of locations where their works were possibly taught is taken from catalogues and biobibliographical surveys and has not been verified, except for a few cases, on the basis of the manuscripts themselves.

While Table 26.1 includes all the localities named in manuscripts, not all of these references also state explicitly that the texts were produced at a *madrasa*. This feature of incomplete information has caused disputes about the locus of teaching and the relevance of the different loci, in particular, when the class took place in the teacher's house. But, as Chamberlain and Leder have shown, the fluidity of the physical space where classes took place was not specific to the mathematical, philosophical, or medical disciplines; it also applied to the religious and philological fields of knowledge. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence that a substantial number of mathematical and astronomical texts were produced at *madrasa*s, which means that they were taught there. In addition to the examples of early productions of such texts at *madrasa*s in Baghdad and Sivas, later examples exist for Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, Erzerum, Bursa, Tokat, Amid, and Van.[44]

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[41] Matvievskaya and Rozenfel'd, *Mathematicians* ii, 418.

[42] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* i, 438.

[43] Matvievskaya and Rozenfel'd, *Mathematicians* ii, 390.

Beyond those *madrasa*s, some teachers' textbooks spread across several Islamicate societies, while others gained regional prominence. A good survey of teachers who had a lasting impact in the Maghreb, and in several cases also in al-Andalus, as well as sub-Saharan Africa, can be found in Djebbar and Moyon's book.[45]

In addition to edited ancient texts and treatises written by *madrasa* teachers, a few books by scholars that are not known to have had a *madrasa* affiliation became standard literature in many cities and regions like Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Chaghmīnī's (seventh/thirteenth century) *Mulakhkhaṣ fī ʿilm al-hayʾa* and Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī's (d. ca. 702/1303) *Ashkāl al-taʾsīs*.[46] A fascinating bit of information tied to a copy of Chaghmīnī's *Mulakhkhaṣ* is that it was written in Kashgar in Shawwal 920/November–December 1514 and that the scribe ʿUmar b. Aḥmad characterized himself as *al-muwaqqit*.[47] As is well known, the emergence of a specialization within the mathematical sciences for the determination of prayer times, prayer directions, and the beginning of a new month (*ʿilm al-mīqāt*) at the end of the seventh/thirteenth century in Mamluk Egypt led to an upsurge of interest in spherical astronomy and the construction of instruments.[48] As a result, this subfield of the mathematical sciences became firmly integrated into Mamluk *madrasa*s in Egypt and Syria. Teachers of this knowledge found a stable outlet for their textual and educational activities in the sphere of the *madrasa* as *mudarrisūn*. As I have argued elsewhere, this meant that they taught, as other *mudarrisūn* did, *fiqh*, at times

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[44] İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, lxxxiii, 8–24, 102–109; İhsanoğlu, *Mathematical literature* i, 9–12.

[45] Djebbar and Moyon, *Sciences* 107–133.

[46] Christie's, Sale 7595, Lot 125, http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=5421946 (last accessed: 28 March 2019).

[47] The cataloguer of this work was neither very familiar with this particular work nor with Arabic and historical dates. He falsely transliterated *al-muwaqqit* as *al-muwqat*, gave a wrong and repeatedly misspelled title to the work, and claimed that the thirteenth-century author had dedicated it to Ulugh Beg, who lived in the fifteenth century. Christie's, Sale 7595, Lot 125.

[48] King, *Muezzin* 285–346.

TABLE 26.1 Distribution of major textbooks

Author	North Africa al-Andalus	Egypt, Syria	Anatolia, Rumeli
Ibn al-Bannāʾ[49]	Granada, Fes Tlemcen …	Cairo Damascus	Istanbul
Ibn al- Hāʾim[50]	Fes	Alexandria, Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem	Istanbul, cities of the Balkans
Qāḍīzādeh al-Rūmī[51]	Tunis	Cairo, Alexandria	Erzerum, Konya, Manisa, Kastamonu, Amasya
ʿAlī Qushjī[52]		Cairo	Istanbul, Kütahya, Manisa, Amasya, Adana, Edirne
Sibṭ al-Māridānī[53]	Algiers, Rabat	Cairo, Alexandria, Tripoli, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Damascus	Istanbul, Sarajevo, Khaskoy, Edirne, Tokat, Yenişehr, Karahisar, Erzerum
Niẓām al-Dīn al-Birjandī[54]		Cairo	Istanbul, Adana, Manisa, Bursa, Tarsus, Van, Üsküdar, Erzerum, Kastamonu, Trabzon
Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī[55]		Aleppo, Jerusalem, Cairo	Istanbul, Sivas, Erzerum, Amasya, Ladik, Kaiseri, Edirne, Karahisar Mesudi, Kuşadası

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[49] Ibid., 443.

[50] Ibid., 472–474.

[51] Ibid., 487–489; İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, 8–21; İhsanoğlu, *Mathematical literature* i, 4–18.

[52] Matvievskaya and Rozenfel'd, *Mathematicians* ii, 504–506; İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, 31–38; İhsanoğlu, *Mathematical literature* i, 21–26.

[53] Matvievskaya and Rozenfel'd, *Mathematicians* ii, 514–522; İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, lxxx–lxxxv.

[54] Matvievskaya and Rozenfel'd, *Mathematicians* ii, 541–543; İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, 101–111.

[55] Matvievskaya and Rozenfel'd, *Mathematicians* ii, 579–584; İhsanoğlu, *Astronomy literature* i, lxxxii.

Iraq	Arabian Peninsula	Iran, Caucasus region	Central Asia	India
				?
Mosul, Baghdad	Mecca, Najaf			?
Baghdad		Hamadan, Shiraz	Samarqand	
Diyar Bakr		Qom, Tabriz, Hamadan, Ray, Rasht, Yazd	Samarqand	Lahore, Hyderabad, Calcutta, Peshawar, Herat
Baghdad, Mosul, Mardin	Medina	Baku, Makhatchkala	Tashkent	Hyderabad, Kabul, Patna, Rampur
Najaf, Baghdad, Mosul, Diyar Bakr, ʿAyntāb	Medina	Mashhad, Tiflis, Yazd, Kashan, Baku, Isfahan, Rasht, Makhatchkala, Tabriz, Shirvan, Qom	Tashkent	Patna, Calcutta, Rampur, Lahore, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Jaipur
Baghdad, Diyar Bakr, Najaf, Mosul		Baku, Erevan, Isfahan, Machatchkala, Tiflis, Mashhad, Tabriz, Yazd, Shamakhi	Samarqand, Tashkent Urgentch, Bukhara	Dacca, Lahore, Lucknow, Patna, Peshawar, Calcutta, Rampur, Hyderabad

TABLE 26.2

Qāḍīzādeh al-Rūmī	**Sibṭ al-Māridānī**	**Niẓām al-Dīn al-Birjandī**
Istanbul?, Madrasat Qāsim Pāshā, 1047 h	Tokat, Pervane Medresesi, 1094 h	Erzerum, al-Madrasa al-Yāqūtiyya, 1057 h; by Muḥammad b. Mullā Aḥmad b. Mullā Muḥammad in the service (*khidma*) of Muḥammad Efendi al-Vānī
Amid, Madrasa Masʿūdiyya, Jumāda II 1065 h + Dhū l-Ḥijja 1072 h	Yalvaçli, Ibrāhīm Efendi Medresesi, 1120 h	Amid, Madrasa Khusrawiyya, Muḥarram 1060 h
Erzerum, al-Madrasa al- Yākūtiyya, 1065 h	Yenişehr, Medresetü Dār-i Qurāʾī, 1143 h	Erzerum, al-Madrasa al- Yākūtiyya, 1063 h
Erzerum, Madrasa Khātūniyya, 1067 h + 1076 h		Istanbul, Madrasat Maḥmūd Pāshā, 17 Dhū l-Ḥijja 1070 h
Istanbul, Madrasa min al-Madāris al-Thamāniya, Ramaḍān 1067 h		?, Madrasat Pālū (?), fī tadrīs Abī Aḥmad Çelebi, 1072 h
Istanbul, Madrasat Fātiḥ Muḥammad, 1080 h		Bursa, Madrasat Yilderim, Jumāda 1090 h
Isfahan, Madrase-yi Navvāb, 1083 h		Van, al-Madrasa al-Iskandariyya, 1105 h
Istanbul, Aşık Paşa Mahallesi, 1084 h		Üsküdar, Madrasat Rūm Muḥammad al-Maqtūl Pāshā, vizier of Fātiḥ Sulṭān al-Ghāzī Muḥammad Khān, 26 Rabīʿ II 1126 h
Istanbul, Madrasat Shāhzāde, 1082 h		Erzerum, Pervizzāde Medresesi, 1134 h
Baghdad, Madrasat Shaykh Shams al-Dīn, 1094 h		
Tokat, Madrasa Ḥiṣāriyya, 1108 h		
Kastamonu, Ali Efendi Medresi, 1109		
Bursa, Madrasat Sulṭān Yilderim, 1115 h		
Istanbul, Bayrampaşa Zāviyesi, 1117 h		

also Arabic, plus a series of topics from the mathematical sciences, and again, at times, parts of philosophy.[56] In the Ottoman Empire the profession became formally recognized and subordinated under the *münajjim başı*. The boundaries of the eastern extension of the designation of a scholar as *muwaqqit* or *mīqātī*, and of corresponding specialized treatises on *ʿilm al-mīqāt*, or on instruments beyond the astrolabe, is known only as far as those of the Ottoman Empire and cities on the western Arabian Peninsula. There is, so far, no reason to assume that this kind of specialization also emerged in Iran, Central Asia, or India. On the contrary, the extant texts on how to determine prayer times and related issues from *madrasa*s in Iran, for instance, indicate that these tasks were taken care of either by *mudarrisūn* who did not specialize in spherical astronomy, but had a general training in the mathematical sciences, or by leading religious dignitaries who treated them preferably without recourse to mathematical knowledge or provided very simple rules.[57] Hence, if the colophon of the copy of al-Chaghmīnī's work that was made in Kashgar can be trusted, either its scribe had come from far away in the West or the specialization in spherical astronomy had reached the Chinese borderland without ever arriving in Iran, Central Asia, or India. It is clear that this is a challenge to our understanding of how knowledge travels and thus needs further investigation.

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[56] Brentjes, On *muwaqqit*s 132–135.

2 Conclusions

While the teaching methods seem to have remained quite stable between the third/ninth and the eleventh/seventeenth centuries, sources, institutions, and loci changed considerably. In the classical period, texts by ancient authors or the teachers themselves were privileged sources, and courts, as well as private houses, dominated as loci of teaching. In the postclassical period, ancient texts moved more and more into the background, in favor of treatises by more recent authors and texts by the teacher and the teacher's teacher. The teaching locations also became living spaces for teachers and students, and eventually, over time, also housed—in addition to the private homes of scholars—all kinds of institutions of piety and teaching. The first such institutions that made room for teaching mathematical and astronomical knowledge were Hanafi and Shafiʿi *madrasa*s. Maliki and Hanbali, as well as Shiʿi and Sufi, institutions followed suit. Courts, in contrast, kept their importance as places of patronage for professional activities in many dynasties, but they lost their previously prominent role as loci of teaching. The time when these shifts happened varied from region to region. The process of integrating education in mathematical and astronomical topics into the new institutions of piety and teaching seems to have begun during the sixth/twelfth century, gained strength and normalcy during the seventh/thirteenth century, and become an unspectacular occurrence during the eighth/fourteenth century, as far as Egypt, Syria, eastern Anatolia, and Iraq are concerned. In North Africa and al-Andalus it seems to have started a century later. This may also be true for Iran. However, so far not enough research has been undertaken on most questions related to the teaching of mathematical and astronomical knowledge in classical and postclassical Islamicate societies.

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[57] Brentjes, Mathematical sciences 345–347.

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PART 7

Politics of Knowledge and Muslim Identity

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CHAPTER 27

The Development of a Sufi Anti-curriculum: Politics of Knowledge and Authority in Classical Islamic Education

Sara Abdel-Latif

The relationship between political rule and religious authority provoked many power struggles in the Islamic dynasties of the Middle Ages, spawning a variety of distinct and often opposing movements. Whether an individual considered themselves a caliph, a scholar, or a mystic, at every level of society a person could claim superior knowledge and rank by tracing their bloodline, learning, or religious practice to Muhammad, the founder and Prophet of Islam. While the ʿAbbasid caliphs boasted an ancestral link to Muhammad, the *ʿulamāʾ* considered themselves the heirs to the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), and the Sufis claimed spiritual succession to Muhammad through the practice of disciplined, spiritual asceticism. This paper studies how these three claimants to religious authority understood their power as absolute and valued their knowledge as inherently superior to the rest. By analyzing a variety of claims to knowledge and authority, this paper illuminates the ways in which social opposition over what constitutes true prophetic inheritance created new modes of power and religiosity in medieval Islamic contexts.

The caliphs of the ʿAbbasid dynasty struggled to establish their preeminence over and above the learned class (*ʿulamāʾ*) in matters of theological and religious import due to the sway the *ʿulamāʾ* held over the lay population.[1] While the term *ʿālim* (pl. *ʿulamāʾ*) can refer to one who is learned in any discipline, and

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[1] Muhamad Qasim Zaman argues that the caliphs of the ʿAbbasid era had long since accepted the *ʿulamāʾ* as guardians of knowledge and religious legal edicts, with only al-Maʾmūn attempting to disrupt the status quo. I am inclined to disagree, given the proliferation of advice literature that attempted to revert religious authority to the caliphs (e.g., Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ *Kitāb al-Suḥba*). In my view, had there been an implicit acceptance of the *ʿulamāʾ*'s singular authority, the many treatises that attempted to shift these dynamics would not exist. See Zaman, Caliphs 3–5. In contrast, Ahmed argues that the *ʿulamāʾ* enjoyed a lowly status in society, based on analyses of texts that divide society into a hierarchy that places the ruler at the top. However, Ahmed's analysis misses the fact that the authors of these social categorizations were usually tied to the caliph in some way (either as a vizier or minister) and had a vested interest in championing the ruler over the scholars. Ahmed goes on to say that, despite what

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can even describe a generally erudite individual, Gilliot et al. note that the term *ʿulamāʾ* largely refers to a distinct, regulated, and structured body of scholars with popular, social, and political sway that is primarily distinguished by their knowledge of *ḥadīth* (prophetic traditions) and secondarily associated with the study and practice of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) as well as a number of other disciplines subsumed under *ʿulūm al-dīn* (the sciences of religion—often contrasted to *adab* or belles-lettres).[2] While the caliph possessed patrilineal power and political authority, the *ʿulamāʾ* possessed religious and social authority through their extensive study of subjects relevant to the realities of Muslim life. While some rulers cooperated with the members of the *ʿulamāʾ* and offered them titles and limited positions of power, other caliphs contested their authority, either overtly and aggressively or in more subtle ways.

The emblematic example of the caliph versus scholar struggle is the *miḥna* (the inquisition), when the caliph al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833) made a play for power in 212/827 by demanding that all scholars must uphold the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Quran. Nawas notes that, in al-Maʾmūn's *miḥna* order, the caliph described himself "as the heir of the prophethood,"[3] a clear indication of his self-perception as the ultimate figure of religious authority over and above the *ʿulamāʾ*, who had recourse to a prophetic tradition that read, "The scholars are the heirs of the prophets" (*inna al-ʿulamāʾ warathatu al-anbiyāʾ*).[4] The wording of al-Maʾmūn's *miḥna* order is an obvious parallel to this tradition.

The rise of popular ascetic movements around the time of the *miḥna* offered another claim to prophetic inheritance. Following what they considered to be prophetic practices of self-seclusion, material detachment, and nurturing unmediated relationships with God, the Sufis appropriated the prophetic heir tradition for themselves, claiming the true inheritors of prophetic knowledge were the mystics who could access a knowledge that is divinely-bestowed rather than learned.[5] For Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), one of the progenitors of institutionalized Sufism, the realized Sufi saint, having walked the spiritual path of ascent inaugurated by prophets, rightfully inherits

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he perceives to be the lowly status of the scholars, the *ʿulamāʾ* had great influence over laypeople. Ahmed, *Muslim education* 195–196.

[2] Gilliot et al., ʿUlamāʾ.

[3] Nawas, Reexamination 620.

[4] The tradition regarding the *ʿulamāʾ* as heirs of the prophets can be found in multiple, near-contemporary sources of *ḥadīth*, including Tirmidhī's (d. 279/892) *Jāmiʿ al-Saḥīḥ* and Abū Dāwūd's (d. 275/889) *Sunan*.

[5] See, e.g., al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 20. See also Franz Rosenthal's discussion of this concept of prophetic heritance in Sufism in *Knowledge triumphant* 38.

prophetic knowledge through embodying the prophetic spiritual journey. Al-Sulamī writes that the Sufis are the "*khulafāʾ*" (representatives) of the prophets and messengers, and that God sent these "*awliyāʾ*" (saints, "friends of God") as successors to the messengers and as examples of the prophetic way of life (*sunna*).[6]

In each of these three cases—the caliphs, the *ʿulamāʾ*, and the Sufis—knowledge, and by extension religious authority, was predicated on each party's conception of itself as part of the prophetic lineage, whether genealogically, pedagogically, or spiritually. By studying the debates about authority during and after the *miḥna*, we glean some important insights into how caliphal governance developed in response to the *ʿulamāʾ*'s claims to knowledge, how Sufi concepts of knowledge developed in response to the *ʿulamāʾ*'s claims to authority, and how the *ʿulamāʾ*'s style of learning developed in juxtaposition to Sufi claims to a more authentic religious edification. These dynamic exchanges influenced the trajectory of Islamic history in innumerable ways and provide a vivid example of how movements grow and develop in conjunction with each other and in response to sociopolitical realities.

1 Caliph vs. *ʿulamāʾ*: The Rise of Sunni Educational Curriculums and Clashes over Authority

While many scholars and theologians at the time submitted to al-Maʾmūn's test of allegiance, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's (d. 241/855) opposition to the createdness of the Quran doctrine has come to epitomize the struggle over religious authority, and for many represents the deliverance of the right to claim religious knowledge into the hands of the learned class (the *ʿulamāʾ*).[7] According to the analysis of Ira Lapidus and Patricia Crone, caliphal rule was divested of religious authority and only retained political power after the *miḥna*.[8] The destabilization of totalizing caliphal rule culminated in the reduction of the function of a caliph to a nominal role in the Buyid era of Islamic history (fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh centuries), the period associated with the rise of institutionalized Sufism. Caliphs succeeding al-Maʾmūn, including al-Muʿtasim (d. 227/842) and al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861), continued struggling to reappropriate religious knowledge and authority for themselves, with less and less effect.

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[6] Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 20–21.

[7] Zaman, Caliphs 2; cf. Makdisi, *Rise* 75, 80.

[8] Lapidus, Separation 363–385; Crone and Hinds, *God's caliph* 93–96.

The dramatic clashes between the ʿAbbasid caliphs and the *ʿulamāʾ* were fueled by an environment of political turmoil, with prominent groups such as the ʿAlids and other proto-Shiʿites, *dihqāns* (Persian landowners), the *kuttāb* (administrative secretaries), as well as military groups like the Khurasaniyya and their descendants, the *abnāʾ al-dawla*, struggling to fulfill their own claims to power or ally themselves with whatever group would best benefit their circumstances.[9] The conflict through which al-Maʾmūn gained full rule over Islamic lands, and which resulted in the assassination of his brother al-Amīn (d. 198/813), revealed how deeply entrenched and complex political alliances and allegiances had become by the third/ninth century.[10] Meanwhile, a long history of assassinating caliphs, beginning with the second caliph, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭab (d. 24/644), and ongoing clashes over what grants one true authority to rule, left every caliph in a precarious position and vulnerable to criticism, if not outright attack. Thus, it is not difficult to imagine why the ʿAbbasid caliphs felt such a strong urge to establish their authority by any means necessary, given the proliferation of groups with different ideas of what constitutes valid authority and the likelihood of these groups enforcing their views through aggressive means. In contrast to the process of designating the next caliph, the *ʿulamāʾ*'s victory created an environment where religious authority, and therefore the right to guide the affairs of laypeople, could not be elected by *shūra* (council), chosen by *naṣṣ* (divinely inspired designation), or inherited, but had to be earned through education (*taʿlīm*). Sebastian Günther writes, "[Quranically], [t]here is explicit emphasis on the idea that only those who have attained a certain level of education can properly understand the message of the Qurʾān, its teachings and warnings."[11] The centrality of education to claims of religious authority fueled the enterprise of *ʿulamāʾ* learning.[12]

In the mid-third/ninth century, around the time of the *miḥna*, the *ʿulamāʾ* had no real standardized system of learning whereby a person could earn their title as a *ʿālim* once they had reached a certain milestone or fulfilled certain requirements. At the time, education was an unstructured, private pursuit. An individual devoted to learning would sit in a circle (*majlis* or *ḥalqa*) headed by an already established *ʿālim*, and, at his own self-discretion, would begin his own circle of knowledge when he felt prepared and without any added qualifications.[13] Many individuals would travel to learn from authors of books of knowledge and would later recite these books to others on behalf of the author. The first evidence of the *ijāza* (certification) system, in the early fourth/tenth century, marked a new trend that ensured the longevity of traditions (and chains of transmission) and verbatim recitation of books and teachings, but this had yet to create any widespread system that rendered people qualified to become a scholar.[14]

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[9] Zaman analyzes the political and religious dynamics between these various groups in his article, Zaman, ʿAbbāsid revolution 119–149.

[10] Kennedy, *Prophet* 147.

[11] Günther, Education 2.

[12] Makdisi notes a preponderant belief that education provides the *ʿālim* with the (sometimes exclusive) dispensation to guide people in matters of religion. Makdisi, *Rise* 298.

With the lack of standardized *ʿālim* schooling, authors, including Ibn Saḥnūn (d. 240/854), al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868 or 869), and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), began composing treatises with their own views on the necessary components of a good education for an *ʿālim*. Studying central works on education from the second/eighth to ninth/fifteenth centuries reveals that a common thread of pedagogical subjects was slowly beginning to develop in the ʿAbbasid era, which consisted of similar core sciences.[15] The curriculum often began with reading and writing Arabic, as a means of accessing the Quran, and included any number of the following subjects: *tārīkh* (Islamic history), *tafsīr* (Quranic exegesis), *ḥadīth* (prophetic traditions), *shariʿa* (law, depending on which *madhhab* or school of jurisprudence one followed), *ʿaqīda* (creed), *naḥw* and *ṣarf* (grammar and morphology), and poetry (*shiʿr*).[16] In the late second/eighth century, the caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809) had outlined a syllabus of learning for his aforementioned son al-Amīn (d. 198/813) that included recitation of the Quran, history, poetry (and by extension rules of the Arabic language), *ḥadīth*, and

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[13] Shalabi, *History* 147.

[14] Ibid., 147–148.

[15] Makdisi also observed a pattern in the subjects recommended by authors of pedagogical treatises, adding that the differences in curricula were largely influenced by the individual choices made by the patrons of various educational institution's endowments (*waqf*), cf. Makdisi, *Rise* 80.

[16] For the sake of comparison, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's (the Brethren of Purity) recommended curriculum was reading and writing, language and grammar, history, poetry, *ḥadīth*, law, *tafsīr*, math, logic, and theology. Al-Qābisī (d. 356/967) recommends reading, writing, and grammar. Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) suggests in this regard *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence, speculative theology, philosophy, Arabic philology, and arithmetic. See Cook and Malkawi, *Classical foundations* 229. Al-Ghazālī recommends the following topics of study: law, grammar, Quranic recitation, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and history. See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* i, 33. For more examples of the curricula medieval Muslim authors recommended, see Günther, Principles of teaching and learning. See Ahmed, *Muslim education* 32–36, for one account of why some of these core subjects were taught and how they developed out of Quranic learning. Cf. Dodge, *Muslim education* 31–88; Cf. Makdisi, *Rise* 80. Makdisi provides an incredibly beneficial analysis of how the value of different subjects was weighed in terms of the fulfilment of one's obligations and the relationship between Islamic and "foreign" subjects of knowledge.

balāgha (rhetoric).[17] Thus, despite the lack of a formalized conception of a curriculum, many ʿAbbasid-era thinkers and leaders had begun formulating ideas of what constituted a good education worthy of a respectable and authoritative scholar and, in the case of Harūn al-Rashīd, an heir to the caliphal throne. These ideas were rooted not in a standardized curriculum but in the very concept that knowledge, and by extension authority, rested in the pursuit of acquiring learning and amassing expertise in a variety of learned subjects, the foundation of which were the Quran and the prophetic traditions—the subjects of study most concerned with the rights and rituals of Muslim life.[18]

Any analysis of these emerging subjects of knowledge makes it clear that the early development of Islamic education heavily, and almost exclusively, concerned itself with what was necessary for Muslims to perform their basic Islamic duties, such as prayer, fasting, and paying alms. Thus, in these early stages of Islamic developments in education, the pursuit of learning was motivated by a moral imperative to fulfill one's duties as a member of the Muslim faith, as opposed to merely learning for the sake of knowledge.[19] In studying developments in Islamic education, one notices just how much the moral imperative for learning shaped the evolution of the *ʿulamāʾ*; the *ʿulamāʾ* focused intently on what organically grew out of the moral imperative to learn one's Islamic duty, particularly concerning themselves with Quran and *ḥadīth* learning, eventually focusing almost exclusively on whatever might serve the knowledge and dispensing of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). All three of these subjects, Quran, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh*, directly relate to day-to-day Muslim issues of ritual and ethics.[20] The underlying belief was that acquiring knowledge aided in the attainment of virtues and ethics.

The emphasis on education in the *farāʾiḍ* (obligatory duties) began in children's elementary education in the *kuttāb* system,[21] and necessitated the foundation of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* sciences to determine the lawful performance of one's religious duties. The focus on *ḥadīth* allowed an elite group of scholars to establish, via their rigorous education, further religious authority by concentrating on evaluating chains of transmission (*isnād*s). With the increase of ʿAlid pressure, the Sunni legal tradition became consolidated through a system of learning founded by the Seljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), though the Niẓāmiyya colleges were by no means the first institutions of higher learning in Islam.[22] The Niẓāmiyya heralded the beginning of *waqf*-established institutions that focused exclusively on training *ʿulamāʾ* for the field of jurisprudence through scholarships.[23] The actual Niẓāmiyya curriculum remained somewhat in flux, and it remained the prerogative of the student to seek out a teacher from whom to learn and continue his studies.[24] Nevertheless, the Niẓāmiyya cemented the already dominant status of *ʿulamāʾ* as religious authorities through the institutionalization of acquired learning and the creation of a pool of candidates designated for state appointments and a variety of civil and religious offices. Makdisi writes, "Before Nizam's network of colleges, there was no organized way of harnessing this great potential of power which resided in the control of the masses through the learned men of the religious sciences."[25] Thus, the institutionalization of the education of the *ʿulamāʾ* normalized a model of authority based on acquiring learning in the religious sciences.[26]

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[17] Shalabi, *History* 25.

[18] Makdisi writes, "The tendency in Islam was to encourage a diversification of the sciences to be learned. A learned man should have some knowledge of every science, for every field of knowledge had its seekers." Makdisi, *Rise* 83. Regarding the focus on Islamic law in the learning institutions of the *ʿulamāʾ*, see Makdisi, Muslim institutions 16.

[19] Al-Attas, *Aims* 1; cf. Cook and Malkawi, *Classical foundations* 3.

[20] Makdisi, *Rise* 76.

[21] Shalabi, *History* 16–19.

The development of a model of authority, based on knowledge acquisition and learning, began before the founding of institutions like the Niẓāmiyya and was further cemented by the creation of *madrasa*s. While the early elementary education of the *kuttāb* was recommended for all Muslims in general,[27] the education of the *ʿulamāʾ* applied to a small minority—an elite group of learners who would undertake training to help distinguish sound *ḥadīth*s from forgeries and learn all the necessary skills to facilitate the correct forms of Muslim worship. Thus, while a basic education was a necessary aspect of one's identity as a practising Muslim, the knowledge of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, which established the tenets of one's Islamic obligations and ethical behavior, became the privilege of those with access to a higher level of specialized education.[28] In the development of the scholastic approach to authority, the Niẓāmiyya represents the culmination of centuries of *ʿulamāʾ*-centered learning and the solidification of principles of knowledge and authority that were rooted in education in the sciences of Quran, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh*.

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[22] Makdisi, Muslim institutions.

[23] Ibid., 50–53.

[24] Shalabi, *History* 56. See also Dodge, *Muslim education* 21.

[25] Makdisi, Muslim institutions 53.

[26] For a discussion of the relationship between acquired knowledge and social mobility in Muslim societies, see Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant* 322–323, and Sayeed, *Women* 4–5.

[27] Shalabi, *History* 22, 170–171.

[28] Al-Ghazālī provides a relevant discussion of his understanding of the kinds of knowledge the general public must pursue (*fard ʿayn*) and knowledge only the scholarly elite should pursue on behalf of everyone else (*fard kifāya*) in *Iḥyāʾ* i, 32ff.

The two most salient features of the *ʿulamāʾ*'s educational system that are relevant to our discussion of Sufi approaches to knowledge and authority are:

- Chains of transmission: The use of teacher-student genealogies that can be linked back to Muhammad in order to prove the authenticity, and thus the authority, of a person's statement.
- Acquired learning as a countermeasure to the caliphal authority that is earned through birthright.

In the process of gaining religious authority over the caliphs who opposed them, the *ʿulamāʾ* established that authority was not inherent in one's person and could not be claimed through one's ancestry, as an ʿAlid may claim for an Imami descendent of Muhammad or a caliph by virtue of his patrilineal right to rule. Rather, the authority of an *ʿālim* was acquired through learning. It was an authority gained through the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student.[29]

2 Al-Sulamī and the Sufis

In the rise and development of *ʿulamāʾ*-centered education, the formative Sufi movement of the fifth/eleventh century occupies a significant and counter-hegemonic role, particularly in the destruction and reformulation of conceptions of knowledge and authority. Sufi master Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) undermined the use of acquired learning as a marker of authority by simultaneously subverting and appropriating the traditionalist tools that granted the *ʿulamāʾ* their power. By appropriating chains of transmission, reformulating the moral imperative underlying Sunni education, and redefining the role of education in the establishment of authority, al-Sulamī brought the Sufis forward as the ultimate authorities in matters of religion. He undermined the *ʿulamāʾ*'s curriculum of knowledge in favor of a program rooted in spiritual ethics, while adopting pedagogical claims to knowledge and authority by means of chains of transmissions (*isnād*s) originally intended primarily for *ḥadīth* use but repurposed for Sufi theology and practice. Al-Sulamī's project de-monopolized knowledge by divesting the power to grant reigning authority to the *ʿulamāʾ* from institutions of acquired learning and placing it in the hands of those who had cultivated spiritual virtue rather than amassing subjects of learning. He consolidated the then amorphous Sufi movement into a valid path of knowledge and education for Muslims. Thus, by the time the Niẓāmiyya opened its doors in 459/1067, al-Sulamī's legacy had provided an alternate route to authoritative knowledge by virtue of his interactions with and departure from the curricula of *ʿulamāʾ* learning.

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[29] Makdisi, *Rise* 89. See also Franz Rosenthal's *Knowledge triumphant* for an extensive discussion of the role of acquired knowledge in various avenues of Muslim thought.

Al-Sulamī's biography provides insight into how he chose to resource and simultaneously dismantle the authoritative tools of the *ʿulamāʾ* in service of his Sufi project. Al-Sulamī was born into a mystically inclined family and inherited a *duwayra* (circle of learning) from his grandfather.[30] *Duwayra* culture allowed for the dissemination and preservation of knowledge through students who went on to teach in their own circles (similar to the *majālis* of the early *ʿulamāʾ*) and thus provided an early platform from which al-Sulamī could seek to redefine religious authority through his Sufi ideas. In fact, a surviving manuscript of al-Sarrāj's epistle on Sufism (*al-Lumaʿ*), incorrectly attributed to al-Sulamī, provides evidence that, in his role as teacher, al-Sulamī taught some of the earliest Sufi texts available to us.[31] Through his *duwayra*, al-Sulamī established a mode of authority based on a program of spiritual ethics, rather than a curriculum of subject-based learning.

Well-known for pioneering several genres of Sufi literature, including encyclopedic Sufi commentaries on the Quran (*tafsīr*), biographical encyclopedias of mystical and ascetic figures (*ṭabaqāt*), a volume of Sufi history (no longer extant), and a variety of ethical and polemical treatises, al-Sulamī represents a period of consolidation for the Sufi movement through the production of a written canon of Sufi knowledge and the founding of a mode of authority based around experiential knowledge (*ʿilm ladunī*) rather than acquired learning (*ʿulūm kasbiyya*).[32] This claim to experiential knowledge allowed Sufis to bypass the *ʿulamāʾ* as authorities by virtue of what they considered a genuine, divinely bestowed state of comprehension in contrast to the acquired learning characteristic of the *ʿulamāʾ*.

Al-Sulamī's production of written canons of Sufi knowledge, which solidified five generations of orally transmitted Sufi knowledge from proto-Sufi mystical and ascetic figures, allowed Sufi ideas and teachings to disseminate in a more standardized form. This cemented the influence of the five generations of proto-Sufis that al-Sulamī cited in his writings and consolidated their position as Sufi forebearers and religious authorities—setting the stage for Sufi successors to claim the same authority. Evidence of al-Sulamī's agency in the consolidation of these proto-Sufis is clear in the influence of his depiction of the figure of Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī. Dhū l-Nūn was a third/ninth-century Egyptian mystic best known for formulating concepts of the states and stations of the Sufi path.[33] While Dhū l-Nūn was a renowned mystic and teacher, and had gained great fame in his own community, particularly after his persecution under the caliph al-Mutawakkil's continuation of the *miḥna*, al-Sulamī utilized Dhū l-Nūn both as a *ḥadīth* scholar and Quranic exegete (*mufassir*). While Dhū l-Nūn had transmitted *ḥadīth* in his lifetime, he was by no means a great *muḥaddith*, and no records existed, prior to al-Sulamī, that Dhū l-Nūn had made any real attempt to explicate the meanings of the Quran. Yet, al-Sulamī's canonization of Dhū l-Nūn as one of the earliest and most important Sufis also allowed Dhū l-Nūn to live on as a master of both *ḥadīth* and Quran. Dhū l-Nūn's qualifications for such a reputation, like other Sufi authorities of al-Sulamī's writings, came not from specialized learning but through his personal efforts at spiritual development. While spiritual exertion may be considered a weak claim to Quranic authority in some circles,[34] al-Sulamī's approach to knowledge and education ensured the validation and continuance of a host of proto-Sufi mystics' teachings in a manner that allowed the Sufis access to a religious authority that even the *ʿulamāʾ* could not access without walking the Sufi path. This allowed for the establishment of Sufi figures as religious authorities over and above the Sunni *ʿulamāʾ*, and it contributed to the separation of the caliphal role from the realm of religious pronouncements. The Sufi program, and its emphasis on the genealogy of mystical teachers that al-Sulamī helped to found, could only succeed through two pillars, al-Sulamī's Quranic commentary *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*, and his biographical encyclopedia *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. Through these companion works, al-Sulamī established a canon of Sufi knowledge based on a traditional lineage, not unlike that of *ḥadīth* chains of transmission, that could garner the Sufis valid authority in a world shaped by the *ʿulamāʾ*. Having established these lineages, which positioned Sufis as rightful heirs to prophetic knowledge, al-Sulamī proceeded to dismantle the value of the education of the *ʿulamāʾ*, choosing to focus on the accumulation of spiritual virtues rather than religious sciences.

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[30] For more information regarding *duwayra* culture, see Shalabi, *History* 216–217.

[31] See al-Fāwī and al-Sulamī, *Taṣawwuf*. Also, Qureshi, *Book*.

[32] For a discussion of the construction of this binary epistemology in Sufi thought, see Sands, *Ṣūfī commentaries* 22–28, 82–88.

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[33] Massignon, *Essay* 142.

[34] For Asma Sayeed's analysis of Malik b. Anas's criticism of granting religious authority to spiritual ascetics despite their impressive spiritual accomplishments, see Sayeed, *Women* 96.

3 *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*: The Realities of Exegesis

Al-Sulamī's particular social and political context, fourth/tenth- and fifth/eleventh-century Khorasan, was a time of great shifts in Islamic knowledge and education. Shortly before the rise of the *madrasa* system of education through the founding of the Niẓāmiyya colleges in the mid-fifth/eleventh century,[35] the steady development of the *ʿulamāʾ*'s educational curriculum had rendered religious authority a matter of the right kind of learning. It is clear from al-Sulamī's introduction to his *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr* that the widespread mode of knowledge and dominant source of Quranic authority came from the sciences established by the *ʿulamāʾ*. Al-Sulamī writes:

> When those characterized by the exoteric sciences busied themselves, they composed [writings] on the variants of the Quran, of beneficial and problematic aspects, commands, declension, language, summaries, exegesis, the abrogating (verses) and the abrogated, and not one of them was preoccupied with understanding his speech on the basis of reality except with regards to a few disparate verses that are attributed to Abū l-ʿAbbās b. ʿAṭā and verses that are said to have come down from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, upon him be peace, that were not in sequence. I had heard on behalf of them (Ibn ʿAṭā and Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad) only a section of this which I had perfected, so I desired to bring together these parts with their sayings (*maqālāt*) and to bring together the sayings of the shaykhs who are the People of Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqīqa*) with these, and to organize them based upon the (Quranic) chapters, to the best of my capacity and capabilities. I consulted God's wisdom in all of this and sought his aide in all my affairs. God is my guardian; an excellent aide is he![36]

Here, al-Sulamī articulates his desire to gather together the sayings of the Sufis as a way to explicate the realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) of the Quran. He writes that those who mastered knowledge of the "exoteric sciences" had compiled works on various legalistic, lexicological, and grammatical aspects of the Quran. He thus felt compelled to do the same for what he considered the esoteric "realities" of the Quran. In his introduction, he suggests that the exoteric commentaries on the Quran, the domain of the *ʿulamāʾ*, though prolific, do not convey the true meanings housed in the Quran and only superficially attempt exegesis. Al-Sulamī goes on to say that he desired to gather together the reports of those God had distinguished with knowledge of the "subtleties of His secrets and meanings" and to record their spiritual and mystical illuminations in a single anthology.[37] In a few short introductory remarks, al-Sulamī has already posed a challenge to the authority of the *ʿulamāʾ*, primarily through his radical devaluation of their curricula of learning as proliferate but incomplete, and secondarily by hearkening back to the binary epistemology of acquired learning versus spiritual gnosis, representing his work as a record of the latter form of knowledge. Gerhard Böwering writes:

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[35] Cook and Malkawi, *Classical foundations* xix.

[36] Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* i, 19. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

> In Sulamī's view, no comprehensive commentary, i.e., one which included the mystical ways of reading the Qurʾān, had been produced until his time. He therefore proceeded to collect systematically whatever pertinent glosses and sayings he could find from oral or written information and to organize the material according to the order of the running commentary on the Qurʾān.[38]

For al-Sulamī, commentaries on the Quran based on prophetic traditions, history, grammar, or any number of the exoteric sciences reflected a lower order of knowledge and could not approximate the realities of meaning housed within the Quran. In al-Sulamī's view, the ability of Sufis to receive these realities of meaning directly from the divine realm gave them a greater spiritual authority and a higher order of knowledge. Al-Sulamī's project collated insights vocalized by past spiritual and religious masters (those he designated as Sufis in his biographical encyclopedia *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*) that explicitly or implicitly address Quranic revelation, and he organized them into a verse-by-verse Quranic commentary in the style of traditional exegesis but distinctive in the type of knowledge it claimed to convey.

When al-Sulamī enumerates the branches of knowledge that, in his view, comprise the "exoteric sciences," we notice the same subjects typically identified in treatises on pedagogy that influenced the curriculum of the *ʿulamāʾ*. In his statement about providing knowledge that has previously been ignored, we begin to see the development of a different authoritative figure of knowledge, the saint-mystic. While mystics had previously been outliers, by writing a Quranic commentary using the words of these early Sufis, al-Sulamī granted them mainstream status, not as people of spiritual devotion but as people of knowledge. What may have started as popular ascetic spirituality on the margins of society becomes, in al-Sulamī's mind, the central source of knowledge and spiritual authority. Thus, by stating his intention to produce a written encyclopedia of Sufi Quranic knowledge, al-Sulamī sets into motion the development of a Sufi education parallel to that of the *ʿulamāʾ*.

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[37] Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* i, 19.

[38] Böwering, Major sources 39.

A deeper analysis of al-Sulamī's mission statement for writing the *Ḥaqāʾiq* reveals a unique and unusual dimension to his Quranic commentary that presumes the fluidity and universal applicability of Sufi pronouncements over and above the teachings of the learned class. Because al-Sulamī chose to gather together wisdom teachings of proto-Sufis and arrange them *himself*, according to the verses of the Quran, he presents these wisdom teachings as applicable to all realms of knowledge, regardless of the initial intent of the author of these teachings. The significance of al-Sulamī's task is easy to miss. By choosing where a wisdom teaching can explain the Quran, rather than transmitting only those teachings fully intended as commentary upon a specific Quranic verse, al-Sulamī was able to expand the rather limited source of teachings he had into multiple genres of learning, while also creating a web of Quranic meanings that transcend any specific verse and instead point directly to Sufi teachings and conceptions, thus subsuming Quranic verses under a larger Sufi framework. By freeing the teachings of his proto-Sufi predecessors from the constraints of their original context, al-Sulamī is able to claim a universality on behalf of Sufi teachings that transcends the categorizations of subject-based learning, thus dismantling the specialization the *ʿulamāʾ* had constructed through their educational curriculum.

Al-Sulamī considered the mystical explanations and explications of the Quran that he sought from his predecessors an inspired, special sort of knowledge, bestowed solely upon the spiritual elect through their witnessing of divine realities.[39] Despite his own convictions about the ultimate source of Sufi understanding, claims of direct, divine knowledge garnered the Sufis no guarantees to claims of authority in society. Al-Sulamī's claim to a higher knowledge could only gain traction through persuasive claims to authority that other Muslims could recognize. Al-Sulamī tackled this problem through the use of the same genealogical modes of knowledge transmission established by the *ḥadīth* sciences. If al-Sulamī could claim chains of transmission for Sufi knowledge that would be recognized by *ḥadīth*-trained *ʿulamāʾ*, then the Sufis could establish their authority on a much broader scale. One of the most important tools at al-Sulamī's disposal in the production of his *tafsīr* was the application of his own *ḥadīth* training to bolster the authenticity of his exegetical authorities. Without this training, his Sufi project might not have gained the same traction, nor would it have influenced the trajectory of Sufi history to the same extent.

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[39] Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* i, 19.

4 *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*: The Generations of the Mystics

Al-Sulamī put his *ḥadīth* training to use through the composition of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, an encyclopedia of Sufi biographies arranged in five consecutive generations (*ṭabaqāt*), through which once could conceivably constitute an unbroken Sufi chain of transmission leading back to Muhammad's generation. He likely intended the *Ṭabaqāt* as a companion piece to his *Ḥaqāʾiq*, since the authors of the aphorisms al-Sulamī utilized in his *tafsīr* also held an honored place, as people of great piety, within the first few generations of his *Ṭabaqāt*.[40] Through both the *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr* and the hagiographical records of the early Sufis contained in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, al-Sulamī strove to present a unified canon of his Sufi predecessors' oral and written teachings and to consolidate the place of Sufism in the wider Islamic intellectual tradition by constructing an unbroken spiritual lineage of masters and disciples leading back to Muhammad. These lineages served to reconstitute the historical narrative of the Sufi tradition. The master-disciple genealogy acted as the conduit of Sufi spiritual teachings and allowed for the authentication of Sufi doctrine and practice by claiming Muhammad as its source, in the same way that the *ḥadīth* science validated exoteric doctrine and practice through the prophetic example (*sunna*).[41] In his study on Sufi biographical literature, Jawid Mojaddedi writes:

> Sulamī is depicting the past of his own specific tradition as extending back to the time of the Prophet of Islam, by a method, or route, that serves to attribute to Sufism the same foundations as Sunni Islam.[42] … Sulamī's

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[40] Al-Sulamī composed the *Ṭabaqāt* around two decades after the *Ḥaqāʾiq*, indicating a developing interest in genealogy as he matured as a writer and Sufi scholar. Böwering, Sufi hermeneutics 260.

[41] Sufi genealogies mirror Shiʿi lines of imams, both relying on the succession of spiritual guides designated by preceding masters. See Momen, *Introduction* 147. For parallels in Sufi and Shiʿi thought and their relationship in history, see Chapter 11 of Momen's book.

[42] Mojaddedi, *Biographical tradition* 12. Mojaddedi's distinction between Sufism and Sunni Islam is ambiguous and problematic, given that the majority of al-Sulamī's Sufis were also Sunni Muslims and understood themselves as such. See Makdisi, Muslim institutions of learning 14. It is my understanding that Mojaddedi specifically meant to highlight how

> eleventh century re-reading of the past of Sufism, in the form of the first work of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre, shaped the corresponding re-readings of his successors in Sufi historiography.[43]

Al-Sulamī utilized the same methodology as the *muḥaddith* tradition within Sunni Islamic scholarship, meaning he had a vested interest in authenticating teachings by tracing them back to Muhammad through chains of transmission from sources evaluated as trustworthy. He established a claim for the legitimacy of his version of normative Sufism through similar authenticated chains of transmission, which placed those he identified as the earliest Sufis in line as the spiritual heirs of the Prophet and, more specifically, the successors of the *tābiʿū al-tābiʿūn*, the third generation of Muslims after the contemporaries of Muhammad (*al-salaf, al-ṣaḥāba*) and those that followed them (*al-tābiʿūn*). Since al-Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* begins with the generation following the *tābiʿū al-tābiʿūn*, he presents the first generation of Sufis as the fourth generation of Muslims.[44] He writes in the introduction to his *Ṭabaqāt*:

> He [God] followed the prophets, peace be upon them, with the *awliyāʾ* (the friends of God), who succeed them in their traditions (*sunan*) and carry on (guiding) their communities upon their path and [in emulation of] their character. So, no time period was ever void of one who summons [others] to him (God) with truth or one who points to him with evidence and proof. He created them in generations (*ṭabaqāt*) in every era, so *walī* succeeds *walī* by following the traditions of the one before him and emulating his behavior. Through them, seekers (*murīdūn*) are disciplined and those professing the unity of God are given a model to emulate.[45]

Here, al-Sulamī lays out his belief that the *awliyāʾ* (the Sufi masters of his *Ṭabaqāt*) are the heirs of prophetic guidance and the best models of prophetic character and knowledge. He specifically identifies Sufis as the direct heirs of the prophets and later describes them as "the representatives of the prophets and messengers … the fosterers of the realities of *tawḥīd* (professing the unity of God), the transmitters of prophetic knowledge, and the possessors of true dis-

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al-Sulamī attempted to integrate Sufism into Muslim society as part of Sunni Islam using the same authentication process Sunni Muslims used in *ḥadīth* criticism to authenticate sayings attributed to Muhammad.

[43] Mojaddedi, Biographical tradition 39.

[44] Ibid., 13.

[45] Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 20.

cernment."[46] For him, the spiritual masters he identifies are the de facto sources of true knowledge about God and his prophets. Contrasting this with both the *ʿulamāʾ*'s belief in their status as heirs to prophetic knowledge as well as the caliph al-Maʾmūn's self-conception of himself as the prophetic heir, it is immediately apparent that al-Sulamī did not shy away from basing his claims on the same foundations that others did. The use of the prophetic heir claim is another way al-Sulamī appropriated devices at the disposal of the *ʿulamāʾ*, overhauling the *ʿulamāʾ*'s status as representatives of prophetic knowledge and replacing them with the Sufis.

Analyzing the politics of authority that can be extracted from al-Sulamī's work, we clearly see that genealogy is at the heart of his approach to establishing authority in the fact that, rather than writing his own *tafsīr*, he attempted to produce a Tabarī-style encyclopedic *tafsīr* for the Sufis, thereby consolidating the group's identity and presenting an already seemingly proliferative class of scholars with a superior claim to knowledge rather than presenting himself directly as an authoritative figure. By claiming authority on behalf of a whole lineage, he implicitly places himself in line as a transmitter of authoritative knowledge. He also puts forward a long, already established history rather than initiating a new trend.

Al-Sulamī's claim of inheritance and construction of a lineage on behalf of the Sufis shows how concepts of genealogy drove al-Sulamī's project of securing authority for the Sufis. By utilizing *ḥadīth*-style chains of transmission and tying them to the person of a Sufi, rather than simply to a *ḥadīth* the Sufi may have transmitted, al-Sulamī enmeshed the *ʿulamāʾ*'s chains of transmission with ʿAlid emphasis on genealogy to promote the knowledge and authority of the proto-Sufis he identified in his *Ṭabaqāt* and *Ḥaqāʾiq*. In other words, the Sufi himself or herself is the source of knowledge, not simply the conduit of transmitted knowledge, thus allowing the Sufi to speak as a representative of divine knowledge. The Sufi becomes a source of absolute knowledge rather than a transmitter of a single unit of knowledge as with *ḥadīth*. The ʿAlid imams similarly represent divine authority in their person and do not just reiterate what came down through communcation of the prophets. This authority is inherited in chains. What impact did such chains of authority have on the *ʿulamāʾ*'s claims? It demoted the value of knowledge based in acquired learning for the very fact that, not only could al-Sulamī claim a knowledge on par with that of the *ʿulamāʾ* for the Sufis, due to similar chains of transmission, but he could also attribute to the Sufis an authority vis-à-vis their very person, the likes of which are usually found in the veneration of Shiʿi imams who, by virtue of their noble blood and divinely chosen person, are sacred and authoritative in themselves and not by virtue of the transmitted traditions they can recount. The implications of this are that, while an *ʿālim* can speak only to what he or she is learned in, both an imam and a Sufi can speak on anything and still be considered fully authoritative by virtue of their spiritual rank.[47] Since the *ʿulamāʾ* represented religious authority after the *miḥna*, any rival claim to religious authority could only be achieved by means of a tailored approach deemed acceptable by a broader public. The fact that al-Sulamī ignored acquired learning as a fundamental marker of authority, though many Sufis were in fact learned in the way of the *ʿulamāʾ*, meant that some other form of education or training had to serve in the place of a subject-based curriculum in order for a person to be recognized as a Sufi and honored as an authority in the way that al-Sulamī hoped. While a genealogical or pedagogical link to Muhammad served a central purpose in establishing authority, it could not encompass the measures a Sufi would have to take, or the training s/he would have to undergo, to be inculcated into these lineages of authority. Additionally, al-Sulamī could not claim experiential knowledge inherited by lineage, since experiential knowledge suggests a direct relationship between the Sufi and the source of true knowledge/revelation. Thus, the education that al-Sulamī presents as an alternative to the *ʿulamāʾ*'s curriculum-based learning is the training and disciplining of the ego-self (*nafs*) to prepare a person to receive direct knowledge from the divine presence. The education of a Sufi focuses on priming the human soul as a vessel capable of receiving revelation directly from its source, rather than simply inheriting revelation from indirect transmitters.

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[46] Ibid., 21.

5 *Tafsīr* and Sufi Modes of Knowledge: al-Sulamī's Sufi Quranic Hermeneutics

Al-Sulamī provides a model for circumventing the whole system of acquired learning and education by providing a prototypical path to knowledge that completely does away with subject-based learning centered on *fiqh* or *shariʿa*. In fact, his system does away with the categorized nature of knowledge and approaches knowledge as a reward for the refinement of character, which is in contrast to the *ʿulamāʾ*, who considered their refinement of character a result of their study and the knowledge of prophetic tradition that they acquired. In studying the *Ḥaqāʾiq*, we notice that, while some Sufi wisdom teachings that are used to explain a Quranic verse are relevant to the context of the verse in question, perhaps shedding light on a different interpretation than what may usually be stated by tradition,[48] many of the teachings al-Sulamī cites to explain a Quranic verse are not at all relevant to the immediate context of the Quran and only have a single keyword or "keynote" in common with the verse in question. Common keynotes include "patience" (*ṣabr*) and "sincerity" (*ikhlāṣ*). The teaching thus takes the meaning of the verse in a completely different direction—transforming the Quran, by means of this commentary, into a compendium of spiritual teachings about the Sufi path and a record of lived mystical experience, as well as expressions of the dynamics of spiritual living. This method of exegesis removes the Quran from the center stage, using it as the starting point for Sufi discussions rather than the end point. An approach that de-emphasizes the role of the Quran in a *tafsīr* could only work with an approach to Sufi epistemology like that of al-Sulamī.

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[47] The one field in which Sufi pronouncements could not apply is the field of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which requires a Sufi to hold the same certificates as a *ʿālim* in order to issue a *fatwa*. However, since details of legal ordinance are subsumed under "exoteric sciences," al-Sulamī could still claim a superior knowledge for Sufis that transcends *fiqh*.

The *tafsīr* tradition in Islam takes as its starting point verse 3:7 of the Quran, which indicates that there are two types of verses in the Quran: clear, precise verses (*āyāt muḥkamāt*) and ambiguous, unspecific verses (*āyāt mutashābihāt*).[49] The verse states that only God knows the interpretation of the ambiguous verses, though a number of Muslims argue that the grammar of the verse allows for both God and those "firmly rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūn fī l-ʿilm*) to know the interpretation of the *āyāt mutashābihāt* (the ambiguous verses).[50] Thus, the *tafsīr* tradition rests on the notion that there are ambiguous verses that need explaining. The Sufi *tafsīr* tradition relies heavily on this notion of ambiguous verses with hidden interpretations that only a select few can know, and so Sufis often cite a saying attributed variously to Muhammad, his younger cousin ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660), the preeminent imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), or others, wherein the verses of the Quran are said to have four or seven "faces" (*wujūh*) or levels of meaning. In the introduction to his *tafsīr*, al-Sulamī provides several versions of this saying, only one of which I reproduce here:

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[48] For example, Dhū l-Nūn provides a distinctly Sufi analysis of Q 13:39, which reads: *God obliterates what He wills and establishes, and with Him is the Mother of the Book*. Dhū l-Nūn disregards the verse's allusions to the Book (i.e., the Quran) and the context offered by the previous verse that references the prophets preceding Muhammad. Instead, Dhū l-Nūn draws out the Sufi doctrines of effacement or annihilation in God (*fanāʾ*) and subsequent subsistence in him (*baqāʾ*) and uses these as the basis for interpreting the notions of obliteration (*maḥw*) and establishment (*ithbāt*) presented in the verse. See al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* i, 336.

[49] Sands, Ṣūfī commentaries 14.

[50] Arberry's translation of Q 3:7 reads: "It is He who sent down upon thee the Book … and none knows its interpretation, save only God. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it …'" Arberry, *Koran* 73. Compare this with Carl Ernst's translation: "He is the one who caused the book to descend upon you … None knows its interpretation except God and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge. [Others] say, 'We have faith in it …'" Ernst, *Sufism* 37. These two translations juxtapose the two readings Muslims accept, with

> ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib said, may God bestow honor upon his countenance: There is not a verse [of the Quran] save that it possesses four meanings: a manifest (*ẓāhir*) [meaning], a hidden (*bāṭin*), a border (*ḥadd*), and a point of ascent (*maṭlaʿ*). He said: The manifest is recitation (*tilāwa*). The hidden is comprehension (*fahm*). The border is the expression (*ʿibāra*), the allusion (*ishāra*), as well as commandments of what is lawful (*ḥalāl*) and what is unlawful (*ḥarām*). The point of ascent is what he (God) desires of the worshipper in it. He made the Quran an expression and an allusion, as well as [a collection of] subtleties (*laṭāʾif*) and realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*). Thus expression[51] is for hearing, allusion is for the mind, the subtleties are for witnessing, and the realities are for submission.[52]

Al-Sulamī thus viewed the Quran as a collection of verses that conveyed layers of meaning, some immediately graspable by all and others too subtle for many readers to comprehend. That he called his own work of Quranic commentary *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr* is evidence enough of where he considered the knowledge of his Sufi predecessors to be, i.e. on the highest end of the continuum of Quranic meaning. The notion that there are subtle meanings, alluded to by symbols, in the Quran is at the heart of *tafsīr ishārī*, one of the Arabic terms used to describe Sufi *tafsīr*, though its literal translation is "interpretation by indication (*ishāra*)." This is the type of exegesis al-Sulamī engaged in, and it relies on a concept Böwering calls "keynotes."[53] In an analysis of the Quranic commentary of the third/ninth-century mystic Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), Böwering writes:

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the large majority of *ahl al-ḥadīth* adopting the first reading, while Sufis, theologians, and philosophers often adopting the second.

[51] *ʿIbāra*. Cf. *ʿibāda* in the original, meaning "worship" or "servanthood." This is, in my view, an error in transcription.

[52] Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* i, 22–23.

[53] Böwering, *Mystical vision* 136.

> In the *Tafsīr* [of Tustarī], the theme of an item of commentary is usually introduced by a Qurʾānic keynote, a short passage of the Qurʾān. A word or a short phrase of a particular verse, which strikes the mind of the commentator, is quoted and taken up as the focal point of the interpretation … A number of keynotes are taken up by the commentary as isolated units, independent from their Qurʾānic context.[54]

Elaborating elsewhere on this concept of keynotes, Böwering writes:

> With these keynotes the listener associates a cluster of images emerging from the content of his personal experience. These images merge with the Qurʾānic keynotes and find their expression in the allusions that are jotted down in the commentary in a condensed, abbreviated form. These jottings thus reflect the gist of the listener's encounter with the divine word merging inextricably with the matrix of the Sufi world of ideas.[55]

The use of keynotes in Sufi *tafsīr* is why Böwering describes Sufi exegesis as interpretation by association. With this type of exegesis, the exegete is not bound to the immediately apparent meaning conveyed by the verse, but rather is able to take each word, even each letter, of the Quran as significant and meaningful in and of itself. Through such an approach to the Quran, the definition of *tafsīr* expands to accommodate the vocalization of mystical experiences and illuminations that, to the uninitiated, may at first seem abstract and divorced from the specifics of the Quranic verse with which they are associated. However, understanding Sufi *tafsīr* as a mystic's "encounter with the divine word" allows a more explorative and unrestrained approach to Quranic commentary.

Since many of al-Sulamī's *tafsīr* authorities were not trained in the interpretation of the Quran, or, if they were, al-Sulamī only had access to their more general spiritual teachings,[56] al-Sulamī's truly innovative contribution to the *tafsīr* tradition is the use of extra-Quranic spiritual experience and teachings as a vehicle for interpreting the Quran through the use of keynotes, regardless of the context of a teaching or a verse. He topically organized aphorisms himself without reference to authorial intent (except in special cases, such as Sahl al-Tustarī, where it is clear he had a written source at his disposal, which, according to Böwering, he followed rather faithfully).[57] The compiler's role, in the hands of al-Sulamī, evolved from that of a passive copyist to an active *mufassir* in his own right, one who decides what teachings can explain which verses.

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[54] Ibid., 136.

[55] Böwering, Qur'an commentary 51.

[56] Al-Sulamī's own confession in his introduction, that he only had access to a handful of Quranic verses interpreted by proto-Sufis and only from two sources (Ibn ʿAṭāʾ and Jaʿfar al-Ṣadiq), and thus used *aqwal al-mashayikh*, the aphorisms of shaykhs for the rest of his commentary on the Quran, indicates that the larger part of his *tafsīr* is nothing more than a series of unspecialized wisdom teachings pinned onto verses of the Quran at al-Sulamī's own discretion.

Al-Sulamī's role as the agent of organization, determining the sequence of the aphorisms in his *tafsīr*, in addition to his use of historical figures often accused of heresy or otherwise marginalized, garnered criticism of his *tafsīr* from both exoteric scholars and Sufis. Sayyid ʿImrān collected some of the most famous critiques of al-Sulamī's *Ḥaqāʾiq* in his introduction to the 2001 Beirut edition, three of which I reproduce in English here. A near contemporary of al-Sulamī, ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1075), wrote, "Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī composed *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*—and should he believe that it is a *tafsīr*, then he has fallen into disbelief (*kufr*)."[58] Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) wrote of al-Sulamī, "He has a book called *Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tafsīr*—that he had never composed it! It is a perversion and of the Qarmatians.[59] Were it not for this book, he would have concealed his vanity."[60] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ṣuyūṭī, the famous ninth/fifteenth-century Sufi scholar and polymath (d. 911/1505), wrote a biographical encyclopedia of Quranic exegetes and included al-Sulamī's *tafsīr* in his section on deviant works (*tafāsīr mubtadiʿa*). He writes, "I presented [al-Sulamī's *tafsīr*] in this section because his *tafsīr* is not praiseworthy."[61] Hence, despite al-Sulamī's efforts, he encountered much opposition, often due to what other authors deemed as weakly supported sources.[62] The content of his *tafsīr* naturally attracted some criticism for its esoteric nature. Islamic history is, after all, peppered with opposition to Sufism. In the case of al-Ṣuyūṭī's response, however, it is clear it is al-Sulamī's role in the production of the *tafsīr* and his choice of sources and aphorisms that was the point of contention, since al-Ṣuyūṭī himself was a renowned Sufi, both in his time and later on, and held many of the same beliefs al-Sulamī himself did.[63] He even authored multiple Sufi treatises, including a biography of al-Sulamī's pre-eminent early authority, the aforementioned Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī.[64] These criticisms are evidence of where al-Sulamī's project was less successful—in convincing the population at large that there remained an important relationship between the words of the Quran and the wisdom teachings of the Sufis, even if the Sufi in question had no explicit intention to interpret a specific phrase or word from the Quran. These critiques of al-Sulamī's *tafsīr*, covering both content-based criticisms and censure of his chains of transmission, are very telling indications of al-Sulamī's need to engage the tools of the *ʿulamāʾ* to establish authority on behalf of the Sufis. While al-Sulamī utilized *ḥadīth* methodology in an attempt to establish Sufi knowledge as authoritative, and attached Sufi wisdom teachings to genres of literature recognized by the *ʿulamāʾ* (*tafsīr*, *tārīkh*), it seems he ultimately faced great resistance in establishing equal or superior authority for Sufis on a scale that could compete with the *ʿulamāʾ*.

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[57] Böwering, *Mystical vision* 133.

[58] ʿImrān, Introduction 11.

[59] The Qarmatians (*al-qarāmiṭa*) refers to a sect of Ismaʿilism that was present in Nishapur around al-Sulamī's time. The author here is accusing al-Sulamī's *tafsīr* of Ismaʿili influence. Sociopolitically, the Ismaʿilis, also called the *bāṭiniyya*, encountered great opposition in the medieval period, and thus attributing *bāṭiniyya* influence (or the other incorrectly used blanket term for all Ismaʿilis, *qarāmiṭa*) to somebody indicated pejorative intent. See Daftary, *Ismaʿilis* 116.

[60] ʿImran, Introduction 11.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibn Taymiyya was very outspoken in his critique of al-Sulamī's *tafsīr* since he determines that the traditions al-Sulamī narrates are either weak (i.e., inauthentic) or false, as they "contradict the Book and the *sunna*." See ibid.

Nevertheless, despite being widely criticized for his attempt to produce a comprehensive work of Sufi *tafsīr*, the development of Sufi *tafsīr* following al-Sulamī stands as a testament to the overall success of his project. His *Ḥaqāʾiq* inspired a host of exegetes and *tafsīr* compilers who modeled their work on al-Sulamī's, including Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074) and Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209). The reason for his work's success, despite the words of his critics, might be related to the fact that his notion of the relationship between the Sufi mystic and the divine word made sense to one particular group of people—other mystically inclined individuals. Thus, while his project may not have achieved immediate widespread success, it continued to influence the unfolding of Sufi thought and understanding of religious authority. Al-Sulamī was not operating within the same paradigm of Quranic exegesis as other *tafsīr* scholars. Thus, while other *tafsīr* scholars may not have found al-Sulamī's use of the extra-Quranic to explain Quranic meaning fully convincing, certain mystically inclined scholars did.

To understand the weight of al-Sulamī's work and the logic of his seemingly reckless matching up of wisdom teachings with Quranic verses, we must consider the Sufi notion of the "realized sage" (*al-ʿārif*), who, as "the perfect human being" (*al-insān al-kāmil*), is a microcosm of the divine word (*al-kalima*

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[63] For more information about al-Ṣuyūṭī's life and work, see Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*.

[64] Al-Suyūṭī, Dhul-Nun al-Misri.

al-ilāhiyya).[65] This notion redirects the enterprise of *tafsīr* to one that views anyone who has attained a particular stage of divine proximity as an embodied Quran, therefore his or her character and actions come to be an expression of the meaning of the Quran.[66] Al-Sulamī's project succeeded regardless of criticism, in part, because it reaffirmed the key Sufi notion of the macrocosmic/microcosmic parallel that binds the human soul, the natural world, and the divine word to the same singular reality, essentially including all knowledge realized by the spiritually adept within the realm of Quranic meaning and understanding. Al-Sulamī utilized this idea of an exegesis by experience through the application of practical spiritual teachings, which focused on the ideals and shortcomings of the human self, to the message of the Quran itself.

6 The Realized Sufi as a Mirror of Quranic Meaning

Since al-Sulamī pioneered the production of Sufi *tafsīr* anthologies, we can credit him with the first use of non-*mufassir* figures in Sufi exegesis. Al-Sulamī was not the first to produce a written encyclopedic *tafsīr*, and his unique contribution was to expand what is included under the term "*tafsīr*," allowing him to make use of the teachings of figures who would not normally be considered *mufassirūn* or exegetes, as well as extra-Quranic material, and still claim they interpret and explain the Quran. This changes the definition of *tafsīr*, but it also helps reaffirm a Sufi belief that allows spiritual expressions by a person of high spiritual stature to qualify as a manifestation of Quranic meaning since they are drawn from a purely Quranic experience.[67] This notion is based on various interpretations of Quran 41:53 ("We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it is made clear to them that it [or he] is the truth"). For instance, in *Laṭāʾif al-Ishārāt*, al-Qushayrī cites the following interpretation of this verse:

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[65] Ibn al-ʿArabī explores the concept of the microcosmic perfect human being extensively in his writings, including his *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*The ringstones of wisdom*).

[66] The understanding of an embodied Divine Word had, at that point, already been explored in Ismaʿili and Shiʿi thought in the figure of the Imam, who represented the "speaking Quran" to the extent that he embodied divine inspiration and knowledge more fully than anyone else. See Ayoub, Speaking 183.

[67] Ernst describes the inspiration for Sufi exegesis as a response to the "emotional power" of the Quran resulting from internalizing it through heavy meditation and prayer. Ernst, *Sufism* 36.

> It is said about these signs in the horizons that they show differentiation in the decreed substances (*aḥkām al-aʿyun*) with concordant essences (*jawāhir*) that are homogeneous (*tajānus*) … these are the signs that occur in the world, and they necessitate a Cause due to his attributes.[68]

The verse presents the "signs of God" or the *āyāt* (a term also used to designate the verses of the Quran) as permeating the natural world and the human self. Al-Qushayrī's esoteric interpretation of this verse presents the diverse nodes of existence as sharing the same essence, which intersects with the locus of divine self-disclosure through which God reveals His signs.[69] Thus, the signs of God strewn throughout the world find expression in a multitude of different substances whose essences are homogeneous (i.e., of the same nature). It is in this way that Sufis understand the unity implicit in the cosmos despite its apparent differentiation. Sufis similarly understand the purest essences of the world, in the form of realized Sufis, as akin to divine reality, giving the self-realized the unique ability to understand the hidden meanings of the Quran.

The development of notions of this "perfect human being" (*al-insān al-kāmil*), who is uniquely capable of interpreting the Quran, has its seeds in the spiritual teachings al-Sulamī preserved in his *Ḥaqāʾiq*, as well as in his primary approach to *tafsīr*. As we have gleaned from al-Sulamī's introduction to his *Ḥaqāʾiq*, he believed all the *tafsīr* works written up to his time represented a stratum of knowledge inferior to that of the Sufis, insofar as they did not approximate the "realities" (*ḥaqāʾiq*) hidden beneath the exoteric surface of the Quran's verses.[70] We know from the introduction to his *Ṭabaqāt* that he considered the Sufis the rightful heirs of prophetic knowledge and the ones tasked with guiding the Muslim communities of their time.[71] In al-Sulamī's exegesis of Q 41:53 he quotes al-Qaḥṭānī saying, "It is that all attributes become one attribute and one sees nothing but pure, unadulterated truth."[72] Here are the roots of the notion of a shared essence among the signs of God. And, we can discern the beginnings of the notion of the "perfect human being" from al-Sulamī's exegesis of the story of Adam in the Quran, particularly Q 2:30, where God announces to the angels that he is creating Adam as a *khalīfa*, a representative of God on earth. Al-Sulamī quotes authorities describing Adam as a being adorned with ancient knowledge, understanding of divine attributes, and an eye that discerns both unity and complexity.[73] "The condition of *khilāfa* (vicegerency) is an essential vision of all things both in separation and in unity (*faṣlan wa-waṣlan*)," al-Sulamī writes on behalf of an unidentified source from Iraq.[74] The wording of this interpretation of Q 2:30 closely echoes Ibn al-ʿArabī's description of Adam as *al-kalima al-fāṣila al-jāmiʿa*, "the separating and unifying Word."[75]

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[68] Al-Qushayrī, *Laṭāʾif* iii, 339.

[69] Ibn al-ʿArabī describes the "signs" of God in terms of loci of manifestation, which are all the entities of the world that act as veiled bodies hiding within them the divine spirit. See Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Bezels* 27.

[70] Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* i, 19.

[71] Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 20–21.

[72] Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* ii, 221.

The discussion of the three parallel nodes of God's self-disclosure, through signs in the natural world, the human soul, and the verses of the Qurʾan, reaches full fruition in Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī's writings in the seventh/thirteenth century. As with previous Sufis, Ibn al-ʿArabī employs Q 41:53 as a proof-text for the proliferation of God's marks throughout the world and the human soul.[76] Thus, to know God, he argued, the human being must look inside his or her own soul, and also seek knowledge of God through the words of scripture as well as the phenomena of the natural world.[77] The multilayered parallelism implicit in Q 41:53 has significant ramifications for the spiritual journey of the human being as perceived by Ibn al-ʿArabī, since the journey of knowledge may begin at one point, whether in the heart or in the manifest world, but it gradually morphs into an all-encompassing journey of self-realization that plays itself out on every level of existence. Human beings who successfully undertake this journey of self-realization realize their role as prophet, apostle, or saint-mystic. The divine word encompasses all of reality, and thus the "perfect human being," realized in the prophet or saint-mystic, being an all-comprehensive existent, embodies the Divine Word in a way that the rest of creation cannot in its differentiated and un-unified state.[78]

Since only an actualized mystic who has tapped into the macrocosmic reality of the "perfect human being" can receive divine revelation (*waḥy*), in the case of prophets, or inspiration (*ilhām*), in the case of self-actualized mystics, Sufis claim access to a perfect knowledge that emerges directly from divine self-disclosure.[79] Ibn al-ʿArabī essentially considered the mystical experiences of the spiritually adept a universal realization of the human being's function as the mirror of God. Recognizing the aptitude of those with hearts fit to realize essential knowledge, Ibn al-ʿArabī, like earlier Sufis, saw allusions or indications (*ishārāt*) in the Quran that the mystic's heart recognizes as signs of God, leading him or her to divine unveiling.[80] Ibn al-ʿArabī considered the physically manifested Quran an "outer garment" that guides humanity to reality.[81] Those chosen for higher knowledge see a series of signposts pointing toward the divine word in a purer form in this outer garment, without the circuitousness of an intermediary or the sully of physical intelligibility. Thus, the divine word or the "true Quran" is housed in the heart of the "perfect human being," the true, comprehensive, unmediated image of God housed in the macrocosm. In this way, only that unmediated image of God can understand the hidden dimension of the Quran, and the essence that lies beyond the exterior form. Ibn al-ʿArabī's discussion of the realized gnostic as the "perfect human being" and the perfect mirror for divine self-reflection reveals just how much notions of Sufi Quranic exegetical authority developed in the two centuries following al-Sulamī. By Ibn al-ʿArabī's time, the notion of the human/logos parallel became central to discussions of who is able to convey true Quranic knowledge.

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[73] Ibid., i, 55.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Bezels* 51.

[76] Ibid., 54.

[77] For example, Ibn al-ʿArabī writes, "all the infinite objects of knowledge that God knows are within man and within the cosmos through this type of [divine] nearness." Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Sufi path* 92–93.

[78] Ibid., 154.

[79] Ibid., 51. Ibn al-ʿArabī writes, "God draws back the veils from hearts and eyes so that they

While al-Sulamī's understanding of the relationship between the Sufi and the words of the Quran are embryonic expressions of later, highly theorized Sufi hermeneutics, as explored by Ibn al-ʿArabī, al-Sulamī's exegesis of the Quran provided a basis of esoteric understanding to be drawn on later, and thus also provided foundational Sufi concepts as a reference point for many later developments in Sufi cosmological theories. Al-Sulamī's division of knowledge into strata, his understanding of Sufis as the keepers of the highest knowledge, his understanding of unity beyond complexity, and his application of practical spiritual teachings and the Sufi theorization of virtues and human nature to the Quran all came together in the idea of the "perfect human being," who reflects the message of the Quran in his or her very being.

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might perceive things, eternal and ephemeral, non-existent and existent, impossible, necessary, or permissible, as they are in their eternal reality and essentiality."

[80] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Bezels* 166. Ibn al-ʿArabī's understanding of the relationship between the Quran, the realized sage, and God is best discerned in the following statement: "the Universal Man (*al-insān al-kullī*) *is* the Qur'ān," as cited in Chodkiewicz, *Ocean* 96. Michel Chodkiewicz provides an informative gloss on this statement, writing: "It is in us that the words [of the Quran] should be inscribed, it is our very beings that should be the book in which we decipher them … it is the Qur'ān that dwells within the man: Divine Word takes possession of the *ʿārif bi-Llāh* in such a way that the Qur'an becomes his 'nature.'"

[81] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Bezels* 258.

Al-Sulamī's ability to use Sufi aphorisms in whatever avenues he found most fitting allowed him to produce a canon of written knowledge for the Sufis out of somewhat limited material. When there were not enough direct explications of the Quran, he could use the broader canon of Sufi wisdom teachings to bolster the rest of his *tafsīr*. In fact, since a large amount of this written canon of mystical teachings was originally oral, al-Sulamī facilitated the move from oral knowledge to written knowledge in the Sufi tradition, a movement that added to its longevity and canonization, in the same way that al-Sulamī disseminated al-Sarrāj's text in his own *duwayra*. Texts alone could not suffice, since Muslim thinkers had been debating the importance of learning from a teacher rather than a book long before al-Sulamī's time, and many had concluded that, while books are important, a teacher is much more valuable.[82] This may partly explain why al-Sulamī felt the need to emphasize the importance of the Sufi teaching lineage in one's journey to knowledge.

7 Al-Sulamī's Impact on Education

Al-Sulamī's work represents an important shift from a focus on *ʿulūm al-dīn* as a basis for claims to authoritative knowledge to a focus on self-development through praxis and spiritual guidance, allowing one's spiritual station to reflect an entitlement to authority rather than the completion of any kind of curriculum of learning. While Sufis continued to teach subjects of learning and many continued to pursue education in the sciences—after all, many Sufis were themselves *ʿulamāʾ*—the emphasis shifted to spiritual states and the development of spiritual virtues. In this way, the highest Sufi authority came not from learning but from realized spiritual states. While Sufis could not, by virtue of their states alone, speak to law and issue juridical rulings (*fatwa*s) without *fiqh* certificates of their own, Sufi epistemology suggested the existence of a different form of knowledge that was beyond the concerns of law and ultimately served a higher purpose, guiding aspirants to a more direct experience of their religion, thus positioning Sufi knowledge above the knowledge gained by the *ʿulamāʾ*.

Al-Sulamī's influence is most discernible in al-Ghazālī's approach to education (as seen, in particular, in his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, The revival of the religious sciences), wherein al-Ghazālī melds the classical curricula of *ʿulamāʾ* learning with the spiritual preparedness that was the aim of Sufi spiritual training, insisting that both are prerequisites to the fulfilment of the highest spiritual goals.[83] In this way, authority could shift from the learned or *ʿulamāʾ* to the "friends of God" (*awliyāʾ Allāh*) while still utilizing tools characteristic of *ʿulamāʾ* learning. Still, learned or otherwise, al-Sulamī depicts the *awliyāʾ* as the only true inheritors of prophetic knowledge and guidance. For al-Sulamī and his fellow Sufis, knowledge was gained through *kashf* (unveiling) and not through acquiring subjects of learning. Indeed, for those seeking the highest form of religion, seeking *kashf* was a veritable necessity for the fulfilment of humanity.

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[82] See Shalabi, *History* 115; cf. Makdisi, *Rise* 89, 309.

By implementing chains of transmission as a source of teaching, al-Sulamī established spiritual genealogy as a basis for realized knowledge. This created a teacher-student conduit for wisdom. Though one's firsthand experiential knowledge could occur with or without the help of a teacher, the lineage provided the right guidance to prepare the self for divine revelation. In this way, al-Sulamī set the stage for the establishment of Sufi orders through the development of constructed spiritual lineages by means of which practical rituals (such as ritual remembrance, or *dhikr*) could be handed down, as well as the dispersal of Sufi knowledge through the genres of literature that al-Sulamī himself had pioneered. Studying the case of al-Sulamī, and his interactions with contemporary systems of education, brings to mind important questions about the relationship between learning and religious authority. While the *ʿulamāʾ* understood subject-based training to be crucial for acquiring religious authority, al-Sulamī provided a counter point-of-view, wherein religious authority could be granted only by divine experience arising through self-exertion and spiritual training in the context of a spiritual lineage. In al-Sulamī's initiatives, we can pick apart the threads of the debates that had occurred around the subject of religious authority at the time, including ʿAlid genealogical claims of divine designation, caliphal demands of patrilineal authority, and *muḥaddith* emphasis on transmission reaching back to Muhammad. Because of the extent of his influence and the ambitious nature of his project, al-Sulamī's writings provide a significant glimpse into the politics of authority occurring in the fifth/eleventh century and the formulation of concepts of knowledge in the rich and diverse era immediately prior to the rise of the *madrasa* system, which still prevails in Sunni communities today.

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[83] On al-Ghazālī's use of both types of education, Günther writes: "In what is perhaps his most important book, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* ("The Revivification of the Religious Sciences"), al-Ghazālī includes several lengthy chapters advising learners to begin by cleansing their souls of bad behavior and reprehensible qualities to make themselves worthy of receiving knowledge. They should concentrate fully and completely on their studies, show no arrogance toward a subject or a teacher, achieve a firm grasp of one discipline before moving on to another, and structure their studies so as to begin with the most important branches of knowledge first. Also, students should aspire to spiritual perfection rather than worldly fame and fortune." Günther, Education 16; cf. Makdisi, Muslim institutions 40.

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CHAPTER 28

Knowledge in the Buyid Period: Practices and Formation of Social Identity

Nuha Alshaar

This paper discusses the nature of social-intellectual groups that emerged in the Buyid period (334–440/946–1048), and which, with various degrees of effectiveness, demonstrated a capacity for social agency. It will highlight the political establishment's influence on the social and intellectual practices in this period and how it facilitated learning and the production of knowledge. The focus will be on two main groups, "court-based groups" and semi-independent "knowledge-based" groups. Scholars identified themselves on the basis of their commitments to the study of a specific discipline, and developed loyalties accordingly. This led to an imposed division of labor, resulting in a specific shift in the nature of knowledge that came to be conceived not simply in its abstract totality, but in terms of the particular changes to specialized scholarship, and as a polysemous and multivalent phenomenon, with each area requiring its own terms and territories. The ways in which intellectual groups interacted in this period will be highlighted, outlining two different attitudes to knowledge: a wider approach that draws upon all available forms of knowledge, and a more restricted approach to knowledge. Thus, the heated debates between competing groups as a way of affirming their own independent intellectual identity, and their claims to the exclusive possession of a body of knowledge that will save the community at large, will be discussed.

1 The Buyid Political and Historical Context

The failure of the ʿAbbasid caliphs to recruit a reliable army and to maintain civil order during the first half of the fourth/tenth century led to a political vacuum that paved the way for new political players to step in and establish their own dynasty.[1] The newcomers were warlike people known as the Daylamites of the mountainous areas, newly converted to Islam, notably from the Kurds

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[1] For further discussion of the Buyid period and the intellectual groups, see Alshaar, *Ethics* 27–59.

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of the Zagros Mountains and the people of the northern Iranian provinces of Gīlān and Daylam. This group of people produced one of the most famous ruling families, the Buyids, who established a dynasty in Iraq and Iran that was named after them.

Thus the Buyid period can be seen as a turning point in the history of Islamic civilization. This can be explained by various factors. Despite the relative political stability that the Buyids were able to establish in Baghdad, their origin and rise to power was extraordinary and caused cultural and social shifts, introducing new paradigms in the social fabric of society. The humble origin of the three brothers, ʿAlī, Aḥmad, and Ḥasan b. Būyeh, who were mercenary soldiers and the sons of a poor fisherman from the Shah Rūd Valley of Daylam in Persia, symbolized a shift in the social hierarchy. This shift could be seen in the transfer of power from one ethnic group to another (Arabs to non-Arabs), from the elites to a group from the lower class of society, from one religious sect to another, and from the ethics of one group or sect to another (Sunni to Shiʿi).

The coming of the Buyids also changed political reality and appears to have caused a major shift in the concept of polity itself. This situation not only shaped the practices of the ruling class and its interaction with the rest of society, but also necessitated the introduction of a new theory of rule, and the need to look for alternative moral principles to justify the legitimacy of its rulership.

The Buyids were unable to make use of already established theories of rule, and they could not claim legitimacy on the basis of a direct succession to the Prophet, like the ʿAbbasid caliphs, or as the delegated agent of God on earth, like the Umayyad caliphs. Although Shiʿites, the Buyids had no credentials by which to claim succession to the Prophet as a source of legitimacy. Therefore, they found themselves in need of a new theory of rule, and appropriate moral principles, if they were to establish their authority over the entire Muslim community.

Furthermore, with the existence of multiple ethnic and religious groups in their society, the Buyids found it to their advantage to preserve the religious authority of the ʿAbbasid caliphs, which was a symbol of legitimate governance and the unity of Islam. In this way, they found a unifying narrative that would satisfy the religious sentiment of the Sunni majority. In order to maintain their political power, and in light of the difficulty of finding a common interest between the competing groups, the different Buyid emirs found it to their advantage to alienate themselves from the rest of society, and to share the rulership.[2] This policy, and a desire to keep society fragmented, seems to have shaped the nature of social life, introducing different paradigms of behavior and conduct based on the principle of the exchange of mutual benefits between the Buyid emirs and different groups in society, and between the groups themselves.[3] This, as well as a growing sense of insecurity, intensified the earlier proliferation of groups with their social and intellectual practices. People of knowledge were not immune to this sentiment and other practices. Thus, while the Buyids and their officers encouraged the career of some scholars and littérateurs, as will be discussed below, other scholars or intellectual groups organized themselves into semi-independent groups on the basis of their mutual loyalties and conscious participation in the study of a specific discipline.[4] There were also certain individuals and groups who maintained a level of independence, and they did not restrict themselves to the study of one particular discipline. They were polymaths who existed across group affiliations and negotiated the boundaries between different disciplines.

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[2] For a further discussion on the relationship between the different Buyid emirs, kings, and the community at large, see Mottahedeh, *Loyalty* 179.

In what follows, I will differentiate between the intellectual groups in this period, especially between the "court-based groups" and the "knowledge-based groups." I will also explore different groups' relationships with the Buyid establishment, and their relationships with each other.

2 The Concept of Knowledge and Intellectual Groups in This Period

Before I begin to discuss the intellectual groups, it is necessary to note that the different intellectual practices in this period have led to a specific shift, both in the concept of knowledge itself and in the ways different scholars perceived it. The majority of scholars appear to have conceived of knowledge not in its abstract totality (as was the previous norm) but in relation to their specific disciplines, which meant changes toward specialized scholarship so that they could designate strict limits between different fields and disciplines.[5] This perception of knowledge seems to have influenced intellectual practices in this period. Many scholars started to define the boundaries of their disciplines and to impose strict divisions of labor among scholars. This led to the consolidation of independent institutions and circles of learning. In Baghdad, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (ca. 315–414/927–1023) spoke about this attitude of scholars and wondered about the prejudice that many scholars showed toward each other's fields.[6] In particular, he mentioned the tendency of many scholars in his time to think that their respective field of study was the best. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the widespread tendency among scholars in Baghdad to keep philosophical discussions separate from the domain of religion and to avoid any discussion of the relationship between them.[7]

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[3] See Alshaar, *Ethics* 30–48.

[4] Makdisi, *Rise* 1–200.

[5] On the development of the concept of *ʿilm*, see Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant* 6–18.

Furthermore, intense competition between the different groups marked this period, and the relationships between different individuals and groups were not friendly. Each group defined itself, at least in part, in contrast to the other entities. According to Cooperson, members of these different groups invoked the Prophet's legacy and claimed that some portion of his knowledge was their inheritance and thus required the obedience of other members of the community, since they also acted in its defense.[8] In addition, many scholarly groups claimed exclusive possession of a body of knowledge that was desirable for others to learn or necessary to the community at large.[9] This led to increased tensions in this period, not only between traditional Islamic fields of science and what is considered foreign disciplines, such as philosophy, but also between different groups studying the same field. This resulted in a culture of heated debates between practitioners belonging to different groups and fields of knowledge. Many scholars had a number of perplexing questions about which type of knowledge was superior and could save the community. Scholars were unable to demonstrate convincingly a claim to truth with any certainty.[10] Hence, doubt and skepticism became prevalent attitudes toward knowledge and were integral parts of scholarly discussions and life in this period, with each group trying to use all the available tools to argue for its position of truth. Groups connected to the Buyid courts leaned toward philosophical and Greek knowledge and sciences, while a number of semi-independent scholars tried to promote and preserve the place of traditional forms of knowledge in their society. At the same time, this skepticism over knowledge, combined with the prolification of specific disciples, led other scholars, such as Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (the Brethren of Purity), to produce manuals devoted to resolving this tension by identifying a proper method for classifying different types of knowledge. Their works seem to have aimed at introducing an approach that harmonized and synthesized different forms of knowledge, including logic, language, and the philosophical and religious sciences, into a comprehensive framework.

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[6] See al-Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt* 95.

[7] See al-Tawḥīdī, *Risāla fī l-ʿulūm* (*On the classification of knowledge*) in *Rasāʾil Abī Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī*. For a study of this Epistle, see Alshaar, Analytical reading 161–185.

[8] See Cooperson, *Heirs* 14–15.

[9] See Makdisi, *Rise* 1–200.

[10] For a treatment of the issue of skepticism in Islam, see Heck, *Skepticism*.

The following section will illustrate how different scholarly groups from this period approached knowledge and their practices in relation to it.

2.1 *Court-Based Groups*

Beside the court of the ʿAbbasid caliph, who offered patronage and encouraged learning, this period witnessed the emergence of smaller courts that fostered the career of many groups or individuals who became affiliated with the courts and complied with their rules and protocols.

Unable to justify their rule on the basis of a divine argument, the Buyids aspired to construct their own political identity and to establish their autonomy by invoking high moral principles to accompany their rise to power. Therefore, the new officials had no option but to invest in learning and develop their reputations as avid patrons of learning. In so doing, they fostered the careers of talented men, who, in turn, produced culture and ideology to shape the dynasty's identity.[11] This emphasizes the interplay between the production of knowledge and the shaping of political realities in this period, all of which should be seen as a result and response to the social and political changes particular to Buyid society.

A good example is the famous philologist and historian of the fourth/tenth century Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. after 350/961), who had contact with important scholars and was highly respected because of his vast learning. His scholarly activities and interests gravitated toward history, proverbs, and lexicography.

Al-Iṣfahānī had a strong Persian nationalistic sentiment and was greatly concerned with Persian matters, and he wrote his famous *Chronology on world history* during the rule of Rukn al-Dawla in Isfahan; in it he created the image of the Arabs' reign coming to an end as the result of a series of riots and disturbances, which later caused the ʿAbbasids to cede authority to the Buyids.[12] The production of such texts served as a tool to promote a particular form of rhetoric, which reinforced the ideology of the ruling elites, gave a divine justification for their rule, and portrayed the coming of the founder of the Buyid dynasty as a manifestation of God's will to save the caliphate and the people of Baghdad from a state of anarchy and devastation.[13]

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[11] For a discussion of the category of clerks and professional writers, see al-Tawātī, *Muthaqqafūn* 199–236; Mottahedeh, *Loyalty* 90–96, 108–110.

[12] For more information on the book, see Madelung, Assumption 93–95.

[13] See al-Iṣfahānī in ibid., 94.

The politics of knowledge in this period can also be seen clearly in the practices of different Buyid rulers to promote a certain type of knowledge. In order to create their own distinctive identity and court protocol, the Buyids derived their theory of rule by restoring previous forms from non-religious sources, particularly certain elements of Persian culture and ideas related to their concept of rulership and Iranian political ideology. Placing importance on the revival of Persian cultural representations signifies a restructuring of power in the world and the type of knowledge that was to be taken account of in this period. The production of knowledge was very much interlinked with the tastes and preferences of the ruling class. For example, many of the Buyid emirs and their viziers used Persian at their courts, and they manifested an interest in neo-Persian literature to the extent that Persian poets, such as Firdawsī, were welcomed at the court of Bahāʾ al-Dawla (d. 403/1012).[14] Al-Tawḥīdī also reports that the vizier al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 385/995) uttered Persian words when addressing his entourage, though he had no idea what they meant.[15]

The political rivalry between different competing Buyid emirs and their viziers was not only a competition for political expansion; it was also a constant struggle to acquire prestige. For this reason, the practice of holding scholarly receptions in the different Buyid courts became a method through which certain forms of knowledge were consolidated and came to offer access to power.

Many writers of the period described these intellectual settings as vibrant venues that facilitated the exchange of ideas and culture. Al-Tawḥīdī describes these various activities in many places. For example, he mentions that in 360/971 the Buyid emir Bakhtiyār ʿIzz al-Dawla (d. 366/976 or 367/977) gave a reception for scholars that was attended by philosophers such as Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 370/981) and ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-Rummānī (d. 384/994).[16] The king ʿAḍud al-Dawla (d. 372/983) also was a great patron of learning.[17]

The ruler's *majlis*, a salon-like session in which scholars debated important issues of the day, was a prominent institution in the intellectual life of the time.[18] A *majlis* existed as a social domain with implicit and explicit rules and its own value system. This was seen in the daily interactions between members of those circles and in their social power relationships that were characterized by specific divisions of responsibilities and expectations. These hierarchies were further reinforced by certain practices, stories, customs, and norms of prestige.

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[14] Cahen and Pellat, Buwayhids; see Bosworth, Bahāʾ al-Dawla 118.

[15] See Abbās, *Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* 12; see also al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq* 104–105.

[16] See al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq* 202.11–203.3. ʿIzz al-Dawla was also a devoted sponsor of poets; see Kraemer, *Humanism* 54. On ʿIzz al-Dawla, see Cahen, Ba͟khtiyār 954–955; Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 51–64.

[17] On ʿAḍud al-Dawla, see Bowen, Aḍud al-Dawla 211, Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 65–86.

[18] See Kraemer, *Humanism* 52–60; Griffith, Monk 13–65.

The relationships between most professional writers and their Buyid patrons were based on mutual interests and governed by "the ethics of *niʿma* (blessing)."[19] While they depended on the Buyids to provide them with a livelihood and social recognition, they in turn supported the Buyids in establishing their kingdom. To obtain the blessing (*niʿma*) bestowed by those emirs and viziers, men had to acquire polished skills of persuasiveness, diplomacy, courtesy, and often submissiveness and avoidance of confrontation. In this way, patronage was necessarily associated with ethics and filial duty, which were important for the cohesion and structure of the bureaucracy run by viziers in different *majālis*.

The different local viziers also played a major role in the development of intellectual life, contributing to the diversification of court life in the period. There was also a constant competition between different centers ruled by the different viziers. A good example is the competition that existed between cities like Shirāz, Nishapur, Rayy, and Baghdad,[20] and there was a tense competition between the two Buyid viziers Ibn Saʿdān (d. 375/986) in Baghdad and Ibn ʿAbbād in Rayy.

These two viziers were competing not only for the different interests of their Buyid masters but also for intellectual prestige. According to al-Tawḥīdī, one of the main concerns of Ibn Saʿdān, vizier of the Buyid emir Ṣamṣām al-Dawla (d. 388/998) in Baghdad, was to ensure that he had the best and most talented entourage by which he could compete with the courts of the viziers of Rayy—namely, Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 360/970) and Ibn ʿAbbād.[21] The diversity of knowledge sponsored by the different courts was also impressive. While the court of Baghdad promoted logic and philosophy, other courts, especially the one in Rayy, encouraged forms of the religious sciences.

2.2 *Knowledge-Based Groups*

As mentioned above, some men in Buyid society tried to maintain a level of independence from the ruling establishment in their intellectual practices. Some of these groups were semi-independent, while some enjoyed a deeper level of independence in their own established circles. The changing policies of different Buyid rulers, and the social and political climate in this period, caused a measure of caution and discomfort, which led some men in Buyid society to detach themselves, preferring to remain in their own groups. These men had an awareness, through their conscious participation in the study of a specific discipline of knowledge, of the independence of each of their fields and developed loyalties and commitments to their own group. This tendency resulted in a greater proliferation of strict, exclusionary boundaries between intellectual groups. Despite this attitude, polymaths still existed across group affiliations, such as Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, Aḥmad b. Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), and the Brethren of Purity.

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[19] For further discussion on the different acquired loyalities and the art of patronage in the Buyid period, see Mottahedeh, *Loyalty* 40–96.

[20] For intellectual life in Shirāz, see Howes, Qadi 875–894.

[21] See al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqa* 71–72. On Ṣamṣām al-Dawla, see Bosworth, Ṣamṣām al-Dawla 1050.

2.2.1 Semi-independent Religious Groups

Among the most established circles in this period were religious circles. These circles identified themselves as self-defining collectives on the basis of their distinctive activities and practices. Most of the religious scholars and circles, apart from the Shāfiʿis, tried to maintain a level of independence and not to link themselves with the activities of the Buyid emirs or viziers.

The consolidation of the three main Sunni legal schools, including the Shafiʿi, Hanafi, and Hanbali schools, continued in Baghdad. The schools followed the activities of leading figures from the late ninth to the early to mid-tenth centuries.[22] This, according to Stewart, could be seen, in part, as opposition to the Shiʿites, who also developed the constituent elements of their own classical schools of law, which had come into being by the end of the tenth century, especially the Zaydi and the Imami schools.[23]

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[22] Melchert singles out the Shafiʿi jurist Ibn Surayj (d. 306/918), the Hanbali jurist al-Khallāl (d. 311/923), and the Hanafi jurist Abū l-Ḥasan al-Karkhī (d. 340/952) as the virtual founders of the Shafiʿi, Hanbali, and Hanafi schools of law respectively. They collected the teachings and legal doctrines of eponyms, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 240/855), and Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 149/767), after whom the schools were named; see Melchert, *Formation* 87–156. This dating given by Melchert conflicts, particularly regarding the order of appearance of schools of law, with Makdisi, who uses the publication of *Ṭabaqāt* works—biographical compendia arranged by generations—devoted to the jurists of each *madhhab* as evidence for their formation. While Makdisi gives the leading role to the formation of the Hanbalis in the formation of the Sunni legal schools, Melchert ascribes this role to the Shafiʿis and especially Ibn Surayj; for more information, see Makdisi, Law 371–396; Stewart, Review 277. Hallaq, however, thinks that the authority of the so-called founders or eponyms cannot be historically accurate and was largely "a later creation, partly drawn from attributions to the eponyms by their successors, and partly a later denial of the significant contributions made by the earliest jurists to the formation of the eponyms' doctrine." This was the result of complex forces, rather than the distinctive contributions of the Imams themselves; see Hallaq, *Authority* 57, 58–85, see also Hallaq, *Themes* 158–159.

The schools developed an authoritative structure and consolidated the teaching of a leading jurist, after whom the school acquired its characteristics.[24] There were different methods applied in the context of the schools, including *ijāza* (license) to teach the authoritative texts and the ability to collect a body of juridical opinions of a recognized teacher.[25]

For example, the Shafiʿis consolidated the teaching of their own schools. Two associates of Abū l-ʿAbbās b. Surayj (d. 306/917), who collected the jurisprudence of al-Shāfiʿī—namely, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Marwazī (d. 340/951) and al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaṭṭān (d. 359/970)—established their own schools.[26]

Other religious scholars also consolidated the teachings of their own circles, such as the Hanafi Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Jurjānī (d. 398/1009), who had his own teaching circle in a private mosque.[27] The Hanbalis also established their own circles.[28] Many of them were very strict in maintaining the independence of their own circles, as in the case of the Hanbali Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥasan b. Ḥāmid (d. 403/1014), who refused a pension sent to him by the caliph al-Qādir in appreciation of his learning.[29]

There was another narrowing of doctrinal affiliations that appeared in this period. Each religious school appeared to have defined their boundaries in contrast to the claims of the other schools.[30] The schools also developed their own curriculum, legal methodology, and regular method of training students.[31]

In this atmosphere of constant striving among members of the school to prove the validity of their disciplines and teachings, forms of competition appeared between different jurists and individuals and this manifested in heated debates. Each party attempted to defeat its opponents by using different methods and tricks. This general tendency was reported by many scholars of the age. Al-Subkī, for example, reports a debate in the Manṣūr mosque in Baghdad between the Shafiʿi judge Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Ṭabarī, Ṭāhir b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 450/1058) and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ṭāliqānī (d. ca. 457/1065), the judge of Balkh and a leading imam of the Ḥanafiyya.[32] He also reports from al-Tawḥīdī that Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfarāʾīnī (d. 406/1017), the head of the Iraqi school in his time,[33] advised Ṭāhir al-ʿAbbādānī not to transmit much of what he heard from him in the debating sessions (*majālis al-jadal*), because the discussions were carried out with the intention of defeating the opponents (*dafʿih wa-mughālabatih*) in order to win legitimacy for their disciplines as the valid one and not for the sake of obedience to God (*li-wajh Allāh khāliṣan*).[34] He adds that, on many occasions, silence in these *majālis* would have been better than duplicity and zealous speech.[35]

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[23] The Sunni activities were also directed against Muʿtazili theologians, especially in the eleventh century, when the Qādirī creed publicly prohibited the teaching of both Shiʿi and Muʿtazilī doctrines; see Stewart, Review 278–279; see also Kraemer, *Humanism* 62–63.

[24] Hallaq, *Authority* 61; Hallaq, *Themes* 152.

[25] See Makdisi, *Rise* 29; Mottahedeh, *Loyalty* 146; Melchert, *Formation* xviii.

[26] See Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 322.

[27] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* vii, 243.13–15; Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 326.

[28] On the formation of Hanbali doctrine, see Hurvitz, *Formation* 91–112.

[29] See Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt* ii, 171–177; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* vii, 263.3–11; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh* vii, 303.5–18; Nābulsī, *Ikhtiṣār* 359–361; Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 320, 322.

[30] Hallaq, *Authority* 62.

[31] Melchert, *Formation* xiv–xvii; Hallaq, *Themes* 156.

In general, as well as in these *majālis* in particular, each of the competing groups acted as if it was the only possessor and defender of the prophetic *sunna*, and this sometimes took the form of a hostile attitude and religious zeal. Among the Shafiʿis, for example, Ibn Surayj was represented as one sent to revive the prophetic *sunna* and to eliminate all forms of innovations.[36] Al-Tawḥīdī further portrays the behavior of jurists as duplicitous, jealous, constantly attempting to mislead one another, and producing contradictory views.[37] He also mentions brutal disagreements and how they held rigidly to their own views and followed their own passions and desires. He also condemns their false piety and lack of proper moral behavior.[38]

2.2.2 Independent Knowledge-Based Groups

The grammarians and theologians also attempted to define their own circles and learning, and to develop their own methods. The philosophers also organized themselves within specific circles, but the boundaries between the different circles were not clearly defined. Members of the philosophical circle of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 974 CE), a Christian philosopher and theologian, scribe, translator, and commentator on the works of Aristotle, who followed the neo-

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[32] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* v, 24–36. Al-Subkī also reports another debate between al-Ṭayyib al-Ṭabarī and Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Qudūrī from the *Ḥanafiyya*; see al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* v, 36–46.

[33] See ibid., iv, 61.

[34] Ibid., 62.

[35] Ibid.

[36] See Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 322; see al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh* iv, 217–288, 290; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* iii, 23.1–14; Donohue, *Buwayhid dynasty* 322.

[37] See al-Tawḥīdī and Ibn Miskawayh, *Hawāmil* 328–329.

[38] Ibid., 329.5–9.

Aristotelian and the Alexandrian tradition, were also regular members of other philosophical circles.[39] Al-Sijistānī, Ibn ʿAdī's student who followed the Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophical traditions, established his own circle, which used to gather at his residence.[40] His circle was also joined by other members of Ibn ʿAdī's circle, especially Muslims.[41] Philosophical ideas in both circles were practiced nearly exclusively inside the circles themselves. Philosophers defined their own discipline in contrast to other fields, such as grammar. For example, Ibn ʿAdī wrote a small treatise entitled *Tabyīn al-faṣl bayna ṣināʿatay al-manṭiq al-falsafī wa-l-naḥw al-ʿarabī* (*Explanation of the difference between the arts of philosophical logic and Arabic grammar*), in which he summarized the difference between grammar and philosophical logic.[42] Al-Sijistānī states clearly that the fields of philosophy and religion are two separate domains that cannot be combined.

2.2.3 Cross-Discipline Groups or Polymaths

Alongside groups whose members identified themselves based on their conscious participation in a specific group, a number of scholars in this period remained committed to the concept of knowledge in its totality. Such scholars and groups were not fanatics of a specific field of study, but they shifted their loyalty between different categories. In contrast to scholars who tended to limit themselves to their own field, some participated in multiple disciplines. According to al-Tawātī, scholars like al-Tawḥīdī and al-Tanūkhī maintained a comprehensive notion of knowledge by participating in the study of all available knowledge.[43]

For al-Tawḥīdī, this is based on his belief that the value of knowledge lies in its essence and not in one specific field or branch. He states that knowledge is noble in origin and this nobility applies to all its branches, whether religious or secular:

> If *ʿilm* is noble (*sharīf*) and the most noble (*ashraf*) of all things, then it follows that this universality (*al-ʿumūm*) is applicable to [all of its] class (*al-jins*), and this generalization entirely encompasses [both] the origin and the branch. This is because [the word] *al-ʿilm* with the definite

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[39] For the activities of the circle and the interactions of its members with other circles, see Kraemer, *Humanism* 104–134, 198.

[40] On al-Sijistānī's circle, see ibid., 139–165, Kraemer, *Philosophy* 1–30.

[41] Kraemer, *Humanism* 139–140.

[42] For an account of the book, see Versteegh, *Landmarks* 60–62.

[43] See al-Tawātī, *Muthaqqafūn* i, 155.

> article (*bi-l-alif wa-l-lām*) does not specify one [form of] knowledge (*maʿlūm*) rather than another.[44]

This understanding of the nature of knowledge seems to address al-Tawḥīdī's position on the debate concerning the valid forms of knowledge. It might also indicate his attempt to divert scholars' attention from basing the validity of knowledge on its source, to its essence and value. He tries to reconcile contemporary, intellectual anxieties about the status of various disciplines of knowledge, conceived as separate fields, and fit them all into a cohesive framework, showing how they could be conceived in relation to one another. This comprehensive approach to knowledge is discussed clearly in his letter *Risāla fī aqsām al-ʿulūm* (*On the classification of knowledge*), in which he discusses the relationship between various contemporary disciplines, including religious science, logic, and the traditional Arabic sciences, arguing for intersections between all forms of knowledge.

Based on this understanding of knowledge, al-Tawḥīdī, for example, developed affiliations with various philosophical, religious, and intellectual groups, such as different Shafiʿi study circles, the philosophical circles in Baghdad, the circles of the grammarians al-Sīrāfī and al-Rummānī, and frequented Sufi masters. Therefore, al-Tawḥīdī crossed the boundaries between disciplines that modern scholars have seen as hostile to one another—namely, religious studies, jurisprudence, the study of language, philosophy, and *taṣawwuf*.[45]

Another scholar of this period who followed a similar approach is Miskawayh, who also had cross-group affiliations. In addition to his active political career, he practiced philosophy and was a member of Ibn Saʿdān's circle. He covered various fields ranging from history to psychology and chemistry.[46]

The members of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, a secret group of closely associated thinkers who were united with each other by friendship and sincerity, are also another good example of scholars who practiced different forms of knowledge. Their *Epistles*, which cover a wide range of disciplines, exemplify their openness to the different forms of knowledge that were circulating in the public and intellectual spheres of the period.[47]

The *Epistles* are neatly divided into four main parts. Fourteen of them focus on the mathematical sciences, seventeen on the natural sciences, ten deal with psychological and intellectual sciences, and the concluding eleven in the last four volumes of the Arabic edition concentrate on metaphysics or theological science. This shows the polymath tendency among the Ikhwān, who did not restrict themselves to the study of one specific field and tried to find virtue in the different forms of knowledge, whether religious or secular.

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[44] Ibid., 105–106.

[45] See Cooperson, *Heirs* 24; see also Makdisi, *Rise* 1–200.

[46] See Leaman, Ibn Miskawayh 252.

[47] See Netton, Brethren 223.

On the level of discourse, a close look at the epistles shows better the unitary conception that the authors of the epistles had in relation to the scripture and *falsafa*. The authors considered both traditions, the philosophical tradition and the scriptural one, to be equally valid as sources of wisdom. The tension between the people of religion and the people of philosophy manifested in heated debates between the two groups. However, the Ikhwān thought that if properly understood and interpreted, the two sources were in complete harmony with each other.

This same position was adopted by al-Tawḥīdī, who was exposed to the teaching of the Ikhwān and their epistles. He stated this position very clearly in a number of his *muqābasāt* that dealt with contemporary themes and assessed the relationship between language, grammar, and logic.[48] For al-Tawḥīdī, the study of logic may evoke aspects of grammar, and vice versa:[49] "Were it not that perfection were impossible, it would be required that a logician be a grammarian and a grammarian a logician, for the language is Arabic and logic is translated into it."[50] This may be seen as an attempt to maintain the primacy of Arabic religious science as a valid source of salvation, while not excluding secular forms of knowledge.

The Ikhwān also attempted to resolve the division between what others saw as competing disciplines, and they also tried to reconcile differences within the sphere of religious truth.[51] For them, all religious communities are subject to division and disagreement, and this can be lessened by properly understanding religion in a more allegorical sense, as well as using philosophical tools.

3 Conclusion

This paper offers an analytical overview of the perception of knowledge, learning, and educational practices in the Buyid period. One of the main aims of this paper was to highlight the direct relationship between the shift in the understanding of the concept of knowledge and the forms of knowledge produced by this shift and the social and political changes in Buyid society.

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[48] Al-Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt* 121–125, 126–128, 129–132.

[49] Ibid., 132.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Heck, *Skepticism* 81.

The paper provides a description of the various social-intellectual groups that emerged, including the traditional form of "court-based groups," which were connected to different Buyid courts, and "knowledge-based groups," such as the semi-independent legal schools and other mono- or multi-disciplinary circles, which shaped their own intellectual practices and developed their own curricula and methodologies.

An analysis of these groups has shown how the various intellectual attitudes and practices of the period were conditioned by the material world and connected to the emerging cultural patterns and changing political attitudes in the period. Court-based groups of scholars were able to produce manuals that met the needs of their Buyid patrons, which was for them to claim legitimacy for their rule. Thus, knowledge was seen as an effective tool to establish prestige and political legitimacy for the ruling elite. Buyid emirs competed to attract the best intellectuals of the time to join their circles in an attempt to bring about a sense of authority in a climate of uncertainty and constantly changing economic and political circumstances.

Furthermore, the prevalent tendency among different groups in Buyid society, which was to consolidate their own identities and practices, appears to have influenced the increasingly defined boundaries of specific disciplines and knowledge production that led to scholarly specialization. These attitudes reflect not only how members of Buyid society continued some of the cultural practices that existed under the late ʿAbbasids, but also how different groups and agents demonstrated different forms of social agency.

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CHAPTER 29

A Ruler's Curriculum: Transcultural Comparisons of *Mirrors for Princes*

Enrico Boccaccini

> [F]or those who educate men in private stations benefit them alone, but if one can turn those who rule over the multitude toward a life of virtue, he will help both classes, both those who hold positions of authority and their subjects; for he will give to kings a greater security in office and to the people a milder government.[1]
>
> ISOCRATES (436–338 BCE)

…

> The first upon whom counsels (*naṣāʾiḥ*) should be bestowed is the sultan, may God extend his glory, because in his integrity lies the integrity (*ṣalāḥ*) of all [his] people.[2]
>
> IBN AL-JAWZĪ (510–597/1126–1200)

⁂

The shared sentiment in the above statements seems to be that the most effective way to improve people's lives is to educate the monocratic ruler. As a result, we have texts from all parts of the world that offer advice on rulership. However, this seemingly universal genre, often referred to as *Mirrors for princes*, seldom receives a scholarly treatment that does justice to its transcultural nature. As recently as 2013, Linda T. Darling noted that, when it comes to Christian and Islamic *Mirrors*, "the historiographical or critical tradition has taken two extremely similar phenomena and rendered them incommensurable."[3] This

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[1] Norlin, *Isocrates* 45.

[2] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Miṣbāḥ* 162.

[3] Darling, Incommensurability 225.

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incommensurability is especially questionable in light of the picture that scholars like Aziz Al-Azmeh have drawn of the vivid traffic in both thought and symbol between the societies that were the legatees of the antique cultural heritage that crystallized in the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia.[4] A transcultural approach[5] to the phenomenon of *Mirrors* allows us to address this conceptual problem and question the separation by comparing Christian and Islamic *Mirrors* across the historiographically defined limits of their traditions.

In preparation for a more comprehensive and in-depth transcultural study of *Mirrors*, the present paper seeks to provide an overview and comparisons of the topics that authors of *Mirrors* have addressed in their works. The resulting list will represent a model curriculum for the education of monocratic rulers in the Abrahamic societies between the eighth and thirteenth centuries CE. This curriculum will provide us with an insight into what monocratic rulers were advised to learn and do and how this information was presented to them. It will also give us an idea of how *Mirrors* might have contributed to the definition and reinforcement of the scope and meaning of rulership. The study will look at individual elements of the curriculum in terms of their appearance or omission in *Mirrors*, and it will also analyze and compare the multiple ways in which authors have interpreted them. Therefore, this paper will also help us to widen our understanding of the specific social, cultural, and historical context in which these *Mirrors* were written.

1 *Mirrors* in Their Context

The earliest of the *Mirrors* that I will consider in this article is the famous *Letter to the crown prince* attributed to ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib (d. 132/750), chief secretary of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II (r. 127–132/744–750). In 747, when Marwān decided to send his son and designated successor ʿAbdallāh to fight a Kharijite rebellion in the Mosul area, he ordered ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd to write a *risāla* to the young ruler.[6] This highly elaborate epistle combines the father's admonitions on ceremonial conduct, and general remarks on how to be a ruler, with advice on matters of warfare. Until now, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's *Risāla*[7] has been studied primarily either as an example of the Arabic epistolary genre or for its role in the development of Arabic prose.[8] The latter issue is also often accompanied by discussions on potential Greek influences on ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's style of writing, in particular his extensive use of qualifying clauses.[9] Recently the *Risāla*'s importance in the history of what has been termed the "Islamic *Mirror*-tradition" has found scholarly recognition.[10] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's *Risāla* is representative of the early stages of this tradition, when *Mirrors* often came in the form of epistles and were written primarily by *mawālī* secretaries (*kuttāb*) who adapted and translated Greek (usually via Syriac), Pahlavi, and Sanskrit material.[11]

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[4] The starting point of al-Azmeh's enlightening study, *Muslim kingship* (1997), is his subsumption of Christian kingship and Muslim caliphate and sultanate under the term "kingship." This allows him to compare the large repertoire of enunciations of power that Christian and Muslim rulers, as legatees of late antiquity, had at their disposal. Another important contribution to our understanding of the history of the Mediterranean area is Garth Fowden's pioneering study *Empire to commonwealth: Consequences of monotheism in late antiquity* (1993). By pointing out the continuities between late antiquity and the Islamic Empire, Fowden reinstates Islam as an integral part of the connected history of the Mediterranean area.

[5] On the transcultural methodology, see Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille, *Transcultural history* 1–142; and Höfert, *Anmerkungen*.

Less than a century after ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's death, the bishop Jonas of Orléans (760–843) dedicated his *De institutione regia* (*On the royal education*)[12] to king Pepin I of Aquitaine (797–838), the son of the Carolingian emperor Louis I (778–840). Composed in 831, the *De institutione regia* (from now on referred to as *DIR*) came one year after the first of several civil wars between the emperor and his sons, including Pepin, that eventually culminated in the final fragmentation of the Frankish empire.[13] Jonas offers Pepin the *DIR* as a monitory letter, cautioning him against disloyalty toward his father and reminding him of a king's duties.[14] The 17 chapters, which are preceded by a dedication letter, discuss the details of the king's office (*ministerium*), its relation to God and the episcopate, and a number of more general issues in the realm of religious practice. Since the *DIR* is based almost entirely on the council acts of the 829 Paris synod, during which the Carolingian episcopate laid out its vision of Christian kingship, the *DIR* is highly reflective of the contemporary discourse on rulership. Jonas's work is also frequently mentioned as a prime example of the Carolingian *Mirror*-tradition that was firmly in the hands of clerical authors and is characterized by its heavy reliance on Augustinian thought and its general focus on the king's personal Christian virtues.[15]

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[6] Hawting, Marwān II. Cf. also Marlow, *Advice*; and al-Qāḍī, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd.

[7] Throughout the paper I will use *Risāla* (as opposed to *risāla*) to refer specifically to ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's *Mirror*.

[8] For instance, Latham, Beginnings; or Schönig, *Sendschreiben*.

[9] This claim is most famously sustained by Taha Hussein, *Min ḥadīth* 42–44. However, it is refuted by scholars like Francesco Gabrieli, Il kâtib ʿAbd al-Hamîd 328.

[10] Cf. Yousefi, Islam.

[11] Other examples of these early stages are, inter alia, the *Risāla fī l-ṣaḥāba* (*Epistle concerning the entourage*) by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (b. 102/720), as well as his version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, or Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn's *Risāla* (*Epistle*; ca. 206/821–822) to his son ʿAbdallāh. The early tradition also includes large *adab* compendia, such as the *Kitāb ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (*The book of choice narratives*) by the famous theologian and *adīb* Ibn Qutayba (213–276/828–889) or the *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* (*The unique necklace*) by the Andalusian panegyrist Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (246–328/860–940).

[12] In this paper I use Dubreucq's edition of the *De institutione regia*, which he published in *Le métier de roi*.

[13] Boshof, *Ludwig* 109–134.

[14] Anton, Fürstenspiegel 214–215.

According to Clifford Edmund Bosworth, it was only during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries that "classical Islamic civilization" saw the emergence of a "full blown, independent Mirror for Princes genre."[16] One of the most famous *Mirrors* of that era is the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (450–505/1058–1111). Written for either the Great Seljuq sultan Muḥammad b. Malik-Shāh (r. 498–511/1105–1118) or his brother and successor Sanjar (d. 552/1157), who was then *malik* of Khorasan, the composition of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* coincides with a period of relative recovery and attempts at the empire's reorganization after Malikshāh's death in 485/1092, which had been followed by internecine wars between the different Seljuq leaders. The text's attribution to al-Ghazālī is still a matter of fierce debate, with questions also raised over the relation between the work's two parts.[17] The first part of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* presents the nature of God and the ten principles of justice. The second part starts with a long chapter on rulership, followed by a series of shorter chapters discussing topics like viziers, secretaries, and women. Regardless of the identity of its author, the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* marks an important stage of what historiography has termed the "Islamic" *Mirror*-tradition. The text reflects a moment in which the *ʿulamāʾ* increasingly engaged with the genre by composing *Mirrors* that responded to the rise of worldly sultans at the expense of the institution of the caliphate.[18]

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[15] Cf. ibid., 1043–1044; Hadot, Fürstenspiegel 621–623; Lambertini, Mirrors 792; and Singer, Fürstenspiegel 708. Other prominent examples for the Carolingian *Mirror*-tradition are Lupus of Ferrieres's (ca. 805–862) letters to the Carolingian emperor Charles II, the *De regis persona et regio ministerio* (*On the person of the king and the regal ministry*) by Hincmar of Reims (806–882), the *Via regia* (*Royal way*) by Smaragdus of St. Mihiel (760–840), and the *De rectoribus christianis* (*On Christian rulers*) by Sedulius Scottus (840–860).

[16] Bosworth, Arabic mirror 26.

[17] For the most recent summary of the debate over the authorship of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, see Said, *Ghazālī's politics* 20–24.

[18] One of the earliest *Mirrors* with a strong legal imprint is al-Māwardī's (d. 1058) *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* (*The ordinances of government*). Among the other Persian *Mirrors* to emerge during that period are the *Qābūsnāma* (*Book of Qābūs*; c. 1082–1083) by the Ziyārid prince

The Christian *Mirror*-tradition also, according to the historiographical narrative, underwent significant changes in the twelfth century.[19] One *Mirror* to emerge from these changes was the *Castigos e documentos para bien vivir* (*Teachings and treatises for right living*), attributed to Sancho IV, king of Castile and León (r. 1284–1295). Dedicated to Sancho's son and designated heir Ferdinand IV (r. 1295–1312), the *Castigos* presents itself as a father's advice,[20] although it seems more likely that the authorship lies with other members of the royal court.[21] The work was probably composed around the year 1293, at a time when Ferdinand was only eight years old and his father was facing both political instability and deteriorating health. The text consists of 50 chapters, without a frame-narrative, and is preceded by a prologue. Only chapters 9 to 16 directly address issues related to kingship, while the other chapters discuss religious matters, the role of the clergy, a number of specific virtues and vices, and instructions regarding ways of interacting with certain types of people. The *Castigos* is representative of a new type of *Mirrors* because it was one of the first works composed in a vernacular. Other *Mirrors* of this period are characterized by their non-clerical authorship and their synthesis of religious and classical ideals.[22]

ʿUnṣur al-Maʿālī Kaykāʾūs b. Iskandar, the *Siyāsatnāma* (*Book of government*) attributed to the famous Seljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092), and the anonymous sixth/twelfth-century *Baḥr al-fawāʾid* (*The sea of precious virtues*).

[19] This stage of the history of the Christian *Mirror*-tradition is usually said to have commenced with John of Salisbury's (ca. 1118–1180) composition of the *Policraticus*. Cf. Berges, *Fürstenspiegel* 3–4; and Lambertini, Mirrors 791.

[20] Almost all chapters, and sometimes even single paragraphs, begin with a direct address to the son (*"Mío fijo"*—"My son"). The father's duty to instruct the son seems to be somewhat of a topos in *Mirrors* attributed to rulers (and addressed to their sons and designated successors). The *Castigos*' prologue justifies the work's compilation by indicating that "all men are obliged (*obligado*) to educate (*castigar*), guide and administer their sons" and that this "pertains even more so to kings and princes who have to govern kingdoms and peoples" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* Ról.: 10). For references to the *Castigos* I have adopted the system of chapter and verse reference used in Bizzarri's edition.

[21] In my eyes, the *Castigos* is most likely a product of the cathedral school of Toledo. Cf. Bizzarri, Reflexiones 443–444.

[22] The new wave of vernacular *Mirrors* includes, among many others, the French *Li livres dou tresor* (*The books of treasures*) by Brunetto Latini (ca. 1220–1294) and the Catalan *Libre de Saviesa* (*Book of wisdom*) by James I of Aragon (1208–1276). Informed by the rediscovered works of Aristotle are the *Mirrors* by Giles of Rome (1243–1316) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), which both bear the title *De regimine principum* (*On the government of princes*).

2 A Ruler's Curriculum

In compiling the following survey, I have made an attempt to define certain topic clusters, rather than listing concrete questions that the authors sought to answer. As a result, we will occasionally encounter a noticeable overlap between these clusters. The different clusters or topics are arranged according to their approximate prominence in the texts, both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking. Naturally, the list of topics that will emerge from the analysis of a limited number of texts cannot represent an exhaustive or normative catalogue of characteristic topics in advice literature for monocratic rulers, and every additional text is likely to reveal new topics or new ways of approaching those that can be encountered in other *Mirrors*. In other words, the following curriculum will provide us with an idea of what subjects a *Mirror might* raise, rather than *should* raise, although, anticipating the discussion to come, the ubiquitous references to some aspects of monocratic rulership suggest that certain topics are intrinsic to every text that aims at giving advice and educating an individual holding such a position.

2.1 *Characteristics of a Ruler*

Whether explicitly or implicitly, all *Mirrors* under consideration remark on the traits that they want the ruler to display; they answer both the question of how the ruler should be and how he should not be.[23] These enumerations of character traits and modes of behavior are often referred to as virtue catalogues (*Tugendkanon*). *Mirrors*, however, being practically minded vade mecums rather than theoretical treatises, hardly ever discuss virtues and vices in the form of an organized catalogue or list, although we might find that in some cases they establish hierarchies of virtues or have recourse to other organizing structures.[24] Since the virtues and behaviors that authors demand from a ruler have a significant overlap with what is deemed appropriate for many or all other members of society, some *Mirrors* cannot be said to be intended exclusively for the instruction of the ruler. Instead, these texts aim at educating a more general audience. If the intended audience represents society as a whole, these texts are also referred to as *Mirrors for society* (*Gesellschaftsspiegel*).[25] While some *Mirrors* feature a designated chapter or section on the ideal characteristics of a ruler,[26] others contain separate discussions on particular traits, at times including a note that this specific quality is particularly important for a ruler.[27] A detailed discussion of the virtue catalogues of *Mirrors* would exceed the limits of this article, the more so because some of the recurring traits represent variable concepts that can adopt a multiplicity of meanings, even within a single *Mirror*. Instead, I will discuss, in very general terms, the (quantitatively and qualitatively) most prominent traits by indicating their presence or absence, their specific interpretations, and their role in the four primary texts.

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[23] Jonas tells Pepin that he will explain to him what he has "to be (*esse*), to do (*agere*) and to avoid (*cavere*)" (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 55–56). For references to the *De institutione* I have adopted the system of chapter and line reference used in Dubreucq's edition. Similarly, in the *Risāla* ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd summarizes the first part of his letter as providing instructions (*awāmir*) and prohibitions (*zawājir*) (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 494). (Pseudo-)Niẓām al-Mulk explains in the first chapter of the *Siyāsatnāma* that the text will provide "some of those good qualities/virtues (*siyar*) that kings cannot dispense of" (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 16).

[24] The *Risāla* employs a whole series of organizing models in its presentation of a ruler's traits, including the direct juxtaposition of virtues and vices, the tripartite model that is reminiscent of the Aristotelian principle of mesotes, the Sasanian ideal of *paymān* (right measure), and even a quadripartite model, where two correlative virtues are juxtaposed

One of the most important and, at the same time, most diversified regal virtues to emerge from many *Mirrors* is justice.[28] First of all, being just means for the ruler to correct his subjects through just, i.e., impartial,[29] (legal) judgments. In the *DIR* the aim of the ruler's corrective justice is to set his subjects on the divine path.[30] Both in the *DIR* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, corrective justice

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by their exaggerations. For instance, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd warns against exaggeration both in relation to punishment and mercy (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 480). In the Sasanian context such a model has been described by Shaked, *Wisdom* xli.

[25] Bejczy argues that, in contrast to the virtue theories of antiquity that were intended exclusively for politically active citizens, medieval discussions on virtues were more egalitarian in their outlook; they considered all virtues to be founded in religion and therefore tended not to differentiate between the virtues of a ruler and those of his subjects (Bejczy, Virtue 1369).

[26] For instance, ch. 1 (of part 2) of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, "On the exercise of justice and discipline and the qualities of kings (*sayrat al-mulūk*)"; ch. 3 of the *DIR*, "What the king is, what he ought to be and what he ought to avoid"; or ch. 42 of the *Qābūsnāma*, "On rulership (*pādshāhī*)."

[27] The *Castigos* warns against greed (*codiçia*/*cobdiçia*), especially in "kings and emperors, because they occupy a higher position (*logar*) than others" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XXII:2). It also tells the addressee that a ruler has to avoid sin, because "everybody pays attention to what he says and does" and takes him as an example (*enxenplo*) and a mirror (*espejo*) (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XIII:15–16). See also Bizzarri, *Castigos* IX:3; and XI:46.

[28] See also al-Azmeh, *Muslim kingship* 61. In the *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, justice (*ʿadāla*) is the first of the seven conditions that a candidate must fulfill to become a ruler (al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 16).

[29] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 121; and Bizzarri, *Castigos* IX:9.

[30] Cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 58–61; and 161–166.

is also meant to preserve (social) peace and a divinely ordained state of balance that guarantees safety and prosperity.[31] In many "Islamic" *Mirrors*, including the second half of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*,[32] the idea of the ruler's justice producing safety and prosperity for the subjects is expressed through the ancient Middle Eastern concept of the *Circle of Justice*.[33] However, the *DIR* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* also refer to an entire list of additional ways of how royal justice must be exercised, including the seeking of advice, the imposition of justice on all state officials, and the practice of humility.[34] The requirement to provide for the subjects' needs and to redress their grievances, which features the extended definitions of justice in both these *Mirrors*,[35] presents another common theme in many Seljuq *Mirrors*.[36] In terms of the effects that the ruler's justice produces, the *DIR* describes its role in securing the king's rule,[37] while both the *DIR* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* also link justice to the ruler's salvation.[38] The consequences of injustice, however, especially in the *DIR*, can take on a cosmological scale.[39] The ruler's justice has both a religious aspect—it represents a religious duty through which the ruler can earn his salvation—and a practical aspect (since it produces safety and prosperity for the subjects, which in turn secures the ruler's position).

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[31] The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* defines justice as "God's balance (*tarāzū*) on earth" (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 105), and elsewhere it argues that "[j]ustice is the strength of religion and the power of the Sultan. It produces well-being for the subjects and leads to peace and a life in security and prosperity" (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 149). See also al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 111; and 129. Cf. Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 26 and Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 100–101. On justice, order, and peace in the *DIR*, see Dubreucq, *Métier de roi* 90–92. On justice as balance in the "medieval Persian theory of kingship," see Lambton, Theory of kingship 119. On justice as balance in the Hellenistic and Islamic tradition, see Rosenthal, Political justice 100–101.

[32] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 100–101.

[33] Cf. Darling, Circle.

[34] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 14–51; and Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 64–82.

[35] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 47; 158; 167–169; and Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* V, I. 43–47.

[36] Cf. "3.2 Duties of a Ruler."

[37] Cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 63; The *Castigos* states that "everything is governed (*gouierrnan*) and maintained through justice" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* IX:51) and that "many kings have lost [their] realms for a lack of justice" (XII:45–49).

[38] The *DIR* defines justice as the king's "hope for future beatitude" (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 105), and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* reminds the ruler that his subjects will repay his justice by becoming his intercessors (*shafīʿ*) on the Day of Judgment (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 79). Cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 17–18. Lupus of Ferrieres combines both the political and the eschatological effects of justice when he explains that it will not only earn him God's reward (*Deum meritum*), but also secure his earthly power (*terrenam potestatem*) (Lupus of Ferrieres, Epistolae 82: 28–29).

[39] The *DIR* describes the detrimental impact of injustice on (social) peace, the subjects' health, and the climate (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 83–99). See also Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* X. Cf. Meens, Mirrors for princes and the Bible.

Religion or religiosity is a central topic in most of the *Mirrors* under consideration, and since the ruler was often seen as an exemplary figure, it was deemed necessary that he was properly instructed on the correct practices, precepts, and beliefs of his faith. As a result, discussions on religious practices and beliefs occupy entire sections or chapters of the text in many *Mirrors*.[40] Ubiquitously present is the emphasis on the virtue of piety or religiousness that finds its expression, inter alia, in the fear of God and the Day of Judgment, adherence to His laws, and gratefulness for His mercy. The *Castigos* depicts the fear of God (*themor de Dios*), knowledge/awareness of Him (*conosçimiento*), and true belief (*creençia*) as the most important "weapons" (*armas*) in the fight against the devil.[41] In the *DIR*, piety (*pietas*), together with mercy and justice, form a triad of fundamental royal virtues.[42] The ruler's *pietas* is also closely linked to his justice, since the practice of justice entails the imposition of a pious lifestyle on the subjects.[43] In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* as well, piety is intertwined with justice,[44] although the text leaves no doubt that, for a ruler, justice is more important than piety.[45] Yet, the importance of religion remains significant as the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* declares religion and kingship to be twins.[46] In contrast, piety plays a comparatively minor role as a royal virtue in the *Risāla*. The text merely urges the ruler to read the Quran[47] and be mindful of his relationship to the divine.[48]

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[40] For instance, chapters 1–8 of the *Castigos* and the entire first part of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* cover mainly religious issues, like religious practices, sin, divine laws, alms, and the meaning of true faith. In the *DIR*, chapters 11, 15, and 16 are dedicated exclusively to religious concepts and practices. In contrast, the *Risāla* does not convey a significant amount of religious knowledge. However, the work clearly betrays an attempt to bolster the Umayyads' legitimacy by emphasizing their role as leaders of the Islamic community and as God's chosen vicegerents on earth. Cf. al-Qāḍī, Umayyad ideology.

[41] Bizzarri, *Castigos* I. 16.

[42] Cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 5; and VI, I. 31–35.

[43] Cf. ibid., III, I. 75–78.

[44] The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* names justice (*ʿadl*)—toward the subjects—and piety or obedience (*ṭāʿa*)—toward God—as the two components of faith (*īmān*) (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 13–14). In the *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* the relation between justice and piety is of a different kind. Here, justice means for a ruler not to succumb to his desires (*shahwa*), as this is seen as sinful, and not to leave room for doubts about his faith (cf. al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 32).

[45] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 25 and 124. Both the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 82) and the *Siyāsatnāma* (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 17) also quote the same *ḥadīth*, according to which "[k]ingship (*mulk*) stays with unbelief (*kufr*), but not with injustice (*ẓulm*)." On the recurring idea of the preferability of justice over piety in Islamic texts on rulership, see Sadan, Literary problem 107–115.

[46] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 106. Cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 75.

Another major theme of *Mirrors* virtue catalogues is emotional restraint, which appears among a number of traits that are demanded from a ruler. The advice to curb one's anger—and excessive joy[49]—pervades all four *Mirrors*.[50] The *Risāla*, in particular, emphasizes the importance for the ruler to control his emotions in public, in order to disguise his thoughts.[51] Linked to the ruler's corrective role is the virtue of forgiveness that implies the ruler's abstention from revenge or the exercise of forbearance in the face of an act of injustice committed by a subject. Forgiveness bears a religious connotation in all of the *Mirrors* under discussion,[52] with the exception of the *Risāla*, which instead focuses on the granting of forgiveness as a ruler's tool to win his subjects' gratitude and loyalty.[53] Yet some *Mirrors*, like the *Castigos* and the *De regia persona*, also express the feeling that indiscriminate forgiveness could have dire consequences for the ruler.[54]

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[47] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 477. Moreover, the *Risāla* also advises the ruler to supplicate God for help (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 494–495).

[48] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 474.

[49] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 42.

[50] The *DIR* praises the control of feelings and the appeasement of emotions through rational judgment (*rationabili discretione*) (Jonas d' Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 139–142). The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* urges the ruler to fight his anger through forgiveness (*ʿafū*), generosity (*karm*), and forbearance (*burdbārī*) (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 40). In the *Castigos*, emotional restraint is obtained through patience (*pasçiençia*) and moderation (*mesura*), which in turn stands for good manners (*buenas costunbres*) and shame (*vergüença*) toward God (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XIV:6–7). *Pasçiençia* is thus a distinctly religious virtue in the *Castigos* (cf. XXX:4–28, 29–30, and 39). The *Siyāsatnāma* declares that the bravest man is he who "can withhold himself in times of anger (*khashm*)" (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 108).

[51] For instance, that *Risāla* addresses the ruler's proper conduct in his "convoy (*mawākib*)" (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 483–484). Elsewhere the *Risāla* also urges the ruler not to allow his joy to turn into "boastfulness (*baṭar*)" (480). Moreover, it characterizes the public display of extreme anger as an expression of "disgraceful foolishness (*sukhf shāʾin*), devastating rashness (*khiffa murdiyya*) and blatant ignorance (*jahāla bādiyya*)" (491).

[52] The *Castigos* considers *clemençia* as a defining virtue of rulership, because through the practice of forgiveness a ruler can imitate God (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XII:16). In the *DIR*, forgiveness or mercy (*misericordia*) is part of the aforementioned triad of fundamental royal virtues. Notions of forgiveness also feature in the Augustinian imperator-felix image that is quoted in both the *DIR* (cf. Jonas d' Orléans, *De institutione* XVII, I. 28–34) and *De regis persona* (Hincmarus Rhemensis, De regis persona 839C–840A). Regarding the benefits of forgiveness, the *DIR* declares that "God loves the practice of mercy and the passing of just judgment more than sacrifices" (Jonas d' Orléans, *De institutione* VI, I. 6–7). The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* explains that only those who have practiced forgiveness (*ʿafū*) will be saved on the Day of Judgment (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 40–41). Probably the most recurrent term in Islamic *Mirrors* to convey the notion of forgiveness and forbearance is *ḥilm*, which, in general, represents a pivotal element of Islamic ethics, especially in the context of rulership. On the significance of the virtue of *ḥilm* in Islamic ethics and its link to rulership, see Pellat, Ḥilm; and, Goldziher, *Muslim studies* 11–44.

Three of the four *Mirrors* also attribute a role to emotional restraint in the context of the ruler's decision-making. The *Risāla* contains frequent references to the importance of rational decision-making (*raʾy*),[55] the *Castigos* argues that all decisions must be based on *cordura*,[56] and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* warns explicitly against quick temper (*tundī*)[57] and the vacillation (*taqallub*) of the fickle heart.[58] In the DIR, however, the issue of decision-making is entirely absent, as the text's focus seems to lie on the ruler's duty to lead his subjects to salvation rather than on strategically governing a state. All four *Mirrors* also urge the ruler to practice restraint in his physical and material desires. The condemnation of passions and desires is expressed mainly in religious terms,[59] although the *Risāla* also points out their detrimental effect on the ruler's rational decision-making process.[60] And while the *Risāla* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* propose reason (*ʿaql*) as desire's main antagonist,[61] people's shame (*vergüença*) before God emerges as the strongest force to oppose carnal desire (*voluntad de la carne*) in the *Castigos*.[62] All the *Mirrors* except the *Risāla* also specifically condemn the desire for material goods, which is discussed in the context of the notions of avarice, contentment, and generosity.[63]

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[53] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 486. However, the DIR also points to the stabilizing effect of forgiveness or mercy (*misericordia*) on a king's rule (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 46–47; and VI, I. 5–6).

[54] In chapter xii of the *Castigos* the narrator informs the ruler on how, and under what circumstances, to absolve a wrongdoer, since forgiveness, so he argues, can be damaging (*dannosa*) when used wrongly (XII:14). The *De regia persona* contains an entire chapter on how to approach forgiveness (Hincmarus Rhemensis, De regis persona 846A–D).

[55] *Raʾy* is usually translated as "view" or "opinion," but I would argue that in the *Risāla* it denotes the entire process of judging and interpreting the situation, forming an opinion, and making a decision. The *Risāla* underscores the importance of the ruler's *raʾy* by reminding the addressee that he will be judged for its quality (cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 485). It urges the ruler, inter alia, to free his *raʾy* from the burden of improvisation (*badīha*) through careful considerations (487). In his epistle, Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn warns his son that anger (*ghadab*), bad temper (*ḥidda*), carelessness (*ṭayra*), and arrogance (*ghurūr*) must be countered with forbearance (*ḥilm*) and composure (*waqār*), because they damage one's judgment (*raʾy*) and are a sign of weak faith (Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 28). The *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* makes prudence or sound judgment (*raʾy*) one of its seven conditions for rulership (cf. al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 17).

[56] *Cordura* might be translated as "sanity of mind" or "prudence." The *Castigos* describes *cordura* as the "daughter of good understanding/perception (*entendimiento*)" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XLVIII:2). On the role of *cordura* in the process of decision-making, see Bizzarri, *Castigos* XLVIII:7–25. However, it should be noted that in the *Castigos* the virtue of *cordura* is not specific to rulers.

[57] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 159.

[58] In an anecdote involving Alexander the Great and one of his advisers, the latter urges Alexander to base his decisions on thought (*andīshih*), wisdom (*khirad*), and consultation (*mashūrat*), rather than what his heart (*qalb*) tells him to do (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 158–159). On the importance of "making plans (*tadbīr*)," see al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 127 and 151. On avoiding calmness (*āhistagī*) and hesitation (*dirang*) when urgency (*shitāb*) is required, see al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 165. Chapter 38 of the *Siyāsatnāma* bears the title "On not being hasty (*shitāb nā-kardan*) in the affairs of kings." Cf. Lupus of Ferrieres, Epistolae 83: 6–9. On prudence (*prudentia*) in Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* and other quasi-contemporary *Mirrors*, see Lambertini, Tra etica.

Other virtues demanded by all or some of the *Mirrors* under consideration include humility and determination. In the *DIR* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, humility, as the antagonist of the arrogance of power, pertains to the ruler's justice and indicates the importance of respecting the limits of one's role. In the *Risāla*, humility emerges as a tool for the struggle against distracting desires and passions, since pride is seen as "the onset of desire (*hawā*), the beginning of enticement (*ghawāya*) and the driver of [lit. the place/thing that leads to] destruction (*maqād al-halaka*)."[64] In the *Castigos*, humility (*homildança*) appears as a part of the armor that protects humans from the devil.[65] Determination only appears as a royal virtue in the *Risāla*, where it combines with notions of prudence and rationality to inform the ruler's formation and execution of decisions.[66]

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[59] The *Risāla* defines desires (*ahwāʾ*, s. *hawā*) as being of satanic origin and provoking "God's wrath (*sakhṭat*)" (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 478). The *DIR* laments that "the Christian faith is miserably neglected by many people for the sake of carnal pleasures (*delectatio carnalis*), the most different vanities of this world and the most perverse habits" (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* XI, l. 23–26). It adds that a ruler who practices abstinence is particularly praiseworthy, because he possesses the power to satisfy his desires as much as he likes (XVII, l. 34–35). In the *Castigos* the notion of desires and pleasure is intimately linked with the work's sexual ethics and the warnings about the wide-reaching consequences that a ruler's transgression in this respect can produce (cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* VI:28–29 and XXI:21–22).

[60] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 481.

[61] The *Risāla* identifies desire as "the enemy of reason (*khaṣm al-ʿaql*)" (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 477). The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* explains that "[j]ustice means to restrain oppression, desire (*shahwat*) and anger with reason (*ʿaql*), so that they become prisoners of reason and religion, and not the other way around" (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 47).

[62] Bizzarri, *Castigos* VI:2. The *Castigos* defines *vergüença* as the "impediment to all evil (*freno de toda maldat*)" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* V:3). *Vergüença* is also the driving force behind subjects' obedience toward their ruler (cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* X:9–10). There is also one instance in the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* where desire is juxtaposed by modesty or shame (*sharm*) (cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 27).

[63] According to the *Castigos, cobdiçia* makes all people lose their shame (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XXII:4–6). The *Castigos* also specifically condemns greed in rulers (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XXII:2–3). The *DIR* explicitly mentions greed (*avaritia*) as a vice of rulership with two biblical quotations (Prov 29:4 and Ex 18:21) (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* IV, l. 39–40; and V, l. 29–32). For references to the giving of alms as part of the royal virtue of caritas, see Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* II, l. 71; IV, l. 4–6; and IV, l. 25–29. The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* contains an entire chapter in praise of the "magnanimity (*himmat*)" of rulers (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 197–219). On the consequences of greed (*bukhl*), see al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 44. However, in the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* the ruler's greed for taxes or the public treasury is also discussed as a practical problem, not only as a religious vice, since it threatens the social peace in the realm. Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn's epistle discusses the vice of greed in pragmatic terms, as it argues that when the ruler is greedy (*ḥāriṣ*) none of his projects will succeed, and his subjects will not trust him (Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 30).

Among the virtues that are conspicuously absent or appear less prominent than one might expect are physical strength, courage (in battle), truthfulness, and wisdom/sagacity. Since the four *Mirrors* do not envisage a warrior-type of ruler, they do not consider physical strength and courage necessary traits of rulership.[67] Truthfulness only plays a role in the *Castigos*,[68] while we find that the *Risāla* even actively encourages the ruler to employ deception in the context of war.[69] Wisdom, too, is not particularly prominent among the things that our *Mirrors* want their addressees to acquire, although the essence of the works themselves is that they present the very wisdom and insight rulers need. Only the *Risāla* contains a substantial treatment of the ways, difficulties, and benefits of wisdom acquisition.[70] Instead of encouraging rulers to seek general wisdom, the four *Mirrors* tend to present a more specialized sort of knowledge that is meant to benefit them. For instance, the *Risāla* warns that "ignorance of the objectionable and the praiseworthy traits (*al-akhlāq*)" leads to hardship,[71] while the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* recommends to frequently read the reports (*akhbār*) on the conduct of the former kings.[72]

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[64] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 479.

[65] Cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* I:16.

[66] In the *Risāla*, the virtue of determination is conveyed by the terms *ʿazm, ḥazam, maḍāʾ, niyya*, and *qaṣd* (cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 478–479).

[67] In accordance with the concept of moderation, the *Risāla* merely urges the ruler not to let caution turn into cowardice (*al-jubn*) (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 480). The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* even explicitly declares that "[w]hen a ruler rules with justice, he has no need for courage" (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 128). However, the *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* does consider both courage and physical strength prerequisites for rulership. It requires the ruler to have the courage and bravery (*al-shajāʿa wa-l-najda*) to fend off enemies (cf. al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 17). Regarding the physical conditions of the ruler, the *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* demands that a ruler have sound senses (*salāmat al-ḥawāss*) and healthy limbs (*salāmat al-aʿḍāʾ*) (cf. al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 16–17).

[68] Cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* X:41; and XXXIII:7. There is only one mention of truthfulness in the DIR (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 63–64). In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* truthfulness only occurs within larger lists of virtues (cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 17; 28; and 160). In his epistle Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn urges his son to honor all his promises and not to lie (Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 28).

[69] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 498; and 531.

[70] Cf. ibid., 474–477.

2.2 *Duties of a Ruler*

Linked to the topic of how a ruler ought to behave is the question of what duties and tasks his position entails. In some cases, *Mirrors* contain full-blown discussions on the definition of rulership—that is, its place in the cosmos (vis-à-vis God and religious authorities), its origin, and its legitimization. However, this kind of theoretical debate normally occurs between the lines, if at all. Among the four *Mirrors* that the present study analyzes, only the *DIR* proposes an explicit discussion of the king's position in the cosmos.[73]

Since, as we have seen, *Mirrors* imagine an important aspect of the ruler's justice to be corrective or rectificatory interventions, all four texts contain passages where the ruler acts as a judge who punishes his subjects' transgressions.[74] The analogy of God as judge in heaven and the ruler as judge on earth is made explicit in a number of *Mirrors*.[75] However, what is entirely absent in all four *Mirrors* is the ruler's participation in the drafting of laws.[76]

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[71] Ibid., 478.

[72] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 127. The *Castigos* refers to a number of insights (*conosçimiento*) regarding God and the subjects that are conducive to good rulership (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XIII:4–8; XVI:3–14; and XXVII:6). A case where knowledge (*ʿilm*), as a prerequisite for decision-making, is mentioned explicitly in a *Mirror* is the *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* (cf. al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 16). For wisdom in the virtue catalogues of *Mirrors*, see Lambertini, Tra etica.

[73] Cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* I.

[74] According to Lambton, "[o]ther than defence the main function of the sultan and his deputies was to judge the people with justice" (Lambton, Quis custodiet 132).

[75] The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* warns the "terrestrial judge (*dāwar-i zamīn*)" of the Day of Judgment when he will face the "heavenly judge (*dāwar-i āsmān*)" (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 21). The *Castigos* produces a long list of God's judgments (*juyzios*) that the ruler ought to imitate in his own judgments (cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* IX:21–35). On the image of the ruler as a judge, who will eventually himself be judged by God, see Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* IV, I. 14–24; or 45–52.

[76] In the *Castigos*, the *Risāla*, and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* there is no indication as to how laws are decided on. The *DIR* even explicitly excludes the administration of the law (*cura legis*) by the ruler through the reference to Deut 17:14–20 (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 22–37). A *Mirror* in which the ruler seems to be given slightly more authority over the law's content might be the *Risāla fī l-ṣaḥāba* in which, according to Yousefi, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ "rec-

In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* and the *DIR*, we find the notion that the ruler's punishments are also meant to instill fear into the subjects. In the *DIR*, this notion is expressed in a quotation from Isidor's *Sententiae libri tres* explaining that what the bishop's "word of instruction (*doctrinae sermonem*)" cannot bring about, the ruler can impose through "the terror of discipline (*disciplinae terrorem*)."[77] In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, the same notion is expressed in the term of *siyāsa*, which suggests the enforcement of discipline through the exemplary punishment of misdemeanor.[78] The text argues that the awe (*hayba*) that *siyāsa* produces in the subjects stops them from attacking each other and plunging the realm into chaos.[79] Apart from the punitive aspect, the *Mirrors* also mention other approaches to the ruler's normative duty. For instance, the *Castigos* also suggests the ruler's engagement in the education of his subjects through the term *castigar* (educate). However, notions of education in our *Mirrors* are often intertwined with, and can therefore be rarely distinguished from, other normative policies.[80]

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ognizes the caliph as the sole interpreter of the divine law who can exercise his personal judgment where legal precedent is lacking" (Yousefi, Islam 19).

[77] Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* IV, I. 59–62. On terror as a necessary tool for rulers in Carolingian thinking on kingship, see Anton, Fürstenspiegel 67–71.

[78] On the term *siyāsat* (from the Arabic *siyāsa*), see Bosworth, Netton, and Vogel, Siyāsa; al-Azmeh, *Muslim kingship* 118; and Lange, *Justice* 42–44. In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk siyāsat* denotes the ruler's ability to enforce his justice or authority on his subjects (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 107; 110; and 148) with the aim to produce safety (131).

[79] The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* repeatedly warns the ruler that if he does not inflict awe (*haybat*) and fear (*bīm*) into the subjects through the exercise of *siyāsat*, they will display no piety/obedience (*ṭāʿa*) and honesty (*ṣalāḥ*) (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 148–149). It thus seems that in the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* the preservation of the social order, through maximal deterrence, enjoys a higher priority than the exercise of benevolent justice. Belief in the human inability to coexist peacefully without forceful intervention by a powerful ruler seems to be widespread in all three Abrahamic religions. Cf. Anton, Fürstenspiegel 56–57; al-Azmeh, *Muslim kingship* 115–118; and Bizzarri, *Castigos* X:22–32. In fact, the *Siyāsatnāma* warns that if God wants to punish mankind, He withdraws kingship, and, as a result, people begin to kill each other (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 13–14).

[80] The *Castigos* declares that "[b]lessed are the people whom God gives a king or lord who knows how to educate (*castigar*) and command them and who distances himself from (*estranne*) and chastises (*escarmiente*) evil people for the bad that they do and rewards the good deeds of good people" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* L:36). The *Castigos*' list of model educators includes Christ and Moses, which betrays the soteriological nature of the education that the ruler is intended to provide (Bizzarri, *Castigos* L:29–30). The *Risāla* illustrates the ruler's normative role as follows: "… so that you might revive the poor among them, restore the broken, straighten the bent, educate the ignorant and seek to better the corrupted" (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 493). For an analysis of this passage, see Schönig, *Sendschreiben* 91.

We have seen that the DIR and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* hold it significant for a ruler to address his subjects' wants, as both texts make the subjects' satisfaction part of their definitions of justice. One way to ensure the subjects' satisfaction, according to some *Mirrors*, is for the ruler to routinely receive petitioners, in order to learn about the needs of his subjects. Driven by a pressing concern for the assessment of the ruler's legacy on the Day of Judgment, the importance of granting audience (*bār dādan*) and receiving petitioners (*arbāb-i ḥājāt*) enjoys a great deal of attention in Seljuq *Mirrors*.[81] For instance, the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* claims that nothing damages a ruler more than "elusiveness (lit. few audiences) and isolation (*tang-bārī wa-ḥijāb-i pādshāh*)."[82] Both the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* and the *Siyāsatnāma* mention a "custom of the Persian kings," according to which, once a year all subjects could bring forward their complaints against the ruler, who, on that occasion, would rise from his throne and sit next to the claimant for the entire duration of the trial.[83]

Despite showing less concern with the court as the space in which the ruler moves and interacts with others, the DIR also mentions the importance of the ruler allowing the "causes of the poor (*causam pauperum*)" to reach him as a measure against the injustice of state officials.[84] In contrast, the *Risāla* and the *Castigos* seem concerned more with the regulation of access to the ruler. The *Risāla* discusses how, why, and by whom the access of petitioners, but also officials and foreign delegations, must be administrated,[85] suggesting the importance of the ruler retaining control over his image, but more importantly also protecting his space and time for making decisions. The *Castigos* features recurrent references to various types of people the ruler is advised to avoid, such as the flatterer (*lisonjero*),[86] the bad adviser (*mal consejero*),[87] the person who reveals secrets (*mestuero*),[88] the traitor (*traydor*), the apostate (*apostotador*), and the disobedient person (*desobediente*).[89]

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[81] In ch. 3 ("On the king's holding of court for the hearing of grievances (*muẓālim nishastan*) and his cultivation of good qualities") the *Siyāsatnāma* emphasizes the importance of receiving subjects on a regular basis in order to talk to them without intermediary (*bī-wāsiṭa*) (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 19). See also ch. 16, "On the steward of the household (*wakīl-i khāṣ*)"; ch. 28, "On private and public audiences (*bār dādan*)"; or ch. 49, "On answering to complainants (*mutaẓallimān*), dealing with their matters and dispensing justice." See also Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn's epistle, which urges the ruler to frequently give his subjects the permission (*al-idhin*) to approach him (Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 33).

[82] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 158. See also ibid., 47.

[83] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 167–169, and Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 52–55. The symbolism of the entire procedure, or rather the depiction of it in a *Mirror*, is probably meant to prove the ruler's commitment to the ideal of justice. The institution through which subjects could present their grievances to a Muslim ruler or complain about the state of justice in the realm was called *maẓālim*. On *maẓālim*, see Lange, *Justice* 40–41; and Nielsen, Maẓālim.

[84] Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* V, I. 43–47.

[85] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 484–488.

While the four *Mirrors* under consideration do not envisage that rulers practice what Almut Höfert terms "*Kultaufsicht*"[90]—that is, "supervision of the cult"—they still charge their addressees with distinctly religious duties. In one way or another, all four rulers are recognized as God's vicegerent.[91] The *Risāla* considers Marwān's son as part of "His deputyship (*khulāfatihi*)";[92] the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* refers to its addressee with the caliphal title of "shadow of God on earth (*ẓill allāh fī l-arḍ*)," explains the meaning of the title as indicating "God's delegate (*bar-gumāshta-ī khudā-st*) over His creation,"[93] and elsewhere also refers to the ruler explicitly as "God's caliph (*khalīfa-yi allāh*)."[94] The *Castigos* explains that the king "occupies God's place (*lugar*) on earth in the realm in which He placed him,"[95] and the *DIR* defines kingship as a *ministerium* awarded by God.[96] In all but the *Risāla*, the ruler is also explicitly attributed a soteriological role. The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* explains that rulers are given "a treasury (*bayt-i l-māl*), a sword and a whip … to keep the people out of hell,"[97] while the *DIR* urges the ruler to be the *corrector* of his subjects, in order that they might be granted salvation.[98] The main way the *Castigos* perceives the ruler's soteriological work is the chastisement and education (*castigar*) of his subjects.[99] The enforcement of piety as the primary method of the ruler's salvational mission is ubiquitous.[100]

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[86] Cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* XI.

[87] Cf. ibid.

[88] Cf. ibid., XXV.

[89] Cf. ibid., XI:88.

[90] Höfert, *Kaisertum* 295–298. Höfert's definition of cult-supervision includes the participation in theological debates, the oversight of religious practices (like the organization of pilgrimages or the reading of sermons), and the passing of legal judgments (based on religious laws). Höfert considers the ruler's exercise of cult-supervision to be one of the defining characteristics of an imperial monotheist kingship.

[91] All four *Mirrors* declare the rulers to have been divinely chosen. Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 474; al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 171; Bizzarri, *Castigos* I:39; and Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 27. On the various forms of sacralized rulership, see al-Azmeh, *Muslim kingship* 11–61.

[92] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 474.

[93] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 81.

[94] Ibid., 131. On the understanding of the caliphate in al-Ghazālī's works, including the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, see Safi, *Politics of knowledge* 111–121.

[95] Bizzarri, *Castigos* X:5.

[96] Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III.

[97] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 28. However, the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* also charges the prophets with a salvational mission (ibid., 81).

[98] Cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 161–168. See also ibid., ADM., I. 188–189. On the

2.3 *Officials, Advisers, and Servants*

Advice on interaction with various officials, advisers, and servants is a staple in advice literature for rulers. Authors of *Mirrors* often address questions of how the ruler ought to choose (i.e., according to which criteria) and how he ought to treat his staff. Wherever they occur, these discussions can occupy extended sections of the text and cover a large variety of positions.[101] In some cases, even the threats that members of the state might pose to the ruler are mentioned. Thus, the *Castigos* highlights the importance for the ruler to have the ability to recognize the nature of people.[102] In the *DIR* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, the main threat that comes from state officials seems to be, as mentioned before, their undermining of the ruler's justice. The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* repeatedly points to the various ways in which tax-collectors (*ʿāmilān*)[103] and others jeopardize the ruler's salvation, the stability of his reign, and the prosperity of the people.[104] In some cases, the discussions of the ruler's officials even expand into

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ruler's duty to correct his subjects, see also Hincmarus Rhemensis, De regis persona 850C–D.

[99] The result of their education is that the subjects "obey God and their worldly lord" (Bizzarri, *Castigos* L:33). Another way in which the *Castigos* suggests the messianic mission of rulership is by comparing the loss of Spain by the Visigoths and Sancho's achievements in the Reconquista to mankind's exile from paradise and its return under the guidance of Christ. Cf. Palafox, *Éticas del exemplum* 33–60.

[100] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 107; Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 69–70; 123–126; IV, I. 4–6; and 57–73; and al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 30–31.

[101] The *DIR*'s treatment of this topic is relatively limited, as the text only mentions judges and scribes (cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* V). The same can be said for the *Castigos* (cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* XI:37–38). In contrast, the *Siyāsatnāma* discusses several positions at court, including viziers, tax-collectors, judges, and preachers. The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* contains entire chapters dedicated to viziers and secretaries. Finally, in the *Risāla*, the selection of officials constitutes the work's most important issue. See also Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 30–32; and al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 30–31.

[102] On the divided loyalty of servants, see Bizzarri, *Castigos* XLV. On servants revealing the ruler's secrets, see ibid., XXV:6–7. The *Castigos*, however, also warns against the detrimental consequences of distrust (*sospecha*) and the readiness to believe disparaging stories about others (ibid., XXIV).

[103] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 136.

[104] On the effects of bribery (*rishwat*), see ibid., 153–154. On plots against the realm or the harem and the revealing of the ruler's secrets, see ibid., 160. On the importance of punishing officials and kinsmen, see ibid., 154–158. More detailed advice on how to reprimand (*ʿitāb kardan*) officials without damaging their standing can be found in the *Siyāsatnāma*

detailed descriptions of the duties and tasks of the different offices at court.[105] In fact, the *Risāla* goes to great length to indicate, in addition to the characteristics that the potential officeholder ought to possess, the duties of each position it mentions.[106] Finally, the ruler's choice of friends and companions, which the "Islamic" *Mirrors* especially tend to provide advice on, is similarly, to a large extent, discussed in terms of people's beneficial and detrimental traits.[107]

Advisers, as well as the giving of advice and the ruler's reception thereof, are also given a central position in most *Mirrors*, as writers sought to add value and legitimacy to their own parenetic endeavor.[108] For instance, the *DIR* considers the ruler's seeking of advice from "old, wise and sober advisers" as an element of justice,[109] while the dedication letter also indicates Jonas's hope to join the "many servants of Christ" that act as Pepin's advisers.[110] The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the ruler being surrounded

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(cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 158). In the *Risāla's* accounts on the virtues required by the various members of the state, obedience is the most recurring trait. Cf., e.g., ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 481, 513, 515, 518, and 528.

[105] About a third of the chapters of al-Māwardī's *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* are concerned with the appointment (*wilāya/taqlīd*) of officials.

[106] While some positions are described in a rather superficial fashion, the *Risāla's* discussion of others, such as the one on the role of spies (*jawāsīs*), displays an insightful level of detail (cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 502–505). The employment of spies seems to have been common advice in Arabic and Persian *Mirrors*. Cf. Canard, *Djāsūs*.

[107] The *Risāla* explains how to choose confidential friends (*biṭāna*) and comrades (*julsāʾ*) with whom the ruler interacts in his private time (*khalwāt*) and shares his secrets (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 481). It advises the ruler to compare people's faith (*dīn*), wisdom (*ḥijā*), judgment (*raʾy*), intelligence (*ʿaql*), planing (*tadbīr*), and reputation (*ṣīt*), as well as the advantages, for instance in terms of public praise (*tafḍīl*), that a friendship with them might offer to him (494). Ch. 17 of the *Siyāsatnāma*, "On the boon-companions (*nadīmān*) and intimates (*nazdīkān*) of the king and the ordering of their affairs," mentions the traits of good companions and their benefits for the ruler. However, the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* only lets the ruler know that he needs a boon-companion (*nadīm*) who can give him advice (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 178), while the *Castigos* treatment of friendship (Bizzarri, *Castigos* XXXV) contains no advice that is specific to the ruler.

[108] For instance, the final chapter of the *Castigos* bears the title "On all the good things that were done due to good teachings (*castigos*) and all the evil that is born out of the lack of instruction," and ch. 18 of the *Siyāsatnāma* discusses "the ruler's consultation (*mushāwarat kardan*) with sages and elders." Ch. 4 of Hincmar's *De regis persona* bears the title "Which advisers (*consiliarios*) the king should consult" (cf. Hincmarus Rhemensis, De regis persona 837C–839B). The *Risāla* claims that God has ordered to give advice (cf.ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 474).

[109] Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, I. 72.

[110] Ibid., ADM., I. 45–48.

and advised by people of wisdom and religion, by which the author probably means the *ʿulamāʾ*.[111] The *Risāla* includes the ability to act as an adviser to the ruler in the lists of traits that people in various positions at court or in the army should possess.[112] All but the *DIR* give significant space to warnings against bad and potentially harmful advice.[113]

2.4 *Rules of Appearance and Behavior*

Beside advice on governance, *Mirrors* also tend to address the importance of the ruler's appearance—that is, the way he should behave and conduct himself in front of others. Among the *Mirrors* under consideration, the most detailed discussion of the ruler's behavior occurs in the *Risāla*, where the ruler is advised on how to act in a variety of settings. During the *majālis* (s. *majlis*)—i.e., the assemblies or councils of notables (also *majlis al-malīʾ*) that seem to have been sometimes held in the presence of the public[114]—the ruler is advised to avoid expressing any emotions through laughter (*ḍaḥk*) or frowning (*quṭūb*),[115] to listen "with placid kindness and appropriate poise (*bi-daʿa hādiʾa wa-waqār ḥasan*)" to the speeches of others[116] without interrupting them,[117] to be concise in his own speeches,[118] and not to stare at or quickly avert his gaze from people.[119] Moreover, the *Risāla* refers to certain manners, like spitting (*tabaṣṣuq*), yawning (*thuʾabāʾ*), and belching (*jushāʾ*), that "the common people (*sūqa*)" simply do not notice, but which the ruler has to avoid by all means in the presence of "refined people (*ahl al-adab*)."[120] Altogether, the ruler is advised to display "steadiness in speech and dignity in the council (*thubūt al-manṭiq*

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[111] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 27, 143, 152, and 160.

[112] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 481, 514, 515, and 529.

[113] Tellingly, the *Castigos* discusses advisers in particular in ch. XXXIV ("On how one should not pay attention to a flatterer"), which features a long section on how to distinguish between the good and the bad adviser (*consejero*). Cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* XXXIV:8–14; and 20–28. On bad or damaging advice, see also ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 484; and al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 27–35. Lupus of Ferrieres repeatedly discusses the issue of good and bad advice (cf. Lupus of Ferrieres, Epistolae 64:5–7; and 83:9–14). Cf. Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 30.

[114] "When you are in the council of your notables and the public is attending (*ḥuḍūr al-ʿāmma*) your council …" (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 489).

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 491.

[118] Ibid., 492.

[119] Ibid., 489–490.

[120] Ibid., 492–493.

wa-waqār al-majlis)."[121] Finally, the *Risāla* also urges the ruler to prevent all reprehensible behavior of others in his presence, in order to protect his reputation.[122]

The *Castigos* gives information on how the ruler ought to behave and speak with other people, as well as how they ought to act around him. Chapter 11 features a long list of the ruler's "dos" and "don'ts," including the prohibition of dancing, singing, and dressing badly in front of others, as well as publicly revealing the sins that he has committed. The ruler is urged to receive (*reçebir*) people adequately, to speak without ostentation, flattery (*lisonja*), or the usage of unrelated examples, and not to allow others to argue among each other or to speak ill of the ruler's friends or members of his family in his presence.[123] The *Castigos* also contains a list of elements of the king's attire, such as his throne (*silla*) or his scepter (*çeptro*), each of which is linked to a quality that the ruler has to embody, like beneficence (*benignidat*) or good manners (*buenas costunbres*).[124] This detailed explanation of the symbolism of a ruler's attire not only provides the ruler with a list of objects and characteristics that he ought to display but also, by linking each object to a trait, includes a translation of the code that is applied in this specific act of communication (i.e., the ruler's display of his attire). Apart from a short passage on how to treat the vizier,[125] the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* merely warns the ruler that, while he should always seek advice from the *ʿulamāʾ*, he must be wary about the flattery of those members of the *ʿulamāʾ* "with worldly ambitions (*ḥarīṣ bar dunyā*)."[126] In the *DIR*, advice regarding royal demeanor is entirely absent.

Some authors differentiate between the court and the ruler's household, which means that the texts also specify the ruler's behavior toward his family and close associates. However, the advice on conduct in a private setting that is found in *Mirrors* is rarely specific to a ruler. For instance, in the *Castigos*, the entirety of the advice on relationships with women can almost be considered as valid for any Christian. In the *Risāla*, the household appears simply as a defined space to which only certain people should have access.[127] Thus, it seems that, when it comes to the ruler's private life, the main issue for ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd is the phased shielding of the ruler (with various spheres that different people can access) and the concern for the ruler's public image.[128] In the DIR and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, the ruler's household does not feature prominently as a private sphere. The texts perceive the ruler mostly as a public figure who needs to conduct himself in a way that sets an example for his subjects.[129] The DIR's predominant silence regarding everything that concerns the ruler's interaction with any member of the court, or his own conduct at court and in the household, may also have reasons that are more specific to its context. For one, Jonas might have simply not been interested in discussing the court, instead preferring to focus on the relation between the king and the clergy and the king's role in the *correctio* of his subjects, either because these issues were ultimately more relevant for himself, or as a result of the more universal approach that his work shares with the aforementioned *Gesellschaftsspiegel*. However, the author's silence regarding everything that concerns the ruler and the elites' image and self-representation might also be seen as a conscious degradation of the palace as the locus of power, to the advantage of the episcopal synods.[130]

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[121] Ibid., 491.

[122] Cf. ibid., 480, where the ruler is urged to "ban evil speech (*al-badhāʾ*) and bad company (*sūʾ al-muthāfana*) from your [i.e., his] social life (*istiʾnās*)." See also ibid., 493. In the context of attacks on the ruler's reputation, the *Risāla* also deems it important that he guard himself from blame by family members (*ḥāmma*) and personal servants (*biṭāna khudimika*), since they are in a position to divulge his personal secrets (cf. ibid., 482). On how to handle secrets in general, see ibid., 481–484.

[123] Cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* XI:56–111.

[124] Cf. ibid., XI:1–39.

[125] Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 176.

[126] Ibid., 27. The *Siyāsatnāma* proposes a system (*tartīb*) for receptions, but without specifying how the ruler ought to behave on these occasions (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 151–152).

2.5 *Warfare*

With the exception of the *Risāla*, concrete advice on the practicalities of warfare does not feature prominently in the four *Mirrors* under consideration. The DIR merely mentions the appointment of military leaders based on a biblical quotation (Ex 18:21–26),[131] whereas the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* only urges the king not to participate in a war in person.[132] The *Castigos* dedicates one chapter to the preparations for war. The chapter begins with a lengthy warning to the ruler about the consequences that a lack of preparation for war can have, before it goes on to provide him with advice on the conditions for success, the employment of spies, the dangers of war-weariness among the subjects, and the appointment of various military leaders.[133] The *Castigos* also repeatedly adduces a ruler's military success as proof of his abilities and the divine approval of his reign.[134] However, the *Risāla*'s advice on warfare goes significantly further than that; it provides the ruler with concrete knowledge on strategies, formations, and weaponry.[135] The advice includes the preferability of a victory gained through stratagems, the intricacies of chasing after fleeing enemies, the way to set up and defend one's own camp, and two long lists of weapons and armor. The *Risāla*'s emphasis on military matters can easily be related to the specific occasion of the work's composition. And while we usually do not find such concrete advice on strategies and formations as in the *Risāla*, general advice on warfare is more common in *Mirrors* than our four examples might suggest.[136]

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[127] The royal household is discussed in terms of the ruler's private time (*khalwāt*) to which only trusted associates (*biṭāna*) or comrades (*julsāʾ*), who generally seem to belong to the ruler's family (*ahl al-bayt* or *al-ḥāmma*), and personal servants (*biṭānat al-khudim* or *khāṣṣat al-khudim*) have access (cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 481–488).

[128] The *Risāla* warns the ruler that ultimately, the veils (*sutūr*) and doors (*abwāb*) that confine and define the household will not prevent secrets from reaching the public (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 481).

[129] For instance, the DIR urges the ruler to crack down on the flaws not only in his own character, but also in his house (*domum*), for it to become a "good example (*bonum exemplum*)" for his subjects (Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* III, 1. 8–12). Also, the *Naṣīḥat al-mulū* demands the ruler to treat his realm like his house, more specifically to give and take with moderation (*andāza*) (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 137).

[130] Cf. Airlie, Palace 289.

[131] Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* V, 1. 29–33.

[132] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 147. The *Siyāsatnāma's* advice on warfare is minimal and

2.6 *Succession*

Although inheritance of rulership was a common practice in all the dynasties for which the present *Mirrors* were composed, the texts promote the legitimacy of their addressees by depicting them as divinely chosen vicegerents. The *Risāla* and the *DIR* suggest that this is also the case for their potential successors.[137] In fact, the *DIR* even explicitly rejects the idea that rulership

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focuses mainly on preparations for war, rather than the actual combat (cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 106–107 and 126–129). Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn's epistle merely advises the ruler to keep his soldiers satisfied through adequate salaries (cf. Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād* 30).

[133] Cf. Bizzarri, *Castigos* XLII.

[134] Cf. ibid., XXXVI:21–28. Needless to say, this argument carries an implication for Sancho himself, since he famously succeeded in conquering the city of Tarifa in September 1292.

[135] Cf. Schönig, *Sendschreiben* 83–84.

[136] In *Il principe*, Machiavelli famously declared that rulers must be focused on getting to grips with warfare "because it is the only art that is required from who commands" (Machiavelli, *Principe* 209–210). However, the text itself lacks specific strategic or technical advice on warfare. Hincmar's *De regis persona* contains at least eight chapters related to warfare, with a focus on the issue of the "just" war and what might be termed as a sort of war ethics (cf. Hincmarus Rhemensis, *De regis persona* 840C–844B). The *Qābūsnāma* features two chapters on warfare (ch. 20, "On fighting a battle," and ch. 41, "On commanding an army"), the latter of which does in fact contain a few remarks on formations and tactics. A famous example from the Byzantine tradition is the Strategikon (c. 1075–1078) attributed to Kekaumenos. On discussions of warfare (*ḥarb*) in *Mirrors*, see Cahen, Ḥarb.

[137] Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Risāla 474.

might be inherited from the forefathers.[138] Of the texts under consideration, only the *Castigos* displays a different approach to this particular subject. In a chapter on the honoring of promises, it essentially underscores the sanctity of the right of primogenitur and warns against the division of the realm among the ruler's sons.[139] Sancho's own rise to the throne is, as the *Castigos* lets the reader know, legitimized through the divine intervention that caused Sancho's older brother to die prematurely.[140] As a result, the appearance of this particular topic in the *Castigos* might be seen as part of the general propagation of the legitimacy of Sancho's reign that pervades the entire work, rather than an actual advice for his son on how to proceed with his own heir in the future.

2.7 *Women*

While women hardly ever occupy the role of the (intended) addressee in premodern advice literature for monocratic rulers,[141] they feature prominently as a subject of discussion in a number of *Mirror* texts. The *Castigos* and the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* dedicate significant space to a discussion on women. Both texts paint a decisively negative image of women, characterizing them as inferior and a serious threat to men.[142] At the heart of these depictions of women stands the development of a code of sexual ethics, especially in the *Castigos*, where the (male) reader is repeatedly reminded which women are suitable for marriage. However, in both cases, the sections on women are, with few exceptions,[143] not addressed to rulers specifically, but rather represent a moral instruction for men in general. Neither the *Risāla* nor the *DIR* mention women in their advice, which is slightly more surprising in the case of the *DIR*, given its abundant religious-ethical advice.

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[138] Cf. Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione* V, I. 1–3.

[139] Bizzarri, *Castigos* XV:13–20.

[140] The *Castigos* explains that if Sancho's brother had outlived their father, Sancho would not have been able to claim the throne. The fact that Sancho was given the chance to become king is defined as "God's order (*ordenamiento fue de Dios*)" (ibid., XV:22).

[141] Notable exceptions are Durand de Champagne's *Speculum Dominarum* (*Mirror for ladies*) for Jeanne of Navarre, wife of Philip IV and Queen of France (r. 1285–1305), or Bartolomeo Vicentino's *Liber tertius de informatione regiæ prolis* (ca. 1260) for Margaret of Provence, Queen of France and wife of King Louis IX. The most famous female author of advice literature for rulers is Christine de Pizan (1364–1429).

[142] The *Castigos* prologue recounts Eve's role in the fall of men and concludes that "Origen says that man's great burden is bearing his wife in her passions and miseries. Therefore, he who invented the English language called the female 'woman,' which means woe to man. As a punishment for all this Our Lord God ordained that if a man gives his power to woman, she will always be against him" (translation quoted from Francomano, Castilian *Castigos* 192). Apart from the prologue, in the *Castigos* women form the subject of discussion in ch. 1 ("How man should know and fear God, who created his soul"), ch. 6 ("On how man should not give free rein to his flesh for the satisfaction of its desires"), ch. 19 ("How man should not offend God with unsuitable women and which women are unsuitable"), ch. 20 ("On the great error committed by one who sins with a married woman"), and ch. 21 ("On how noble a thing virginity is before God"). The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* concludes its last chapter, which bears the title "On the qualities of women, their virtues and their vices," arguing that men's "misery (*miḥnat*), affliction (*balā*) and perdition (*halāk*), all of it stems from women" (al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* 285). In the *Siyāsatnāma*, which

3 Conclusion

This cursory glance at four *Mirrors* suggests both a certain degree of consistency regarding the things that the texts discuss, as well as a distinct diversity in the ways they understand and interpret the same ideas. The recurrence of many issues in the four *Mirrors* suggests that their authors shared a certain image of rulership. This of course confirms what other studies have found regarding the existence of a certain model of monocratic rulership among the societies that could draw on a late antique heritage. The present findings thus underscore the importance of reimagining the interactions and relations between these societies. This reimagining also ought to take into consideration the diversity the transcultural comparisons of the four primary texts have revealed regarding the way authors interpreted the single elements of this shared model of rulership. These differences tell the stories of the authors and their times. Whether it is the *Risāla*'s focus on the subjects' obedience and the ruler's image, which hints at the threats of the civil war in the Umayyad caliphate, the *DIR*'s emphasis on *correctio* through justice and piety, which encapsulates the Carolingian response to political crises, the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*'s employment of *siyāsa* in times of internecine wars, or the *Castigos*' insistence on the messianic nature of the practice of education in a work of advice, every *Mirror* bears witness to the specific historical context of its composition.

But what is the value of comparing this diverse corpus of literature? What at first sight might simply appear as a kaleidoscopic image of possibilities,

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expresses similarly disparaging views on women (cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 226–234), the danger that emanates from them is limited to the possibility of them influencing or controlling the male ruler since "their orders are always the opposite of what is right" (226).

[143] In the *Castigos*, the ruler is warned against wrongdoing with the wife of his vassal through a reference to the famous legend of Don Julian (Bizzarri, *Castigos* VI:28–29). For further negative examples, see ibid., XXI:21–22.

idiosyncrasies, and multiplicity, provides clues for understanding the genre and its production at large. For instance, it seems clear that the multiplicity of interpretations of identical topics, as well as the appearance of a few specific issues in only a small number of texts and the prominent absence of particular topics in others, embody the genre's contingency and occasionality. At the same time, the genre is characterized by the frequent recurrence of ideas and materials that might give the modern reader a sense of repetitiveness. However, this ought not to mislead us about the specificity of every given text and its embeddedness in a particular social, cultural, and historical moment. In order to bolster the authority of their work and its parenetic value in the eyes of their audience, authors of *Mirrors* made sure to situate their texts in an established tradition of writing about rulers by addressing the same questions and using time-tested images and textual references. However, every author gave the material a particular spin to serve either his own personal agenda or the agenda of the ruler or any other party that had an interest in having their view on rulership laid out in a *Mirror*. In fact, given their discursive nature, the specifics of the type of rulership that is constructed in a given *Mirror* can also shed light on attempts to redefine—or even curtail—the scope of the ruler's role, rights, and tasks.

Another reason behind the coherence of the curricula brought forward by multiple *Mirrors* might be a striving for comprehensiveness. While authors composed *Mirrors* for specific situations and purposes, they seem to have felt the need to adhere to a loosely defined list of topics and pieces of advice that every advice text for a monocratic ruler had to contain. Added to the above conclusion regarding the use of similar material, this observation also carries major implications for how we ought to imagine the authors' breadth of knowledge, their control over the relevant literary corpus, and the education that provided them with both of these things. *Mirrors* are thus both on-the-spot, practical vade mecums and the bearers of long-standing traditions of political, religious, philosophical, and educational thinking. The study of *Mirrors* sheds light on the education not only of rulers but also of those that surrounded, advised, and taught them.

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CHAPTER 30

Interpretive Power and Conflicts of Interpretive Power: Caliphate, Religion, and "True" Islamic Education at the Dawn of the Seventh/Thirteenth Century in Baghdad

Angelika Hartmann

Today, in light of the city's recent war- and terror-torn history, the Arabic dictum "He who has not seen Baghdad has not seen the world" would evoke only sadness and anger. However, for the first third of the thirteenth century this saying genuinely illuminates the splendor and great importance of Baghdad, the metropolis known as "the city of salvation" (*madīnat al-salām*) and "the city of peace."[1] The capital of the ʿAbbasid caliphate, Baghdad was founded in 145/762 and lies along the middle reaches of the Tigris, which divides the city into two halves. In the eastern walled section lay the caliphal palace, as well as the majority of the great mosques, markets, and other public buildings, including the colleges. To this day the eastern quarter of the city still contains a mainly Sunni Arab population; Persian and Arab Shiʿites settled primarily in the western quarter.

Baghdad is among the hottest cities in the world and has very low humidity, being regularly plagued by sandstorms from the deserts in the west. Due to its location on the navigable Tigris and at the center of important trade routes, Baghdad has long been an important economic and cultural metropolis—a multiethnic as well as multireligious center for the arts and sciences. In addition to Sunni Islam, with its four canonical schools of jurisprudence and various theological schools of thought, ranging from literalist traditionalism to those that have adopted the logical and dialectical approaches of philosophical thought, Baghdad (then as now) was also the site of numerous Christian

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[1] The founder of Baghdad, the caliph al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775), called his city "*madīnat al-salām*" in reference to Quranic paradise (Q 6:127 and 10:26). The name "Baghdād" itself is pre-Islamic. Arab chroniclers usually look for Persian origins and give the explanation "gift of God"; others tend to give the name an Aramaic origin meaning "the enclosure of sheep." Cf. Duri, Bag͟hdād i, 894.

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churches.[2] A strong Jewish minority was also present. Already in the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries, the population of Baghdad was quoted at around 1 million, and the circumference of the city at around 15 km^2.

In effect, life in the city was shaped by a society that was pluralistic in many respects. Monotheistic religions and rival currents within Islam—each with its own distinctive dogma, educational aims, and freethinkers and philosophers—were engaged in lively, frequently contentious, and not always peaceful, dialogue with one another.

For the most part, very few educational institutions and *lieux de mémoires* from the early seventh/thirteenth century remain today. Chief among those that do, is the mausoleum (*turba*) of Zumurrud Khātūn[3] in west Baghdad, which contains her tomb,[4] a *madrasa*, and a *ribāṭ*; a total of two public schools for tradition and law. Zumurrud Khātūn was the wife of the late caliph al-Mustaḍīʾ bi-amr Allāh (d. 575/1180) and the mother of the reigning caliph, al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (d. 622/1225). She died in 599/1203 after a life replete with political, religious, and pedagogical vigor. Her mission was the orthodox interpretation of canonical writings, with the aim of promoting the conservative, traditionalist system of education both in Baghdad and far beyond the city's borders. Her tomb lies in the heart of a large cemetery in the center of the city, not far from the western bank of the Tigris.[5] A square-shaped structure (a current-day reconstruction of the original) serves as the entrance. The ground plan of the burial chamber is octagonal; a cone-shaped *muqarnas* dome, a special vault construction consisting of small, honeycomb-like niches that are characteristic of tomb monuments, rises in the middle—a type of architecture that perhaps originated in Baghdad itself.[6] The building material consists of burnt bricks. As previously mentioned, a residence with a school and library for Sufis, as well as an institute for the traditionalist interpretation of Islamic law and Islamic theology by the Hanbalis, who were very active in Baghdad, were part of the burial site. The Hanbali theory of law was famous among the four recognized Sunni schools of jurisprudence for being the only paired with its own, conservative, theological teaching.

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[2] For instance, it is the seat of the Patriarchs of the Chaldean Church and the seat of an Orthodox Syrian bishop, as well as of an Armenian, Roman-Syrian, and Roman Catholic archbishop. Today, most of the Iraqi Christians have left Baghdad because of persecution and the attacks of ISIS. The Jewish minority has since vanished.

[3] Today, mistakenly referred to under the name "the tomb of Zubayda," the cousin and wife of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. Similar to Zumurrud Khātūn, Zubayda was also famous for her generous donations to pilgrims and the poor, especially for the construction and maintenance of cisterns and water-supplies on the plain of ʿArafāt for the multitudes of pilgrims going to Mecca. Zubayda died in 210/831. Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 180–181. Jacobi, Zubayda bint D̲jaʿfar xi, 547–548, and Jacobi, Zumurrud K̲h̲ātūn xi, 571.

[4] There are contradictions concerning the date of construction in the sources; perhaps it was already completed in 586/1190 or first begun in the year of Zumurrud Khātūn's death, 599/1203. Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 126. An image of the tomb can be viewed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baghdad-Zumurrud-Khatun.jpg.

[5] Near the tomb of the mystic Maʿrūf al-Karkhī.

[6] See Behrens-Abouseif, Muḳarnas vii, 502.

Zumurrud Khātūn also left a mosque with a library and an imam's residence located on the east bank of the Tigris, near the great college for all four schools of Sunni jurisprudence, the famous al-Madrasa al-Mustanṣiriyya, which was built around 30 years later.[7] Only the minaret of the Mosque of Zumurrud Khātūn survived, and it is regarded as the oldest in Baghdad.[8]

The tomb (*turba*) of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), the famous mystic, scholar of tradition, and court theologian,[9] also survived. He deserves recognition as the actual founder of the "Suhrawardiyya" Sufi order,[10] which expanded all the way to India, and he was known as "shaykh al-Islām"—one of the greatest scholars active in educational policy of his time. In his magnum opus, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* (*The gifts of deep knowledge*),[11] he succeeded in systematically setting forth the mysticism of the Sufi orders in fixed teaching units for novices and other students. To this day, it remains a vade mecum for Sufis. Al-Suhrawardī's tomb is a popular destination for pilgrims, and it lies within an extensive Sufi cemetery in the northeast of the historic old city. With its Seljuq-style minaret, it is among the most prominent landmarks of Baghdad.[12]

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[7] The construction of the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya was commissioned by the caliph al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh (r. 623–640/1226–1242) in 625/1227. In 631/1234, the entire complex of the school opened, along with its famous library, mosque, hospital, and pharmacy. "The interior of the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya is disposed around a perfectly regular courtyard, balanced on its short ends by tall and spacious iwans and in the middle of its long sides by the entrance iwan and the tripartite façade of the prayer hall, a straightforward but elegant adaption of the four-iwan plan that became standardized under the Seljuqs in Iran." (Tabbaa, Resurgence 315–316.) The Mustanṣiriyya was the first universal *madrasa* and the only university endowed by an ʿAbbasid caliph. It withstood the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, even though it was robbed of nearly its entire library and was temporarily closed as a school of law. After its restoration approximately a decade later, the *madrasa* again served its original purpose until the late seventeenth century. In the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries the building slowly became more and more dilapidated. Following its misappropriation as a caravansaray in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was restored in 1945 and almost entirely rebuilt. Since 1960, it has also been a museum for Islamic art and culture. Today, the surviving portions of the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya have been incorporated into the modern university of the same name.

[8] Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 180, dated 580/1184–1185. It had a single balcony for the muezzin atop a *muqarnas* pillar. The balcony was decorated with blue and turquoise-colored glazed tiles.

[9] Cf. Hartmann, al-Suhrawardī ix, 778–782.

[10] Cf. Sobieroj, Suhrawardiyya ix, 782–786, and Ohlander, *Sufism*. The latter's publication is based on my studies on al-Nāṣir and ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī published between 1975 and 1997, and nicely reiterates their arguments.

[11] For the *terminus ad quem* of this famous Sufi handbook, even prior to 612/1215–1216, see Hartmann, Handschriften 124–125, 139.

I will mention two further pivotal *lieux de mémoires*, one of which is directly connected with the caliph al-Nāṣir, while the other—the so-called "Palace in the Citadel," or "the ʿAbbasid Palace"—was a universal *madrasa* built after the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya. Erroneously ascribed to the caliph al-Nāṣir,[13] it came into being after his reign.

The most important monument is the Talisman Gate (*Bāb al-Ṭilasm*), one of the four city gates in east Baghdad. Restored by the caliph in 618/1221, it was furnished with a famous dedicatory inscription and an outstanding relief, which can be recognized as a statement of the caliph's religious, political, and educational program.[14]

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[12] In 1964 the remnants of an embellishment of turquoise-colored brick tilework—brick mosaics with entrelac patterns ("Bandgeflecht")—were discovered at the entrance of the tomb in the course of renovation work. A similar decoration survives on the Shrine of Yaḥyā in Mosul from 637/1239–1240. Schmid therefore dated al-Suhrawardī's tomb to the middle of the thirteenth century, sometime before 656/1258. Cf. Schmid, *Madrasa* 120. Cf. fig. of the tomb at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/7304692108/in/photostream/.

[13] It was built after the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya. Schmid, *Madrasa* 120, explains why, in former research, this building was dated to the time of the caliph al-Nāṣir, contemporary with the Talisman Gate and the Ghaybat al-Mahdī, both buildings commissioned by al-Nāṣir. The *muqarna*s vault in the arcades of the so-called "Palace in the Citadel" are also similar to the *muqarna*s dome in the tomb of Zumurrud Khātūn. However, judging from the floor plan, it could not have been a palace, but rather, was a public building. "The arches of the arcades are replete with splendidly executed *muqarnas* vaults, whose cellular surfaces are engraved with arabesques and brick mosaics of exquisite perfection." According to Schmid, *Madrasa* 114–124, at 123, the building is the Madrasa Bishiriyya (also known as al-Madrasa al-Sharābiyya) founded in 653/1255 where the four schools of jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*) were taught. Unlike Schmid, the Iraqi art historian Tabbaa, Resurgence 317–319, again recently supported a series of arguments in favor of identifying the building as a palace before, in his conclusion, addressing the arguments that have identified it as a *madrasa*.

[14] In 1917 the most interesting sections of the Talisman Gate were destroyed by the Ottomans, who had used it as a powder tower. Photographs and descriptions from before 1917 depict the original state of the inscription and the relief. Photographs can be viewed at http://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:261988 (the front part of the tower with the gateway) and http://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:262335 (the relief sculpture over the arch of the gateway). The entire Talisman Gate consisted of "a massive cylindrical tower with a flat façade dominated by a single pointed arch, which had already been walled up in the 17th century. First constructed sometime around the middle of the twelfth century, it was rebuilt in 618/1222

> A richly-dressed man crouches over the keystone at the top of the gateway arch, his head crowned with a diadem and surrounded by a nimbus. He stretches his arms wide into the open jaws of two mighty dragons with winged upper portions of their bodies and long, scaly tails … With both hands he calmly takes the tongues of the furious monsters.[15]

This is the description of the relief. The inscription praises the caliph and emphasizes his unique position as the sole spiritual ruler over all of Islam. The name of the caliph is, surprisingly, provided with a special eulogy—something uncommon in Sunni Islam but not uncommon among the extreme Shiʿa, or in Ismaʿilism. It reads: "The blessing of God and His salvation are upon him [the caliph] and his forefathers, the Pure."[16]

This raises several questions: How is the figural relief on the archway and the uncommon inscription to be interpreted? Do they accurately reflect the spiritual and temporal claim to power of the "Commander of the Faithful?" What interpretive power is presented by the image and text? What conflicts can be discerned? Figural representations, such as that on the Talisman Gate, usually have an allegorical, and above all apotropaic, character. They are supposed to protect the gate threshold against the invasion of the enemy. Typically, they do not carry individual statements. However, the symbolic mindset and language of the time,[17] as well as the underlying politics of this particular caliph, to which

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by al-Nāṣir and renamed the 'Talisman Gate' after the unusual figural relief carved above its central arch … This gate was one of the finest works of medieval Islamic military architecture." (Tabbaa, Resurgence 310).

[15] Sarre and Herzfeld, *Arch. Reise* i, 36, quoted in Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 164. Extremely striking are the knotted tails of both dragons, which demonstrate the multifarious nature of the subject. See also Otto-Dorn, Drachenrelief 532–542, and in greater detail Kuehn, *Dragon* 113–114, 124–126.

Different interpretations of the relief's ambiguous iconography are discussed in Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 163–166. Without giving full attention to the inscription, art historians generally tend to interpret the relief sculpture as a victory monument that commemorates al-Nāṣir's victories over the Seljuq sultan of Iran Ṭughril III (d. 590/1194) and the Khwārazm-Shāh Muḥammad II (d. 617/1220). In both cases al-Nāṣir's policy of alliances would act as the driving force. Hodgson, *Order* 222 n. 31, would like to recognize an astrological figure: "a child between two nodes of a dragon, i.e. the point at which sun and moon can pass and may be eclipsed." This interpretation, however, does not take a relation between inscription and relief sculpture into consideration.

[16] Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 164.

[17] Cf. ibid., 165: "Already in the 12th–13th century a special preference for lively decoration had begun to emerge, for example in guardian figurines or representations of enthroned princes with servants at their sides." The Seljuqs emerged as "bearers of a notion of the use of figural motifs which in no way corresponded to the stricter Sunni obser-

I will return, justify an interpretation of the image beyond a general allegorical meaning to a personal symbol of the caliphate's victory—its talisman (as popular interpretation has it) for the protection of all residents of Baghdad, Sunnis and Shiʿites alike.[18] With the help of the mediums of narration, ritual, institutions, and their representatives, this caliph made his interpretive power explicit. He utilized the media of text, word, and image with consummate skill to secure his claim to sole rulership. He also did this, as I will demonstrate, by creating a new distinctive type of educational establishment where he himself taught Islamic tradition. To him, education and power were intimately intertwined.

1 Discources of Power and Structures of Conflict

Why have I begun my remarks on "interpretive power and conflicts of interpretive power" with *lieux de mémoires*? The answer lies in the locales themselves, which characterized the contours of the discourses of power and the structures of conflict that are to occupy our attention below. It is in these terms that we can distinguish the most important protagonists in the conflict over interpretive sovereignty in matters of religion—namely, over "true" Islam (or whatever was held to be so in each case)—and the power of interpretation and its conflicts with respect to "true" Islamic education at the dawn of the seventh/thirteenth century in Baghdad.

To summarize, on the one hand, we can recognize a strong traditionalism sponsored by a woman, the caliph's mother Zumurrud Khātūn, and championed by Hanbali scholars, particularly teachers and mass-preachers—the audience of the well-known preacher Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) numbering in the five to six figures (10,000–100,000!).[19] A strong traditionalism indeed! On the other hand, the attempts of the caliph al-Nāṣir to directly re-establish the unity of the community are immediately apparent. Here, amid the centering of dif-

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vance." They adopted Chinese models. The motifs employed in the relief style on the Talisman Gate were disseminated as far away as Europe, where, above all, they can be seen in Romanesque portal sculpture. For more details of east-west exchange of the serpent dragon motif, see the transcultural study of Kuehn, *Dragon* 209–227.

[18] The arch itself springs from a pair of recumbent lions (a feature also appearing on the Wasṭānī Gate, the only surviving city gate in Baghdad), which are "a very common feature in this period for towers and gates and generally [can be] interpreted in terms of power and protection" (Tabbaa, Resurgence 310).

[19] For the elaborate performance techniques used at public venues, see Swartz, *Ibn al-Jawzī's Kitāb* 22, 31. Hartmann, Predigtwesen 348; Hartmann, Ambivalences 54.

ferent movements, including almost incompatible groups, the caliph's person is decisive. As is well-known, from around the middle of the third/ninth century, the weakness of the caliphs in Baghdad had allowed local rulers within the Islamic caliphate (especially along its peripheries) to assume power on their own behalf. As they established their own dynasties, they challenged the caliphs as centers of spiritual and temporal power, claiming the latter for themselves. In the meantime, the caliphs at the center of the empire were no more than puppets in the hands of their slave-soldiers[20] or foreign dynasties, such as the Iranian Buyids (334–447/945–1055), who were themselves Shiʿites, or the Sunni Turkic Seljuqs (447–590/1055–1194). The caliphs did, however, retain a great measure of importance as symbolic figures, since only they could confer the "blessing" (*baraka*)[21] that actually legalized the balance of power.[22] But the winners of the competition between the caliph and local rulers were the Muslim scholars of religious sciences (*ʿulamāʾ*). It was upon them that religious authority fell, and it has remained with them to this day. The *ʿulamāʾ* are the guardians of tradition, and they formulate and protect "true" Islam. It was precisely the shoring up of this bipartite structure of power and its replacement with a new unity, embodied in the person of the caliph, that was the goal of the caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh's realpolitik, as well as his educational and religious policy.

At the same time, and in the same way, a distinctive trend, led by ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, began to emerge within Islamic mysticism and theology, which also addressed the matter of "true Islam," and within which (as we shall see) it very quickly became clear which groups in the Islamic community—above all among the philosophical intelligentsia—were to be marked out as "enemies of true Islam." In favor of a regained—or at least proclaimed—unity of Sunnis and Shiʿites in the city, a new model enemy was now decried. "Enemies of Islam" were, at that time, no longer the adherents of extreme Shiʿism, but those

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[20] From 221–227/836–842, the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh relocated the capital to Samarra in order to keep the army, comprised mainly of Turkish praetorians, away from the populace. In 247/861 the caliph al-Mutawakkil was murdered by his praetorians. The political power of the Turkish soldiers reached a climax under the reign of the caliph al-Muntaṣir (r. 247–248/861–862) and his two successors, al-Mustaʿīn (r. 248–252/862–866) and al-Muʿtazz (r. 252–255/866–869).

[21] Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 109–111.

[22] Moreover, only the caliphs had the right and the duty to occupy public offices in the administration of their empire. Without the Imamate of the caliphs, the Muslim community would have been subjected to legal uncertainty and, indeed, chaos. The preservation of the ʿAbbasid caliphate was always uncontested. On further details, see the sociopolitical study by Hanne, *Putting*.

Muslims who were interested in Greek philosophy. These so-called “outsiders” were more than just verbally attacked. During several *auto-da-fé*s philosophical works were burnt, handwritten textbooks were washed out word by word, and owners of these books were accused of heresy and condemned in the name of religion if they did not publicly repent.[23] From the power of interpretation, “proper” interpretation came into being.

The struggle for interpretive sovereignty took place largely in centers of instruction and learning, including the public squares of Baghdad, through the mass sermons of Hanbali preachers and through the sermons and lectures of the Sufis, especially those who were beginning to organize themselves into the newly forming Sufi orders. The question that thus arises is, how were the conflicts—resulting from different claims to power, or fear and perturbed ambivalence—carried out and resolved?

What form or dimension of power is the “power of interpretation?” What kind of power do interpretations of religion and education, institutions and officeholders, or even discourses and media, possess, and, additionally, what kinds of power do they create? When and why do they become accepted, or when and why are they not?[24] Normally, the power of interpretation is regarded as unquestionable through acquiescence. The “why” either remains latent, or becomes explicit through narration, such as in myths and tradition. The power of interpretation is the manifestation of claims to power and truth, and, as such, it is subject to dispute. It is by referring to these disputes or conflicts that we can examine such claims. The duty of the historian and scholar of Islamic studies is to be able to determine the limits of interpretive power and claims to interpretive power through the actions of contemporaries. This also means working out the ways in which these actors navigated conflicts and how they determined the conditions in doing so—whether or not they were successful.

Conflicts over the power of interpretation can emerge between cultures, as well as between differing social discourses within the same culture. The same is true of science—and in places of learning, instruction, or other forms of education in general. The multiplicity of cultural, ideological, and, above all, religious variation is a potential source of conflict which should be dealt with in subtly different ways. However, this is rarely more than a hope, either historically or at present. Our task as scholars is to determine how learning environments were structured and how the principal figures and their followers in such conflicts behaved, in order to develop a systematic methodology for the analysis of interpretive power conflicts. If, for instance, certain centers of learning and their curriculum could be employed to *amplify* a particular claim to interpretive power, then they would be exploited in that capacity. It is from this perspective that I would like to critically analyze and reevaluate the educational policy of caliph al-Nāṣir in tandem with his religio-political advisors. In doing so, it is important to remember that the emergent power of interpretation does not have to figure prominently or charismatically; it can just as easily be established gradually and imperceptibly.

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[23] Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 255–262.

[24] These and similar questions stand at the center of postgraduate project no. 1887, “Power of interpretation: Religion and belief systems in conflicts of interpretational power” (“Deutungsmacht: Religion und belief systems in Deutungsmachtkonflikten”) of the German Research Association, at the University of Rostock, cf. https://www.deutungsmacht.uni-rostock.de.

Finally, it should be noted that the term "power of interpretation" (*Deutungsmacht*) can be used both in the sense of *genitivus subjectivus* and *genitivus objectivus*—that is, in the first sense, as the power of an interpretation or the power that an interpretation itself creates. The power that emerges from an interpretation—in other words, from an event and its consequences—is strictly *non*-personal. In the second sense, it is the power to interpret. Here, power is a *personal* ability—an act by which a person interprets and thereby acquires their own interpretive power. Personal interpretive power is the ability *to* interpret and to exercise power *through* interpretation. Non-personal interpretive power is the possibility of realizing or negating an interpretation. (This is the type I will be dealing with in my closing remarks.)

Interpretation implies power, and power implies interpretation. Both concepts are complementary to each other since power, insofar as it becomes effective, manifests itself in the ways in which it is represented and interpreted. Power only gives hints of its existence. Power is relative, not absolute, because it is dependent upon conditions and people—on recognition and understanding. Interpretive power is also embedded within processes such as tradition, institutionalization, language, and reception (i.e., in the regulations by which it is conditioned and upon which it depends). Interpretation, power, and interpretive power are always relative, and they are historically and culturally conditioned.

2 Political and Social History

In light of these theoretical considerations, I would like to briefly outline the political and social history of the caliphate in Baghdad at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century before proceeding to elucidate the interpretive power of religious education and the conflicts it unleashed. In closing, I will present some additional theoretical considerations, drawn from historical perspectives.

The transition from the sixth/twelfth to the seventh/thirteenth century marked a period of new beginnings. In 590/1194, after over a century of Buyid and then Seljuqid dominance that had severely limited the ʿAbbasid caliphate's temporal power, the caliph al-Nāṣir succeeded in shaking off the "protective power"—or, more accurately, the yoke—of the Seljuqs, thereby preserving the caliphate's spiritual power and restoring its secular sovereignty. During his nearly 45-year-long reign from 575–622/1180–1225—one of the longest in Islamic history—al-Nāṣir strengthened his position through an elaborate policy of alliances against military and political threats and consolidated it through a highly effective and innovative educational reform in the face of a great multitude of ideological attacks. Even though his immediate and continuous domain, apart from occasional expansions through his conquests, consisted merely of Mesopotamia, from Tikrit to the Persian Gulf, his name was read aloud in mosques from Spain to China. He was the last renewer of the caliphate before the great Mongol invasion of Baghdad. In 656/1258 Baghdad was destroyed and, with it, the ʿAbbasid caliphate in Iraq.[25] Perhaps, even if it was unintentional, al-Nāṣir himself contributed to the Mongol conquest of the eastern Arab lands, and thus to one of the greatest disasters the eastern Islamic world has ever experienced. Either way, contemporary sources blame him for taking up with the Mongols. Around 617/1220, he allied himself with Chingis Khan against the military threat posed by the Khwārazm-Shāh Muḥammad II (r. 596–617/1200–1220) under the pretense that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Through his contact with the Mongols, the caliph provided the descendants of Chingis Khan with a future foothold in Mesopotamia. However, in 614/1217, the fact that his archrival Muḥammad II—who in previous years had closely allied himself with the caliph against the Seljuqs—now sought to overpower the caliphate militarily and, to the dismay of the Sunnis and cheers of the Shiʿites in Baghdad, had installed an ʿAlid/Shiʿite counter-caliph to paralyze al-Nāṣir's religious authority, posed a very real threat for the ʿAbbasid caliph. The Khwārazm-Shāh's military assault, as well as his struggle for power against the caliph, was ultimately unsuccessful.[26] Yet, the fact that a local ruler, even if his power did extend from the

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[25] Cf. Gilli-Elewy, *Bagdad* 13–35.

[26] Muḥammad II gave up and returned to Persia and Central Asia due to a harsh winter. For a detailed account, see Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 75–86; Hartmann, al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh vii, 997–998. Al-Nāṣir's policy of alliances can be summed up as follows: He successfully set the

Caspian Sea to the Indus and from the Jaxartes to the Gulf of Oman, dared to declare the caliph deposed through the use of *fatwā*s, while simultaneously proclaiming a Shiʿite counter-caliph and striking coins in his name, bears witness to the state of emergency in which al-Nāṣir found himself. As a further means of propaganda, the Khwārazm-Shāhs declared that their struggles against the caliphs, like their struggles against the Mongols, were acts of *jihād*.

With this short synopsis, I must leave the history of political events behind and turn to a sociopolitical issue. Al-Nāṣir succeeded in strengthening his authority at home and abroad, among Sunnis as well as Shiʿites, by unifying and reorganizing the various groups of vagrant and quarrelling men's confederations among the urban population in Baghdad and throughout the whole region. These groups were called *futuwwa* confederations—that is, community-building urban social movements of "brave and virtuous young men."[27] Some of them were Sufi-based associations with strong concepts of moral righteousness, while others were merely gangs with less moral basis. By arranging these groups in an ethical and semi-military fashion around his own person, al-Nāṣir created an important instrument for securing his power. The reformed *futuwwa*, personally supported by the caliph, constituted the framework for a new sense of social solidarity among Muslims and, indeed, for members of all denominations and social strata up to the princes and their subjects, and it was regarded as an honor to join the *futuwwa* of caliph al-Nāṣir. An increasingly heavy emphasis on the veneration of ʿAlī—employed by the caliph as an arm of his interpretive power—also made the *futuwwa* attractive to Shiʿites. The entire process could be termed a "successful integration" of the Shiʿites in Baghdad; through the *futuwwa*, every deviant trend within the Islamic community was to be done away with. The caliph supervised the initiation rituals; he prescribed certain sporting activities for men, such as shooting; he and his confidants tightly controlled communications through carrier pigeons;[28] he oversaw the

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Khwārazm-Shāh Tekish against the Seljuq sultan Ṭughril III, who was killed in 590/1194. Once the Khwārazm-Shāhs became a threat to him, al-Nāṣir employed Ismaʿili assassins and allied himself with the Ghūrids against the Khwārazm-Shāh.

[27] On its origins, history and development up to the Mongol invasion of Baghdad, see Cahen, Futuwwa ii, 961–965. Havemann, Männerbünde 68–90. On *futuwwa* associations regulating urban populations in Anatolia, particularly on the basis of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's *futuwwa* treatises, see Goshgarian, Opening and closing 36–52. On al-Suhrawardī's *futuwwat*-treatise in Persian, see Ridgeon, *Jawanmardi* 25–97.

[28] Al-Nāṣir monitored communications by forcing the populace to use his young pigeons, which only flew specific routes. Consequently, every letter carried by pigeon first passed through the hands of the caliph or those of his confidants. In order to gain audience, one

proper observance of hierarchical rules within the *futuwwa*; and, above all, he distinguished himself as the *qibla* (direction of prayer) for all members of the *futuwwa*,[29] the center of an absolutely binding system of veneration—a status actually reserved by the law of the Quran and the *shariʿa* only for the Kaʿba in Mecca (i.e., for the "House of God" itself).

Through the caliph's self-designation and self-interpretation, a particular proximity to the Sufi branch of Islam becomes clear. The Sufi orders emerged at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century and with them, for the first time, a hierarchy that often seemed to break the boundaries of *shariʿa*. Caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh—whose throne name means "He who provides the Religion of God with Victory"—recognized the connection between traditional *shariʿa*, as well as the *futuwwa* he had personally reorganized, and the deeply charismatic intellectual world of Sufi conceptions of Islam. With the help of his theological advisor ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, he brought all three elements together into a unique theory of the caliphate.

This built upon the similarities between the different dogmatic currents in Islam and presumed a close bond between Sunnis, moderate Shiʿa, *futuwwa*, and Islamic mysticism. After centuries of mistrust toward mysticism, the caliph was driven by a pointed desire to interpret his own institutional power and intermediary role in a capacity similar to a Sufi *shaykh*—as the pivot (*quṭb*) of his order—thus strengthening his power while simultaneously sanctioning Sufism throughout the caliphate. The notions of *futuwwa*, Sufism, and caliphate were aligned in ascending order.[30] The caliph attained the highest level of spiritual power by being officially named and honored as God's appointed intermediary (*wāsiṭa*) between Him (i.e., God, the absolute One and transcendent Almighty) and the people of the world.[31] In no sense whatso-

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first had to receive a pigeon from the caliph himself. This was considered a distinction and was interpreted as proof of the noble character of the recipient, thus, in Baghdad, giving rise to the proverb "The reception of a pigeon from the caliph, admittance to the *futuwwa*, and shooting ("shooting with pellets") make it impossible for a man to lie." For details, see Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 96–98; Hartmann, Social aspects 10–14.

[29] All members were "comrades" but, in truth, were ranked from "younger" to "older," or from "son" to "father" to "grandfather." The society of "comrades" was called a "house," and several "houses" were combined into a "host." The caliph was the "supreme master" of all these groups. Members of the ʿAlid family al-Muʿayya were invested with the function of the nobility's head. Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 103.

[30] If *futuwwa*, *taṣawwuf*, and *khilāfa* are analogous to *sharīʿa*, *ṭarīqa*, and *ḥaqīqa*, then the caliphate was the "register" (*defter*) containing and subordinating Sufism and *futuwwa*.

[31] For details on the theory of the caliphate written by the court theologian and propagandist ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, cf. Hartmann, Conception gouvernementale 51–62; Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 111–118; Hartmann, al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh vii, 999–1000. The Imam holds the function

ever did such a theory of the caliphate allow for the "consensus" (*ijmāʿ*) of scholars—a central element in Sunni law. On the contrary, by heralding the "Commander of the Faithful," the caliph-imam, as the absolute intermediary between God and man, displayed a close affinity with Shiʿite understandings, all for the sake of uniting the Muslim community. From the perspective of the Shiʿites, their imams were understood on the basis of their ancestry, doctrinal authority, and charismatic capacity—the exact opposite of the Sunni idea of "consensus." Here, we see the charisma of al-Nāṣir's claim to interpretive power.

The caliph went one step further in his official religious policy, which he announced under title *al-daʿwa al-hādiya* (the guiding call), and which was concerned with a pointed religio-political propaganda, a stark contrast to the traditionalist Sunni self-image of his father and predecessor al-Mustaḍīʾ, as well as of such powerful rulers as the Zengid Nūr al-Dīn (r. 541–569/1146–1174) and the Ayyubid Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (r. 567–589/1171–1193). Al-Nāṣir no longer concerned himself with the moral rearmament and unification of Sunnis against Shiʿites, but rather proposed to reconcile all Muslim sects and divisions. On the one hand, this led to a rapprochement with the Ismaʿilites under their Imam Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III (r. 607–618/1210–1221)[32] which centered primarily on Sunni Islam, while on the other, the caliph himself fostered a policy of open personal accommodation toward the Shiʿa. This was especially apparent in his domestic policy. He surrounded himself with Shiʿite viziers and other Shiʿite officials and advisors. He attached great importance to the renovation of Shiʿite shrines in Baghdad and Samarra.[33] As we have already seen, he adopted the Ismaʿili

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of mediator in an absolute way, just as the Sufi, once he has obtained the dignity of *shaykh*, is a mediator between God and the novice (al-Suhrawardī, *Idāla* fol. 88a).

[32] Ḥasan III converted to Sunni Islam in 608/1212, though his underlying motives cannot be completely determined. It might have been either a genuine expression of a change of faith, or simply the result of a deep father-son conflict. In either case, it can be explained by the Ismaʿilite concept of "occultation" and "concealment" (*satr*), which began in 607/1210. Not only were the imams thus temporally concealed from the Ismaʿilis of Alamūt, but so was the true nature of their mission and Ismaʿili doctrine as a whole. If the inner truth of their doctrine remained obscure, then their external manifestations were irrelevant. Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 158–162, 252–253. Cf. also Daftari, *Ismāʿīlīs* 405–407, 410–420. On the other hand, "Ismāʿīlī-aligned" concepts of God and His creation, apparently derived from works of the (crypto-)Ismaʿili heresiographer al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), can be verified in some of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's works from late in his life, cf. Hartmann, Ismâʿîlitische Theologie 202–203; Hartmann, Cosmogonie 168–171; Hartmann, Kosmogonie 140–141, 151; Hartmann, al-Suhrawardī ix, 781.

[33] He had the Ghaybat al-Mahdī that was located there elaborately restored and expanded into a mausoleum. He designated himself as the "erector and guardian of the shrine." Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 166.

eulogy in the inscription on the Talisman Gate, and his designation of his religious policy as *al-daʿwa al-hādiya* was a concept drawn from Ismaʿili political propaganda, just as was the special warrant (*wikāla sharīfa*) with which he outfitted his messengers and the oaths of allegiance he drew from them.

Contemporary Sunni chroniclers publicly accused the caliph of being partisan to Shiʿites (*mutashayyiʿ*).[34] Here, two aspects need to be distinguished: on the one hand, al-Nāṣir was regarded as "omniscient," even in religious matters, because of his excellent spy network. A later chronicler remarks that the Shiʿites had indeed regarded the caliph as the infallible, sinless Imam, since "the infallible Imām knows what is in the womb of a pregnant woman and what lies behind the wall."[35] On the other hand, the caliph's tolerance toward the Shiʿa can also be understood as a reaction to contemporary political events. We have already noted that his archrival, the Khwārazm-Shāh Muḥammad II, had proclaimed an ʿAlid-Shiʿite counter-caliph. If al-Nāṣir wanted to restore the ʿAbbasid caliphate of Baghdad to a real and effective power, he could only successfully do so if he took into consideration the fact that half of the city's population consisted of Shiʿites. He had to shape the political consciousness of the entire population in such a way as to fortify his personal position as caliph against internal and external accusations. Externally, he was provoked by the ʿAlid-Shiʿite counter-caliph; internally, he was attacked by the fierce criticism of the orthodox Hanbalis[36] in his mother Zumurrud Khātūn's entourage.

It should, however, be noted that at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century, the Hanbaliyya no longer constituted a strictly homogeneous group in Baghdad. It had split into two branches, each with its own notion of piety; one branch staunchly traditionalist and the other tending toward Sufism.[37] From the Shiʿites to the Hanbalis, al-Nāṣir could not afford to alienate any of the different trends in Baghdad, lest a social vacuum emerge and unleash intense conflicts. In terms of the relationship between politics, religion, and education, this meant a careful balancing act that demanded clarity, competence, and the gift of communication. The conflicts and struggles that had long shaken the Iraqi metropolis seem to have been resolved during the period of al-Nāṣir's caliphate.

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[34] Literally, "behaving like a Shiʿite," "pretending to be a Shiʿite," or "a would-be Shiʿite."

[35] Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 449.

[36] For example, the Hanbali polymath Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) composed an "Abuse of the Caliph al-Nāṣir" (*Dhamm al-Imām al-Nāṣir*). This work has been lost. Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 186–190.

[37] Cf. Hartmann, Predigtwesen 342–346, 351–355; Hartmann, Ambivalences 51–115; Hartmann, Ibn Hubaira 91–92; Chabbi, ʿAbd al-Ḳādir al-Djīlānī 75–106; Mason, *Two statesmen* 30–37.

All of the caliph's undertakings were directed toward completely abolishing the division of power—the temporal power in the hands of the caliph, the sultan, or other local princes, and the spiritual power in those of the religious scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*)—and uniting it in his person. Therefore, as successor to the Prophet, the caliph also claimed to embody the scholarly authority to instruct others. In this way, he gave the impression that he was thoroughly concerned with the well-being of the Islamic community in this life and the hereafter. Early on, al-Nāṣir recognized the importance of pious education, through different channels (not merely through scholars), as well as the importance of religious propaganda. He adopted the tasks and authority of the traditionalists by personally handling the transmission of *ḥadīth* and thereby implementing a broad-based educational reform, which included the founding of new institutions of learning.

3 Educational Policy

How was the underlying potential of such a complex construction of power realized in the education system of the time? On the one hand, the caliph transmitted a great number of *ḥadīth*s via "license" (*ijāza*).[38] On the other, he reformed the education system in Baghdad so that he, like the Seljuqs before him, presided over the nomination for the chairs of the Great Mosque. Apart from direct intellectual influence, this also had economic consequences, allowing the caliph to control the "benefices" in Baghdad, which themselves had long ignited fierce conflicts between the city's different religious syndicates. Now, quarrels could be prevented, or at the very least mitigated, by the caliph.

In collaboration with ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, al-Nāṣir emphasized another feature of his educational policy, creating a novelty in the history of Islamic state-controlled education: the systematic expansion and reestablishment of Sufi convents (*ribāṭ*s and *khānaqāh*s), which included educational institutions, hospices, and, in a broad sense, "places of learning" for Sufi communities.[39] *Ribāṭ*s had already been mentioned in older Islamic sources, so what new functions did they possess under al-Nāṣir? And what did these new educational institutions have to do with his conception of the caliphate—with the power of interpretation and interpretive power conflicts?

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[38] Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 206–232.

[39] Cf. Chabbi, Fonction 101–121.

Since the arrival of the Seljuqs, there had been four principle places of instruction in the Islamic education system:

1. the colleges for higher studies of the Islamic sciences, the *madrasa*s (*madāris*, s. *madrasa*), that had risen during the Seljuq period;
2. mosques;
3. hospitals; and
4. the private residences of scholars.

The *madrasa*s primarily taught jurisprudence (*fiqh*), along with Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*), the transmission of tradition (*ḥadīth*), grammar (*naḥw*),[40] and literary theory (*badīʿ* and *naqd al-shiʿr*: *balāgha*), as well as a basic knowledge of mathematics (*riyāḍa*) and logic—all disciplines deemed propaedeutic for the study of Islamic law and speculative theology (*kalām*).[41] Quranic exegesis and law were also taught in the mosque (*jāmiʿ*). It was there that the traditionalist movements within the Sunni juridical schools in Baghdad, especially the Hanbalis, held on, while the more Sufi-aligned groups (which also contained some Hanbalis) separated from the mosque into their own *madrasa* and later on their own *ribāṭ*. At the time of its establishment at the end of the sixth/twelfth century, some Hanbali *madrasa*s were frequently closely connected with Sufism and advocated anti-traditionalist tendencies.[42] Medicine was taught mainly in the hospitals (*bīmāristān*), and "foreign" disciplines (*ʿulūm al-ʿajam*) like mathematics, physics, and philosophy were studied in private. Whoever controlled the *madrasa*s thus had control over the most important sphere of the educational system. Consequently, al-Nāṣir not only tried to acquire such control but also attempted to regain control over the entire educational system through his purposeful expansion of Sufi convents[43]—thereby intensifying and renewing a development that had slowly begun during the reign of his father and predecessor. Once the *ribāṭ*s were officially recognized as institutions under al-Mustaḍīʾ,

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[40] "Grammar" should be understood as a service to the Quran, the "holy revealed text," as a necessary complement to the study of the Quran, tradition, and law.

[41] Al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) repeatedly emphasized that the study of theology (*kalām*) and law (*fiqh*) had to be rooted in a sufficient knowledge of Greek logic. He saw logic first and foremost as a useful instrument for determining the rules for proper definitions and conclusions. By incorporating Aristotelian logic into the curriculum of theological education, he also made it possible for other branches of Aristotelian philosophy to penetrate theology. As the historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) remarked, it had become difficult to distinguish between a work on the theme of *kalām* and one concerning philosophy—so strong were the effects of the writings of al-Ghazzālī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209).

[42] A well-known example is the *madrasa* of the famous Hanbali jurist and Sufi *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (d. 561/1166) and his family during the reign of the caliphs al-Mustaḍīʾ and al-Nāṣir. Cf. Chabbi, *ʿAbd al-Ḳādir al-Djīlānī* 75–106; Hartmann, Predigtwesen 353–354.

[43] See Chabbi, Fonction 116–120; Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 126–127, 198–205.

al-Nāṣir firmly integrated them into the spiritual life of Baghdad as homiletic institutions, centers of instruction in law, *and* meeting places for Sufis. "In contrast to the madrasas with their formalized curricula, convents were spatially smaller and less structured educational institutions which also served as spiritual retreats for inner perfection."[44]

During the first half of his reign, the caliph established six new *ribāṭ*s[45] through which he spread the teachings of Iraqi Sufism coupled with traditionalist Sufi preaching and the traditional sciences. In the most famous of these new *ribāṭ*s, the Ribāṭ al-Marzubāniyya, located at the ʿĪsā Canal (Naḥr ʿĪsā) that connected the Tigris and Euphrates in west Baghdad, the caliph also attended mystical meetings himself, especially during a time of personal crisis when he played with the thought of becoming a Sufi.[46] As exemplified by these new *ribāṭ*s, all spheres of knowledge—"inner" (*ʿilm al-bāṭin*) as well as "outer" (*ʿilm al-ẓāhir*)—were to be directly bound to the caliph under the guidance of the (supposedly) highest-ranking course of study, the first officially recognized "study of preaching" (*mawʿiẓa*) of its day.[47]

Al-Nāṣir's reform was predicated upon his desire to create a new balance among the sciences. The one exception, however, lay in philosophy and dialectical-speculative Islamic theology (*kalām*),[48] especially that of the Muʿtazilites, who had been the first to establish speculative dogmatics in Islam. Philosophical and dialectical-theological ideas were not always so easily distinguished, as was certainly the case with their opponents, who, owing to their own interpretation, considered any philosophy or speculative theology to be obsolete, since only "true" Islam—based on the Quran and tradition—deserved to be called a "religion of reason." Every other perspective was subjected to the authoritative interpretive power of the ruler and his propagandists. Above all, this meant that supporters of al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) philosophies[49] faced persecution. Anyone suspected of *raʾy* (personal opinion, rational discretion), particularly in the form of *qiyās* (conclusion by analogy),[50] was prosecuted, principally followers of the contemporary Ashʿariyya (*mutakallimūn*) and the "friends of philosophy" (*falāsifa*). However, only a minority of these groups, whose thinking encouraged people to act freely rather than be bound by revelation, were branded by their opponents as "subversive." They were accused of dividing the Islamic community, which on several occasions resulted in book burning, washing out the ink of philosophical manuscripts, and penalties for "recalcitrant" freethinkers.

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[44] Günther, Bildung 217–218.

[45] For an overview of the *ribāṭ*s built on the order of al-Nāṣir, see Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 126–127.

[46] For a detailed discussion, see Hartmann, Wollte der Kalif Ṣūfī werden? 185–198, based on an unexplored source, Ibn al-Sāʿī's collection of biographies of ascetics, the *Kitāb Akhbār al-zuhhād*, fol. 96^a–101^b. The Ribāṭ al-Marzubāniyya consisted of a larger complex of buildings which had been built for the *shaykh* ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī and his students. In his *Akhbār al-zuhhād* (fol. 97a:11), the biographer and chronicler Ibn al-Sāʿī reports that the caliph had the building renovated as his retreat from worldly affairs. Fol. 101b:9–10 of Ibn al-Sāʿī's report states that al-Suhrawardī and his followers lived in "the said *ribāṭ*," and that al-Nāṣir frequently came to visit them. The Marzubāniyya district was one of Baghdad's most westerly districts, crossed by the ʿĪsā Canal. Al-Suhrawardī not only held meetings in the *ribāṭ* which bore the name of the district (and which was also known as the Ribāṭ al-Mustajadd), he also lived there together with his family and his students. At al-Nāṣir's command, all residents received their daily necessities—for both living and study—free of charge. In addition, he also donated a large number of books, including valuable copies of the Quran, to the *ribāṭ*'s library.

[47] Hartmann, Wollte der Kalif Ṣūfī werden? 183–185; Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 145.

[48] This refers to the adherents of Ashʿarite theology, especially if they continued to reason along Muʿtazilite lines.

Paraenesis, exhortation, and homiletics (*mawʿiẓa, ʿilm al-waʿẓ*) were recognized as official branches of science. Only a generation earlier, in the second half of the sixth/twelfth century, the rank of preaching (*ʿilm al-waʿẓ*) vis-à-vis the other Islamic sciences was still being hotly debated. During al-Nāṣir's caliphate, preaching was officially included in curriculum, so that henceforth listeners in the *ribāṭ* could also be students in the *madrasa*—this dual function being particularly well-documented in ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's circle of students.[51]

The subject matter of the Sufi convent also began to encroach upon the lectures of the theological colleges during al-Nāṣir's caliphate—the curriculum of the *ribāṭ*s influenced those of the *madrasa*s. The caliph himself regularly attended lectures and sermons. To a large extent, he permitted students who came from elsewhere to also live in the *ribāṭ* and provided all of their daily needs free of charge.[52] The caliph was a great patron of what he and his propagandists understood as the "true" Islamic science. Among his accomplishments, he also earned merit for the substantial renovation and expansion of the famous Niẓāmiyya *madrasa*, at that time the largest *madrasa* in Baghdad. The new building, al-Madrasa al-Nāṣiriyya, was named after him. The political intent of his patronage is clear: by supporting the Shafiʿi school of law in Baghdad, the caliph was also supporting those who were closest to his own interests. However, al-Nāṣir also had numerous other libraries erected and furnished with costly copies of the Quran, legal treatises, and other manuscripts.[53]

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[49] In the eastern Arabian lands of the seventh/thirteenth century, more commentaries were written on Ibn Sīnā than on Aristotle.

[50] Both terms are well-known means of determining the law; *qiyās* is the fourth source in the development of Islamic law, customary amongst the Hanafi and Maliki schools, but rejected by al-Shāfiʿī, and totally condemned by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal.

[51] For brief biographies of the most well-known of al-Suhrawardī's students, see Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 236–239, and Gramlich, *Gaben* E 20–39.

[52] Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Jāmiʿ* ix, 99; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt al-zamān* viii, 513; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith* 74.

Even *that* was not enough! Since the acquisition of "knowledge" (*ʿilm*), as well as its transmission, is a significant act of piety in Islam—a form of worship that is simultaneously an exchange from one individual to another—the caliph strove with all his power to be recognized as an authority in the sphere of religious knowledge (*ʿilm*).[54] To consolidate his power, he needed the recognition of the conservative traditionalists of the Hanbali "camp," who had often shown their displeasure with his tolerant policies toward the Shiʿites. He also needed the recognition of the Shafiʿites, who represented the largest Sunni school of law in his domain and were primarily the traditionalists in Baghdad. And, of course, the caliph expected to be recognized as a "scholar" by the strongly represented Shiʿites.

Apart from the instruction that he had already received as crown prince, al-Nāṣir also made himself familiar with a great many fields of knowledge, ranging from religious law (*ʿilm al-sharāʾiʿ*) to Hellenistic philosophy (*ʿulūm al-awāʾil*)—his desire being, at the very least, to become acquainted with the thinking of the "enemies of Islam." In addition to his striking interest in the exchange of ideas with Shiʿite scholars, he was soon regarded as an undisputed authority of the Sunni science of *ḥadīth*. Such a turn toward the tasks of the traditionalists can certainly also be seen as the propagandistic handling of a complex political power. In this sense, we must evaluate his presence as a "teaching authority"—as a *mujtahid*—as well.

In the middle of his reign, around the year 596–597/1200, al-Nāṣir emphasized his claim to be a teacher skilled in law with his intention to obtain the dignity of a Sufi *shaykh* (*mashyakha*), thereby arousing a wave of controversies.[55] The caliph did not become a Sufi, but his vested interest in the transmission of *ḥadīth* via "license" or "authorization" (*ijāza*)[56] remained an indispensable part of his policy and education reform. Thus, he held assemblies for hearing *ḥadīth* compilations—i.e., auditions (*samāʿāt*)[57]—where he transmitted the *Musnad* of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal to representatives of all schools of law.[58] He understood, with consummate skill, how to win over the nascent liberal trend among the Hanbalis, without singling them out from those who supported his policy.

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[53] Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 198–201.

[54] In this context, education can also be taken as a form of socialization.

[55] For details see Hartmann, Wollte der Kalif Ṣūfī werden? 175–205.

[56] The Arabic term *ijāza* means both the "certificate of participation" and the "license" which authorized the continued transmission of a certain text.

[57] *Samāʿ* (pl. *samāʿāt*), lit. "hearing," "hearing of traditions." In this context it means "certificate of hearing, audition, authorization, licence." The author, or an adequately authorized

The culmination of his role as *mujtahid* was his drawing up of a collection of 70 *ḥadīth*s of the Prophet, mainly on the subject of "behavioral norms," as well as ethics and education, to provide for the faithful in this life and to prepare them for the afterlife. Every human action is understood as a service to God and therefore as an act of faith, and all actions are judged according to their intentions. As a result, the caliph established a close connection between education and religious ethics. Al-Naṣir handed down these 70 *ḥadīth*s to representatives of all four Sunni schools of law alike using an official transmission license (*ijāza*)—thereby integrating his name into the chain of transmission (*isnād*). The work, titled *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn* (*The spirit of the knowers* [*of God*]),[59] was systematically propagated in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Seljuq Asia Minor, Iran, and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Al-Nāṣir thus created a foundational moral manifesto for his official raison d'être as caliph.

On the one hand, this example clearly reveals how the power of interpretation emerged and operated as a personal act: the caliph employed it in the capacity of comprehensive self-interpretation and thereby gained power—i.e., the power of interpretation or *Deutungsmacht* (as *genitivus objectivus*). In short, it is the exercise of power through interpretation. On the other hand, the power of interpretation (as *genitivus subjectivus*) manifests itself as a non-personal realization, or even as a negation, of an act resulting from the power that the interpretation itself engenders.

The *ḥadīth* collection *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn* was adopted across a large geographic area from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries by historians, theologians, and scholars of law.[60] The historiographers al-Bundārī and Ibn al-Dubaythī (d. 637/1239)—both of them contemporaries of al-Nāṣir in Baghdad—quote from it. In the eighth/fourteenth century, the theologian al-Taf-

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shaykh, read his own work or another's work with his pupil, and attested to this for the latter with a corresponding note. Regular attendance at the lecture qualified the auditor to transmit the text. *Samāʿāt* are inexhaustibly rich sources that document the spread of a work and its manuscripts. Cf. Sellheim, Samāʿ viii, 1019–1020.

[58] Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 211–212.

[59] The title was also written as *Rawḥ al-ʿārifīn* (*The refreshment of the knowers* [*of God*]). The text is referred to in this way in two manuscripts at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin: 5287, 2, and 4733, fol. 85a (new pagination: 98–103). Both manuscripts are incomplete versions of al-Nāṣir's *ḥadīth* collection. Ali Zaherinezhad (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg) kindly sent me a photocopy.

[60] On details see Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 206–220.

tazānī (d. 793/1390) quoted from it.[61] The polymath, physician, philosopher, and historian ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231)[62] wrote a comprehensive commentary on it under the title *Futūḥ al-waqt* (*The openings of the* [*spiritual*] *moment*[63]), which, together with the *ḥadīth*s of the *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn*, are preserved in two manuscripts in the British Library in London.[64] One of the two manuscripts[65] is ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's autograph and contains, in addition to his *ijāza*, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's personal handwritten *placet*, which is dated 4 Rajab 614/10 August 1217.[66] An additional commentary, written by the historian Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256),[67] has been lost. ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī included numerous *ḥadīth*s transmitted by al-Nāṣir, some of them from the *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn*, in his own works.[68] In the eleventh/seventeenth century, the Turkish chronicler Katib Çelebi (Ḥājjī Khalīfa) also knew of the *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn*. By the twentieth century the work was considered lost, until it has been identified in 1975 in the two aforementioned manuscripts in London. In the same year I presented a first analysis of its text.[69] In 2001, the *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn* was edited for the first time in Amman by the Iraqi historian and *ḥadīth* specialist Badrī Muḥammad Fahd.[70]

Several scholars commented on caliph al-Nāṣir's compilation of *ḥadīth*s. Yet only one, the polymath al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), himself one of the primary experts on the science of *ḥadīth*, reacted critically, in that he challenged the authenticity of the chains of transmission of the *Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn*. He accused those who received the work of political opportunism and a personal desire to further their own careers[71]—an assertion that certainly cannot be dismissed out of hand. However, in general, the caliph's self-fashioning as the embodiment of the "spirit of the knowers," the teacher of wisdom—as he interpreted it—in succession to the Prophet, sparked great enthusiasm among contemporary Muslims.

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[61] Cf. ibid., 214–215, 217–218 (al-Bundārī and Ibn al-Dubaythī), 219 (al-Taftazānī).

[62] On his person and his works see the detailed article by Martini Bonadeo, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf.

[63] In the context of this title, the Arabic term *waqt* (time) means the moment in which someone becomes conscious of reality and the Creator.

[64] Brit. Mus., Cat. Or. 6332, Order Ps. 908098, fol. 30^b–76^b (text)/-82b (*samāʿ*-lists); Brit. Mus., Cat. Or. 5780.

[65] Brit. Mus., Cat. Or. 6332.

[66] Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 19.

[67] Ibid. 216–217.

[68] Mainly in his two polemics against *falsafa* and *kalām*: *Rashf al-naṣāʾiḥ al-īmāniyya wa-kashf al-faḍāʾiḥ al-yūnāniyya* and *Idālat al-ʿiyān ʿalā l-burhān*.

[69] Cf. Hartmann, *Nāṣir* 215–232. A detailed contextual outline of the entire Arabic text can be found op. cit. 219–232. See also Hartmann, Authority, ijtihād and politics.

[70] Edited under the title *Kitāb Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn min kalām Sayyid al-Mursalīn*, taʾlīf al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh al-ʿAbbāsī, taḥqīq Badrī Muḥammad Fahd, shāraka fī takhrīj aḥādīthihī ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Rasmī Āl al-Duraynī, ʿAmmān 2001, 128 pages.

[71] Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 448.

To sum up, after centuries of limitations placed on caliphal authority, the aim and, ultimately, the most critical element of al-Nāṣir's self-conception was the official restoration of the caliph's function as an independent legal and traditional scholar (*mujtahid*), to act in politics as the guardian and propagator of prophetic traditions for all dogmatic currents, and so that he could retain his own judgement as a recognized expert in the matter of text interpretation. Personal interpretive power emanated from his figure, allowing him to be venerated as the "direction of prayer" (*qibla*) as part of his reorganization of the *futuwwa*. Non-personal interpretive power unfolded in his "true" Islamic educational doctrine, in the establishment of *ribāṭ*s as centers of instruction, and in inscriptions with Shiʿite appeal. The media attention itself could already be used as one of the effects of power. In this way, Islamic educational doctrine, like any theological tradition in any culture, is a theory of power.

In other words, the roots of power lie in the capacity of something to stand out and thereby to draw attention to itself. Attention is an "effect of power" because interpretation serves to channel the actions of the addressees. By becoming a recipient—or consumer—the addressee effectively complies with the claim to interpretive power. "If the addressee fails to comply with the claim, there may be some effort to strengthen the interpretation through the use of perception or recognition techniques such as rhetoric, arguments, threats or propaganda to the extent of violence and punishment, or exclusion from the community."[72] The latter took place to an alarming degree under al-Nāṣir's caliphate in the form of the exclusion of philosophical and *kalām*-friendly scholars (i.e., intellectuals) from the Islamic community. Those addressees who did not accept the educational policy prescribed by the caliph and his court theologians also opposed the authoritarian claim to interpretive sovereignty. Although Islamic philosophy (*falsafa*) and speculative-rational theology (*kalām*) offered no genuine threat to the state at the dawn of the seventh/thirteenth century in Baghdad, a notion of enmity was constructed, indeed outright staged, against them.

In conclusion, the power of interpretation thus remains dependent on the recognition of its addressees. The power of interpretation can arise either from the actor alone or from the recipient through consent[73] or recognition and agreement[74]—that is, ideally, through the communicative relationship between the actor and recipient. While classical theories of power emanate even more so from the primacy of the agent, (late) modern theories favor a primacy of structure or media. Here, the importance of the license of transmission (*ijāza*) comes into play, since it is the most vital medium in the communicative relationship between the teaching authority (the actor) and the student (the recipient). The transmission of a text proceeds from person to person. It is only in this way that "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) is authenticated. In Islamic educational institutions of any kind, working with a text consisted of the instructor dictating it to his students, who wrote it down and memorized it over and over. Many educational texts were rhymed to facilitate the learning process. The study of a text was not complete until the student read it aloud with a comment from the instructor, for instance: "I am handing over my book with my writing from my hand to yours. I grant you the authority of this text. You can pass it on from me. It came into being after it was heard and read."[75] The license of transmission contained a list of the names of all of those who had transmitted the text, going back to the original author. The student was only the most recent link in a continuous chain of oral transmission.

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[72] Cf. website of postgraduate project no. 1887, "Power of interpretation: Religion and belief systems in conflicts of interpretational power" ("Deutungsmacht: Religion und belief systems in Deutungsmachtkonflikten") of the German Research Association, at the University of Rostock: https://www.deutungsmacht.uni-rostock.de.

By using the example of Islamic tradition—the transmission of *ḥadīth*s and historiography being two of the most important mediums of instruction and learning in religious education—I hope to have clarified how personal and non-personal interpretive power function. The canonical texts were traced back *ex post* (i.e., retroactively) to the credibility (*auctoritas*) of the transmitters and to their authorization by the Prophet Muhammad, or, moving one step further, to "God Himself." The instructors were narrators and, as such, "agents" of the work being transmitted. They operated with personal interpretive power. At the same time, however, the transmissions, as media, developed their own non-personal interpretive power. This arose from the traditional *process* of reception, entailing as it did consent, and recognition or rejection.

It was precisely at this point that al-Nāṣir tried to take part in, and indeed to manipulate, the reception process by establishing his credibility as an instructor, and it is here that the medium of his interpretive power proved particularly significant. Put differently, the power of interpretation did not emanate solely from him as ruler, nor solely from the recipient/addressee. Rather, it could also be realized in the media—that is, the language of the license to teach

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[73] Cf. Weber, *Wirtschaft* ch. 1, § 16.

[74] Cf. Arendt, *Macht* 45 *passim*.

[75] Robinson, Wissen 246.

(*ijāza*)—and manner of transmission from teacher to student. At the dawn of the seventh/thirteenth century in Baghdad, *ijāza* was one of the most important media which the caliph had personally received from his *ḥadīth* instructors and which he was then able to pass on to his disciples—among them numerous nobles and powerful rulers—in an authorized way.

4 One Final Question

Why has a culture that places such high value on the written word and which possessed so many manuscripts and such great libraries—much larger than those of the contemporary Occident—so emphatically stressed the spoken, oral transmission of texts rather than quiet, personal reading and study by their consumers? The answer lies in the fact that traditionalist Muslims considered the written word, and particularly the word written and learned without supervision, to be particularly unreliable and confronted it with deep skepticism. As explained by Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), one of the most independent Muslim thinkers:

> If a student has only the study of books and documents to rely upon, and understands scientific problems on the basis of the forms of written letters in books, then he stands before … [a] veil—the script and forms of the letters in one document divorcing itself from the spoken word in the imagination.[76]

In order to be able to trace the actual meaning of a text, it is believed that it must be read aloud by the student in the presence of the instructor. And, in order to be eligible to receive this text, the student/recipient must read the text aloud to the satisfaction of his instructor/agent, who himself had received the authorization for that text in the same way. This obligation is undoubtedly related to the peculiarity of written Arabic, which marks only consonants, diphthongs, and long vowels. However, the aversion to independent, quiet reading also points to a peculiarity of the concept of knowledge (*ʿilm*) in Islam.

At the outset, I spoke of the obligation of every Muslim to acquire knowledge in all of its diverse forms. Knowledge serves as an act of piety toward God. However, in the teaching programs of the seventh/thirteenth century not only was "knowledge" not a part of autonomous, independent, or neutral thinking, but the terms "knowledge," "reason," and "intellect" were understood in accordance with revelation. Education therefore cannot be of a secular nature. It is bound to transmitted concepts of Islam's Salvific history, which have themselves gradually come to overshadow the historical events (*"Ereignisgeschichte"*) in the very process of transmission. Consequently, in the program of caliphate, education, and religion, the intellect (*ʿaql*) is no more or less than "God's first, most obedient, and dearest creature," as stated in an oft-quoted *ḥadīth*.[77] Conflicts between education and religion over the power of interpretation emerging from this idea continue down to our own time.

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[76] Ibid., 247.

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[77] This is one of the central ideas of al-Nāṣir's spiritual advisor ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī in his religious treatises, particularly in his polemics against *falsafa* and *kalām*. Cf. Hartmann, Kosmogonie 139; Hartmann, Sur l'édition d'un texte arabe 94–97. Even in al-Ashʿarī's rational theology, as confirmed by al-Ghazzālī, reason is subordinate to revelation.

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CHAPTER 31

The *ʿĀlim*-Caliph: Reimagining the Caliph as a Man of Learning in Eighth/Fourteenth and Ninth/Fifteenth-Century Egypt

Mustafa Banister

Two centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the caliphate, Islam's signature leadership institution, had already lost much of its actual political and religious authority, and the caliph himself had become little more than a so-called "symbol of the *sharīʿa*." After the Mongol conquest of ʿAbbasid Baghdad in 656/1258, the caliphal office was re-established and supported for nearly two and a half centuries (659–923/1261–1517) by the reigning sultans of Cairo. Building on the traditional importance of the caliphate, the late medieval Syro-Egyptian Sultanate of Cairo strengthened its claims to sovereignty while increasing the caliph's profile as a man of learning.[1]

Although Annemarie Schimmel's 1942 study on the significance of the Cairo caliphate's ʿAbbasid officeholders has contributed to a holistic understanding of the institution, there are still many areas of the topic worthy of further study.[2] In addition to examining changing conceptions of the caliphate in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, this chapter will illustrate the caliphs' ties to educated circles in Cairo, as well as some of the reasons the caliph re-emerged as a scholar in late medieval Egypt.

The growth of an influential scholarly class had gradually undermined the religious authority of both the Umayyad and early ʿAbbasid caliphs, causing them to grow into the role chiefly as temporal leaders. When the ʿAbbasid caliphs of the third/ninth century championed the doctrines of the Muʿtazila theological movement, they were ultimately forced to cede their authority over interpreting sources of religious law to the *ʿulamāʾ*.[3] For a time, the caliphs

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[1] For important analysis and commentary on the re-establishment of the ʿAbbasid caliphate in Cairo, see Hassan, *Longing* 66–88; Aigle, *Mongol empire* 244–254; Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 195–202; Holt, Some observations 501–504; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols* 56–63.

[2] Schimmel's early contributions included historical details of the ʿAbbasid caliphs of Cairo as well as discussion of their burials, living standards, legal rights, succession, and ceremonies. See Schimmel, Kalif 20–25.

[3] Donner, Muhammad 27; Kennedy, *Caliphate* 84–85. For an image of the second-third/

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retained political control, until that too was lost to the emerging, autonomous regional rulers of the caliphate's former provinces, followed by the usurpation of power by slave recruits in the ʿAbbasid capital itself.[4]

A succession of Persian and Turkish amirs and sultans claiming to rule on behalf of the caliphs later took control in Baghdad. It was amidst the backdrop of dynasties perceived to be "usurpers" of classical caliphal rights, such as the Buyids and Seljuqs, that religious scholars set down important articulations of leadership (*imāma*) that presented the political theory behind the caliphal institution in the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries.[5] Thus, from the late third/ninth century onward, various political actors retained the caliph and his office to legitimize political power. In those years, the caliphs were regarded as bearers of an undefined religious authority, which lasted throughout the ʿAbbasid caliphate, including its years in Cairo (659–923/1261–1517).[6]

1 The ʿAbbasid Caliphate in Late Medieval Egypt

In the Sultanate of Cairo, widespread religious endowments for *madrasa*s and Sufi lodges helped perpetuate what Linda Northrup described as an "educated Sunni elite with shared values"[7] that upheld reverence for both the caliphate and the ʿAbbasid family.[8] In exchange for supporting scholarly institutions and cultivating an infrastructure, the sultans and their entourages secured acceptance from the *ʿulamāʾ* for their rule.[9]

The caliphate, with its close association to the sultanate, was especially sensitive to changing political currents. Like any public office, the ʿAbbasid caliphate readily lent itself to innovation, as caliphal practice or policy was often sculpted on demand to suit the needs of each new sultanic political order.[10] The first caliphs had been used to address the pressing requirements

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eighth-ninth-century ʿAbbasid caliphs as scholars in their own right, see Zaman, *Religion* 120–136.

[4] Kennedy, *Caliphate* 85–87.

[5] Crone, *God's rule* 221–223; Hassan, *Longing* 99–108; Anjum, *Politics* 94–95; Kennedy, *Caliphate* 132–157.

[6] Hassan, *Longing* 83; Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 194; Kennedy, *Caliphate* 247–250. For the political history, position, and status of the ʿAbbasid caliphs in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, see Hanne, *Caliph*.

[7] Northrup, Baḥrī Mamluk sultanate 270.

[8] Hassan, *Longing* 4, 26, 63, 135–141, 259.

[9] Ibid., 67, 83–85, 259; Berkey, Religious policy 7.

[10] Banister, "Naught remains" 230–231.

for the legitimacy of the amir, and later the sultan al-Ẓāhir Baybars (r. 657–676/1260–1277), both domestically and externally. From Cairo, the caliphate played an important part as a rallying point for the anti-Mongol *jihād* in the late seventh/thirteenth and early eighth/fourteenth centuries.[11]

Politically, in the later eighth/fourteenth and early ninth/fifteenth centuries, on at least half a dozen occasions, rebellions against the sitting sultan appeared to consider the caliph as a suitable replacement.[12] The most conspicuous case occurred in 815/1412, when the amirs Shaykh and Nawrūz used the caliph al-Mustaʿīn bi-llāh (r. 808–816/1406–1414) as a compromise candidate to briefly cover the tensions arising from their rivalry for the sultanate.[13] The later ninth/fifteenth century, save for one interruption, was a period of political quietude for the caliphs, when they appeared to engage themselves fully with the scholarly class. The early tenth/sixteenth century brought with it the Ottoman conquest of the Cairo sultanate, in which the ʿAbbasid caliph played an interesting final role as interlocutor during the transition period.[14]

The social position of the caliphate appeared satisfactory to most elite groups. The caliphs themselves did not seek a role greater than what they had, and if they were ever drawn into politics, members of the power elite found ways to punish, demote, or exile them. Religious scholars, save for a few exceptions, likewise tended to withhold support for any increase of caliphal power. Overall, when it came to the ʿAbbasid caliphate, both the religious and political elites tended to favor existing circumstances.[15]

2 Teaching the Caliphs

One very obvious question may be, after having relinquished the majority of his powers to the sultan in Cairo, what remained for an ʿAbbasid caliph to do? Once the new sultan was invested with authority following the *bayʿa* pledge ceremony, the caliph was quite literally confined to a tower in the citadel of Cairo.

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[11] Broadbridge, *Kingship*, 15, 52–53, 68–69; Hassan, *Longing* 66–83, 133–134; Aigle, *Mongol empire* 244–254. The caliphs were also brought on campaign in the early eighth/fourteenth century to boost troop morale and challenge the religious authority of the sultan's Muslim enemies. For examples, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* xv, 349; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh* ix, 167; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 327; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* v, 68–69; Sümer, Yavuz Selim 347; Banister, "Naught remains" 231–232.

[12] Broadbridge, *Kingship* 150; Wiederhold, Zahiri Revolt 213–214.

[13] Hassan, *Longing* 93–95; Kennedy, *Caliphate* 249; Garcin, Histoire 61–62.

[14] Banister, "Naught remains" 235–237.

[15] Garcin, Histoire 65.

As far as formal duties, some works of Islamic jurisprudence, which discuss politics and government in this period, conveniently sidestep the issue by ignoring the caliphal office and focusing on the sultan, or refer to a vague notion of the "*imām*," which usually implied the sultan.[16] Encouraging the caliphs to engage in academic activities was a way to provide them with innocuous pastimes that might also service the interests of the political order established around each new sultan.

Given the former position of the caliph as chief military and spiritual leader, the idea that, in late medieval Cairo, he was required to sit with tutors and be "taught" Islamic science might well be read as an insult to the traditional dignity of the caliphal office.[17] Nevertheless, members of the elite encouraged many resident ʿAbbasid caliphs to pursue endeavors in the sciences of religion that would provide an excuse to cloister them away, submerged in directed study. Although social expectations provided some impetus, piety, family tradition, or a lack of other meaningful pursuits may have driven some later Cairene ʿAbbasids into modest careers of study.

Evidence of the apparent interest in reinventing the caliphs as scholars appears in the biographies and obituaries of individual ʿAbbasids. However, it is worth mentioning that compilers of Arabic biographical dictionaries during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries (often religious scholars themselves) tended to be predisposed toward highlighting a subject's training, teachers, and scholastic abilities.

The first ʿAbbasid caliph of Cairo, Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. al-Ẓāhir al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh, after being invited to the city in 659/1261 and installed as caliph, was sent on a fatal attempt to retake Baghdad from the Mongols.[18] When a new ʿAbbasid claimant arrived in Cairo the next year, Baybars invested him as the caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 660–701/1262–1302).[19] This time, after publicly receiving the caliph's investiture, the sultan arranged to have the caliph sequestered in the citadel, but also tutored. Baybars was often worried about ambitious members of the military class, though he seemed to view religious scholars as less of a liability and selected teachers from their ranks, to whom he granted access to the caliph. Some restrictions on the caliphs' movements eased by the mid-eighth/fourteenth century, and visitors, usually courtiers, bureaucrats, *ʿulamāʾ*, and littérateurs, were permitted to visit the ʿAbbasids living in confinement.

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[16] However, Mona Hassan has examined many examples of jurisprudential literature which consistently affirm the significance of the ʿAbbasid caliphate of Cairo; see Hassan, *Longing* 108–141.

[17] I thank Prof. Thomas Herzog for sharing this observation with me.

[18] Hassan, *Loss* 124–125, 139–142, 279–281; Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 145–157; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols* 56–59.

[19] Hassan, *Longing* 79–80; Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 159–166; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols* 59–63.

Baybars provided the caliph al-Ḥākim with teachers to strengthen his religious knowledge. The Syrian religious scholar and historian al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) claims that Baybars sent to Syria to locate the best instructors in *ʿilm*, *khaṭṭ*, and *adab* for the caliph.[20] The Damascene Shafiʿi scholar Sharaf al-Dīn al-Maqdisī was enlisted to be al-Ḥākim's secretary (*kātib darj*) and hired to teach the caliph Islamic jurisprudence, sciences, and penmanship. Al-Maqdisī was joined by Ibn al-Khabbāz, who instructed the caliph in calligraphy.[21] Eventually, to the satisfaction of his tutors, al-Ḥākim received formal authority, as confirmed in an *ijāza*, to issue official letters and went on to prepare some 40 documents.[22] The caliph's son and successor, Sulaymān al-Mustakfī bi-llāh (r. 701–740/1302–1340), likewise became a skilled calligrapher with a distinct and celebrated style. He concentrated on religious education, though he had a flair for the arts, particularly music and singing. When able, al-Mustakfī also entertained prominent littérateurs, such as Khalīl al-Ṣafadī (d. 763/1363), who visited the caliph numerous times.[23]

The son of al-Mustakfī, Aḥmad al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh II (r. 741–753/1341–1352), received training in the Islamic sciences, notably as a traditionist (*muḥaddith*). The reputed scholar Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404) attested to the caliph receiving an authorization to narrate prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*) after studying with various noteworthy *ḥadīth* experts in late medieval Syro-Egypt.[24] In many ways, al-Ḥākim II personified the caliph as the regime wanted him to be, a diplomatic, humble, and even submissive personality devoted to study and quiet prayer.

Al-Ḥākim II's brother and successor, Abū Bakr al-Muʿtaḍid bi-llāh (r. 753–763/1352–1362), studied *ḥadīth* with al-ʿIzz b. al-Ḍiyāʾ al-Ḥamawī, who spoke highly of the caliph's academic talents;[25] likewise, Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb described al-Muʿtaḍid as well-educated and able to apprehend knowledge at an accelerated rate.[26] In Shaʿbān 753/September 1352, at the Dammāghiyya madrasa in Syria, political elites gave the caliph leave to participate in a summit with local scholars, notably receiving, honoring, and reading a portion of Hanbali *ḥadīth* literature with the distinguished Damascene scholar and Quran exegete Ismāʿīl b. Kathīr (d. 774/1373).[27] According to their biographies, both al-Ḥākim II and his brother al-Muʿtaḍid maintained a relatively low profile and immersed themselves in religious studies and engagement with the scholarly class of Cairo.[28]

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[20] Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh* liii, 16.

[21] Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 177–178; Hassan, *Longing* 118; Shāfiʿ b. ʿAlī, *Ḥusn* 55; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* vi, 318; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn* ii, 61; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 480. On Ibn al-Khabbāz, see al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh* liii, 16, 44–45; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal* ii, 383–383.

[22] Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 178; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* vi, 318.

[23] Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* xv, 349; al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān* ii, 420.

[24] Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Tārīkh* iii, 38; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar* i, 159; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, 399; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl* i, 234. On Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* iv, 171–178.

[25] Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz* i, 123.

While many of the earlier Cairene ʿAbbasids regularly received instruction from professional scholars, later caliphs were freer to pursue learning at their own pace. Young ʿAbbasid hopefuls to the office were encouraged to memorize the Quran and traditions of the Prophet (equal parts of a most basic education) if they expected to attain the family office and any financial perks that came with it.[29] However, in the long run, formal instruction for ʿAbbasid family members appears to have been neither uniform nor mandatory. Some apt pupils, such as al-Muʿtaḍid II (r. 816–845/1414–1441) and al-Mutawakkil II (r. 884–903/1479–1497), became formidable scholars in their own right, engaging frequently in scholarly salons and sessions, while other caliphs, such as Zakariyyāʾ al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 779/1377), were purportedly altogether unlettered (*ʿummī*).[30]

Other ʿAbbasid family members in Cairo, including Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb (d. 881/1476), his son Khalīl (d. 920/1514), and Mūsā al-Hāshimī[31] (d. 891/1486), underwent Islamic training, though they never became caliphs themselves.[32] Al-Sakhāwī described Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb as suitable for the family office, claiming that he had spent at least a quarter of a century engaged in scholarly pursuits with teachers, including Shams al-Badr, al-Jamāl al-Amshāṭī, al-ʿIzz ʿAbd al-Salām al-Baghdādī, and al-Suyūṭī.[33] Similarly, after Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb's son Khalīl failed to win the caliphal office in 914/1508, he exiled himself to Mecca and devoted the remainder of his life to studying with the scholarly masters who had settled in the holy city.[34] The scholarly milieu of the Hejaz was familiar to Khalīl, who had made an earlier pilgrimage in 897/1492, during which he had engaged in solitary acts of worship, as well as communal practices, with the noted Shafiʿi scholar Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qasṭalānī (d. 923/1517).[35]

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[26] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* xiv, 245; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar* 191–192; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Tārīkh* iii, 517; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar* i, 529; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl* i, 126–127, 130, 188; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz* i, 123; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn* ii, 81; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 400; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār* ii, 212.

[27] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* xiv, 245; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl* i, 126, 130, 188; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz* i, 62–63, 123. See also Laoust, Ibn Kathīr.

[28] Garcin, Histoire 58. See also al-Malaṭī, *Nayl* i, 340.

[29] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* x, 86, 188, 329.

[30] Ibid., iii, 233.

[31] In his autobiography, al-Suyūṭī numbers the ʿAbbasid prince Mūsā al-Hāshimī among his many teachers; see Taḥadduth 68.

[32] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* iii, 205; al-Suyūṭī, Taḥadduth 68.

[33] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* x, 86.

The Cairo caliphs al-Mustakfī II (845–855/1441–1451) and al-Mustamsik (r. 903–914/1497–1508, r. 922–923/1516–1517) do not appear to have been rigorously trained, despite having reputations for pious sagacity. Some ʿAbbasids, like al-Wāthiq II (785–791/1383–1386), even learned non-traditional (and perhaps controversial) arts, such as geomancy,[36] while more aesthetically inclined caliphs, including al-Mustakfī (701–740/1302–1340) and al-Mutawakkil III (914–922/1508–1517), counted music, calligraphy, and verse among their many passions, perhaps even at the expense of religious study.[37]

Among the latter-day ʿAbbasid caliphs of Cairo, contemporary authors held the example of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mutawakkil II (r. 884–903/1479–1497) as a noteworthy man of learning.[38] Like his father and some recent ancestors, the caliph, who would later correspond with Pope Alexander VI,[39] had been trained in Quranic studies and learned from skilled specialists in the Islamic sciences.[40] Al-Mutawakkil II received formal authorization (*ijāza*) to transmit his learning in a number of subjects, and the scholarly establishment recognized him as a narrator of *ḥadīth*.[41] Later ninth/fifteenth-century Egyptian sources describe al-Mutawakkil II as a man of profound talent, an intellectual giant with encyclopedic knowledge capable of deducing sound Islamic rulings and practicing *ijtihād*.[42] He was also a master calligrapher who successfully cultivated his own unique style.[43] Indeed, his academic talents were deemed formidable enough for him to be assigned a secretary (*dawādār*) to wait on him.[44]

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[34] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iv, 140–141, 360–361. See also Schimmel, Kalif 18.

[35] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* iii, 205.

[36] Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Tārīkh* i, 201.

[37] Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh* liii, 376; al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān* ii, 420–421; al-Nahrawālī, *Chroniken* iii, 185. In contrast to the earlier ʿAbbasid caliphs of Baghdad, some of whom were reputable poets, very little (if any) of the verse produced by the caliphs of Cairo has survived.

[38] Egyptian sources praised both his erudition and public persona. See al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 413; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iii, 379; Rāgib, Sayyida Nafīsa 52.

[39] Har-El, *Struggle* 156.

[40] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* iv, 326–327; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn* ii, 92; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār* ii, 222.

[41] Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn* ii, 92.

[42] According to Wael Hallaq's analysis of medieval treatises, a jurist wishing to perform *ijtihād* had to obtain a unique quality and quantity of knowledge, including 500 verses of the Quran that dealt with legal subject matter, relevant legal *ḥadīth* literature, complex knowledge of Arabic, abrogation theory, training in legal reasoning, and awareness of previous cases strengthened by consensus. See *Origins* 146.

As a young man, al-Mutawakkil II sat at the feet of the Shafiʿi scholar Abū Bakr Kamāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 885/1480).[45] This elder al-Suyūṭī, father of the more famous religious scholar Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 911/1505), had distinguished himself as "tutor to the caliphs" and held instructional sessions at the ʿAbbasid residence in Cairo.[46] Aware of his family's debt to the al-Suyūṭī family, al-Mutawakkil II maintained a close bond with Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and did his best to help advance his career.[47] The younger al-Suyūṭī had also helped train the caliph to attain *ijāza*s in various fields of Islamic science. As he approached death, al-Mutawakkil II summoned his son, the 50-year-old Yaʿqūb, to designate him as heir apparent (*walī al-ʿahd*) with a testament authenticated by the four chief qadis of Cairo. Yaʿqūb suffered poor eyesight for much of his life and was largely unable to pursue his father's legacy as a scholar. Allegations of his "illiteracy" later in life became the focus of unpleasant and public family squabbles over the legitimacy of his caliphate by rival cousins.[48]

Although they were seldom seen as scholars of repute by members of the religious establishment, who jealously guarded the top titles and positions of distinction for themselves, the ʿAbbasids of Cairo received similar privileges on campaign, such as being given residence quarters in *madrasas*.[49] It is difficult to determine precisely how high the caliphs were able to ascend in the world of the *ʿulamāʾ*. Given what we know regarding the Cairene ʿAbbasids and the degree to which they studied, we can only suggest that even the most educated caliphs took their place among the class of "minor scholars" identified by Jonathan Berkey to refer to those who lacked the extensive training of the *ʿulamāʾ*, although they had acquired enough religious knowledge to join the ranks of thousands of unprofessional scholars.[50] Nevertheless, as with any crop of students, we may say that there were several "shining stars" among the ʿAbbasids of Cairo.

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[43] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iii, 379.

[44] Ibid. iv, 101.

[45] On the close relations between the Suyūṭī and ʿAbbasid families, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* iv, 69, xi, 72–73; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 410; al-Suyūṭī, *Taḥadduth* 8–10; al-Shādhilī, *Bahjat al-ʿābidīn* 57–58; Banister, Casting 102–103; Hassan, *Longing* 136–137; Sartain, *al-Suyūṭī* 22, 81–82; Garcin, Histoire 34–37, 65–66.

[46] Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, 412; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iii, 379.

[47] Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz* iii, 974; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iii, 228. In April 1486 al-Mutawakkil II recommended al-Suyūṭī, perhaps at the latter's behest, for the position of administrator of the mosque complex of Baybars after the death of the preceding director.

[48] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iv, 139–141.

[49] Chamberlain, *Knowledge* 91 n. 2.

[50] Berkey, *Transmission* 196–198, 204.

3 Learning and the Caliphate in Late Medieval Egypt

Many literary sources describe young members of the ʿAbbasid family as having been raised and tutored in the homes of their fathers, while caliphal succession documents suggest that knowledge was passed down from father to son. The documents, above all, concern a new caliph's fitness for the noblest office in Islamdom, and thus the idea that good knowledge was inherited from the new caliph's predecessor carried significance. One such document states:

> [The new caliph] followed the life example of his father in knowledge, followed his honorable legacy, and was comparable to him in nobility; *whoever resembles his father engages not in wrongdoing*.[51] … [The caliph] took from the good tools which had been transmitted from his father and grandfather, from that which was happily imprinted in his polished mind, engraved in his intellect and from the time of his childhood, intermingled within his blood and flesh, until they became second nature … When a man is commanded to enjoin good, it is desirable, and a man must advise his son, as Allāh Most High has said, "Abraham gave instruction to his sons and so did Jacob (Q 2:132)."[52]

As Paul Cobb has observed, it is also worth calling attention to the caliphate itself as an important convention for the organization of historical information. The cultural practice of writing caliphal histories, which continued the tradition from the earlier Islamic period, also appeared as an active form of historiography.[53] During the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, Baybars al-Manṣūrī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Nubāta (father of the poet), Muḥammad al-Damīrī, al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Duqmāq, al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Suyūṭī, Ibn al-Ṭūlūnī, and countless others penned caliphal histories of varying length, in which they sometimes arranged important events within the framing context of a given caliph's reign. These historians' use of the regnal periods of the ʿAbbasid caliphate to arrange historical data is but one more sign of the social and cultural importance attached to the office and its holder.

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[51] This particular maxim also appears in the *Dīwān* of Kaʿb b. Zuhayr, poem 25, line 13. For a translation and commentary see Imhof, *Religiöser Wandel* 114.

[52] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* ix, 375; al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir* iii, 349–350.

[53] Cobb, al-Maqrīzī 69–70.

Because of the caliph's presence in the capital, Cairo ipso facto was often described as an important scholarly hub. Indeed, the arrival and investiture of a new caliph and the subsequent flourishing of the ʿAbbasid line, for many writers, had made the city a true capital no less than Rāshidūn Medina, Umayyad Damascus, or ʿAbbasid Baghdad.[54] For al-Suyūṭī, writing in the late ninth/fifteenth century, it was clear that, in the centuries since the ʿAbbasid caliphate took up residence locally, Cairo had undergone a profound scholarly awakening and emerged as a devoutly Islamic capital:

> Know that Egypt, since the time it became seat of the caliphate, became more important and [observed an increase in] the rituals of Islam practiced within it. It raised the *sunna* and erased innovation, and has been a place of residence for the learned and a wayfaring stop for virtuous scholars (*maḥaṭṭu riḥāl al-fuḍalāʾ*); and this is one of the divine mysteries of God; that wherever He deposits the prophetic caliphate, belief and knowledge (*ʿilm*) accompany it.[55]

4 Education-Based Expectations for the ʿAbbasid Caliphs of Cairo

Juristic treatises on the *imāma*/caliphate, a tradition going back to fourth/tenth-century Baghdad, contribute to a normative understanding of the institution. These include "knowledge" among the criteria that a caliph or imam must have in order to hold office, in addition to being male, Muslim, free, sane, and having probity (*ʿadāla*), or not being guilty of major sins.[56] According to the Asharite theologian ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), the first of the four necessary qualities for the imam is that he must have "knowledge, the minimum requirement being that he should reach the degree of the mujtahids in regard to things lawful and unlawful and all other ordinances."[57] Likewise, the Shafiʿi legal scholar (*faqīh*) ʿAlī l-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), following earlier compilers, writes in his famous *Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, that, among the "seven conditions of eligibility for supreme leadership," after justice, the imam must have "knowledge, conducive to the exercise of independent judgment in crises or decision-making."[58] The political thought of the jurist ʿAbd al-Malik al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) also makes clear that the leader of the Muslim community must be able to successfully carry out *ijtihād*.[59] Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) similarly required that the weak caliph of the Seljuq period should, at the very least, be a *mujtahid* capable of providing religious judgments.[60]

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[54] Hassan, *Longing* 5, 127, 129, 134, 136, 259. See al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* i, 31; al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir* i, 1. See also Becker, Barthold's Studien 372; al-Musawi, Vindicating 134. Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī identified Cairo, because of the presence of the caliph and the righteous scholars, with such epithets as "*umm al-mamālik*," "*ḥāḍirat al-bilād*," and "*dār al-khilāfa*." See *Taʿrīf* ii, 247. The theme of Egypt's preeminence as seat of the caliphate is also picked up later in the ninth/fifteenth century by Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī (d. 1483), who identifies Egypt, thanks to the presence of the ʿAbbasid caliph, as the heartland of Islam. See Haarmann, Injustice 63–64; Berkey, *Transmission* 9; Broadbridge, Diplomatic conventions 101, 106; Khūlī, *ʿUlamāʾ* 67, 69–71.

[55] Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn* ii, 94.

[56] Hassan, *Longing* 98–107; Kennedy, *Caliphate* 161–172.

As Tarif Khalidi suggests, such requirements were likely included in these treatises to reconcile the toothless caliphate of the time with at least *one* of the classical stipulations for the imamate—the notion that the caliph or imam must have knowledge sufficient to provide legal ruling on the matters of his subjects.[61] This was also a condition that could easily be set aside by the military and religious elites if the caliph began to acquire additional support, or tried to insist on taking directions that did not mesh well with their interests.[62]

In the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, knowledge as a requirement for leadership continued to be mentioned in the political writings of the chief Shafiʿi qadi Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamāʿa (d. 733/1333), who composed his own list of ten qualifications for the imam, insisting that the leader be both wise (*ʿāqilan*) and scholarly (*ʿāliman*).[63] Encyclopedists and scholars of the era, including Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), also included knowledge among the stipulations for the imam or caliph. According to al-Nuwayrī, who lists knowledge as the second condition for the imam, any candidate must have knowledge sufficient to uphold various obligatory acts, including the proper practice of Muslim prayers, alms collection, and jihad, as well as how to organize the judiciary, uphold legal limits, and manage the wealth of the state.[64] Among the four conditions for the imamate identified by Ibn Khaldūn, knowledge appears first with the observation that the imam can execute divine laws only if he knows them. Those he does not know cannot be properly implemented. His knowledge is satisfactory only if he is able to make independent decisions. Ibn Khaldūn considered blind acceptance of tradition as a shortcoming, and he required perfection for the imamate in all qualities and conditions.[65]

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[57] Lambton, *State* 79–80.

[58] Al-Māwardī, *Ordinances* 4.

[59] Hallaq, Caliphs 37; Hassan, *Longing* 104.

[60] Crone, *God's rule* 240–243.

[61] Khalidi, *Historical thought* 196.

[62] Jackson, Prophetic action 85–86.

[63] Ibn Jamāʿa, *Taḥrīr* 6:356.

[64] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* vi, 2.

Perhaps the most interesting depiction of caliphal expectations at court comes from a chapter on the caliphate in Khalīl b. Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī's (d. 872/1468) *Zubdat al-kashf*, an abridged mid-ninth/fifteenth-century manual detailing the important regions and administrative positions of the Cairo sultanate. The work describes the caliphal office of Cairo after nearly 200 years:

> Among the necessary obligations of the Commander of the Faithful … are that he must busy himself with the pursuit of religious knowledge (*ʿilm*) and have books to study in his library. When the sultan departs on an urgent matter, the caliph must be in his company to best serve the common interests of the Muslims.[66]

Rather than rely on formal juristic tradition, which seldom defined the contemporary caliph's duties, Khalīl al-Ẓāhirī's discussion of the ninth/fifteenth-century caliphate is informed by personal interactions with ʿAbbasid caliphs in the court of the sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (r. 842–857/1438–1453). The previous passage emphasizes the caliph's duty to achieve an acceptable level of religious learning (guided by the classical stipulation that the caliph be able to perform *ijtihād*) and to remain far from vulgar politics—with the important exception of rallying citizens to the sultan's defense of the realm. Both caliphs of the period in question, al-Muʿtaḍid II (r. 816–845/1414–1441) and al-Mustakfī II (r. 845–855/1441–1451), enjoyed quiet lives of study and attendance at scholarly salons.[67]

Expectations regarding education and government can also be mined from advice literature, or the *Fürstenspiegel* manuals produced during the eighth/fourteenth century. In one such work, the *Āthār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal*, written by the ʿAbbasid-descended courtier Ḥasan al-ʿAbbāsī for the sultan Baybars al-Jāshinkīr (r. 709/1308–1309), the ruler is charged with protecting pious worshippers who choose to reside in his realm. According to the author, every kingdom has pious aesthetes who choose to isolate themselves in order to focus on religious devotions. Not only must the ruler ensure that they are undisturbed, he must also seek their counsel whenever the need arises, as their piety distinguishes them from the masses.[68] While this particular section no doubt addresses patronage for Sufis and religious scholars, the ʿAbbasid caliph was similarly hidden away and expected to pursue religious interests that included praying for the sultan's realm and studying religious sciences in accordance with the regime's desire to cultivate the ʿAbbasid caliph as an *ʿālim*, a scholar capable of offering informed advice, engaging in public debate, and carrying out *ijtihād*.

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[65] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* 223–225.

[66] Al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubda* 90.

[67] Garcin, Histoire 63.

While some expected the ʿAbbasid caliph to approach the scholarly level of a *mujtahid* capable of using religious knowledge to independently exercise his interpretive and reasoning faculties,[69] it remains unclear what this meant in the late medieval Cairene context.[70] Most jurisprudential treatises from the sixth/twelfth century onward maintain that qadis and other religious scholars were expected to follow the past authoritative opinions of their legal schools (*taqlīd*) rather than use independent reasoning in the form of *ijtihād*.[71] Nevertheless, the important work of Wael Hallaq has revealed that the so-called "gates of *ijtihād*" did not close in the late third/ninth century and instead remained integral to Islamic legal theory well into the ninth/fifteenth century.[72] For their part, the sultans and their entourages pressured qadis and other functionaries to rule based on established laws and doctrines.[73] Hallaq maintains, however, that jurists capable of practicing *ijtihād* existed at almost all times, but only qualified jurists could perform legal reasoning.[74] With the exception of al-Suyūṭī, whose provocative claims to be a *mujtahid* in the late ninth/fifteenth century were condemned by contemporaries, few in the scholarly community seemed to reject those who claimed to practice *ijtihād* in their legal schools.[75] Based on the findings of this researcher, the ʿAbbasid caliph was merely expected to attain the level of one who could perform *ijtihād*, though he would seldom if ever find himself in a position to deliver an independent ruling that would be taken seriously. Few scholars may have expected the caliph to exercise *true* influence in political or religious matters beyond his ceremonial role while the sultan of Cairo remained the true "*imām*" in the classical sense.[76]

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[68] Al-ʿAbbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal* 120–121.

[69] Hallaq, *Origins* 115.

[70] On *ijtihād* and the scholarly rank of the *mujtahid* among jurists of the era, see Hallaq, *Authority* 69–71; Hallaq, Gate of ijtihad? 26–28.

[71] Rapoport, Legal diversity 213–214. On the transition from *ijtihād* to *taqlīd*, see Hallaq, *Authority* 24–120.

[72] Hallaq, Gate of ijtihad? 3–4, 33; Rapoport, Royal justice 73.

[73] Rapoport, Legal diversity 216–217.

[74] Hallaq, Gate of ijtihad? 4; Hallaq, *Origins* 146.

[75] Al-Suyūṭī, *Taḥadduth* 215–227; Sartain, *al-Suyūṭī* 59–72; Hallaq, Gate of ijtihad? 27–28; Berkey, Mamluks 165.

Ninth/fifteenth- and early tenth/sixteenth-century historical sources further illustrate what was expected of a caliph, as well as what was expected of the sultan as he interacted with the caliph as a "learned man." The historian ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ al-Malaṭī (d. 920/1515) described the contemporary caliph al-Mustanjid bi-llāh as polite, modest, and well-mannered enough, though ignorant of the Islamic sciences and void of the virtues of education.[77] Some years later, the chronicler Muḥammad b. Iyās (d. 930/1524) expressed his disapproval of one incident in which the ruler, a son of the sultan Qāytbāy (r. 872–901/1468–1496), curtly dismissed the erudite caliph al-Mutawakkil II at the Eid festival of 902/1497 when the latter came to congratulate the young sultan on the occasion. Ibn Iyās mentions that the sultan later thanked the caliph, but he criticizes his failure to properly receive al-Mutawakkil and demonstrate appropriate respect for his high office as evidence of the sultan's "lack of education."[78]

Other sources of the era, notably deeds of investiture (*taqlīd*, *taqrīr*, *ʿahd*), have left more information for speculation about the expectations of the *ʿulamāʾ* and sultans vis-à-vis the caliphs. The idea, discussed by Lutz Wiederhold, Mona Hassan, and others, that the caliph was expected to command, at least symbolically, the loyalty of the amirs and the military in the name of Islamic universalism is alluded to in most succession and investiture documents, yet occasionally tempered with the notion that the caliph must also simultaneously be a quiet and pious man of learning. Several expectations emerge related to the caliph and his education, the first of which was that he must be knowledgeable enough to offer advice to the sultan. By the mid-ninth/fifteenth century, the five chief men of religion—the ʿAbbasid caliph and the four chief qadis of the prominent Sunni jurisprudential schools—would visit the sultan each month. After a brief and formal congratulatory session, the caliph would retire, and the qadis would entertain the sultan's legal questions regarding certain policies or procedures. Only in rare cases would the caliph be asked for his counsel or advice.[79]

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[76] Hassan, *Longing* 110, 115, 120–122, 129.

[77] Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl* vii, 226. Al-Mustanjid does not appear to have received much in the way of formal scholarly training beyond some basic studies of the Quran in his youth; see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* x, 329; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl* ii, 326.

[78] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* iii, 361; Schimmel, Some glimpses 354.

[79] On this point see Schimmel, Kalif 22–23, 74; Banister, "Naught remains" 234–235.

Deeds of investiture sometimes depict the caliph as a learned guide. The deed of al-Ẓāhir Baybars praises God who "has placed by your side an *imām*, a guide, who has affixed the virtue of magnificence to you."[80] In isolation, this statement suggests the expectation that the holder of the caliphate ought to be capable of leading the sultan, or at least able to counsel him about policy, to ensure fidelity to Islamic principles and the will of God. A later deed for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr describes the caliph as one who gives and receives advice: "The caliph, in seeking a cure for that which mires the umma in difficulty, relies upon your auspicious counsel. He is sufficed by your qualifications and responsibility in guarding the realm … and he relates to you the best advice."[81] Baybars al-Jāshinkīr is thus reminded of his obligations to the caliph who has overseen his rise to power. In clear terms, the document enjoins the caliph and sultan to advise each other: the sultan, as an expert in warfare, must advise the caliph about temporal matters, while the caliph serves as the sultan's spiritual guide.

The early ninth/fifteenth-century succession deed for the caliph al-Mustaʿīn bi-llāh, in which he inherits the office from his father al-Mutawakkil, encourages the incoming caliph to use sound opinion (*raʾyan ṣawāban*) as the source for his judgments. The caliph is also advised not to appeal to past rulings unless the legacy of the precedent has proven consistently praiseworthy.[82] The author of the document later lists several qualities which make one fit for the caliphate, including that the candidate be the best at offering counsel.[83]

A similar testament, naming the caliph al-Mustakfī II as the successor to his brother al-Muʿtaḍid II in 855/1451, states that the incumbent caliph made the covenant in favor of his brother, "placing him as *imām* over the Muslims … with full trust and approval to council them (*naṣīḥa lil-Muslimīn*) and to fulfill the obligations upon him in regard to the interests of the monotheists (*al-muwaḥḥidīn*), to follow the traditions (*sunna*) of the Rāshidūn caliphs and guided imams." This document affirms that the appointment of al-Mustakfī II relates to his religious knowledge, goodness, and suitability.[84]

A second notable expectation was that the caliph ought to have knowledge of the *sharīʿa* and work toward promoting it in society. According to the 740/1340 investiture deed for the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Ḥākim II:

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[80] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *Rawḍ* 107.

[81] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* viii, 133–134; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* x, 73.

[82] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* ix, 372; al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir* iii, 345.

[83] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* ix, 373; al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir* iii, 346.

[84] Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 409.

> [The caliph] follows and conforms to the noble *sharīʿa*, enjoining it upon the people … The caliph hastens [to deliver] that which heals the souls (*bi-mā yushfā bihi al-nufūs*). With it, [the caliph] causes the abatement of Satan's schemes, forcing him to despair. He acquires the hearts of the subjects although he has no need because he leads [them].[85]

Regarding the "commands and prohibitions of God" contained in the *sharīʿa*, the caliph, according to the document's author, Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349), demanded religious officials to scrutinize them, ordered mosque orators to formulate their speeches by taking them into consideration, and that the people of excellence should use them to attain perfection. It was the caliph's wish and duty to see that they be discussed by men and women in all walks of life.[86] Thus, the document depicts the caliph as an educated man raising public awareness about Islam.

5 Links between the Caliphs and Religious Scholars

Modern specialists of the so-called "Mamluk" period often affirm the contention that the ruling classes and the *ʿulamāʾ* existed in a state of symbiosis.[87] Religious scholars remained appreciative of the military defense, religious endowments, and the perpetuation of the infrastructure that secured their livelihoods.[88] Alone and divested of power, the ʿAbbasid caliph lacked tangible authority. Yet, as Mona Hassan suggests, the caliph continued to be seen as a necessary part of the equation, symbolically representing the vested interests of both religious as well as political power elites.[89] There is no doubt that the *ʿulamāʾ* outfitted the political orders established by the sultans and their networks of supporters with legitimacy, and in the context of their rule, the caliph was partially recast as a scholar and private citizen, rather than the traditional "*imām*" described in classical treatises.

Linking the religious symbolism of the caliphate to education was an important initiative for both the sultans and their entourages, as well as for the religious scholars who worked closely with them. Addressing any notion of the religious class of *ʿulamāʾ* in this period requires us to acknowledge a broad social grouping comprised of jurists, imams, teachers, Quran reciters, Sufis, mosque functionaries, *ḥadīth* experts, and others—with many performing multiple functions. Although subdivided by wealth, status, and occupation, religious learning and competition for patronage positions united them all.[90] The caliphate existed in their world as an important symbol, but lacking actual power, while the *ʿulamāʾ* themselves wielded true influence in religious and political matters.[91]

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[85] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* ix, 327; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 397.

[86] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* ix, 328; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh* 397.

[87] Berkey, Mamluks 166–167; Berkey, Religious policy 7–8, 20; Lev, Symbiotic relations 1–26.

[88] Berkey, Religious policy 7.

[89] Hassan, *Longing* 13–17, 67, 73–74, 88.

Although the religious establishment tended to hold back support for any increase of the caliph's political power, some scholars, like Ibn Ḥajar and al-Suyūṭī, were sympathetic to the weakened caliphate and wished it to redeem its former grandeur, while others maintained caution, perhaps fretful that excess authority for the ʿAbbasid caliph might threaten their own role as "guardians of Islam," a hard-won status gained by their predecessors in the third/ninth century.[92] The *ʿulamāʾ* in practice did little to acknowledge the caliph's theoretical position as leader of the "men of religion" (*arbāb al-ʿamāʾim*) and neglected to consult or defer to him on religious matters. Nevertheless, the caliph, physically at any rate, was on hand to play his part, not necessarily as a leader of Islam, but as the leader of the Muslims.[93]

As the analysis of Hassan, Yaacov Lev, and others has made clear, fidelity (whether feigned or authentic) to the ʿAbbasid caliph furnished the *ʿulamāʾ* with a means to display their own credibility, which, according to Carl Petry, was the foundation of the status they were allowed to enjoy in the Syro-Egyptian territories of the Cairo sultanate.[94] Thus, the caliph's relationship with members of the *ʿulamāʾ* in Cairo during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries is worthy of further comment. The latter may have demonstrated an interest in linking themselves to the legacy of the ʿAbbasids, as many mosque orators "routinely dressed in black, the color of the Abbasids, since the delivery of the Friday sermon was an official act that included an explicit acknowledgment of the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasid caliph."[95]

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[90] Lapidus, *Muslim cities* 107–108, 113–115; Petry, *Civilian elite* 312–313; Lev, Symbiotic relations 1.

[91] See n. 90 above. See also Holt, Structure 59; Petry, *Civilian elite* 314–315; Berkey, Culture 393.

[92] Garcin, Histoire 65.

[93] Hassan, *Longing* 4–5, 110, 114–115; Mājid, *Nuẓum* i, 33.

[94] Hassan, *Longing* 84; Lev, Symbiotic relations 14. See also Petry, *Civilian elite* 320.

[95] Berkey, *Transmission* 183. The investiture document for the scholar and chancery chief Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Bārizī (d. 823/1420) as main orator of the mosque of Mu'ayyad Shaykh makes many allusions to the ʿAbbasids and to the reliability of receiving reli-

Throughout the long history of the sultanate of Cairo, the *ʿulamāʾ* interacted with the caliphate in several important ways. Dual investiture ceremonies of sultans and caliphs began under Baybars, with the *ʿulamāʾ* confirming the caliph's pedigree and ʿAbbasid lineage, overseeing the proper execution of the *bayʿa*, and aiding in the composition of relevant documents. As Hassan and Lev have observed, incorporating and co-opting the recognized religious authorities of the time as officiators at the *bayʿa* ceremonies encouraged widespread acceptance of the caliphate and presented the ruling elite with a way to publicly involve the *ʿulamāʾ* and provide the sultan's *dawla* and its secular proceedings with Islamic coloring.[96]

Reinforced over time, the caliph's position at all investiture ceremonies came to resemble that of the four chief qadis, with whom he frequently appeared at functions inside and outside the citadel.[97] Although their public stature often seemed equivalent, the caliph, as one-of-a-kind, was raised to a higher level of participation in the ceremony.[98] Modern research has tried to explain the interrelationship of these five key men of religion. Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes has viewed the caliph and the four qadis as a kind of "high religious and juridic community" mirroring the early Islamic tradition of the Prophet and the four Rāshidūn caliphs, with the qadis approximating the caliph's auxiliaries despite their actual appointment by the sultan.[99] Peter Holt has seen the ʿAbbasid caliph as having an official stature *similar* to the qadis, though his legal opinions did not enjoy the same impact.[100] Jo Van Steenbergen has identified the five men as key agents of a defining value system linked to the reigning political orders of late medieval Egypt and Syria.[101] Although the caliph's acceptance of the power transfer to the sultan was a grand public event, it is telling that he was rarely present during the sultan's proceedings at the Dār al-ʿAdl, in which the four chief qadis received priority as the chief religious functionaries of the highest rank.[102] In practice, however, the religious elite (whose most visible representatives were the four

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gious knowledge from members of the family. See al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir* iii, 194–198; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ* 73–75.

[96] See n. 94.

[97] Holt, Some observations 505; Holt, Position 243–244.

[98] Schimmel, Kalif 54.

[99] Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Syrie* xxii.

[100] Holt, Some observations 505; Holt, Structure 45.

[101] Van Steenbergen, Appearances 60.

[102] Holt, Structure 58; Nielsen, *Secular justice* 56. Ulrich Haarmann described the ʿAbbasid caliph as the silent representative of a "fifth neutral *madhhab*"; see Yeomanly, Arrogance 121.

chief qadis), lent their support to the state by participating in ceremonies, along with the caliph, and by administering the immense judicial bureaucracy. Indeed, it was not just the caliph who invested each new sultan; it was also the qadis, amirs, and other notables.[103] Nevertheless, these five men had little choice but to defer to the dictates of each newly established political order and had no real means to oppose decisions they found objectionable.[104]

There were personal as well as professional intersections between the caliphs and the scholars. For members of the *ʿulamāʾ*, access to the caliphs had immediate benefit. Lectureships in mosques and *madrasa*s were a prestigious and lucrative source of income for many qadis and other religious figures.[105] In a practice known as *nuzūl*, many officeholders often wished to pass their lectureship or office down to a son or other relative. According to Michael Chamberlain, because *nuzūl* could not be legally enforced, an officeholder might attempt to approach the ʿAbbasid caliph or the sultan to court official support, thereby strengthening the case of their intended successors.[106]

Many caliphs were patrons of the arts and were able to fraternize with scholars and littérateurs. Several caliphs took on prominent men of learning as clients, commissioning works of scholarship and giving gifts to notable scholars to achieve favor, training, or influence.[107]

Notable scholarly families (including the Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd family in the eighth/fourteenth century and the al-Bulqīnī family in the ninth/fifteenth century) intermarried with the ʿAbbasids, allied their interests to various caliphal candidates, or attempted to influence a sitting caliph when possible.[108] It is also worth mentioning that many scholars stood to gain monetarily from proximity to the caliphs, whether through patronage for their writings or vocational appointments facilitated by caliphal intercession or recommendation. In the cases of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and al-Suyūṭī, both of whom enjoyed ʿAbbasid patronage, emotional testimonies betray hints of loyalty to the caliphate beyond its status as a religious institution. Joining Garcin, we would be remiss to say none of this concerned individual careers and opportunism. There can be no doubt that scholars, just like individual *mamlūk*s, harbored an interest in their own material advancement, some more than others.

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[103] Hassan, *Longing* 71–74, 79–80, 83–86; Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat* 95–104, 163–166.

[104] Holt, Position 247; Berkey, *Formation* 212.

[105] Petry, *Civilian elite* 250–253.

[106] Chamberlain, *Knowledge* 94–95.

[107] Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal* iv, 304–305; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* iii, 215; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn* ii, 92; Holt, Some observations 503.

[108] Marriage within the ʿAbbasid family was by no means exclusive to members of the *ʿulamāʾ*. Minor amirs also married ʿAbbasid princesses. See al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* xiv, 319–321, al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 54–55; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz* ii, 874; Schimmel, Kalif 79; Schimmel, Some glimpses 354. On the political capital harvested through marriages with the ʿAbbasid family of Cairo, see my forthcoming paper, "Princesses born to concubines: A first visit to the women of the Abbasid household in late medieval Cairo."

Some scholars of the era, especially those with close personal or even familial ties to the ʿAbbasid family, watched over the caliphs' educational pursuits with interest. In his biographies of the ʿAbbasid caliphs of the eighth/fourteenth century, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī recorded examples of the ruling elites' desire to encourage the caliphs to pursue academic pastimes as the dynamics of the sultan-caliph relationship defined themselves in Cairo. In his view of the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Ḥākim's relationship with Baybars, Ibn Ḥajar notes that the sultan sought to limit the caliph's prestige (*ism*), opting instead to train him as a scholar in the Islamic sciences.[109]

As Schimmel observed, whenever an ʿAbbasid caliph died in late medieval Cairo, the chief qadis, as visible representatives of the religious establishment, aided the transition process by ratifying a successor and, in many cases, arranging the caliph's funerary procession, prayers, and interment.[110]

Hassan and Lev have already demonstrated that by establishing the caliphate in Cairo, the ruling military class could use a key Islamic institution to involve and integrate the so-called "men of the turban." The ʿAbbasid caliphate provided an excellent means for the political elite to incorporate the *ʿulamāʾ* in document production and in offering official supervision of rituals and investitures to ensure fidelity to the *sharīʿa*.[111] The documents, like the *bayʿa*/*mubāyaʿa*, attempted to convey scholarly unanimity in the selection of a new caliph. The surviving portion of a possibly eighth/fourteenth-century succession contract for al-Mustakfī's son al-Mustawathiq, for example, clarifies that, in their consensus, the *ʿulamāʾ* and the qadis granted the authority (*amr*) and the keys of the caliphate, as well as the right to make decisions in small or large matters, to the caliph. If the incumbent caliph, having previously satisfied the criteria of the scholars, decided that his son should be the next caliph, it became lawful (*sharʿiyya*) but required the unanimous consent of the *ʿulamāʾ*. In the case of al-Mustawathiq, who did not live long enough to make good on any such designation, the author of the drafted document suggests that the future caliph had good character, the most obvious proof of which was that the foremost scholars of the regime had lent their blessing to his nomination and presumed succession.[112]

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[109] Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar* i, 138.

[110] Schimmel, Kalif 72, 75; Chapoutot-Remadi, Institution 17.

[111] See n. 94 above.

6 An Office in Transit: Recasting the Caliph as a Scholar

Even by the early tenth/sixteenth century, debate persisted as to what the caliphate should be and which powers it should have, questions as old as the office itself.[113] The ʿAbbasid caliph, while theoretically perched atop an imagined hierarchy of governance, and despite having his position and lineage touted in the era's juridical literature,[114] suffered from a poorly defined practical role in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. Many authors may also have wished to avoid an explicit definition of what the caliph's role should be, lest it undermine or antagonize the position of the sitting sultan and his entourage. Authors may often have chosen instead to describe the classical caliphate, while elsewhere emphasizing the role of the sultan as imam par excellence.[115] Contemporary literature of the period examined by Hassan and Berkey supports the idea that at least some jurists did not necessarily favor an idealized leader for the imamate, and the officeholder, like most others in the medieval period, was highly disposable. In other words, the caliphate itself was paramount, far more than the man who actually held it.[116]

Schimmel is correct in her observation that any prerogative or activity could be immediately seized without a formal meeting or consensus,[117] though the sultans remained committed to having the caliphs appear to play a role in the realm of religion and scholarship when they were not called upon to serve the government in a ceremonial capacity. Re-establishing the caliphate in Cairo also required some reimagining of what new roles the officeholders would play.[118]

Confusion and ambiguity, combined with the fluid nature of all public offices, aided the networks of *ʿulamāʾ* and political elite in finding a solution to the question of what *else* to do with the ʿAbbasid caliph. The ever-evolving nature of late medieval institutions and rule demanded that an auxiliary institution such as the caliphate be able to adapt quickly to accommodate shifting political realities. As a result, caliphal policy could often develop rapidly and change with the establishment and dissolution of each new political order centered around the caliphate and sultanate.

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[112] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* ix, 390; al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir*, ii, 339.

[113] Sourdel, K͟halīfa iv, 937. See also Kennedy, *Caliphate* xviii–xxii; Hassan, *Longing* 133–151; Banister, Casting 107–112.

[114] Hassan, *Longing* 111, 115, 133–136.

[115] Ibid., 111, 120, 126–131.

[116] Berkey, Religious policy 12.

[117] Schimmel, Kalif 17.

[118] On the other duties performed by the caliphs in Cairo, see Schimmel, Kalif 22–25; Banister, "Naught remains" 227–237.

As the officeholder appointed to "select" each new sultan after careful consideration and divine guidance, it was therefore important that the caliph be presented as an educated man charged with a crucial task. Because knowledge of religion was interpreted as a sign of holiness, attending to the learning of the caliphs may also have better equipped the ʿAbbasids of Cairo for their pious roles in an "Islamic" government.[119]

The very figure of the caliph represented a latent threat to the authority of the true ruler, the sultan of Cairo.[120] That the caliph would regain his influence and make a comeback was not a new concern among rulers, particularly after the late sixth/twelfth-century resurgence in power and authority for the ʿAbbasid caliphate during the reign of the Baghdad caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (575–622/1180–1225). That the caliph of Cairo should instead focus on his studies and quietly pray for the success of the sultan's *dawla* ideally kept him out of politics, thus the political elites of Cairo reimagined the caliphate as a predominantly religious entity that kept the caliphs from "sullying" themselves with governance. Nevertheless, individual caliphs were occasionally pulled into politics as compromise candidates for the sultanate by desperate amirs hoping to resecure the sultanate for themselves later on. The selection of such an *ʿālim*-caliph to serve as a "harmless" interim sultan, while the amirs jockeyed to emerge as the real rulers, also implied an assumption, possibly convenient, that the position of the caliph was now too sacred to engage in the impious world of secular rule.

By insisting on the image of the ʿAbbasid caliph as a reputable religious scholar, the political elite were able to set boundaries on the office, distance it from politics, and thereby strengthen the sultan's own image as the chosen ruler favored by the *ʿulamāʾ* and the *ʿālim*-caliph.[121] The sultans of Cairo demonstrated their need to control the caliphs physically by isolating them from potential rivals. Deciding on who the caliphs' teachers would be and what they were allowed to learn was another means of securing control over the project. This was a way to decide which social networks the caliph could participate in, as well as *how* he could learn. The scholars selected to tutor the ʿAbbasids could likewise check the caliph by deciding how much the caliphs could learn, what level they could attain, and always make sure that the caliphs were kept at an arm's length from the highest levels of scholarly influence and prestige, which they guarded for themselves.

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[119] On the relationship between piety and *baraka* with knowledge and official religious service, see Talmon-Heller, *ʿIlm* 26–29, 40–41; Chamberlain, *Knowledge* 100–101, 125–130.

[120] Hassan, *Longing* 17, 88–95.

[121] Ibid., 83–84.

Many contemporary chroniclers observed that the resident ʿAbbasid in Cairo was caliph in name only, which left political and religious elites somewhat in a bind to demonstrate that he was no mere prisoner in a tower, but rather an authentic ʿAbbasid caliph to whom all Muslims owed obedience.[122] One logical outcome was therefore to present the caliphs as esteemed members of the learned class.[123] Thus, the sultans of Cairo and their entourages took active steps to develop the "*ʿālim*-caliph," or the scholar-caliph, a "Commander of the Faithful" trained in Islamic sciences and capable of performing *ijtihād*.

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[122] Ibid., 84–88, 131–133; Broadbridge, *Kingship* 42.

[123] Al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubda* 90; Holt, *Crusades* 150; Behrens-Abouseif, Citadel 32.

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PART 8

Principles and Practices in Ibadi and Shiʿi Learning

⁂

CHAPTER 32

Teaching Ethics in Early Ibadism: A Preliminary Study

Jana Newiger

> It was not simply Ibāḍī doctrine or practice, but also the unbroken transmission of these doctrines and practices by unimpeachable authorities that set the Ibāḍī *madhhab* above the other 72 erring groups as the true and correctly guided *firqa*.[1]

⁂

Ibadism, which today exists mainly in Oman and North Africa, can without a doubt be considered one of the oldest factions of Islam. The first Ibadis split from the Kharijites as early as the first half of the second/eighth century. Hence, studying this early Islamic minority will not only shed some light on their history and beliefs, but will also, more generally, work to fill some of the gaps in research on the formative period of Islam from a non-Sunni or Shiʿi perspective.

Throughout the centuries Ibadis have managed, to a large extent, to maintain the key elements of their beliefs, which developed from the early years of the group's formation in the first half of the second/eighth century in Basra, the Ibadi center to the end of the third/ninth century. An offshoot of the quietist Kharijites, who split from the activist Khariji branch during the second *fitna*, from their early days, the Ibadis were eager to develop distinctive doctrines and practices, which were to a great extent characterized by egalitarian and moderate ideas.[2] Consequently, doctrines established by early Ibadis not only shaped their own identity but also contributed to the development of Islamic *kalām* (theology), *fiqh* (Islamic law), and *akhlāq* (ethics) in general.

At first glance, these doctrines might not appear to differ much from those of other groups in early Islam. However, a review of Ibadi sources reveals their

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[1] Gaiser, Teacher lines 157.

[2] Gaiser, *Scholars* 61–62; Ennāmi, *Studies* 241–243.

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unique approach to early Islamic thought, and this is clearly illustrated in concepts like the *masālik al-dīn* (stages of religion), *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa* (association and dissociation), and their interpretation of the concept of the imamate.[3] These early Arabic sources, many of which are unedited manuscripts, not only tell us about the theological, legal, and ethical arguments of early Ibadism, they also provide insight into how the group was organized in Basra and how Ibadi proselytization was administered.

In this regard, the uniquely Ibadi "teacher lines" are of utmost importance, since these "teachers" were supposed to ensure the unbroken transmission of Ibadi beliefs. The "teacher lines" also highlight the group's sustained effort to build their beliefs on knowledge (*ʿilm*) that could be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad and that had been transmitted by authorities of high moral reputation after his death.[4] In view of these early texts, it becomes clear that Ibadism established—and heavily relied on—a specific ethical line of thought which has yet to be identified and analyzed by Western scholarship in detail, and thus, to this day remains an important lacuna in the field of Ibadi studies.

Until the second half of the twentieth century, Ibadism was largely neglected by scholars of Islamic studies. This situation changed when renowned scholars such as I. Goldziher (d. 1921), T. Lewicki (d. 1992), J. Schacht (d. 1969), and, more recently, ʿA.K. Ennāmi (d. ca. 1986), W. Schwartz, and J. van Ess focused on Ibadism and its literary-intellectual heritage.[5] Today, scholars such as P. Crone, A. Gaiser, V.J. Hoffman, W. Madelung, A. al-Salimi, J.C. Wilkinson, and A. Ziaka, among others, have made particularly important contributions to the field through their examinations of Ibadi history and thought.[6] However, because of a lack of accessible manuscripts, these publications focus mostly on the history of Ibadism and its theological and legal doctrines, while the topic of Ibadi ethics has only been marginally dealt with to date.[7]

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[3] Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī theology* 1–2; Lewicki, Ibāḍiyya iii, 658.

[4] Gaiser, Teacher lines 160–161; Gaiser, Good models 78–79. See 3 for a more detailed survey.

[5] See, e.g., Goldziher, Dogme; Lewicki, Subdivisions; Ennāmi, *Studies*; Schacht, Bibliothèques; Schwartz, *Anfänge*; van Ess, Untersuchungen.

[6] See, e.g., Madelung, Origins; Madelung, *Streitschrift*; Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī literature*; Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī theology*; al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar*; al-Salimi, Arguments; al-Salimi, Themes.

[7] In this context, Wilkinson's *Ibāḍism*, which discusses the emergence of Ibadism in Basra and its development in Oman, as well as Hoffman's *Essentials*, which is one of the standard references when it comes to Ibadi theology, and Ziaka's (ed.) comprehensive volume *On Ibadism* must be mentioned.

Indeed, within the field of Western Islamic studies, Ibadi "teacher lines," an important feature of Ibadi ethical thought, have thus far only been addressed in greater detail by A. Gaiser.[8] It is also noteworthy that, while several Arabic publications on Ibadi education[9] and ethics exist, these studies focus mainly on the Maghrib and do not take Oman, the contemporary stronghold of Ibadism, into consideration.[10] Thus, a comprehensive study on the beginnings and foundation of Ibadi ethical thought appears to be of vital importance.

Therefore, this contribution aims to identify certain key aspects of Ibadi ethical thought while taking its legal and theological background into consideration. It will also point out how these concepts were taught in Basra and then passed on to Ibadi communities during the formative period of the Ibadi *madhhab*. By taking both the textual and educational aspects of the Ibadi practice of virtue into account, it will become evident how these two factors came together to shape Ibadi ethical thought.

1 The Formative Period

The origin of Ibadism can be traced back to 123/740, when a group of Muslims branched out from the quietist Kharijites, mainly due to opposing views on the practice of *istiʿrāḍ* among Muslims.[11] Under the guidance of the alleged group's namesake ʿAbdallāh b. Ibāḍ al-Murrī al-Tamīmī (d. 86/705),[12] the Ibadis settled down in Basra, where they practiced their beliefs in a state of secrecy (*kitmān*).[13]

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[8] See Gaiser, Teacher lines.

[9] Following Günther, Education 29, education is understood here as the imparting and acquisition of knowledge, values, and skills, in which intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual qualities play an important role.

[10] See, e.g., Khulayfāt, *Nuẓum*; Yaʿqūb, *Ibāḍiyya*; and Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwūr*.

[11] Gaiser, *Scholars* 61–62. While Ibadis strictly denied the legitimacy of the lawful killing of Muslims for religious reasons, it was a key aspect of Khariji doctrine. For more on the Kharijites and their influence on Ibadism, see Levi Della Vida, K̲h̲āridjites iv, 1074–1077 and esp. Gaiser, Good models 75–79; Gaiser, *Legends* 114–151.

[12] Only a little biographical data on Ibn Ibāḍ is available. Two important sources for determining his much-debated role in early Ibadism are the polemical letters ascribed to him, which—according to Madelung and Wilkinson—are addressed to ʿAbd al-Malik, the son of ʿUmar II (r. 99–101/717–720). However, the authenticity of these two letters is still in dispute; see, e.g., Madelung, Origins 52–54; Madelung, Authenticity; Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī texts* 1–3; Watt, *Formative period* 16.

[13] Francesca, Formation 261–262. For more on the state of *kitmān* and the other three stages of religion (*ẓuhūr*, *difāʿa*, and *shirāʾ*), which correlated with different types of the Ibadi imamate, see 2.5.

Later on, Ibn Ibāḍ was succeeded by Abū l-Shaʿthāʾ Jābir b. Zayd al-Azdī (d. ca. 93/712),[14] who was an associate of the Prophet's cousin ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās (d. 68/687) and a well-known scholar. He joined the Basran teaching circles (*ḥalaqāt*, s. *ḥalqa*) and engaged in writing *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* works.[15] Early Ibadi sources mention him as *aṣl al-madhhab* (foundation of the [Ibadi] school [of thought]) and their first imam. However, the title of imam merely attested to his importance in religious matters, since the Ibadis did not establish an autonomous imamate until decades later.[16]

After Jābir b. Zayd laid the foundation of the Ibadi *madhhab*, his student Abū ʿUbayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma al-Tamīmī (d. before 158/775),[17] the second Ibadi imam, elaborated the school's theological and legal doctrines and thereby further unified the group.[18] Although hesitant of using activist means, Abū ʿUbayda—unlike Jābir b. Zayd—was keen to leave the state of *kitmān*, aiming to establish an autonomous Ibadi imamate (*imāmat al-ẓuhūr*).[19] Hence, he polemicized against the Umayyad caliphs and spread the Ibadi doctrine by sending out missionaries, the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*[20] (bearers of knowledge). In order to educate the Ibadi community in Basra, and especially the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*, Abū ʿUbayda organized secret teaching circles. In doing so, the Ibadis were the first Islamic school to make knowledge available to the general population as well as the elite.[21] While Abū ʿUbayda managed to unify the Ibadis by laying the foundation for their essential doctrines and practices, this unity collapsed shortly after his death, and several subgroups emerged.

Abū ʿUbayda was succeeded by al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb al-Farāhīdī (d. 175/791), who compiled the Ibadi *ḥadīth* collection *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*.[22] Under his leadership, the group's center slowly shifted from Basra to other regions of the Islamic world, where Ibadism was influenced by local customs and traditions.[23] Despite his efforts to continuously train and educate those known as *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*, al-Rabīʿ could not avert the declining influence of the Basran Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ*.[24] Thus, his successor, Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl (d. ca. 230/844–845), was the last Basran Ibadi imam.[25]

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[14] Jābir b. Zayd, who was of Omani origin, was known as an Ibadi traditionist, *ḥāfiẓ*, and jurist in Basra. For more details on his life, see Rubinacci, D̲jābir b. Zayd ii, 359–360.

[15] Hoffman, *Essentials* 11–12.

[16] Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism* 184–189; Ennāmi, *Studies* 44–45.

[17] Abū ʿUbayda's death date cannot be accurately determined. While Ennāmi refers to an account by al-Shammākhī according to which Abū ʿUbayda died during the rule of the second ʿAbbasid caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775), Madelung and al-Salimi propose circa 150–158/767–775; see Ennāmi, *Studies* 57–58 (for more details on Abū ʿUbayda's biography, see also 57–75); Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī theology* 1.

[18] Hoffman, *Essentials* 12–13. Like Jābir b. Zayd, Abū ʿUbayda was an *imām al-kitmān* and had to rule in concealment; see Wilkinson, Reconsiderations 43.

[19] Gaiser, *Scholars* 68–69; Francesca, Formation 271.

[20] See 3. Unlike most other scholars, who regard Basra as the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*'s place of origin, Wilkinson argues that the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm* doctrine developed in Oman, where it was called *naqalat al-ʿilm*; see Wilkinson, Ḥamalat al-ʿilm 91.

[21] Günther, Education 44.

[22] The full title of al-Rabīʿ's work is *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ: Musnad al-Imām al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb b. ʿAmr al-Farāhidī al-Uzdī*.

After Abū Sufyān, the Ibadi center in Basra came to a definite end when several important Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* left Basra due to schisms which had occurred as a result of theological and political disputes. Thereafter, the group split further into a Maghribi and a Mashriqi branch, and their respective *ʿulamāʾ* and imams became the new communities' moral and political authorities. Additionally, the first autonomous Ibadi imamates were established in several places.[26] The division of the Ibadi movement into a Western and an Eastern branch led to (sometimes striking) differences in the development of their respective doctrines, which are also reflected in their literary heritage.[27] However, due to the school's characteristic segregation from other Islamic factions, which was practiced in both Ibadi branches, the essential aspects of Ibadi thought remained, for the most part, the same and led to the formation of the Ibadi *madhhab* in the course of the third/ninth century.[28]

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[23] Lewicki, Ibāḍiyya iii, 650–651. See also Wilkinson, Theological literature 34; al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 83. In particular, the Berbers need to be mentioned, who not only impacted Ibadi doctrines and practices, but also supported their political endeavors. For more on this, see Schwartz, *Anfänge* 93–94, 257–261; Rebstock, *Ibāḍiten* 88–97.

[24] Gaiser, *Scholars* 70.

[25] Custers, *Bibliography* i, 8–9; van Ess, *Theologie* ii, 200.

[26] Lewicki, Ibāḍiyya iii, 650–651. See also al-Salimi, Themes 488–490; Gaiser, *Scholars* 69–70; Wilkinson, Theological literature 33–34. In Ifrīqiya, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb ʿAbd al-Aʿlā b. al-Samḥ al-Maʿāfirī (d. 144/761) became imam, while al-Julandā b. Masʿūd (d. 134/752) was elected as the first Ibadi imam of Oman. In Tāhart, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam b. Bahrām al-Fārisī (d. 168/784–785 or 171/788) established an imamate that lasted from 161/778 to 296/909 and brought forward some relevant Ibadi *tafsīr* works and *ḥadīth* compilations (see al-Salimi, Themes 488; Talbi, Rustamids viii, 638–640; Hoffman, *Essentials* 20–21). See also Prevost, Ibn Rustum 44–49, and Rebstock, *Ibāḍiten* 143–162 for a detailed overview of the Rustamid imamate.

[27] Cook, *Commanding* 395.

[28] Francesca, Formation 260–261, 267–274. On local influences, see Schwartz, *Anfänge* 93–94, 257–261; Rebstock, *Ibāḍiten* 88–97.

2 Key Ethical Concepts

In what follows, I will outline certain key aspects of Ibadi ethical thought concerning the understanding of *ʿilm* (religious knowledge) and *qadar* (predestination), the doctrines of *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa* (association and dissociation) and *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (commanding right and forbidding wrong), and lastly, the concept of the imamate.

The information provided here is derived from texts by prominent Ibadi scholars from the second/eighth century, such as Abū ʿUbayda and Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī (d. after 179/795)[29] who—among others—considerably influenced early Ibadi doctrines and practices.

2.1 *Knowledge*

Religious knowledge (*ʿilm*),[30] based on the Quran and the *sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad,[31] constituted the basis of the Ibadi creed, and was regarded as a pillar of religion in Ibadi thought.[32] Following from this, the Ibadis understood knowledge acquisition to be the second duty of righteous Muslims, after worshipping God. Its primary aim was "knowing God" (*maʿrifat Allāh*), which Ibadis regarded as obligatory, even for children at a young age.[33] Early Ibadis held the view that knowledge of God constituted the demarcation line between faith and polytheism (*shirk*).[34] Abū ʿUbayda even asserted that knowledge was equivalent to faith and mentioned it as one of the first things created by God.[35]

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[29] Al-Fazārī was "the most prominent Ibadi *kalām* theologian of the 2nd/8th century" (Madelung, Abode 53) and a pupil of Abū ʿUbayda. Although he later veered from the Basran school (Wahbi Ibadism) due mainly to political reasons. Al-Fazārī's opinion on theological and ethical matters exemplifies, to a large extent, the early Ibadi traditionalist doctrine taught by Abū ʿUbayda; see Newiger, Theologie 90–91. See also Madelung, al-Fazārī 57–58. For a detailed analysis of al-Fazārī's teachings, see Newiger, Theologie esp. 80–93. For this scholar's much-discussed role in the formation of early Ibadism, see Madelung, *Streitschrift* 4–12 and Madelung, al-Fazārī 57–59. Additional information in this section is derived from texts by: (a) Abū Ayyūb Wāʾil b. Ayyūb al-Ḥaḍramī (d. ca. 190/805–806), one of Abū ʿUbayda's first students and successor of al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb as the leader of the Ibadis in Basra in circa 170/786 (see Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī texts* 7–8); (b) Shabīb b. ʿAṭiyya al-ʿUmanī al-Khurāsānī (d. after 134/751), who studied with Abū ʿUbayda and was an advisor to the Ibadi imam al-Julandā b. Masʿūd (d. 134/752) in Oman (see Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī texts* 6); and (c) Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib b. Mawdūd al-Ṭāʾī al-Azdī (d. before Abū ʿUbayda, i.e. before 158/775), who joined the Ibadis after Jābir b. Zayd's death and was in charge of military and financial affairs. His house hosted sessions of the Ibadi *majālis* (see Ennāmi, *Studies* 66).

[30] This section only covers the Ibadi concept of *ʿilm*, which was usually referred to as religious knowledge (e.g., *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *qirāʾa*, and *naḥw*) in early Islam. However, it must be noted that there is a second term which denotes secular knowledge (*maʿrifa*). While this distinction is fluid and somewhat contrived, it is still a useful distinction when approaching methods of knowledge acquisition in early Islam. See Makdisi, Institutions 6; Lewis et al., ʿIlm iii, 1133.

[31] It seems that Ibadis did not place as much importance on the collection of *ḥadīth*s as other contemporary factions. Their only *ḥadīth* collection, compiled by al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb al-Farāhīdī, served mainly political purposes. See, e.g., Crone and Zimmermann, *Epistle* 308; Hoffman, *Essentials* 19–20. *Sunna* is understood here as the standard and practice established by the Prophet and elder Ibadi leading figures (cf. al-Busaidi, Reading 57, 59).

However, even though *maʿrifat Allāh* was a central element of the Ibadi *ʿilm* doctrine, it was not the sole requirement for being a righteous Muslim. Early Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* were convinced that true ethical behavior could only arise out of a combination of *ʿilm* and *ʿamal* (deeds), with the former preceding the latter to ensure that these religious works were executed properly.[36]

ʿIlm constituted a prerequisite for any righteous act, and, according to Ibadi doctrine, education was the most important means for understanding and interpreting it.[37] However, in this context the distinction between Quranic and non-religiously sanctioned ("secular") knowledge needs to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, Ibadis argued that human knowledge of God was innate and predestined by Him. Thus, essential knowledge—such as truth of God, His existence, and the key aspects of belief, which included *tawḥīd* (unity) and *qadar* (predestination)—was comprehensible even without any form of revelation and could not be acquired through education.[38] On the other hand, to a certain extent it was possible to actively achieve some aspects of religious knowledge through the use of reason (*ʿaql*).[39]

The Ibadi emphasis on the use of reason is also manifest in their early writings. Scholars such as Jābir b. Zayd based their legal counseling on *raʾy* and reason instead of solely referring to the Quran or the *sunna*. Ibadis also used

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[32] See, e.g., Q 2:247, 35:28, 39:9, 96:4–5; Günther, Education 30–31; Madelung, *Streitschrift* 11.

[33] Al-Fazārī, Tawḥīd 187; al-Fazārī, Rajaʿa 227. See also Ourghi, *Reformbewegung* 270; Ziaka, Roots 95.

[34] Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant* 100.

[35] Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 323; Abū ʿUbayda, Risāla 118. See also al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 5.

[36] Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 321, 323. Ibn ʿAṭiyya, Kitāb ilā ʿAbd al-Salām 217–218, 220–221; Hoffman, *Essentials* 236–237. See also al-Najjār, *Ibāḍiyya* 84–85; Schwartz, *Anfänge* 54–55. For an overview of the relationship between *ʿilm* and *ʿamal* in Islamic societies, see Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant* 240–252 and Lewis et al., ʿIlm iii, 1133. Francesca argues that, in Ibadism, the correlation between faith and works in order to maintain one's status as a believer was applied to religious works as well as secular works, because work in general was considered a religious duty. See Francesca, Individualism 69–70.

[37] Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant* 246–248.

[38] Hoffman, *Essentials* 36–37. See also al-Najjār, *Ibāḍiyya* 101–102.

[39] Al-Fazārī, Tawḥīd 157; Hoffman, *Essentials* 36–37.

ijtihād for Quranic exegesis and the interpretation of other religiously central texts, and they were opposed to any literal interpretation. Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* advised their students—as well as the public—to revise and verify the knowledge they were being taught and hence rejected *taqlīd* (lit. imitation, copying; defined as the [blind] acceptance of, or submission to, authority[40]) at all costs.[41]

Even after Ibadism's formative period in Basra had ended, knowledge acquisition remained a priority in both the Maghribi and Mashriqi branches of Ibadism. Indeed, Omani scholars stressed the importance of seeking knowledge in various *siyar* (short letters).[42] In Tahart, the capital of the Rustamid imamate (161–296/778–909), scientific libraries were built and *ʿulamāʾ* engaged in scholarly discussions on various subjects.[43] The Rustamid imamate was one of the first autonomous Muslim states in North Africa and is seen as a golden age by many Ibadis today.

Although the Ibadi concept of *ʿilm* appears to have been a theological aspect of early Ibadism, it still had an impact on early Ibadi ethics, in which the use of reason and rational thinking were considered key aspects for acquiring knowledge. This, in turn, also influenced the Ibadis' educational activities (discussed in section 3).

2.2 *Predestination*

While the early Ibadi understanding of *ʿilm* appears to be more rational—thus, resembling that of the Muʿtazila—their thoughts on predestination (*qadar*) come across as more conservative. Since both the Quran and the *sunna* extensively emphasize God's almightiness, Ibadis were in agreement with most other Islamic divisions of their time—and with what would later become "orthodox" Islam—that God's power embraces every aspect of human life at every moment in time.[44] Therefore, disagreement was based primarily on their respective views as to how this power manifests itself in everyday human life and to what extent free will exists.

The early Ibadi notion of *qadar* was characterized by the idea that God is the creator and the source of everything and everyone. Therefore, according to the

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[40] Calder, Taḳlīd x, 137.

[41] Al-Fazārī, Rajaʿa 227. See also Ziaka, Ibāḍī writings 100–101; Badjou, Concept 104; Hoffman, *Essentials* 36–37.

[42] Ziaka, Roots 94–95, 97.

[43] Guendouz, Ibadiyya doctrine 130–131.

[44] See, e.g., Q 10:5, 2:117, 3:47; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* viii, 152–153; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* ii, 1171–1174. See also Gardet, Ḳaḍāʾ iv, 365–366. The Muʿtazila and Qadariyya had opposing views on this issue and argued that God gave humans free will in order to not violate God's justice. See Gimaret, Muʿtazila vii, 790–791; van Ess, Ḳadariyya iv, 368–369.

Ibadis, God has complete power over His creation and has created belief and unbelief; however, they also require the action of humans to come into existence.[45] Although humans are predestined by God to become either believers or unbelievers according to their respective capacity, He gives them relative freedom to decide whether to fulfill an act in any given situation.[46] It is important to note here that, according to Ibadi doctrine, the power to act occurs concurrently with the action. Human voluntary acts were defined as acquisitions (s. *kasb*) to ensure that God's absolute justice (*ʿadl*) remains intact.[47] Furthermore, they held the view that God does not punish humans if they are predestined to unbelief; rather, He punishes them for their free decision to perform an act in a given situation.[48]

According to S. Stelzer, "the ethical" refers to "knowledge which allows to locate a particular act on a predefined scale of categories while 'ethics' denotes the science which defines the means for such a localization."[49] Applying this definition to the Ibadi concept of *qadar*, Ibadis followed a "theistic subjectivism" since they believed that the value of an act resides in the divine will. While this approach was similar to the Ashʿari understanding of *qadar*, it differed from the latter since the Ashʿari approach preferred revelation and tradition over reason, which was opposed to the Ibadis' rationalist understanding.[50] Ibadism neither followed the Muʿtazili objectivist approach, nor was their theistic subjectivism equivalent to the Ashʿari doctrine, thus they offered a new perspective on the understanding of *qadar*.

2.3 *Association and Dissociation*

Another crucial doctrine of early Ibadi ethical thought involved the concepts of association (*walāya*) with and dissociation (*barāʾa*) from other Muslims and non-Muslims, depending on whether they were regarded as believers or unbelievers.[51] Early Ibadis distinguished between different kinds of unbelief. The first, and most severe, was referred to as *kufr shirk* (polytheism) and was performed by non-Muslims, while sinning Muslims committed *kufr nifāq* (hypocrisy) and *kufr niʿma*. While the former was defined as the disregard of religious duties, the latter denoted ingratitude for God's blessings.[52] The Ibadi definition of unbelief outlined above had a substantial impact on their doctrine of *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa*. According to Ibadi doctrine, the latter was a religious duty that regulated the Ibadis' coexistence amongst themselves as well as with non-Ibadis.[53]

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[45] Al-Fazārī, Qadar 25, 29; Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 323.

[46] Al-Fazārī, Qadar 58; Abū ʿUbayda, Risāla 118.

[47] Al-Fazārī, Qadar 36, 41, 50; Abū ʿUbayda/Abū Mawdūd, Risāla ilā l-Faḍl b. Kathīr 106–107. For more on the Ibadi notion of *qadar*, see al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 55–56; Hoffman, *Essentials* 32–35.

[48] Al-Fazārī, Qadar 55, 57–58.

[49] Stelzer, Ethics 165.

[50] Ibid., 165–168.

[51] Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 313 (see also ibid., 318, 320, 324–325).

Both *al-walāya* and *al-barāʾa* contained two aspects.[54] The first aspect of *al-walāya* consisted of the belief in *tawḥīd, al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (commanding right and forbidding wrong),[55] and the Ibadis' association with their community and other Muslims (*walāyat al-jumla*) in general. If an Ibadi neglected this aspect of *walāya*, he committed *shirk*.[56] While this component of *al-walāya* was rather theoretical, the second aspect concerned the everyday life of early Ibadis. *Walāyat al-ashkhāṣ* (association with the people) was defined as the association with other Ibadis that was determined individually on the basis of *ijmāʿ* (consensus).[57] If an Ibadi was found to be genuine in regard to his religious beliefs and actions, he was eligible to obtain association with the others.[58] Thus, practicing *walāya* was not only an obligation for Ibadis, but also their right if they fulfilled the necessary requirements.

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[52] Hoffman, Articulation 204–205. Cf. Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 313, who does not mention *kufr niʿma*, and al-Fazārī, Rajaʿa 225–227, who does not point out any specific kind of *kufr* (see also Newiger, Theologie 56–57). This points to the assumption that a fixed Ibadi doctrine of *kufr* did not take place before the third/ninth century. For more on the Ibadi notion of *kufr*, see Schwartz, *Anfänge* 54–56; al-Najjār, *Ibāḍiyya* 141–143. The categorization of Muslims who did not perform their religious deeds as hypocrites was common among scholarly circles in Basra; see van Ess, Manzila vi, 457.

[53] Ennāmi, *Studies* 193–195.

[54] Al-Fazārī, Tawḥīd 154–155. Hoffman argues that the development of the different categories of association and dissociation only took place after the deposal of the Ibadi imam from Oman, al-Ṣalt b. Malik al-Kharūsī (d. 272/886), in 272/886; see Hoffman, Ibāḍī scholars 186–191, esp. 191.

[55] For more on this, see 2.4.

[56] Ennāmi, *Studies* 195–196. The community of Muslims was defined as the angels, the prophets, and *al-manṣūṣūn* (the people of paradise mentioned in the Quran); see ibid., 196.

[57] Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 163.

[58] Ennāmi, *Studies* 198–199. For a comprehensive overview of people who were entitled to *walāya*, see ibid., 196–199. There are also some early Islamic figures with whom the Ibadis only partially associated. This applied, for example, to ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, who the Ibadis associated with in regard to their religious knowledge but rejected their political actions; see ibid., 215. The issue of *walāya* with children was divisive, since the status of minors was unresolved and often inconsistent. The prevalent stance of the Ibadis on this matter was that children of Ibadi parents were entitled to *walāya*, whereas *wuqūf* needed to be practiced with children of non-Ibadi or polytheist parents until they

Al-barāʾa was the opposite of *al-walāya* and prescribed dissociation from evil things and insincere believers. However, this did not necessarily require local or social segregation, as the doctrine first and foremost addressed the believer's inner attitude.[59] Similar to *al-walāya*, *al-barāʾa* had two aspects. The first aspect aimed at the maintenance of God's unity, which required Ibadis to dissociate from infidels in general (*barāʾat al-jumla*), as well as the ones who are mentioned in the Quran as damned to eternal Hellfire. The second aspect was defined as the dissociation from believers who have either committed one of the grave sins (*al-kabāʾir*) or repeatedly committed minor sins (*al-ṣaghāʾir*). Similar to *walāyat al-ashkhāṣ*, whether to dissociate from someone or not had to be determined individually and on the basis of *ijmāʿ*.[60] However, *al-barāʾa* still allowed a sinner to regain association if they repented their sins publicly.[61]

The doctrine of *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa* consisted of an additional aspect that became essential when deciding whether to associate with or dissociate from a person. This third aspect was the suspension of judgment (*wuqūf*; lit. stop, halt) in regard to unknown believers or in uncertain situations. Equivalent to *walāya* and *barāʾa*, practicing *wuqūf* was both an obligation and a right for each (Ibadi) believer.[62] It is worth mentioning here that, to a certain extent, Ibadi *wuqūf* resembled the Muʿtazili concept of *al-manzila bayna l-manzilatayn* (the state between the two states), which allowed them to suspend their judgment when it could not be decided whether a Muslim should be classified as a sinner. This similarity not only highlights the Ibadis' closeness to other rationalist factions of early Islam, but also—since the Ibadi doctrine is older than the Muʿtazili one—sheds some light on how early Ibadism influenced key components of *ʿilm al-kalām* that were discussed in Islam's formative period.[63]

The doctrine of *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa* was an essential part of early Ibadi belief and crucial for the development of their ethical thought. The Ibadis were the first Islamic faction to practice association with and dissociation from others in a way that often required them to separate themselves from their respective tribes if they were not in line with Ibadi doctrine. Therefore,

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came of age; see ibid., 201–202. For further controversies on the practice of *walāya*, *barāʾa*, and *wuqūf*, see Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 164.

[59] Hoffman, *Essentials* 28–29.

[60] Schwartz, *Anfänge* 56–63. See also Ennāmi, *Studies* 202–205 (with a detailed overview of people to dissociate from) and Francesca, Individualism 70–71.

[61] Francesca, Formation 272.

[62] Al-Fazārī, Rajaʿa 205–206; Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 321. See also Ennāmi, *Studies* 206–207; Schwartz, *Anfänge* 56–63. The obligation to perform *wuqūf* is also mentioned in the Quran; see Q 17:37 and 49:6. There are also several *ḥadīth*s that refer to it; see Ennāmi, *Studies* 206.

[63] van Ess, Manzila vi, 457–458.

Ibadis established a new form of belonging that relied on faith rather than kinship. This also appears in their concept of the imamate, according to which the imam was elected based not on lineage but on the amount of knowledge he possessed. Despite the doctrine having originated primarily as an inner attitude, it supported and bound the group's solidarity in a substantial way and helped to secure their survival.[64] Early scholars like Abū ʿUbayda emphasized this by reminding the Ibadi community that God made Islam the religion of his friends (*awliyāʾ*), who are connected through a strong bond of love (*mawadda*).[65]

The concept's framework was based on the Quran and *sunna*, and the judgment was given according to *ijmāʿ*, therefore *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa* stood at the intersection of theology and law.[66] However, it influenced Ibadi ethical thought since it combined the eschatological matter of how Muslims will be punished by God for their sins in the afterlife with the worldly issue of how to deal with sinning Muslims.[67]

2.4 *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong*

Ibadi texts from the second/eighth century show that the doctrine of commanding right and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*) played a crucial role in early Ibadism.[68] On a societal level, the doctrine was closely connected to the Ibadi imamate, since it strongly prohibited unjust rule and thus demanded that the Ibadi community refuse to be governed by an illegitimate imam. On the other hand, it required the Ibadi imam to govern in accordance with Quranic ethical principles[69] and the *sharīʿa* at all times. Furthermore, *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* was linked to the abovementioned *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa*, since the Ibadi community's *ʿulamāʾ* decided—using *ijmāʿ*—whether to practice *walāya* or *barāʾa* according to the nature of peoples' deeds.[70]

At the same time, the Ibadi interpretation of *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* strongly emphasized an individual's responsibility not only to live in accordance with their creed and according to their individual ability (*ṭāqa*) at all time, but also to remind others of their religious duties, even if they would not listen.[71] For early Ibadis, implementing this duty became particularly difficult when living in a state of secrecy (*kitmān*) and performing *taqiyya*[72] (prudence)—which allowed them to deny their religion in public[73]—was considered to be the paramount duty in order to avoid suffering for the cause of religion. Nevertheless, the Ibadis managed to reconcile these conflicting doctrines by establishing three different modes of practice: The first mode was for a situation in which one is able to stop others from committing wrong; the second mode stood for a situation where one may not actually be able to prevent others from doing wrong, but one still has the obligation to speak out; and, the third mode required the implementation of *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* in the heart when one cannot speak out without being placed in a dangerous position. When in the state of *kitmān*, it was mandatory for Ibadis to at least fulfill this duty in the third mode.[74]

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[64] Hoffman, *Essentials* 28–31; Francesca, Individualism 70–71.

[65] Abū ʿUbayda, Risāla 117–118.

[66] Ennāmi, *Studies* 209–210. See, e.g., Q 2:157, 17:37, 49:6, and 60:13.

[67] Cf. al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 57–59.

[68] See, e.g., Abū ʿUbayda/Abū Mawdūd, Risāla 103–104; Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 326.

[69] See Q 17:22–39 (Q 6:151–153 for the abridged version).

[70] Francesca, Individualism 70; Cook, *Commanding* 395, 421.

Regarding the obligation of women to perform this duty, deviating opinions can be found in Ibadi sources. While there are scholars who argue that the obligation was the same for all Ibadis, regardless of whether they were men or women, there are others who claim that although women had no obligation to act accordingly, they still needed to perform the duty in their hearts.[75]

2.5 *Imamate*

The Ibadi concept of the imamate (*al-imāma*) was not only "the product of multiple institutions of authority that were inherited from earlier eras via the early Basran Ibāḍiyya"[76] and the Kharijites, but also the result of the previously discussed doctrines that shaped their ethical thought.[77]

Although Basran Ibadis did not have a fixed concept of the imamate, they still developed a general outline for it.[78] The most distinct feature Ibadis took from their Khariji predecessors was the "democratic" election of their imam based on personal qualities and moral virtues instead of lineage. Thus, piety and outstanding knowledge, which legitimized the imam's authority, were two of the key prerequisites for an Ibadi imam.[79] Equality was an essential feature of (early) Ibadism; therefore, their imam did not hold a hierarchical position in the community.[80]

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[71] Cook, *Commanding* 425–426. See also Cook, Nahy xii, 644; Günther, Bildung 212–213.

[72] *Taqiyya* is similar to the Ibadi state of *kitmān*, and is described as the action of covering or dissimulation, see Strothmann and Djebli, Taḳiyya x, 134–135.

[73] Ibn Ayyūb, Sīra 320.

[74] Cook, *Commanding* 400–401, 415–416. Practicing *taqiyya* was particularly common in Shiʿi Islam, see van Ess, *Theologie* i, 312–315.

[75] Cook, *Commanding* 415–416.

[76] Gaiser, *Scholars* 140.

[77] Ibid., 11.

[78] Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 156; Gaiser, *Scholars* 4, 135.

An Ibadi imam was bound by contract to rule in accordance with his community and the *sharīʿa*.[81] Thus, he was instructed to regularly consult with a congregation of *ʿulamāʾ* who monitored the actions of the imamate to make sure they served the community's collective welfare.[82]

Scholarly debate is still ongoing as to whether or not the deposal of an Ibadi imam was allowed according to Ibadi belief. Early Ibadi texts lead to the assumption that the *ʿulamāʾ*—in agreement with the Ibadi community—had the right to depose an imam.[83] However, this only applied to "exceptional situations involving the potential annihilation of the Ibadi community. In all other cases the *imāma* was required."[84] When the imam failed to rule in accordance with the *sharīʿa*, the community had to apply the principle of *barāʾa* if he did not repent his sins publicly. This was in sharp contrast to the orthodox Islamic doctrine described in the Quran.[85]

While the Ibadis' ultimate goal was to establish an autonomous imamate, they remained a minority in most of the areas they lived in. Hence, the concept of the *masālik al-dīn* (stages of religion)—that is, the four stages that determined the methods for practicing the Ibadi faith in any given time and situation—became an essential part of their imamate concept, since each stage was accompanied by its own type of imamate.[86]

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[79] Gaiser, *Scholars* 20, 24–25. Further required traits were responsibility, moral rectitude, being just, and being an ascetic; see Savage, *Gateway* 15–16; Gaiser, *Scholars* 47; Bierschenk, Religion 111–112; Vehkavaara, Entering 134. Although a key aspect of Ibadi egalitarian thought, elections were not always democratic in reality, and they sometimes relied on factors that contradicted the Ibadi imamate theory; see Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 170–176.

[80] Sheriff, Mosques 12–13; Vehkavaara, Entering 133–134.

[81] Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 154–155.

[82] Gaiser, *Scholars* 78; Vehkavaara, Entering 133–134. Some Ibadi branches, like the Nukkār, made it mandatory for the Ibadi imam to regularly consult with a group of *ʿulamāʾ* (*jamāʿa maʿlūma*) and to resign from his position when a better suited candidate was available; see Lewicki, Nukkār viii, 113. The regular consultation with certain *ʿulamāʾ* was also an obligation for Maghribi Ibadi imams, while Mashriqi Ibadis rejected this idea; see Cook, *Commanding* 395–396. While the imam's political authority arose out of the *ʿulamāʾ*'s exegesis of Islamic revelation, the authority of the *ʿulamāʾ* was of a solely religious nature and did not imply any political power. See Gaiser, *Scholars* 62–63.

[83] The first Ibadi imamate that was disposed in 272/886 was the imamate of al-Ṣalt b. Malik al-Kharūsī in Oman. This led to a schism among the Ibadis and the formation of the Nizwa and Rustaq schools in Oman, because Ibadis disagreed whether or not the imam's disposal was in accordance with Islamic law; see Hoffman, Ibāḍī scholars 187.

[84] Gaiser, *Scholars* 136. See also ibid., 112–113, 132–136. A valid reason (*ʿudhr*) for the deposal of an imam was, for example, physical or mental problems, as well as committing sins of commission or omission; see Wilkinson, Ibāḍī imāma 541–542.

[85] See al-Fazārī, Radd 68; Q 4:59. See also Hoffman, Ibāḍī scholars 190–191.

The first of the four stages was the state of *kitmān* (secrecy), which allowed Ibadis to practice their belief when living under tyrannical rule.[87] Its implementation was mandatory because it protected the Ibadi religion. *Taqiyya* (prudence, fear) was an essential part of *kitmān*, because it allowed Ibadis to deny their faith when threatened or under pressure.[88] The most important task of the secretly elected *imām al-kitmān*—besides making sure that *taqiyya* was practiced—was educating the community in order to establish an autonomous imamate in the state of *ẓuhūr*.[89] Since *kitmān* imamates could not be openly declared, Gaiser argues that they were more of a theoretical construct than actual imamates and that they thus allowed the early Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* to be declared imams in hindsight. This practice gave greater authority to the respective imams' teachings, which, in turn, indicates the importance the Ibadis placed on establishing an unbroken chain of transmission for their doctrines (discussed in section 3).[90]

In the second stage of the *masālik al-dīn*, the state of *difāʿ* or defense, an Ibadi imam's greatest responsibility was to defend his community from enemies. Since Ibadis did not have a standing army, the *imāmat al-difāʿ* only existed in times of war, when it was mandatory. This indicates not only the primarily defensive nature of the *imāmat al-difāʿ*, but also the Ibadis' defensive attitude to warfare in general.[91] If the defense was successful, the *imāmat al-ẓuhūr* (the imamate of [the condition of] openness[92]) began; otherwise, the state of *kitmān* was declared.[93]

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[86] Schwartz, *Anfänge* 67–70; Gaiser, Stages 207–210.

[87] While in Basra, the group was constantly living in a state of *kitmān* since non-Ibadi rulers were in power.

[88] Ennāmi, *Studies* 234–238; Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 154–155. See al-Najjār, *Ibāḍiyya* 129–130 for the Ibadis' understanding of *taqiyya*.

[89] Al-Rawas, *Islamic Oman* 142–143.

[90] Gaiser, *Scholars* 13. This notion is further supported by the fact that the development of the *masālik al-dīn* concept remained a merely hypothetical one in Oman, one of the earliest Ibadi strongholds after the center in Basra had collapsed, where Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* were assigned to take control over matters in their community. In North African Ibadi communities, where *kitmān* was formally implemented, the *ʿulamāʾ* were the ones to lead the community during the absence of their imam. Eventually, this led to the emergence of the *ʿazzāba* (communal councils), which allowed Ibadi communities to function without the presence of a righteous imam. Thus, although the imamate tradition in Western and Eastern Ibadi communities developed differently, both conceptions had their "common origin in the formative Ibāḍī imāmate of Basra [which] provided them with a core conceptual vocabulary and practice of the *imāma*" (Gaiser, *Scholars* 12). See also Gaiser, *Scholars* 10, 76; Hoffman, *Essentials* 21. For a more detailed look at the political impact of the *masālik al-dīn* and their geographically influenced development, see Gaiser, Stages 210–222.

The third stage of the *masālik al-dīn* concerned the autonomous and openly declared *imāmat al-ẓuhūr*. According to this idea, the Ibadi community should openly and closely follow the ways of the Prophet's *umma* in Mecca after the conquest. It was—and still is—considered the ideal Ibadi imamate.[94] In the state of *ẓuhūr*, the Ibadis were free to practice their belief openly under the rule of the righteous *imām al-ẓuhūr*. The *imāmat al-ẓuhūr* had to be declared when there were at least 40 Ibadis—six of whom had to be knowledgeable men—who exceeded the number of non-Ibadis. This ensured that the community was capable of being economically and religiously autonomous.[95]

The last of the four *masālik al-dīn* was the state of *shirāʾ* (selling), which again highlights Ibadi imamate theory's resemblance to that of their Kharijі forerunners.[96] The *imāmat al-shirāʾ* (the imamate of "exchange"[97]) was the Ibadi's approach to martyrdom, and it described the act of giving ("selling") one's life for the Ibadi belief according to the Quran.[98] Although participation was voluntary, once the willingness to participate in *shirāʾ* had been declared it became an obligatory act, for which at least 40 Ibadis were needed, with a brave and heroic *imām al-shirāʾ* as their leader. The state of *shirāʾ* served only a defensive purpose, and its primary goal was the declaration of the *imāmat al-ẓuhūr*.[99]

In summary, it is worth emphasizing that despite having adopted certain elements from the rather extremist Kharijites for their imamate theory, the Ibadi concept of the imamate can be considered the most progressive in Islam at that time, because its authority was based mostly on egalitarian virtues and principles.

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[91] Wilkinson, Ibāḍī imāma 537–538; Gaiser, Imāmate 148.

[92] Cf. Gaiser, Imāmate 148.

[93] Ennāmi, *Studies* 230–231; Gaiser, *Scholars* 137.

[94] The imamates of the two rightly guided (*rashidūn*) caliphs, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, were also considered to be perfect examples for the *imāmat al-ẓuhūr*; see, e.g., Ibn Ibāḍ, Sīra 38–42; Ibn ʿAṭiyya, Sīra 192–193. See also Ennāmi, *Studies* 230. See also al-Fazārī, Radd 68.

[95] Schwartz, *Anfänge* 70; Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 155–157; Ennāmi, *Studies* 230.

[96] Gaiser, *Scholars* 79. For more on the concept of *shirāʾ*, see Izzi Dien, S̱ẖīrāʾ ix, 470–471.

[97] Cf. Gaiser, Imāmate 148.

[98] See, e.g., Q 4:74, 2:107.

[99] Ennāmi, *Studies* 231–234. See also al-Rawas, *Islamic Oman* 144–146.

3 Educational Activities

Some scholars regard Ibadism as one of the first Salafi movements because Ibadis considered themselves the "unchanging and unchanged successors to the Prophet Muhammad, and the preservers of the authentic form of Islam,"[100] with their austere ethics and morals leading them to "refute any kind of innovation, laxity or modern ideas."[101] However, in the majority of scholarly works, Ibadism is classified as a rational, moderate faction of Islam, and their doctrines, as well as their means of educating the community, are classified as egalitarian and rational.[102]

It needs to be repeated that Ibadi education took place mostly in *ḥalaqāt* (s. *ḥalqa*, teaching circles) or *majālis* (s. *majlis*, teaching sessions),[103] based on the model of the Basran circles, which focused mainly on religious disciplines. Unlike those of their non-Ibadi counterparts, which took place in mosques or other public places, Ibadi *ḥalaqāt* were held as nightly meetings in cellars, huts, caves, or the houses of *ʿulamāʾ*, since they were living in a state of secrecy (*kitmān*) in Basra. A. Gaiser even states that they would disguise themselves in order to reach their circles safely.[104]

In their teaching circles, Ibadis discussed matters of Islamic theology and law on their own terms. The safe space these circles provided allowed Ibadi scholars to instruct and teach their students, mostly by answering questions that were posed to them. Teaching circles were of crucial importance for the young Ibadi community, since they not only helped the *ʿulamāʾ* to settle on a common ground regarding the doctrines and practices they taught others, but also formed the basis for Ibadi proselytization.[105]

Unlike other Islamic factions, Ibadis made education accessible to the general public. In order to ensure that everyone was educated according to their needs, early Ibadi texts indicate that three different teaching circles were established:

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[100] Gaiser, *Scholars* 12.

[101] Francesca, Individualism 69.

[102] See, e.g., Guendouz, Ibadiyya doctrine 127.

[103] As of the fourth/tenth century, *majālis* and *ḥalaqāt* were fixed institutions for the transmission of knowledge in Islam. While *majālis* usually had a large audience, *ḥalaqāt* were mostly attended by smaller groups of people. They both served the same purpose—namely to dispute certain matters of Islamic law and theology—but they were held in different locations. See Günther, Education 31; Makdisi, Institutions 9; Makdisi, *Rise* 10–14.

[104] Gaiser, *Scholars* 67–68; Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwur* 136–137.

[105] Wilkinson, Ḥamalat al-ʿilm 91–93.

1. *majlis al-ʿāmm*, made accessible to all Ibadis under Abū ʿUbayda;
2. *majlis al-mashāyikh*, special meetings for leaders of the *daʿwa* (call or invitation [to believe in Islam as the true religion]), during which the policies for Ibadi proselytization were decided; and
3. *majlis ḥamalat al-ʿilm*, attended by the missionaries over a period of five years, after which they were allowed to disseminate Ibadi doctrines and practices.[106]

Through these secretly held sessions, the Ibadis established an underground network that allowed everyone within the community to obtain education. This spirit of intellectual tolerance became one of the main features of Ibadi Islam.[107]

The Ibadi way of education changed significantly after the establishment of several *imāmāt al-ẓuhūr* outside of Basra. *Ḥalaqāt* no longer took place in secret nightly meetings; they took place in the daytime and in public places, such as mosques. In addition to this, Ibadis continued to provide education for everyone, since they regarded education as a communal duty. According to their doctrine, it was the community's obligation to fulfill the mental and pedagogical needs of those who did not receive an education at home. This was especially true in the case of children, who were supposed to be educated from an early age.[108]

Since Ibadis placed great importance on their *ʿulamāʾ* being of the highest moral character in order to legitimize their knowledge, this standard was also applied to their teachers. Both Ibadi scholars and teachers had to be men of outstanding knowledge, piety, and fairness who possessed immaculate reason and perception. Further requirements for becoming an Ibadi *ʿālim*[109] or teacher were virtues such as justice, truthfulness, trustworthiness, patience, vigor, and righteousness.[110]

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[106] Ennāmi, *Studies* 61–64; al-Rawas, *Islamic Oman* 113–114. Ghubash, *Oman* 28–29, also mentions three different councils in the formative period of Ibadism. Unlike Ennāmi and al-Rawas, however, he refers to one of them as *majlis al-ʿulamāʾ*. Further investigation is needed to determine whether *majlis al-ʿulamāʾ* and *majlis al-mashāyikh* refer to the same council.

[107] Guendouz, Ibadiyya doctrine 130. Even though the Ibadi educational system was not fixed before the seventh/thirteenth century, teaching circles remained an essential part of the Ibadi educational system because they served as a model for the Ibadi *ʿazzāba*, which substituted for the imam when an Ibadi imamate was not feasible; see Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwur* 141, 145, 180.

[108] Ibid., 137–141, 145–146.

[109] Note that the term *ʿālim* was not a formal appointment or title like, for example, the term *qāḍī* in the formative period of Islam; see Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 187.

[110] Ziaka, Ibāḍī writings 101; Gaiser, Teacher lines 159. See also Ourghi, *Reformbewegung* 274.

This also holds true for Ibadi missionaries who were responsible for spreading Ibadi belief in the Islamic world. As was common in early Islam, the way of preserving and passing on knowledge was predominantly oral. This meant that Ibadi proselytization and expansion required trustworthy figures who made sure only genuine Ibadi knowledge would be passed on to communities outside of Basra. To fulfill this delicate undertaking, Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* relied on specifically trained missionaries, the bearers of knowledge (*ḥamalat al-ʿilm*), who became an essential part of Ibadi proselytization.[111]

Organized Ibadi proselytization started between 105/723 and 123/740, when Abū ʿUbayda sent five missionaries to disseminate Ibadism throughout the Islamic world. These first *ḥamalat al-ʿilm* reportedly travelled to Oman, Khorasan, Hadramawt, and North Africa, where they participated in establishing the first autonomous Ibadi imamates.[112]

Beside the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm* from Basra, Abū ʿUbayda also trained young Ibadis who had traveled to Basra solely for the purpose of learning Ibadi doctrines and practices. After having completed their studies, the newly educated missionaries returned to their respective communities to disseminate Ibadi beliefs. Coming from different cultural and tribal backgrounds, it was primarily these missionaries who paved the way for the partial incorporation of non-Ibadi customs into Ibadi doctrine, which soon became a common practice. Hence, the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm* not only maintained and transmitted Ibadi knowledge, to a certain extent, they also took part in developing it.[113]

Along with Ibadi doctrine being increasingly intermingled with local customs, the expansion of Ibadism lead to the usage of *siyar*. (Short) letters (*siyar*) by Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* became a common means of communication, especially after several autonomous Ibadi imamates had emerged toward the end of the second/eighth century and personal communication was no longer always feasible.[114] In addition to disseminating genuine Ibadi knowledge, *siyar* functioned as an extension of the missionaries. Because they primarily aimed at refuting their opponents and instructing Ibadi communities in theological, social, and legal matters, *siyar* were often polemical in style. They mostly contained the views of Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ* on specific intellectual issues and their exchanges on social and theological problems. They would also often contain *fatwa*s (legal opinions) or provide biographies of Ibadi imams and *ʿulamāʾ*.[115] A salient feature that distinguished Ibadi *siyar* from other early Islamic texts was their aspiration to educate and instruct the public along with the Ibadi elite.[116]

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[111] Al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 61; Wilkinson, Ḥamalat al-ʿilm 92. The *ḥamalat al-ʿilm* were not the first to disseminate Ibadi knowledge in the Islamic world. Rather, the transmission of knowledge started gradually and unsystematically with leading Ibadi *ʿulamāʾ*, followed by the *shurāt*, and finally the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*. Jābir b. Zayd's missionary activities in Oman can be considered a forerunner of the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*. For more details on this topic, see al-Rawas, *Islamic Oman* 127–130.

[112] Ennāmi, *Studies* 61–62; Schwartz, *Anfänge* 97; Wilkinson, *Scholars* 68–69. For more details on the first *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*, see Schwartz, *Anfänge* 105–118. According to Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwur* 88, women played an important role in the Ibadi *daʿwa*.

[113] Wilkinson, Theological literature 34–35; Wilkinson, Ḥamalat al-ʿilm 94. See also Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwur* 82–83.

[114] Wilkinson, Theological literature 35–36; Ziaka, Ibāḍī writings 101; al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar*

With the expansion of Ibadi territories in the Islamic world, *siyar* became an essential means of so-called Ibadi "teacher lines." The expression "teacher lines" here stands for the attempt of Ibadi scholars to establish, or maintain, an unbroken chain of transmission for Ibadi knowledge. It was first introduced by J. Wilkinson and then discussed in more detail by A. Gaiser.[117] Indeed, these "teacher lines" approached the Islamic heresiographical genre from a uniquely Ibadi point of view. Since Ibadis legitimized their knowledge—and even expressed a large part of their identity—through these lines, they tried to trace their beliefs and practices back to pious figures.[118] Thus, starting in the Prophet Muhammad's time with ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās (d. 68/686–688; also referred to as *baḥr al-ʿilm*), Ibadi "teacher lines" included several other of the Prophet's Companions, as well as Khariji *ʿulamāʾ* and important Ibadi scholars like Ibn Ibāḍ, Jābir b. Zayd, and Abū ʿUbayda.[119] At the beginning stages of Ibadi proselytization, the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*, who were believed to be capable of evolving and solidifying the group's identity, as well as morally educating Ibadi

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76–77. *Siyar* were not just a central means of communication in early Ibadi history, but are also used by modern Ibadi scholars, like Muhammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfaiyash (d. 1914) to spread their ideas; see Ourghi, *Reformbewegung* 284–291. Other means of communication were primarily business journeys and pilgrimages; see Ennāmi, *Studies* 73–75; Hoffman, *Essentials* 19.

[115] Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwur* 82, 121; al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 201; Ziaka, Roots 93–94.

[116] Ziaka, Ibāḍī writings 99. With the expansion of autonomous Ibadi imamates, several doctrinal differences between the Maghribi and Mashriqi branches of Ibadism occurred, which in turn led to deviations in the content and style of their *siyar*. While *siyar* written in the Maghrib mainly contained biographical information about Ibadi authorities, Omani *siyar* were usually composed as sociopolitical epistles that dealt with Ibadi theological doctrines. See al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 7–9.

[117] See Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism* 419; Gaiser, Teacher lines.

[118] Gaiser, Teacher lines 161–162; al-Sal[i]mi, *Omani siyar* 195–196.

[119] Wilkinson, *Imamate tradition* 10. Conceptually, these "teacher lines" resembled the *silsila*s, or chains of names, by which Sufis would later trace their lineage back to their master(s) and, eventually, the Prophet Muhammad.

communities, became a part of the "teacher lines."[120] Hence, Ibadi "teacher lines" served the same purpose as *isnād*s because they certified the continuous transmission of true knowledge and faith.[121]

Constructing a genealogy through the establishment of an unbroken chain of transmitted knowledge was even more important because Ibadism was based not on kinship but on the teachings of educated and virtuous authorities. Thus, tracing their knowledge back to the Prophet Muhammad himself was the only way of legitimizing Ibadi doctrines and practices.[122] Since the missionaries were an essential tool for stabilizing society both morally and spiritually, the responsibility given to them came with certain requirements, such as remaining discreet about their actions, and being able to adjust easily and sincerely to their surroundings.[123] What knowledge a missionary was entrusted with, and where to disseminate it, depended on their personal and intellectual eligibility.[124]

"Teacher lines" remained the essence of Ibadi knowledge formation up to the seventh/thirteenth century. Up to this point in time, Ibadis managed to maintain an unbroken chain for their knowledge, which—according to them—carried the "true meaning" of Islam. Moreover, they secured the group's inner bond and were proof that Ibadism was not only a *madhhab* of beliefs and practices but also of highly moral personalities.[125]

4 Conclusion

The aim of this contribution was to identify key aspects of Ibadi ethical thought, as well as to highlight how these concepts corresponded to certain educational activities in early Ibadism.

Since their early days, the Ibadis' ultimate aim was to establish a permanent, autonomous *imāmat al-ẓuhūr* which would allow them to practice their beliefs openly. The means through which this could be realized was education, not military action. By utilizing education for proselytization, and also making it accessible to the public, Ibadis established a universal understanding of knowledge.

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[120] Ziaka, Roots 94; Wilkinson, Ḥamalat al-ʿilm 94.

[121] Gaiser, Good models 78–79; Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism* 419–420.

[122] Gaiser, Teacher lines 160–161; Gaiser, Good models 78–79.

[123] Ḥijāzī, *Taṭawwur* 84–88.

[124] Schwartz, *Anfänge* 268.

[125] Gaiser, Teacher lines 160, 162.

While the Ibadis strove to share knowledge with everyone, regardless of origin or social background, they had a strict policy when it came to who was entrusted with passing on their beliefs and educating others. This manifested itself in their "teacher lines," which consisted exclusively of the most pious figures in early Islam and Ibadism.

This dogmatic polarity between fundamentalist and egalitarian doctrines, which still exists today, was also evident in other parts of Ibadi doctrine. Their definitions of key ethical aspects, such as *ʿilm*, *qadar*, *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*, and *al-walāya wa-l-barāʾa*, were based on a restrictive definition of the ideal Muslim and highlighted the individual believer's obligation not only to live according to Ibadi rules but also to ensure others did as well, regardless of the circumstances. However, Ibadis employed rational methods for the interpretation of scriptures and interacted with other Muslims—and even non-Muslims—in a tolerant way whenever necessary. From their early days onward, they have also been politically active in a predominately progressive, egalitarian, and defensive way, as their *masālik al-dīn* and imamate concepts clearly show.

Therefore, the transmission of key Ibadi ethical concepts demonstrates how Ibadism is based on—and unifies—partially dichotomous doctrines. Thus, this contribution highlights how Ibadism offers a new perspective on the evolution of Islamic ethics in the formative period of Islam.

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CHAPTER 33

Scholars of Ḥilla and the Early Imami Legal Tradition: Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd, “The Two Ancient Scholars,” Retrieved

Ali R. Rizek

وإنّما يقع الاجتهاد في الأحكام الشرعيّة إذا خلت عن دليلٍ قطعيّ.[1]

> Juristic reasoning only occurs in legal rulings when they are devoid of definite evidence.

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Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī Ibn Abī ʿAqīl al-ʿUmānī and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Junayd al-Iskāfī of the fourth/tenth century—later known also by the honorary title “al-Qadīmān” (the two ancient scholars)—are said to be among the central figures in the development of Imami legal thinking after the major occultation (329/941).[2] Hossein Modarressi, in his account of the development of Imami law during that stage, attempts to identify the characteristics of the legal “school”[3] that distinguished their legal methods from those of their traditionist

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[1] Al-ʿAllāma, *Foundations* 226–227.

[2] For a general overview of the information on the two scholars in legal and biobibliographical Imami compilations, see al-Khazrajī, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl; al-Khazrajī, Ibn al-Junayd [1] and [2]; Modarressi, *Introduction* 35–39; Stewart, *Islamic legal orthodoxy* 107–108, 139–142, 163–165; al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 239–256. The first collection of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl’s legal opinions (*fatāwā*) was prepared by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Burujurdī in 1406/1986, along with a collection of ʿAlī b. Bābawayh’s *fatāwa*. Later, these were once more gathered from later sources and published by Markaz al-Muʿjam al-Fiqhī (The Center of the Jurisprudential Lexicon) in Qom. Ibn al-Junayd’s *fatāwā* were first collected by Bāqir Muḥsinī Khurramshahrī as *al-Fatāwā li-Ibn al-Junayd*. A second and more comprehensive collection was prepared by ʿAlī al-Ishtihārdī as *Majmūʿat fatāwā Ibn al-Junayd*; see the bibliography.

[3] The term “school” here denotes, as it seems to be used by Modarressi, a legal tendency or a methodological framework within which law is conceived and inferred; it does not necessarily indicate a clearly defined educational institution or an independent legal

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rivals.[4] Although they had distinctive approaches to law, Modarressi continues, "both practiced rational reasoning in legal thought," and they were "regarded as constituting the first school of Shiʿi deductive law, based not merely on collections of traditions but on speculative analysis and rational argument."[5]

Ibn Abī ʿAqīl compiled his opinions in his *al-Mutamassik bi-ḥabl Āl al-Rasūl* (*The adherer to the bond of the Prophet's household*), and the book gained much interest in the early stages of Shiʿi legal thinking.[6] Shortly after, Ibn al-Junayd put forth his collection *Tahdhīb al-Shīʿa li-aḥkām al-sharīʿa* (*Guiding the Shiʿa to the precepts of sharīʿa*), along with an abridgment of it titled *al-Mukhtaṣar al-Aḥmadī lil-fiqh al-Muḥammadī* (*The Aḥmadī abridgment of Muḥammadan law*).[7] Unfortunately, the original books of "al-Qadīmān" are lost, and we only know about the content from quotations in later sources.[8] The actual connection between the two thinkers is still a matter of discussion, and there is no clear evidence that they ever met or corresponded on legal matters. As Modarressi states, the only report found in the sources is that Ibn Abī ʿAqīl al-ʿUmānī slightly preceded Ibn al-Junayd. However, the fact that they agreed on many legal judgments in several cases made later scholars refer to them together.[9]

At the moment, we know very little about the legal reasoning of these two scholars. Although, apparently, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl was praised by succeeding scholars, such as al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), his opinions were not quoted in the legal literature for several decades. On the contrary, it is evident that Ibn al-Junayd received harsh criticism from Imami scholars of the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries—namely, his legal method was condemned by al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), and al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), who accused him of reliance on doubtful traditions, *qiyās* (legal analogy), and *raʾy* (personal opinion).[10] As will be shown, no space was left for the opinions of "al-Qadīmān" who

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madhhab. This particular usage is justified in Makdisi, Significance 1. For an elaborate discussion, see al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 35–40.

[4] For the dispute between rationalism and traditionalism in Shiʿi legal thinking, see Modarressi, Rationalism; and Melchert, Imāmīs.

[5] Modarressi, *Introduction* 35.

[6] Al-Khazrajī, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl 164–167; Modarressi, *Introduction* 35.

[7] Al-Khazrajī, Ibn al-Junayd [1] 218–224; Modarressi, *Introduction* 35–36.

[8] In his study on the library of Ibn Ṭāwūs, Kohlberg points out that there is a chance that the *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn al-Junayd might have been preserved. He relies on the opening paragraph of the book quoted by al-Kantūrī (d. 1286/1869), which might indicate he possessed a manuscript. See Kohlberg, *Muslim scholar* 280–281. Reference is made to al-Kantūrī, *Kashf al-ḥujub* 494–495. Much effort has been exerted to locate this manuscript, so far with no results.

[9] Modarressi, *Introduction* 36–38.

[10] See below here.

went into obscurity for approximately two centuries until prominent scholars of Ḥilla, the newly established center of Imami learning,[11] started to quote these opinions in their legal books. In fact, it was with Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Ḥillī (d. 598/1202) that these opinions were first restored and regarded with esteem. Later scholars of Ḥilla—namely, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277) and his nephew al-ʿAllāma (d. 726/1325)—quoted the legal opinions of the two scholars and counted them among the early Imami jurisconsults (*aṣḥāb al-fatāwā*).

This paper endeavors to scrutinize this particular early stage of Imami law represented by the two scholars. It focuses on the role of the Ḥilla scholars in recovering earlier legal authorities such as "al-Qadīmān," as well as the motivations, perceptions, and purposes for reintegrating them into mainstream Imami *fuqahāʾ*, whose legal opinions are revered and admired. The study presents, thus, a substantial example of the achievements of scholars from Ḥilla in redefining the boundaries and components of Imami legal scholarship.

A preliminary observation should be addressed. The problem presented by the two scholars—namely, that some individuals who are present in early biographical works, identified as scholars of law (*fuqahāʾ*), neglected in the legal books of following generations, and then retrieved in later stages, especially in Ḥilla—is not a unique case. Among other examples, one can refer to Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Juʿfī al-Ṣābūnī of the fourth/tenth century and his book *al-Fākhir*, which was retrieved in the time of al-Shahīd al-Awwal (d. 786/1384), a disciple of Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn al-Ḥillī (d. 771/1370), known also as Ibn al-ʿAllāma.[12] Al-Ṣadūq al-Awwal, ʿAlī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 329/941), father of Muḥammad b. Alī al-Qummī al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), represents a case very similar to "al-Qadīmān;" his *Risāla* was also retrieved, to a large extent, in the time of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī.[13] (However, the fact that this scholar also appears in the works of his prolific son al-Ṣadūq entails a slightly different strategy which deserves a separate study.)

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[11] For the moment, see Modarressi, *Introduction* 45–48, who places the scholars of Ḥilla within the school of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067). A historical review might be consulted in Makdisi, Notes on Ḥilla. For a holistic and fresh account on Ḥilla as a center of learning and education, see al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 319–413. For a relatively new, well-documented biobibliographical review of Ḥillī *ʿulamāʾ* and their achievements, see Ali, *Beginnings*, particularly 198–285 and 286–325.

[12] On al-Ṣābūnī and his case, see al-Khazrajī, Abū l-Faḍl al-Juʿfī.

[13] On al-Ṣadūq al-Awwal and his case, see al-ʿAmīdī, al-Ṣadūq al-Awwal [1] and [2]. Modarressi, *Introduction* 39, identifies al-Ṣābūnī and al-Ṣadūq al-Awwal as proponents of an "intermediate school" that adopted a moderate path between traditionalism and rationalism, and held the validity of reports in its approach to law while abandoning the conservatism of the mainstream of Imami traditionists, however without providing "an analytical systematic law comparable to that of the Qadīmayn."

In all these cases, the relatively large historical gap between the time the scholar under examination reportedly lived and the first remarkable reference made to his work raises a number of questions of various social and intellectual concerns, such as the processes of exclusion and inclusion within a tradition, the related concept of canonization, the dynamics of knowledge exchange, and the authenticity of reported opinions ascribed to earlier generation of scholars.[14]

1 Negligence and Critiques: al-Murtaḍā in *al-Intiṣār*

The generation of scholars that immediately followed "al-Qadīmān" treated them differently. On the one hand, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl seems to have been praised, especially by al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), for his scholarly merits, although no explicit reference is made to any of his legal opinions. That this approval of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl is expressed by al-Mufīd in general terms[15] suggests that what was at stake here was al-ʿUmānī's legal method, and not his particular opinions on legal matters. On the other hand, al-Mufīd stood firmly against Ibn al-Junayd's approach—namely, his alleged reliance on *qiyās* and *raʾy* as legitimate sources for law when contradictory traditions are faced—though he still praised his cleverness as a scholar (especially when compared to non-Imamis).[16] Nevertheless, al-Mufīd's extant oeuvre does not explicitly feature Ibn al-Junayd's legal positions.[17]

The most elaborate citations referring to one of the two scholars go back to al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā in his comparative legal compilation *al-Intiṣār fī mā*

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[14] This problem is more crucial in the cases where the works attributed to a scholar are not extant. Few comments on this subject will be added for consideration.

[15] Cf. al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* 48; Modarressi, *Introduction* 36.

[16] Al-Mufīd, *Ṣāghāniyya* 71–76; al-Mufīd, *Sarawiyya* 56–64; Modarressi, *Introduction* 38; Stewart, *Islamic legal orthodoxy* 107–108, 139–142; al-Khazrajī, Ibn al-Junayd [1] 227–230; McDermott, *Theology* 277, 305–311. Al-Mufīd's main interest is the theological consequences, particularly on the theory of Imamate that could be inferred from Ibn al-Junayd's methodology, something that transcends its relevance for the common dispute on *uṣūl al-fiqh*. A full restoration of this discussion is still a desideratum; however, the position found in our sources apparently does not allow it. Cf. Ansari, *Qerāʾt-e*.

[17] A report mentioned that al-Mufīd compiled two refutations of Ibn al-Junayd: [*Naqd*] *Risālat al-Junaydī ilā ahl Miṣr*, and *al-Naqd ʿalā Ibn al-Junayd fī ijtihād al-raʾy*, apparently on *uṣūl*. For the full discussion, see McDermott, *Theology* 33, 40 respectively.

infaradat bihi l-Imāmiyya (*Upholding unique Imami legal positions*). This book, as al-Murtaḍā states, is dedicated to revealing the Imami positions on certain legal matters based on which the Imami community was accused by other schools of law of contradicting the consensus (*ijmāʾ*) of all Muslims. Al-Murtaḍā embarks on a long discussion of around 300 precepts, covering almost all chapters of classical Islamic law. The main strategy of al-Murtaḍā is to defend the cases where Imami scholars have, from his point of view, a unique position that does not agree with any other school (*mimmā infaradat bihi l-Imāmiyya*), or to show that what is thought to be a unique position of Imamis (*mimmā ẓunna infirād al-Imāmiyya bihi*) is actually a matter of dispute among Muslim scholars (*khilāf*), and hence, no consensus could be claimed. In both cases, Murtaḍā's best argument, as he makes it clear, is "the consensus of Imāmiyya" (*ijmāʾ al-ṭāʾifa al-Imāmiyya*).[18]

As is the case with al-Mufīd's surviving corpus, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl is never quoted in the extant oeuvre of al-Murtaḍā. It might be argued, then, that al-Mufīd and al-Murtaḍā approved the legal work of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl, making any possibility of dissenting opinions on his part less threatening as long as the methodological framework was acceptable.[19] Yet, Ibn al-Junayd's approach was still a source of discomfort for al-Murtaḍa, most importantly for his treatment of traditions narrated on the authority of the Imāms. In *al-Intiṣār*, reference to Ibn al-Junayd is made in nine cases, three on charitable alms (*zakāt*), two on transactions (*muʿāmalāt*), and four on jurisdictional procedures (*qaḍāʾ*).[20] In all of these cases, Murtaḍā attacks Ibn al-Junayd, refuses his opinions, and states that the consensus of Imamiyya was well established before and after Ibn al-Junayd (*ijmāʾ al-Imāmiyya qad taqaddama Ibn al-Junayd wa-taʾakhkhar ʿanhu*). From this account, one understands that Ibn al-Junayd is contradicting all other Imami scholars and has his own position, which seems to be in conformity with non-Imami scholars. As a reason for this divergence, al-Murtaḍā states Ibn al-Junayd's reliance on weak Imami traditions (*akhbār shādhdha*), doubtful speculations and misunderstandings (*ẓunūn wa-ḥusbān; takhlīṭ; qillat taʾammul Ibn al-Junayd*), and the use of reprehensible *ijtihād* and personal opinion (*innamā ʿawwala Ibn al-Junayd fīhā ʿalā ḍarbin min al-raʾy wa-l-ijtihād*).[21]

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[18] Al-Murtaḍā, *Intiṣār* 75–81. On Murṭadā's legal thought, see Stewart, Sharīf 174–188; and the detailed account of Abdulsater, *Climax* 403–483, particularly on *ijmāʿ* 441–461, and 478–479. This relevant part of Abdulsater's dissertation does not appear in his published book on Murṭadā; see Abdulsater, *Shiʿi doctrine* 8.

Here, and in later sources that have been examined, and for consistency of reference and comparison, I will limit my comments to the legal precepts dealing with *zakāt* (alms) where both scholars were quoted abundantly on different stages of Imami law. Rich material can also be found in chapters on prayers (*ṣalāt*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), war (*jihād*), penal law (*ḥudūd*), and inheritance (*mawārīth*).

[19] This framework could be generally conceived as practicing law in keeping with the method of *al-mutakallimīn*, e.g., most importantly rejecting the probativity of *akhbār al-āḥād*; cf. Modarressi, *Introduction* 36.

[20] For these cases, see al-Murtaḍā, *Intiṣār* 210, 215, 219, 451, 470, 487–488, 495–496, 500, 502.

An important legal matter (*ḥukm*) attributed to Ibn al-Junayd in *al-Intiṣār* is that *zakāt* is obligatory on all kinds of crops (*ghallāt*).[22] This differs from what al-Murtaḍā claims to be the consensus of all other Imami scholars; *zakāt* is only compulsory on four kinds: wheat (*ḥinṭa*), barley (*shaʿīr*), dried dates (*tamr*), and raisins (*zabīb*). Al-Murtaḍā also states that Ibn al-Junayd relied on the opinion of an early Imami *ḥadīth* transmitter, Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. The text reads:[23]

> If it was said (*fa-in qīla*): how do you claim consensus [on this matter] while Ibn al-Junayd contradicts your claim (*yukhālifu*) and considers *zakāt* obligatory on all grains produced by land …, and relies on traditions from your Imams confirming this, and mentions that Yūnus [b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān] had the same opinion?
>
> We say (*qulnā*): the deviant opinion of Ibn al-Junayd is not taken into consideration (*lā iʿtibār bi-shudhūdh Ibn al-Junayd*), neither is that of Yūnus, although he agrees with him. What we have stated is the teaching of Imamiyya. Indeed, consensus of Imamiyya was well established before and after Ibn al Junayd and Yūnus (*taqaddama ijmāʿ al-Imamiyya wa-taʾakhkhar ʿan Ibn al-Junayd wa-Yūnus*).
>
> Traditions that Ibn al-Junayd relied on, and which came from Imami narrators, are denied by means of a larger number of traditions that are clearer and stronger (*muʿāraḍatun bi-aẓhar wa-akthar wa-aqwā minhā*) and that are well known [among Imamiyya fellows]. And then, those traditions [relied on by Ibn al-Junayd] could be considered the conse-

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[21] Abdulsater, *Climax* 448, remarks that al-Murtaḍā does not accuse Ibn al-Junayd of *qiyās*. It should be noted, however, that al-Shāfiʿī, *Risāla* 467–468, equates *qiyās* with *ijtihād*, making the question more complex; detailed consideration of this point is out of the scope of the current discussion. For the moment it is sufficient is to refer to Gleave, Imāmī Shīʿī refutations 273–287.

[22] Al-Murṭaḍā, *Intiṣār* 206–210, discusses the different opinions expressed by Muslim legal thinkers on this matter; for more elaboration of the four Sunni legal schools, see Ibn Qudāma, *Mughnī* iv, 154–161.

[23] The remaining quotations found in *al-Intiṣār* are very similar to this case. On Yūnus, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* 446–448.

> quence of dissimulation (*taqīya*), since the majority of counter-Imamiyya scholars (*mukhālifī al-Imāmiyya*) believes that *zakāt* is obligatory on all types.

Eventually, other Imami sources identify Yūnus with this legal precept.[24] However, al-Murtaḍā—whose refutation of non-widely transmitted report (*khabar al-wāḥid*) as a source of law is well known,[25] and whose preference of *ijmāʿ* has been already mentioned—seems to be more interested in refuting Ibn al-Junayd's position. This is of great relevance when added to the fact that al-Murtaḍā seems, in all of these instances featuring Ibn al-Junayd, to be challenging an addressee (as the structure "*fa-in qīla/qulnā*" indicates) who contradicts his claim of consensus when confronted with Ibn al-Junayd's views.[26] The discussions that follow show how Ibn al-Junayd's dissenting opinions caused al-Murtaḍā, and likely others as well, to become engaged in disputes over the suitability of his methods (i.e., Ibn al-Junayd's) to Imami *fiqh*.

In harmony with this unsettled dispute launched by al-Mufīd and intensified with al-Murtaḍā, the most decisive treatment of Ibn al-Junayd was yet to come. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), the towering Imami scholar after al-Murtaḍā, continued the neglect of both Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd in his legal books. Moreover, in his biographical account on Ibn al-Junayd he remarkably claims that his books were left behind (*turikat kutubuhū*) by subsequent Imami scholars who found them useless and based on reprehensible *qiyās* and *raʾy*.[27] Al-Ṭūsī, unlike al-Murtaḍā, does not bother himself with substantially discussing the problems aroused by Ibn al-Junayd's disagreements. He utters his final position, and it was instructive for one and half centuries after his death. None of al-Ṭūsī's disciples, as far as the sources are concerned, felt compelled to deal with Ibn al-Junayd. Together with his equally neglected (but less attacked) counterpart, the two ancient scholars were, arguably, silenced and expelled from the Imami legal discourse. Indeed, no traces of them can be found in scholarly circles in the post-Ṭūsī period, except for marginal glosses in biographical compilations.

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[24] See, e.g., al-Kulaynī, *Kāfī* iii, 509.

[25] Modarressi, *Introduction* 40–43.

[26] Whether this interlocutor is a real or a fictive one, it is unlikely for al-Murtaḍā to make a false ascription to Ibn al-Junayd while addressing an informed audience. Moreover, one should keep in mind that the books of Ibn al-Junayd were reportedly still extant at the time of al-Murtaḍā, as mentioned in al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* 385–388. Hence, Ibn al-Junayd's divergent position—from al-Murtaḍā's point of view—is to be seen as genuine since any attempted forgery would hardly occur in this situation. Nevertheless, one might cast doubt on the argumentation found in *al-Intiṣār*, i.e., Ibn al-Junayd's reliance on certain Imami traditions. At most, it would represent only a part of Ibn al-Junayd's account on the matter. Al-Murtaḍā's engagement in refining the Imami law according to his *kalām*-inspired doctrines and his clash with other Imami scholars, namely the traditionists, might have influenced the way he advances the rationale of his opponent.

[27] Al-Tūsī, *Fihrist* 209–210. Remarkably, al-Ṭūsī does not mention the point made by al-Murtaḍā on Ibn al-Junayd's reliance on weak traditions.

What remains is the attempt to conceptualize this negligence that "al-Qadīmān" were subject to, and which was reflected in the position of al-Mufīd, the hostile citations of al-Murtaḍā, and the verdict of exile spelled out by al-Ṭūsī and his followers. As Zysow points out in his classical typological study, *The economy of certainty*, "the expulsion of uncertainty from the law" was a key component of the legal thinking of al-Mufīd and al-Murtaḍā.[28] This is particularly evident in the positions taken toward Ibn al-Junayd from the perspective of certainty (*ʿilm; qaṭʿ*). Al-Mufīd and al-Murtaḍā addressed Ibn al-Junayd's alleged reliance on doubtful methods (*qiyās, raʾy*, and non-widely attested traditions), all of which were seen as inviting uncertainty in law. For al-Ṭūsī, who sensed the annoyance of legal disputes among Imami scholars,[29] the means to reach this aim were different. His further step of accepting the "probativity" of *khabar al-wāḥid* (non-widely attested tradition) did not change the main enterprise of his law—that is, to reach a moderate level of certainty (*qaṭʿ*),[30] leading to a single valid version of law that could prevail and exclude other rivals. Hence, *ijtihād*,[31] with all the probability that comes with it, was still rejected by al-Ṭūsī and his successors.[32] This leads us to the conclusion that the first stage, where ultimate answers to legal questions were being hunted for, was one in which "al-Qadīmān" found themselves at the heart. This could be understood as a natural and expected situation that followed the crisis of the absence of the Imam. Not only were "al-Qadīmān" marginalized, indeed, the competitive nature of the debate made it impossible for the distinct legal tendencies to exhibit mutual tolerance.[33] It was inevitable, with the successful project of al-Ṭūsī, that other voices would be heard and accepted.

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[28] Zysow, *Economy* 283.

[29] Al-Ṭūsī expressed this annoyance—apparently since he was a disciple of al-Mufīd—in the introduction to his *Tahdhīb* i, 45–46.

[30] Al-Ṭūsī, *ʿUdda* ii, 725–726, is clear in agreeing with al-Mufīd and al-Murtaḍā that "truth is one, and there is a proof on it. Whoever contradicts it is erroneous and ungodly" (*inna al-ḥaqq wāḥid wa-inna ʿalayhī dalīlan man khālafah kān mukhṭiʾan wa-fāsiqan*). Also indicative is his project of reconciling contradictory traditions, which is apparent in the title of his famous work on traditions, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*. Notice that "*tahdhīb*" (refinement) is also featured in Ibn al-Junayd's oeuvre; dealing with this parallelism falls outside the aims of this chapter.

[31] Al-Ṭūsī, *ʿUdda* ii, 726, relates *ijtihād* to two components, *qiyās* and the position toward *khabar al-wāḥid*. Cf. McDermott, *Theology* 295–298, 309–311 (al-Mufīd on *ijtihād*); Abdulsater, *Climax* 470–473 (al-Murtaḍā on *ijtihād*); Calder, Doubt 59–60.

[32] Ḥubb Allah, *Naẓariyyat al-sunna* 67–107 (similar to Zysow) speaks of two trends in dealing with traditions, "*madrasat al-yaqīn*" (certainty), as represented in al-Mufīd and al-Murtaḍā's positions, and "*madrasat al-ẓann*" (conjecture), as first initiated by al-Ṭūsī, and elaborated (with the elaboration of *ijtihād*, by al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī later on) in what he calls "*madrasat al-sanad*" (ibid., 175–195).

2 First Retrieved: Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī in *al-Sarāʾir*

After a long disappearance, "al-Qadīmān" were given the chance to reclaim their position among their Imami fellows with the emergence of scholars from Ḥilla who took over Imami legal and theological learning. It was with the magnum opus of Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Ḥillī (d. 598/1202), *al-Sarāʾir* (*The inner thoughts*), that Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd rejoined the cluster of privileged *fuqahāʾ*. The relevance of Ibn Idrīs's achievements and impact should be addressed separately;[34] what matters in the scope of the present study is what could be termed as his "project" of challenging the authority of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and his followers.[35]

According to the available text corpora, Ibn Idrīs was the first scholar to reintroduce both scholars, in his *al-Sarāʾir*. Interestingly, he referred to them for the first time together when dealing with a precept on charitable alms (*zakāt*). This might be the first clue in a classical work uniting, albeit superficially, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd. Ibn Idrīs provides brief biographies of the two scholars and praises their erudition. He claims en passant that the book of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl is in his possession, describing it as a "large and good book" (*kitābun ḥasanun kabīr, wa-huwa ʿindī*). He also indicates that Ibn al-Junayd mentioned the precept in hand in his *al-Mukhtaṣar*.[36] Of high interest is the remark that Ibn Idrīs, specifically in *al-Sarāʾir*, does not mention any accusation against Ibn al-Junayd. To the contrary, he is deemed a scholar of "esteemed rank" (*jalīl al-qadr, kabīr al-manzila*). Taken into consideration that it is unlikely that Ibn Idrīs was unaware of previous claims about "al-Qadīmān," the positive evaluation of Ibn al-Junayd speaks for the changing perception of earlier figures of Imami law that Ḥilla was about to introduce.

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[33] For a similar problem on the theological level, see Ansari, *Imamat* 6–11; for a wider cultural consideration, see Assmann and Assmann, Kanon 7–27.

[34] See the informed account in Ali, *Beginnings* 61–67.

[35] An important critique is al-Ṭūsī's lenient position toward *khabar al-wāḥid*. See Modarressi, *Introduction* 45–47; al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 370–378. It is noteworthy that the editor of Ibn Idrīs's compilations refers to more than 3,300 cases where Ibn Idrīs refers to al-Ṭūsī and discusses his legal opinions, either refuting, accepting, or amending them; Ibn Idrīs, *Sarāʾir* i, 81–93.

[36] Ibid. ii, 113–115.

There are ten traceable cases (including the one above) in *al-Sarāʾir* where Ibn Idrīs refers to both, or at least to one of "the two ancient scholars" (al-Qadīmān), two on alms (*zakāt*), one on pilgrimage to Mecca (*ḥajj*), one on jurisdictional procedure (*qaḍāʾ*), three on transactions (*muʿāmalāt*), two on inheritance law (*mawārīth*), and one on blood money (*diya*).[37] Not all of these cases can be addressed here in detail.[38] It is sufficient to recall here that Ibn Idrīs flourished in a time that witnessed the revival of Imami legal scholarship,[39] which makes the fact that he was among the first legal thinkers to pay tribute to "al-Qadīmān" a landmark for the following Ḥillī generations. One example of scholars associated with this revival is Ṣafī al-Dīn Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Maʿadd al-Musawaī (d. after 616/1219), who was also, reportedly, in favor of Ibn al-Junayd and held a volume of one of his books.[40]

The reintroduction of "the two ancient scholars" to the Imami legal discourse by Ibn Idrīs leads to a twofold conclusion relating to the way Imami law was taught, learned, and discussed in Ḥilla. First, despite the underestimation of the two scholars, their legal opinions were still known in Ḥilla, though their teachings did not form a part of any curriculum or active discussion, as was the case with al-Ṭūsī's teachings, for instance. Second, there was an attempt in Ḥilla to rediscover the Imami legal tradition that had been overshadowed by the model promoted by al-Ṭūsī and his followers.[41] In fact, Ibn Idrīs's treatment of the case of "al-Qadīmān" represents a transitional stage—in terms of the range and nature of citations referring to Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd—through which the two scholars were brought to light again. As will be discussed, this made his successors feel it incumbent upon themselves to demonstrate an equivalent knowledge of the Imami tradition. It is thus significant to note that

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[37] Ibid. ii, 137–139; ii, 275, iii, 190, 358, 395–396, v, 38, 363–364, 370; vi, 88 respectively.

[38] The few cases attributed to the two scholars in a six-volume book should not be overlooked. It reveals that neither Ibn Abī ʿAqīl nor Ibn al-Junayd were of central relevance in the formation of Ibn Idrīs's specific opinions on legal precepts, especially in his refutation of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. This is more substantiated when we realize that Ibn Idrīs did not always subscribe to the opinions of the two men. Even when he adopts their opinions, he refers to other scholars—including al-Ṭūsī himself—who share the same view. This will exclude any explanation that might doubt Ibn Idrīs's reference and its intention.

[39] Al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 351–361.

[40] Al-ʿAllāma, *Īḍāḥ* 291; Ali, *Beginnings* 98–100, 295.

[41] Elsewhere I have accounted for the role played by the disciples of al-Ṭūsī in consolidating his legal school; see Rizek, "Disciples."

Ibn Idrīs opened the door for reinitiating the debate about these two scholars. This time, in Ḥilla, "al-Qadīmān" were gradually more successful than previously.

3 Partially Retrieved: al-Muḥaqqiq and His Disciple al-Fāḍil al-Ābī

That Ibn Idrīs triggered renewed attention toward "al-Qadīmān" is exemplified in the case of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī and his disciple al-Fāḍil al-Ābī. One aspect of the legal achievement of Jaʿfar b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277), known as al-Muḥaqqiq (the meticulous scholar), is the defense of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's approach to law, along with an adjustment of weaknesses that were the subject of Ibn Idrīs's criticism and that led to the first appreciation of *ijtihād* in Imami legal circles.[42] Al-Muḥaqqiq, who was able to restore the legacy of al-Ṭūsī, also had a great interest in the legal works of the early Imami scholars. This is clear from the introduction of his *al-Muʿtabar fī sharḥ al-mukhtaṣar*—to name one example—where he promises to pay attention to the matters of "dispute among prominent Imami legal scholars" (*khilāf al-aʿyān min fuqahāʾina*).[43] Unsurprisingly, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd are listed among those *fuqahāʾ*. This should be understood in line with al-Muḥaqqiq's efforts to refine Imami law following al-Ṭūsī's method. For instance, al-Ṭūsī's negligence of Ibn al-Junayd is replaced in *al-Muʿtabar* by plentiful references to the latter's book *al-Mukhtaṣar al-Aḥmadī*. Ibn Abī ʿAqīl is often quoted, and both scholars are counted among Imami jurisconsults (*aṣḥāb al-fatāwā*),[44] a group that also includes, and places on equal footing, al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā, and al-Ṭūsī. This merits some contextualization. In his introduction al-Muḥaqqiq explains the reason for not quoting all the Imami scholars in his book. Basically, he claims that the large number of scholars and their works makes it difficult for any compilation to be comprehensive and holistic. But, he also remarks, all opinions of Imami scholars are accessible through the works of a certain number of "esteemed late scholars" (*munḥaṣira fī aqwāl jamāʿa min*

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[42] Cf. Modarressi, *Introduction* 47–48; Ali, *Beginnings* 146–147; al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 380–386. Ḥillī scholars not only elaborated the concept of *ijtihād* in Imamism (Zysow, *Economy* 285; Calder, Doubt 67–72), they were also responsible for the establishment of a new method for *ḥadīth* criticism; see Afsaruddin, Insight; Ḥubb Allah, *Naẓariyyat al-sunna* 167–195 (speaking of the "*madrasat al-sanad*" that flourished in Ḥilla). Theological improvements were also remarkable, for instance, see al-Madan, *Taṭawwur* 162–171, 341–381.

[43] Al-Muḥaqqiq, *Muʿtabar* i, 33–34.

[44] Ibid., 33.

fuḍalāʾ al-mutaʾakhkhirīn). They are divided into two groups by al-Muḥaqqiq. The first group comprises *ḥadīth* transmitters and collectors such as al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb, al-Faḍl b. Shādhān, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr al-Bazantī, and others, along with the two famous scholars al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941–942) and al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991).[45] The second group consists of the abovementioned jurisconsults (*aṣḥāb al-fatāwā*), including "al-Qadīmān." They are neither *ḥadīth* transmitters or collectors,[46] nor disparaged scholars; rather, they represent the legal tradition that the Ḥillī scholar inherited and tried to refine, reshape, and expand.

Al-Muḥaqqiq remains silent on his position toward the legal approach of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd. He neither completely adopts nor condemns their work. As the examples found in the chapter on *zakāt* show,[47] he does not subscribe to their opinions consistently. In one case, he contradicts the opinion of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd while being tolerant to their methodology, giving possible interpretations that explain their position.[48] In another case, he refers to Ibn al-Junayd on a legal detail that seems to be neglected by other scholars and only found in *al-Mukhtaṣar al-Aḥmadī*.[49] Arguably, al-Muḥaqqiq decided to take advantage of the early Imami tradition instead of being involved in a refutation of it. In this case, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd, whether they agree with al-Muḥaqqiq or not, are still relevant and deserve to be quoted, regardless of earlier assessments of their work. They provide new ramifications. Indeed, they seem to have invited al-Muḥaqqiq to prove his skills and vast knowledge of the tradition. Moreover, it was possible that he cited them, along with other scholars, to ensure the credibility of his position; they reflect the richness of the Imami tradition and its inner dynamics.

Another point must be addressed. *Al-Muʿtabar* is a book of *khilāf* (i.e., it is a book in which it is normal to quote different opinions of scholars). Al-Muḥaqqiq's famous legal compilation, *Sharāʾiʿ al-Islām*, which served as a textbook for *fiqh* in Imami learning circles for long periods and is still relevant till modern times,[50] has no explicit references to Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd and very rarely feature citations from other legal authorities. This could help in understanding the circumstances that frame the reappearance of such scholars after a long demise. Although al-Muḥaqqiq's legacy does not rely or depend on the two revived scholars, he found space for their inclusion in scholarly discourses.

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[45] While it could be argued convincingly that al-Muḥaqqiq is referring to extant and well-known books in the case of al-Kulaynī and al-Ṣadūq, it is not clear by which means the "opinions" of the former narrators were accessible to him. A possible explanation would be that al-Muḥaqqiq refers to other *ḥadīth* compilations, for example, the works of al-Ṭūsī.

[46] For instance, al-Mufīd previously counted Ibn al-Junayd among the traditionists. See Modarressi, *Introduction* 37.

[47] Al-Muḥaqqiq, *Muʿtabar* ii, 485, 487, 492, 499, 536, 554, 567, 578, 581, 590.

[48] Ibid., 499.

[49] Ibid., 492.

[50] Al-Muhājir, *Nashʾat al-fiqh* 382.

This interest in early Imami legacy can be traced in the oeuvre of the direct students of al-Muḥaqqiq. Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Abī Ṭālib, known as al-Fāḍil al-Ābī (alive 672/1274), who wrote a commentary on his teachers' work, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfiʿ* (*The serviceable legal abridgement*), refers to prominent Imami scholars while discussing a variety of matters.[51] In this regard, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl, exclusively, was of interest; Ibn al-Junayd fails to deserve his admiration.[52] In his preface to *Kashf al-rumūz* (*The interpreter of signs*), we read:

> I confined my citations of the opinions of the [Imami] fellows to the sayings of the notable scholars who are the models for Imamiyya and leaders of the Shīʿa: the dignified Shaykh Abū Jaʿafar Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā ʿAlam al-Hudā, the *faqīh* ʿAlī b. Bābawayh and his son Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, and al-Ḥasan b. Abī ʿAqīl al-ʿUmānī …
>
> I neglected the reference to Ibn al-Junayd (*wa-akhlalt bi-dhikr Ibn al-Junayd*), except in a few cases, since Shaykh Abu Jaʿfar [al-Ṭūsī] mentioned that he adopted *qiyās*, and his books were abandoned.

This inattention to Ibn al-Junayd perhaps reveals the position this scholar would have acquired had he been acknowledged. For al-Ābī, he is the only *faqīh* who will be neglected, since his opinions do not match the others. However, al-Ābī is not the only one to fall under al-Ṭūsī's influence. What makes al-Ābī's comment remarkable is that he might be responding to the recent reconsideration of Ibn al-Junayd.[53] The fact that he clearly states his intention to leave the latter's opinions behind shows that he was not driven by the position taken by his teacher, al-Muḥaqqiq, who was, in the case of Ibn al-Junayd, to remain on the safe side—neutral in his attitude. This, in turn, reveals the legacy of Ibn al-was still controversial at the time of al-Muḥaqqiq, that he was far from being recognized in Ḥilla, and that he was ranked alongside other Imami scholars.[54]

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[51] Ali, *Beginnings* 135–136, 213–214.

[52] Al-Fāḍil al-Ābī, *Kashf al-rumūz* i, 40.

[53] Al-Ābī compiled his book in 672/1274 (see Ali, *Beginnings* 136), but it is unclear when al-Muḥaqqiq finished his *al-Muʿtabar*, which includes citations from Ibn al-Junayd (Ibid. 212–213). However, al-Ābī is aware in his introduction (*Kashf al-rumūz* i, 21, 39) that *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfīʿ* (on which both commentaries, *Muʿtabar* and *Kashf al-rumūz*, were written) included anonymous references to earlier citations, including Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd.

4 Fully Retrieved: The Works of al-ʿAllāma

Al-ʿAllāma was interested in the opinions of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd more than any other scholar was. His *Muntahā al-maṭlab*, *Taḥrīr al-aḥkām*, *Mukhtalaf al-Shīʿa*, and *Tadhkirat al-fuqahāʾ* are full of references to both scholars.[55] He also never fails to mention them in his bibliographical volumes. Moreover, he states clearly that he has the books of both scholars and that he has referred to their opinions in his own writings.[56] The abundance of material attributed to both scholars by al-ʿAllāma is large enough to be the backbone of the relatively recent collections of Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd's *fatwa*s, which were regroupings of hundreds of legal opinions ascribed to both of them.[57] In short, we owe al-ʿAllāma for almost everything we know today about the specific legal precepts ascribed to "al-Qadīmān." This is exemplified in the cases found in the chapter on *zakāt* (as noted above), where al-ʿAllāma reaffirms earlier quotations and mentions, for the first time, new legal matters on the authority of "al-Qadīmān." Indeed, later scholars, like al-Shahīd al-Awwal (d. 786/1384), al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), and al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 965/1558), based themselves on al-ʿAllāma's collection, especially his *Mukhtalaf*, to quote the two scholars when needed.[58]

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[54] References in *Kashf al-rumūz* i, 233–234, on *zakāt* are exclusively to Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and match Ibn Idrīs citations while dropping mention of Ibn al-Junayd. The relaunched controversy about Ibn al-Junayd is rewarding on account of the faithfulness of material ascribed to him. It is unlikely that al-Muḥaqqiq could have forged some legal opinions and put them in the mouth of Ibn al-Junayd, knowing that another contemporary scholar would be aware of those precepts and express a different assessment of them. On discrepancies between al-Muḥaqqiq and al-Ābī, see Ali, *Beginnings* 213–214.

[55] Examples on *zakāt* include al-ʿAllāma, *Muntahā* viii, 28, 56, 81, 203, 220–221, 289, 333–334, 356, 396, 407; al-ʿAllāma, *Taḥrīr* i, 356, 380, 409, 416; al-ʿAllāma, *Mukhtalaf* iii, 151, 157, 160, 163, 166, 168, 170, 175, 178, 180, 182, 185, 188, 191, 195, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 207, 211, 212–213, 216, 218, 221, 225, 229, 236, 241, 252, 256; al-ʿAllāma, *Tadhkira* v, 85, 286, 295, 339.

[56] Al-ʿAllāma, *Īḍāḥ* 153; 291; al-ʿAllāma, *Khulāṣa* 101, 161.

[57] See particularly Markaz, *Ḥayāt Ibn Abī ʿAqīl* and al-Ishtihārdī, *Majmūʿat fatāwa*.

[58] For the moment, see al-Khazrajī, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl 166–167; al-Khazrajī, Ibn al-Junayd [2] 215–216.

It should also be noted that al-ʿAllāma's positive evaluation of both scholars, though he points out earlier critics (e.g., Ibn al-Junayd), does not mean full adoption of their legal opinions. In several cases, statements such as "*laysa bi-jayyid*" (not agreeable, or not good)[59] or the equivalent[60] appear at the end of his discussion of legal matters where the two scholars are quoted. His attitude toward them resembles more that of al-Muḥaqqiq, however, with more expansion and attention to all chapters of law, which might be seen as a continuation of the comprehensive approach to the large Imami tradition.[61] Within this framework, disputes are signs of the *madhhab*'s richness and prosperity, instead of being a matter of discomfort and agitation, as was the case during the formative period, when scholars like al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā, and al-Ṭūsī were engaged in foundational struggles at the time of the Imami community's emergence after the occultation. Relevant to this point is, unsurprisingly, the adoption of *ijtihād* as an acceptable legal schema, which emphasizes the speculative aspect of law as opposed to the inclination to certainty (*qaṭʿ*) adopted by earlier generations.[62] Speculation or conjecture (*ẓann*) conceived within the guidelines of adequate *ijtihād* (that, among the Imamis, was firm in its continuous rejection of *qiyās*) opens the floor for accepting disputes (*khilāf*) among scholars without accusing any one of generating false legal opinions. For that reason, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd might be, through al-Ḥillī, revisited, along with other scholars, as long as it is supposed that certainty (*qaṭʿ*) in legal questions is not always within reach, and that the contradictory positions of the Imami scholars is a normal product of their *ijtihād*.

In keeping with this same line of thought, the development of the genre of *khilāf* in the time of al-ʿAllāma and how it was integrated into Imami scholarship must be brought to light. Challenging the ancestors, exhibiting an equivalent level of knowledge, and providing a wide spectrum of writings that goes beyond theirs, are all well-known characteristics of the Islamic scholastic tradition; Imami scholars were no exception in this regard. Whether to compete with the Sunni writings on the subject,[63] or the Imami *khilāf* books, al-ʿAllāma—under the patronage of the court[64]—makes it clear in his introduction[65] that he is bringing something new into Imami scholarship:

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[59] Al-ʿAllāma, *Mukhtalaf* iii, 198, 252.

[60] Ibid., 197.

[61] *Al-Muʿtabar* of al-Muḥaqqiq is an incomplete survey on *fiqh*, the last chapter being on *ḥajj*; al-Fāḍil al-Ābī, *Kashf al-rumūz* i, 22.

[62] Zysow, *Economy* 285. For more elaboration on the role of al-ʿAllāma in the integration of *ijtihād*, see Calder, Doubt 67–72; al-Muhājir, *Nash'at al-fiqh* 392–395, 409; Farḥān, *Adwār* 151–168.

[63] Such as *al-Muḥallā* of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), *Bidāyat al-mujtahid* of Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) and *al-Mughnī* of Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223).

> While examining the books of our former fellows, and the opinions of our previous scholars in the realm of law (*fiqh*), I found disputes among them over many different matters and [offered] under great scattered outlines. I decided to mention these matters in a register that contains what has reached us from their dispute on legal rulings and jurisprudential matters, without referring to what they have agreed on …
>
> We have confined this book to the matters around which discord is reported. Then, if we were to find, for every opinion, a proof (*dalīl*) of the scholar who adopts it, we transmit it. If not, we get recourse to speculation (*tafakkur*) and mention it.[66] Afterwards, we decide between them [which opinion is the sounder], avoiding injustice and unfairness …
>
> None of the [Imami] scholars who predated us has made such a compilation, nor has anyone of the earlier virtuous fellows followed the way in which this book presents the [legal] proofs.

The final remark on the uniqueness of the book in Imami circles is informative: Prior to al-ʿAllāma, *khilāf* among Imami scholars was understood only as the disagreement of Imamiyya with other (Sunnī) schools of law, the most explicit example being al-Murtaḍā's *al-Intiṣār* and al-Ṭūsī's *al-Khilāf*. Two parallels are discernable in the new legal framework conceived by al-ʿAllāma: *ijtihād* and *khilāf*. The adoption of the former makes the second legitimate, normal, and even enriching, to the point that it neither threatens al-ʿAllāma nor arouses his annoyance (as it previously did in the case of al-Ṭūsī). His project was not to relieve the burden of disputes but to keep a record of them for the benefit of future scholars. For many years after, Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd profited plentifully through their recovered positions as prominent Imami *fuqahāʾ* in their own rights.

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[64] Al-Muhāji, *Nash'at al-fiqh* 396–402; Schmidtke, *Theology* 23–32.

[65] Al-ʿAllāma, *Mukhtalaf* i, 173–174.

[66] From this remark, one can understand that the "proof" ascribed to any scholar in *Mukhtalaf* is not always genuine, since al-ʿAllāma might have reached it by his own assumption and speculation. This kind of material usually starts with the phrase "*iḥtajja*" (he argued based on) and is followed by various types of arguments, most of the time in the form of a *ḥadīth* (e.g., ibid. iii, 168, 241). While the ruling (*ḥukm*) attributed to one of the scholars is likely to be the real position of either Ibn Abī ʿAqīl or Ibn al-Junayd, the credibility of the "*iḥtajja*-material" could not be assessed as one entity. Every citation is to be scrutinized, and textual evidence must be considered before giving a word on the matter. With the absence of any systematic use of the opinions of "al-Qadīmān" by al-ʿAllāma (the main source for the large material ascribed to the two men), it is unlikely that he forged a whole corpus of legal matters without profiting from it as a consolidation for his opinions. The present study argues, for the reasons spread out in this survey, that what we have on the two scholars is credible, representative, and reliable material preserved in a rich context of intellectual, political, and communal dynamics. Treating this rich source carefully and critically is subject to a multitude of discussions that need a separate exposition.

5 Conclusion

This study has analyzed the different stages through which Ibn Abī ʿAqīl and Ibn al-Junayd gradually regained their position as two esteemed Imami scholars of *fiqh*. It has been revealed that the learning center of Ḥilla was responsible, to a large extent, for this revival of early Imami legal tradition. Starting with Ibn Idrīs, who occasionally quotes their legal opinions, the two scholars began to gain consideration, and more attention was given to their approach. Finally, al-ʿAllāma successively achieved the return of their oeuvre, quoting them comprehensively in almost every chapter of Islamic law, along with references to real or expected proofs they may have relied on. The main thread along which the positions toward "al-Qadīmān" evolved is, from the perspective adopted here, the interplay between the legal model that prevailed in each stage of the development of Imami law—namely, the positions regarding *ijtihād* and *khilāf*—and the legal scholarship that resulted from this development.

The achievements of the scholars of Ḥilla in this regard should thus be added to the other advancements of Imami thought that were carried on during this central stage of education and knowledge exchange among classical Imami scholars, which lasted for approximately three centuries. This time, it did so in terms of preserving the Imami tradition from loss and deterioration.

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CHAPTER 34

Shiʿi Higher Learning in the Pre-Safavid Period: Scholars, Educational Ideals, Practices, and Curricula

Maryam Moazzen

During the early centuries of Shiʿi history, most learning took place in mosques and in the homes of Shiʿi Imams and scholars, as well as in houses of knowledge (s., *dār al-ʿilm*) and libraries. Students attended the teaching circles (*ḥalaqāt*) of eminent scholars to hear and record *ḥadīth*s and the sayings of the Shiʿi Imams (*akhbār*) and to discuss the issues addressed by these texts. In the latter half of the formative period of Islamic history—from the mid-ninth century through the tenth century—Muslims received a great influx of new knowledge from the ancient civilizations they encountered during the expansion of the Islamic caliphate. This abundance of knowledge, in addition to the maturing of Islamic legal, theological, mystical, and philosophical thought, intense intellectual confrontations, and deepening religious divisions, created a need for an educational institution that would take students beyond what was being taught in the mosques and homes of scholars.

The increasing complexity of urban life during the late classical period of Islamic history, coupled with the demand for an educated class primed to join the ranks of administrators and bureaucrats, further contributed to the *madrasa*'s evolution into an indispensable element of the socioeconomic and judicial apparatuses of the Muslim world.[1] The state of the learned class was also changing at this time, as Marshall Hodgson famously argued in the second volume of *The venture of Islam*. The *ʿulamāʾ* and Sufis had become recognized and effective socio-spiritual and religious groups, claiming unique sorts of authority as heirs to the Prophet Muhammad; thus, they demanded a place in the upper echelons of power. They dominated religious and educational institutions as well as juridical offices.[2] Moreover, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the number of students attending the teaching circles of eminent

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[1] For a detailed survey of the development of the *madrasa* as the most important institution of higher learning in medieval Islam, see Günther, Madrasa 237–270.

[2] On maturity and discourse among Islamic intellectual traditions, see Hodgson, *Venture* ii, 152–154.

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scholars in mosques across the Muslim world had grown so large that the existing educational system and teaching paradigms became insufficient to accommodate them. All of these developments created a cultural base for the nascent *madrasa*s during the late classical period of Islamic history.

The high-ranking and wealthy Shiʿa, like their Sunni counterparts, founded a number of *madrasa*s in major cities that were traditional Shiʿa strongholds—such as Rayy, Qom, Kāshān, and Najaf—in order to promote their own religious denomination, and to solidify their political power.[3] For example, in his *Kitāb al-Naqḍ,* ʿAbd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī (d. after 584/1189) reports that across Islamic lands, the largest and most beautiful *madrasa*s and mosques were built by the Shiʿa. The period between approximately 596/1200 and 905/1500 was also a crucial historical juncture for Twelver Shiʿism in particular. The Mongol invasions ushered in an age of religious transition during which the Shiʿa experienced ideological and political ascendancy. The Ilkhanids generously founded a number of *madrasa*s and houses for descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (*dār al-siyāda*s) and patronized leading Shiʿi *ʿulamāʾ*.

Despite the reportedly large number of Shiʿi institutions of higher learning, in studying Shiʿi educational institutions one encounters a variety of obstacles. The most significant obstacle is the lack of documentation on these institutions; the few available texts are brief in their descriptions. As a result, very little serious scholarly attention has been given to the institutional history of Shiʿi *madrasa*s. Since the historical study of Shiʿi higher learning during the pre-Safavid period is an ambitious undertaking, the preliminary scope of this survey cannot be overemphasized. The main objectives of this study are to discuss the characteristics of Shiʿi pedagogical undertakings and the influences of Shiʿi educational institutions on stimulating and directing Shiʿi intellectual culture in pre-Safavid times. Those findings will then be corroborated with references to *dār al-siyāda*s, *dār al-ʿilm*s, and *madrasa*s, as well as particular Shiʿi scholars.

1 Shiʿi Learning during the Formative Period of Islamic History

Before discussing the rise of the *madrasa* and how the Shiʿa capitalized on this institution, a brief digression into the history of Shiʿi learning is necessary. During the first three centuries of Islamic history, as stated earlier, learning transpired mainly in mosques and in the homes of the Shiʿi Imams and scholars, and in houses of knowledge and libraries. According to Shiʿi doctrine, Shiʿi Imams are infallible and authoritative interpreters of Islamic revelation.[4] The Imams knew not only the literal meanings of the Quran and *ḥadīth*s but also their hidden and esoteric connotations. *Ḥadīth*s preserved in the early sources, such as *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt* by Ṣaffār al-Qumī (d. 290/903), indicate that the Imams possessed an initiatory, sacred, and supernatural knowledge that could be transmitted to only their very closest associates. This allegedly limitless esoteric knowledge was hereditary.[5]

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[3] Qazwīnī, *Kitāb al-Naqḍ* 12, 47, 473. See also Calmard, Chiisme imamite en Iran 60–65.

According to the Shiʿi traditions, all Shiʿi Imams were brilliant scholars and among the most outstanding intellectuals of their times. They believe that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the first Imam, was the most learned associate of the Prophet Muhammad. He is reported to have written a number of books, including *Kitāb Jafr ʿAlī/Kitāb al-Jafr al-aʿẓam* and *Kitāb al-Diyāt*, both of which were esoteric in nature.[6] They listed all permitted (*ḥalāl*) and forbidden (*ḥarām*) actions and objects, and also contained apocalyptic prophecies.[7]

The fifth and the sixth Imams, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 113/732 or 735) and al-Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 147/765), occupied themselves with elaborating ideas that later became the main principles of Imami (or Twelver) Shiʿism.[8] During the imamate of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, an increasing number of his followers turned to him, as the most learned family member of the Prophet Muhammad, to resolve disputed legal and other religious questions. However, it was during the long imamate of al-Bāqir's son and successor, al-Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, the sixth Imam, that the Imami community emerged as a religious community with a distinct doctrinal and legal identity.[9] Al-Ṣādiq was well known for his knowledge of religious sciences, including Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*), prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The Sunnis also regarded him and his father, al-Bāqir, as erudite jurists and highly reliable transmitters of *ḥadīth*.[10]

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[4] Some of the disciples of the Imams, however, contested the Imams' leadership and authority. Differences amongst the Imams and their disciples had emerged by the time of al-Bāqir, and some of his associates challenged his legal and theological opinions. Kohlberg, Barāʾa 159. At times, some of the disciples deemed themselves superior to the Imam of their era. For example, al-Bāqir was reported to have said: "O God, have mercy on the disciples of my father, for I know that some of them consider me inferior in rank." Modarressi Tabatabaʾi, *Crisis* 54. Sometimes disciples had different opinions about legal issues because they were attending the teaching circles of two or even three Imams and found themselves in the sensitive position of having to unify their opinion with the current Imam. For example, Zurāra, who was a disciple of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, reported different versions of the fifth Imam's opinions from time to time and sometimes even directly opposed the views expressed by al-Ṣādiq. Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 138–139, 221.

[5] Al-Qumī, *Baṣāʾir* 114–116, 118–121, 468–470. For a detailed study of the sources of the Imams' initiatory knowledge and its nature and modes of transmission, see Amir-Moezzi, *Divine guide* 69–91. It should be noted that the Imams and the majority of Shiʿi scholars always distanced themselves from extremist beliefs; all 17 books that refute the *ghulāt* (*al-radd ʿalā l-ghulāt*) were written by members of the Shiʿi *ʿulamāʾ*. For more information, see Qadi, *Ghulat* 169–193.

[6] ʿAlī, in particular, is famous for his sermons and aphorisms. These were collected by Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, known as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 407/1016), under the title of *Nahj al-balāghah*, which has been the subject of many commentaries.

[7] Ṣaffār Qumī describes the shapes and contents of these books. See al-Qumī, *Baṣāʾir* 163, 155, 159. For more on her books, see Modarressi Tabatabaʾi, *Tradition* 17–22; Amir-Moezzi, *Divine guide* 74.

[8] There were also a large number of Shiʿi scholars contemporaneous with the Imams who were

Shiʿi scholarship flourished under the leadership of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq. The number of transmitters and compilers of *ḥadīth* increased so much that al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Washshāʾ, a companion of the eighth Imam, claimed he had met nine hundred *ḥadīth* transmitters in the mosque of Kufa relating *ḥadīth*s on the authority of the fifth and sixth Imams.[11] According to Muḥammad b. al-Nuʿmān, known as Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 412/1022), four thousand transmitters related *ḥadīth* from al-Ṣādiq alone.[12] Seventy-five percent of the traditions recorded in *Man lā yaḥḍurahu al-faqīh*, one of the four canonical books of Shiʿi *ḥadīth* by Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Bābūya, also known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), are traced to al-Bāqir and especially to al-Ṣādiq.[13]

The disciples of the fifth and sixth Imams spread their teachings in Medina, Kufa, and Qom. The great majority of al-Ṣādiq's followers were Kufans.[14] These associates were carefully selected for their knowledge and loyalty. Among al-Ṣādiq's numerous Kufan disciples, Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī (d. 150/767) and the controversial disciple Zurāra b. Aʿyān (d. 150/767) were the most trusted and prominent. Al-Ṣādiq reportedly said: "Had it not been for them, the prophetic traditions would have been disrupted and obliterated."[15] These disciples played a significant role in spreading the teachings of

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very active in reading the Imams' teachings and developing Shiʿi jurisprudence and other scholarly subjects.

[9] The period of the imamate of al-Ṣādiq spanned over three decades.

[10] For example, see al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān* i, 414–415; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* ii, 92–94.

[11] Najāshī, *Rijāl* i, 139; Tehrānī, *Dharīʿa* i, 17.

[12] Al-Mufīd, *Irshād* 408.

[13] Buckley, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq 37–58.

[14] From the early days of Islamic history, Kufa was an important center of Shiʿi learning. For more information on Kufa, see Djaït, al-Kūfa.

[15] Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 170, 280. Kashshī counts 18 prominent disciples of the Imams who formed the *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*. For more on them, see ibid., 238/431, 373/705.

the Imams in the form of *ḥadīth*.[16] Al-Thaqafī, who spent four years in Medina in the company of al-Bāqir, is reported to have heard more than thirty thousand traditions from al-Bāqir.[17] Jābir al-Juʿfī had reportedly heard over seventy thousand traditions from the same Imam. Al-Thaqafī's status as a *ḥadīth* transmitter and Shiʿi jurist was recognized even by Abū Ḥanīfa, the founder of the Sunni Ḥanafī school of law (d. 150/767). According to Shiʿi sources, Abū Ḥanīfa dared not challenge al-Thaqafī's legal opinions, which were based on the sayings of the Imams al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.[18]

By the end of the eighth century, Qom also had become a Shiʿa stronghold.[19] Subsequently, the city became one of the main loci of Imami scholarship in the ninth century and has maintained its status as an important Shiʿi learning center from medieval times to the present. It was here that many of the Imami traditions, which were first transmitted in Medina, Kufa, and elsewhere, were collected. Scholars residing in Qom—including al-Barqī and Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qumī (d. 290/903), who was a disciple of the eleventh Imam, al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, and a student of al-Barqī—produced a large number of Shiʿi texts.

In addition to Qom, Rayy, Nishapur, and Ṭūs were also important sites of Shiʿi learning. Faḍl b. Shādhān (d. 260/ 873–874) was a prominent Shiʿi scholar from Nishapur. His numerous books and teachings were transmitted by his disciple ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Qutayba al-Nīshābūrī.[20] His works included *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, in which he addressed messianic ideas.[21] Abū Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328/940–941) and Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Qibā al-Rāzī (d. ca. 319/931) were outstanding scholars who came from Rayy.[22] Al-Kulaynī resided in Qom and finally moved to Baghdad, where he spent the last 20 years of his life and penned his most celebrated book, *al-Kāfī fī ʿilm al-dīn*.[23] The *rijāl* books written by Abī ʿAmr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kashshī (d. 367/978), Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī (d. 449/1058), and Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa l-Ṭūsī (d. 459/1067) give short accounts of the lives of prominent Shiʿi scholars from diverse places such as Balkh, Kāshān, Qazwīn, Gurgān, and Āmul.

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[16] Later in the third/tenth century, growing ʿAbbasid persecution meant that the tenth and eleventh Imams, al-Hādī and Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, known as al-ʿAskarī (d. 260/874), could not fully direct the affairs of their followers due to the geographical expansion of Shiʿism. They entrusted many of their responsibilities to their most learned and loyal disciples. See Kohlberg, Imām 37–39.

[17] Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 163.

[18] Ibid., 162–163/275.

[19] Majlisī quotes the following *ḥadīth*, which perhaps formulated and ascribed to al-Ṣādiq after religious learning had been firmly established in Qom: "Very soon Kūfa will be empty of the believers. [Religious] knowledge will disappear from that region the way a snake disappears from its abode into a hole in the earth, [without leaving any trace]. Then it will reappear in the city known as Qum." *Biḥār al-anwār* lx, 213.

[20] Najāshī, *Rijāl* 255–256, 197.

[21] Arjomand, Crisis 500.

[22] Modarressi examined Ibn Qibā al-Rāzī's contribution to Imami Shiʿism in his book *Crisis and consolidation*, where he explains the ideological tension that existed within Imami Shiʿism in the period between the two Occultations. He shows that, from its onset, Imami

2 Shiʿi Higher Learning during "the Shiʿite Century" (ca. 338–441/950–1050)

The beginning of the Greater Occultation (329/941), which coincided with the rule of the pro-Twelver Shiʿi Buyid rulers, marks a new phase in the socioreligious as well as the intellectual history of Twelver Shiʿism. During Buyid rule (335–446/947–1055), prominent Shiʿi scholars moved to Baghdad. Perhaps the Shiʿa and pro-Shiʿa dynasties, including the Fatimids (358–566/969–1171), the Buyids, and other Shiʿi dynasties that controlled central parts of the Islamic world, were largely responsible for the burst of intellectual activity in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[24] Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. between 329/985 and 334/990) praises the Buyid ʿAḍud al-Dawla as someone

> who had invigorated them [the people of learning], enhanced their enterprise, and has given free rein to their tongues to promulgate what each of their sects professes, without dissimulation (*taqīyya*), so that they might reveal what their teachings claim and proclaim what they believe. And that they may discriminate the true from the false, secure that one will not assail another with the tongue of religious fanaticism.[25]

Twelver Shiʿism had conflicts concerning various aspects of Imami doctrine, such as the subject content of the Imams' knowledge, their supernatural characteristics, the Prophet's inheritance, the Quran, and the prophetic traditions.

[23] For an examination of this Shiʿi *ḥadīth* compilation, see Newman, *Formative period* 94–109.

[24] Other Shiʿi dynasties held sway in various parts of the Islamic world. The Hamdanids and the Idrisids ruled Morocco from 172–375/789–985. The Hamdanids' successors, the ʿUqaylids, ruled in northern Syria and central Iraq from 380/990 to 564/1169, and the Mazyadids held power in central Iraq from 350/961 to 545/1150. The Qarāmiṭa ruled from 273/886 to 470/1078 in central Syria and parts of Iraq and later extended their rule to eastern Arabia. The cities of ʿAbbasid Iraq became the arenas for significant doctrinal developments in Twelver Shiʿism. Shiʿi influence could also be felt in the east of the Islamic Empire. The Samanid rulers of greater Khorasan had pro-Shiʿi attitudes.

[25] Kraemer, *Humanism* 288.

Among the Twelver scholars who resided in Baghdad were Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940–941), who spent the last 20 years of his life in Baghdad, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Babawayh, known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, known as al-Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa (d. 460/1067). These scholars are the authors of the "Four Books," or *al-Kutub al-arbaʿa*. Titled *al-Kāfī fī ʿilm al-dīn*, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, and *al-Istibṣār*, the "Four Books" are authoritative Shiʿi collections of *ḥadīth* that form the basis of Imami law to the present day.[26] Shaykh al-Ṣadūq visited Baghdad once in 350/962 and again in 353/965. He had a number of students in Baghdad attending his teaching circles to hear *ḥadīth*s from him, the most important being al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022).[27]

Prior to residing in Baghdad, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq traveled widely to the main centers of learning and culture of his time. The Buyid ruler Rukn al-Dawla summoned him to Rayy at the request of the city's people. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq accepted the invitation and stayed there for a number of years, most likely from 338/950 to 346/958. He then went to Khorasan, again at the invitation of Rukn al-Dawla, in order to visit the shrine of Imam Riḍā. Apparently, he stayed there until July 351/963. He paid another visit to this shrine in 366/977. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq visited additional cities in greater Khorasan, including Nishapur, Marv, and Sarakhs. He traveled to Baghdad in 351/963 and held his teaching circles there. Then he went to Mecca and Medina in 367/978, and from there to Kufa in 353/965. In Kufa he also conducted his teaching circles. Then he went to Hamadān and afterwards visited the Shrine of Imam Riḍā for the third time in 367/978. From Mashhad he went to Balkh, Samarqand, and Farghāna. During this time, he authored a number of books, some of which were on jurisprudence. Najāshī then lists the names of his students in those cities, as well as a number of his students in Baghdad.[28]

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[26] For the historical development of the *al-kutub al-arbāʿa*, see Sachedina, *Just ruler* 65–80. For an analytical and comparative examination of al-Kāfī, see Newman, *Formative period* 94–200.

[27] In the year 353/965, he received an authorization (*ijāza*) from Ibn Bābūya to transmit traditions. He also attended the teaching circle of Ibn al-Junayd al-Iskāfī (d. 380/991), who, according to al-Najāshī, was the leader of the Imami Shiʿis to whom the *khums* (the fifth) that belonged to the Twelfth Imam was entrusted. He, however, fails to mention the names of mosques or any other places that Ibn Bābūya had received his education or the institutions where he taught. Najāshī, *Kitāb al-Rijāl* 5–6.

[28] For a brief account of the life, times, and works of Ibn Bābūya, see Najāshī, *Rijāl* (Jamāʿt al-Mudarrisīn) 261, 389, 392; al-Amīn, *ʿAyān al-Shīʿa* x, 24; al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil* ii, 283. See also the introduction to Ibn Bābūya's *Amālī* 3–40, in which the editors, Sayyid Ismaʿīl Musawī et al., provide a rather comprehensive biography of Ibn Bābūya and a long list of his students and works.

Travelling scholars such as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq almost always took manuscripts, textbooks, and other teaching materials with them, essentially creating new matrices of vast geographical interaction through which scholars carried religious teachings to other places. As a result of the circulation of intellectual and cultural ideas, more universal forms of Shiʿi knowledge emerged in many parts of the Islamic world during the later period of classical Islam. However, it appears that later on rulers started to establish well-funded centers of learning, and consequently, from the twelfth century onward, international academic mobility started to decrease. Higher education became increasingly regionalized thanks to the widespread presence of *madrasa*s.

Al-Mufīd, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's most prominent student in Baghdad, in turn trained a number of scholars whose lasting influence significantly shaped and directed the course of Shiʿi scholarship.[29] Among them was Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, who, according to Amir-Moezzi, created a certain balance between "Rationalism" and "Traditionalism."[30] Sayyid Murtaḍā ʿAlam al-Hudā, known as al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), and his brother al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 407/1016), also benefitted from al-Mufīd's teachings.[31] They, and in particular al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, are said to have created the foundation of Shiʿi legal and theological systems. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā and al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī trained a host of scholars specializing in various branches of Islamic learning who contributed to the flourishing of intellectual activity amongst the Shiʿa. Taqī al-Dīn b. al-Najm al-Ḥalabī (d. 447/1055),[32] Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, known as Sallār al-Daylamī (d. 447/1056 or 463/1070),[33] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Nahrīr, known as Ibn al-Barrāj (d. 481/1088), ʿAlī b. ʿUthmān al-Karājikī (d. 449/1057),[34] and Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) are among the scholars who were trained in the teaching circles of al-Shaykh al-Mufīd and al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

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[29] See the following sources on al-Mufīd's teachers, students, and works: Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* i, 74–77; Mudarris Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab* iv, 59; Khvānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* 562–563; Tehrānī, *Dharīʿa* ii, 125–129; al-Qumī, *Kunā wa-l-alqāb* iii, 171–172. None of these sources, however, furnish us with information concerning the institutions where al-Mufīd taught and his students studied.

[30] Amir-Moezzi, *Divine guide* 19.

[31] Shaykh al-Mufīd and al-Murtaḍā are considered the two personalities responsible for guaranteeing the survival of the Imami doctrine and transforming the "esoteric non-rational Imamism" into a "rational," more "orthodox," and conventional branch of Islam. For more information on this view, see ibid., 18–22.

[32] Tūsī, *Ikhtiyār* 457.

[33] For more on him, see Najāshī, *Rijāl* 206; al-Qumī, *Kunā wa-l-alqāb* ii, 228.

[34] For more on him, see al-Qumī, *Kunā wa-l-alqāb* i, 224.

Throughout the entire period under discussion, prominent Shiʿi scholars held their teaching circles in either mosques, *dār al-ʿilm*s, libraries, or their own houses. However, houses of knowledge were intended primarily for the spread of Twelver Shiʿism more than for teaching purposes. One such *dār al-ʿilm* was the personal library of Abū Aḥmad al-Mūsawī (d. 396/1005) who was appointed by Bahāʾ al-Dawla, the Buyid ruler (r. 379–403/989–1012), as emir of the pilgrimage in 981/1004. Abū Aḥmad was also in charge of the court of grievance (*maẓālim*) and was the head (*naqīb*) of the Shiʿa. He fathered two great scholars of the era, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 407/1016), the compiler of the *Nahj al-balāgha* (ʿAlī's speeches), and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā ʿAlam al-Hudā (d. 436/1044). His library allegedly contained over eighty thousand works. The other significant library of that period was the *dār al-ʿilm* established by Shāpūr b. Ardashīr (d. 416/1025), the vizier of the Buyid Bahāʾ al-Dawla. It reportedly contained more than ten thousand volumes (or even 100,000 to 140,000, according to some). This library was destroyed by fire in 450/1059.[35]

The *Fihrist* of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī's *Rijāl* contain an almost complete list of the Shiʿi works that were known in Baghdad. These two works include a body of information that could be regarded as the sum of knowledge about the most prominent Shiʿi religious scholars and their extensive scholarship on diverse theological, jurisprudential, and historical issues. During anti-Shiʿi uprisings in Baghdad, both the libraries of Abū Aḥmad al-Mūsawī and al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's home and books were burned. In addition to these libraries, apparently there were many other private and public Shiʿi libraries. In his *Kitāb al-Naqḍ*, Qazwīnī states that many Shiʿa have their own private libraries and one can also easily find Shiʿi books in libraries such as the Ṣāḥibī Library in Rayy, belonging to the vizier of Buyid Rukn al-Dawla, Abū l-Qāsim Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbbād, known as Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād (d. 385/995),[36] the large library of Isfahan, the library of Abū Ṭāhir Khavātūnī in Sāvah, and many other libraries across Iraq and Khorasan.[37]

The golden age of Imami Shiʿism in Baghdad came to an end in 446/1055, when the Buyids were ousted by the Seljuqs (432–591/1040–1194), a Turkic Sunni dynasty whose most powerful vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk al-Ṭūsī (d. 485/1092), founded a number of *madrasa*s in several cities, including Baghdad, Ṭūs, Nishapur, and Isfahan. His aim was to systematically define an "orthodox" version of Islam and combat "heretical" innovations that issued from various Shiʿi groups.[38] Some scholars believe the emergence of the *madrasa* reflected, in part, the Sunni-Shiʿi rivalry for political and intellectual supremacy during the tenth and eleventh centuries.[39]

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[35] Kraemer, *Humanism* 55.

[36] For more information on Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād, see Cahen, Ibn ʿAbbād.

[37] Qazwīnī, *Naqḍ* 12.

3 Shiʿi Higher Learning during the Reign of the Sunni Seljuqs (Fifth-Sixth/Eleventh-Twelfth Centuries)

The rise of the Seljuqs spurred anti-Shiʿi unrest. Seeing the danger of remaining in Baghdad, Shiʿi scholars left the city. According to Jaʿfar Khalīlī, in 447/1056 al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) settled in Najaf and established a *madrasa* there. Some three hundred students reportedly attended his teaching circle.[40] He was succeeded by his son al-Ḥasan, who was known as al-Mufīd al-Thānī (d. after 511/1117), and was himself an outstanding scholar.[41] Najaf, a city best known to Shiʿa as the resting place of Imam ʿAlī, is home to one of the oldest Shiʿi educational institutions, which has been revered by learned Shiʿa as a center of religious scholarship. In this regard, Roy Mottahedeh states that contemporary Shiʿi scholars of the *madrasa*s of Najaf consider themselves the successors of al-Ṭūsī through a continuous line of teachers that stretches from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries.[42] The importance of this educational center has fluctuated over the centuries. Prior to the Safavids' establishment of Shiʿism in Persia in 1012/1604, Ḥilla and then Jabal al-ʿĀmil had become prominent centers of Shiʿi scholarship. With the collapse of the Safavid dynasty in 1134/1722, the center of Shiʿi religious education shifted from Isfahan to the Holy Shrines, the *ʿAtabāt*, once again.

Shiʿi *madrasa*s developed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries CE alongside the emergence of Sunni *madrasa*s. A large number of the Shiʿi *madrasa*s located in Persian-speaking cities were historically already strongholds of Twelver Shiʿism, including Rayy, Qom, Kāshān, and Sabzawār. In his *Kitāb al-Naqḍ*, Qazwīnī portrays the situation such that the conditions essential to the success of a *madrasa* were present and the new institutions prospered from the start. He reports that Shiʿi *madrasa*s were abundant even during Sunni

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[38] Arjomand, Philanthropy 116.

[39] For example, see Tritton, *Materials* 103; Pedersen, Some aspects 530–532, 535; Tibawi, Muslim education 429–435; 437.

[40] Khalīlī, *Mawsūʿat* ii, 28–35.

[41] For more information on Shaykh al-Tūsī's life, see Baḥr al-ʿUlūm's introduction to al-Tūsī's *Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī* 1–45.

[42] Mottahedeh, *Mantle* 91–92.

Seljuq rule.[43] He speaks of the large number of Shiʿi students who flocked to Shiʿi scholars' teaching circles and briefly describes some of the *madrasa*s, which were numerous, in his hometown of Rayy. He mentions the Madrasa-yi Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad, a large *madrasa* that was built in the final decades of the eleventh century. Then he names the various *madrasa*s built during the reigns of the two Seljuq rulers Malik Shāh (d. 485/1092) and Muḥammad (d. 512/1118), which are Madrasa-yi Shams al-Islām, attributed to the ascetic Abū l-Futūḥ, located near the Iron Gate [of Rayy]; Madrasa-yi ʿAlī Jāstī, located in the Iṣfahānī neighborhood; Madrasa-yi Khvāja ʿAbd al-Jabbār Mufīd, which had four hundred students who came from all over the world; Madrasa-yi Kūy-i Fīrūza; Madrasa-yi Khvāja Imām Rashīd Rāzī, near the Jārūb-Bandān Gate (it had a library and more than two hundred students); Madrasa-yi Shaykh Ḥaydar; and, a *madrasa* called the Khānghāh-i Riyān, located between Madrasa-yi Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad and Madrasa-yi Shams al-Islām, and home to a group of ascetics.[44]

Qazwīnī also lists the names of nine *madrasa*s in Qom, Madrasa-yi Saʿd Ṣalat, Madrasa-yi Athīr al-Mulk, Madrasa-yi Sayyid Saʿīd ʿIzz al-Dīn Murtaḍā, Madrasa-yi Sayyid Imām Zayn al-Dīn Amīr Sharaf Shāh al-Ḥasanī, Madrasa-yi Ẓahīr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Madrasa-yi Ustād Abū l-Ḥasan Kumayj, Madrasa-yi Shams al-Dīn Murtaḍā, Madrasa-yi Murtaḍā–yi Kabīr, and one associated with the shrine of Fāṭima al-Maʿṣūma.[45] He also lists the names of four *madrasa*s in Kāshān, including the Ṣafawiyya, Majdiyya, Sharafiyya, and ʿIzziyya *madrasa*s, in which teachers such as Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Abū l-Riḍā and Faḍlallāh b. ʿAlī al-Ḥusaynī taught. The small city of Ābeh (Āva)[46] had two congregational mosques, as well as the ʿIzz al-Mulkī and ʿArab shāhī *madrasa*s, in which teachers such as Sayyid Abū ʿAbdallāh and Sayyid Zayn al-Dīn Abū l-Fatḥ Ḥusaynī taught.[47] Qazwīnī also lists two *madrasa*s of Varāmīn, which in his time was a little village. Its *madrasa*s were Madrasa-yi Raḍawiyya and Madrasa-yi Fatḥiyya. Cities such as Bayhaq /Sabzawār also hosted a number of Shiʿi madrasas.[48] In addition to these *madrasa*s, mosques continued to serve as centers of worship and learning where circles of teaching took place, led by eminent Shiʿi scholars who taught jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, and a variety of other subjects, including *kalām* (Islamic theology). These circles, centered on a particular person, also served as a stage for preaching, disputation, and the solicitation of legal opinion.[49]

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[43] Qazwīnī, *Naqḍ* 46–50, 164–173, 473.

[44] Ibid., 47–48.

[45] Ibid., 163–164. For more information on these *madrasa*s and their deeds of endowment, see Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Turbat-i pākān* i, 31; ii, 218–243. A number of *madrasa*s were built during Safavid rule in Qom, including Qiyāthiyya, Raḍawiyya, Jānī Khān, and Fayḍiyya. For more information on these learning institutions, see Modarresi Tabataba'i, *Turbat-i pākān* ii, 127–139.

[46] For more information on this place, see Frye, Āwa (Āvah, Āveh).

[47] Qazwīnī, *Naqḍ* 170.

[48] Ibid., 171–173. Qazwīnī also provides a comprehensive list of the eminent Shiʿi scholars,

The abovementioned *madrasa*s traced their origin to endowments (*waqf*s) founded by charitable acts on the part of wealthy individuals, typically merchants or other members of the political elite. Viziers were common donors, voluntarily giving part of their wealth for pious purposes by instituting a charitable foundation to exist in perpetuity.[50] The person who endowed a *madrasa* normally made provisions for the upkeep of the buildings, the salaries of the teachers and staff, stipends to be given to the students, and the subjects to be taught.[51] Not all *madrasa*s were alike. Based on Qazwīnī's description and additional historical sources, some *madrasa*s were magnificent, while others were small.

4 The Curriculum, Organization of Learning, and Methods of Instruction

Shiʿi *ʿulamāʾ* organized their teaching in the same manner as their Sunni counterparts. The structure and content of the two higher education models were so similar that some Shiʿi scholars attended the teaching circles of prominent Sunni teachers. For example, Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) issued an *ijāza* commonly known as *al-ijāza al-kabīra* to one of his students,[52] Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abū Ibrāhīm Muḥammad b. Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. Abī Zuhra (fl. ninth/fourteenth c.). ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī based his authority on his studies in Baghdad, including audiences with Sunni scholars such as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kīshī (d. 696/1296), and Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 687/1288), with whom al-Ḥillī studied disputation.[53]

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exegetes, theologians, philologists, rulers, viziers, governors, sayyids, and poets living in the tenth and eleventh centuries of early Islamic history. See ibid., 178–254.

[49] Ibid., 56–58, 59–63, 85–97, 221.

[50] Ibid., 220.

[51] This description is based on Qazwīnī's account, ibid., 226. No *waqfiyya*s (deeds of endowment) or any other types of legal records concerning these *madrasa*s have survived.

[52] For a copy of this *ijāza*, see Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* cvii, 60–137.

[53] Ibid., civ, 62–95. For a list of ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī's teachers, see Schmidtke, *Theology* 12–22. Besides al-Ḥillī, many Shiʿi scholars including Faḍl b. Shādān al-Nishābūrī (d. 873) and

The major difference between a Shiʿi *madrasa* and a Sunni one was the multifunctionality of the Shiʿi centers of learning. Whereas Sunni forms of religious education focused almost exclusively on the transmission of religious knowledge, Shiʿi *madrasa*s focused more or less on the preservation of communal identity while providing instruction in religious matters.[54] In other words, Shiʿi *madrasa*s proclaimed the Shiʿi ethos in a visible and tangible form. That said, teachers were still the *madrasa*s, meaning one of the key goals in the Shiʿi *madrasa*s, as in their Sunni counterparts, was to embody one's teacher in knowledge, manners, and conduct.

In his *Kitāb al-Naqḍ*, Qazwīnī explains in some detail the curricula of Shiʿi *madrasa*s. The Quran, and all the other sciences related in one way or another to the study of this text, occupied a prominent place in the teaching carried out at the *madrasa*s. Prophetic and Imāmī traditions (*ḥadīth* and *khabar*), exegesis (*tafsīr*), law and legal theory and principles (*fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh*), Arabic morphology and grammar (*ṣarf wa-naḥw*), and literature (*adab*) were also taught. Nonetheless, other subjects (i.e., rational subjects, which at times were called ancient and foreign sciences), occasionally found their way into the curriculum of a *madrasa*.[55]

Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 687/1274), one of the most celebrated Shiʿi pedagogues, echoes didactic recommendations of earlier Muslim pedagogues, such as Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī (d. 620/1223), an early thirteenth-century scholar. According to Muhammad Taqi Danishpazuh, al-Ṭūsī's *Ādāb al-mutaʿallimīn* (*Rules of conduct for students*) is in fact an abridgment of al-Zarnūjī's book, *Kitāb Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim ṭarīq al-taʿallum*.[56] Indeed, al-Ṭūsī's *Ādāb al-mutaʿallimīn* contains the main points discussed by al-Zarnūjī with a few modifications, revisions, and additions.[57] Despite its Sunni pedigree, al-Ṭūsī's *Ādāb al-mutaʿallimīn* provides particular insight into what could constitute the ideals of the Shiʿi learning.

Like all pre-modern Muslim educators, he recommends a curriculum that fosters moral, aesthetic, and salvational values and virtues.[58] The twelve chapters of his short treatise discuss the quiddity of knowledge and its virtue, the

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Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī "Shaykh Bahāʾī" (d. 1621) attended the teaching circles of Sunni scholars and even taught in Sunni *madrasa*s. For more information about these scholars, see Stewart, *Islamic legal orthodoxy* 63–97.

[54] Qazwīnī, *Naqḍ* 33–37, 41–43, 402–406.

[55] Ibid., 102.

[56] For more information, see al-Ṭūsī, *Ādāb* 16–17.

[57] Al-Ṭūsī omitted most of the poems and anecdotes cited in *Kitāb Taʿlīm al-mutaʿallim*.

[58] Al-Ṭūsī, *Ādāb* 41. S. Günther has published several studies on the *adab al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* literature; see in particular his Principles 72–93; and Education.

objectives of learning, and the ways in which such goals may be achieved. Al-Ṭūsī also provides practical advice regarding the most beneficial branches of knowledge that students should pursue in their studies, as well as advice on choosing the best teacher and learning companion. He also has recommendations regarding the amounts of material to be mastered, the need for repetition, and rules on punctuality and scheduling time for study. He even dictates how students can maintain their physical and financial well-being and proscribes a diet that can help retain or increase a good memory. Additional advice relates to the ethics and the techniques of written text transmission.

Knowledge, in al-Ṭūsī's opinion, is the specific feature of human beings, through which God gave Adam preeminence over the angels and differentiated man from animal. Knowledge is noble for it leads to eternal bliss.[59] Al-Ṭūsī argues that it is of paramount importance for a student to choose from among all the branches of knowledge the one most beneficial to him. He may learn sciences such as astronomy to the extent that is needed to determine the times and direction of the daily prayers, for example, but becoming preoccupied with these kinds of sciences is forbidden. The seeker of knowledge should also select what is essential according to the stage reached in one's religious development. Finally, students should choose what is necessary for them in the future.[60] A student must also choose old before new things.[61]

In a Shiʿi *madrasa*, a religious scholar would typically sit with students around him in a circle (*ḥalqa*). The scholar would read a text, most often concerning one of the religious sciences, and then comment on its phraseology and meaning. Usually, students would recopy the text from the scholar's recitation, often adding their own comments in the margins of the text. Some teaching circles were much larger than others, the popularity of the professor having its influence on the number of students attending.

According to al-Ṭūsī, an ideal teacher is the most knowledgeable, the most pious, and the most advanced in years.[62] He warned younger scholars, "If a student chooses a teacher hastily and then leaves the teaching circle of the unqualified, no blessing will come to him."[63] Thus, he advised students to take their time upon arriving in a new town and research the options for at least two months before joining the teaching circle of a teacher. Al-Ṭūsī writes that a student who truly wants to acquire knowledge and profit from it should hold the knowledge and those who own it in very high esteem. One of the ways a student can show his respect to the knowledge is to venerate his teacher by seeking his approval, avoiding his resentment, and obeying his commands in those things that are not sinful in the eyes of God.[64] He also recommends that students complete studying a book before embarking upon learning another subject matter, and that they avoid unnecessary traveling so as to not waste their time. Furthermore, he advises students to choose a pious, mentally sound, as well as assiduous, learning companion, while avoiding lazy, idle, loquacious, corrupt, and deceitful individuals.[65]

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[59] Al-Ṭūsī, *Ādāb* 40–41.

[60] Ibid., 42–44.

[61] Ibid., 49.

[62] Ibid., 50. Muhammad Zaman Tabrīzī, a Safavid pedagogue, gives more information on this issue: "Sunnis hold various views on the age at which a teacher should start teaching; some say one should not teach unless he has reached the age of forty and some say other things. Apparently, a scholar at any age, as long as he meets the criteria, can teach. And whenever he is so old that his mind becomes weak, he must stop teaching." Tabrīzī, *Farāʾid* 278.

A student was expected to seek knowledge at all times, hence al-Ṭūsī advises a seeker of knowledge to have ink on hand on every occasion so that he can jot down items of interest. He also reminds students to question venerable men and acquire information from them. Lastly, al-Ṭūsī maintains that it is essential for the student of knowledge to bear miseries and vileness patiently while seeking learning.[66] According to al-Ṭūsī, Wednesday is the best day for a student to begin his study; that is the day practiced by predecessors and recommended by traditions. The best times to study, according to al-Ṭūsī, are the hours of dawn and between the setting of the sun and first vigil of the night.[67]

On the amount of study to be undertaken in the initial stages of learning, al-Ṭūsī maintains that the beginner's study ambition reflects an amount he can retain in his memory after two repetitions. Every day he should increase the span of his recollection, so that even if the duration and quantity of his study become large, it would still remain possible for him to recall the material by repeating it. One must commence study with matters that are more readily understood, as demonstrated by the method practiced by elders.[68] According to al-Ṭūsī, it is obligatory for a student to count and measure for himself the amount of repetition needed. He further suggests that the seeker of knowledge should necessarily repeat the lesson of yesterday five times, and the lesson of the preceding day four times, and the lesson of the day previous to that, three times, and the one which comes before, two times, and that of the day before that, one time. It is essential to avoid becoming accustomed to silent repetition. Learning and repetition must be carried out with vigor and eagerness.[69]

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[63] Al-Ṭūsī, *Ādāb* 51.

[64] Ibid., 54, 56.

[65] Ibid., 52.

[66] Ibid., 107.

[67] Ibid., 65.

[68] Ibid., 74–75.

Al-Ṭūsī maintains that characteristics such as earnestness, insistence, and assiduity are indispensable in the quest for knowledge. Although it is considered essential to the knowledge seeker to maintain a vigil throughout the nights, al-Ṭūsī believes that, in order to pursue knowledge, one should neither exhaust nor weaken oneself, as this will surely result in one cutting himself off from work.[70] Al-Ṭūsī gives the student useful advice on how he can take care of his physical health and improve and sharpen his mental acuity and memory. He writes:

> It is essential for the pursuer of knowledge to eat well and moderately. Knowledge of those things enhances his well-being and the duration of his life, thus enabling him to be free from sickness and concerns and devote his time exclusively to the pursuit of knowledge.[71]

Al-Ṭūsī also warns students to be careful about eating food in the marketplace if possible, because food of the market is more apt to be impure and contaminated. In addition, eating in the market is remote from the contemplation of God and facilitates His neglect. In the marketplace the eyes of the poor fall on one's food, the poor who are not able to buy anything, thereby they are harmed, and the blessing of the food vanishes. Lastly, students should avoid slander and the company of the loquacious.[72]

Memorization and constant repetition maintained the authenticity of reports and texts fundamental to Islamic principles.[73] For this reason, a strong memory was one of the most important tools for a student. Almost all Muslim pedagogues commented on how one could improve memory. Al-Ṭūsī gave the following tips: be industrious and committed, reduce consumption, pray at night, recite the Quran, recite night prayers from memory, memorize the Quran, and perform other virtuous deeds following the Prophet Muhammad's model. Scholars wrote that rubbing the teeth, drinking honey, and eating the incense plant with sugar, as well as eating 21 red raisins each day on an empty stomach, also improve memory, because these substances cure many sicknesses. Everything that diminishes phlegm and humor increases memory, and everything that increases phlegm creates forgetfulness. Moreover, among those things that create absentmindedness are sinful deeds and the commission of many perfidies, as well as concern and worry over worldly affairs and being distracted by many occupations and attachments. Among the activities that cause poor memory, scholars mentioned eating fresh coriander and sour apples, beholding a man crucified, reading the inscriptions on tombs, passing through a train of camels, throwing live fleas on the ground, and the application of the cupping glass to the nape of the neck.[74] Although this sounds trivial to us, it nevertheless highlights the importance scholars accorded to memory and memorization.

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[69] Ibid., 85.

[70] Ibid., 65.

[71] Ibid., 69–71, 114.

[72] Ibid., 110.

[73] In his article Art of memory, 485–516, Eickelmann argues that rote learning, a technique that is often denigrated, is in fact an effective learning method.

Committing sins, especially lying, and oversleeping are two factors that bring about material poverty, as well as poverty of learning. Other activities that bring about poverty include sleeping and urinating while naked, eating in a state of impurity, eating lying on one's side on a couch and disdaining the remnants of the table, burning the skins of onion and garlic, sweeping the house at night and leaving the sweepings in the house, going ahead of venerable old people or learned men, calling one's parents by their given names, using toothpicks made of every kind of wood, washing the land with mud and earth, sitting on the doorstep, lying on one's side against a doorpost, making sacred ablutions in the latrine, sewing clothes on one's body, drying one's face with clothes, leaving spiderwebs in the house, neglecting one's prayers, making a hasty exit from the mosque after the morning prayers, arriving very early to the market, arriving late in returning from the market, buying pieces of bread from poor people, begging, invoking evil in one's children, leaving the covers off vessels, and extinguishing the lantern by blowing on it. It is likewise stated that writing with a knotted reed-pen, combing oneself with a broken comb, neglecting to pray for one's parents, sitting while winding one's turban around the head, putting on one's trousers while standing up, and finally, showing avarice, miserliness, extravagance, laziness, sluggishness, and neglect in one's affairs all lead to poverty.[75]

While encouraging students to enhance their memory, al-Ṭūsī also advises them to ask questions and debate (*munāẓara*) in order to internalize one's learning and encourage arguments to cross over from one field to another. However, al-Ṭūsī also encourages students first to learn and understand books and then to become involved in disputation.[76] In *madrasa*s and congressional mosques, in addition to regular lectures, there were occasional public discussions on significant matters of religion and dogma. Sometimes lecturers or preachers would answer random questions posed by the audience. It was a public, open, and communal learning session. There, professors also gave sermons (*waʿz*) and held disputations on matters of law and theology.[77] Qazwīnī describes some of the discussions and debates held at the *madrasa*s or Friday mosques, and notes the welcoming atmosphere that encouraged inhabitants of the city to attend those events. Disputation was conducted on the highest level to defend Shiʿi principles against Sunni polemists. Prominent Shiʿi religious scholars and teachers took an active part in these disputations, while the audience listened.[78]

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[74] Al-Ṭūsī, *Ādāb* 113–117.

[75] Ibid., 119–124.

Although the Shiʿa did not convene Friday papers during the Seljuq period,[79] disputations were reserved for the period preceding the congregational service on Fridays (the period following the service being devoted to sermons) and for Saturdays. Qazwīnī has recorded many of these theological disputations in which he himself took an active part, or merely attended, in the mosques of Rayy and Qazwīn. In these meetings, scholars disputed certain themes of law, theology, creed, or dogma. Mosques were not the only place in which this type of session could be held. Sessions could take place in the home of a scholar, or in a mosque, or in the court of a sultan or the governor of a city. Qazwīnī's *al-Naqḍ* is an excellent guide and source of information on such meetings, which were attended by members of the Sunni schools of law and dogmatic theology, as well as by the traditionalists.[80] Not all religious scholars held such sessions. Apparently, this form of learning was reserved for the elite among scholars and required a high degree of erudition. Qazwīnī discusses a certain Shiʿi scholar, Abū Naṣr Hasnajānī, who once explained the Shiʿi religion and refuted the scholarly methods of Sunnis in front of an audience of 100,000 in Qazwīn. Everyone present was amazed and became speechless in the face of his reasoning.[81]

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[76] Ibid., 77.

[77] Qazwīnī, *Naqḍ* 46–50.

[78] Ibid., 102, 488.

[79] Ibid., 598–600.

[80] Ibid., 48, 102, 488.

[81] Ibid., 488–489.

5 The Twelver Shiʿa and the Mongols and Ilkhanids

The period between the collapse of the ʿAbbasid caliphate in 654/1258 and the consolidation of the Sunni dynasty of the Timurids (771–912/1370–1507) was an age of religious pluralism par excellence in the central and eastern parts of the Muslim world.[82] Mongol conquerors sought to ingratiate themselves with the leading clerics of various religious traditions, perhaps in order to better facilitate control of the newly subjugated territories. The Mongols themselves were initially impartial when it came to religious persuasion. In fact, they pursued a policy of religious tolerance and pluralism in their culturally, racially, and religiously diverse empire, either as a result of indifference or ignorance, or in a premeditated approach. Regardless of their motive, Judith Pfeiffer argues that the affinity between the Chinggisid and Shiʿi notions of political authority made Twelver Shiʿism more appealing to the Ilkhanids as opposed to other branches of Islam.[83]

Undoubtedly, the period between approximately the seventh/twelfth and tenth/fifteenth centuries was a crucial historical juncture for Twelver Shiʿism in particular. The Mongol invasions ushered in an age of religious transition during which the distinctions between Sunnism and Shiʿism were largely dissolved into a form of ʿAlid loyalism, as discussed by Marshall Hodgson.[84] Sufi orders, as well as Sunni Muslims, also sought after the attention of the Ilkhanids.[85] However, this period is marked by the ascendancy of the Shiʿa, both ideologically and politically, and the rapid spread of Sufi orders.[86] The Twelver Shiʿa and the leading Shiʿi scholars, including Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 725/1325), took particular advantage of the radical change in political circumstances—namely, the abolition of the Sunni ʿAbbasid caliphate—to create new long-term economic, social, and political opportunities for the Shiʿa by establishing close ties with converted Ilkhanids. As a result, the Shiʿa once again enjoyed greater access to political power and economic resources, which enabled them to actively usher in religio-cultural and political discourses.

Maḥmūd Ghāzān (r. 694–703/1295–1304), a convert who abandoned Buddhism in favor of Islam, effectively fostered Shiʿi support by showing consideration for the *sayyid* families who claimed descent from the Prophet's family. Both Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh (d. 718/1318) and Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbdallāh b. Muhammad Qāshānī (fl. late eighth/early fourteenth c.), report that—following instructions he received in a dream—Ghāzān issued an imperial command indicating that a *dār al-siyāda* should be built in each of the provinces of Persia, including Tabriz, Isfahan, Shiraz, Baghdad, Kirmān, Kāshān, Sivas, Kufa, and Yazd, and that estates and villages should be made into a *waqf* for them, so that every year the income derived would amount to 10,000 dinars.[87]

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[82] For more information, see Bausani, Religion 538–549; Amoretti, Timurid 610–655.

[83] See Pfeiffer, Confessional ambiguity 148.

[84] For an analysis of the "ʿAlid loyalism typical of Sufism by this time," see Hodgson, *Venture* ii, 369–385; 445–455; 463.

[85] On millenarian religio-political movements, especially the Sufi ones, see Bashir, *Messianic hopes* 31–41.

[86] Zarrinkoob, Persian Sufism 136–220.

Dated 702/1303, the endowment deed of the *dār al-siyāda* of Kāshān provides important information on the daily activities of this multifunctional institution.[88] According to the deed of endowment, the revenues of the three villages held in endowment for this *dār al-siyāda* were to be used for the upkeep of the building, the salaries of the *mutavallī* (trustee), the *naqīb al-nuqabā* (the chief of descendants of the Prophet), the imam (prayer leader), the teacher, the physician, and the personnel of the *dār al-siyāda*. Personnel included a caretaker, a doorkeeper, a cupbearer, a cook, an assistant to the physician, and a superintendent who oversaw the work of the staff of the *dār al-siyāda*. In addition to the above expenses, the endowment supported 25 poor *sayyid*s tasked with caring for travelers and the poor. It also provided 20 stipends of 30 dinars per year for *sayyid* students of the Quran and Islamic law. A sum of 30 dinars was to be given to 20 poor *sayyid* women per year to enable them to get married. Finally, 60 dinars were set aside to bury the dead, and 740 dinars were to be spent annually on medicine for the sick.[89]

Oljeytū (Öljeitü, Oljeitu), also known as Muḥammad Khudābanda (r. 703–715/1304–1316), who succeeded Maḥmūd Ghāzān, adopted Twelver Shiʿism around 708/1309–1310 for a short while.[90] He declared his newly chosen faith to be the state religion of the Ilkhanate. Oljeytū followed Ghāzān's tradition, commissioning *dār al-siyāda*s as well as creating pious endowments (*awqāf*) for them. His foundations, however, were less magnificent in scale. They were mainly in Sulṭāniyya, his capital, and included a congressional mosque, a *khānqāh* (Sufi hospice), a *madrasa*, and a *dār al-siyāda*. To support these institutions he allocated many valuable estates, the revenues from which reached 100 *tuman* annually, according to Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd Āmulī.[91] According to Qāshānī, Oljeytū also created a mobile (*sayyāra*) *madrasa* in his camp.[92] There taught Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 725/1325), a student of Ibn Ṭāwūs,[93] and Abū l-Qāsim Jaʿfar b. Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā al-Ḥillī (d. 675/1277), also known as Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, one of the leading Shiʿi scholars and a close friend of the Ilkhanid ruler.[94] According to Muḥammad Zamān Tabrīzī (fl. early twelfth/eighteenth c.), Madrasa-yi Sayyāra had about one hundred students.[95] Apart from Jamāl al-Dīn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, Niẓām al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marāghī (d. 715/1316), Mullā Badr al-Dīn Shūshtarī, Mullā ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥayy, Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥākim al-Tustarī, Burhān al-Dīn al-ʿIbrī (d. 743/1343), and ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ijī (d. 756/1355) all also taught in Madrasa-yi Sayyāra.[96]

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[87] Qāshānī, *Tarīkh-i Oljeytū* 91–94, mentioning as locations for such *dār al-siyāda*s explicitly the *abwāb al-birr* (Ghāzān's own endowment) in Tabriz, Anatolia (Rum), and the towns of Baghdad, and Shiraz. See also Rashīd al-Dīn, Savāniḥ 143 (letter no. 29). According to Anne Lambton, "In dār al-siyādas religious scholars and sayyids from anywhere in the world could stay in this institution where they would teach and provide guidance." Lambton, *Landlord* 92; Lambton, *Awqāf* 299, 315–318; Pfeiffer, Confessional ambiguity 148–156.

[88] Afshar, Waqf-nāma-yi sih dih 122–138.

[89] Ibid., 122–138; Pfeiffer, Confessional ambiguity 149.

[90] For more details on Oljeytū's conversion to Twelver Shiʿism see Pfeiffer, Conversion versions 35–67. For a summary of historical narratives on Oljeytū's conversion see also Jaʿfariyān, Sulṭān Muḥammad. Jaʿfariyān also edited the *Risāla-yi Fawāʾid Oljeytū* and published it at the end of the aforementioned book. Pages 41–45, in which Oljeytū explains why he converted to Shiʿism.

Taking along with him a full-scale *madrasa* staffed with a team of the most prominent Shiʿi *ʿulamāʾ* was perhaps a well-calculated plan to spread the faith, which Oljeytū had recently adopted, among the Persians. Or perhaps Persians already had shown an interest in Shiʿism, and because of their inclination toward Shiʿism, Oljeytū converted and brought with him a host of Shiʿi scholars to answer people's religious questions. According to historical sources, Oljeytū had a keen interest in theological discussions, and he held regular debates in his court.[97] Tabrīzī also reports that Sulṭān Muḥammad Khudābanda built another *madrasa* in Sulṭāniyya, where 200 students benefitted from the teaching circles of 16 teachers.[98] Al-Ḥillī trained a host of students, including his son, Fakhr al-Muḥaqqīn (d. 771/1370), who accompanied him everywhere until his father's death in 725/1325. ʿAmīd al-Dīn (d. 680/1282) and Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-Aʿrajī al-Ḥusaynī (d. 682/1284) were trained by al-Ḥillī, probably in the Madrasa-yi Sayyāra.[99]

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[91] Āmulī, *Nafāʾis* ii, 258.

[92] Qāshānī, *Tarīkh-i Oljeytū* 107–108.

[93] Raḍī al-Dīn Abū l-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 1266), who was a student of Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Hibatulllāh b. Namā (d. 1248), Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī b. Zuhra al-Ḥalabī and the Sunni scholar, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Ibn Najjār (d. 1245), was a significant bibliophile. In his private library, there were about fifteen hundred books on various religious sciences, including the principles of religion, prophecy and the Imamate, Islamic jurisprudence, history, Quran exegesis, supplications, genealogy, medicine, grammar, poetry, alchemy, talismans, geomancy, and astrology. According to Kohlberg, two-thirds of the books in Ibn Ṭāwūs's library that survived the Mongol destruction at Baghdad were Shiʿi, and the remaining third were Sunni. For more on Ibn Ṭāwūs's life and work, see Kohlberg, *Medieval scholar* 3–67, and for more information on his library, see ibid., 71–81.

[94] Khvānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* ii, 282.

[95] Tabrīzī, *Farāʾid* 287.

[96] Qāshānī, *Tarīkh-i Oljeytū* 107–108; Khvāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar* iii, 197.

To some extent, ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī's *ijāza*s reveal the branches of knowledge and books that constituted the seventh/thirteenth-century curricula of Shiʿi higher learning. An *ijāza* issued to one of his students, Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abū Ibrāhīm Muḥammad b. Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. Abī Zuhra, was commonly known as *al-ijāza al-kabīra* and is indicative of the Shiʿi curricula.[100] According to this *ijāza*, al-Ḥillī studied the four Shiʿi canonical books of *ḥadīth*, together with the Sunni canonical collections of *ḥadīth*—the *Muwaṭṭāʾ* by Mālik b. Anas, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī, the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal and the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd.[101] Al-Ḥillī was a student of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), who taught him Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*.[102] Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī (d. 675/1276), who was one of the four cofounders of the observatory invited to Marāgha by Hülegü at the request of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, taught al-Ḥillī philosophy and logic. Al-Ḥillī also studied with him the works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 605/1209) and the texts of Muḥammad b. Nāmāwar al-Khunjī (d. 645/1248). Later, he wrote commentaries on both al-Kātibī's works, the *Risāla-yi shamsiya*, which is on logic, and the *Ḥikmat al-ʿayn*, a work on metaphysics and natural sciences. As al-Ḥillī mentions, this teacher also introduced him to the works of earlier philosophers, including Athīr al-Dīn Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Abharī (d. 662/1264), the author of *Hidāyat*

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[97] On theological debates held at the court of Oljeytū, see Qāshānī, *Tarīkh-i Oljeytū* 99–103. For a summary of other historical accounts, see Jaʿfariyān, *Sulṭān Muḥammad* 10–21, 45–46.

[98] Tabrīzī, *Farāʾid* 287.

[99] For a list of al-Ḥillī's *ijāza*s for these students, see Tehrānī, *Dharīʿa* i, 178, no. 909.

[100] For a copy of this *ijāza*, see Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* cvii, 60–137. ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī also issued two *ijāza*s for his student Muhannā b. Sinān al-ʿAlawī al-Ḥusaynī authorizing him to teach his works. The first was issued in 717/1317 in Ḥilla, and the second in 720/1320, by which he was given permission to transmit a large number of books written on various subjects including *fiqh, ḥadīth and rijāl, uṣūlal-fiqh, uṣūl al-dīn, naḥw*, and books on the rational sciences. See this *ijāza* in ibid., cvii, 146. For a list of al-Ḥillī's students, see Schmidtke, *Theology* 35–40. Al-Ḥillī's son Fakhr al-Dīn also issued Muhannā an *ijāza*, thereby, permitting Muhannā to transmit his books, his father's works, all the books of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, and those of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī. Ibid., civ, 150–151.

[101] Ibid., cvii, 62–95.

[102] Ibid., cvii, 62.

al-ḥikma.[103] Al-Ḥillī comments that he benefitted from the teaching circles of Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ṭāwūs and a number of other scholars.[104] While in Baghdad he studied with Sunni scholars such as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Kīshī (d. 695/1296), who taught al-Ḥillī the works of Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 686/1288).[105]

Shiʿi political ascendancy continued after the collapse of Ilkhanid authority. Some militant Shiʿi Sufi orders established small states, such as the Sarbidārs in Sabzawār and the Marʿashīs in Ṭabaristān. Some Sunni Sufi orders, such as the Kubrāwiyya and the Niʿmatullāhī, transformed into Shiʿi ones.[106] The most successful of them all were the successors of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn (d. 734/1334), who transformed their *ṭarīqa* (Sufi order) into a militant movement supported by *qizilbāsh*s from Anatolia. The *qizilbāsh*s were responsible for permanently transforming Persia into a Twelver Shiʿi polity at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century.[107]

The tradition of building *dār al-siyāda*s also continued after the demise of the Ilkhanids. The Timurid ruling elite in particular patronized *sayyid* families by commissioning and creating endowments for a number of *dār al-siyāda*s. In his *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, Khvāndamīr mentions that the royal *dār al-siyāda* was located at the main junction (*chāhār-sūq*) of the city of Herat.[108] In his *Khātimat al-akhbār fī ahwāl al-akhyār*, Khvāndamīr describes this *dār al-siyāda* in more detail. He reports that the royal *dār al-siyāda* was one of the magnificent monuments commissioned by ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī,[109] that the poor and the needy were fed in that noble edifice, and that a certain Mawlanā ʿAbd al-Jalīl taught there and received a sufficient royal pension. Khvāndamīr also reports on another royal *dār al-siyāda* located in Herat, where Vāʾiz Kāshifī gave the sermon every Friday morning from the pulpit of Herat's Dār al-Siyāda-i Sulṭānī. He also taught at the Madrasa-yi Sulṭānī and a certain Sufi shrine.[110] In her religious complex in Mashhad, Gowhar Shād (d. 861/1457), the wife of Timurid ruler Shāh-Rukh, also commissioned a *dār al-siyāda* and a *dār al-ḥuffāẓ*, as a well a mosque in Mashhad, all of which are adjacent to the shrine of Imam Riḍā.[111]

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[103] Ibid., cvii, 66–68.

[104] Ibid., cvii, 67–68.

[105] Ibid., civ, 62–95. For a list of his teachers, see Schmidtke, *Theology* 12–22. Besides al-Ḥillī, many Shiʿi scholars, including Faḍl b. Shādhān al-Nishābūrī (d. 259/873) and Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī "Shaykh Bahāʾī" (d. 1030/1621), attended the teaching circles of Sunni scholars and even taught in Sunni *madrasa*s. For more information about these scholars, see Stewart, *Islamic legal orthodoxy* 63–97.

[106] On the ascendancy of the sayyid families during post-Ilkhanid and Timurid period, see DeWeese, Eclipse 45–83; Graham, Shah Niʿmatullāh Walī 173–190.

[107] See Aubin, Études safavides i, 55.

[108] Khvāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar* (Homāʾī) iv, 345; Khvāndamīr, *Khātimat al-akhbār* 192. Khvāndamīr ascribes a whole series of institutions to Oljeytū: "He took it upon himself to build mosques, Sufi convents, dār al-ḥuffāz a house of recitation, a *ḥadīth* school, a *dār al-siyāda*, and *madrasa*s in Sulṭāniyya." *Ḥabīb al-siyar* iii, 196.

[109] ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾi (d. 906/1501) was a distinguished poet who became Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's grand vizier.

6 Conclusion

Despite the reportedly large number of Shiʿi *madrasa*s in the pre-Safavid period, one encounters a variety of obstacles when studying Shiʿi educational institutions and practices.[112] The most significant impediment is the lack of documentation on these institutions. The few available texts are brief in their descriptions or portray the ideals of pedagogical activities, and not the actual practices. Hence, the preliminary scope of the current study cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, in discussing the characteristics of Shiʿi pedagogical undertakings, practices, and ideals in pre-Safavid times, the present study corroborated them with references to mosques, *dār al-siyāda*s, *dār al-ʿilm*s, and *madrasa*s, as well as to particular Shiʿi scholars.

The two main objectives of this study were to explore the religious and institutional context within which Shiʿi higher learning was pursued, and to investigate the fundamental changes it underwent during the first seven centuries of Islamic history. The genesis of Shiʿi higher learning is found in the teachers and students who had a common interest in a particular subject or a range of topics. Dissemination of knowledge could transpire in any place. Prior to the rise of *madrasa*s, this happened in mosques, or anywhere else that both teachers and students found suitable. With the rise of *madrasa*s, scholars and seekers of knowledge, however, strove to affiliate themselves with *madrasa*s for all the benefits they provided, such as lucrative employment and prestige for scholars, as well as free education and stipends for students. Several factors help explain this transformation in Shiʿi higher learning and the rapid rise of the *madrasa* institution. The process of harmonizing the intellectual heritage of the ancient civilizations with the teachings of Islam created an atmosphere of change that deepened religious divisions. As a result of this, religious authority was scattered amongst a host of competing groups who were trying to maintain a monopoly over the meaning and message of Islam. Moreover, there was a growing need to expand the scope of higher education to meet the demands of an increasingly literate and prosperous society. Combined with the crystallization of Muslim ideals, all of these factors provided a cultural base for the birth of the *madrasa* system. Shiʿi *madrasa*s emerged concurrent to the rise of *madrasa*s among Sunni Muslims. The *madrasa*s of both major Islamic branches had several essential characteristics in common: a foundation and maintenance system based on the *waqf* institution, and a particular process for appointing and determining the succession of their professors. The prescribed, ideal pedegogy was also similar in nature. Learning was individualistic and personalized in both Shiʿi and Sunni *madrasa*s. Additionally, the Shiʿa, like their Sunni counterparts, made extensive use of the *madrasa* institution to spread their own special brand of Islamic orthodoxy.

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[110] Khvāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar* iv, 345.

[111] For more information on this complex, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid architecture* i, 332; Hillenbrand, *Islamic architecture* 59; O'Kane, *Timurid architecture* 127–128; There is also another *dār al-siyāda* complex, in Shakhrisabz, Uzbekistan, which was built in 1375–1404. For more information on this complex, see Blair and Bloom, *Art* 37; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid architecture* 271–276; Hillenbrand, *Islamic architecture* 423–426.

[112] In his *Kitāb al-Naqḍ*, Qazwīnī speaks of the large number of Shiʿi students who flocked to Shiʿi scholars' teaching circles, and briefly describes some of the many *madrasa*s in his hometown of Rayy. Qazwīnī, *Naqḍ* 46–50, 164–173, 473.

Although Shiʿi *madrasa*s offered primarily religious learning, they did far more than simply provide the setting where learning took place. Shiʿi *madrasa*s, as well as mosques, *dār al-ʿilm*s, and *dār al-siyāda*s, became dynamic agents in the construction, development, and persistence of Shiʿism itself. These educational and religious institutions helped Shiʿism to establish itself as a lasting, major religious group in the landscape of Islamic history. Furthermore, the *madrasa* institution and other cultural organizations, such as the shrines of the Imams and their progeny, created a single cultural universe in which Shiʿi Muslims promoted their own religious persuasion.

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PART 9

Gender, Human Growth, and Authority in Muslim Education

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CHAPTER 35

Denial of Similitude: The Exegetical Concern with Gender in “And the Male Is Not Like the Female” (Q 3:36)

Hosn Abboud

1 “Binary Dialectics” versus “Binary Opposition”

The examination of the phrase “And the male is not like the female,”[1] from Maryam’s infancy story in the Quran, starts with understanding the binary concept male/female, moving to the relationship between them within Quranic linguistics and grammar in general, and then analyzing them within the narrative context of Maryam’s infancy story in particular.

The phrase “And the male is not like the female” is a denial of similitude based on a relationship of “binary dialectics”;[2] that is, if A is not B, it does not mean A is better than B. Moreover, the Quranic discourse sometimes addresses both genders—for example, in the story of creation—as a couple, *zawj*. The *Lisān al-ʿArab* emphasizes the fact that the duality included in the concept of *zawj* refers both to the parity and the differences between the sexes.[3] Further, “the notion of male and female” constitutes the oneness of the human race, and is at the center of the notion of *tawḥīd* “as a theological principle” in the Quran.[4] Thus, although A is not B, A is in a dialectical relationship with B. This relationship, however, *may* be interpreted as a relationship of “binary opposition,” rendering the definition of female in the negative sense as “not male” and feminine attributes as not male attributes, and vice versa. This

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[1] Q 3:36. Except for the two sentences “and God knew best what she had given birth to—and the male is not like the female,” I use Tarif Khalidi’s translation of *The Qurʾan*. Abdel Haleem translates them as “God knew best what she had given birth to: the male is not like the female”; cf. Abdel Haleem, *Qurʾan* 37. Arberry translates it as “And God knew very well what she had given birth to; the male is not as the female”; cf. Arberry, *Koran* 49. Abdullah Yusuf Ali renders it as “And God knew best what she brought forth—And nowise is the male like the female”; cf. Ali, *Holy Qurʾan* 132.

[2] See Q 3:195, 4:124, 16:97, 40:40, 49:13, 53:45, 75:39, 92:3.

[3] See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* iv, 212.

[4] For the notion of duality and opposition, see Lawson, Duality 23–49.

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means that the “binary dialectics” between the two genders becomes “binary opposition.” What is “binary opposition?”

“Binary opposition” implies that meaning can only be evaluated through a complex measure of the antithesis of the very thing one is trying to evaluate. In other words, literary theorists may determine a more comprehensive textual meaning by engaging in a complex measure of the antithesis of the very thing under analysis. Thus, a meaning determined with reference only to itself cannot be considered totally evaluated.[5] The idea that an opposing relationship should be established is based on the notion that words and images are nothing more than symbols of thoughts. Roland Barthes (d. 1980), the French literary theorist, considers the implications of the sociological lens; he says that when any group belonging to one culture interprets meaning, it puts a series of binaries into practice. In turn, our own responses and interpretations are colored by this play of binaries.[6]

Scriptures depend on binary relationships between concepts. The Quran, for instance, offers a list of binary relationships that are unequal:

> Say: Is the blind man the equal of one who sees? Or is darkness the equal of light?[7]
> Unequal are the denizens of the Fire and the denizens of the Garden.[8]
> Say are those who know the equal of those who do not know?[9]
> Unequal are the blind and those who see; nor Darkness and Light.[10]

The inequalities in these binary relationships are between light and darkness, paradise and hell, knowledge and ignorance, and blindness and sight. The context of inequality, as the late ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 1998) argues, is between the benevolent and the malicious, faith and blasphemy, true guidance and delusion; it is not between male and female.[11]

We can infer from the above that the quotation “And the male is not like the female” does not imply inequality.

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[5] As Steve Campsall, an educational writer and editor at Englishbiz Publishers, points out. See Campsall, Binary opposition. See also Moss, Binary opposition 44–45.

[6] See Kanaya, Binary.

[7] Q 13:16.

[8] Q 59:20.

[9] Q 39:9.

[10] Q 35:19.

[11] See Abd al-Rahman, Conception of women’s liberation 37–43.

2 Reading the Phrase in a Narrative Context

فلمّا وضعتها قالت ربِّ إنّي وضعتُها أنثى واللهُ أعلمُ بِما وضعتْ وليس الذكرُ كالأُنثى وإنّي سمّيتها مرِيم

The phrase “And the male is not like the female” appears only once in the Quran, in the context of a “tale” where there are two narrators, God as the first person plural noun, referring to Himself as “We” and “He” (as *ṣāḥib al-khiṭāb al-aṣl*), and “the wife of ʿImrān” (Mary’s mother) as the second person narrator (*ṣāḥibat al-ḥikāya*).[12] This occurs in Mary’s infancy story, in the chapter *The house of ʿImrān*,[13] as follows:

> Remember when the wife of ʿImrān said: “My Lord, I pledge to You what is in ‘my womb’ (literary belly, *baṭn*). It shall be dedicated to Your service. Accept this from me for it is You—You Who are All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”
>
> When she gave birth to a female, she said: “My Lord, I have given birth and it is a female”—and God knew best what she had given birth to and the male is not like the female—“and I have called her Mary and I seek refuge in You for her and her progeny from Satan, ever deserving to be stoned.”
>
> God accepted her offering graciously and caused her to grow up admirably, and entrusted Zachariah with her upbringing. Whenever Zachariah entered in upon her in the sanctuary (*miḥrāb*), he found food by her side. He said: “Maryam, from where do you have this?”
>
> She said: “It is from God. God provides for whomever He wills, without reckoning.”[14]

3 Grammatical Inference of the Quranic Usage

There is a grammatical rule in the Quran that requires *al-dhakar* (the male) to be always mentioned before *al-unthā* (the female) whenever they syntactically occur together.[15] This stylistic rule is known from the inductive inspection of the Quranic text,[16] and from perscriptive statements in grammar books.[17]

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[12] See Todorov, Catégories 137.

[13] All translations are taken from Khalidi, *Qurʾan* 45.

[14] Q 3:35–37.

[15] Ibn Manẓūr defined “the female as different from the male in everything and the plural

Even in the syntax of "a denial of similitude," *al-dhakar* precedes *al-unthā* in the structure of the sentence. This suggests that in Quranic grammar the male is the primary concept, and the female is a subdivision of it. To understand this rule, the grammatical inference of this Quranic expression must be made clear.

"And the male is not like the female" is a full grammatical sentence. *Laysa* is an imperfect verb that indicates negation. *Al-dhakar* is *laysa's* subject (*ism*) in the nominative (*marfūʿ*) and is originally the subject of a nominal sentence (*mubtadaʾ*). The prefix *kāf* is a preposition (*ḥarf jarr*) and *al-unthā* is governed by it (in the genitive case). *Ka-l-unthā* (*jārr wa-majrūr*) is a prepositional phrase that depends on the omitted predicate of *laysa* (*mutaʿlliq bi-khabar laysa al-maḥdhūf*). "And the male is a like the female" means they are not alike (i.e., they are different).

According to al-Zamakhsharī, the definite article *al-* in *al-dhakar* and *al-unthā* indicates familiarity (*al-ʿahd*);[18] it refers to something that is already known or that has already been mentioned. It means that "the male and the female" refer not to the two genders in general but specifically to what was stated in "the wife of ʿImrān's" mind. Thus, *al-lām* in *al-dhakar* refers to the male that "the wife of ʿImrān" has consecrated (in her belly) to serve in the temple (*muḥarraran*), and *al-lām* in *al-unthā* refers to the female that she has delivered, not to the female sex in general. The speech is made to clearly distinguish between the female child she has given birth to and the desired male child she originally consecrated. The meaning is that the male whom she thought of and consecrated is not like the female who was born. However, the linguist al-Sakkākī interprets it: "What is missed from the expression, we deduce it from the expression; the missed is that the male is better or preferable to the female."[19] But how do we prove that this is implied in the phrase when we know that the phrase, uttered by the first narrator (i.e., they are God's words), is inserted and not part of the pleading discourse (*khiṭāb al-rajāʾ*) given by "the wife of ʿImrān"? And why does Quranic grammar place *al-dhakar* before *al-unthā* in syntax that denies similitude between both genders—that is, denies

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is *ināth*." Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines the female *al-unthā* in the entry *anath* as different from the male *al-dhakar*, but in the entry *dhikr*, he defines the male as opposite to the female and he refers to the phrase "and the male is not like the female." Cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* i, 116; ii, 464; and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt* 93, 329.

[16] See Abd al-Bāqī, *Muʿjam al-mufahras*, and ʿUmar, *al-Lugha* 69.

[17] See ʿUmar, *Lugha* 59–60.

[18] See al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf* i 350.

[19] See al-Qazwīnī, *Talkhīṣ* 17 (an abridgment of al-Sakkākī's *Miftāḥ*).

comparison between them (*al-mushabah* to be equal to *al-mushabbah bi-hi*)? If the female is not like the male, it would be logical to first start with the female, "and the female is not like the male," or does the rule dictate that the male precedes the female in all cases where both genders are mentioned together?

The linguist Aḥmad Mukhtār ʿUmar explains that many linguists believe the grammatical syntax of a language reflects the pattern of thought of those who speak it. Using this hypothesis, he argues that it is possible to discover some cultural features through language. He adds that since most societies prefer the male to the female, and communicate with the male on the basis that "he" has more value than a female, this inferior view of the female is reflected in linguistic classifications, including gender classification.[20] In addition, most languages that distinguish between male and female through an additional grammatical ending take the male as the origin of the respective word, and the female as a subdivision of it. The opposite, however, rarely occurs. ʿUmar then gives examples of literary couples, such as Qays and Laylā, ʿAntar and ʿAbla, and Ṣafā and Marwā, and contends that the converse, such as Laylā and Majnūn, and Shafīqa and Mutwallī, is rarely found.

According to ʿUmar, the Quran consistently follows this linguistic rule, always giving the male precedence over the female in grammatical syntax and in all the verses where they are found together (with one exception).[21] For example:

> Their Lord answered their prayers: "I disregard not the works of any who works among you, be they male or female: The one is like the other."[22]
>
> Whoso does good deeds, whether male or female, and has faith, shall enter Heaven and will not be wronged one fleck.[23]
>
> O Mankind, We created you male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may come to know one another.[24]

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[20] See ʿUmar, *Lugha* 59–60.

[21] In the case of adultery, "the woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication" (Q 24:2), the Quran gives the female precedence over the male in the syntax. Here, ʿUmar makes a value judgment and says "the role of woman in the adulterous crime is basic, it is key in this crime, and this is why He commences with her. This is contrary to God's statement: 'Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman of similarly guilty etc …' (Q 24:3) since the subject here is marriage, and the man is basic in it, because he is the one who desires and takes the initiative for marriage, and this is why He commences with him." Cf. ʿUmar, *Lugha* 69.

[22] Q 3:195.

[23] Q 4:124.

[24] Q 49:13.

> It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, if God and His Prophet decide some matter, to have liberty of choice in action.[25]
>
> The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another.[26]
>
> Al-Ṣafā and al-Marwā are among the rites of God.[27]

According to ʿUmar, the Quran does not change this pattern without good reason.

It is important to note that this syntax, "and the male is not like the female," is interpreted *on the basis of a similar syntax*,[28] which denies similitude between "the wives of the Prophet and all other women: 'O wives of the Prophet you are not like other women' "[29] and denies similitude between God and any other creature or thing—"Nothing resembles Him"[30] (i.e., working from the equation that the rule is always to start with the paradigm, which here is the wives of the Prophet and God the Almighty).

4 Major Classical Exegetes on the Interpretation of Q 3:36–37

The interpretation of a group of major classical exegetes, whose significant commentaries on the Quran mark the end or high point of a theological development, is consulted in this section. The classical exegetes include the *ḥadīth* compiler Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), the Shiʿite scholar al-Ṭūsī (d. 459 or 460/1066–1067), the famous Muʿtazilite grammarian al-Zamakhshārī (d. 538/1144), and the Ashʿarite theologian al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). The chain of transmitters (*ahl al-sanad*) of the *ḥadīth* reports, as referred to by each exegete, is mentioned, but the authority of these transmitters of *ḥadīth* is not discussed. The discussion of the texts (*al-mutūn*) themselves is of interest to us in this research.

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[25] Q 33:33.

[26] Q 9:71.

[27] Q 2:158.

[28] See the gender bias analysis of al-Iskandārnī, one of the commentators on al-Zamakhshārī's *Kashshāf*, in *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* i, 350, n. 1.

[29] "O wives of the Prophet, You are not like other women if you are pious. So do not speak enticingly lest he who has sickness in his heart lust after you, but be chaste in your speech." Cf. Q 33:32.

[30] "(He is) Creator of the heavens and earth! It is He Who assigned to you, from your own number, spouses and from cattle, pairs, wherewith to multiply you. Nothing resembles Him. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." Cf. Q 42:11.

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) is known as the major universal historian and Quran commentator of the first three or four centuries of Islam (b. 224/838–839 in Āmul, d. 310/923 in Baghdad). In his excellent work on exegesis (*tafsīr*), *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* (*The comprehensive clarification of the interpretation of verses of the Qurʾān*),[31] al-Ṭabarī pays special attention to grammatical analysis, lexical etymologies, and meaning variations, and refers to many early traditions and their dogmatic statements.[32] The advantage of his *Commentary* is that it forms the most extensive of the extant early works of Islamic scholarship and it preserves the greatest number of citations from lost sources.[33]

> فلمّا وضعتها قالت ربِّ إنّي وضعتُها أنثى واللهُ أعلمُ بِما وضعتْ وليس الذكرُ كالأُنثى وإنّي سمّيتها مريم.
>
> When she gave birth to a female, she said: “My Lord, I have given birth and it is a female—and God knew best what she had given birth to (*bi-mā waḍaʿat*)- and the male is not like the female—and I have named her Mary.”

Al-Ṭabarī starts by identifying the “hidden” or elided subject (*al-fāʿil al-mustatir*) of the verb *waḍaʿathā*, then gives the meaning of the verb *waḍaʿat* before discussing the two different readings of the consonant in the verb *waḍaʿat* in order to determine the identity of the speaker (whether God or “the wife of ʿImrān”).

- Abū Jaʿfar said on *fa-lammā waḍaʿathā*, it was when Hanna delivered the female nazirite (*fa-lammā waḍaʿat Hanna al-nadhīra*), and this is why He put it in the feminine (*annatha*). If the *hā* refers to the *mā* in his saying *innī nadhartu laka mā fī baṭnī* the wording would have been *fa-lammā waḍaʿathā qālat rabbi innī waḍaʿtuhā unthā*.
- The meaning of *waḍaʿat* is *waladtuhā* (I am delivered of a female). It is said *waḍaʿat al-marʾa taḍaʿ waḍʿan*.
- She said: “O my Lord! I am delivered of a female!” meaning she delivered the Nazirite (*al-nadhīra*), the consectrated one to serve the Lord, a female—“and God knew best what she had given birth to.”

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[31] See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* vi, 333–336.

[32] See Gilliot, *Exégése*.

[33] See Chaumont, al-Ṭabarī x, 13.

On the different readings of the verb *waḍaʿat*, Abū Jaʿfar sides with the majority of the (Quran) reciters (*ʿāmmat al-qurrāʾ*):

- Most of the [Quran] reciters recite *waḍaʿat*, with a *sukūn* (gram. without a vowel), as a report (*khabar*) from God Almighty about Himself: that He is the Knower of what she had delivered, not of her saying "O my Lord! I am delivered of a female."
- Some of the recent reciters read it as a report by Maryam's mother *wa-llāhu aʿlamu bimā waḍaʿtu* (using a *ḍamma* as the respective vowel).[34]

Then al-Ṭabarī gives his own interpretation (*fa-taʾwīl al-kalām idhan*) before he shares the opinions of a list of six transmitters of Tradition to substantiate the authoritative sources of his reports.[35]

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[34] See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* vi, 333–336.

[35] "When Ṭabarī introduced sources by such formula as *ḥaddathanā, akhbaranā* or *kataba*, this means that he had the license (*ijāza*) for the book from which the passage in question was quoted, whilst when he relied on older books for which he had no firm transmission tradition on which he could rely, he used words like *Qāla, dhakara, rawā, ḥuddithtu*." Cf. Chaumont, al-Ṭabarī x, 13.

"Ibn Ḥāmid has related to me (*ḥaddathanī*) the following statement of … on the basis of [a chain of authorities including Salamah, from (*ʿan*) Ibn Ishāq, from Muhammad b. Jaʿfar b. al-Zubayr]: 'When she was delivered, she said: O my Lord! I am delivered of a female!—and God knew best what she had brought forth (*bi-mā waḍaʿat*) and a male is not like a female, that is: when she had given her as a nazirite (*nadhīra*) to Him.'"

"Ibn Ḥāmid has related to us (*ḥaddathanā*) the following statement of … on the basis of a chain of authorities: Salamah has related to us (*ḥaddathanā*), has related to me (*ḥaddathanī*) Ibn Ishaq 'because a male is stronger in this than a female' (*huwa aqwā ʿalā dhālik min al-unthā*)."

"Bushr has related to us (*ḥaddathanā*) … on the basis of (a chain of authorities including Yazīd, Saʿīd,) from (*ʿan*) Qatāda: 'The woman was not able to be given for such workmanship (*kānat al-marʾa la tastaṭīʿ an yuṭaʿ bihā dhālik* …) meaning to be consecrated for the service of the church (*kanīsa*) to reside in it and take care of it and clean it, so she does not leave it at any time, because she is afflicted with menstruation and harm.'"

"Al-Ḥassan b. Yahyā has related to us (*ḥaddathanā*) … on the basis of (a chain of authorities including (*akhbaranā*) ʿAbd al-Razzāq, (*akhbaranā*) Maʿmar,) from (*ʿan*) Qatāda: 'She said: my Lord I am delivered of a female, indeed they used to give the male in dedication for the service of God (*wa-innamā kānū yuḥarrirūna al-ghilmān*)—he said: and the male is not like the female and I have named her Maryam.'"

"Al-Muthannā has related to me (*ḥaddathanī*) … on the basis of (a chain of authorities including Ishāq, Ibn Abī Jaʿfar) from his father from (*ʿan*) al-Rabīʿ, he said: 'The wife of ʿImrān dedicated to Allah what was in her belly with the hope that He will give her a boy because the woman cannot do the meaning taking care of the church (*kanīsa*) and not departing from it and cleaning it for what she is afflicted with of harm *al-adhā*.'"

"Mūsā has related to me … on the basis of (a chain of authorities including ʿAmrū, Assbāt,) from (*ʿan*) al-Suddī that the wife of ʿImrān thought that what was in her belly is a boy so she had consecrated him (*wahabathu*) to Allah; so when she delivered suddenly she

> Allah knows best of all his creatures what she had delivered (*bi-mā waḍaʿat*)—then the Almighty turned back to her report, and she said—in apology to her Lord regarding what she had consecrated (of her pregnancy) for the service of her Lord—“and the male is not like the female,” because the male is stronger and better equipped for the service, and the female is not suitable (*lā taṣluḥ*) in certain situations to enter the holy (*al-quds*) to serve the church (*al-kanīsa*) for reason of menstruation and postpartum period.[36]

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī (385–460/995–1067) is commonly known as Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa (high religious leader of the Shiʿi sect). Al-Ṭūsī’s commentary on the Quran, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (*The elucidation of the interpretation of the Quran*), is a comprehensive work comparable in scope to al-Ṭabarī’s work.[37] However, al-Ṭūsī arranges his material in a different way. He begins by giving various readings and addresses issues of etymology and word significance. He then moves to a discussion of the meanings of certain words and phrases as they are used in the verse under study. Matters of syntax are analyzed and, finally, the reasons for the revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) are given where appropriate.[38]

Al-Ṭūsī organized his commentary on

فلمّا وضعتها قالت ربِّ إنّي وضعتُها أنثى واللهُ أعلمُ بِما وضعتْ وليس الذكرُ كالأُنثى وإنّي سمّيتها
مرِيم

under the subcategories: “The reading” (*al-qirāʾa*) and “The meaning” (*al-maʿnā*).

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was a female so she said—to Allah apologizing:

‘My Lord I am delivered of a female and the male is not like the female,’ saying that they used to give a male in dedication for the service of God (*wa-innamā yuḥarrirūna al-ghilmān*). Allah said: ‘and Allah knows best what she had delivered’, she said: ‘I have named her Maryam.’ ”

“Al-Qāsim has related to us he said … on the basis of (a chain of authority) al-Ḥusayn who said Ḥajjāj has related to me … on the basis of (a chain of authorities from Ibn Jurayj, al-Qāsim b. Abī Bazat, from ʿIkrima and Abī Bakr) from ʿIkrima, ‘My Lord I am delivered of a female, and the male is not like the female’ means in menstruation and no woman should be with the men her mother is saying this.”

[36] See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* vi, 333–336.

[37] Al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*.

[38] See McAuliffe, *Qurʾānic Christians* 48.

Al-Ṭūsī related from Ibn ʿĀmir and Abū ʿAmr, on the authority of Āṣim and Yaʿqūb, that there are two statements regarding the issue of "the wife of ʿImrān" that mention the gender of her newborn female. First, he says, it is read as an apology to withdraw from the vow because the newborn is female. Second, proceeding with the male before the female in her questioning about her female gender (*taqdīm al-dhakar fī l-suʾāl lahā bi-annahā unthā*), because the shame (*ʿayb*) of the female is worse (*aswaʾ*), and this shame affects her faster (*asraʿ*), and her strive is weaker (*aḍʿaf*), and her mind is lesser (*anqas*), she mentions the female first so that her question on this issue is valid.[39]

As to his saying (*qawluhu*) "And the male is not like the female," al-Ṭūsī says it is an apology, because a female is not fit in the same way as a male (*lā taṣluḥ limā yaṣluḥ lahu al-dhakar*) and that they used to only allow males to be consecrated (*taḥrīr*), because a female is not fit like a male to serve the sacred mosque (*li-khidmat al-masjid al-muqaddas*) given that she is afflicted with menstruation and postpartum confinement, and must protect herself from mixing with other people. He quotes from Qatāda, who said that consecrating (*taḥrīr*) is—according to custom—only allowed for boys. Then he relates that *hā* in *waḍaʿtuhā* could be a metonymy of *mā* in His saying *mā fī baṭnī*.

As for the linguistic phrasing, al-Ṭūsī gives the original meaning and all the conjugated forms of the verb *waḍaʿa*, and in regard to the meaning (*al-maʿnā*) of (her) saying "and God knew best what she had given birth to," he argues that it is said by way of exaggerating an attribute (*lil-mubālagha fī l-ṣifa*). Next, he discusses the reading of *waḍaʿat* as either *waḍaʿtu*, with the first person singular ending *-tu* if it is to be the speech of "the wife of ʿImrān" by means of her glorification of God and her worship to Him, or as *waḍaʿat*, with the third-person feminine singular ending *-at*, which he sees as the best reading for two reasons: she has already said that she had delivered a female; and second, if otherwise, she would have addressed God in her speech—if it is her speech—by saying "and you knew best" (*wa-anta aʿlamu*).

Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (467–538/1075–1144), the famous Muʿtazilite grammarian, wrote one of the best-known Quran commentaries, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl* (*The discoverer of the truths of the hidden things of revelation and the choicest statements concerning the aspects of interpretation*).[40] *Al-Kashshāf* contains ideal examples of Muʿtazilite doctrine and, in this respect, "stands much more intentionally on a specifically dogmatic foundation than does al-

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[39] Al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* 444.

[40] Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*.

Ṭabarī's commentary."[41] Al-Zamakhsharī conveys his perceptiveness and brilliant knowledge of language in a number of grammatical, lexical, and philological writings in *al-Kashshāf*.

Al-Zamakhsharī organizes his interpretation of Q 3:36 into a question-and-answer format ("you say" and "I say"):

> If you ask me: How is the female (*al-unthā*) in the accusative as a state (*ḥāl*) from the pronoun *waḍaʿathā* and is this according to your statement: the female has delivered a female? I answer you: The original is: she has delivered him a female, but he puts it in the feminine because the state (*ḥāl*) is in the feminine … As if it was said: I am delivered of the pregnancy or the (*nasmah*) a female.
>
> If you ask me: Then why did she say I am delivered of a female and what is the purpose of her statement?
>
> I answer you: She said it with disappointment, and contrary to her assumption, she complained to her Lord because she had hoped and thought she would deliver a boy and this is why she dedicated him for the service of the Lord (*lil-sidāna*). Addressing her monologue of disappointment and sadness, God Almighty said "and God knew best what she had given birth to," in order to glorify her subject and to show her ignorancef of what He had bestowed to her. The meaning is: "and God knew best what she had given birth to" and what is connected to her of great matters and to make (her) and her son a sign for humankind while she was ignorant of it.[42]
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> In the reading of Ibn ʿAbbās, "and God knew best what she had given birth to" (*wa-llāhu aʿlamu bi-mā waḍaʿat*), God's speech to her means, you do not realize the worth of the delivered child (*al-mawhūb*) and of God's knowledge of his high rank and his importance.[43]
>
> In another reading of the verb *waḍaʿat*, Allah has a secret and wisdom (*sirr wa-ḥikma*), and perhaps this female is better than the male as a source of comfort for herself (*tasliyatan li-nafsihā*). If you ask me what is the meaning of "and the male is not like the female"? I say, it is a clarification (*bayān*) to what she says "And God knows best what she brought forth" of the greatness of the subject and its elevation. It means that the male that she has requested is not like the female that is given to her as a

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[41] See Götje, *Qurʾān* 35.

[42] Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf* i, 349–350.

[43] Ibid., i, 350.

> gift (*wahabat lahā*) and the definite article *al-* in both indicates familiarity.[44]
>
> If you ask me why He joined by means of a conjunction (*ʿaṭafa ʿalā*) the phrase "and I have named her Maryam" (*wa-innī sammaytuhā Maryam*) I answer you: It is adjoined (*ʿaṭf ʿalā*) to the phrase, "and I am delivered of a female" (*wa-innī wadaʿtuha unthā*) and between them are two inserted phrases, like the Quranic phrase *wa-innahu la-qasamun law taʿlamūna ʿaẓīm*.[45]

Muḥammad b. ʿUmar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (543/1149 or 544/1150–606/1210) was a master of Sunni Ashʿarism. He occupies such an important place in the intellectual history of Islam's twelfth century that he has been called the renewal of religion (*mujaddid al-dīn*).[46] The *tafsīr*, known as either *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (*The keys to the unseen*) or *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (*The great commentary*), is al-Rāzī's great work (magnum opus). In his *al-Tafsīr*, al-Rāzī combines philosophy and theology and often divides his analysis of a particular verse into a series of questions (*masāʾil*); each *masʾala* may then be further subdivided to present an extensive range of possible interpretations.[47] Al-Rāzī presents two opinions:

فلمّا وضعتها قالت ربِّ إنّي وضعتُها أنثى واللهُ أعلمُ بِما وضعتْ وليس الذكرُ كالأُنثى وإنّي سمّيتُها مريم

> The first "is said to be God Almighty" said, narrating on her behalf, "and the male is not like the female," and there are two statements (*qawlān*) in this regard: the first is that her aim is to prefer the male child to the female (*tafḍīl al-walad al-dhakar ʿalā al-unthā*). The reasons for this preference from different points of view (*wujūh*) are: First, the law allows the males to be given (as *nadhīra*) but not the females. Second, it is permissible for the males to carry on the service in the temple but not for females because of menstruation and other symptoms experienced by women. Third, because of his strength and fortitude, he is suitable for service but not the female because she is weak and cannot withstand service. Fourth, the male attracts no shame while in service and when mixing publicly

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[44] See my conclusions for the meaning of *lām al-ʿahd*.

[45] Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf* i, 350.

[46] See McAuliffe, *Qurʾānic Christians* 63.

[47] Ibid., 69.

> with people, but the female does. Fifth, the male is not accused in the same way as the female when he mixes [with other people].

For all these reasons (*wujūh*) al-Rāzī concludes here that the male is preferred to the female in this context. The second opinion is the following: what is meant by this phrase is to favor this particular female over the male. It is as if she is saying that "I wanted a male but this female is a gift from God Almighty. The male who was my wish is not like the female who is a gift from God." This indicates that this woman had deep knowledge of God's glory and knew that anything God did for His servants was better than what the servant wished for himself.[48]

5 Cross-Referencing with the Protoevangelium of James

Having examined the interpretations of a group of classical exegetes, it is important to now turn to a reference about the story of the vow by Hannah, Mary's mother, as it is found in the ancient Christian narrative and apocryphal gospel, the Protoevangelium of James (also known as the Gospel of James, or the Infancy Gospel of James). To point out Maryam's infancy story from the Protoevangelium is by no means suggesting that this is the only source the Quran may be referring to. However, the description of Hannah's vow seems to be consistent with that of "the wife of ʿImrān."

The Protoevangelium is not considered canonical, although it was read in the early church alongside the New Testament. Its significance is acknowledged, since it is part of a church tradition related to the biographies of highly regarded figures and saints, which satisfy the curiosity of the believers who want to know about the biographies of their sacred figures.

The Protoevangelium's account was widespread in early Christianity, and also at the time of the Quranic revelation, and later Muslim exegetes refer to it. Exegetes also looked for historical details, especially in regard to names and the naming of the holy figures mentioned (only according to their epithets) in their Quranic stories.[49] Finally, it sheds light on the type of vow which, according to al-Rāzī, "is in the laws of the Israelites and is absent in our laws."[50]

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[48] See al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr* viii, 28.

[49] The Quran tends to hide the names of Jewish and Christian female figures (except for Mary) from the Messianic and Israelite periods and both male and female figures from the Islamic period (with the exception of two names, Muḥammad and Zayd).

[50] Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr* viii, 27.

Al-Rāzi and other authoritative exegetes knew that the narrative was set in an ancient Israelite milieu. They even mention the names of personalities such as "the wife of ʿImrān" (Hannah) and her genealogy. In fact, some recount the story in its entirety in their historical works,[51] since they most probably knew the story from translated Arabic reference works, given that Muslim exegetes did not read the Christian texts in their original languages, such as Greek, Syriac, and Coptic, and their knowledge of foreign languages was limited mostly to Persian.[52]

It is essential to point out that the New Testament does not include Mary's infancy story, as found (in full) in the Protoevangelium and very briefly in the Quran, although the story was widely known. The Quran retells the story of Mary's infancy from the moment of her mother's vow to dedicate her to the service of the Lord before she was born, to her growing up in the temple in preparation for her receiving the annunciation from God (via the messenger). Moreover, it places Mary's family, "the House of ʿImrān" (*Āl ʿImrān: The Descendants of Amram*), in the same chosen status as that of "the House of Abraham" (*Āl Ibrāhīm: The Descendants of Abraham*).[53]

It is important to notice that, in the Protoevangelium's account, Hannah gave a similar speech to her God before the birth of the child, expressing her will to consecrate her (future) child to the service of the Lord regardless of its gender.

I will give a short account from the scene where the archangel gives Hannah the good news (annunciation) and Hannah makes the vow regarding the child—which is closely related to the scene where "the wife of ʿImrān"[54] makes the same vow to God in the Quranic narrative:

> The Angel's annunciation to Anna and Joachim (iv)
>
> 1 And behold an angel of the Lord appeared, saying unto her: Anna, Anna, the Lord hath hearkened unto thy prayer, and thou shalt conceive and bear and thy seed shall be spoken of in the whole world. And Anna said: As the Lord my God liveth, **if I bring forth either male or female**, I

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[51] See al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh* i, 585.

[52] See Baʿalbaki, Lexicographers 31.

[53] See the verse which introduces Mary's infancy story in "The House of ʿImrān," Q 3:33. See Neuwirth, House of Abraham 499.

[54] The Quran does not mention biblical women by their first names (except for Mary, Mother of Jesus); this is why Hannah, the mother of Mary, is not mentioned by name, and instead appears by her epithet, the wife of ʿImrān. The Quran also links Mary's genealogy with Amram's, which includes Moses, Aaron, the brother of Moses, and their sister Miriam (Exodus 15:1–20).

> will bring it for a gift unto the Lord my God, and it shall be ministering unto him all the days of its life.[55]

Note that Hannah makes the vow to God about consecrating her baby to the service of the Lord regardless of whether she gives birth to a male or female child. This indicates a clear vow without consideration of the baby's gender, although there is clear preexisting knowledge of the significance of this woman and her child whose "lineage will be known to the whole world." No traces of regret can be found in Hannah's speech about the gender of the child. Also, the first narrator does not interrupt to assert that God needs not be told by his people things that he knows, or to speak on his behalf or on behalf of "the wife of ʿImrān"; "and God knows best what she has given birth to," and "and the male is not like the female."

6 Conclusion

The question raised at the beginning of this paper was whether the exegetical views interpret this controversial phrase in a way that implies, literally, that the male is preferable to the female.[56] Before we give the answer, a summary of the relevant linguistic, grammatical, and cultural issues raised above is necessary:

The **linguistic feature** of *al-lām* in *al-dhakar* and *al-unthā*, which is defined as *lām al-ʿahd*, refers, in *al-dhakar*, to the male that "the wife of ʿImrān" has consecrated (in her belly) to serve in the temple (*muḥarraran*), and in *al-unthā* to the female that she has delivered, meaning the individual child in the mind of "the wife of ʿImrān" (*al-maʿhūd fī dhihn wālidat Maryam*), and not the female sex in general. *Lām al-ʿahd* thus removes any hidden meaning of the sort al-Sakkākī suggested (i.e., general preference of male over female) since there is no hidden meaning (*iḍmār*) in the grammar. And when Maryam was "accepted right graciously" by the Lord and "was chosen above the women of all nations," her acceptance becomes one of blessing and not one of compensation.[57]

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[55] See James, Protoevangelium 40.

[56] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines *al-faḍl* as "surplus over economy" and of two kinds: praised and criticized, and it is used more in praise than in criticism; "As to the surplus in terms of the self (*al-dhāt*), like the surplus of one man over another, it is accidental (*ʿaraḍan*) not in essence (*jawharan*), i.e., it is possible to attain it by earning, such is stated, 'God has preferred some of you over others in bounty' (Q 16:71) and 'Men are legally responsible for women, in as much as God has preferred some over others in bounty, and because of what they spend from their wealth' (Q 4:34); He means of what man is favored in subjective virtue, and the favor has given him strength, money, prestige and power." Cf. al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt* 639.

As to the structure of the sentence *wa-laysa al-dhakar ka-l-unthā* and the grammatical rule that claims the Quran consistently commences with *al-dhakar* (the male) before *al-unthā* (the female) as a gender preference rule (ʿUmar), in most cases where the two genders are mentioned together—even in the case of "a denial of similitude phrase" (*jumlat nafī al-tashbīh*), such as "and the male is not like the female," where the male precedes the female—this does not mean that the criterion of precedence in the grammatical language system is equivalent to the criterion of preference in the social system. Also, this grammatical rule may reflect the social system of the people who speak the language, but it does *not necessarily reflect the moral system of these people*. The moral criterion before God as to the difference between the male and the female, as stated in Q 49:13, is righteousness (*taqwā*).[58]

Moreover, while the syntax of *wa-laysa al-dhakar ka-l-unthā* is comparable to the syntax of *yā nisāʾ al-nabī lastunna ka-aḥadin min al-nisāʾ*,[59] the meaning that "the Prophet's wives are not like other women" is not based on the Prophet's wives' being preferred over all other Muslim women, but that they are exemplars for other women. In a similar analogy, the expression *laysa ka-mithlihi shayʾ*, "Nothing resembles Him," is structured on God's absolute transcendence and not on God being preferred to His creatures.

How did al-Ṭabarī, al-Ṭūsī, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Rāzī interpret preference (*tafḍīl*) of the male to the female (or vice versa) in God's statement (on behalf of himself or on behalf of "the wife of ʿImrān") in the context of a particular Jewish ritual of dedicating males to the service of the temple?

All of the aforementioned authoritative exegetes, al-Ṭabarī, al-Ṭūsī, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Rāzī, read the two phrases "and God knows best what she had delivered and the male is not like the female" (according to *qirāʾat al-jumhūr*) as God's words (whether on behalf of Himself or on behalf of "the wife of ʿImrān"). Only al-Zamakhsharī identifies the two phrases as technically two parenthetical phrases (*jumlatān muʿtariḍatān*) into “the wife of ʿImrān’s speech.” However, in identifying the two different voices in the tale, the first narrator (*ṣāḥib al-khiṭāb al-aṣl*) and the second narrator (*ṣāḥibat al-ḥikāya*), these exegetes do not say that the story is a retelling of a Christian tale.

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[57] I thank Professor Wajih Qansu at the Lebanese University in Beirut for his explanations of the linguistic and legal meaning of *lām al-ʿahd*.

[58] "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." Quoted from Ali, *Holy Qurʾan* (Q 49:13).

[59] "O Women of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women: If you do fear (God), be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak a speech (that is) just." Q 33:32.

Al-Ṭabarī interprets “And the male is not like the female” as meaning the male is stronger and better equipped for the service. The female is not suitable (*lā taṣluḥ*) in certain situations to enter the into the holy (*al-quds*) environment and serve the church (*al-kanīsa*) for reasons related to feminine attributes, mainly “menstruation and the postpartum period,” which were considered unclean states according to Jewish customs.

Al-Ṭūsī interprets (on the authority of ʿĀsim and Yaʿqūb) and associates gender bias with the female; for example, the “shame (*ʿayb*) of the female is worse (*afẓaʿ*), and this shame affects her faster (*asraʿ*), and her drive is weaker (*aḍʿaf*), and her mind is more defective (*anqaṣ*).”[60]

Al-Zamakshārī reads the passage to imply the importance of the future child (*mawlūd*) and “God’s knowledge of his high rank and his importance.” Al-Zamakhshārī uses the term “perhaps” and the two terms “secret and wisdom” to produce a shift in perception from the preference of the male to the female: “God perhaps has a secret and wisdom (*sirr wa-ḥikma*) and perhaps this female is better than the male as a source of comfort for herself (*taslyatan li-nafsihā*).” He interprets “And the male is not like the female” as a clarification of her saying “And God knows best what she had given birth to.” It means the male that she requested is not like the female that was given to her as a gift (*wahabat lahā*). In other words, we can also interpret the phrase to suggest “the male is not better than the female.”

Al-Rāzī gives two conflicting statements (*qawlān*). According to his first statement (*qawl*), God is sharing news on her behalf, favoring the male over the female, and uses the term preference, saying that “the wife of ʿImrān’s” aim is to prefer the male child to the female (*tafḍīl al-walad al-dhakar ʿalā l-unthā*).[61] He gives five reasons for her preference by arguing from a gender perspective why men and not women are allowed to do service of this kind and why the Israelite law allows the males to be given (as *nadhīra*), but not the females. The reasons he listed are basically physical feminine attributes (menstruation and other symptoms experienced by women) and socially defined reasons (the female attracts shame while mixing publicly with people, and the male is not accused in the same way as the female when he mixes with other people).

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[60] Al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* 444.

[61] See al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī’s definition of *al-faḍl* as in fn. 54.

It is very important to highlight what al-Rāzī clearly contests, this kind of preference in the male "*nadhīra*" "is in the laws of the Israelites and is absent in our [Muslim] laws, and in general, laws allow for such differences." This leads to a contention with those who take this phrase, not within its original context, and apply the Quranic exegetical rule of interpreting in a general sense and not looking at the specific context (*al-ʿibra bi-ʿumūm al-alfāẓ lā bi-khusūs al-asbāb*).[62]

According to the second opinion (*qawl*), what is meant by this phrase is to favor this particular female over the male. It is as if she is saying: "I wanted a male, but this female is a gift from God Almighty. The male, who was my wish, is not like the female, who is a gift from God." It is interesting that here al-Rāzī gives a positive opinion of the religiosity of the mother of Maryam, which "indicates that this woman had deep knowledge of God's glory and knew that anything God did to His servants was better than what the servant wished for himself."[63]

In conclusion, the issue of favoring the male and not the female to serve in the temple as a *nazir* was well understood by all exegetes to be in accordance with Jewish norms (not Islamic norms). Although these exegetes do not accuse the female of polluting the temple—which is what was implied and in accordance with Jewish norms—they do not differentiate between the physical inconvenience of the female serving in the temple and the female's spiritual convenience and strength to serve in the temple, which is the real requirement for the worship of the Lord according to the Quran, as it is clearly stated in the same narrative, "O Mary, pray constantly to your Lord, and bow down in worship, and kneel alongside those who kneel."[64] Thus, these exegetes were aware that "the wife of ʿImrān" is doubtful of God accepting her newborn female to be given as a *nazir*, but they did not justify this ruling from their own cultural milieu; that is, they did not emphasize how, in general, Muslim women are expected to enter the Kaʿba or mosque.[65]

A study of the gender concerns of major authoritative exegetes in classical Islam, including al-Ṭabarī, al-Ṭūsī, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Rāzī, allows for an examination of the capacity of classical Islamic learning and the teaching of the Quranic ideals, and the exegetes' authority in interpreting issues related to gender equality in Islam.

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[62] Opinion of the author of this article.

[63] See al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr* viii, 28.

[64] Q 3:43.

[65] In ancient Judaism, a woman did not enter their most sacred temple or serve in it, but according to the customs of the Arabs, which continued into Islam, both men and women enter and circumambulate around the Kaʿba and run between Ṣafā and Marwā.

A critical analysis of the challenges that arise from a lack of analytical gender criteria in Islamic education will definitely make a difference in modern Islamic education. Today, a group of Islamic feminist academics, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, literary theorists, and theologians from the United States, Europe, the Middle East, the Arab world, and Indonesia are involved in rereading and rethinking the Quran's and *ḥadīth*s' long history of male interpretation. They are enriching Islamic studies and bringing a new dynamic to Islamic learning.

Most of the aforementioned classical exegetes are fully aware that the exclusion of the female *nazīr* from worship in sacred space was the custom and norm of the Israelites and does not reflect Islamic norms and customs. Some of these exegetes did not hesitate, however, to bring their own gender and cultural biases into their interpretations. Others, like al-Zamakhshārī, who made a shift in perception, did not push for gender analysis to confirm the unmistakable presence of ethical and spiritual egalitarianism in Islam. Indeed, the Quran does not state that the female is not equal to the male or that the male is preferable to the female in the theological and ethical system of Islamic learning.

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CHAPTER 36

"If Music Be the Food of Love?" The Singing-Girls and the Notion of *Ṭarab* as Part of an *Adab*-Ideal

Agnes Imhof

This chapter will not give a survey or even an analysis of the huge body of ʿAbbasid scholarship on music and singing-girls—this would be a much larger project and could easily fill numerous volumes.[1] Instead, it will focus on an aspect of musical theory that, from the non-professional's point of view, does not seem to have much in common with education—the emotional response to music, which is extensively discussed in ʿAbbasid scholarship. I will demonstrate that this emotional response (as a public gesture) not only functioned to display knowledge and education—the hearer demonstrates that he is a connoisseur—but is also a characteristic of the increasing interaction and mingling of the ideals of *adab* and *ẓarf*.

The celebrated Basran rationalist theologian and littérateur Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–869) related,

> Yazīd [b. ʿAbd al-Malik] used to listen [to his singing-girls Sallāma and Ḥabāba], and when he was specially moved (*ṭariba*), he would rend his garment and cry, "I am transported," and Ḥabāba would reply, "Please, don't be transported! we need you."[2]

The concept of *ṭarab*, the topic of this contribution, refers to musical performance, as well as to the impact of music on the audience. In the anecdote quoted above, we find a strong, emotional male listener, and, in fact, later Arabic and Western literature[3] suggest that *ṭarab* is a male preserve—the female singers being mere objects of emotion. But, is music only an aspect of sexual seduction, the food of love?

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[1] The quotation in the chapter title is from Shakespeare, *Twelfth night* 1, 1.

[2] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 29, 23, 11. The first page number refers to the translation, the second to the edition.

[3] Stigelbauer, *Sängerinnen*; al-Azdī, *Ḥikāya* 72 f.; al-Washshāʾ, *Ẓarf* 191–192 suggest this, as do the religious scholars, see Engel, *Stellung* 63–120.

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Entertainment has long been underestimated as a source for cultural history. However, al-Jāḥiẓ tells us that "the Persians regarded singing as *adab*, the Greeks (*Rūm*) as philosophy."[4] We will demonstrate, through the example of *ṭarab*, how a pre-Islamic oral tradition was maintained and developed in Muslim times, and how it became part of the ideal of a literate élite, into which singers in turn were assimilated. We will further show how *ṭarab* even attained religiopolitical significance. *Ṭarab* as an emotional gesture par excellence became a characteristic of an urban intellectual, religiously indifferent social group who staged enjoyment of life and hot-bloodedness, in contrast to the religiously prescribed restriction of emotions, which they perceived as "coarse."

We shall define *ṭarab*, first as an etymological and psychological phenomenon. Then, we shall deal with the question of the Greek, pre-Islamic Arabian, and Persian impact—particularly in dealing with the phenomenon of *tamzīq* (tearing one's clothes)—as well as with the way the songstresses influenced the aesthetic and social discourses of their time and finally became "adabized" themselves—and thus, how *ṭarab* became a distinctive feature of the literate élite. Arabic works by al-Jāḥiẓ, Ḥassān al-Kātib, al-Iṣfahānī, and al-Washshāʾ will be investigated, as well as Greek sources, mainly by Plato and Aristotle.

1 Toward a Definition of *ṭarab*

1.1 *Etymological Approaches*

Despite several references to *ṭarab* in works on classical Arabic music and cultural history, the concept has not yet been investigated in detail. Engel has pointed out the etymological connection to camel-driving: *istaṭraba al-ibl* means "to stir the camels (in order to drive them)"; *ibl ṭirāb* refers to the camels aroused by the driver's song. The emotional aspect of *ṭarab* is thus implied by the word itself. Consequently, Engel focuses on the double meaning of *ṭarab* as "joy" and "music"; the "musician" is thus *muṭrib*, literally "he who causes/makes *ṭarab*."[5] Not surprisingly, A.J. Racy adds that the hearer of music is called *maṭrūb*, he who experiences *ṭarab* or is "musicated."[6] Racy stresses the ritual aspect of *ṭarab* music, which usually follows more or less the same pattern.[7] He quotes several possible translations, such as "enchantment," "aesthetical emotion," "exstasy," or "trance," rejecting the latter notion by G. Rouget.[8]

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[4] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 28, 22–23, 10.

[5] Engel, *Stellung* 133–134.

[6] Racy, *Making music* 198. The audience is in a passive state, but we also find the active *ṭariba* for "he was moved" and *ṭarraba* for "arouse *ṭarab*." The singer's affect during performance,

Sawa has provided us with examples of *ṭarab* reactions,[9] and recently Montgomery (stressing the sense of motion, which, in a musical context, is to be called the "musical affect") widened the focus, pointing out the dimension of *ṭarab* as a public gesture.[10]

1.2 *Psychological Approaches: The Thrill*

"The domain of prosody is part of the domain of music: it belongs to the domain of psychology,"[11] says al-Jāḥiẓ. Several works on music and emotion, from different perspectives, have been published during the last two decades.[12] Of particular interest within our context is a phenomenon that has been called *thrill*; a "subtle nervous tremor caused by intense emotion or excitement (as pleasure, fear etc.) producing a slight shudder or tingling through the body."[13] Descriptions of *thrills* resemble those of *ṭarab*. In the *K. al-Aghānī* we read, "Something crawled from my feet to my head like the crawling of ants; there descended upon my head a similar crawling and when both crawlings came to my heart I could not account for my action."[14] There are also descriptions of "the room moving and the *majlis* shaking," "the walls answering," one "flying because of *ṭarab*," or even throwing away one's clothes and jumping into the water.[15] Weeping is frequent, although etymologically *ṭarab* refers to joy[16]—this corresponds with Schönberger's observation that thrills often evoke contradictory

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distinguished from this, is called *salṭana*—unlike in al-Fārābī, who uses *ṭarab* for the singer's state as well as that of his audience. See Rouget, *Music* 285 about "musicant" and "musicated."

[7] Racy, *Making music* 193–194. This aspect of *ṭarab* sounds familiar to those who deal with mystics, and in fact the question of whether the Sufi ecstasy (*wajd*) derives from the concept of *ṭarab* has been discussed; see During, *Musique* 15–29.

[8] Racy, *Making music* 1, 6, 13, 195. Racy stresses that the arousing of emotions and the interaction between performer and audience were a characteristic of Arabic music, 1. They were also, and still are, elements of European music (particularly pop music).

[9] See Sawa, *Music performance* 192–195 for audience reactions.

[10] Montgomery, Convention 147–178, 157.

[11] Quoted from al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 31, 24, 12.

[12] Sloboda, *Musical mind*; further Sloboda and Juslin, *Music*; Gabrielsson, Emotions; Schönberger, *Musik*; Moore, *Introduction*; Witt, *Kreierte Emotionen*, to name but a few.

[13] Goldstein, Thrills 126–129, 126.

[14] See Sawa, *Music performance* 193.

[15] See ibid., 195; Engel, *Stellung* 35, 59.

[16] Sawa, *Music performance* 194, 100 defines it as a "strong emotion of joy or grief."

emotions, described as "pleasure of tears" or "sweet pain."[17] We can therefore translate *ṭarab* as "thrill."[18]

Thrills are measurable since they manifest stereotypy, as evinced in goose bumps, shudders, changing of the pulse's frequency, tension of muscles, and facial expressions; people may also sigh, break into tears, or display an even more extreme behavior.[19] Neurochemical signs include an increase of the dopamine concentration, which explains why people can be "addicted" to a piece of music: some drugs like cocaine inhibit the dopamine transporter and by doing so keep the dopamine concentration high; there are assumptions that cocaine may even increase dopamine release. Elevated dopamine can cause hallucinations even in healthy people—as reported from various experiences of *ṭarab* as well—and dopaminergic hyperactivity has been observed accompanying hallucinations in psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. In a test, the phenomenon can be weakened by the previous injection of naloxone (an opiate antidote). The pattern that triggers thrills is recognizable (the more if the thrilled person—passive as in Arabic *maṭrūb*—knows the piece). Schönberger mentions melodic apoggiaturas, delay of final cadence, sudden dynamic or textural change, etc.,[20] further remembrance (the so-called "Darling, they're playing our tune" phenomenon), setting (e.g., dark room or concert atmosphere with hundreds of thrilled fans), text (particularly love songs), and so forth.[21]

The impact of music is thus a human phenomenon—but which piece causes thrills is dependent on the respective cultural setting, personal circumstances, and even the actual music charts;[22] so teenagers today will scream at hearing Justin Bieber, fans of classical music at Wagner[23] or Beethoven—and consequently, caliphs at listening to *qiyān*.[24]

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[17] Schönberger, *Musik*; Gabrielsson, Emotions, describes thrills as shudder and intensified perception (56), contradicting emotions (59), transcendental or trance-like experiences (59), like walls responding to music, etc. (60).

[18] See Panksepp, Emotional sources 171–207; Goldstein, Thrills 126–129; Schönberger, *Musik* 25–35.

[19] See Racy, *Making music* 198, who points out that there are typical cries or gestures, as well as shouting, clapping, or just being silent and cry. Ibid., 206–208 for other stimuli (alcohol, dancing, light effects, etc.), which are also characteristics of modern pop concerts. Schönberger, *Musik* 19, notes that this sometimes makes it difficult to be sure if the reaction is really caused by music (or by other stimuli). See also 159, quoting an experience with Haschisch and a symphony by G. Mahler.

[20] Schönberger, *Musik* 43–44.

[21] Ibid., 109–111.

[22] Ibid., 20–22, 62–64, 125.

[23] Friedrich Nietzsche mocked the Wagnerians, who experienced trance-like states caused by *Parsifal*.

[24] Today the phenomenon is investigated for economic and even medical reasons: Is it pos-

In medieval Islam this idea was not unfamiliar. Pre-Islamic Arabia knew of women who incited warriors by making music while sitting on a camel.[25] Al-Kindī's (d. ca. 252/866) concept of music, influenced by the Pythagoreans, assumed a relationship between the cosmos and the human body and soul. Engel's work provides a concise overview of music in medicine; Yuḥannā b. al-Biṭrīq was convinced of its influence on the psyche, and Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzī (d. ca. 313 or 323/925 or 935), Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), and others used music to support their therapies.[26] Proceeding from the viewpoint of the performer, al-Fārābī's (d. 339/950) concept is also close to what Csikszentmihalny has called the "flow";[27] music, says al-Fārābī, is a natural disposition of human beings. It absorbs us, it can relax us and help to endure pains, and it makes us lose a sense of time, and thus the feeling of fatigue—like camels thrilled by the songs of their drivers. From the neurochemical point of view, he is right, because, in fact, dopamine is connected to the reward system; it can excite and generate feelings of pleasure. In al-Fārābī's eyes, this influence on the human soul and body is the main reason for the historical development of music; people loved the feelings they had when performing or hearing music.

2 The Heritage of Late Antiquity

The biography of ʿAzza, one of the first Arab songstresses we know by name (seventh century), mentions a concert by ten singing-girls, five of them from Byzantium singing in Greek, and five from al-Ḥīra (which had been under Persian dominance).[28] We often find in the biographies of early singers that they

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sible to make film music or pop songs more successful? Can music in shopping malls (so-called Muzak) influence the behavior of consumers? See Schönberger, *Musik* 14–16. Can women influence the intelligence of their unborn babies by hearing Mozart? (The so-called "Mozart-Effect" has been falsified; see Schönberger, *Musik* 16.) Can music cure illnesses? (Music therapy is applied, for example, to psychic illnesses, but can also be applied for palliative care, and even support cancer therapy; see Harrer, *Musiktherapie*; Lecourt, *Musiktherapie*; Schönberger, *Musik* 14–16. Some even suggest a "musical home-pharmacy" like Rueger, *Hausapotheke*.)

[25] See Engel, *Stellung* 203–208, 205, provides archaeological proof of these female "cheerleaders." The Battle of the Camel also refers to it; ʿĀʾisha, sitting on a camel, incited the warriors.

[26] Engel, *Stellung* 32–38, 121–126. The genre of music had to correspond to the situation; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* v, 34–36: "This is music for a wine-carousal."

[27] Csikszentmihály, *Flow*; Racy, *Making music* 221.

[28] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* xvi, 14.

learned singing by listening to Persian or Byzantine captives.[29] This supports al-Jāḥiẓ tracing music back to Byzantium and Persia. Does it also provide an indication of the origins of *ṭarab*? It is acknowledged that, even in pre-Islamic times, Arabia was not isolated, but in contact with civilizations such as Byzantium and Persia.[30]

2.1 *Persia*

The most influential scholarly work on Iranian singers is still that by Mary Boyce.[31] Boyce points out that singers, like the famous Bārbad, had a strong position within the royal entourage in Sasanid times. She names, in particular, Khusraw Parwēz and Bahrām Gūr as great admirers of music—and also of female slaves who were trained to perform as singers, the themes of the songs being mourning, love, or other emotional issues.[32] A page from Khusraw Parwēz is quoted, stating that he wanted to learn music as part of his education as a noble, and in fact, music seems to have been part of the nobleman's education in general.[33] Boyce also quotes an anecdote that describes a thrill evoked by a musician (*dēv*).[34] She stresses the oral tradition of music. Writing had come into use comparably late in Zoroastrianism, and even in Sasanid times it was restricted to prose writing (i.e., it was a privilege of nobles, particularly of the influential secretary class).[35]

Khusraw Parwēz's page-boy thus verifies al-Jāḥiẓ's saying, that the Persians regarded music as *adab*. In later Sasanid times, music seems to have been part of the education of a noble youth. We also have abundant references to musician slave-girls. The musical tradition was an oral one—even as late as in the ninth century, songs were learned by rehearsing them over and over, and written notes were only an aide-mémoire.[36]

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[29] Ibn Misjāḥ is said to have sung Arabic verses to tunes he learned from Persian workers. Similarly, in the biographies of Ṭuways, or Nashiṭ (who was of Persian origin); see Fück, Ibn Misjāḥ; and Farmer and Neubauer, Ṭuways.

[30] See Imhof, *Religiöser Wandel* 17–58, recently Montgomery, Empty Ḥijāz 37–97; Farmer, *Historical facts* 49–50 had claimed a genuine Arabic music theory, independent from Greek music theory. Engel, *Stellung* 212 and 264–265, states the development of a new musical style during the seventh century, its main exponents being the singers ʿAzza and Ṭuways.

[31] Boyce, Parthian Gōsān. I owe gratitude to Philip Kreyenbroek for the suggestion.

[32] Ibid., 23–25, 28–29.

[33] Ibid., 26–27.

[34] Ibid., 25.

[35] Ibid., 32–45.

[36] See Imhof, Traditio 6. Stigelbauer, *Sängerinnen* 27–28.

2.2 *The Effeminate Stranger: Dionysos*

But what about al-Jāḥiẓ's statement that the Greeks regarded music as philosophy? Musical thrills are often related to wine.[37] There are also Arabic idioms, like "Music goes to the head," and music is mentioned in the *ḥadīth* literature as intoxicating.[38] Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1200) declared that music had the same effects as alcohol; it aroused worldly passions, and evoked a pleasure that was usually attributed to wine or sexual intercourse.[39] Christian monasteries had been a popular vacation destination in pre-Islamic times—as a kind of wine bar.[40] At first glance, this seems to point back to the Greek deity Dionysos rather than to philosophy.

Dionysos is an ambiguous deity; a stranger, a hunter and warrior, clothed in a panther's skin, and the luxurious lord of wine and ecstatic music, wearing exquisite hairdress and clothes.[41] Dionysos and Orpheus cults[42] were popular in late antiquity; during the second-fourth/eighth-tenth centuries, pseudo-orphic poetry such as the orphic hymns emerged. Orpheus calming animals with music is a popular motif in mosaics, and even the Christian Boethius (d. 524) describes him in such a manner.[43] We know about ecstatic behavior in the cults of Dionysos, Sabazios, and other (female) deities, for example, as referred to in Euripides's *The Bacchae*. Corybantic cults have been attributed to Phrygia, and the behavior often interpreted as possession by demons or gods, induced by music.[44] The instruments were the flute (*αὖλος*) and the lyre, usually played by women, and the typical musical genre was the διθύραμβος (*dithyramb*).[45]

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[37] See Heine, *Weinstudien* 63, 90–92.

[38] Racy, *Making music* 48–50.

[39] Engel, *Stellung* 50–51.

[40] Mentioned by Ḥassān b. Thābit; see Imhof, *Religiöser Wandel* 174, 63, 73–74 for Labid b. Rabiʿa on "Symposia" in al-Ḥīra. Heine, *Weinstudien* 54–55.

[41] His mythology shares elements with that of the Egyptian Osiris and Adonis, and the cult was related to Greek drama and the Orphic mysteries. Heraclite (fragment 15) associates him with Hades. Nysa, his place of birth, has been located (among other places) in Arabia. See Burkert, *Antike Mysterien*; Edmonds, *Gold tablets*; Cain, *Dionysos* 9–11; Klodt, Orpheus-Mythos 37–98, 44, states that Orpheus wears oriental dresses and a Phrygian cap. Phrygia is also associated with Dionysos and the dithyramb; see below.

[42] It has been noted that drawing a line between the two is difficult, since cult, mythology, etc. had much in common. Klodt, Orpheus-Mythos 45; see Frede, Orphik 229–246, 231–232.

[43] Klodt, Orpheus-Mythos 39–40, 60.

[44] See Linforth, Corybantic rites 121–162; see 125–126, 131, 133. Unfortunately, there are no sources by the Corybants themselves, so we have to rely on sources by outsiders like Plato or Euripides.

[45] See Mathiesen, *Apollo's lyre* 71–78.

There was at least a "Dionysos-discourse," which survived—not as a religion but as a cultural phenomenon—in the Byzantine Empire; So Basil of Caesarea (d. 379) and Chrysostomos (d. 407) stigmatized women's emotional conduct during funeral processions as "behaving like Bacchae."[46] And Dionysos' iconography has a striking resemblance to a social group existed in early Islam: the *mukhannathūn* (effeminated).

A *mukhannath* was recognized by his elegant and luxurious lifestyle, as well as by his effeminate behavior, luxurious clothing, and hairdress (long, beautifully dressed hair)—"as if he was a woman." (In modern Sufism we still find a comparable appearance, including long tresses of hair.[47]) We also have evidence of homosexuality and bisexuality.[48] They were strongly attached to music and musicians.[49]

"With long hair styled to curls, like a woman!" is how the unknown stranger (Dionysos) in Euripides's *Bacchae* is described; a spell-singer, perfumed, beautiful, Aphrodite in his eyes (i.e., sexually interested). In fact, statues of Dionysos, particularly from later Hellenism, show him as a beautifully styled and exquisitely dressed man, with an effeminate body and luxurious, sometimes "sexy," clothes. Cain interprets this as an expression of Dionysos's increasing popularity during Hellenism. With the emergence of an elaborate festival culture (which was not related to the sphere of war and hunting, but rather to the οἶκος), Dionysos became the incarnation of (urban) festival ideals (i.e., leisure, luxury, and pleasure). His other aspect did not disappear entirely. He served as a role model (who knew how to fight and to feast) for aristocrats, as well as for the festival artists, the *technites* (musicians, etc.).[50]

The first *mukhannathūn* in the Hejaz appear toward the middle of the seventh century—the time when contact between Arabia and Greek civilization became closer.[51] They are usually referred to as *mawālī*.

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[46] Alexiou, *Ritual lament* 28–29.

[47] I owe gratitude to Jürgen Wasim Frembgen for this information on Pakistani Sufi orders. Engel, *Stellung* gives an account of effeminate musicians until the twentieth century, 290–294, referring to modern times.

[48] Thus, the description of Ṭuways; see Engel, *Stellung* 268.

[49] Ibid., 271–272, for examples of obscenities; 274–276, for music; 278–280, for wine; 280–284, for homosexuality and pederasty; 286–287, for musical innovations like falsetto singing; 212, for connections with ʿAzza.

[50] Cain, *Dionysos* 9–11, 13–14, 51–72.

[51] This corresponds to the observations by Frede, Orphik 244, that it was not easy to draw a line between orphics and religion, and that the first continued as "theosophy" even in Christianity. Orpheus, who is closely related to Dionysos, is said to have invented pederasty. Klodt, Orpheus-Mythos 45. So, we find music, wine, effeminate behavior, and pederasty as well.

2.3 *Philosophers on a Scaring Magical Power*

But do we also find traces of Greek philosophy in the notion of *ṭarab*? There are two concepts in Greek referring to ecstatic behavior, μανία (*manía*) and ἐνθουσιασμός (*enthusiasmós*).[52] Rouget claims that trance was an important aspect of Greek religion, and he deals in detail with Plato and Aristotle's writings on the subject.[53] On the basis of his classification,[54] mainly telestic ("ritual madness," as in Dionysos cults) and erotic *μανία* are of interest here. ἐνθουσιασμός is related to possession (*κατοκωχή*: *katokoché*) and is frequently used in the context of the Corybants as well as in that of music; *κορυβαντιᾶν* is explained by "παρεμμαίνεσθαι καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικῶς κινεῖσθαι" (to perform and to be transported in an enthusiastic way).[55] We also find wine in this context, since Plato doubts that the mysteries are sincere in their religious affect when wine is served.[56]

Without drawing a clear line between "trance" and *ἐνθουσιασμός*, Rouget quotes a passage on the latter that has a striking resemblance with *ṭarab*: "When you recite epic verses correctly and thrill the spectators most deeply … are you not beside yourself, is your soul not transported by enthusiasm?"[57] The Platonic dialogue *Ion*, a "talk" with a *rhapsode*, gives evidence of *ἐνθουσιασμός* in the context of reciting verses. We learn that this is not a technique but a divine power (θεῖα δύναμις),[58] and comparable to the dance of the Corybants, not at all intellectual, but rather related to possession (ὂυκ ἐκ τεχνής αλλ̓ ἔνθεοι ὄντες και κατεχόμενοι ὂυκ ἔμφρονες).[59] Like the Corybants, the *rhapsode* is in a state of enthusiasm. Plato compares the enthusiastic *rhapsode* to iron that is magnetized (by the poet/God/Muse)[60] and thus attracts more iron (i.e., the audience). So, the *rhapsode* can make people laugh or cry. The *Symposion* uses the image of a corybantic state caused by the Phrygian mode in music (the mode of the dithyramb) to describe the impact the famous fluteplayer Marsyas had on his audience, which "unlocks emotions, interrupts the regular habit of sober thought and opens the way to … relief."[61] *Phaidros* 245a even goes so far as to say that poetry without the possession and madness caused by the Muses was worthless. However, Plato has an ambiguous attitude toward music because of this latent “corybantism”; “irrational pleasure” was regarded as negative.[62] Fluteplayers seem to have been of a low social class; the instrument is attributed to women, even to prostitution.[63]

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[52] See Linforth, Corybantic rites 125.

[53] Rouget, *Music* 187–226.

[54] Ibid., 189, following *Phaidros*.

[55] Linforth, Corybantic rites 145.

[56] Rouget, *Music* 201–206.

[57] Plato, *Ion* 535b–c, further speaking of tears, heartleaping, etc. Rouget, *Music* 198; Linforth, Corybantic rites 137.

[58] Plato, *Ion* 533d.

[59] Ibid., 533d–534a.

[60] Ibid., 533d.

[61] Linforth, Corybantic rites 140–143. In leg 790c–791b he compares lullabies with coryban-

The idea that music had an influence on the human soul thus already occurs in Plato’s writings; he mentions that the different modes had different influences on the human soul.[64] In his *Politics*, Aristotle claims that tunes make our souls enthusiastic, since they correspond to the expressions of character. Here, we find the idea that musical modes were related to particular emotions.[65] Melodies “actually contain in themselves imitations of character” (μιμήματα τῶν ἠθῶν).[66] Like Plato, Aristotle also regards Phrygia as the origin of musical enthusiasm.[67] The Phrygian mode is defined as orgiastic and passionate (ὀργιάστικα καὶ παθήτικα), and thus for the ordinary people and the theatre[68] (we should recall the function of the theatralic *kátharsis* at this point)![69] Since there are people who are sensitive to emotional excitement, they can both be calmed and find harmless joy in it.[70] Among genres, the dithyramb is associated with the Phrygian mode to such an extent that it was simply impossible for Philoxenos to compose one in the Dorian mode; bacchantic ecstasy was only to be manifested in the Phrygian one.[71]

The influence of music on animals and human beings is indubitable in the Arab world even to this day. We find striking similarities between Platonic-

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tism, since inner motion was calmed by an outward one, like in the healing rituals of the Corybants; cf. Pelosi, *Plato on music* 15.

[62] See Pelosi, *Plato on music* 55–56, 84.

[63] Rouget, *Music* 205–212. According to Engel, *Stellung* 41–52, percussion instruments in particular had a negative (seducing) image in Islamic tradition.

[64] Pelosi, *Plato on music* 28, 35. Aristotle regarded music as adequate in the education of children (*Politics* 1339a–b). Similar also in Quinitilian’s *De musica*; see Mathiesen, *Apollo’s lyre* 125.

[65] Aristoteles, *Politik* Part iv, Book 8, 1340a–b.

[66] Ibid., 1340a.

[67] Ibid., Part iv, Book 8, ch. 5, 1339a11–1342b34.

[68] Ibid., Part iv, Book 8, 1341a.

[69] Trans. by Rouget, *Music* 220.

[70] In a comparable fashion, Sextus Empiricus states that music “turns the heart toward the desire for good things. But it is also a consolation to those who are grief-stricken; for this reason, the *auloi* playing a melody for those who are mourning are the lighteners of their grief”; seeo Mathiesen, *Apollo’s lyre* 126. In the orphic context this impact is even more obvious; Orpheus can calm wild animals and even the sea, rocks cry etc.: Klodt, Orpheus-Mythos 49–51.

[71] Aristoteles, *Politik* Part iv, Book 8, 1342a–b.

Pythagorean thought and al-Kindī, and also between Plato, Aristotle, and al-Fārābī. Al-Kindī even relates the strings of the lute to special emotions, according to their influence on the bodily humors (e.g., the *matna*-string, which was said to excite heroism and to heal illnesses caused by black bile). He even suggested that there was a relation between musical sounds and numbers and thus a relation between sounds, spherical harmonies, and human beings.[72] Similar to Greek music theory are the so-called *maqāmāt* (usually translated *modi*; preferable is *trópoi*). The Greek idea of music influencing the soul is also obvious in the legend of Orpheus, who calmed wild animals, and even the sea, with music and who made the rocks cry. Orphic ideas were transferred (back?) to the East, together with Pythagorean philosophy and Empedocles, all of which are present in the philosophy of al-Kindī.[73]

Al-Fārābī claims that the human voice could express feelings and arouse them in the listener, all the more so if there was also a fitting text, or if the hearer was in a condition that harmonized with the text (e.g., love-pain).[74] Musical sounds derive from passions. Being products of a state of the soul, they prove the existence of these states. We love them because they are the perfection of these passions. The respective sounds require a specific state in the soul of the performer, which he needs in order to trigger the respective passions.[75] Music and special modes, according to al-Fārābī, are imitations of passions, and thus could evoke these passions in the audience—like the "μιμήματα τῶν ἠθῶν" in Aristotle's *Politics*. Al-Fārābī himself is said to have made a whole *majlis* in the house of the vizier Ibn ʿAbbād first laugh, then cry, and finally sleep when he played the respective musical modes.[76]

Since the power of changing moods was related to the knowledge of music theory (e.g., which *maqām* to apply to the situation, etc.), music theory could be dealt with without performance, but performance could not be executed without at least a minimum knowledge of theory. It is thus a mistake to separate singing-girls from music theory. Musicians, Ibn Hindū (d. ca. 410/ 1019) writes, "can manipulate people's souls and bodies, for, should they wish it, they can perform in such a way as to make a person laugh or weep, or make him happy or sad.”[77] The power to inspire feelings at will would make one almost almighty. In many cultures, music and magic are closely connected, as the Italian term *incanto* (incantation) suggests. Spells were indeed sung in Babylonia,[78] and magic is not an alien concept in Islam either. The following anecdote underlines how strong the power of music was regarded:

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[72] Rouget, *Music* 293; see Engel, *Stellung* 29–30, 33–34; Farmer, *Sources* xi–xii; Shiloah, *Music in the world* 45–67.

[73] Already noted by Montgomery, Convention 151–153.

[74] This is confirmed by modern music psychology; see Witt, *Kreierte Emotionen* 158.

[75] Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Mūsīqā l-kabīr* 14–16, partial translation in van Gelder and Hammond, *Takhyīl* 15–23, discussed by Klein, Imagination 179–195. Al-Fārābī tells how the pre-Islamic poet ʿAlqama finally received the desired reward by setting his initially disregarded poem into music; d'Erlanger, *Musique arabe* 18–20.

[76] See Rouget, *Music* 294.

> It has been related that a certain gifted musician had enemies who intended him harm. One morning he was with a group of friends and they decided to have a party. His enemies got wind of it and made haste to go there. The musician and his friends were taken by surprise and had no means of defense or weapons. However, the musician, a wise man, began strumming on his instrument, and he played in such a way as to make people relax and fulcontent. It was not long before his enemies relaxed, their weapons slipped out of their hands, and they were left powerless.[79]

We can conclude that there is much evidence that Greek musical theory had an impact on Arab writers, in fact, usually via the works of the great philosophers. Many of the texts had already been translated into Persian under Sasanid rule, so educated people could read them in Persian long before they were available in Arabic. From the late seventh and especially since the ninth century, translation into Arabic had been supported by the caliphs. There is no exact proof that it had been translated by the third/ninth century, but in *Phaedo* 60d–61b Socrates says that he had interpreted the warning “practice and compose music,” in the sense of μέγιστη μουσική (i.e., philosophy)—a rather unusual association, as Pelosi notes.[80] We thus suggest that this could be the text al-Jāḥiẓ refers to.

But does musical emotion also concern the performing singing-girls, as it does the *rhapsode* in *Ion*? Reading the texts about the treachery of the *qiyān* in love affairs raises the question of whether they also just pretended to be passionate in their singing? Al-Jāḥiẓ writes: “The singing-girl is hardly ever sincere in her passion, or wholehearted in her affection. For both by training and by innate instinct her nature is to set up snares and traps for the victims."[81] Al-Washshāʾ in particular depicts the singing-girl as an "unmoved mover" of the soul. Neither of the writers tells us of a state of *salṭana* or *ṭarab* during their performances. The concept of a singer includes emotional commitment (see above). But, was emotion an exclusively male privilege?

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[77] Ibn Hindū, *Key* 12. Ibn Hindū defines music therapy as part of the Greek heritage, tracing it back to Theon of Alexandria and Hippocrates. However, he states, even at the time of Hippocrates this science had been an old tradition, which in Ibn Hindū’s own period was nearly forgotten. Yet, music could support healthy sleep or serve as a remedy for epilepsy or melancholy, since it influenced the mood. Ibn Hindū, *Key* 36–37.

[78] Engel, *Stellung*, 159, 31. Frede, Orphik 230, characterizes Orpheus not only as a musician but also as a soothsayer, physician, magician, etc.

[79] Ibn Hindū, *Key* 12.

[80] Pelosi, *Plato on music* 1.

An anecdote on Shāriya in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (*The book of songs*) makes clear that this applies also to *qiyān*:

> In a moonlit night she was singing on a boat on the Tigris in his (i.e. her master's, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, d. 839) presence. And she went into "rapture and sang" (*indafaʿat tughannī*):
>
> They stirred the camels so that they might run away from us without hesitating.
>
> Then he got up, bent over her to close her mouth saying: "You are more beautiful and sing better than al-Gharīḍ,[82] so I am not safe from you!"[83]

Indafʿat-tughannī occurs frequently in the *Aghānī*.[84] It implies that the act of singing has to do with emotion, and thus the singing-girl is by no means an "unmoved mover." According to al-Fārābī, the singer's *ṭarab* is as important as that of the audience. Only emotional commitment of the singer can evoke *ṭarab*—like Ion's magnet. That this comparison is adequate, even in early Islam, is illustrated by an anecdote on Jamīla, the first "prima donna." Her pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied by her "fans" and colleagues, resembled a master class rather than the fulfilment of a religious duty. At the end of a great performance, together with the crème de la crème of contemporary singers, Jamīla yelled—"and the audience likewise screamed from enthusiasm (*wa-naʿara al-qawm ṭaraban*)."[85] Emotion is not a male or audience privilege, but accords with the role of the performing artist, as well as with that of the listener.

2.4 *Minstrels and Maniacs: Aesthetics of Excess*

In the anecdote quoted at the beginning of this article, the caliph tore his robe. This frequent reaction to music does in fact remind us of corybantic uses. But, was it a genuine Arabic cultural phenomenon, or did it develop in the course of contact with Byzantium and Persia?

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[81] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 48, 31–32, 18. Similarly, al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā* 191–192.

[82] Singer of the Umayyad times.

[83] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 14, 107.

[84] For ʿUlayya, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 9, 82, 83, 85, etc.

[85] Ibid., 7, 137.

In early stories on *ṭarab* the usual reaction is weeping. The biography of ʿAzza al-Mailāʾ (first/seventh century) in the *K. al-Aghānī* tells us that she performed a song based on a verse by Ḥassān b. Thābit.[86] Hearing this, the poet (who was counted among her admirers) was thrilled (*ṭariba*), and his eyes began to overflow.[87] Weeping is recorded from Sallāma as well: "And she played that song again and again until she succeeded in making people cry and sob."[88]

But, soon after the beginning of the Muslim conquest we find much more excessive behavior, particularly in the case of Jamīla. She made ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa's eyes cry "until the tears flowed onto his robe and his beard, in a manner no one had ever seen."[89] She cured a man from melancholy, and when she sang for a female lover, the young lady "nearly died from joy."[90] The anecdote about her pilgrimage illustrates that overwhelming emotion was no longer regarded as strange.

This tendency continues during Umayyad times. Extreme joy is also reported from Yazīd (early second/eighth century), when the singer al-Gharīd performed a famous song of his in the presence of the caliph and the veiled Sallāma. She applauded:

> "Wonderful, Commander of the faithful. But hear it by me!" Then she took over the lute and played and sang. Al-Yazīd was nearly transported by happiness and joy (*kāda yaṭīr faraḥan wa-surūran*).[91]

In later Umayyad and ʿAbbasid times we find the whole spectrum of *ṭarab*—clapping, crying, drinking, giving an exceedingly high reward, tearing robes, jumping into water, fainting, madness, and even death.[92] However, this might have been exaggerated sometimes, as an anecdote about ʿUlayya, the sister of Hārūn al-Rashīd, proves. When she was singing in the house of her nephew, the caliph al-Maʾmūn, Ismāʿīl b. al-Hādī (another relative) entered the palace. Asked what happened to him, he admits that the singing took his breath away, and this was the absolute truth—unlike when he claimed to know of a man who had died from *ṭarab*.[93]

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[86] Ibid., 16, 13.

[87] Ibid., 16, 14. Ḥassān was a contemporary of the Prophet.

[88] Ibid., 8, 10.

[89] Ibid., 7, 129.

[90] Ibid., 7, 134.

[91] Ibid., 8, 11.

[92] Sawa, *Music performance* 192–195; Engel, *Stellung* 35; Rouget, *Music* 282; Shiloah, *Music in the world* 26–30, etc.

[93] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 9, 90. Since overwhelming emotion can evoke heart attacks, we should not completely deny the possibility of death by *ṭarab*.

We shall examine the tearing of robes now in more detail, since it is possible to trace it back to a well-defined circle of people. There are two versions of the story about ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa (d. ca. 93/712), one with ʿAzza, and one with Jamīla.

We are told that:

> Once she (ʿAzza) sang for ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa a melody she had composed on one of his poems. He tore his robe (*shaqqa thiyābahu*) and yelled a resounding scream (*fa-ṣāḥa ṣayḥatan ʿaẓīmatan*), fainting immediately (*ṣaʿiqa maʿhā*). When he regained consciousness, people said to him, "Abū l-Khaṭṭāb, you behave like a madman! (*la-ghayrak al-jahl, yā Abā l-Khaṭṭāb*)." He replied, "No, by God, I was hearing something that neither my soul nor my mind could grasp (*mā lam amlak maʿhu nafsī wa-lā ʿaqlī*)".[94]

Rouget quotes a similar anecdote, starring Jamīla:

> The audience clapped their hands, beat on the floor with their feet and swayed their heads, shouting, "We offer ourselves in sacrifice for thee, oh Jamīla, to protect you from all evil …" ʿUmar, whose verses she sang, tore his robe from top to bottom in a state of total unconsciousness. When he came to [and regained his consciousness], he felt ashamed and began to apologize, saying, "ya Allah [sic], I could not restrain myself, for that beautiful voice made me lose my mind." The other guests answered him, "Console yourself, the same happened to us all, and we fainted. But we did not tear our clothing."[95]

Both anecdotes make clear that extreme behavior like *tamzīq* (tearing of the robe) was something new on the Arabian Peninsula at this time. People regard ʿUmar's behavior as strange, and he himself feels ashamed. The tearing of robes as a reaction to singing was, evidently, introduced by ʿUmar, a trendsetter of his time. Was this excessive behavior simply his spontaneous idea, or does it derive from older cultural patterns?

The famous maenads (heroines of Euripides's *Bacchae*) are said to have torn apart animals (and even curious sons, like Pentheus), and Orpheus is savaged by raging women. It is hardly a surprise that there is no evidence of maenads in the Arabian Peninsula during the first/seventh century. But, we know that tearing one’s robes was still usual at Byzantine keenings and related to strong emotion—in this case, grief—and, of course, opposed by Christian authorities, who regarded this as a relic of paganism. Chrysostomos accused women who tore their garments and danced during laments accompanied by flutes as behaving “like Bacchae.”[96] Although tearing one’s clothes also occurs in the Bible, it seems to have been regarded rather as “pagan” (i.e., as a phenomenon of Hellenism). Similarly, the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* tells us about certain pagan funeral practices that were abandoned in Islam, describing them as follows:

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[94] Ibid., 16, 13.

[95] Rouget, *Music and trance* 281.

> *laysa minnā man ḍaraba al-khudūd wa-shaqqa al-juyūb* (that none of us should beat his cheeks or tear his robes), comparably: *inna rasūl Allāh—slws—laʿana al-khāmishata wajhihā wa-l-shāqqata jaybihā* (the Messenger of God—God bless him and give him peace—cursed the [custom of women of] scratching her face and of tearing her robe[97]).[98]

This reference, even in its vocabulary (*shaqqa*, for example), recalls the reaction to *ṭarab*. In fact, early musicians, like al-Gharīḍ, Ibn Misjāḥ, and Ibn Surayj, used to sing at funerals as well. Funeral melodies (*niyāḥāt*) played an important role in developing the emotional tenderness of musical performance (*ghināʾ raqīq*) in early Umayyad times. It is reported that al-Gharīd, at that time the slave of Sukayna bt. al-Ḥusayn, was given this epithet because of his overwhelming performance during a funeral.[99] He—like his teacher Ibn Surayj—became a *mughannī* (singer) only secondarily.[100]

The intention in tearing the robe was clearly to express strong emotion. ʿUmar is the first to display this reaction, and it is very likely that he was inspired by the expressive emotion at funerals, since some of the most famous singers of his age used to perform in funerals as well. Islam had banned this emotion from the funerals. Despite this, while Dionysos might have been dead as a god, he might have continued to live as a cultural phenomenon in the sense of a

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[96] Alexiou, *Ritual* 28–29. Alexiou, *Ritual* 6–8, also points out that tearing of one’s clothes, as well as scratching one’s face and tearing the hair, had to be interpreted in the sense of defacement and as a ritual expression of grief.

[97] Literally: neckline of a robe.

[98] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī* no. 1232.

[99] Arazi, Sukayna; Farmer and Neubauer, Ṭuways.

[100] Farmer, Gharīḍ; and Fück, Ibn Surayj.

"Dionysos-discourse."[101] Musical culture developed, or rather maintained, its special kind of aesthetics, an aesthetic of excess.

3 *Adab*, *ẓarf*, and *ṭarab*

3.1 *Songs and Drinks: Excess, Display of Generosity, and Connoisseurship*

Excess is not exactly what we would associate with *adab*. We shall now investigate the coherence between the two.

"Who is the best musician?" Isḥāq is asked by Ṣāliḥ b. al-Rashīd. "He (or she), who makes me drink four *raṭl*," he answers.[102] This fits in well with an aesthetic of excess. The perfect singer makes his audience not only experience passion, but also drink wine. Montgomery is thus right to point out the public character of these gestures.[103] This refers to a pattern of representation that derives from pre-Islamic culture.

Generosity (*jūd*) is one of the most important virtues of a pre-Islamic figure of authority. "Who pays the price for praise will be be praised," says Ḥassān b. Thābit. Prestige is venal. Panegyric was a challenge to the praised person in pre-Islamic times. Rewarding a poet—by drinking wine, as well as by giving money, or slaughtering an animal to provide a meal, etc.—also gave prestige to the praised person, and thus legitimized his authority,[104] since generosity and waste demonstrated his wealth.

Generosity as a virtue of the elite had soon been adopted by Islamic civilization and remained a gesture of representation.[105] Among the reactions caused by *ṭarab*, there is often abundant generosity. We have pointed out the destructive character of generosity ("I don't acknowledge any generosity, if nothing is destroyed"),[106] and rending one's garment is surely to be interpreted against this background as well. Further, we find that huge sums were spent—not only for purchasing a slave-girl, but also for rewarding her. Among the best-paid songstresses were ʿArīb and Shāriya (ninth century).[107] This is definitely a public gesture, but also part of the representation of authority in classical Islam. The *qiyān* can thus be regarded as an important means of representation. “Singing-girls have been in the presence of kings from time immemorial” al-Jāḥiẓ emphasizes—not only because of the pleasures they provided, but also because of the opportunity they offered their masters to demonstrate generosity, and thus to maintain their authority.

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[101] As mentioned above, Frede, Orphik 244, claims that orphics continued as a "theosophy" in Christianity. See Fallahzadeh, *Persian writing* 26–29.

[102] Al-Kātib, *Perfection* 41. Shiloah translates: "He who gives me four *raṭl* to drink." I prefer my translation, since drinking was a common expression of approval, like verbal applause; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 9, 86 (Hārūn al-Rashīd and ʿUlayya). One *raṭl* is about half a litre.

[103] Montgomery, Convention 161.

[104] Imhof, *Religiöser Wandel* 59–110, 73–74, 81.

[105] See Imhof, *Religiöser Wandel* 277–279.

[106] Imhof, Preis 398.

This, however, concerns only rulers and rich men. We learn from the biography of Maʿbad that a listener (caliph or not), in general, should be careful about what kind of songs thrilled him. A rich but uneducated man was discredited when he was completely unimpressed by the famous singer but showed excessive joy when he heard his own singer perform foolish songs.[108] *Ṭarab* says much not only about the song but also about the listener; it gives proof of being a connoisseur. There is obviously no contradiction between passion and intelligence—rather, the contrary, since passion helps to demonstrate one’s intelligence (since it can only be evoked by a valuable performance and a good song). But, is there not a contradiction between the aesthetics of excess and education?

Ḥassān al-Kātib gives us more information. In his book on musical connoisseurship, he dedicates the first chapter to *ṭarab*. He strongly contradicts the critics of music, who attribute music to folly, claiming that *ṭarab* showed the connoisseur and was thus no folly.[109] Good emotion was aroused when a talented musician performed a good song in front of an educated audience. Then, music touches the soul, and “generosity appears and the ability to judge becomes manifest.” Emotion changes cowards into heroes, the avaricious became generous, and one “swims in the sea of emotion.”[110] He is obviously referring to the pattern of *ṭarab* developed above, mentioning the influence on the soul, excessive emotion (the sea of emotion), and generosity—and the ability to judge. We should add that he regards the audience as an important part of a musical performance. This refers to the fact that musical notation was usually just an aide-mémoire, and music was not complete unless performed; the success of performance can be influenced by the audience, as every musician knows. Singer and audience were thus supporting each other, and *ṭarab* was one means of judging the performance.

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[107] See Stigelbauer, *Sängerinnen* 99–104, 101: Shariya received 1,000 robes for her performance and a *bonmot*, more than any songstress had previously been rewarded.

[108] Quoted and translated by Rotter, *Kalif* 97.

[109] Al-Kātib, *Perfection* 41–42.

[110] Ibid., 43–44.

Being a connoisseur was a characteristic of the *adīb* and *ẓarīf* ("elegant," "refined" person); books on *ẓarf* (refined manners) usually include entries on music and singing-girls (like al-Washshāʾ, d. 325/937, in his *Muwashshā*). Singing-girls are frequently mentioned with the adjective *ẓarīfa*.[111] Engel points out the importance of the *mukhannathūn* for the close connection between music and *ẓarf*, and even regards them as the real source of *ẓarf*.[112] Singers, poets, and *kuttāb* are the main exponents of *ẓarf* (to such an extent that the introduction to Ibn Qutayba's *Adab al-kātib* says, ironically, that a man already felt like a *kātib* as soon as he had nice handwriting and authored some poems admiring a singing-girl). Being a connoisseur was also part of this ideal.

Another important aspect of *ẓarf* is love. Al-Washshāʾ regards it as an important part of personal development, and thus as a social ideal.[113] It is not surprising, then, that songstresses are described as exceedingly beautiful (even today, beauty is important for successful singers).[114] Beauty of the voice was as important as that of the body; we read in the *Aghānī* that listeners had never heard anything comparable,[115] singing "burns the heart" and seduces the ear.[116] However, there is an undeniable interest (by the male writers) in the seductive power of singing-girls. But, were they inducing seduction by singing, or singing by seduction?

Al-Jāḥiẓ tells us that singing-girls do not appeal only to a single sense, but to all of them. They "provide a man with a combination of pleasures (*ladhāt*) such as nothing else on the face of the earth does." "The organ of hearing finds its sole delight (in her: *yaṭrab*) … When the girl raises her voice in song, the gaze is rivetted on her, the hearing is directed attentively to her, and the heart surrenders itself to her sovereignty." Even looking at women provoked carnal desire—"how much more will this be the case …, when they are accompanied by music."[117]

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[111] So in al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* xviii, 175, where this is said about ʿArīb; idem. ix, 85 mentions "two refined slave-girls" (*jāriyatayn ẓarīfatayn*).

[112] Engel, *Stellung* 276–277, probably referring to Ghazi, Groupe sociale 40–41.

[113] Bellmann, *Buch* i, 71–72, 81–82.

[114] This also provoked hatred: al-Washshāʾ contradicts al-Jāḥiẓ's view that love for singing-girls was deeper and more exciting than any other love—claiming that singing-girls were just easier than chaste women; al-Washshāʾ, *Ẓarf* 204. Although he might just have been drawing from his own painful experiences, this work from the tenth century displays a changed view on songstresses. Engel, *Stellung* 217, points out that beauty had not always been compulsive for songstresses.

[115] See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 7, 122, 129 for Jamīla; 8, 11–12 for Sallāma; 16, 13 for ʿAzza.

[116] See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 8, 12 for Sallāma; 9, 82 for ʿUlayya; 7, 129 for Jamīla; etc.

[117] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 47, 30–31, 17–18.

The close connection between music and love is stressed in different cultural contexts in classical Greece. *Symposion* 187c talks about a ἐρωτικῶν ἐπιιστήμη (also an intellectual category—*episteme*—together with passion); erotic and poetic madness are comparable, since both derive from love. (Even philosophy itself is, as discussed in *Symposion*, "love for wisdom"/*philo-sophia*). Relations of meter and principles of harmony, as well, were nothing but love.[118] Euripides even interprets the love-sick Phaedra's emotions as caused by Corybants, etc.[119] Thus, not only is music the food of love, but love is also the food of music.

In al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, even seduction is described according to an "ideal way." We should keep in mind that this is the era of literature about perfection; the perfect *kātib*, the perfect city, and so forth. *Qiyān* are the perfect seduction; music and love work together to create the perfect woman. As noted above, music was believed to enhance certain qualities of the character, and thus was regarded as important in education. Jamīla tells us why: "Because singing is of the most pleasureful things, provokes joyous passions in the soul, makes the heart alert and nourishes the mind, delights the soul and widens the perspective (*raʾy*)."[120] Music and love for a singing-girl made a man more sensitive; an ideal apt to an urban society.

3.2 *The Impact on the* udabāʾ *and the "Adabization" of the Songstresses*

Ghazi has already pointed out that *ẓarf*, as the lifestyle of the singers, has later been merged with other ingredients: the ideals of the *kuttāb* and the *falāsifa*.[121] From a modern point of view, it is not easy to see the coherence between emotional excess and education. As we noted when dealing with Plato, emotion beyond control had already been a subject of philosophy. And, during the first centuries of Islam, a social change took place within the class of singers themselves:

As noted above, music in Persia—and also in early Islam—was an oral tradition. Singers, whether they were able to read and write or not, transferred their knowledge orally. However, in later biographies of songstresses we find an astonishing level of literacy, and also encyclopedic knowledge:

We learn about ʿArīb (third/ninth century) that she was not only of extraordinary beauty, of elegance (*ẓarf*), and a perfect singer and musician; she is also described as a good theologian, having beautiful handwriting, playing *nard* (a Persian board game, usually translated "backgammon") and chess, and being quick-witted. Furthermore, she was "secure in the knowledge of melodies and strings (i.e., in music theory) and in performing poetry as well as in *adab*."[122]

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[118] Rouget, *Music* 199.

[119] Linforth, Corybantic rites 127; see below.

[120] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 7, 136.

[121] Ghazi, Groupe sociale 40–41, 48.

The introduction to her biography mentions both *ẓarf* and *adab*. Obviously, some changes have taken place in the (self-)definition of songstresses. Beauty, singing, and playing instruments had always been important, but why should a slave-girl, who excelled in an oral tradition of (musical) knowledge, have beautiful handwriting and know about *adab* (here understood as prose-literature, in contrast to poetry)? ʿArīb, though one of the most prominent examples, is by no means the only songstress to have enjoyed an encyclopedic education. Maḥbūba is said to have known everything "that educated people use to know."[123] Shāriya was taught by her master Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī not only how to perform, but was also taught his *maʿrifa* (in this context, probably referring to music theory), and also played—like many songstresses—*nard*.[124] Faḍl was also a renowned poetess and even had a "salon," a circle of learned people and poets, in her later years.[125] The association with poets is also known from earlier songstresses, mainly Jamīla. This is not the case with the association with men of learning and education. Generally, written conversation and the letter genre became important, even for the simplest aspects of the singing-girl's profession. Al-Washshāʾ (who already writes about the ideal of an Islamized version of *ẓarf*) still refers to a decisively literary way of flirting with singing-girls—by exchanging letters that follow special patterns, and by exchanging amorous verses written on rings, apples, and the like.[126]

During the third/ninth century we find an increasing number of songstresses that fulfil also the criteria of a learned *adīb*. Typical components of this ideal, which was introduced into Muslim civilization mainly by non-Arab (preeminently Persian and Byzantine) *kuttāb*, are beautiful handwriting, encyclopedic knowledge, and certain techniques associated with Persian culture, like chess and *nard*. Chess, after having been banned, became "chic" under the ʿAbbasids, and was a subject of the *risāla* genre, the genre of the *kuttāb*. As I have noted on another occasion (successful) singing-girls even claimed to be of noble descent (usually, there are adventurous legends explaining how the "noble" girl was sold unjustifiably into slavery).[127] This makes sense if we keep in mind that noble descent was important mainly for (Persian) *kuttāb*, as so frequently stressed, for example, by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. So ʿArīb maintained to be a daughter of the Barmakid vizier Jaʿfar, and thus preferred the Persian tradition, while Shāriya and Faḍl both claimed descent from the Quraysh (i.e., the tribe of the Prophet). The close relation to the ideal of the *kuttāb* is also evident from the close personal connection between singers and *kuttāb*. They appear in the songstresses’ biographies (either their names or collectively with the frequent formula *ahl al-adab wa-l-ẓarf*), or worked as transmitters of biographical issues like Yūnus al-Kātib (d. ca. 147/765). The latter, like his teacher Muḥammad b. ʿAbbād, is most likely a key figure, since he performed both professions.

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[122] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 18, 175.

[123] Masʿūdī, quoted from Stigelbauer, *Sängerinnen* 131.

[124] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 14, 105, 108.

[125] Ghazi, Groupe sociale 48.

[126] Bellmann, *Buch* ii, 124–156.

[127] Imhof, Traditio 15.

During the third/ninth century, we note an increasing impact of music culture on the well-educated (male) elite. As said above, Ibn Qutayba blamed those who felt like a *kātib* as soon as they admired a songstress or a glass (of wine: the Dionysos-discourse) in their poems. Most manuals on *ẓarf* and correct behavior include chapters on singing-girls. Music, and its implication of excess, become part of the ideal of *adab*, and *adab* becomes part of the singers’ ideal. In the same way, the *udabāʾ* seem to become “*ẓarf*-isized,” and the singers become “*adab*-ized.” *Ẓarf* merged with the ideal of the *kuttāb* and increasingly became the lifestyle of the *udabāʾ*. But also a new ideal of the singing-girl emerged—as a beautiful and seductive songstress who was also exceedingly intelligent and educated, like the literary figure of Tawaddud in the *Arabian nights*.[128]

3.3 *Songs and Sins: Religio-political Implications of* **ṭarab**

The following story, about the caliph al-Walīd’s reaction to the singing of Ibn ʿĀʾisha, does not sound like someone who behaves like an elegant and educated man:

> And al-Walīd was so transported that he blasphemed and apostatized (*ṭariba ḥattā kafara wa-alḥada*). He said: My boy, you have transported me to the fourth heaven! And the singing had such an effect on him that he was beside himself. Then he said: By God, my Prince (*yā amīrī*), you did well! Nay, repeat what you sang about ʿAbd Shams! He did so. Then he said: Wonderful, Prince, by God! Now repeat what you sang about Umayya! And he did so, and so on until he reached among the kings al-Walīd himself, and he said: Again, by my life! And he did so. Then al-Walīd stood up and bent over him and there was no part of the singer’s body which he did not kiss, frenetically embracing and caressing him. And he said:

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[128] As I have demonstrated in Traditio 10–11.

> By wonderful God, you don't go away until I have kissed it [i.e., his sexual organ, my addition]. He exposed it to him and al-Walīd kissed it on the top. Then he pulled off his clothes and threw them towards him and remained naked.[129]

There are dark legends about al-Walīd, and parts of this story might refer to them. Yet, we find in it a good description of a powerful *ṭarab*. There is a complete loss of self-control (made obvious by the cursing and the heretical words, as well as by pulling off the clothes and the strong, erotic moment), joy (fourth heaven), and generosity. This fits well with our claim that music developed an aesthetic of excess. Yet, this kind of excess is not to be explained as only a courtly ideal. We find in it two ingredients we have not yet dealt with, obscenity and heresy.

The close connection between music, heresy, and obscenity is stressed by the accusations that music led to alcoholism, promiscuity, and other excesses.[130] Singing naturally exposed a woman—even behind a *sitāra*—to the other sex. Al-Yazīd III (d. 744) allegedly said that it provoked unchastity.[131] In any case, this occurs not only if the singer was a woman, as the story of al-Walīd proves.[132] To modern observers this behavior might seem rather coarse (and, in fact, the notion of *mujūn*/obscene poetry has been etymologically related to roughness).[133]

Singing-girls are indeed (with few exceptions) hardly famous for their chastity. Many of them were the lovers of caliphs and gained influence, like Ḥabāba,[134] ʿArīb, Shāriya, Maḥbūba, and Fāriḍa. The most famous songstress of the ʿAbbasids, ʿArīb, is quoted with frequent, exceedingly obscene sayings. Asked on which conditions a man might be permitted to sleep with her, she answered, "(Nothing but) an erect penis and good breath."[135] On another occasion, the Khorasani noble Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir tried to provoke her with an obscene satire about her, which she countered with an even more obscene verse about herself.[136] This is not only male colportage or gossip.

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[129] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 2, 70.

[130] Schönberger, *Musik* 5; Racy, *Making music* 206–207, on stimuli. Engel, *Stellung* 41–52.

[131] Engel, *Stellung* 50–51.

[132] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 2, 70.

[133] See Pellat, Mudjūn.

[134] See Pellat, Ḥabāba, says that Yazid was "infatuated with her … granted her authority." ʿArīb gained much influence as well; see al-Heitty, *Poetess* 80–88; Stigelbauer, *Sängerinnen* 105–115.

[135] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 18, 185.

[136] Stigelbauer, *Sängerinnen* 138.

Obscenity, as a characteristic of the Dionysos-discourse, was part of the *mukhannath* pattern, of the image of the singing-girl, and thus also of *ẓarf* from the very beginning.[137] (Male) writers provide abundant evidence of this image. It occurs in anecdotes about *mukhannathūn* like al-Dalāl (who seems to have acted as a matchmaker—persuading the bride as well as the bridegroom to have sexual intercourse with him before celebrating marriage with each other), as well as about singing-girls. The connection with *mujūn* libertinage has been pointed out and is also obvious from personal relations, for example, Abū Nuwās or Bashshār b. Burd. Al-Walīd II (743–744) is another important figure for the merging of *zurafāʾ* and courtly ideals, since he was probably one of the first caliphs who had *zurafāʾ* in his entourage.[138]

Al-Washshāʾ gives a clear indication that obscenity was attributed to urban society (i.e., the milieu where *ẓarf* had emerged and was still influential). He quotes a story about the grammarian al-Aṣmaʿī who questions a Bedouin about the definition of "love." The Bedouin replies that love was mutual glances and—the highest degree of pleasure—mutual kisses. Al-Aṣmaʿī, in turn, pointed out that the definition of love in the city was different: "Open her legs and throw yourself on her—this is love in our context!" The shocked Bedouin cries out: "If you do so you are not a lover but someone who wants children!"[139] Al-Washshāʾ writes from the perspective of a man of religion. Religious circles have become *ẓarf*-ized—and *ẓarf* has become Islamized. He disapproves the fulfilment of love and calls for a "return" to the "Bedouin" ideal of chaste love. Not so the songstress from about 100 years before him. Obscenity displayed the aesthetic of excess, which at ʿArīb's time was predominant (and still was at al-Washshāʾ's time, since, in the context of the anecdote, he condemns the libertinism that many *ẓurafāʾ* obviously still regarded as adequate).

It is not only about obscenity; we also heard that al-Walīd blasphemed and apostasized. Only a dark legend? Let us consult the songstress:

> Why do you torture your body by voluntary abstinence (i.e. by fasting)? May God in His benevolence restrain you from doing this! For the one, who is abstinent, is rough and coarse, but you are hot-blooded![140]

It is ʿArīb who boasts about her lack of religious commitment and regards fasting as beneath a man of culture. She draws a clear antithesis between religion

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137 Ghazi, Groupe sociale 41–43.

138 Engel, *Stellung* 269–270; Ghazi, Groupe sociale 41–46.

139 Bellmann, *Buch*, 138.

140 ʿArīb to Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir on his voluntary fasting: al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 19, 121.

(belonging to the sphere of uneducated, coarse people) and the enjoyment of life among cultivated and hot-blooded (again, the relation of passion and culture) people.[141] This is all the more interesting if we take into consideration that she wrote these lines to Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir, a *kātib* and chief representative of the *udabāʾ*. She obviously regarded fasting as not adequate to his position as a secretary and cultivated person, which would require enjoyment of life.

It is obvious that the profession of a songstress was, in a way, in conflict with religion. Unsurprisingly, the early *ẓurafāʾ*, like Sukayna, ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, Dalāl, and others, were not famous for their religious zeal. If we read literature on and by *kuttāb*, we find that heresy is also a frequent topic. We know that the *kuttāb* were the heirs of the late Sasanid "enlightenment," and thus did not usually feel attached to religious matters. Ibn Qutayba strongly opposes the more or less open lack of religiosity among *kuttāb*. He blames them that mocking Islam seemed to be a party game, a proof of intelligence among them, which set them apart from common people and made them feel like they belonged to the elite.[142] In fact, it was not uncommon, among *kuttāb* like Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, to imitate the rhymed prose of the Quran in order to prove, by a persiflage, that its style was not unique. Even al-Jāḥiẓ blames the unhidden religious criticism and areligiosity of the *kuttāb* on their arrogance, since they regarded intelligence as a contradiction to religion. Among all scribes, he states, there was not a single wholeheartedly religious person.[143]

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[141] Ibid., 19, 121.

[142] "In our times it is regarded as the highest degree of an educated man (*adībinā*) if one composes some little verses praising a songstress or describing a cup of wine. The highest degree of being sophisticated today (*laṭīfinā*) means to study a little bit the stellar constellations, to know a bit about law and a bit about logics. Further: to contradict the book of God the Almighty with taunts—without understanding its meaning—and to mock on the traditions of the Prophet by declaring that they were lies, although one does not even know who has transmitted them. The interest (of an *adīb* in our times) is not directed towards God but towards being called 'sophisticated,' and 'having a nuanced view.' He thinks that a sophisticated view would set him apart from (common) people and that he could by this way attain knowledge which is unattainable to them." See Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-kātib* (introduction) 1–2.

[143] There are many sources mentioning that scribes were arrogant and detested religion. We quote Ibn Qutayba's introduction to *Adab al-kātib* 1–2; van Ess, *Theologie* ii, 29–35, on a text attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, a Manichean "manifest" against Islam, and 35–36 on his persiflage of the Quran; and al-Jāḥiẓ, Dhamm 191–195.

3.4 *The Function of Heresy and Obscenity*

Singing was a thorn in the side of religious authorities, mainly because of this; in particular, passion beyond control was suspicious to the pious men.[144] In refuting music and singing-girls, religious scholars usually contest two aspects, fornication and heresy.

Anecdotes on representatives of music usually stress that they were not famous for their adhesion to religious laws, particularly not in the field of morals. Even more, the para-religious devotion to famous divas is obvious, and directly challenges the religious notion of charisma.[145] Extraordinarily respectful address of singers generally seems to be typical in the context of *ṭarab*; al-Wāthiq called Shāriya "*sittī*,"[146] and we have similar stories about ʿUlayya[147] and—a male example—Ibn ʿĀʾisha (*ya amīrī*, see above).[148]

Ṭarab thus evokes behavior resembling devotion (such as kissing the foot of the singer) or adoration,[149] which could lapse into heresy. Al-Walīd said "blasphemies and apostasized," and even Hārūn al-Rashīd, learning that his singer had just met Satan, commented that he would be glad if this Satan would visit him (i.e., the caliph himself, see below).

The literary function of these stories is chiefly to underline the power of *ṭarab*, and it is in accordance with the aesthetic and social values described above. The stories on blasphemies stress the close relation to the *kuttāb's* values. However, there is an even more prominent example of the relation between excess and education: Satan.

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[144] Racy points out what has been noted already by J. Berque: *Ṭarab* satisfies emotional needs, makes experiences possible without consequences (e.g., weeping without being really depressed), and allows otherwise forbidden emotions (love, passion)—especially in a sexually restricted society; see Racy, *Making music* 10, 192–193. Witt, *Kreierte Emotionen* 94–95. Rouget, focusing on the parallels between *ṭarab* and the Sufi concept of *wajd*, notes al-Ghazālī's emphasis on the right use of measured emotion (i.e., in dance); moderation is in fact an important distinctive between *ṭarab* and *wajd*; see Rouget, *Music* 255–270.

[145] On the star-cult, see Imhof, Traditio. The pilgrimage of Jamīla, accompanied by her fans, gives the impression of a masterclass or concert tournee rather than a pilgrimage; al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 7, 128–133.

[146] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 8, 9, resp. 14, 108: *kāna yusammihā sittī*.

[147] "Sayyidatī," see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 9, 86–87.

[148] By al-Mutawakkil, quoted from al-Heitty, *Poetess* 84.

[149] Al-Maʾmūn is said to have kissed ʿArīb's foot; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 18, 182 (= al-Heitty, *Poetess* 80); Hārūn al-Rashīd used to kiss the head of his half-sister ʿUlayya; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 9, 86–87; a young man kissed Jamīla's head, hand, and foot; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 7, 134.

3.5 *Shayṭān Becomes a Man of Learning*

Q 2:102 tells us that the angels Hārūt and Mārūt in Babylonia were skilful magicians.[150] According to Q 26, the famous Egyptian magicians were overcome in a competition by Moses, who transformed a staff into a snake (Q 26:32). This Sura is titled "The poets"—even at the time of the Prophet, poetry seems to have been regarded as, in some degree, related to magic, which also was inspired by *shayāṭīn* (Q 2:102).[151] It is perhaps for this reason—not only to be understood in the plain sense of seduction—that al-Jāḥiẓ calls the singing-girls "the banner of Satan" and compares them to the mythological angels:

> Had the Devil no other snare with which to slay, no other banner to rally [men] to, and no other temptation wherewith to seduce, than singing-girls, that would still be ample for him. Nor is this any criticism of them, but the highest praise … Hārūt and Mārūt, Moses' staff, and Pharaoh's magicians, were not so skillful as these singing-girls are.[152]

Pre-Islamic Arabia had already known *shayāṭīn*. Today, the word is usually translated as "devils," and it refers to ambiguous demons, in the sense of *genii*/δαίμονες, who were imagined as inspiring poets. These demons were anything but representatives of an urban ideal.

The usual place a pre-Islamic poet met a *jinn* or *shayṭān* was the desert; they are associated with a creepy place, to use Turner's words, with liminality.[153] In early texts, *shayṭān* has much in common with Dionysos. Iblīs (διάβολος) is quite early regarded as the author of music, and the *shayāṭīn* were imagined as satyr-like[154] beings with a huge sexual appetite. Engel[155] quotes passages from the Quran,[156] and different sources, especially by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), that relate music to Satan. He suggests a connection with the ancient magician priest (Abū Murra/the Devil, referring to the Phoenician priest-king Kinyras, a famous musician)[157] and, of course, with the pre-Islamic poet and the *kāhin*.

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[150] "and they follow what the Satans recited over Solomon's kingdom … teaching the people sorcery, and that which was sent down upon Babylon's two angels Harut and Marut." See Arberry, *Koran interpreted* 12.

[151] In al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 31, 23, 11–12, al-Jāḥiẓ says that singing was just poetry with melody.

[152] Ibid., § 51, 34, 21.

[153] Turner, Betwixt.

[154] The satyre Ampelos, who had been transformed into a grapevine, is mentioned as a friend of Dionysos; see Kloft, *Mysterienkulte* 25.

[155] Engel, *Stellung* 52–54.

[156] Q 17:64; Q 26:221–226.

[157] Engel, *Stellung* 154, 160–161.

Lane's dictionary defines *shayṭān* as "anything that is excessive."[158] We also find an ecstatic aspect; Ibn Mayyāda tells us that his *shayāṭīn* sang and were intensely excited (*janna junūnuhā*).[159] One version of the death of the singer al-Gharīḍ (d. probably during the first decades of the second/eighth century, around the time of Yazīd II, 720–724) is that he was killed by his *jinn* because he had insulted them by disobedience.[160] All of these legends portray the anti-social and ecstatic aspect of *shayṭān*—quite the opposite of an urban literate ideal. In fact, they seem to incorporate the incalculable and savage aspect of the desert, but also in a way that incorporates features of *ṭarab* (which, in a way, can also be described as "savage," incalculable, referring to liminality and ecstasy, if we interpret *ṭarab* as a state of emotional liminality).

Legends about encounters with Satan are thus frequent as an element of the ideal in the biographies[161] of musicians and poets.[162] (Songs were composed by women and men, and famous singers used to let their singing-girls revise their compositions.[163] It is thus not misleading to deal with musical inspiration, even if our anecdotes are about men.) But, as late as the early ʿAbbasid period, Satan experiences a sudden change. He is no longer a rough debauchee, inclined to (musical) intoxication. He becomes a cultivated debauchee, inclined to intoxication. Legends, usually stereotypical, soon display elements of the *adab*-ideal.

So Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm (al-Mawṣilī) tells us:

> One night I sat with Hārūn al-Rashīd in order to sing for him. When he was joyfully thrilled by my singing he said, "Don't leave yet!" So, I continued to sing until he fell asleep, then I laid my lute down on my lap and rested sitting.
>
> And voilà, there was a young man, with a beautiful body and face, clothed in silk, and good-looking. He came in, greeted me, and sat down. I was astonished that he came here to this place at this time, and without being previously announced … He pointed at my lute and stretched his hand for it. So, I took it up and laid it on his lap. He touched it [i.e.,

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[158] See ibid., 52–54, 145–157.

[159] See ibid., 145.

[160] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 2, 143.

[161] As described in Imhof, Traditio 15.

[162] See Engel, *Stellung* 145–147, and Neubauer, *Musiker* 37, mention stories about Mukhariq, Ibn Jamiʿ, and Ziryab; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 21, 232–233, al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 6, 294–295, also Farmer, *History* 130; in poetical context see al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmat al-Iblīsiyya* 243–266.

[163] D'Erlanger, *Musique arabe* 11, 309 (n. 12). Most *qiyān* composed, like ʿAzza, Jamīla, ʿArīb, etc.

> the strings], and I realized that it was the most beautiful creation of God that he touched. He tuned it as I had never seen before. Then he played it—and never had my ear heard a better sound—and began to sing:
>
> For not to be wronged by a forlorn hope, before we separate: come on, give me pure and clear wine!
>
> And [it was the time when] dawn was about to overshine darkness, and [when] the cloth of the night was nearly rent.
>
> Then he put the lute on my lap and said: You, who bite the clitoris of your mother! (*yā ʿādd baẓr ummihi*) I sang, do you now likewise!
>
> Then he disappeared. I stood up in order to follow him and asked the porter, "Who was the young man who just went out here?"
>
> He replied, "There was nobody coming in or out."
>
> I said, "But just now a young man slipped through my fingers, who looked like this and that."
>
> He repeated, "No, by God, there was nobody coming in or out."
>
> I remained astonished and went back to my *majlis*. Hārūn al-Rashīd woke up and asked, "What happened to you?" I told him, and he was astonished as well. Then he said, "Well, you have obviously met a *shayṭān*," and asked me, "Sing again for me!" So I did, and immediately he went to a state of strong excitement (*wa-ṭariba ṭaraban shadīdan*). He ordered that I be given a reward, and then I went away.[164]

The *shayṭān* is described as a young and beautiful man; his playing and singing is astonishing. He clearly refers to an urban lifestyle through his clothing, manners, and perfection of technique. However, he is still ambiguous, and he insults Isḥāq in an aggressive, even obscene way. The supranatural aspect of this "close encounter of the third kind" is underlined by the fact that nobody, apart from Isḥāq, could see the *shayṭān*. Realizing that Isḥāq will sing even better now, since he has been inspired by a *shayṭān*, the caliph orders him to sing. Isḥāq manages to get him into one of the strongest states of *ṭarab*, and receives his reward. We find musical perfection and beauty here, coupled with wine and obscenity. *Shayṭān*, once a creature of the desert, has become a citizen.

Isḥāq's father, Ibrāhīm, tells about a similar encounter, when a well-dressed and perfumed old man visits him to sing.[165] The visitor is an educated, beautiful, but impolite man, and his singing makes Ibrāhīm provide us with one of the best-known descriptions of *ṭarab*/thrill:

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[164] Muhannā, *Ṭarab* 39–42.

[165] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 5, 34–36.

> And, by God, I thought, the walls and doors and everything in the house would reply to his voice and sing with him because of the beauty of his song. No, by God, I imagined (*khiltu*) that I and my bones and my clothes would answer him. I remained astonished (*mabhūtan*) that I could neither talk nor answer or move since he touched my heart (*lammā khālaṭa qalbī*) … I nearly lost my mind from joy (*ṭarab*) and pleasure (*irtiyāḥ*).[166]

He wants the guest to teach him the songs, but the latter refuses, saying that they were already in his mind. Then he disappears and suddenly there was a voice calling me from somewhere in the house, "Don't be afraid, Abū Isḥāq! I am Iblīs." When Ibrāhīm performs the songs for Hārūn al-Rashīd, the caliph is thrilled (*ṭariba*) and finally comments, "If only he (Iblīs) himself would for just one day provide me with such pleasure as he gave you!"[167]

It is striking that modern *ṭarab* performers still talk about a state of *salṭana* (possession) during performance (al-Fārābī used *ṭarab*); inspiration is thus not only for composition, but also for performance—similar to the magnet-image in Plato's *Ion*. The composer is "possessed" by his *shayṭān*, the singer by the composer (if they are not the same person), and the audience by the singer. Musical talent, as in the *Ion*, is defined as a supranatural power; *Shayṭān* refers, in a way, to possession in the sense of ἔνθεος (*entheos*). Being part of the process of composing, it is a topic for music theory.

The fact that Isḥāq's *shayṭān* is young and Ibrāhīm's is old may tell us that the age of the *shayṭān* corresponds to that of "his" singer; he is his Alter-Ego or Evil Twin. Obviously, these stories were not regarded as repulsive in a courtly context. Even the caliph himself wished that this devil would also visit him. The motif of "well-tempered heresy" is quite frequent in anecdotes about singers (see the chapter on obscenity and heresy). Further, the *shayṭān* is beautiful—but amoral. Heresy, obscenity, and urban ideal are closely related to each other in the figure of the inspiring devil. Additionally, the legends stress Satan's education. Ibrāhīm is astonished and pleased by the high level of conversation, and his visitor's knowledge, and allows him to stay—although he originally did not want him to—due to his "*adab* and *ẓarf*."[168] This clearly demonstrates the influence of the *adab*-ideal, which—in contrast to the time of early music—is based on literacy and paired with *ẓarf*. The very heart of music and music theory has become "*adab*-ized."

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[166] Ibid., 35.
[167] Ibid., 36.
[168] Ibid., 35.

It is striking that most of these later legends use *shayṭān* instead of *jinn*. The inherent religious provocation is, of course, intended. Obscenity and heresy served as a conscious self-display of a subculture opposed to religion—part of a controversy. We should keep in mind that in the ninth century the position of religion within society was not clearly defined. Religious polemics had not yet acquired the consequences they would have today. Further, these polemics took place within a circle where religion was usually regarded as belonging to the sphere of common people.

The Dionysos-discourse, as opposed to "Arabic" religion and "Bedouin" chastity, was soon adopted by the emerging urban elite, which had been initially dominated by non-Arabs. Classifications of the sciences also attributed the religious sphere to the Arabs. Regarding the religio-political context, particularly that of the ninth century—we only mention the notion of *shuʿūbiyya*—it is unsurprising that there were circles that felt inclined to cultural patterns opposed to Islam. *Ṭarab*, as the quintessence of the aesthetic of excess, was staged in deliberate opposition to religious values, and is thus part of the so-called "critical tradition" of the ninth century. A proudly demonstrated sexuality (via obscenity) and excess were displayed in contrast to the "chaste Arab-Bedouin" ideal of love and religion.[169] Through the alliance of singing-girls and the courtly elite—made all the easier since singing-girls could be regarded as also having a "Persian heritage"—*ẓarf* became the lifestyle of the *adīb*. Sexuality, like heresy, was part of the self-display of the urban elite, which regarded self-mortification as coarse.

Regarding this, another of al-Jāḥiẓ's arguments is no longer surprising. In defense of the songstresses, he says they were not religious, because they were trained to behave so and their songs hardly mentioned religious issues.[170] He uses the same argument in dealing with unbelievers; an unbeliever was not guilty if he could not understand the truth, or if he did not reflect, because he did not know he should.[171]

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[169] See Bellmann, *Buch* 78–79, 138. Al-Washshā' quotes several examples illustrating this antithesis. He still discusses both concepts of love, but, as opposed to al-Jāḥiẓ, already repudiates the Dionysian discourse.

[170] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Epistle* § 52, 34, 21.

[171] See van Ess, *Theologie* vi, 333.

4 Conclusion: On the Borderline

The *qiyān* thus create an important link between pre-Islamic culture (Hellenism, Sasanid Persia, and Arabia) and classical Islam. They once again prove the cultural diversity of classical Islam, and the fact that the culture, and society, of the ninth century was by no means static. By transferring the late antique Dionysos-discourse and other pre-Islamic patterns into Islam, they influenced society. This is particularly evident from the phenomenon of *tamzīq* (tearing clothes) as a reaction to *ṭarab*, which seems to trace back to the circle around ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, ʿAzza, and Jamīla, and the fact that singers also performed in traditional keenings. Singing-girls and their environment shaped the notion of *ṭarab* historically, aesthetically, and socially, creating and maintaining an aesthetic of excess. The personal, intellectual, and social mingling of these representatives of ecstasy and oral tradition, with representatives of the highly intellectual and lettered *adab*-ideal, particularly scribes, produced the ambiguous combination of both ideals. *Ẓarf* became the lifestyle of an *adīb*. The emotional reaction to music became a distinctive feature of a learned person—emotion was a means to display education and high social status. This is due to the increasing interaction and mingling of the ideals of *adab* and *ẓarf*. The process is particularly visible in the figure of the inspiring *shayṭān*, who, after his beginnings as a *genius* of the desert, becomes an *adīb* and *ẓarīf*. The study of this aspect of ʿAbbasid musical theory, which for the non-professional (who is not used to regarding emotion as a characteristic of education) may seem surprising, thus provides much evidence on how the *adab*-ideal developed during the ninth century and by which social circles it was influenced.

In their daily reality, the singing-girls were thus representatives of a subculture, admired and at the same time detested, on the borderline between the fourth heaven and the devil's snares.

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CHAPTER 37

Women Scholars of *Ḥadīth*: A Case Study of the Eighth/Fourteenth-Century *Muʿjam al-Shaykha Maryam*

Mohsen Haredy

Given the centrality of *ḥadīth* to Muslims' lives, the traditions and their transmitters have been subject to scholarly investigation throughout Islamic history. This also holds true for the role of women in *ḥadīth* transmission. Women's participation in *ḥadīth* transmission is, in fact, one of the few areas of early and medieval Muslim women's history for which we have considerable source material. Information on female participation in *ḥadīth* transmission can be found mainly in biographical dictionaries, chronicles, legal compendia, and *ḥadīth* collections, as well as in certificates of reading sessions (*samāʿāt*) and diplomas (*ijāzāt*).

How should we understand, from a strictly historical point of view, the fact that the transmission of *ḥadīth* is the only area in Islamic civilization where women's contributions are documented so diligently? What can be said about the social background of these female participants? Were their activities mainly confined—as has been suggested in several publications—to their youth and their old age, as during the period between this their mobility in the public sphere was restricted by the moral code of Islam? Did women read or study all *ḥadīth* books? Did they also read the *ajzāʾ*? Are there any specific critical and evaluative criteria to be found in the *ḥadīth* sources with reference to female transmitters? What was the number of *ijāza*s a woman transmitter could obtain in comparison with male transmitters?

These are some of the questions I will deal with in my contribution, and I shall pay special attention to the life of one particular female *ḥadīth* scholar. The article presents some elements of the introductory study to my edition of Ibn Ḥajar's (d. 852/1449) *Muʿjam al-Shaykha Maryam*. The woman whose life and principal work are the subject of this study, Maryam al-Adhriʿiyya, was born in Cairo in 719/1319 and died there in 805/1402.

The edition of the *Muʿjam* is based on the only MS available at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (No. 1421 *Ḥadīth*). The MS was transcribed by Ibn Ḥajar's grandson, Yūsuf b. Shāhīn (d. 899/1449), from the author's draft manuscript, and is extremely difficult to decipher, as it is usually devoid of diacritical marks to

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distinguish consonants, let alone vowels. Apart from its value for female history, the *Muʿjam* documents many *ḥadīth* collections and other books that Ibn Ḥajar cited or quoted. Some of these collections have not reached us. They have either been lost or still exist only in manuscript form.

1 Women's Education in the Mamluk Period: An Overview

Previous contributions concluded that women played a very active role in the transmission of the prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) throughout much of Islamic history. Recent studies have shown that women of the Companion generation participated actively in this domain of religious knowledge. However, there is a decline of women in the historical record from the mid-second to the mid-fourth centuries. In the second half of the fourth century, women re-emerge in the sources on *ḥadīth* learning and transmission. From this period until well into the Mamluk era, women acquire exemplary reputations as *ḥadīth* scholars.[1]

Before delving into the issue of transmitting religious knowledge, let me outline the position of *ḥadīth* scholars on women's narrations. The early scholars of *ḥadīth* did not stipulate that a *ḥadīth*'s being reported by a man is a condition of its acceptability or its being reported by a woman is a condition for its rejection. The Muʿtazila, a sect of rationalists in the early period, were the strictest in their rules; they would not consider a *ḥadīth* as sound unless it came from two independent narrators in every generation going all the way back to the original speaker. However, they did not require the two narrators to be male.[2]

While specifying the characteristics of those whose transmission is accepted and those whose transmission is rejected, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), a great expert in *ḥadīth*, did not distinguish between a *ḥadīth* reported by a male and one reported by a female.[3]

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[1] Sayeed, Shifting fortunes iii. Previous studies on women and *ḥadīth* transmission include Goldziher, *Muslim studies* ii, 366–368; Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth literature*; Roded, *Women in Islamic biographical collections* 63–89; Berkey, *Transmission* 161–181; Berkey, Women and Islamic education; Abou-Bakr, Teaching; Lutfi, *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*; Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*; Ahmed, *Women*; Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt*; Jamāl al-Dīn, *Nisāʾ*; Maʿtūq, *Juhūd*; Salmān, *ʿInāyat*; Qirdāsh, *Dawr*; Bulliet, Religious elite; Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission; Sayeed, Shifting fortunes; Afsaruddin, Muslim views. For general works on Muslim education, see Tritton, *Materials*; Khan, Theories; Makdisi, *The rise*; ibid., Madrasa; ibid., *Religion*; ibid., Scholastic method; ibid., The Madrasa; Shalabi, *History*.

[2] Sayeed, Shifting fortunes iii, 23.

[3] Al-Shahrazūrī, *Introduction* 81–94, quoted from Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 24.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1070) observes that "[after all,] our pious predecessors (*ʿulamāʾ al-salaf*) accepted the narrations of women, slaves, and those who were not known for their legal expertise even if they narrated merely one or two *ḥadīth*s."[4]

The seventh-century scholar Ibn Rushayq al-Mālikī (d. 632/1234) discussed the acceptability of reports originating from a single narrator. He mentioned some examples of accepted narrators, and it is worth noting that the names of three women Companions headed the list. He says, "They (the Companions and their successors) relied on the narration of a single person, like the narration of ʿĀʾisha (d. 57/676), Ḥafṣa (d. 41/661), Umm Salama (d. 59/678), Abū Hurayra (d. 59/678), Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687), Ibn ʿUmar (d. 74/693), Abū Bakr (d. 13/634), ʿUthmān (d. 35/655) and countless other people."[5]

The thirteenth-century leading jurist Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (d. 647/1250) confirms that it has never been reported that a scholar rejected a *ḥadīth* because it had been narrated by a woman.[6] Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) says: "We have never known of a woman who was charged with lies or a woman whose narrations were rejected."[7] Ibn ʿArrāq al-Kinānī (d. 963/1556) devoted an entire chapter of his famous book *Tanzīh al-sharīʿa al-marfūʿa ʿan al-aḥādīth al-mawḍūʿa* to listing hundreds of fabrications; no woman's name appears even once.[8]

The education of any woman began within the closest kinship circle. When listing the names of those with whom a certain individual had studied, al-Sakhāwī and other biographers begin with a female biographee's father, grandfather, or uncle, and only then move on to others.[9] For example, Amat al-Raḥīm bt. Muḥammad al-Yūnīniyya (d. 739/1328) studied *Musnad al-Nisāʾ* from the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal with her father, the great *muḥaddith* and Hanbali jurist Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Yūnīnī (d. 658/1260),[10] and Umm al-Ḥusayn bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbdallāh b. Asʿad al-Yāfʿī learned the art of writing certain chapters of the Quran and *al-Arbaʿūn* of al-Nawawī from her mother.[11]

Zaynab al-Ṭūkhiyya's father (d. 789/1388) made her memorize the Quran and taught her to write. He also instructed her in a number of books, such as *al-Ḥāwī l-ṣaghīr fī l-furūʿ* of Najm al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Qazwīnī, *al-Mukhtaṣar* of Abū Shujāʿ Aḥmad al-Iṣfahānī, and *al-Mulḥa* of Abū Muḥammad Qāsim al-Ḥarīrī.[12] After Zaynab's marriage, her husband, al-Shams b. Rajab, assumed the responsibility of her education. So, he undertook to continue her education, guiding her through the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and that of Muslim.

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[4] Sayeed, Shifting fortunes 234.

[5] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 24.

[6] Al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-awṭār* viii, 122.

[7] Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-ʿitidāl* iv, 604.

[8] Al-Kinānī, *Tanzīh al-sharīʿa* i, 19–133, cited in Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt.*

[9] Berkey, *Transmission* 169.

[10] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 99.

[11] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 140; cf. Berkey, *Transmission* 169.

Also, Zaynab bt. Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad studied the *ḥadīth* of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. 345/956) with her husband Taqī al-Dīn Sulaymān b. Ḥamza al-Maqdisī in his house in 715/1315.[13]

Beyond their inner familial circle, women would study with other teachers in their towns. For example, Zāhida bt. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Mawṣilī al-Khabbāz studied *Intikhāb al-Ṭabarānī li-bnihi ʿalā Ibn Fāris* with 21 teachers in her town in 718/1318.[14] This supports the idea that women's education was not confined to teachers within the family, but that women went to other teachers in their respective towns.

ʿĀʾisha al-Maqdisiyya studied, with Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭālib al-Ḥajjār, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, the *Kitāb Dhamm al-kalām* of al-Harawī, the *Juzʾ* of Abū l-Jahm, the *Amālī* of Ibn al-Naṣīr, the *Musnad ʿUmar* of al-Najjād, the *al-Arbaʿūn* of al-Ājurrī, and the *Musnad* of ʿAbd b. Ḥumayd. With Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ghanī she studied the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim; with ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Muʿaẓẓam al-Ayyūbī she studied the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥaq and *Juzʾ al-biṭāqa*.[15]

Families belonging to the higher classes took care to educate their female offspring. This was done for many reasons, including to assure their opportunities for securing better husbands, and in order to enhance their social positions in a religious community. Through a religious education, women were expected to elevate their moral and social standards and behavior.[16]

The biographical dictionaries comment that boys began their education and received *ijāza*s at young ages. Their sisters, too, shared in this distinction.[17] Zaynab bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī al-Qāhirī (d. 865/1461) accompanied her brother to classes given by her father and other prominent scholars, such as al-Farīsī and al-Haythamī, on the first day of her fifth year.[18] Zaynab bt. ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad (d. 855/1452) was brought before Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh al-Bājī for the first time at the age of two.[19] Tatar bt. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad

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[12] Ibid., 45; cf. Berkey, *Transmission* 169.

[13] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 101.

[14] Ibid., 103.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Lutfi, *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* 121.

[17] Berkey, *Transmission* 170.

[18] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 41–42.

[19] Ibid., 42.

b. Aḥmad was brought before Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Dāwūd b. Ḥamza al-Maqdisī at the age of two.[20] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī brought his daughter to hear the recitation of particular collections of *ḥadīth* in the third year after her birth.[21] Sāra bt. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Kāfī al-Subkī received an *ijāza* to transmit *ḥadīth*s before her fourth birthday.[22] Such exposure, as Berkey suggests,[23] was the first step in a process of familiarizing young students with the academic world, and it suggests the general interest Mamluk families had in the learning of prophetic traditions as an entry into the world of religious knowledge.

It had become a custom that both males and females learned *ḥadīth*s from teachers visiting their towns. When Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. al-Mubārak al-Zabīdī visited Damascus, the people crowded around him to read the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī with him in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī in 630/1232. Khadīja bt. Muḥammad b. Saʿd b. ʿAbdallāh al-Maqdisiyya (d. 701/1301), Zaynab bt. Sulaymān b. Ibrāhim al-Isʿardī (d. 705/1305), Umm al-Khayr Fāṭima bt. Ibrāhim b. Maḥmūd, and Umm al-Ḥasan Fāṭima bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAmr al-Farrāʾ attended al-Zabīdī's classes.[24]

Although women of the Mamluk period did not enroll in formal classes, women might be found studying alongside men.[25] Khadīja and Zaynab, daughters of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh, were brought by their father to hear the recitation of the *Saḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī at al-Ẓāhiriyya school.[26] Of course, this school was attended by both boys and girls. Al-Sakhāwī tells us that he heard a recitation of traditions from Sitt al-Quḍāh bt. Abī Bakr b. Zurayq (d. 863/1459) in the company of her granddaughter, Āsiya bt. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dimashqiyya and her brother Ibrāhīm in Damascus.[27] Al-Sakhāwī also heard *ḥadīth*s from some teachers in the company of ʿĀʾisha bt. Ibrāhīm b. Khalīl b. ʿAbdallāh.

Women could be educated, and sexual boundaries preserved, by family members providing instruction—fathers, brothers, or husbands. Even so, many women studied with and received *ijāza*s from scholars outside the immediate family circles, and very often the scholars with whom they studied were themselves women.[28] This, asserts Berkey, is not to suggest that education took place in groups segregated by sex. On the contrary, many men, as well as women, were instructed by and received *ijāza*s from learned women.[29] This is clearly illustrated in biographical dictionaries that cover the Mamluk period.

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[20] Ibid., 15. For similar cases, see ibid., 15, 51, 79, 129, 158.

[21] Berkey, *Transmission* 170. For similar cases, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 24, 34, 39, 99, 126.

[22] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 51; Berkey, *Transmission* 170. For similar cases, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ* xii, 8, 15, 38, 53.

[23] Berkey, *Transmission* 170.

[24] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 103–104.

[25] Berkey, *Transmission* 171.

[26] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 31, 47.

[27] Ibid., 3.

A survey on the education of women in medieval Islam cannot ignore the role of endowments.[30] Women, like men, shouldered the responsibility of administering schools and their endowments. At least five schools owing their endowment to women were established in Cairo before or during the Mamluk period.[31] One significant institution was endowed by a daughter of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who married a Mamluk amir named Baktimur al-Hijāzī, from whose *nisba* the school took its name. Endowments of al-Hijāziyya supported courses in Shafiʿi and Maliki *fiqh*. The first professor to teach at the school was Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī. Another school was endowed by Barakat Khātun (d. 774/1372),[32] the mother of Sultan al-Ashraf Shaʿbān, in 771/1369–1370 in al-Tibbāna near the citadel. The school became known as Madrasat Umm al-Sulṭān. It sponsored classes in Shafiʿi and Hanbali *fiqh*.[33] There is mention in the sources about schools endowed and directed by women. Fāṭima bt. Qānībāy al-ʿUmarī directed a school and established a permanent class for reading Hanafi *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, and *ḥadīth* materials. She also endowed some books to the library of the school.[34] Women who wished to continue to have detailed religious and literary training attended lectures by male and female scholars, who may have come to their houses or delivered lectures in their own homes. We shall return to this point shortly.[35] The Syrian capital, Damascus, boasted even more such institutions.[36]

Other women, as Berkey concludes, shared in the abiding interest felt by their families for schools established by some relative or ancestor, as when a female scion of the scholarly al-Bulqīnī family named Alif provided endowments to support Quran readers in her grandfather's school. At the end of their lives, two of her cousins began to pass their time in the family school, and they were eventually buried next to their scholarly relatives.[37]

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[28] Berkey, *Transmission* 172.

[29] Ibid.

[30] For a detailed account of women's economic position in the Mamluk period, see Lutfi, *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* 104–124.

[31] Berkey, *Transmission* 163.

[32] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* i, 474.

[33] Al-Maqrīzī, *Mawāʿiẓ* ii, 399–400.

[34] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 98.

[35] Lutfi, *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* 120.

[36] Berkey, *Transmission* 164.

One may ask if women who worked as teachers or transmitters of *ḥadīth* were paid in return for teaching. The answer to this question, Lutfi argues, comes from al-Sakhāwī, who suggests that there does not seem to be any indication that these women earned any payments through their teaching, except in very few cases. They may have done so on an informal basis and as an activity that would enhance their prestige and authority in a society where the religious mode of life was prized.[38] Moreover, women also established endowments that supported institutions of learning.[39]

2 Women and the Transmission of *ḥadīth*

At a certain stage of their scholarly endeavor, women shouldered the responsibility of transmitting the knowledge they acquired to others. There were many venues through which they conveyed their message. Some women gave classes at their homes. A prime example is Zaynab bt. al-Kamāl al-Dīn (d. 740/1339), who narrated from a large number of teachers.[40] One of her students, al-Dhahabī, describes her as "soft-spoken, patient and polite in manner. He tells how the students of *ḥadīth* crowded around her house and how she would teach through most of the day."[41] The *ḥadīth* of Hibatallāh al-Akfānī was read to Zaynab bt. Ismāʿīl b. al-Khabbāz in the house of Aḥmad b. Saʿīd b. ʿUmar al-Ṣūfī, one of her students, in 744/1343.[42] The house of another woman was a gathering place for divorced and widowed women and for the instruction of young girls.[43] Another scholar offered his house as a forum for the instruction of women by a female teacher. The house of ʿIzz al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Kinānī (d. 875/1471) was a gathering spot for widows.[44]

Other women held classes in the mosques. An example is Umm al-Khayr Fāṭima bt. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Jawhar al-Baʿlabakkī (d. 711/1311). She taught *ḥadīth* in the mosque of the Prophet in Medina. Ibn Rushayd says:

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Lutfi, *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* 117.

[39] Al-Anbārī, *Sanā l-barq*, quoted by Frenkel, Women 415.

[40] For a detailed account of Zaynab's career as a *muḥadditha*, see Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 71–94.

[41] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 10; cf. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* ii, 117.

[42] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 178.

[43] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 148.

[44] Berkey, *Transmission* 173.

> She came in the Syrian caravan as visitor and pilgrim. I met her in the mosque of the Prophet and *ḥadīth* was read to her while she was leaning on the side of the wall of the grave of the Prophet in front of his head. She wrote an *ijāza* with her own hand for me and for others.[45]

In Damascus, women also used to teach at different mosques. Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Dimashqī says in his note on ʿĀʾisha bt. ʿAbd al-Hādī (d. 816/1413): "She was appointed to the post of teacher of *ḥadīth* in the Umayyad Mosque."[46]

Women also taught in the schools, and their classes were attended by male and female students. *Majlis al-biṭāqa* of al-Kinānī (d. 357/967) was read to Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn and Ḥabība bt. Zayn al-Dīn in al-Madrasa al-Ḍiyāʾiyya in 733/1332. The *ḥadīth* of Bakr b. Aḥmad al-Shirāzī was read to Zaynab bt. Makkī l-Ḥarrānī in al-Madrasa al-Mismāriyya in Damascus in 688/1289.[47] *Kitāb al-Fitan* of Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq al-Shaybānī (d. 273/886) was read to Sitt al-Ahl bt. ʿAlwān b. Saʿd b. ʿAlwān al-Baʿlabakkiyya (d. 703/1303) in Madrasat al-Ḥanābila in Damascus in 699/1299.[48] *Fawāʾid Abī Aḥmad al-Ḥākim* was read to ʿĀʾisha bt. Sayf al-Dīn Abī Bakr b. Qawālijī in 739/1338 in al-Madrasa al-Khātūniyya.[49]

Women also taught *ḥadīth* in *ribāṭ*s and gardens. Some *ribāṭ*s seem to have served, among other things, as places of residence for elderly, divorced, or widowed women who had no other place of abode until their death or remarriage.[50] In addition to providing shelter, at least some of these institutions became, at the hands of some women, educational and training institutions, where *shaykhāt al-ribāṭ* would not only supervise the living conditions of its residents but also offer them a basic level of religious instruction through hiring reciters of the Quran and other teachers.[51] Women proved to be successful managers of these *ribāṭ*s, as is evidenced by the fact that the names of many of these famous institutions were related to the women who owned and worked in them.[52]

Examples of the transmission process at *ribāṭ*s are as follows. The *Ḥadīth* of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. 345/956) was read to Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn in Ribāṭ al-Qalānisī at Qāsyūn in 743/1342.[53] The *Juzʾ* of Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq was read to Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn in a *ribāṭ* in Damascus in 733/1332. The *Ḥadīth* of Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Shaddān (d. 426/1034) was read to Zaynab bt. al-Khaṭīb Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ḥarastānī in Ribāṭ Baldaq in 722/1322. *Karāmāt al-awliyāʾ* of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Khallāl was read to Sitt al-Fuqahāʾ al-Wāsiṭiyya in a *ribāṭ* at Qāsyūn in 723/1323.[54] The *Musnad* of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was read to Karīma bt. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Zubayriyya (d. 641/1243) in her garden in 639/1241.[55] *Karamāt al-awliyāʾ* was read to Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn in the garden of Amīn al-Dīn al-Wānī in the land of al-Arza in 728/1327.[56]

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[45] Ibid., 179.
[46] Ibid., 180.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 174.
[51] Abou-Bakr, Teaching 325.
[52] Ibid.

Historically speaking, the *ribāṭ*s were associated with Sufi practices. Therefore, it is safe to conclude, as Berkey suggests, that some women had been drawn into the world of learning through Sufism. A number of women were clearly initiated into Sufi orders. One fourteenth-century young man even received a *khirqa*, the robe that a Sufi novice received from his master, from his grandmother.[57]

Al-Sakhāwī tells us that some women traveled quite far and wide to acquire knowledge from scholars in other cities. For example, Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Hādī obtained her teaching certificates in Damascus, Egypt, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and other places, studying with renowned scholars like the famous *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Muḥammad b. ʿAsākir, Abū Naṣr b. al-Shirāzī, and Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Saʿd, among others.[58] Rābiʿa bt. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī received teaching certificates from a large number of Egyptian and Syrian scholars.[59]

3 Methods of Transmission

There are different expressions used by the biographers to refer to the activities of women in the transmission of religious knowledge, especially *ḥadīth*. One expression is *ḥaddathat* (she narrated *ḥadīth*s to others). Ibn Ḥajar's *al-Durar* used the word *ḥaddathat* in the biography of 46 women.[60] Al-Sakhāwī used the same word in the biography of 59 women.[61] The narration of words (i.e., speaking the words to students) is the most prestigious form of *ḥadīth* transmission. Next in rank, after hearing the text from the teacher, is reading the materials to the teachers.[62] For example, al-Sakhāwī says in his account of eight women that he had been reading (*ḥadīth*) to them.[63]

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[53] Berkey, *Transmission* 182.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 103; Afsaruddin, Muslim views 165.

[59] Berkey, *Transmission* 182.

[60] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* i, 360 (nos. 901, 902), 412, 544, ii, 5, 8, 110, 111, 116, 118 (no. 1744, 1745), 188, 121, 126 (nos. 1780, 1781), 127 (nos. 1784, 1785), 207, 235, 236 (nos. 2081, 2083), 238

A female teacher of *ḥadīth* might also issue an *ijāza* authorizing a certain student to teach others.[64] Al-Sakhāwī mentions about 50 women from whom he got an *ijāza*. The usual term used for that is either *ajāzat lī* (she gave me an *ijāza*) or *ajāzat lanā* (she gave us an *ijāza*).[65] In other cases, he mentions that a certain female teacher gave an *ijāza* to his teacher Ibn Ḥajar.[66] Sometimes he quotes Ibn Ḥajar as referring, in his *Muʿjam*, to certain female teachers who gave him an *ijāza*.[67]

Writing to students is another means of transmitting *ḥadīth*. This is equivalent to correspondence. Al-Dhahabī was unable to receive *ḥadīth* directly from Sayyida bt. Mūsā al-Mārāniyya (d. 695/1295). He regretted missing the opportunity, and then he received her *ḥadīth* from her by correspondence.[68]

Many women distinguished themselves as transmitters of *ḥadīth*. Among them is ʿĀʾisha bt. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Hādī,[69] who is mentioned in al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary as having given *ijāza*s to many students, both male and female.[70] Ibn Ḥajar comments on ʿĀʾisha, saying: "ʿĀʾisha lived until

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(nos. 2092, 2093, 2094), 238 (nos. 2092, 2093, 2094), iii, 221 (nos. 539, 542), 222 (nos. 544, 545, 547), 223 (549, 550), 224, 268, 272, iv, 364, 360, 385 (nos. 1051, 1053), 397 (nos. 1086, 1087, 1089), 407, 408.

[61] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13 (nos. 63, 65), 15 (nos. 81, 82), 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 67, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 91, 93, 96 (nos. 601, 605), 99, 103, 107, 116, 121, 122, 126, 127, 129, 131, 132, 165.

[62] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 169.

[63] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 5, 7, 28, 38, 55, 79, 86, 96.

[64] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* ii, 126, 95, 123, 236, iii, 222, 385; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* i, 166, v, 155, xii, 2, 3, 10, 21, 53, 73, 78, 81, 104, 151.

[65] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 4, 5, 9 (nos. 46, 47), 12, 13, 14, 23 (nos. 126, 127), 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34 (nos. 201, 203), 43, 48, 48, 51, 53, 60, 61, 70, 71, 77, 89, 96, 97, 101, 106, 119, 120, 121 (nos. 737, 741), 124, 127 (nos. 780/783), 131, 133, 144, 156, 158, 159, 160.

[66] Ibid., 15, 30.

[67] Ibid., 23, 27, 57, 71, 116, 118, 127.

[68] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 171.

[69] For her biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 81. For details on her career, see Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 82–87.

[70] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* ii, 74, 306, 323, iii, 52, 144, 306, 469 (numeration is according to al-Shamela Library), iv, 54, 315, 330, v, 43, vii, 294, viii, 80, 220, ix, 167, 218, xi, 102, xii, 262.

she stood as the only one to narrate from al-Ḥajjār."[71] ʿĀʾisha was 4 and al-Ḥajjār was 103 years old when she heard from him the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.[72]

Al-Dhahabī, in his account of Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. al-Najjār (d. 643/1245), writes: "Ibn al-Sāʿī says: His *mashyakha* includes three thousand men and four hundred women."[73] Of the 172 names on his list, Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) included 19 women. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī left us the names of 53 different women with whom he studied *ḥadīth*. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 910/1505) studied with 33 women out of his 130 teachers.[74]

Samāʿāt and *ijāzāt* (certificates of oral or written transmission) are other sources for understanding the role of women's participation in religious knowledge, especially *ḥadīth*. The *samāʿāt* were often issued at a *majlis al-samāʿ* (assembly for hearing *ḥadīth*), the primary function of which was to verify the accuracy of the text being read.[75] In *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyya*, the name of Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn appears in 33 certificates as a presiding authority, either alone or in conjunction with other teachers, over an assembly for hearing *ḥadīth*.[76] The *samāʿāt* were attached to the book studied. Usually, they constitute the front page of a collection of *ḥadīth*s that were read out loud during a transmission session and/or copied there.[77]

In the *Mashyakha* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim, one of the transmitters has the name of Saʿīda bt. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Qudāma l-Maqdisiyya. The place of narration is the house of Ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim at Mount Qāsyūn in the year 627/1229.[78] In *Juzʾ al-Muʾammal b. Ihāb*, Amat al-Khāliq bt. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf is named in a *samāʿāt* certificate written in the desert, not far from Cairo.[79]

The increasing number of *ijāza*s awarded to scholars was one of the reasons for introducing the genre of *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*. Leading *ḥadīth* experts in Andalusia and the Maghreb took the initiative and compiled lists of the teachers with whom they studied.[80] Therefore, the *ijāza* is an important source for the history of scholarly and cultural networks and gives the details by which an entire cultural environment can be reconstructed.[81] A survey of biographical dictionaries of the Mamluk period would reveal that many women were awarded *ijāza*s to transmit the texts they read before or heard from their teachers. Ibn Ḥajar reports that Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn possessed a camel load of *ijāza*s.[82]

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[71] Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 85.

[72] Berkey, *Transmission* 174.

[73] Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* xxxii, 133.

[74] Berkey, *Transmission* 176.

[75] Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 80.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Leder et al., *Muʿjam* introduction; Frenkel, Women 413.

[78] Ṣaliḥ, *Mashyakhat* 98.

[79] Frenkel, Women 417 (also for other examples).

[80] Al-Samarrāʾī, Ijāzāt 283.

From this overview, we can conclude that women shared, to some extent, in the education process in the Mamluk period, though it was an informal education.

We have noticed that women actively participated in the learning of religious knowledge in their early childhood and the dissemination of such knowledge at advanced ages. The years between childhood and seniority were not deemed worthy of note by chroniclers and historians. There are two possible hypotheses. The first is that women, following the religious rules that put some restrictions on their interaction with men when they are of marriageable age, stopped attending public, coeducational *ḥadīth* sessions. At advanced ages, women convened classes for male and female students, as explained above.[83]

The second scenario is that women's careers in this domain largely paralleled those of their male counterparts—that is, they may have continued their education in study circles open to both men and women rather than in cloistered or segregated settings.[84] Occasionally, in biographical dictionaries we read about a certain individual who brought his daughter to the Ẓāhiriyya school, for example, to hear the recitation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.[85] The school was attended by male and female students. The life of Maryam, which will be illustrated below, will reveal more in this respect.

4 The Life and Career of Maryam al-Adhriʿiyya

As mentioned above, this article focuses on the life and the participation of Ibn Ḥajar's teacher, Shaykha Maryam al-Adhriʿiyya, in *ḥadīth* transmission. Information about Maryam is drawn from biographical dictionaries and from her *Muʿjam*, which was compiled by her student Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī.

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[81] Witkam, *Ijāza* 135.

[82] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* ii, 118.

[83] Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 90.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 31. See above for the example of al-Sakhāwī who heard from a woman in the presence of her granddaughters and brothers.

4.1 *The Location of the Manuscript*

The edition of *Muʿjam al-Shaykha Maryam* is based on a manuscript available only at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (ref. no.: 1421 *Ḥadīth*). Two microfilms of the manuscript are also available at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya; one of them is clear and the other is not. A microfilm of the manuscript is available at the Manuscript Institute of the Arab League (ref. no.: 483 Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth). Another microfilm is available at Maʿhad al-Buḥūth at Umm al-Qurā University (ref. no.: 2186 *Tārīkh wa-Tarājim*). The Library of the Islamic University at Medina also has a microfilm of the manuscript (ref. no.: 3/8047). And the Library of King Saʿūd University in Riyadh possesses a microfilm of the manuscript (No. 4/388) as well.

The biographical dictionaries do not disclose any details about the circumstances in which the *Muʿjam* was written. The sources attribute the compilation of the *Muʿjam* to Ibn Ḥajar. For example, al-Kattānī, in his *Fihris al-fahāris*, mentions the *Muʿjam* and attributes its compilation to Ibn Ḥajar.[86] The manuscript appears in a list of Ibn Ḥajar's works in several biographies, which leads to the conclusion that it is indeed his compilation. Brockelmann also classes *Muʿjam al-Shaykha Maryam* among Ibn Ḥajar's writings.[87] While covering works on *muʿjam*s and *mashyakha*s, al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Ḥajar's student, in his *al-Iʿlān*, has a list of such works, among which he mentions Ibn Ḥajar as having compiled his own *muʿjam* and those of al-Tanūkhī, al-Qibābī, Maryam al-Adhriʿiyya, and others.[88]

In his *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān*, al-Suyūṭī mentions the *muʿjam* of Maryam among the books written by Ibn Ḥajar.[89] Some sources refer to this *Muʿjam* as *al-Muʿjam lil-ḥurra Maryam*.[90] In most of the biographical dictionaries that dealt with the life of Maryam there is a reference to a one-volume *muʿjam* compiled by Ibn Ḥajar for her. Indirect evidence can be found in the dates that are recorded in the text. The latest of these dates falls within the first ten years of the ninth Muslim century, which coincides with the thirtieth year of Ibn Ḥajar's life, and so they allow for Ibn Ḥajar's authorship.

Some sources confuse the *muʿjam* of Shaykha Maryam with what is published as *Musnad amatillāh Maryam*.[91]

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[86] Al-Kattānī, *Fihris* 321.

[87] Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. ii, 76.

[88] Rosenthal, *Muslim historiography* 452, see the Arabic translation of Rosenthal, *Iʿlān* 224.

[89] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān* 50.

[90] Al-Sakhāwī, *Jawāhir* ii, 670; al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān* 50; ʿAbd al-Munʿim, *Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī* 494.

[91] Ibrāhīm, *Amatulllāh Maryam*. Within the edition, the editor defines Amatullāh Maryam

4.2 *Description of the Manuscript*

After consulting the original copy of the manuscript, the following remarks are not out of place. The *Muʿjam al-Shaykha Maryam* preserved at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya consists of 78 folios, each with a different number of lines (3-5-16-18-22-24-25-28). It measures 18×13 cm. There are many blank pages, which suggests that Ibn Ḥajar was going to fill them in later and that he had not yet finished the book.

The title page is written as

الأول من معجم الشيخة مريم تخريج حافظ الإسلام أبي الفضل أحمد بن علي العسقلاني
لها عن شيوخ السماع والإجازة

in other words, the first part of the original title page of *juzʾ* 1 of Ibn Ḥajar's autograph draft. The same page contains one *ex libris* seal and a note that reads "حديث 1421، خصوصية 36768 عمومية"; in other words, under the specific category of *ḥadīth* collections preserved at Dār al-Kutub, it is given the reference number 1421, and under the general category of all collections, it is given the reference number 36768. There is another note that reads:

في نوبة محمد مرتضى الزبيدي .

This means that the famous scholar Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1790) once possessed the manuscript.[92] In fact, he added some marginal notes to it. The manuscript is a complete codex. It begins with:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم اللهم أعن ويسريا كريم ، الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا
رسول الله، الشيخ الأول

and ends with آخر المعجم والحمد لله كثيرا and a colophon containing the copyist's name, the date on which he completed the copying, as well as a copy of the original colophon of the author, Ibn Ḥajar, stating when he had started and finished the compilation of the *Muʿjam*. Ibn Ḥajar started the compilation in the month of Ramaḍān in 803/1400 and finished the work in the same month

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as Maryam bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. While the MS bears this title (*Juzʾ min riwāyat Amatullāh bint Abī al-Qāsim ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlī al-Qurashī*). So, the text is not a *musnad* and does not belong to Maryam, whose biography is provided in the edition. For more on this, see al-Ṭāʾī, *Qirāʾa*.

[92] For his biography, see al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* vii, 70; al-Kattānī, *Fihris* i, 526–536.

of the same year. Our manuscript of the *Muʿjam* was copied, as the colophon indicates, in the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal in 872/1467—that is, 67 years after Maryam's death and 20 years after Ibn Ḥajar's death.

There is a side note at the bottom of the last page in which a certain Muḥammad Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar al-Naṣṣībī al-Ḥalabī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 916/1510) wrote that he made use of the *Muʿjam*.[93] Unfortunately, none of the biographical dictionaries that mention his biography provides clues as to the method and purpose of his use of the *Muʿjam*. A few more observations need to be made:

- The MS contains corrections and marginal notes either by the copyist, Yūsuf b. Shāhīn, or Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī.
- The MS was transcribed by Ibn Ḥajar's grandson, Yūsuf b. Shāhīn. The copyist used to rubricate the beginning of each biography with a red-inked line. He stopped this habit after fol. 19/a.
- The manuscript remains in excellent condition. It does not bear any marks of use by modern researchers. Many inside edges are reinforced by tape. The ink used in the *Muʿjam* is black. Catchwords are constantly marked at the bottom left on the verso of each folio.
- The *Muʿjam* is written in one hand, and that rules out the possibility that some parts were added later.
- The *Muʿjam* is bound in a thick blue cover.

4.3 *Printed Editions*

Until December 2010, and after finishing the edition of the manuscript, I had not come across any reference to any previous edition of the *Muʿjam*. While surfing the Internet, I found out that parts of the *Muʿjam* are included in the database of the Islamweb site. I traced the available data and found some bibliographical information about the edition of the *Muʿjam* on the website of neelwafurat.com. The *Muʿjam* was edited by Muḥammad ʿUthmān and published in Cairo by Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya in February 2010.

In April 2010, the forum of the website shamela.ws posted the *Muʿjam* in Shamela format. The bibliographical data indicate that the *Muʿjam* was edited by the Manuscripts Department at Ufuq Software Company and published by the same company in 2004. The data also indicate that the *Muʿjam* consists of only eleven gatherings.

By comparing the two texts, the following remarks can be made: ʿUthmān did not mention the edition made by Ufuq, though both editions are identical.

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[93] For his biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* viii, 259; al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* vii, 315; al-Ghazī, *Kawākib* 44.

Whenever Ufuq's editors could not read a word and omitted it, this was also a word that ʿUthmān could not read. Even where there is a lacuna in the text by Ufuq's editors, indicated by dots, which does not correspond to a similar lacuna in the manuscript, we find the same lacuna in ʿUthmān's edition.

ʿUthmān's text is identical, with the exception that ʿUthmān completed the biographies from other sources without making any distinction between the original text and the other sources. In some biographies, ʿUthmān quotes Ibn Ḥajar's *al-Durar* without acknowledging him.[94] One full biography is taken from *al-Durar*.[95] Neither edition mentions the marginal notes by the scribe, Yūsuf b. Shāhīn, and by the later owner, al-Zabīdī. Therefore, we can conclude that ʿUthmān plagiarized the edition by Ufuq.

ʿUthmān's edition is a pure business edition. Surprisingly enough, he could not identify Maryam. He confuses Mayram al-Adhruʿiyya with another Maryam[96] who died in 758/1357 (i.e., 15 years before the birth of Ibn Ḥajar)! In addition, the editor claims that the MS was written by Ibn Ḥajar and is very difficult to read.[97] Yes, it is true that the text is extremely difficult to read, but it was not written by Ibn Ḥajar; it was drafted by Ibn Ḥajar and copied by his grandson Yūsuf b. Shāhīn. The edition is full of mistakes, and there are many missing passages. ʿUthmān says that the *Muʿjam* consists of 12 gatherings, while in fact it consists of 13 gatherings.

Since no previous edition is satisfactory, a critical text is offered for the first time in my detailed study of the *Muʿjam*.

5 Ibn Ḥajar's Sources for the *Muʿjam*

It is unlikely that Ibn Ḥajar could have gathered data on almost 319 persons solely from his own knowledge without consulting persons who had information on the people included in the *Muʿjam* or other biographical dictionaries. Ibn Ḥajar did use certain sources. Of these, four are mentioned by name:

1. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthman al-Dhahābī (d. 748/1347), a well-known teacher of Maryam, is cited many times as having mentioned some persons in his *Muʿjam*, which is a collection of the biographies of his teachers. Sometimes Ibn Ḥajar quotes al-Dhahabī in the details of some biogra-

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[94] ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam* 21.

[95] Ibid., 188, biography no. 222.

[96] Ibid., 213, biography no. 280.

[97] Ibid., 36.

phies. In almost all instances in which al-Dhahabī is quoted, the usual phrase used is "*wa-kataba ʿanhu*[98] (*anha*)"[99] or "*wa-dhakarahu*,"[100] which indicates that Ibn Ḥajar consulted the written material. In three biographies he quotes al-Dhahabī as commenting on the biographee.[101] In one case, al-Dhahabī's judgment on a certain *ḥadīth* is quoted.[102] It is clear that all references are made to al-Dhahabi's *Muʿjam* and there is no reference to *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*.

2. Quṭb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 735/1335) is known to be the author of "a copious history of Egypt which, if it were complete would fill twenty volumes; the final draft of the section on the Muḥammads filled four volumes."[103] Quṭb al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī is cited twice by name for the biographies of Ibrāhīm b. Ẓāfir b. Muḥammad b. Ḥammād al-Qabbānī[104] (d. 724/1324) and Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ b. Yaḥyā b. Masʿūd b. Ghunayma b. ʿUmar al-Suwaydāʾī al-Qurashī[105] (d. 726/1326). Ibn Ḥajar says that al-Ḥalabī composed a *Muʿjam* of his teachers, which included 1,300 biographies. He also compiled a collection of 40 *ḥadīth*s, each of which had 9 persons in its chain of transmission.
3. Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Abī Yaddās al-Birzālī (d. 739/1338) is cited as the source for the biographies of six teachers.[106]
4. Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sallāmī (d. 774/1372), known as the author of *al-Wafayāt*,[107] is cited as Ibn Ḥajar's source in 13 biographies.[108] In one instance, the *khaṭṭ* of Ibn Rāfiʿ is quoted, which means that he was well acquainted with him and had seen his notes.[109]

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[98] See ibid., biography nos. 45, 48, and 60. There is a reference in the biography of Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar al-Ḥamawī no. 60 to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Makhlūf and that al-Dhahabī wrote about him in his *Muʿjam*. See al-Dhahabī, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh* i, 382–383.

[99] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography no. 83.

[100] See ibid., biography no. 119.

[101] See ibid., biography nos. 14, 104, and 281.

[102] See ibid., biography no. 45. The *ḥadīth* reads: "*Iqraʾ al-Qurʾān fī sabʿ wa-lā tazid ʿalā dhālik*" (Read the Quran in seven days and do not increase on this). Al-Dhahabī says: "This *ḥadīth* has a good chain of transmission." Al-Dhahabī, *Muʿjam al-shūyukh* i, 129.

[103] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* ii, 398, quoted from Little, al-Ṣafadī 200.

[104] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography no. 47.

[105] See ibid., biography no. 236.

[106] See ibid., biography nos. 8, 11, 106, 119, 132, and 144.

[107] The *Wafayāt* has been edited by Salāḥ Mahdī ʿAbbās.

[108] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography nos. 86, 87, 88, 90, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 117, and 119.

[109] See ibid., biography no. 217.

In almost all instances Ibn Ḥajar uses the phrase, "*wa-dhakarahu al-Birzālī fī muʿjamih*." The word *dhakara* indicates that Ibn Ḥajar consulted the written materials of those scholars.

It is evident that Maryam was familiar with the personal notes of some of her teachers. In more than one occasion she says *kamā kataba bi-khaṭṭihi*. In these occasions, the *khaṭṭ* belongs to a teacher who had composed a *muʿjam* and that Maryam studied it with him. These include al-Wānī,[110] Quṭb al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī,[111] Aḥmad b. Abī Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī,[112] Balbān b. ʿAbdallāh al-Suʿūdī,[113] al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿImād,[114] ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī b. ʿUmar b. Shibl al-Ṣinhājī,[115] ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Malik,[116] ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl b. Rawāḥa,[117] ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā,[118] Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥaydara al-Qammāḥ,[119] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī l-Ḥusayn al-Siyūrī,[120] Muḥammad b. Baktūt al-Qurashī,[121] Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ b. Yaḥyā,[122] Muḥammad b. Shāh b. Rifāʿa,[123] Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Murtaḍā,[124] and Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Kuftī.[125]

On only two occasions does Ibn Ḥajar cite the text of what was written by one of Maryam's teacher exclusively to her.[126]

In one biography, Ibn Ḥajar quotes a commentary made by Kamāl al-Dīn al-Zamalkānī on Ḥamza b. Asʿad b. al-Muẓaffar. It is possible that Maryam had access to his written material as she provided Ibn Ḥajar with verbatim quotations.[127]

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[110] Ibid., biography no. 2.

[111] Ibid., biography no. 4.

[112] Ibid., biography no. 9.

[113] Ibid., biography no. 72.

[114] Ibid., biography no. 85.

[115] Ibid., biography no. 128.

[116] Ibid., biography no. 155.

[117] Ibid., biography no. 177.

[118] Ibid., biography no. 189.

[119] Ibid., biography no. 203.

[120] Ibid., biography no. 217.

[121] Ibid., biography no. 228.

[122] Ibid., biography no. 236.

[123] Ibid., biography no. 240.

[124] Ibid., biography no. 253.

[125] Ibid., biography no. 313.

[126] See the written permission sent to Maryam by her teachers Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Munbajī (ibid., biography no. 261), and Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf b. Ḥayyan al-Andalusī (ibid., biography no. 296.)

[127] Ibid., biography no. 90.

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī is quoted once as a reference in the biography of Aḥmad b. Abī Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī.[128]

Maryam cites Ibn al-Samʿānī once to give the exact spelling of al-Qimmanī, the *nisba* of Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan al-Anṣārī al-Qimmanī.[129]

By far, Ibn Ḥajar's cited sources were both oral and written. We know this from the frequent use of phrases like *qāla*, *dhakara*, *kataba*, *kamā kataba*, *kadhā kataba*, and so forth. On nine occasions it is confirmed that many of the sources are oral transmissions. We also know this from the frequent use of the phrase "*suʾila ʿan mawlidihi fa-qāla*" (He was asked about his birth date and he replied).[130]

5.1 *Biographical Sketch*

The woman whose life and principal work are the subject of this article, Maryam al-Adhriʿiyya, was born in Cairo in 719/1319. In medieval biographical dictionaries we are offered only a few details of her educational career.[131] Nevertheless, by combining biographies of her with those of her teachers and students, it is possible to construct a more complete picture.

Her full name was Maryam bt. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ibrāhīm b. Dāwūd b. Ḥāzim al-Adhriʿī l-Miṣrī l-Ḥanafī. Ibn Ḥajar gives her the *kunya* of Umm ʿĪsā.[132] Maryam's contemporary biographers do not mention anything about her marital status. Therefore, it is not certain that the *kunya* reflects her actual family status or whether she was just known by it among her colleagues as her name is the same as Maryam, mother of Jesus.[133]

From her *nisba* of al-Adhruʿiyya, sources tell us that Maryam's family descended from the Adhriʿāt village in the Levant. Many great scholars who belonged to this family migrated to Egypt to learn *ḥadīth*. Biographical dictionaries that cover the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries produce no clues about Maryam's husband.

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[128] Ibid., biography no. 9.

[129] See ibid., biography no. 230.

[130] See ibid., biography nos. 8, 14, 54, 116, 140, 154, 155, 168, and 177.

[131] Her biography is available in the following works: Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* 138; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ* 245–246; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Majmaʿ* ii, 559–571 (270); Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* ix, 85; Kaḥḥāla, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ* v, 37; al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* vii, 210; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar* iii, 469–470; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 124 (757); ʿAzzūz, *Juhūd* 400–404. She is listed in the obituaries for the year 805 in the work of Ibn Fahd al-Makkī, Laḥẓ al-alḥāẓ.

[132] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ* i, 254.

[133] One can give examples of female transmitters who had a *kunya* though they were definitely unmarried. Examples include Umm al-Kirām al-Marwaziyya, Karīma al-Marwaziyya (d. 463/1070). For more on Karīma, see Sayeed, Shifting fortunes 226–240.

5.2 *Maryam's Brother*

Maryam had a famed brother named Muḥammad. He was born in 738/1337. At the age of one, he was brought to the *ḥadīth* assemblies of Ṣāliḥ al-Ushnahī (d. 738/1337). He was also brought to hear *ḥadīth*s from al-Ṣadr al-Maydūmī (d. 754/1353), al-ʿIzz b. Jamāʿa (d. 767/1365),[134] and Abū l-Ḥaram al-Qalānisī (d. 765/1364).[135] He learned *ḥadīth* from Shams al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī (d. 765/1363).[136] Many scholars, including Ibn Ḥajar, heard *ḥadīth*s from him. He was appointed as the *shaykh* of al-Jāmiʿ al-Jadīd in Egypt and the *khaṭīb* of Shaykhū mosque. Al-Sakhāwī is said to have been granted an *ijāza* from Muḥammad al-Adhriʿī. He died in 805/1402.[137]

5.3 *Maryam's Father*[138]

One has to agree with Asma Sayeed that kinship networks among *ʿulamāʾ* families provided educational access for women.[139] Fathers were responsible for educating their families, and the father-daughter connection was often crucial for women's accomplishments as *ḥadīth* transmitters.[140] Maryam's father was born in the year 686/1287. He excelled in the fields of *fiqh*, the principles of *fiqh*, and the Arabic language. He was given the position of *iftāʾ* (issuing legal pronouncements) and taught for many years. He also used to teach at al-Ḥākimī mosque. He acquired an *ijāza* from Ibn al-Qawwās (d. 698/1298), Abū l-Faḍl b. ʿAsākir, and al-ʿIzz al-Farrāʾ. He attended the assemblies of al-Taqī Sulaymān, al-Ḥasan al-Kurdī, and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Wānī. He played a great role in his daughter's education; he brought her to the assemblies or meetings in which she heard scholars, such as al-Wānī and al-Dabbūsī, read works aloud. He died in 741/1341.

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[134] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammd b. Ibrāhīm b. Saʿdallāh. For his biography, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* ii, 378–382.

[135] Ibid., iv, 235.

[136] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Mawṣilī. For his biography, see ibid., iii, 325.

[137] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* vii, 39. Al-Ziriklī mistakenly refers to Sitt al-Quḍāh Maryam bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān as the sister of Muḥammad al-Adhruʿī while there is no relation between them. The same mistake has been committed by the editor of the *Muʿjam* who quoted al-Ziriklī without acknowledging him. Al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* vii, 210.

[138] His biography is available in Taghrībirdī, *Manhal* ii, 118–119; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* i, 240 (613).

[139] Sayeed, Shifting fortunes 258. Such studies include Berkey, *Transmission* 169–171, and Roded, *Women in Islamic biographical collections* 75–76.

[140] Sayeed, Shifting fortunes 258.

5.4 *The Collections Transmitted by Maryam*

Maryam is listed as transmitting the following works:[141]

1. the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection of Muslim; *Juzʾ al-musalasal bi-l-awaliyya*;
2. the *Mashyakha* of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Wānī (d. 727/1326) compiled by Abū l-Ḥusayn b. Aybak; *al-Arbaʿūn al-buldāniyya* of al-Silafī (d. 576/1180);
3. a minor *ḥadīth* compilation (*juzʾ*) of al-Ḥasan b. ʿArafa (d. 257/870);
4. the first, second, third, fourth, and sixth portions of the work titled *Muʿjam Abī l-Nūn Yūnus b. Ibrāhīm al-Dabbūsī* (d. 729/1328) compiled by al-Ḥasan b. Aybak;
5. the first portion of the *Makārim al-akhlāq* of al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/970);
6. the seventh portion of the work titled *Amālī al-maḥāmilī*; a portion of the work titled *Majlis Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī wa-Abī Muḥammad b. Bālawayh* (d. 410/1019);
7. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth Manṣūr b. ʿAmmār* (d. 225/839);
8. a *juzʾ* of Ibn Nujayd (d. 365/975);
9. *al-Muntaqā min al-juzʾ al-awwal min ḥadīth Ibn Akhī Mīmī*;[142]
10. the nineteenth and twentieth portions of the work titled *al-Khilaʿiyyāt*;[143]
11. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth ʿAmr b. Dīnar* (d. 126/743) compiled by Abū Bakr al-Shāfiʿī;
12. *Juzʾ al-arbaʿīn* of al-Thaqafī, compiled by al-Ḥaddād;[144]
13. *al-Arbaʿūn* of Imām al-Ḥaramayn (d. 478/1085);
14. the ninth and tenth portions of the work titled *al-Thaqafiyyāt*;[145]
15. a portion of the work titled *Imlaʾ Maʿmar b. al-Fākhir* (d. 564/1168); the first portion of the work titled *Amālī al-Maḥāmilī*[146] with the narration of Abū ʿUmar b. Mahdī from him;
16. the seventh and eighth portions of the work titled *Ḥadīth Sufyān b. ʿUyayna* (d. 198/813); a portion of the work titled *Fawāʾid al-ḥāfiẓ Abī l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir* (d. 507/1113);
17. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth al-Anmāṭī*[147] by al-Qirmisīnī (d. 358/968);[148]

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[141] This list is taken from Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Majmaʿ* ii, 559–571; cf. ʿAzzūz, *Juhūd* 400–404.

[142] Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-Daqqāq al-Baghdādī (d. 390/999).

[143] A collection of 20 *juzʾs* of *ḥadīth*s written by Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Khilaʿī (d. 492/1098).

[144] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Saʿīd al-Ḥadād (d. 500/1106).

[145] A collection of ten *juzʾs* of *ḥadīth*s written by Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Qāsim b. al-Faḍl b. Aḥmad al-Thaqafī (d. 489/1096).

[146] Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Ismāʿīl al-Maḥāmilī (d. 330/941).

[147] Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī al-Anmāṭī.

[148] Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhim b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan.

18. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth al-Dabbūsī*;
19. a portion of the work titled *al-Juzʾ al-sādis min ḥadīth al-Mukhalliṣ* (d. 394/1003);
20. a portion which consists of six assemblies of the work titled *Amālī Abī Saʿīd al-Naqqāsh* (d. 414/1023); the *Arbaʿūn* collection of al-Bayhaqī;
21. *al-Arbaʿūn al-buldāniyya* of Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Bakrī (d. 656/1258);
22. a portion of the work titled *Sudāsiyyāt al-Rāzī* (d. 525/1130);
23. a portion of the work titled *Musnad Ṣuhayb* of Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Zaʿfarānī (d. 369/979);
24. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAyyāsh al-Qaṭṭān* (d. 334/945);
25. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad b. Fāris* (d. 346/957);
26. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth al-Qāsim Naṣr b. Aḥmad al-Marjī*;
27. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth Ibn al-Busrī* (d. 474/1081);[149]
28. a portion of the work titled *Khamsa min shuyūkh al-Dabbūsī*; a portion of the work titled *Muwāfaqāt juzʾ al-Dhuhalī*;[150]
29. a portion of the work titled *Muwāfaqāt Abī Muṣʿab ʿan Mālik fī l-Muwaṭṭaʾ*;
30. the fourth portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth Ibn Ziyād al-Qaṭṭān* (d. 350/961) selected by ʿUmar al-Baṣrī;
31. a portion of the work titled *ʿAshrat aḥādīth muntaqāh min al-muntaqā min ḥadīth al-Layth* (d. 175/791) with the narration of ʿĪsā b. Ḥammād from him;
32. the book of *al-Arbaʿīn li-Muḥammad b. Aslam*;
33. a portion of the work titled *Ḥikāyat al-Maṣqalī*;[151] the eleventh portion of the work titled *Fawāʾid Abī l-Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Dhuhalī* (d. 367/977); and
34. a portion of the work titled *Muntaqā min ḥadīth Abī Manṣūr b. al-Wakīl wa-Abī Ḥafṣ b. al-Ḥaytham wa-Abī l-Qāsim al-Khallāf* with the narration of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr b. Mardawayh from them.[152]

In addition to this list, Ibn Ḥajar provides us with another list in his *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras*, a collection of *isnād*s through which Ibn Ḥajar acquired authority to transmit specific works.[153] The list includes the following works which Ibn Ḥajar heard from Maryam or read before her:

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[149] Abū l-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Baghdādī l-Bandār.

[150] Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ḥumayd b. ʿAlī al-Dhuhalī (d. 452/1060).

[151] ʿAlī b. Shujaʿ b. Muḥammad al-Maṣqalī (d. 443/1051).

[152] ʿAzzūz, *Juhūd* 400.

[153] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Mufahras passim*.

1. *Mukhtaṣar al-Muzanī* (d. 264/877);[154]
2. *al-Muttafaq*[155] of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Jawzaqī (d. 388/998);
3. the *Muṣannaf*[156] and *Rafʿ al-yadayn fī l-ṣalāh*[157] of Ḥammād b. Salama;
4. *al-Farāʾiḍ*[158] of Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marūzī (d. 294/906);
5. *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīm*[159] of Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838);
6. the *Musnad*[160] of Isḥāq b. Rāhawayh (d. 238/852);
7. the *Musnad*[161] of Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849);
8. *Muʿjam al-ṣaḥāba*[162] of Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī (d. 317/929);
9. the *Musnad*[163] of Abū Bakr al-Bazzār (d. 292/905);
10. *ʿUlūm al-ḥadīth*[164] of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 378/988);
11. *al-ʿIlal*[165] and *al-Tamyīz*,[166] both of al-Bukhārī;
12. *al-Jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*[167] and *al-Ikhwa wa-l-akhawāt*,[168] both of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938);
13. *Asmāʾ al-ṣaḥāba*[169] of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Daghūlī;
14. *al-Maʿārif*[170] of Ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawarī (d. 276/889);
15. *Tārīkh Miṣr*[171] of Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā;
16. a portion of the work titled *Ḥadīth Ibn al-Muqayyar*;[172]
17. *Kifāyat al-mutaʿabbid*[173] of ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm b. ʿAbd al-Qawī al-Mundhirī (d. 643/1246);

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[154] Ibid., 41.
[155] Ibid., 48.
[156] Ibid., 50.
[157] Ibid., 61.
[158] Ibid., 71.
[159] Ibid., 106.
[160] Ibid., 131.
[161] Ibid., 135.
[162] Ibid., 135.
[163] Ibid., 139.
[164] Ibid., 153.
[165] Ibid., 158.
[166] Ibid., 160.
[167] Ibid., 166.
[168] Ibid., 167.
[169] Ibid., 167.
[170] Ibid., 177.
[171] Ibid., 178.
[172] Ibid., 365.
[173] Ibid., 403.

18. *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*;[174] and
19. the *Musnad*[175] of al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān al-Nasawī (d. 303/915).

Al-Maqrīzī lists the following works that Maryam heard from her teacher al-Wānī: His *Mashyakha*, *al-Arbaʿīn al-buldāniyya* of al-Silafī, *al-Arbaʿīn al-thaqafiyya*, and *Juzʾ Ibn ʿArafa*. From al-Dabbūsī she heard a portion of his *Muʿjam*, which was compiled by Ibn Aybak.[176]

From this list, we notice that the subjects covered by these compilations underscore that her reputation was based on the transmission of a range of works in diverse areas of *ḥadīth*. She transmitted personal collections of *ḥadīth*, *musnad*s, *al-amālī*, *al-arbaʿūn*, *al-fawāʾid*, *al-muwāfaqāt*, and *sudāsiyyāt*. This list includes works on ascetic piety, such as the book of *Makārim al-akhlāq* of al-Ṭabarānī.

Also, we can conclude that she had much contact with al-Wāni and al-Dabbūsī. They appear frequently in the chain of transmission of the collections she transmitted. In addition to al-Wāni and al-Dabbūsī, there are two other teachers who played a great role in Maryam's career, al-Wādī-Āshī (d. 749/1338)[177] and al-Ḥajjār (730/1329).[178] Al-Wādī-Āshī is best known as Ibn Jābir or Ṣāḥib al-Riḥlatayn. His *nisba* is taken from his origin in the Andalusian city of Guadix.

Al-Ḥajjār was a famous transmitter of *ḥadīth*. Students from all countries travelled to hear him. We are told that when he died, the level of scholarship declined.[179] He was among those who had heard the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ibn al-Zabīdī (d. 649/1251), another prominent *muḥaddith*. Al-Ḥajjār's repute was such that he narrated the *Ṣaḥīḥ* no less than 70 times in Damascus, al-Ṣāliḥiyya, Cairo, Hama, Baalbek, Homs, Kafr Baṭnā, and other surrounding regions.[180]

Finally, it is safe to conclude that Maryam's appearance in these *isnād*s signifies that she acquired permission to narrate these works.

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[174] Ibid., 417.

[175] Ibid., 138.

[176] Ibid.

[177] His full name is Muḥammad b. Jābir b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥassān al-Wādi Āshī. See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography no. 229; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* iii, 413–414.

[178] His full name is Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭālib b. Niʿma b. Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Bayān al-Ṣāliḥī l-Ḥajjār. See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography no. 14; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl* i, 142–143.

[179] Roded, *Women in Islam* 133.

[180] Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 84.

5.5 *The Beginning of Maryam's Education*

As mentioned before, Maryam's father brought her to the assemblies of *ḥadīth* scholars, but it is not clear at exactly what age. In the *Muʿjam* there is a reference to two teachers who died in the year 722/1322, when Maryam was three.[181] This indicates that Maryam began the learning process surprisingly early. At this stage, she could memorize short, popular *ḥadīth*s. Even granting a young child an *ijāza* was widely accepted.[182]

Five of Maryam's teachers are named in her biographies. Al-Wānī died by the time she was nine. Al-Dabbūsī died when she was ten. Al-Ḥalabī died when she was 16. Al-Taqī al-Ṣāi'gh died when she was six. Al-Ḥajjār[183] died when she was eleven. She was the last to narrate from most of these scholars.[184] Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Farḍī (d. 700/1300) heard *ḥadīth*s from al-Dabbūsī (d. 729/1328), and Maryam also heard from al-Dabbūsī. There is a span of 100 years between their deaths. This is an example of what is known in *ḥadīth* literature as *al-sābiq wa-l-lāḥiq* (early and late students of transmitters).[185] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ defines this category of *ḥadīth* as "those from whom two transmitters relate, one early and one late with a great difference between their dates of death. So, there is a great difference in the time difference between them. Both relate, even if the later one of them is not regarded as a contemporary of the first or a member of his generation."[186]

Ibn Ḥajar reports that al-Ḥajjār and other scholars from Damascus granted Maryam some *ijāza*s.[187] Al-Ḥajjar died when Maryam was eleven, so Maryam's travel in the pursuit of knowledge began very early when her father took her to Damascus to attend the classes held by al-Ḥajjār.

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[181] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography nos. 141 and 249.

[182] Al-Shahrazūrī, *Introduction* 114.

[183] The editor of al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, on which all the biographies of Maryam in other sources are based, mistakenly read the text "*wa-ajāza lahā al-Taqī al-Ṣāʾigh wa-ghayruhu min musnidī Miṣr wa-l-Ḥijāz, wa-ghayruhu min al-aʾimma bi-Dimashq*." The context suggests that al-Taqī al-Ṣāʾigh and other scholars from Egypt granted her an *ijāza*, al-Ḥajjār and other scholars from Damascus also granted her an *ijāza*. So, the text should be read as follows: "*wa-ajāza lahā al-Taqī al-Ṣāʾigh wa-ghayruhu min musnidī Miṣr, wa-l-Ḥajjār wa-ghayruhu min al-aʾimma bi-Dimashq*." The only editor who read it this way is Ḥasan Ḥabashī, the editor of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*. He gave the reason for this reading as that Maryam is not reported to have traveled to the Hejaz. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ* ii, 254 n. 5.

[184] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ* ii, 254.

[185] Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar* iii, 470.

[186] Al-Shahrazūrī, *Introduction* 235. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has a book on this category of *ḥadīth* titled *al-Sābiq wa-l-lāḥiq fī tabāʿudi mā bayna wafāti rāwiyyan ʿan shaykhin wāḥid.*

[187] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ* ii, 254.

There is a reference in Maryam's biographies to a certain Nāsir al-Dīn b. Samʿūn[188] as one of her teachers, but no biographical information is found in the *Muʿjam* or any other sources, except in al-Ziriklī's *al-Aʿlām*.[189] The number of female teachers mentioned in the *Muʿjam* is 28 out of 319.[190] The death dates of four of them are not known.[191] The confirmed death dates for these women indicate that Maryam's contact with them must have occurred when she was young. Ḥafṣa bt. ʿUbayd and Sharīfa bt. Abī l-Barakāt died by the time Maryam was 5; Lawza bt. ʿAbdallāh, by the time she was 6; Dunyā bt. Yūsuf al-Hakkārī, by the time she was 7; Zaynab bt. ʿAbdallāh, by the time she was twelve; Muʾnisa bt. ʿAlī, by the time she was 13; Ḥabība bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisiyya, Khadīja bt. Ibrāhīm al-ʿAsqalānī, and Fātima bt. Fakhrāwar, by the time she was 14; Sitt al-Shām Khadīja bt. ʿAlī, Sitt al-ʿAbīd bt. ʿUmar b. Abī Bakr al-Dunaysīr, Fāṭima bt. ʿAbd al-Dāʾim, and Khadīja bt. ʿUthmān b. al-Tuzarī, by the time she was 15; Sitt al-ʿAjam Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad, by the time she was 18; and Khadīja bt. Fakhrāwar and Sitt al-ʿArab ʿĀisha bt. ʿAlī al-Ṣinhājī, by the time she was 20.

In her twenties Maryam had contact with five female teachers. Āmina bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisiyya and Zaynab bt. Muḥammad al-Bajdī died by the time she was 23; Zaynab bt. Kamāl al-Dīn, by the time she was 27; and Fāṭima bt. al-ʿIzz Ibrāhīm b. Qudāma and Sitt al-Fuqahāʾ bt. Muḥammad, by the time she was 28. Later, she had contact with Asmāʾ bt. Yaʿqūb by the time she was 43, and finally Hājar bt. ʿAlī al-Ṣinhājī by the time she was 58.

Maryam's biographers used different terms to describe how she received certification or transmission authority. For example, we read "*samiʿat min*," which describes occasions in which she was brought to an assembly or meeting in which a specific work was read out loud. "*Ajāza*(*t*) *la-hā*" is used for permission granted in writing, either through a direct meeting with the granter of the certificate or by correspondence.

She was well-deserving of the great respect with which she was held, for she "stood alone (as a transmitter) from the majority of her teachers."[192]

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[188] See al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 124; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ* ii, 254; ibid., *Dhayl* 138.

[189] His name is Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Samʿūn (d. 737/1337). He was a mathematician and an astronomer. Al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* v, 325.

[190] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography nos. 63, 66, 69, 83, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 112, 191, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 202, 303, and 307.

[191] See ibid., biography nos. 69, 91, 98, and 199.

[192] Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar* iii 470.

5.6 *Maryam's Male Students*

Like many scholars, Maryam was sought out for her transmission authority by students. For example, Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-ʿIryānī (d. 852/1448) is said to have been brought to the assembly of Maryam.[193] Ibn Abī l-Iṣbaʿ Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf (d. 856/1452) was granted an *ijāza* by Maryam (ca. 788/1386).[194] Aḥmad b. Yaʿqūb al-Iṭfīḥī, who was born in the year 790/1388, was brought to hear *ḥadīth*s from Maryam.[195] Khalīl b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ashqar (d. 820/1417) read some *ḥadīth*s in the presence of Maryam.[196] Maryam is credited with giving an *ijāza* to ʿAbd al-Salām b. Dāwūd b. ʿUthmān al-Maqdisī (d. 850/1446).[197]

ʿAbd al-Ghannī b. Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Birmāwī (d. 856/1452) was brought by his father to hear *ḥadīth*s from Maryam.[198] Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 864/1459) and Ibn al-Hilīs Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 838/1434) also heard *ḥadīth*s from Maryam.[199]

Bulliet notes a trend among *ḥadīth* teachers to have young students, particularly in their final years of teaching. The teachers that *ḥadīth* students had at a young age appear frequently in their biographies.[200] In Maryam's case, we are told that she gave a certificate to Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. ʿAlī al-Yāfiʿī (d. 823/1420) when he was young.[201]

Although women themselves did not travel as much as men in the search for religious knowledge, contact with scholars who stayed in the cities of their residence allowed them to acquire and disseminate *ḥadīth*. Travelling scholars would obtain *ijāza*s from female teachers and then transmit the knowledge they learned from them to their hometowns.[202] Maryam's reputation attracted students, traveling in search of knowledge, to her study circles. The Damascene scholar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Qamāqim (d. 864/1459) heard *ḥadīth*s from her during his travels to Cairo.[203] The Meccan scholar ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Fāsī (d. 827/1423) traveled to Cairo with his brother ʿAbd al-Laṭīf (d. 822/1419) to hear *ḥadīth*s from Maryam.[204] Another Meccan scholar, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ẓahīra (d. 802/1399), also traveled to Cairo to hear *ḥadīth*s from Maryam.[205]

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[193] Ibid., i, 70–71.

[194] Ibid., ii, 245 (682).

[195] Ibid., 245.

[196] Ibid., ii, 202.

[197] Ibid., iv, 205.

[198] Ibid., 245.

[199] Ibid., ix, 148, vi, 19.

[200] Bulliet, Age 105–117, quoted from Sayeed, Shifting fortunes 89.

[201] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* v, 13 (numeration is according to al-Shamela Library).

[202] Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 74.

[203] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* vii, 95.

The Damascene scholar Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaysī (d. 842/1438) and the Meccan scholar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Shaybī (d. 837/1433) were awarded an *ijāza* by Maryam.[206] The Meccan scholar Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 832/1429) is reported to have heard *ḥadīth*s from Maryam in Cairo. Likewise, the Meccan scholar ʿUmar b. Raslān b. Nuṣayr b. Ṣāliḥ al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403) travelled to Cairo to hear *ḥadīth*s from Maryam.

Maryam is mentioned among a list of scholars who gave certification to Ibn Zabraq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb (d. 840/1436) circa 788/1386.[207] Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Ẓahīra from Mecca, and ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Ṭāʾifī from al-Ṭāʾif (d. 840/1436) were also given an *ijāza* by Maryam around 794/1319.[208]

5.7 *Maryam's Female Students*

Maryam's teaching career continued until after the year 797/1395. Maryam and her brother Muḥammad appear in the biography of Sitt al-ʿIrāq bt. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Bālisī (d. in Mecca 867/1462) as having awarded her an *ijāza* after the year 797/1395.[209]

Maryam also appears in the biography of a Meccan scholar, Ghuṣūn bt. ʿAlī al-Nūwayriyya (d. 855/1451).[210] Ghuṣūn was born in the year 794/1392, which means that her meeting with Maryam must have taken place between the years 794 and 805. This is another indication of the continuation of Maryam's teaching career until the beginning of her eighties.

Another female student was Hājar bt. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (d. 874/1468) who is mentioned as having heard or attended the sessions of Maryam.[211]

From the biographies of Maryam's students, we can figure out the geographical extent of her reputation. Some of the students went to see Maryam in Cairo, or perhaps she met some of them in the cities of their origin. If Maryam had not convened assemblies in such places, it is possible that her students recounted her reputation after returning home from travels where they had encountered her.

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[204] Ibid., iv, 322.
[205] Ibid., ix, 5–6.
[206] Ibid., viii, 103, ix, 13.
[207] Ibid., ii, 211.
[208] Ibid., v, 60, viii, 191.
[209] Ibid., xii, 55.
[210] Ibid., xii, 85.
[211] Ibid., xii, 132.

A good reconstruction of Maryam's network of students and teachers places her in the scholarly elite of Cairo. It also reveals her connection with scholars from other cities.

5.8 *Methods of Receiving* ḥadīth

Throughout the *Muʿjam*, Ibn Ḥajar, quoting the *samāʿāt* and *ijāzāt* which had, of course, been provided to him by Maryam, provides the different methods by which Maryam received *ḥadīth*s from her teachers. He uses expressions like *akhbaranā* (informed us) and *haddathanā* (transmitted to us) to indicate the transmission of *ḥadīth* through *samaʿ* (audition). Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ views this type of transmission as the most elevated, according to the majority of scholars.[212] On the different expressions used to indicate this type of transmission, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ quotes al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ as saying:

> There is no dispute that in reference to this form of taking up *ḥadīth* it is permissible for the student who heard the teacher to say, "He transmitted to us" (*ḥaddathanā*), "He informed us" (*akhbaranā*), "He told us" (*anbaʾanā*), "I heard X saying" (*samiʿtu fulānan yaqūl*), "X said to us" (*qāla lanā fulān*), "X mentioned to us" (*dhakara lanā fulān*).[213]

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī confirms that the expression "*samʿitu*" (I heard so and so) is the highest expression.[214] This reflects the role of *samāʿāt* as an important source for the study of *ḥadīth* transmission. The traditions of the Prophet were transmitted in small circles and in mass gatherings. Hence, the reading of and listening to *ḥadīth* were considered an exceedingly esteemed performance because these meetings created a multigenerational social group.[215] The social importance of this tradition is clearly highlighted by chroniclers, and many obituaries include that the deceased "had learned *ḥadīth* with" or "read with" a well-known teacher.[216]

In some other cases, Maryam confirms the method of transmission by the expression "*qirāʾatan ʿalayhi wa-anā asmaʿ*" (It was recited to so and so while I was listening). This is another method of taking and receiving *ḥadīth*; it is called "*al-qirāʾa ʿalā al-shaykh*" (recitation to the teacher). Ibn al-Ṣalah says:

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[212] Al-Shahrazūrī, *Introduction* 97.

[213] Ibid., 98.

[214] Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 84.

[215] Frenkel, Women 411.

[216] Ibid.

> Most of the transmitters call it "presentation" (*ʿarḍ*) since the reciter presents the *Ḥadīth* to the teachers just as the reciter presents the Quran to the Quran instructor. It makes no difference whether you are the reciter or someone else recites while you listen. You may recite from a book or from your memory. The teacher may have memorized the material recited to him or not. In the latter case, he or some other reliable individual should hold his text.[217]

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says:

> Most of jurists and scholars of *Ḥadīth* hold that reading to the teacher is like hearing from him.[218]

The usage of the expression "*qirāʾatan ʿalayhi wa-naḥnu nasmaʿ*" implies that she attended the assemblies of her teachers along with other colleagues, male and female. These two methods indicate oral transmission.

Along with the expression *akhbaranā*, Maryam adds the word *ijāzatan* to emphasize that she was granted an *ijāza* to narrate a particular *ḥadīth* to others on behalf of her teacher. This is the third method of receiving *ḥadīth*. *Ijāza* signifies the teacher's permission to a student to narrate from him all his narrations or his writings.

The frequent use of the expression "*ijāzatan*" (by means of *ijāza*) indicates the proliferation of written transmission at Maryam's time. In the earliest period of *ḥadīth* history the imperative to acquire *ḥadīth* through direct, oral transmission, often entailing rigorous journeys in search of authoritative sources, raised the bar for women's participation and denied them access to this domain. However, written transmission facilitated the career of female transmitters.[219]

In 148 narrations mentioned throughout the *Muʿjam*, Maryam uses the terminology "*akhbaranā* [so and so] *ijāzatan*" (so and so informed us while providing us permission to narrate the same information on his authority.)[220]

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[217] Al-Shahrazūrī, *Introduction* 100.

[218] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāya* 259–260, here quoted from Nadwi, *Muḥaddithāt* 86.

[219] Sayeed, Shifting fortunes 237.

[220] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography nos. 1, 3, 5–6, 10–11, 13–25, 27–28, 35–38, 41–42, 45–46, 48, 54, 56–57, 59, 60–61, 64, 68, 72–73, 75–77, 81, 83, 86, 88, 90, 100, 104–105, 107–111, 113–114,

In one instance, Maryam uses the terminology "*fīmā ajāzahu lanā wa-kataba bi-khaṭṭihi*" (in what he licensed us in his own handwriting), confirming that her *ijāza* had been signed by the teacher himself.[221]

In another eight cases, Maryam uses the terminology of "*akhbaranā* [so and so] *idhnan*" (so and so informed us by granting permission) to express *ijāza*.[222]

In one case, the *Muʿjam* confirms that the *ijāza* was coupled with a correspondence (*mukātabatan*),[223] which is another type of *ḥadīth* reception. It consists of the teacher sending some of his *ḥadīth*s in his own handwriting to an absent student, or the teacher writing them for him while he is present.[224] A correspondence takes two forms. One of them is a correspondence without licensing. The second is a correspondence coupled with licensing.[225] The second form applies to the case of Maryam.

In order to indicate that the *ijāza* was obtained without audition (for instance, by correspondence), Maryam uses the terminology "*ijāzatan in lam yakun samāʿan*"[226] (by way of licensing, even though I had not heard the text itself during an audition) or "*idhnan in lam yakun samāʿan*."[227]

When it comes to poetry, Maryam uses the expression "*anshadanā*"[228] (he recited to us). In one case, the recitation of verses was conveyed through an *ijāza* coupled with a writing from the teacher.[229]

6 Conclusion

Maryam died in 805/1402 at the age of 84. Ibn Ḥajar praises her as a pious and chaste woman and one who had great love for knowledge.[230] Based on Maryam's career, the general picture that emerges is one of a woman who was

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116–120, 122–128, 130–137, 139–149, 154, 158, 161–169, 171–173, 175, 177, 179–182, 184, 186, 194–196, 198, 201, 215, 222, 225, 230, 243, 248, 251, 258, 262, 266, 278, 285–286, 289, 291, 294, 297, 299, 302, 305, 306, 308, 310–314, and 324.

[221] See ibid., biography no. 76. Maryam narrated some verses from her teacher Bilbān to the effect that he granted those who asked him for *ijāza* to narrate the collections he narrated. These collections include the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the *Juz'* of al-Rāzī.

[222] See ibid., biography nos. 1, 116, 176, 188, 202, 230, 236, and 305.

[223] See ibid., biography no. 203.

[224] Al-Shahrazūrī, *Introduction* 123.

[225] Ibid.

[226] See ʿUthmān, *Muʿjam*, biography nos. 1, 179, 180, 186, 227, and 277.

[227] See ibid., biography no. 116.

[228] See ibid., biography nos. 3 and 260.

[229] See ibid., biography no. 260.

[230] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbā'* ii, 254–255.

active in receiving and transmitting religious knowledge, especially the transmission of *ḥadīth*. Her activities reflect intellectual developments in the important network of scholars of which she was a part. In general, women during the Mamluk period played important and prominent roles in their society, and some of their activities have been documented in medieval biographical dictionaries. Women are described in the *Muʿjam* as freely studying with both men and women. After getting permission to instruct others, they clearly worked hard to match their male counterparts in their teaching careers. Maryam's portrait does not reveal the stereotyped preoccupation with seclusion or gender segregation.

Knowledge of the details of Maryam's life is relatively limited. Maryam showed competence as a scholar and educator of some of the best minds of her times, and in turn, her contemporary male scholars recognized her authority in transmitting the words of the Prophet. It is noteworthy that Maryam's reputation was based, to a great extent, on the scholars she studied with. We have noticed the kind of interaction that Maryam had with both male and female teachers and students, which shows coeducational activity during her youth and seniority. Maryam was an authority for compilations of *ḥadīth*, and she emerged in the historical records as a sought-after teacher of *ḥadīth*.

The study provides a historical framework for further research on individual female scholars and for the development of gender roles throughout Muslim history. Further research is needed, especially on individual female scholars, and one can assert that there is potential for supporting the argument that *ḥadīth* literature has been developed, preserved, propagated, and taught by both men and women of scholarly repute.

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CHAPTER 38

Knowledge, Piety, and Religious Leadership in the Late Middle Ages: Reinstating Women in the Master Narrative

Asma Afsaruddin

Most works that discuss the lives of Muslim women from the first/seventh century through the seventh-eighth/fifteenth centuries tend to assert that women's roles in the public sphere—whether defined politically, culturally, economically, or, particularly, in terms of religious scholarship and leadership—went into a decline after the third/ninth century. There appears to be considerable truth in this assertion. In her book *Women and gender in Islam*, Leila Ahmed presents quite a compelling narrative about the diminution of women's public roles by the mid-ʿAbbasid period. As the sources suggest, male jurists in particular, reflecting contemporary societal and cultural norms, tended to legislate away many of the rights and privileges that early Islamic society had given women—from the time of the Medinan polity under the Prophet Muhammad, through the reign of his four Rightly-Guided Successors, and into the Umayyad and the early ʿAbbasid periods. Such rights included attendance at mosques and at public gatherings in general, negotiation of one's own marriage, access to divorce under specific conditions, traveling without a male guardian, and, above all, gaining access to positions of religious instruction and leadership. Ahmed says,

> In Abbasid society women were conspicuous for their absence from all arenas of the community's central affairs. In the records relating to this period they are not to be found, as they were in the previous era, either on battlefield or in mosques, nor are they described as participants in or key contributors to the cultural life and productions of their society.[1]

If we read only juridical discourses and prescriptive legal manuals written particularly for the edification of women, we would be convinced that this process of attrition was relentless and essentially complete by roughly the end of the

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[1] Ahmed, *Women and gender* 79.

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third/ninth century.[2] However, fortunately for us, we also have biographical literature on women from various periods, which, being more descriptive than prescriptive in its compositional intent, gives us more realistic accounts of the lives of the women depicted.[3] These accounts help us challenge the rather streamlined, monolithic, and perennially pessimistic image of medieval Muslim women that emerges in certain kinds of literature down to our own times.

One of the best sources for recovering the multiple, often public, religious roles played by Muslim women, particularly in the Mamluk period, remains al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* (*The book of women*). This is the name popularly given to the last volume of his encyclopedic biographical work known as *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (*The brilliant light belonging to the people of the ninth century* [*AH*]).[4] This volume is a veritable treasure trove of information on women who distinguished themselves on various levels—economically, socially, culturally, and, above all, in terms of religious piety, academic learning, and some measure of religious leadership that ensued from such learning. H. Lutfi has discussed the socioeconomic roles that various women played in the Mamluk period, as retrieved from al-Sakhāwī's important work.[5] I will instead focus on the academic and religious roles that certain women played during this period and document their noteworthy personal qualities, scholarly achievements, and religious piety, which merited mention in one of the most important biographical works of their time.

That these women should continue to have access to religious knowledge in the Islamic milieu, and that wealthy, learned families in particular were concerned about their daughters' education, in addition to that of their sons, despite the otherwise socially restrictive circumstances for women, should not come as a surprise to us. According to a well-known *ḥadīth* (saying) of the Prophet, "The seeking of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim, male and female."[6] Knowledge (*ʿilm*) not only is necessary for training theologians and judges but is also required at the very basic level in order to live one's life as a moral, upright, and God-fearing individual.[7] From this perspective, the seeking and attainment of knowledge recognized no gender restriction. Al-Sakhāwī's important work provides valuable evidence that this was frequently true in the pre-modern Islamic world and opens a critical window for us into the Mamluk period's intellectual environment, which was partially shaped by women.

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[2] An example of such a legal manual written by male jurists to mandate female propriety and restrict women's access to the public realm is Ibn al-Jawzī's *Aḥkām al-nisāʾ*.

[3] Cf. Roded, *Women* 63–73.

[4] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii.

[5] Lutfi, *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*. Also helpful in this context are ʿAbd al-Raziq, *Femme*; Petry, Class solidarity; Fay, Women; and, Chapoutot-Remadi, Femmes.

[6] This *ḥadīth* is recorded by Ibn Māja in his *Sunan*; see Wensinck, *Concordance* iv, 10.

[7] Treatises were written by medieval authors in praise of the merits of acquiring knowledge and its practitioners; among the best known of such treatises are Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr's *Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿilm* and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Faḍl al-ʿilm*.

1 Al-Sakhāwī and His *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*

Before proceeding further, a brief introduction to al-Sakhāwī and his historical and intellectual milieu is in order here to set the larger context for our discussion. Our biographer, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, was born in Cairo in 832/1428 and died in Medina in 902/1497. He was one of the foremost *ḥadīth* scholars and prosopographers of his time, and of the entire Mamluk period. A student of the celebrated *ḥadīth* scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 853/1449), al-Sakhāwī soon became famous himself for his mastery of the *ḥadīth* sciences. He held a number of appointments as *shaykh al-ḥadīth* ("professor of *ḥadīth*") in several well-known religious and academic institutions in Cairo. He frequently traveled to the Syrian provinces of the current Mamluk empire to engage in academic discussions with his colleagues and to audit *ḥadīth* recitations by students wishing to earn their teaching certificates.[8]

It should be stressed here that al-Sakhāwī's interest in contemporary women was by no means commonplace among male biographers who preceded or came after him. Although traditionally most biographical dictionaries have a section on women, these women are drawn mostly from among the female Companions of the Prophet and the women from the generation which immediately followed—that is, from among the Tābiʿūn, or the Successors to the Companions. Like the male Companions, the female Companions were the moral exemplars for all Muslims, particularly for Muslim women, of the succeeding generations. For obvious pious and parenetic purposes, the accounts of these exceptional women from the first generation of Islam continued to be replicated in later biographical works, not always verbatim, and occasionally were doctored to suit the sensibilities of later periods, as I have shown in an earlier study.[9] There was far less interest in documenting the lives of women contemporary to the biographer's time or from the generations following the second generation of Muslims. By departing from convention, al-Sakhāwī's compendious biographical dictionary of the most notable personalities of the ninth/fifteenth century remains to this day an invaluable primary source for information regarding the scholarly and religious elite of his time and, more broadly, of the Mamluk period.[10]

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[8] For more details, see Petry, al-Sakhāwī.

[9] See Afsaruddin, Early women.

2 Women in Roles of Religious Leadership

Now, let us turn specifically to a discussion of some of the women who merited an entry in al-Sakhāwī's biography.[11] An overwhelming number of the 1,075 women referred to in al-Sakhāwī's chapter on women are distinguished for their exemplary religious piety and for their excellence in and dedication to religious scholarship. Out of this total, 411 women received some measure of religious education.[12] The general picture that emerges is of women who were active in both receiving and imparting religious knowledge, particularly in the transmission of *ḥadīth*. The notion of sexually segregated space that we take for granted as a defining feature of medieval Muslim society is challenged to a certain extent by what these biographical accounts have to tell us about the formal and informal settings in which these female scholars conducted their activity in the ninth/fifteenth century. Girls and women are often depicted as studying with boys, men, and other women, and after becoming credentialed as teachers, many of these Mamluk women scholars went on to teach both men and women.

The venues for the academic activities of these women included the *madrasa*, the institution of higher learning, informal study circles (*ḥalaqas*), and private homes. Two of the most prestigious *madrasa*s mentioned by name are the Ẓāhiriyya and the Ṣāliḥiyya in Cairo. For instance, Zaynab bt. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh was taken by her father to the Ẓāhiriyya *madrasa*[13] to listen to al-Bukhārī's *ḥadīth*s being narrated there.[14] The scholar Fāṭima bt. ʿAbdallāh

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[10] For a more general treatment of elite groups in Mamluk Cairo, see Petry's *Civilian elite*.

[11] Since these women are identified as being from the ninth/fifteenth century, and the historical contexts of their lives and accomplishments are thus established, I have not given specific death dates for these individual women, which, in any case, are not always provided.

[12] These figures are provided by Berkey, *Transmission* 167. See further Berkey, Women 143–167.

[13] For more details on this venerable institution built in the seventh/thirteenth century, see Creswell, *Muslim architecture* ii, 42–46.

[14] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 47.

b. Muḥammad herself narrated *ḥadīth*s at the Ṣāliḥiyya *madrasa*,[15] which were audited by the well-known scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, who was one of al-Sakhāwī's teachers. Al-Sakhāwī mentions that Ibn Ḥajar referred to her in his work known as *al-Muʿjam*,[16] while the celebrated Mamluk scholar Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī (d. 846/1442) mentioned her favorably in his important work *ʿUqūd*.[17] A second Fāṭima, the daughter of a certain Khalīl b. ʿAlī al-Khorastānī, narrated *ḥadīth*s at the Ṣāliḥiyya, which were audited by al-Sakhāwī himself.[18]

The homes of learned men and women were also a venue for furthering the education of girls and women. The Hanbali teacher and chief *qāḍī* (judge) ʿIzz al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Kinānī (d. 876/1471) is said to have opened up his home to widows and others to help them continue their informal education.[19]

Our protagonists are mostly women from elite backgrounds. Almost without exception, they are described as being of noble birth, and/or from families that were already distinguished for a tradition of learning, and for producing religious and legal scholars, such as the al-Bulqīnī family. The male relatives and spouses of these women appear to have been quite encouraging of the desire these women had to acquire advanced religious instruction. Some of these scholars were taken as girls by their fathers to *madrasa*s to acquire knowledge, like the previously mentioned Zaynab bt. Muḥammad. Another Zaynab (bt. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad) was taught writing and Quran recitation by her father. She also read with him some of the *ʿUmda*[20] and Ibn Sīnā's *al-Shifāʾ*,[21] among other works. After her marriage to al-Shams b. Rajab, she read with her husband most of the *Ṣaḥīḥān* (the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim).[22] The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī is frequently mentioned in connection with the *samāʿ* sessions attended by our women scholars. Another example is provided in the case of Āmina bt. al-Ṣadr Aḥmad b. al-Badr, who is identified as the maternal aunt of the Hanbali judge in Baalbek, and who is said to have audited part of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī from Abū l-Faraj ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. al-Zaʿbub.[23]

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[15] This Ayyubid *madrasa* was also built in the seventh/thirteenth century; cf., for example, Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic architecture* 87–90. Al-Ṣāliḥiyya was also the name of an important quarter in Damascus where many *ḥadīth* scholars, especially those who belonged to the Hanbali school, resided and taught. However, since Ibn Ḥajar, who was based in Cairo, is described as having audited these sessions, it seems reasonable to conclude that it is the Ayyubid *madrasa* that is being referred to here.

[16] The full title of this work is *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas bi-l-muʿjam al-mufahras*, in which Ibn Ḥajar provides a detailed description of his education and a recounting of his teachers. For a study of these *muʿjam* works which convey much valuable information to us about scholarly networks in the pre-modern period, see Vajda, *Transmission*.

[17] al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 93. The full title of al-Maqrīzī's work is *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-aʿyān al-mufīda*, which, as the title suggests, recounts the lives of some of the most notable personalities of his day.

[18] Ibid., xii, 91.

[19] Ibid., i, 207. These informal venues and networks existed throughout the pre-modern Muslim world; see Chamberlain, *Knowledge, passim*, for an account of such scholarly practices in Damascus during the Mamluk period.

[20] It is not clear which specific work is indicated here, since there are several works with this title.

[21] This is the well-known medical treatise by the famous philosopher and polymath Ibn Sīnā (d. 429/1037).

One highly accomplished woman scholar, Sitt al-Quḍāh bt. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ẓāhira, was from a household known for *ḥadīth* transmission and scholarship (*min bayt riwāya wa-ʿilm*). She received her coveted *ijāza*s, or teaching certificates, from distinguished scholars of the time, such as Abū Hurayra b. al-Dhahabī and Abū l-Khayr b. al-ʿAlāʾī. Sitt al-Quḍāh counted among her students and auditors equally prominent individuals, whom al-Sakhāwī collectively calls *al-fuḍalāʾ*. Al-Sakhāwī himself attended Sitt al-Quḍāh's sessions at the Ṣāliḥiyya and says that he transmitted some *ḥadīth*s from her.[24] Another woman, Umm al-Ḥusayn bt. ʿAbd al-Waḥīd b. al-Zayn, received *ijāza*s from many well-known scholars of her time and married the famous al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī (d. 695/1295), author of several well-known scholarly works.[25] Clearly, these women were empowered by their specific social and familial circumstances, which appear not to have recognized a gender barrier in the basic acquisition and dissemination of religious scholarship.

Some of these women scholars, like their male counterparts, spent years in scholarly apprenticeship, making the rounds of academic circles, choosing to study closely with particular, renowned teachers, and finally earning the coveted *ijāza*. Some women traveled quite far and wide in their scholarly quest. For example, Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Hādī obtained her teaching certificates in Damascus, Egypt, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and other places, studying with renowned scholars like the famous *ḥadīth* scholar Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Ḥajjār, Abū Naṣr b. al-Shirāzī, and Abū Muḥammad b. ʿAsākir, among others.[26] Rabīʾ, daughter of the celebrated Ibn Ḥajar, received *ijāza*s from a large number of Egyptian and Syrian scholars. Her *riḥlat ṭalab al-ʿilm* (travel in the pursuit of knowledge) is said to have begun at the age of four, when her father took her to Mecca to listen to the famed legal scholar from the Shafiʿi *madhhab*, al-Zayn al-Marāghī (d. 816/1414).[27]

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[22] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 42.

[23] Ibid., 3.

[24] Ibid., 57.

[25] Ibid., 140–141.

[26] Ibid., 103. Fāṭima's sister ʿĀʾisha was also a well-known scholar of *ḥadīth*; for a detailed study of the latter's career, see Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 82–87. For more notices on women *ḥadīth* scholars, see Siddiqui, Ḥadīth 117–123.

Another scholar, Sāra bt. al-Taqī ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Kāfī, obtained teaching certificates from some of the best-known Syrian academic luminaries of her time, like al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341) and al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348). She in turn went on to confer *ijāza*s on some of the most prominent scholars of her generation. Al-Sakhāwī mentions that several of his teachers had studied with her, including Ibn Ḥajar, who mentions this fact in his *Muʿjam*. Al-Maqrīzī also includes an entry on her in his *ʿUqūd*.[28] Another Sāra, the daughter of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad, was a highly regarded scholar in her time, born into a house of knowledge and leadership, as al-Sakhāwī phrases it (*min bayt ʿilm wa-riyāsa*). She was prolific in narrating *ḥadīth*. Many of the eminent scholars audited her *ḥadīth* transmission (*samiʿa ʿalayhā al-aʾimma*) and narrated from her "to an indescribable extent" (*ma yafūqu al-waṣf*). However, al-Sakhāwī laments that he did not have the privilege of auditing her transmission. Al-Sakhāwī attests to her near legendary position among the scholars of her day by remarking that when she died, the people of Egypt slipped a degree with regard to transmission of *ḥadīth*.[29]

Like their male colleagues, our female scholars thus clearly worked hard to make their entry into the world of formal religious training. Obviously, their familial prominence and their well-to-do circumstances, which are often implied and sometimes explicitly stated, facilitated their access to the refined world of scholarship. The academic training of the best of these women scholars appears to have been quite rigorous and thorough, a fact that was acknowledged in their own time, given the amount of recognition that came their way as a result.

A number of them appear to have been trained as readers/reciters of the Quran (*qāriʾa*). An overwhelming majority of them are described as having a deep acquaintance with *ḥadīth*, and a significant number of them were prolific transmitters of *ḥadīth*. The two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) figure prominently in the curriculum of our women scholars. Among other works mentioned in relation to the academic training of various women are the biography of the Prophet (*al-sīra al-nabawiyya*);[30]

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[27] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 34. For al-Zayn al-Marāghī, see Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt* iv, 7–8.

[28] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 51–52.

[29] Ibid., xii, 52.

[30] It is not mentioned which specific *sīra* was selected, but very likely it would have been Ibn Hishām's.

the *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* of the fourth/tenth century scholar Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī (d. 459/1066); the *ʿUmda*;[31] the *Arbaʿīn* of al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277);[32] *al-Shāṭibiyya*;[33] and *Sulwān al-muṭāʿ* of Ibn Ẓafar (d. ca. 568/1173).[34] Humanistic works, especially collections of poetry, were sometimes part of the curriculum. ʿĀʾisha bt. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, for example, was not only thoroughly familiar with what is described as *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya* of Ibn al-Furāt (d. 1405; this is possibly his *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*)—so much so that she could recite details of the Prophet's campaigns with ease—but had also memorized numerous verses of poetry, particularly from the *dīwān*, the collected works, of the poet al-Bahāʾ al-Zuhayr (d. 656/1258).[35]

The academic excellence of many of these female scholars is further reflected in the number and quality of the students they supervised, which included, for example, al-Sakhāwī himself, and prior to him, his own teacher, the famous, previously mentioned Ibn Ḥajar. Al-Sakhāwī, in fact, studied with about 68 women, receiving *ijāza*s from about 46 of them.[36] For these, other women scholars of his own acquaintance, and those whom he knew only by reputation, he had words of high praise for their broad erudition and stellar character. Some of them were highly popular teachers, and students flocked to study with them. One such individual was Hājir, also known as ʿAzīza bt. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who our biographer describes as one of the most knowledgeable about *ḥadīth* in her time.[37] Al-Sakhāwī himself had attended her study circles. Hājir bt. Muḥammad had gotten the best possible education in her time, having studied with some of the most outstanding scholars of the period, such as [Abū Isḥāq] al-Tanukhī, al-

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[31] There are several works with this title, and it is not clear which one is intended.

[32] This is the well-known *ḥadīth* collection of Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), containing 40 statements of the Prophet. Similar compilations by other scholars were made in the medieval period, but al-Nawawī's work remains the most popular to this day.

[33] This is the popular poem on the seven Quranic modes of recitation known as *Ḥirz al-amānī wa-wajh al-tahānī*, also known as the *qaṣīda lāmiyya*, by the poet al-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī (d. 590/1194).

[34] The full title of this work is *Sulwān al-muṭāʿ fī ʿudwān al-atbāʿ* by the Sicilian scholar Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Zafar al-Siqillī. For a modern study of this work, see Kechichian and Dekmejian, *Just prince*.

[35] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 78. The poet's full name is Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zuhayr b. Muḥammad. Poetry (and by extension *adab* or belles-lettres) appears to have been a regular feature of women's academic training; theological works, however, appear to be lacking, at least in the training of women mentioned by al-Sakhāwī.

[36] Berkey, *Transmission* 176.

[37] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 131.

Burhān al-Āmidī, and [Sirāj al-Dīn] al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403).[38] Another woman, Kamāliyya al-Ṣughrā bt. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, studied with the celebrated historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), in addition to other prominent scholars.[39]

An important additional role that several of these women played was as benefactors of educational institutions, a natural consequence of their ability to inherit and dispose of their own property under Islamic law. Several works which give us valuable information about the Mamluk period report that wealthy, elite women sometimes established educational institutions or *madrasa*s. One such *madrasa*, as al-Maqrīzī in his *Khiṭaṭ* informs us, was known as al-Quṭbiyya, founded by ʿIṣmat al-Dīn, daughter of the Ayyubid sultan al-Mālik al-ʿĀdil (d. 615/1218), and sister of al-Malik al-Afḍal Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad, for whom it was named.[40] In 771/1369, a renowned *madrasa* was endowed by Barakat, the mother of Sulṭān al-Ashraf Shaʿbān, which became known as "the *madrasa* of the mother of al-Ashraf Shaʿbān."[41]

Our own biographer al-Sakhāwī mentions a number of women who endowed positions in institutions of higher learning or endowed an institution itself. One such individual was Fāṭima bt. Qānībāy al-ʿUmarī al-Nāṣirī, the wife of the Mamluk soldier Taghrībirdī al-Muʿadhdhī, who established a school known as the *madrasa* of Umm Khawānd, sometime in the ninth/fifteenth century. Another woman named Ulaf (?), a member of the aforementioned distinguished scholarly al-Bulqīnī family, created endowments to support Quran reciters in her grandfather's *madrasa*.[42]

The image that we form of these women scholars from the biographical vignettes offered to us by al-Sakhāwī is sometimes quite well-rounded. In addition to occasionally detailed descriptions of their scholarly training, the women's personal traits are clearly mentioned, mainly couched in terms of individual piety and moral rectitude. The same or a similar cluster of epithets is used tropically, one may say, to create, in many cases, a standard image of the morally irreproachable and gifted woman scholar. And yet, within what at first glance may appear to be standard constructions, the variant traits and distinctive accomplishments of the individual woman frequently come through. The most commonly occurring epithets are *khayyira*, *aṣīla*, *ṣāliḥa*, and *fāḍila*. Three of these terms, *khayyira*, *ṣāliḥa*, and *fāḍila*, testify to the women's moral excellence and personal piety. A less frequently used, but related, term is *mutaʿabbida*, which refers to the individual's devoutness and godliness. The epithet *aṣīla*, however, refers specifically to the individual's noble birth and, secondarily, to her strength of character. A related adjective used for a few women is *jalīla*, which indicates her high-born social status in most cases, but also her distinguished academic status. Other personal adjectives used are *mutawaddida*, which means "beloved," in this case also popular, *ḥāshima* (dignified and modest) and, to a lesser extent, *ṣayyina*, or chaste.

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[38] Ibid., xii, 131.

[39] Ibid., 120.

[40] Ibid., ii, 368.

[41] Ibid., 399–400; cf. Berkey, *Transmission* 162.

[42] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 7–8; 93–94; Berkey, *Transmission* 164.

A key descriptive term used is *raʾīsa* (lit., "a female leader") and the more elevated form *kathīrat al-riyāsa* (having plenitude of leadership) for a number of these women. These terms are particularly significant since they appear to connote, in our context, some kind of acknowledged religious leadership and prominence in learning. George Makdisi has pointed out that *riyāsa*, in the academic context, usually referred to proficiency in disputation in one's chosen field—whether that be grammar, theology, literature, or the like.[43] It is unclear whether this is the kind of proficiency/leadership al-Sakhāwī is referring to in his entries in relation to these female scholars. In any case, whatever kind of religious and moral leadership may be implied in al-Sakhāwī's usage of the term *riyāsa*, it appears not to have become translated into any kind of public authority beyond these academic circles or the conferral of public office on any of the female scholars. The term *riyāsa* seems to refer primarily to the women's exceptional stature as academics and scholars in their circumscribed milieu. And yet, such stature could be quite considerable.

For example, Nashwān or Sawda bt. al-Jamāl ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAlāʾ earned widespread respect and acclaim for her exceptional erudition and educational accomplishments. She is described as possessing leadership and great renown (*jāha*) on account of her "religiosity, deliberation, intellect, high-mindedness, honor, and numerous virtues along with nobility of birth." Her reputation was so formidable that it is said that a relative of hers, al-ʿIzz al-Kinānī, who was a Hanbali judge, never stood up in his life for a woman except for Nashwān bt. al-Jamāl. She was extremely popular with her students, who praised her affectionate disposition toward them and her patience with them. She continued to enjoy this exalted status until her death on 19 Rajab 780/11 November 1378. She was buried in the Hanbali cemetery, and the people are said to have offered profuse eulogies.[44]

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[43] Makdisi, *Rise* 129–133.

[44] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 129–130.

Ḥalīma bt. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, a highly regarded scholar who is described as possessing *kathīrat al-riyāsa*, or "plenitude of leadership," is clearly deserving of this accolade. She is described as having been subjected to a rigorous examination by a distinguished board of examiners before being granted her certificate to teach. Her entry continues by recording the fact that prominent scholars audited her transmission of *ḥadīth*. She is said to have lived to an advanced age. Then follows the standard references to her personal virtue and moral excellence (*kānat ṣāliḥa khayyira*). She is also described as modest (*al-ḥāshima*) and patient while auditing and/or being audited. No doubt her aristocratic background was a help, not a hindrance, to her outstanding academic career. Her father was the head of the notables of the Syrian town of Aleppo, which would have facilitated her access to the best social and intellectual circles of her time and stimulated the desire in her at a young age to emulate the learning displayed in these circles.[45]

Al-Sakhāwī records that another scholar, Khadīja bt. Khalīl b. Niʿmat Allāh, was described as possessing a sharp intellect and leadership (*wa-kānat tūṣafu bi-ʿaql wa-riyāsa*), on account of which she won a favorable notice in another, better-known biographical work, the *Inbāʾ al-adhkiyāʾ bi-ḥayāt al-anbiyāʾ* of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), a slightly younger contemporary of al-Sakhāwī. There are no further details about her academic training and stature in this perfunctory entry; however, al-Sakhāwī's reference to the entry on her in al-Suyūṭī's work with a larger, scholarly reach, is meant to serve as testimony to her renown and intellectual prominence.[46]

An interesting usage of *riyāsa* is to be found in a reference to the scholar Fāṭima bt. al-Kamālī Muḥammad b. al-Nāṣirī. While still very young, she began auditing the *ḥadīth* transmission of several scholars, including the well-known al-Zayn al-Zarkashī. Al-Sakhāwī comments further, "She read and wrote with dignity and [an air of] authority" (*taqraʾ wa-taktub maʿa ḥishma wa-riyāsa*). Since these comments are regarding a young girl, *riyāsa* here should more appropriately be understood as being constituted by personal dignity, serious demeanor, intelligence, and possibly future academic potential.[47]

It should be pointed out here that, like their male counterparts, female children from wealthy and learned families often began their education at a very early age, like Fāṭima bt. al-Kamālī. Al-Sakhāwī records that a contemporary of hers, Zaynab bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿIrāqī, started going to classes taught by her father and by other scholars with her brother when she was barely five years old. She went on to receive *ijāza*s from Abū l-Khayr al-ʿAlāʾī, Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, and Abū Hurayra b. al-Dhahabī.[48] We have already mentioned Ibn Ḥajar's own daughter, who started attending *ḥadīth* sessions at the tender age of four. This was a fairly common practice, especially in *ḥadīth* studies, throughout the Muslim world.[49] One of the obvious reasons is that the preference for short *isnād*s made it desirable for the very old to transmit *ḥadīths* to the very young. Another obvious consideration would be social restrictions on mixing between the sexes. We do not always have a clear sense of the ages of a majority of these women, especially during their most productive periods. Only extreme youth and advanced age are clearly indicated on occasion; these were of course the non-"problematic" stages of female life, when one could easily consort with non-*maḥram* members of the opposite sex. Old-fashioned masculine chivalry may also be at play in the lack of references to the middle years of these women.[50]

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[45] Ibid., vi, 22.

[46] Ibid., xii, 26.

[47] Ibid., 105.

Other women's renown and fame in their own lifetimes and after are duly recorded by al-Sakhāwī. Two additional biographical works are mentioned with some regularity by him, as we have already indicated; an entry in either one of these works attested to the scholar's eminence. One was his own teacher Ibn Ḥajar's compilation known as the *Muʿjam*, while the other is the *ʿUqūd* of al-Maqrīẓī. When a female scholar had merited a notice in either one or both works, al-Sakhāwī notes this with strong approval, as we have already seen. Another biographical work of importance, entry into which implied considerable status for the individual, was the ninth/fifteenth-century Meccan Shafiʿi scholar al-Taqī b. Fahd's *Muʿjam*. In this work, al-Taqī is generous in his mention of the notable women scholars he had studied with, as recorded by al-Sakhāwī.

In most of al-Sakhāwī's biographical notices, religious leadership is clearly depicted as emanating not only from exceptional religious learning but also from simultaneous personal piety. Religious learning and any social standing that may derive from it are coupled with meticulous and sometimes prolific observance of the mandatory religious duties and performance of supererogatory deeds. Therefore, many of these women scholars win favorable notices for their generosity in alms-giving (frequently signaled by the phrase *kathīrat al-ṣadaqa* ["prolific in alms-giving"]) and for their compassionate care for orphans and widows (*al-muḥibbāt fī l-aytām wa-l-arāmil*), and for the poor in general.[51]

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[48] Ibid., 41–42.

[49] Bulliet, Age structure 105–117.

[50] See further the discussion by Sayeed, *Ḥadīth* transmission 88–91; Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn* 125–127.

[51] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 47.

Their going on the annual pilgrimage, *ḥajj*, and/or the lesser pilgrimage, *ʿumra*, is also noted. In fact, exceptional religious piety alone appears to have conferred social prominence and leadership on an individual. One woman called Amāʾim, also known as Sittīta bt. al-ʿAlam Ṣāliḥ b. al-Sirāj, is described as "a beloved leader" (*raʾīsa mutawaddida*). She was not, however, academically accomplished according to her biographical entry, but she is further characterized as a morally excellent (*khayyira*) and chaste (*ṣayyina*) woman who had performed the *ḥajj* and raised several children. This constellation of virtues and pious acts appears to have bestowed on her a measure of religious authority as well.[52]

Some of the women are described as possessing *murūʾa*, a quality which, in relation to men, is often translated as manliness. Needless to say, this would be inappropriate in our context, and the word should be understood more generally and more broadly to refer to exceptional virtue and humaneness. For example, Khadīja, also known as Muwaffaqiyya(?) bt. al-Shihāb Aḥmad b. al-Najm, is described as morally excellent, modest, and possessing great virtue (*wa-kānat khayyira ḥāshima dhāt murūʾa kabīra*),[53] while ʿĀʾisha al-ʿAjamiyya, also known as Khātūn, who was the mother of Sitt al-Kull, is described as possessing "goodness (or charitableness) and virtue."[54]

Refreshingly, there are hardly any references to the physical appearance of these women scholars. In the traditional biographical entries on the female Companions there are sometimes references to the physical beauty of the protagonist. In other biographical works, for example, the Andalusian work *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, or in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, which contain accounts of prominent women littérateurs, poets, and, in the latter, singers as well, lyrical descriptions of female comeliness often occur. Such common expressions of one might say masculine, chivalrous attitudes are notably lacking in al-Sakhāwī's section on women. The lone exception to this is the entry on Maghall(?) bt. al-Khaṭīb al-ʿIzz Muḥammad b. al-Khaṭīb, who was not a scholar, but was a woman of high social status and of notable personal piety. Al-Sakhāwī describes her beauty as spectacular (*wa-kānat badīʿa fī l-jamāl*) but then goes on to discuss her religiosity and generosity. Maghall bt. al-Khaṭīb is said on one occasion to have given away 3,000 dinars in charity and performed the *ḥajj* many times. Apart from this one exception, the emphasis in the *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*, as we have seen, remains on the intellectual accomplishments of its female subjects, when applicable, and on their personal piety.

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[52] Ibid., 84.

[53] Ibid., 25.

[54] Ibid., 82.

Most of the women mentioned by al-Sakhāwī completed their education before their marriages. Al-Sakhāwī lists details of their religious training, often at some length, listing specific works studied by them and with whom they studied before obtaining their *ijāza*s. In the longer notices, a listing of the works studied is followed by the mention of their marriages and any subsequent offspring, although a handful of women remained unmarried. In most of the cases, the women clearly continued their academic activity after marriage and taught sexually mixed groups of students and older auditors. The scholarly stature of some of the more illustrious women is indicated first, through mention of the better-known scholars they themselves had studied with, men and women, and second, through mention of those students who were credentialed by them, and who later went on to establish their own reputation as distinguished scholars. Quite frequently, more advanced scholars who came to these sessions as auditors are identified individually by name; at other times, they are collectively referred to as *al-fuḍalā'* (sc. the excellent or distinguished ones) and/or *al-a'imma* (the religious leaders), and less frequently, *al-akābir* (the senior scholars).[55]

Al-Sakhāwī explicitly indicates his own academic relationship with some of these women scholars, either with them directly or through their students. The previously mentioned Āmina bt. al-Ṣadr Aḥmad b. al-Badr was one of his teachers who granted him an *ijāza*, as did another Āmina bt. Nāṣir al-Dīn Abī l-Fatḥ, with whom, al-Sakhāwī states, he read some parts or sections (*ba'ḍ al-ajzā'*). It is not clear parts of what, but probably of *ḥadīth* since immediately preceding this remark, he relates that she had narrated a few *ḥadīth*s (*wa-haddathat bi-l-yasīr*).[56] Yet another Āmina, who was the daughter of al-Sakhāwī's teacher, al-Shams Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Qāhirī, received her *ijāza* from Abū Hurayra b. al-Dhahabī and Abū l-Khayr b. al-'Alā'ī. She transmitted a (modest) number of *ḥadīth*s, and several of her students related traditions from her. One of these students, not mentioned by name, gave an *ijāza* to al-Sakhāwī.[57]

Sometimes touching personal details are inserted into these biographical notices, lending a more graphic and human flavor to the accounts of teacher-student relationships. For example, al-Sakhāwī mentions that he listened to *ḥadīth*s narrated by Asmā' bt. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. 'Alī and reminisces that he had to read back to her *ḥadīth*s in a very loud voice since she was hard of hearing.[58] Another scholar, the previously mentioned Hājir or 'Azīza bt. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, of vast renown, found herself in rather dire financial straits toward the end of her career, and al-Sakhāwī reports that not only did she accept compensation commensurate with her academic position but requested a supplement as well. The entry on Hājir, with a reference to her inadequate salary, also makes clear that a few women did have formal, salaried appointments in the *madrasa*s where they taught, although this appears not to have been the norm.[59]

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[55] See, e.g., ibid., 129.

[56] Ibid., 5.

[57] Ibid., 4.

[58] Ibid., 7.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, one may ask: What was the enduring achievement of these women scholars and how are they remembered by posterity? In their own time, it is clear that they won recognition and scholarly plaudits from their male and female compeers. Their active role in religious instruction in general and in the transmission of *ḥadīth* in particular to the budding and more mature scholars of their time is well-documented by al-Sakhāwī. In terms of bequeathing an enduring legacy to posterity or being firmly enshrined in the memory of succeeding generations, we are on far less sure ground.

A certain way of gauging the continuing influence of scholars is to point to their written works and their dissemination among the reading public, or more narrowly, among their intellectual cohorts. Remarkably, not a single written work is ascribed to these women scholars. They all knew how to write, of course, and a number of them are described as having beautiful penmanship (*al-kitāba al-ḥasana*). For example, ʿĀʾisha bt. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad is described as having learned the art of calligraphy (*taʿallamat al-khaṭṭ*), and al-Sakhāwī mentions he had seen one page of her penmanship. But no specific written work is ascribed to her, even though she was a very accomplished scholar. As al-Sakhāwī records in her entry, she had won *ijāza*s from a number of distinguished Syrian and Egyptian scholars. ʿĀʾisha was a Quran reciter, an authority on the biography of the Prophet, and leading scholars came to audit her *ḥadīth* transmission. One well-known scholar of the time, al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480), praised her mental acumen in many fields (*wa-kānat min al-dhakāʾ ʿalā jānib kabīr*), underscored her knowledge of jurisprudence and poetry, and her exemplary piety.[60] Several women, like Amat al-Khāliq bt. al-Zayn ʿAbd al-Laṭīf b. Ṣadaqa, are specifically referred to as a writer (*kātiba*).[61] Al-Sakhāwī lists the *laqab* (sobriquet or title) of one woman, Asmāʾ bt. ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad, as *al-Kātiba* after recording her full name.[62] Some women wrote poetry, as did Kulthum bt. ʿUmar b. Ṣāliḥ, and al-Sakhāwī records a sample of her poetic composition.[63] Other than this mention of a literary composition, not a single, written scholarly work is ascribed to the accomplished women scholars we encounter in the *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ*.

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[59] This entry thus ameliorates Berkey's categorical pronouncement that women did not have formal appointments in *madrasa*s; Berkey, *Transmission* 161–181. Hājir's case suggests there may have been others. Furthermore, the references to *riyāsa* on the part of a number of these women, to which concept Berkey does not refer, would also suggest the existence of some kind of a formalized system by means of which their scholarly authority was acquired and recognized.

That of course raises the question: Did they not write any scholarly tomes? Are we to assume that their roles as religious scholars extended to teaching and oral transmission of *ḥadīth* alone? Is it possible that they did produce scholarly treatises which did not survive and/or were ignored by the largely male academic establishment?

Without firm documentation, we cannot of course be sure and cannot hazard more than speculative musings at this point. My guess would be that they did produce such works and that prejudice of some sort against female-authored scholarly works probably led to the benign neglect of such works in academic circles and beyond. This situation, after all, would not be unique to the Islamic milieu. When religious authority is constructed primarily in terms of masculine expertise in and control over the public production of knowledge, feminine activity in this regard is often deemed suspect. Since women in the medieval period were not, in general, regarded as fit to be appointed as judges or as jurisconsults, their scholarly pronouncements on legal issues and interpretations of Quranic verses, if codified in written texts, would be unwarranted intrusion into what had become an exclusively masculine preserve.[64]

From the record we have of the scholarly activities of these erudite women, they were certainly qualified to engage in these activities. A number of women are listed as having studied works of jurisprudence, like ʿĀʾisha bt. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh, who is described as being thoroughly familiar with *fiqh*, in addition to the usual sciences.[65] Another scholar, Ruqayya bt. al-Sharaf Muḥammad, who achieved enviable fame during her lifetime for her prolific transmission of *ḥadīth*, attended court proceedings when al-Sakhāwī was presiding.[66] No further details are forthcoming in this entry about her particular role in court.

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[60] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 78.

[61] Ibid., 9.

[62] Ibid., 6–7.

[63] Ibid., 118.

[64] See, e.g., al-Māwardī, *Aḥkām* 83, where this famous seventh/thirteenth-century political theorist expresses the opinion that women cannot be judges.

[65] Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ* xii, 78.

That the written works of our women scholars might be allowed to languish is a correlate of their lack of public judicial and interpretive authority. In the realm of organized and controlled knowledge, the written word trumps the orally transmitted word in authoritativeness. Written texts make possible future replication of the ideas contained therein; they also enjoy an authority independent of the author and extend it to the general, public domain. Oral speech is more transient. Oral, audited speech is not as unassailable a source as the written, recorded speech, and is easily restricted to the more circumscribed, private sphere.[67] "Liberal"-minded, academically inclined men apparently had no reservations about studying with and learning from women, as we have seen. But, was the general public ready to acknowledge the scholarly status of these women and grant them religious authority as a consequence? Very likely not. Denied the outlet of "publishing,"[68] as appears to be the case, and thus unable to more widely disseminate their scholarship, women's religious roles and leadership would remain restricted to the academy, private study circles, their home, and community. Women scholars were thus effectively barred from gaining a broader public recognition of their religious authority.

However, one may hope that, just perhaps, miraculously, such texts have survived in some archival vault and we may yet discover medieval manuscripts of feminine authorship. Al-Sakhāwī's biographical work clearly shows us that feminine scholarly activity in the Mamluk period was far from extinct; rather, it enjoyed an extraordinary period of floruit. Most male scholars of the period appeared to have little reservations, if any, about consorting with and benefitting from the erudition of a female scholar who had earned her degree and proved her scholarly mettle. They gratefully remembered the debt they owed these accomplished women and acknowledged their expertise in their written works. It is we who have consigned these remarkable women to relative oblivion and have, in effect, written them out of the master narrative of the production of knowledge in the Islamic milieu. Reinstating their roles in this crucial activity means reinstating a critical block in the construction of the mighty edifice of medieval Islamic scholarship.

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[66] Ibid., 35.

[67] "For women to write books has been, through time, as if taking, eating, and offering forbidden knowledge," state Holloway, Bechtold, and Wright in their *Equally* 5, in reference to women's scholarship in medieval Europe. The comment is perhaps equally relevant in regard to the medieval Islamic milieu.

[68] That is to say, in the pre-modern, pre-printing sense.

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PART 10

Transformations of Classical Muslim Learning

⁂

CHAPTER 39

The Development of Arabo-Islamic Education among Members of the Mamluk Military

Christian Mauder

They are “more lustful than monkeys, more ravenous than rats, more destructive than wolves.”[1] With these words, the famous fifteenth-century historian Taqī l-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) described a group of his contemporaries who, over the centuries, had become the most important power factor in the Middle East—the Mamluks, former military slaves of non-Islamic origin, who ruled over Egypt, Syria, and their neighboring regions during the late middle period. Obviously, al-Maqrīzī did not hold the slave soldiers of his days in high esteem, considering them even worse than animals. At first sight, this characterization does not seem very far-fetched. Going through the pages of the chronicles by al-Maqrīzī and his fellow historians, one finds reports of the Mamluks constantly engaged in cruel fighting with Mongols, Crusaders, Nubians, Armenians and—most notably—with themselves. In addition to the violent power struggles among the various Mamluk groups, we read of royal Mamluks blackmailing, harassing, and raping the local population.[2] Indeed, these accounts seem to reveal exactly those character traits that led al-Maqrīzī to liken the slave soldiers of his days to the most detestable of animals. Given this general impression one gets while reading the chronicles of the Mamluk age, it comes as no surprise to see how Western scholarship up to the present day tends to describe the Mamluks.[3] To quote contemporary German historian

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[1] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* iii, 694. Cf. also Conermann, Es boomt 8–9; Irwin, al-Maqrīzī 224–225; ibid., Mamluk literature 26; ibid., Mamluk history 167; Levanoni, History 101–103. All translations from the Arabic and the German are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[2] For examples and analyses of the negative characterization of the Mamluks in narrative sources from the middle period, see, e.g., Ayalon, System 291–292; Berkey, The Mamluks 165–166; ibid., *Transmission* 134–135; Fuess, Legends 141–144, 148–149; Lapidus, *Muslim cities* 55–59, 61–64, 69, 124–125, 144–145, 172–173; Levanoni, *Turning point* 3–4; ibid., Rank-and-file, here especially 17; Schimmel, Some glimpses 383–384; Thorau, Bemerkungen 367–368, 372–373. Cf. on the representation of Mamluks in the historical writings of their time in general Haarmann, Arabic in speech 82–84; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 32–39; Rabbat, Representing. For the general context, see also Haarmann, Ideology.

[3] Cf. on the acceptance of representations of the Mamluks from the middle period by modern authors Berkey, *Transmission* 143; Haarmann, Topicality 164–165.

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Jörg-Dieter Brandes, the soldiers are seen as coming from "barbarian countries"[4] and as altogether "coarse and unlettered, aggressive and insolent,"[5] with "not only the ruler [being] cruel and treacherous; the Amirs, commanders, governors, and officers did not behave any better."[6] Similarly, John Bagot Glubb writes about "[t]he savage Mamlukes,"[7] among whom many were "of extreme simplicity of mind."[8]

These quotations point to a noteworthy aspect in the common representation of the Mamluks. The mainly Turkic-speaking slave soldiers, considered brutal, foreign barbarians, could not have been deeply interested in Arabic culture or the Islamic religion. Indeed, they are often characterized as having had a highly superficial relationship with Islam. In addition, they are said to have been unaware of and indifferent to the cultural achievements of their Arabic-speaking environment. In the words of a modern Syrian historian, they showed not only "a love for outrages and blood shedding, [but also] a complete ignorance with regard to religion and the [Arabic] language."[9] In light of this characterization, the members of the Mamluk military might seem a rather curious subject for a volume focusing on education and knowledge in Islam. However, there are, as we will see, reasons to discuss the Mamluks here.

It is mainly due to the merit of the late Ulrich Haarmann that today we are aware of the fact that the Mamluks were more than the unlettered and uneducated, bloodthirsty foreign soldiers that many historians have described them as. In a seminal article published some 25 years ago, Haarmann demonstrated that numerous members of the Mamluk elite possessed a broad knowledge of various civilian, especially religious, disciplines.[10] After Haarmann, a number of scholars followed his example and contributed to our understanding of why and how members of the military occupied themselves with the study of the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning.[11] Some of these scholars tried to put their findings on Mamluk education in a chronology and argue that it was primarily the late and unstable phase of Mamluk rule—that is, during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries—when educated and cultured Arabic-speaking members of the military appeared on the scene. John Bagot Glubb, for example, writes about the fifteenth century: "Mamluk ameers were, in general, more educated than in former times."[12] And Robert Irwin notes: "[A]lthough it is not uncommon to come across references to sultans, amirs, and mamluks who spoke and wrote Arabic, there seems to be more evidence of this level of culture in the fifteenth century than in earlier periods."[13] This stands in marked contrast to Haarmann's original findings that it was mainly the Mamluks of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who showed a considerable interest in Arabic literature and scholarship. Haarmann noted that we find examples of Mamluks who "wrote Arabic and thereby had access to the local tradition of scholarly literature and belles-lettres … mainly in the early epoch between 1250 and 1350."[14]

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[4] Brandes, *Sklavendespotie* 8.

[5] Ibid., 104.

[6] Ibid., 202.

[7] Glubb, *Soldiers* 300.

[8] Ibid., 345. For more examples of this position, see also Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 14–17, 21–22.

[9] Ḥamdān, Muqaddima, in Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Kitāb al-Tuḥfa* 6.

[10] Cf. Haarmann, Arabic in speech. Cf. also his earlier remarks in Haarmann, Alṭun Ḫān.

[11] Cf., e.g., Berkey, *Transmission* 128–160; ibid., "Silver threads"; ibid., Mamluks; Berkey, Mamluks as Muslims; Irwin, Mamluk literature 1–6, 27–28; ibid., Privatization 69–70; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger*. Moreover, see also Flemming, Literary activities, whose results antedate Haarmann's study.

In this contribution, I would like to go back to Haarmann's original results and suggest that, according to information provided by some of the most authoritative authors of the Mamluk period, he was right in stating that the Mamluks already showed a thorough interest in the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning in the earlier part of their rule. To this end, I will demonstrate that, in the first phase of the sultanate (that is, roughly in the second half of the thirteenth and throughout most of the fourteenth centuries), there was a sophisticated system of Mamluk education and a noteworthy number of well-educated slave soldiers.

To do this, I proceed in three steps: First, I discuss the system of non-military education the sultan's slave soldiers enjoyed during the rule of the so-called Baḥrī Mamluks—that is, the earlier phase of the Mamluk sultanate. Second, I introduce some findings of a quantitative analysis based on the entries dedicated to members of the military in a comprehensive biographical dictionary. Third, I demonstrate that there was a structural need for well-educated military slaves in the early Mamluk system of rule. The last section summarizes these findings.

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[12] Glubb, *Soldiers* 355.

[13] Irwin, Mamluk literature 3. See also Berkey, *Transmission* 147; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 151–152; and—with special emphasis on the Mamluk sultans—Brandes, *Sklavendespotie* 201; Glubb, *Soldiers* 315.

[14] Cf. Haarmann, Alṭun Ḫ̮ān 4.

1 The Training of the Sultan's Young Mamluks[15]

Al-Maqrīzī provides us with a valuable, albeit short, account of the training of young Mamluks that had already attracted Ulrich Haarmann's attention. In his seminal description of his home country, Egypt, and its capital *Kitāb al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*, generally known as the *Khiṭaṭ*, al-Maqrīzī offers a detailed discussion of the Cairo citadel. Here, the author informs the reader about the way young Mamluks are treated in the royal barracks after being purchased at the slave markets. He writes:

> The Mamluks in these barracks had some good habits (*ʿādāt*). The first of them was that, when a merchant came with a Mamluk, he [first] presented him to the Sultan. [Then], he brought him to the barrack of his ethnic group … The first thing with which [the Mamluks'] instruction began was what they needed [to know] from the noble Quran. Every group [of Mamluk trainees] had a legal scholar (*faqīh*) who attended to them every day. Their education began with the book of God Most High, the skill of writing and the exercise in the conducts prescribed by religious law … It was stipulated in those days that the merchants brought only young Mamluks. When one of them grew up to the age of adolescence, the legal scholar taught him about jurisprudence and read an introductory work (*muqaddima*) about it to him. When he attained full age, his instruction in the arts of war began.[16]

Young Mamluks received quite comprehensive instruction in what could be termed the basic knowledge of an educated Muslim. While not expressly stated by our author, at least some of the Mamluks' instruction must have taken place in Arabic, given that the subjects studied required some knowledge of this language.[17]

One should not underestimate the quality of the education the Mamluks received. As al-Maqrīzī lets us know, several soldiers who failed to realize their hopes of military promotion left the army and became "a competent expert of jurisprudence, a proficient man of letters, or a skilled arithmetician."[18] It can be assumed that these Mamluks who embarked on a second career after their military service greatly profited from the education they once enjoyed in the barracks.

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[15] The source material discussed in this section was also analyzed in an earlier study, published in German under the title *Gelehrte Krieger. Die Mamluken als Träger arabischsprachiger Bildung nach al-Ṣafadī, al-Maqrīzī und weiteren Quellen*.

[16] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* iii, 692. Cf. also Haarmann, Der arabische Osten 224–225; ibid., Arabic in speech 86–88; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 80–84. On the military education of the Mamluks, see also Adwān, *al-ʿAsakariyya l-Islāmiyya* 117–124; Rabie, Training 154–163; Shatzmiller, Crusades 272–274, 284.

[17] Cf. on the Arabic education of the Mamluks Haarmann, Alṭun Ḫān 4.

It is difficult for us to know exactly which part of the Mamluk era al-Maqrīzī is referring to in these passages, since his description comes without exact chronological information. We can rely only on the context to deduce a tentative dating. The person usually credited with building the most important barracks at the citadel, which were dedicated to the training and housing of the sultan's slave soldiers, is Sultan Baybars, who died in 676/1277.[19] This gives us our *terminus post quem*. Moreover, al-Maqrīzī states that the system of Mamluk education remained more or less stable until the time when the children and grandchildren of Sultan Qalāwūn lost their rule over the Mamluk realm, which was in 784/1382. Thus, we can conclude that, according to al-Maqrīzī, the Mamluks of the sultan received a thorough education at least during the latter part of the thirteenth and most of the fourteenth centuries. Afterward, and especially during the beginning of Sultan Barqūq's (d. 801/1399) second reign in 792/1390 (i.e., during the major part of al-Maqrīzī's lifetime), the Mamluk educational system was, in al-Maqrīzī's view, in a state of steady decline. Our author extensively lamented the slave soldiers' poor upbringing and their continuous misbehavior—a development to be understood in the context that the Mamluks were now coming to Egypt mainly as grown-up men and were no longer easily amenable youth.[20] Therefore, at least in al-Maqrīzī's view, the Mamluks of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and not those of later times, generally deserve to be called well-educated.

We have reason to assume that al-Maqrīzī's positive assessment of the early educational system and his criticism of the later state of affairs is more than just another variation of the all well-known motif that "everything used to be better in the past." There are at least two authors who confirm al-Maqrīzī's account.

The first is his teacher Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), who, in his *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa-dīwān al-mubtadaʾ*, speaks about the "good education" the military slaves of Egypt enjoy. Moreover, he especially notes that young Mamluks are instructed in religious matters, such as the Quran.[21] The dating of this passage is again somewhat problematic. However, Ibn Khaldūn's formulations and the context seem to suggest that he is speaking about the present or a not too distant past. If this is correct, we have further evidence for a well-established Mamluk system of education in the fourteenth century.

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[18] Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* ii, 214. Cf. also Haarmann, Der arabische Osten 226; ibid., Arabic in speech 86–88.

[19] Cf. on the barracks Ayalon, *Esclavage* 9–12; Ayalon, Mamlūk 317; Levanoni, *Turning point* 12–13; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* iii, 691–695; Rabbat, *Citadel, passim*; Rabie, Training 153–154.

[20] Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* ii, 214. See also Ayalon, *Esclavage* 14; Ayalon, Aspects 208; ibid., Mamlūk 217; Garcin, Circassian Mamlūks 300; Haarmann, Der arabische Osten 225; ibid., Alṭun Ḫān 4–5; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 84; al-Musawi, Belletristic prose 126; Rabbat, *Citadel* 293–294; Rabie, Training 154, 162–163.

The second author who lends credibility to al-Maqrīzī's account is his pupil Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī (d. 888/1483). In his *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa l-bahiyya* this scholar recounts the report of a certain Shaykh Shams al-Dīn, who was once in charge of the upbringing of the sultan's sons and selected young Mamluks. The obviously very old Shams al-Dīn explains that he used to instruct young Mamluks in the religion of Islam, the Quran, ritual prayer, and the correct manner of behavior. Moreover, he recalls that, in the middle of the fourteenth century, when he began to work in the citadel schools, the discipline among the young Mamluks was extremely strict and their education both thorough and well organized. However, in later times, particularly in the days of Sultan Barsbāy (d. 841/1438), the once sophisticated system had disintegrated and with it the discipline of the Mamluks, leading to strife and unrest among the ranks of the recruits.[22] Thus, the account of Shams al-Dīn, as narrated by al-Qudsī, corroborates al-Maqrīzī's assessment that it was the slave soldiers of roughly the first century of Mamluk rule, and not those of the later part of the sultanate's history, who received a thorough grounding in the Islamic and Arabic fields of learning during the days of their youth.[23]

2 Educated Mamluks in the Biographical Literature

Are the reports by al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Qudsī regarding a well-developed educational system in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries sufficient to claim that the Mamluks of this time showed considerable interest in the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning? Is there any additional evidence that well-educated slave soldiers were not mainly a phenomenon of late Mamluk times? As shown by various authors, a close analysis of biographical dictionaries can offer valuable insights about how particular social groups, like women or non-Arabs, participated in Islamic education.[24] The same applies to military slaves. However, a discussion of the chronological development of Mamluk education based on the information provided in the many biographical dictionaries preserved from the late middle period faces a problem: The level of interest directed toward the cultural and educational background of a military slave varies greatly from one historian to the other. While author A, for example, may offer a comprehensive description of a certain Mamluk's intellectual achievements, author B may pass them over in silence, focusing more on the particular slave soldier's participation in military campaigns and important events. Furthermore, if authors A and B write about different Mamluks belonging to different periods in the sultanate's history, the modern reader may gain the impression that the slave soldiers in A's time were much more interested in knowledge and education than those who lived in the period discussed by B, solely because author A dedicated more space to their educational and intellectual activities.

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[21] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-ʿIbar* v, 371. Cf. also Ayalon, Mamlūkiyyāt 346; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 84–85.

[22] Cf. al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām* 128–131; cf. also Haarmann, Einleitung, in al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām* 38–45; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 85–86.

[23] Indeed, the ignorance and misbehavior of the Mamluks of later times could be explicitly explained by reference to their insufficient education during childhood. Cf., for example, the biography of Āqbughā b. ʿAbdallāh al-Jumālī (d. 837/1433) in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī* ii, 486.

The best way to minimize this problem is to look for biographical source material penned by the same author and covering as large a part of the sultanate's history as possible. Differences in the biographical representation of Mamluks who lived during different spans of time would thus have a good chance of reflecting historical developments, and not the individual perspectives of historians. A biographical dictionary that fulfills these conditions almost perfectly is Abū l-Maḥāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī's (d. 874/1470) work *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī wa-l-mustawfī baʿda l-Wāfī*. Its author, born around 812/1409–1410 and the son of the Mamluk commander-in-chief of the Egyptian armies, received a thorough training in the crafts of war, joined at least one military campaign to upper Mesopotamia, and counted Mamluk soldiers and officers among his closest acquaintances and friends. Even sometimes referred to as "*amīr*," he was in a unique position to gather information about the social group of the slave soldiers.[25] His completely edited dictionary is known to contain among its nearly 3,000 entries a particularly large number of biographies of Mamluk soldiers and officers.[26] However, even more important, is that almost the entire time span of the sultanate is covered in the work of this single author, who died merely 47 years before the downfall of the Mamluk sultans and was eager to include comprehensive information on the earlier period of their rule.[27] Thus, the material provided by Ibn Taghrībirdī proves to be a promising basis for our analysis from a chronological point of view.[28]

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[24] Cf. on women Berkey, *Transmission* 161–181; ibid., Women; Roded, *Women*; and the contribution by M. Haredy in this volume. On non-Arabs, see inter alia Bernards, Contribution; Fierro, *Mawālī*; Nawas, Emergence of *fiqh*; ibid., Profile; ibid., Contribution.

[25] On Ibn Taghrībirdī's life and works see, inter alia, ‘Abd al-Karīm, al-Mu’arrikh al-Miṣrī; al-‘Adawī, Muqaddima, in Ibn Taghribīrdī, *Nujūm* i, 3–4, 9–28; ‘Ashūr, Makānat Ibn Taghrībirdī 93–104; ibid., Taqdīm, in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī* i, 5–10; Broadbridge, Royal authority 240–244; Darrāj, Nash’at Abī l-Maḥāsin; Darrāǧ, Vie; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī* xii, 375–381 (a most valuable biography written by Ibn Taghribīrdī's pupil Aḥmad al-Marjī); Loiseau, Émir en sa maison 118–119; Petry, *Civilian elite* 10–12; Popper, Abu 'l-

Nevertheless, Ibn Taghrībirdī's dictionary offers less information on well-educated Mamluks than one would wish. Being not only a scholar, but also an expert in the arts of war and an active participant in at least one major military campaign, Ibn Taghrībirdī is more interested in the martial skills and military merits of the Mamluks than in their peacetime activities and academic achievements. While other authors of similar works regularly describe the educational careers of Mamluks in a comprehensive manner, Ibn Taghrībirdī focuses more on their horsemanship and their skills in archery and lance combat. This becomes clear when we compare the biographies of individual Mamluks discussed by Ibn Taghrībirdī with those from other authors.[29]

This notwithstanding, considerable source material on the academic and educational achievements of individual slave soldiers may be found in his dictionary. Usually, Ibn Taghrībirdī offers information on Mamluk education only when a certain slave soldier excelled in particular fields of study. Sometimes,

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Maḥāsin; ibid., Introduction, in Ibn Taghrî Birdî, *History of Egypt Part I* xv–xxiii; Popper, al-Sakhāwī's criticism; Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel* 5–6. A new and interesting perspective on the author's life, based on an analysis of the endowment deed of Ibn Taghrībirdī's mausoleum, is offered by Hamza, Some aspects. In this context, see also Ibrāhīm, Waqfiyya.

[26] On Ibn Taghrībirdī's special interest in the world of the ruling military elite, as documented by his historical writings, see ʿAbd al-Rāziq, Manhaj al-muʾarrikh 114, 119–121; ʿAnān, Abū l-Maḥāsin 22; ʿAshūr, Makānat Ibn Taghribīrdī 96–97; Haarmann, Arabic in speech 112–113; Perho, Historians 107, 112, 117–120; Petry, *Civilian elite* 11; Loiseau, Émir, esp. 119, 121–122; Popper, Criticism 385–386; Wiet, *Biographies* vii.

[27] For a detailed discussion of the chronological scope of the work, see Amar, Valeur 247–249.

[28] Of course, we have to keep in mind that Ibn Taghrībirdī relied, to a large extent, on the information provided by older authorities when discussing the slave soldiers who died during the earlier periods of the sultanate's history. Nevertheless, his dictionary offers a comprehensive set of data that is more homogeneous than any other available in the present context, and it is clearly formed by the individual viewpoint of its author.

[29] Cf., e.g., the biographies of Uljāy al-Dawādār al-Nāṣirī (d. 732/1331) in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal* iii, 39–40 and in al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā* ii, 277–278; of Baybars al-Manṣūrī in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal* iii, 477–478 and in al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā* ii, 531–534; and of Sanjar al-Jāwulī in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal* vi, 74–76 and al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr* ii, 467–470.

his descriptions of a slave soldier's intellectual activities are very limited. On the officer Tīmūr b. ʿAbdallāh Shihāb al-Dīn (d. 798/1396), for example, we learn only that "he possessed knowledge of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and its foundations (*uṣūl*)."[30] Often the sections of the text dealing with the Mamluks' educational and academic activities are more informative. A typical passage from an entry on a well-educated slave soldier reads as follows:

> Buzlār [d. 791/1388], the vice-regent of Syria, was a brave officer … and an expert in jurisprudence. He was well-versed in the branches (*furūʿ*) of [his] school of law and in grammar. He memorized literature and history. He was knowledgeable in astronomy (*falakiyyāt*) and the [science] of the stars.[31]

The achievements of Īnāl al-Abūbakrī al-Faqīh (d. 853/1449) are described in a similar manner:

> He was an intelligent officer, quiet, pious, an expert of jurisprudence, knowledgeable [and] educated … He memorized jurisprudence and its branches, being able to recall on the spot a great deal (*kathīr al-istiḥḍār*) about the branches of his school of law … He was versed in the Arabic language and other fields.[32]

There are also more detailed accounts, such as the one about Taghrī Birmish al-Mu'ayyadī (d. 852/1448), the commander of the Cairo citadel, who is said to have been "most knowledgeable in the science of prophetic traditions, in which he was extremely diligent and much studied."[33] After this general statement, Ibn Taghrībirdī enumerates 13 important teachers of this slave soldier and lists the works he studied with them, thus locating the Mamluk Taghrī Birmish within the intellectual world of Egypt, just like the other scholars discussed in his dictionary. In the case of Āqqush b. ʿAbdallāh al-Baysarī (d. 699/1299), we read: "He belonged to the garrison of Ṭarābulus, authored good poetry, and was well lettered."[34] Thereafter, Ibn Taghrībirdī dedicates a full page to quotations from Āqqush's poetry, thus presenting his literary achievements in the same way as he does in the case of poets of Arab origin.

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[30] Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal* iv, 103.

[31] Ibid., iii, 363.

[32] Ibid., iii, 215.

[33] Ibid., iv, 71.

[34] Ibid., iii, 31.

A close reading of Ibn Taghrībirdī's work shows that the quoted examples are far from exceptional. Among the 708 biographies of members of the Mamluk military to be found in *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī wa-l-mustawfī baʿda l-Wāfī*,[35] 65 contain passages, similar to those quoted above, in which individual soldiers and officers are described as possessing noteworthy knowledge in at least one of the Arabo-Islamic fields of knowledge.[36] Thus, about every eleventh Mamluk discussed in this work could arguably be described as well-lettered and knowledgeable in a non-military academic subject to a degree that was noteworthy in Ibn Taghrībirdī's eyes.[37]

With regard to the topic of this contribution, it is of special interest to ask whether one can recognize a pattern in the chronological distribution of those Mamluks who were singled out by Ibn Taghrībirdī for their interest in academic endeavors. In order to answer this question, all Mamluks discussed by Ibn Taghrībirdī were clustered into five groups according to their dates of death, and every group contained the Mamluks who died during a 50-year time span. Thus, the first group comprises the Mamluks who died during the years 1251 to 1300, the second, those who died between 1301 and 1350, the third, those who died during the following 50 years, and so on. Then, the percentage of the Mamluks in a specific group said to have possessed notable knowledge of at least one Arabo-Islamic field of knowledge was calculated. As Figure 1 shows, the result is as clear-cut as one could wish it to be: While about 14.3 % of the Mamluks of the first, that is, the earliest group (d. 1251–1300) were noted for their learning, the percentages get smaller with every following group, the respective numbers being 11.2 % (d. 1301–1350), 9.8 % (d. 1351–1400), 7.2 % (d. 1401–1450), and 1.7 % (d. 1451–1500).[38] Thus, the percentage among the Mamluks who died during the first half of the fifteenth century is only about half that of the first group. Among the youngest 60 slave soldiers discussed—that is, the group who passed

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[35] Among them, 486 are clearly identified by Ibn Taghrībirdī as Mamluk slave soldiers. The remaining 222, while not explicitly referred to by our author as Mamluks, can nevertheless be considered members of the Mamluk military based on their names, their military positions, and their individual biographies. On the problems of identifying Mamluks in biographical sources from the middle period, see Haarmann, Joseph 68; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 65–66, 74–77.

[36] For an overview of the subjects studied by Mamluks, see Berkey, *Transmission* 148–160; Haarmann, Arabic in speech 94–103; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 93–155.

[37] The percentage of Mamluks described as educated by Ibn Taghrībirdī is comparable, though somewhat lower, to those found in other comprehensive biographical dictionaries of the Mamluk period, cf. Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 77–78; 150–151.

[38] The exact numbers are: 14 out 98 (d. 1251–1300); 17 out of 152 (d. 1301–1350); 16 out of 163 (d. 1351–1400); 17 out of 235 (d. 1401–1450); and 1 out of 60 (d. 1451–1500).

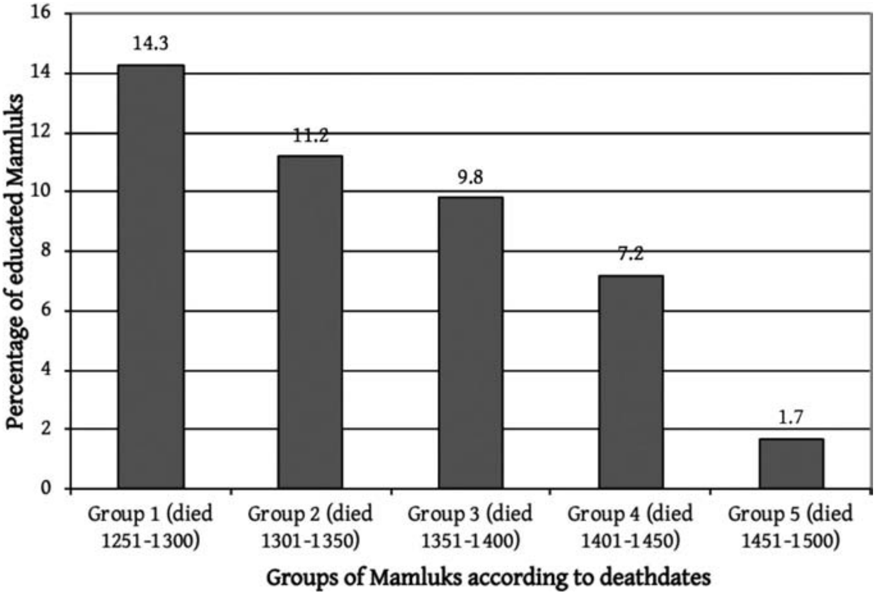

FIGURE 39.1 Quantitative analysis of the biographies of Mamluks in Ibn Taghrībirdī's (d. 1470) *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī wa-l-mustawfī baʿda l-Wāfī*

away during the second half of the fifteenth century—only one possessed a degree of knowledge of the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning that our historian considered noteworthy.

One should be careful not to read too much into this data. The biographies of Ibn Taghrībirdī's *al-Manhal aṣ-Ṣāfī* do not form a randomly selected sample of the Mamluk population, as would be necessary to obtain representative statistical results. Rather, they are a very unevenly distributed collection of pieces of information on a quite large number of military slaves our author found worthy of including in his work for one reason or another. Moreover, Ibn Taghrībirdī was not able to cover the lives of those Mamluks who died during the second half of the fifteenth century in as detailed a manner as those of their earlier peers, since he had stopped working on his dictionary several years before his death in 874/1470. However, what we can say is the following: According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, who could be called an expert on Mamluk affairs, there were relatively more persons with a remarkably high level of education among the prominent members of the Mamluk military in earlier than in later times.

3 The Structural Need for Well-Educated Mamluks

The sultan's military slaves received a thorough education in civilian and especially religious sciences during the earlier part of the Mamluk empire's history. Moreover, quite a few of them possessed an amount of knowledge in the Arabo-Islamic sciences biographers considered noteworthy. However, why did these military men occupy themselves with something other than the art of war, spending their valuable time hearing prophetic traditions, memorizing Arabic literature, and studying the details of Islamic law? Several reasons for this behavior have been suggested. Given that many Mamluks focused on religious fields of study, as is clear from the examples cited above, piety was surely an important motivation for some of them.[39] Others might have tried to improve their reputation and their standing among the population of the Mamluk empire.[40]

While all these reasons certainly play an important role in explaining the Mamluk interest in civilian knowledge and education, none of them suggests that it was in fact *necessary* for some Mamluks to become well-versed in the mentioned fields of study. Yet, as I would like to suggest here, there was indeed a real need for Mamluks to be well educated in Arabic fields of learning during the earlier decades of their rule, and this was by no means exclusive to this period. This need resulted from the way the Mamluks administered their sultanate.[41]

Basically, the Mamluk administration was a two-tier system on both the central and the regional level. The first was the civilian tier, staffed by native scribes, who had to be well versed in the century-old scribal tradition of the Arabic world, and who were mainly in charge of all kinds of financial affairs and record-keeping. The second pillar of the administration was more military in nature, with mostly Turkic-speaking Mamluk officers holding positions such as the military offices at the sultan's court, the command over a citadel, or the vicegerencies of the sultanate's provinces. While the civilian scribes were of course accountable to the sultan and his high-ranking officers, the Mamluks were also dependent on their native clerks, without whom they would not have been able to rule their realm efficiently.[42]

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[39] Cf. Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 166–168.

[40] Cf. ibid., 169–172.

[41] Cf. Irwin, Privatization 69–70; Keßler, *Welt* 125–126.

[42] For a short introduction to the administrative system of the sultanate, see Popper, *Egypt* i, 7 and 96–100.

Though one may hesitate to call this a symbiotic arrangement, given the vast difference in power between the Mamluk overlords and their civilian staff, a high degree of mutual dependence characterized the relationship of the two tiers. Thus, there was a pressing need for a number of key offices which could bridge the gap between the military and the civilian columns of the government and link the two tiers of the administration.[43]

Among these highly important posts that linked the civilian and the military parts of the administration was the *dawādār*, literally "the bearer of the royal inkwell." The duties of the holders of this office are described by ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Shaddād (d. 684/1285) in his history of Sultan Baybars, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, as follows:

> They are the ones who read to him [the sultan] the confidential writings (*kutub al-asrār*) sent to him by [other] rulers, and they are the ones who write the replies to them and who go back and forth between him [the sultan] and his ministers and scribes (*baynahu wa-bayna wuzarāʾihi wa-kuttābihi*).[44]

In a work written by the high-ranking civilian official Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349), an expert on the internal affairs of the early Mamluk sultanate, we read about the *dawādār*s the following:

> They are there to deliver (*tablīgh*) the messages of the sultan and to convey (*iblāgh*) all affairs. [Moreover, they are there] to present petitions (*qiṣaṣ*) to him, to confer about whoever comes to the [sultan's] door and to deliver the mail together with the commander of the bodyguard (*amīr jāndār*) and the private secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) … [Furthermore, the *dawādār*] obtains the sultan's signature on all decrees (*manāshīr*), edicts (*tawāqīʿ*), and documents (*kutub*). If an ordinance (*marsūm*) is issued by the sultan, he writes and lays down the respective message.[45]

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[43] Cf. see Bauer, Hunting party 296; Popper, *Egypt* i, 7.

[44] Ibn Šaddād, *Geschichte* 242.

[45] Al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār* 58. See also the only marginally modified accounts in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* iii, 720; al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* iv, 19; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara* ii, 131. On the general duties of the *dawādār*, see also ʿAbd al-Nabī, al-Dawādār al-thānī 72; al-Bāshā, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿimāra* ii, 204–205; Drory, Yūnus al-Dawādār 267–270; Mājid, *Nuẓum* ii, 46; Martel-Thoumain, *Civils* 71; and especially the still fundamental description in Ayalon, Structure 62–63.

Other writers from the middle period focused on the role the *dawādār* had in controlling popular access to the sultan,[46] while modern authors point to the responsibilities of the *dawādār* in the sultanate's legal system[47] and its intelligence apparatus.[48]

Obviously, at least in the early decades of Mamluk history, the duties of the *dawādār* were mostly administrative and non-military in nature.[49] Therefore, modern historians opt to describe the scope of this office by using terms such as "executive secretary,"[50] "chief secretary,"[51] or "chief of the chancery."[52] Yet, it is important to note that, in the administrative manuals of the Mamluk age, the office of the *dawādār* is always listed among the posts staffed by members of the army, being counted among *al-waẓāʾif min arbāb al-suyūf* ("the offices of the men of the sword").[53] In the times of the Baḥrī Mamluks, this office was indeed mostly held by Mamluk military officers of lower or medium rank.[54]

In order to carry out his duties as *dawādār* or chief secretary, a Mamluk officer had to be able to understand what his colleagues and subordinates in the civilian part of the administration were doing and talking about. Otherwise, he would not have been able to act as a link between the head of the sultanate and the clerks in the various departments. Moreover, he would not have been in a position to fulfill the more demanding of his duties, like taking care of the sultan's international correspondence, producing responses to the writings of foreign powers, and laying down royal decrees. In order to perform these tasks in a satisfactory manner, he had to be able to understand, read, and possibly also to write the sophisticated form of Arabic that functioned as the international diplomatic language of the late Islamic middle period. Furthermore, it was desirable for him to have a share in the intellectual world of his highly educated civilian colleagues.[55] It is thus not surprising that the holders of the office of *dawādār* are often especially noted by the biographers of the Mamluk military for their considerable knowledge of the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning.[56]

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[46] Cf. al-Subkī, *Kitāb Muʿīd al-niʿam* 38.

[47] The *dawādār*'s role in the legal proceedings of the sultan's court is addressed in Armanios and Ergene, Christian Martyr 126; Fuess, *Ẓulm* 129; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* iii, 667; Nielsen, *Maẓālim* 118; ibid., *Secular justice* 37, 67, 69–70, 79, 92.

[48] Cf. Irwin, *Middle East* 39, 42; Northrup, Baḥrī Mamluk sultanate 264.

[49] Cf. Ayalon, Structure 69. His spheres of influence bordered those of the private secretary (*kātib al-sirr*), leading sometimes to controversy among the holders of these offices; see, e.g, al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr* ii, 583–585; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk* ii.1, 8; ii.3, 770–771. See also Björkman, *Beiträge* 41; Drory, Yūnus al-Dawādār 269, 274–275. Cf. on the relationship of the offices Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī* iii, 419–420. In later times, the grand *dawādār* (*al-dawādār al-kabīr*), who served the sultan alongside a number of subordinate *dawādār*s, became one of the most important and powerful officials of the Mamluk sultanate, often assuming command of military campaigns in addition to and, at least sometimes, instead of his administrative duties. Cf. on the development of the office Ayalon, Dawādār; Popper, *Egypt* i, 92; Ayalon, Structure 62–63, 68–69; Drory, Yūnus al-Dawādār 270–278; Garcin, Circassian Mamluks 306; Holt, Mamlūks 326; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* ii, 720–721. See with special emphasis on the subordinate *dawādār*s ʿAbd al-Nabī, al-Dawādār al-thānī. ʿAbd al-Nabī's unpublished PhD dissertation on the grand *dawādār*, titled "al-Dawādār fī Miṣr al-Mamlūkiyya wa-ahamm aʿmāluhu al-miʿmāriyya wa-l-fanniyya" (University of Alexandria 2004), was unfortunately not available to me.

[50] Popper, *Egypt* i, 92.

[51] Northrup, Baḥrī Mamluk sultanate 264.

[52] Ashtor, Baybars al-Manṣūrī 1127.

[53] Cf., e.g., al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* iv, 16, 19.

[54] Cf. ʿAbd al-Nabī, al-Dawādār al-thānī 71; Ayalon, Structure 62, 69; al-Bāshā, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿimāra* ii, 204; Holt, Mamlūks 326; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujūm* vii, 185; Popper, *Egypt* i, 92.

4 Summary and Conclusion

The office of the *dawādār* shows that there was a structural need for well-educated military slaves in the early Mamluk system of rule who could bridge the gap between the military elite and their civilian employees. The research results presented here suggest that numerous Mamluks were well-prepared for this task in the first part of the sultanate's history. Not only did the young Mamluks of the early Mamluk sultans receive a thorough introduction to the basics of Arabo-Islamic education while being trained in the barracks of the Cairo Citadel, as reported by al-Maqrīzī and corroborated by other authors, in fact, many of these former slave soldiers were also known for their erudition with regard to prophetic traditions, Islamic law, Arabic poetry, astronomy, and other fields of study. Their level of competence in these fields of learning was considered adequate enough by contemporary authors of biographical dictionaries to be presented alongside the achievements of the local scholarly elite. Moreover, as a statistical analysis of one of these dictionaries has shown, the data presented therein allow for the conclusion that those Mamluks who flourished during the earlier phase of their sultanate's history were especially credited by its author with achieving a noteworthy level of Arabo-Islamic education.

According to the authors of the narrative sources used in this study, Mamluk interest in the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning should not be considered solely a feature of a late phase of the sultanate's history. Instead, one ought to acknowledge that the founders of the Mamluk sultanate were not devoid of education and knowledge in the Arabo-Islamic fields of learning, as was previously thought. Indeed, it might be worthwhile to ask whether the same applies to their even earlier peers, who fought for the ʿAbbāsid caliphs and the Ayyubid princes, and who may not have been as coarse and unlettered as they are generally assumed to have been.

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[55] On the intermediary position of the *dawādār*, between the Turkic-speaking world of the Mamluks and the Arabic sphere of the scribes, see also Bauer, Hunting party 296; Haarmann, Arabic in speech 100.

[56] Cf. Haarmann, Arabic in speech 94–95, 100, 105; Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger* 153–155.

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CHAPTER 40

Dissociation of Theology from Philosophy in the Late Ottoman Period

Mehmet Kalaycı

From Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) onward, Islamic theology turned into a philosophy of epistemology, ontology, and concepts. The matters regarded by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) as tools and means began to penetrate theology deeply after him, and philosophical matters were transferred to the theological field. Science of logic served as a bridge in this transferring. In order to struggle with the philosophers, al-Ghazālī gave logic a functional role and criticized theologians' methods of opposition (*muʿāraḍa*) and quarrelling (*mujādala*) since they did not base themselves on logic.[1] Al-Rāzī opposed al-Ghazālī's approach to logic as a tool of science, as he regarded it as an independent scientific discipline. Compared to al-Ghazālī, he gave more place in his works to philosophical matters, combined the matters of philosophy and theology, and thus initiated the period of philosophical theology.

This approach found a considerable number of supporters, particularly in Khorasan and Transoxiana. Theologians such as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. ca. 700/1301), Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa (d. 747/1346), Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 749/1349), ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355), Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 766/1365), Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), and al-Sayyīd al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) became the representatives of philosophical theology. By the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, philosophy and theology were thoroughly mixed and could not be distinguished from each other. So, al-Taftāzānī recorded that if theology did not contain the matters of *samʿiyyāt* (divine revelation and prophetic tradition), it could hardly be distinguished from philosophy.[2] Similarly, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) also states that the theologians after al-Rāzī were overzealous to dive into the works of philosophers, and thus philosophy and *kalām* intermingled and became complicated, and the problems of *kalām* were reshaped in the framework of problems of philosophy, until finally the two could no longer

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[1] Al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* 67.

[2] Al-Taftāzānī, *Commentary* 9–10.

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be distinguished from each other. According to him, someone who wants to learn theology could not obtain anything from the works produced in this process.[3]

In this process, philosophical theology ceased to be a phenomenon unique to the Ashʿariyya and gained a metadoxical position. This situation led to the formation of the unity of method and language among theologians belonging to the different schools of Islamic thought. For example, while composing his *Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid*, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, a Twelver Shiʿite scholar, was influenced by al-Rāzī's *al-Masāʾil al-khamsūn*. So, except for the chapter on *imāmate*, *Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid* mirrored Ashʿarite works both in method and in content. Perhaps, it was because of this fact that ʿAllāma Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), a Shiʿi theologian, Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, an Ashʿarite theologian, and Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī, a Hanafi theologian composed commentaries on the same work. Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, though he was a Hanafi scholar, was influenced by al-Rāzī, and composed his work *al-Ṣaḥāʾif al-ilāhiyya* in accordance with al-Rāzī's *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, referring to him repeatedly as "Imam."[4] Similarly, although they were Hanafi in *fiqh*,[5] al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī were the followers of al-Rāzī's line in their theological views. These examples are remarkable in showing that a theological activity intermingled with philosophy was accompanied by a new discourse and paradigm, and that the texts produced on this ground went beyond the limits of *madhhab*.

In its formation period, the Ottoman scholarly tradition was eclectic. This period was marked by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) teaching of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which combined Sufism with philosophy. The *mudarris* of the first *madrasa* founded by Orkhān Bey (r. 724–763/1324–1362) in Iznik (Nicaea) was Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350). Al-Qayṣarī studied basic Islamic disciplines from Qaramānī scholars and came to the fore among his colleagues. He later developed an inclination toward Sufism and became a student of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 730/1329).[6] The most important feature of al-Qayṣarī was the fact that he interpreted the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in a philosophical way and systematized it. Thus, it is recorded that he played the leading role in the spread of this doctrine among the Turks in particular, and other Muslim nations in general.[7]

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[3] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah* iii, 52–53.

[4] Al-Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif* 74, 88, 107, 109, 127, 128, 137, 157, 159, 169, 170, 218.

[5] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Talwīḥ* i, 304.

[6] Al-Kafawī, *Katāʾib* 322a.

[7] Bayrakdar, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī 61.

With Mollā Fanārī (d. 834/1431) a new process started in the Ottoman period, during which philosophical theology came to gain more prominence than philosophical Sufism. Mollā Fanārī was the representative of a transitional period. Together with al-Jurjānī he learned *fiqh* from Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī and logic from Mubārakshāh al-Manṭiqī (d. 806/1403).[8] However, through his father, Mollā Ḥamza, he was also aware of the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabī. Fanārī's father was a follower of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and taught him al-Qūnawī's *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, on which Fanārī composed a voluminous commentary.[9] But the real effect of Fanārī on Ottoman scholarship was his becoming a rigorous follower of al-Taftāzānī and a mediator in gaining currency for his works in Anatolia. Since the copies of al-Taftāzānī's works were not sufficiently available, Mollā Fanārī added one more day to the *madrasa* students' two-day weekend so that they could have time to copy these works.[10] The teaching activities of al-Taftāzānī's students, such as ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Aswad al-Rūmī (d. 795/1392), Burhān al-Dīn Ḥaydar al-Harawī (d. 830/1426), ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Rūmī, and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ḳojḥiṣārī in Anatolia also paved the way for the scholarship that al-Taftāzānī represented to enter the Ottoman scholarly tradition. This situation caused, on the one hand, the pro-*waḥdat al-wujūd* trends to decrease in the post-Fanārī turn in Ottoman scholarly circles, while, on the other hand, also causing al-Rāzī-centered theological activities to rise.

It was in the time of Meḥmed II (the Conqueror) (r. 855–884/1451–1481) that the philosophical understanding of theology predominated in the Ottoman tradition of the *madrasa*. The character of Meḥmed II, and his deep interest in science, paved the way for scientific activity in this period. Meḥmed II was aware of the fact that philosophical theology had turned into the dominant paradigm. Tīmūr (r. 771–807/1370–1405) was his role model for his transformation of the Ottoman state into an empire. He wanted to transfer the scientific dynamism to Istanbul, which became the capital city after its conquest. In addition to the palace library, he founded libraries in the Ayasofya and Fatih mosques, each one holding more than a thousand books.[11] He invited the figures who were famous in their own fields, such as ʿAlī al-Qūshjī (d. 879/1474) and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 877/1472), to Istanbul. Through his personal attempts, Istanbul became a center that attracted scholars belonging to all *madhhab*s. The interest he showed to science (*ʿilm*) and scholars was far from religious and sectarian concerns. He showed a special interest to the teaching of the rational sciences[12] and all kind of sciences in the Ṣamāniyya *madrasa*s, rather than giving preference to a particular *madhhab*. In the endowment of a *madrasa* it was recorded that, in addition to his fame, the chief-*mudarris* must know rational and traditional sciences and other sciences (i.e., *mabādīʾ* and *muqaddimāt*).[13] It was Meḥmed II himself who ordered that certain books should be placed in the curriculum of *madrasa*s, such as al-Jurjānī's gloss on al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid* and his commentary on al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif*.[14] Apart from these, the commentary composed by al-Taftāzānī on Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī's *ʿAqāʾid*, the gloss by Khayālī on the commentary of al-Taftāzānī, al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, the commentary entitled *Maṭāliʿ al-anẓār* by Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, and the gloss by al-Jurjānī written on this commentary were the works taught in the Ṣamāniyya *madrasa*s within the field of theology.[15] Apart from Khayālī's gloss, all of these works were composed by Ashʿarite scholars following al-Rāzī.

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[8] Majdī, *Ḥadāʾiq* 47.

[9] Ibid., 49.

[10] Ibid., 51.

[11] Khōja Saʿd al-Dīn, *Tāj al-tawārīkh* iii, 182.

Meḥmed II went to considerable lengths to transfer the heritage of philosophical theology to Istanbul. But he did not hide his wish for the domestic scholars to become as reputable as al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī in Anatolia. In this process, the tradition of Mollā Fanārī's philosophical theology, in particular, was maintained by his disciple Mollā Yagān (d. 841/1430).[16] Mollā Khusraw (d. 885/1480), the student of Burhān al-Harawī, and Khiḍir Bey (d. 863/1459), the son-in-law and most important disciple of Mollā Yagān, were the two favorites of Meḥmed II.[17] Known for his *al-Qaṣīda al-nūniyya*, a Maturidi creed, Khiḍir Bey was the first qadi of Istanbul appointed by Meḥmed II. He taught many scholars, almost all of whom became *mudarris* in the Ṣamāniyya *madrasa*s. Shams al-Dīn Khayālī (d. 875/1470), Mollā Muṣannifak (d. 875/1470), Khōja-zāde Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Muṣṭafā (d. 893/1488), Mollā Kastallī (d. 901/1495), Mollā Khaṭīb-zāde (d. 901/1495), his son Sinān Pāshā (d. 891/1486), Mollā ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿArabī (d. 901/1495), Mollā Khayr al-Dīn (d. 879/1474), Mollā Ayās (d. after 850/1446), and Mollā Luṭfī (d. 900/1495) were among those who learned directly from Khiḍir Bey. Mollā Afḍal-zāde (d. 903/1497), Mollā Zayrak (d. 903/1497), Kamālpāshā-zāde (d. 940/1534), Taşköprüzade (d. 968/1561), and Abussuʿūd (d. 982/1574) maintained the line of al-Rāzī in the Ottoman scholarly tradition.[18] The fact that the number of scholars who studied under these names or their immediate disciples almost reached 1,200 is important, in that it shows the influence al-Rāzī's school of thought had in the Ottoman *madrasa* tradition.[19]

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[12] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī described Meḥmed II's deep interest in rational sciences in his poetic letter to him. Khōja Saʿd al-Dīn, *Tāj al-tawārīkh* ii, 266.

[13] Atay, *Religious education* 83–84.

[14] Çelebi, *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* 20–21.

[15] Yazıcıoğlu, Teaching 274.

[16] Majdī, *Ḥadāʾiq* 99–100.

[17] Ibid., 111–113.

[18] Uzunçarşılı, *ʿIlmiyya organisation* 76.

Among these names, a noticeable figure in respect to the dynamism of Meḥmed II's time was Khōja-zāde. He memorized *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* and internalized al-Jurjānī. Khōja-zāde, who referred to al-Jurjānī as his teacher in all sciences, did not avoid criticizing him in some matters, and thus he disputed with some scholars who did not allow anybody to speak ill of al-Jurjānī, such as Mollā Zayrak, Mollā Khayr al-Dīn, and Mollā Afḍal-zāde. One of his objections was against al-Jurjānī's view in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* regarding the statement of al-Taftāzānī that "theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) is in need of logic." Al-Jurjānī had argued that this statement could only be expressed by someone who, as he says, had licked the waste of a philosopher or a group of philosophers and had then pretended to possess knowledge of philosophy. Khōja-zāde pointed out that al-Jurjānī had repeated the same view on al-Taftāzānī in the gloss of *Sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* and this was obviously his mistake.[20] Khōja-zāde's authority over al-Jurjānī and al-Taftāzānī made him also known outside of Anatolia. In describing Khōja-zāde, ʿAlī al-Qūshjī reverted to the expression of "unique in the lands of the Persians and the Turks."[21] For instance, among the group sent by Tīmūrīd Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (r. 875–911/1470–1506) to congratulate Bāyezīd II (r. 885–918/1481–1512) for ascending to the throne there was a student of *ʿilm*. Bāyqarā asked in his letter for this person to be allowed to attend one of Khōja-zāde's lessons and, through the request of Bāyezīd II, the person in question joined in the lessons of Khōja-zāde.[22] Moreover, while traveling to learn from al-Dawānī, Muʾayyad-zāde (d. 922/1516) took Khōja-zāde's *Tahāfut* with him and gave it to al-Dawānī as a present.[23]

Apart from Khōja-zāde, there were not many figures to maintain the philosophical tradition of theology. Among them was Mollā Kastallī, who read all of Ibn Sīnā's works, including his *al-Qānūn*. Furthermore, he also read *al-Shifāʾ* seven times.[24] Together with Khōja-zāde, Khaṭīb-zāde was one of the scholars most appreciated by al-Dawānī.[25] Mollā ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿArabī, who was originally from Aleppo, came to Anatolia and entered the service of Khiḍir Bey.[26]

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[19] Unan, *Fatih complex* 335.
[20] Majdī, *Ḥadāʾiq* 154.
[21] Ibid., 183.
[22] Ibid., 155.
[23] Ibid., 157.
[24] Ibid., 165.
[25] Ibid., 170.
[26] Ibid., 171–172.

Mollā Muṣannifak, who was a descendent of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and was thus shown much respect, was born and raised in Herat. Later, he went to Konya and then to Istanbul. Mollā Muṣannifak had learned from the disciples of al-Taftāzānī.[27] Considering his gloss composed on *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, he also regarded al-Taftāzānī as a philosopher.[28] ʿAlī al-Qūshjī and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī had come to Istanbul following the invitation of Meḥmed II himself. ʿAlī al-Qūshjī was aware of the discussions between al-Jurjānī and al-Taftāzānī in the presence of Tīmūr and, contrary to common belief, he was of the opinion that al-Taftāzānī preponderated over al-Jurjānī.[29] After completing his education, learning from the prominent scholars of that time in the territory of ʿAjam, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī came to Anatolia during the time of Meḥmed II. Showing close interest in him and sometimes attending his lessons, Meḥmed II assigned him to one of the eight churches that were changed into *madrasa*s after the conquest of Istanbul. Except for *Tahāfut*, which ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī composed at the request of Meḥmed II, he wrote several commentaries and glosses on al-Jurjānī and al-Taftāzānī's works.[30]

Despite their Hanafi-Maturidi identity, Ottomans place the works by representatives of philosophical theology in the curriculum of the *madrasa*s. The fact that most of these works were composed by Ashʿari scholars led many researchers to connect the Ottoman tradition of the *madrasa* directly to the Ashʿariyya. This might be opposed in two ways. First, this was a transfer of philosophical theology, not of the Ashʿariyya. These texts were not Ashʿari texts per se; on the contrary, they were broad metadoxical texts, and they cannot be reduced to the Ashʿariyya or to any other theological school, which I prefer to call "framework texts." The philosophical discourse that prevailed in these texts paved the way for the dissolution of sectarian identities and the development of a metadoxical viewpoint. The most important motivation for the preference of these works in Ottoman scholarly circles was neither that they were Ashʿari texts, nor that they were composed on Ashʿari theology. On the contrary, the preference was based on the fact that they represented the most original examples of philosophical theology's activity.[31]

Second, it must be said that the Ottoman scholarly tradition did not consist only of the works composed by the Ashʿariyya; when necessary, the Maturidi identity was also stressed. If an assessment is to be made on the history of the religious thought of the Ottoman period, it is not proper to confine oneself to these kinds of texts or to identify the main lines of Ottoman religious thought solely on the basis of these texts. While discussing the Ottoman *madrasa* tradition or mentality, the intellectual ground that might serve as a basis is represented by the large tradition of commentaries and glosses. This tradition is the intellectual—maybe too modest—memory that contains the Ottomans' theological, philosophical, and sectarian content.[32] In this tradition of commentaries and glosses, one can occasionally observe the sectarian reactions of the Ottoman scholars to the framework of the texts. A closer consideration of this tradition shows that the stress on the Ashʿariyya in the framework texts was opposed from time to time. To indicate this situation one example can be emphasized: The commentary al-Taftāzānī wrote on al-Nasafī's *al-ʿAqāʾid* was one such framework text that was taught for a long time in the Ottoman *madrasa*. In *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, al-Taftāzānī starts the theological activity of the Ahl al-Sunna with Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿari and identifies the Ahl al-Sunna only with the Ashʿariyya.[33] But, in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* he revised this view, saying that the Maturidiyya, together with the Ashʿariyya, were a branch of the Ahl al-Sunna.[34] In the glosses written by Ashʿari figures on *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, the statements in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* were not given any place; on the contrary, the reason why the Ahl al-Sunna must be identified with the Ashʿariyya was emphasized.[35] However, in the glosses on *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid* that were written by those claiming a Hanafi-Maturidi identity, the statements of al-Taftāzānī in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* were referred to as an objection, and indirectly, an objection was thereby directed at the identification of the Ahl al-Sunna with the Ashʿariyya.[36] Interpretations of al-Taftāzānī's views in the context of Ashʿariyya do not mean that the Ottomans left their Maturidi identities, even though they were the followers of philosophical theology.

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[27] Ibid., 185–186.

[28] Muṣannifak, *Ḥāshiya* 2a.

[29] Majdī, *Ḥadāʾiq* 183.

[30] Ibid., 118–119.

[31] Kalaycı, Ottoman theologian? 58–64.

For nearly a century philosophical theology dominated the Ottoman *madrasa*s tradition. Two important political developments that took place in the early sixteenth century brought this domination to a standstill. The first of these was the fact that Selīm I brought the Mamluks' political existence to an end and Egypt and Syria became Ottoman territories. Egypt and Syria were the regions where mostly traditionalist activities were dominant. In these regions philosophical theology had found a limited base, and sectarian identities revealed themselves through creeds. In the post-Fatimid period, the most important policy of the various governments in the region was to permanently remove traces of Shiʿism, and thus to firmly establish Sunnism in the region. This was partly an aim of the Seljuqs' political activities, but it was, in particular, a common target of the Zangid and the Ayyubid's political activities. This perception was continued by the Mamluks, and even more so since the Ilkhanids gave support to Shiʿism. Therefore, sectarian identities in Egypt and Syria were propagated generally through Sunnism. The Ashʿariyya were the most influenced by this. The Ashʿariyya were presented to the region as an alternative to Shiʿism, and in the course of time the school of thought was identified with Sunnism. This situation weakened the theological aspect of the Ashʿariyya and transformed it into a religious and political tendency. Thus, Ashʿari thought was perceived in Egypt and Syria not as a theology, but rather as a creed.[37] For example, Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, one of the leading representatives of the Ashʿariyya in the region, said that there was nothing more harmful to faith than Greek wisdom and theology.[38] Similarly, his son Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī recorded that the four legal schools were in agreement on the Ashʿari creed. In his view, the Ashʿariyya was an umbrella concept and identical with the Ahl al-Sunna. Therefore, he stated that all Shafiʿis and Malikis and most Hanafis, as long as they were not Muʿtazili, and most Hanbalis, as long as they did not have anthropomorphist views, were of the Ashʿari creed.[39]

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[32] Özervarlı, Ottoman theology 205.

[33] Al-Taftāzānī, *Commentary* 9.

[34] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* v, 231.

[35] Al-Shīrāzī, *Ḥāshiya* 8a; al-Isfarāyīnī, *Ḥāshiya* 8b.

[36] Khayālī, *Ḥāshiya* 8; Kastallī, *Ḥāshiya* 17; al-Siyalkūtī, *Ḥāshiya* 68; Ramaḍān Efendī, *Sharḥ ʿalā sharḥ* 2; Amāsī, *Ḥāshiya* 45b–46a.

The same was also true for the Hanafis. The Hanafis in the region understood the theological views of Abū Ḥanīfa through the short, simple text of *al-ʿAqīda al-Ṭaḥāwiyya*, and as for the *fiqh*, they remained under the influence of the text-centered traditionalist activities.[40] When Selīm I put an end to the political existence of the Mamluks and carried the caliphate to Istanbul, he also became a natural heir to their political and cultural heritage. This situation led to the transfer of their religious discourse and experience to the Ottoman Empire and to the emergence of new approaches that would give direction to Ottoman intellectual life. Among them was Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī, one of the foremost figures whose works were widely recognized in the Ottoman Empire. He taught many students during his stay in Istanbul.[41] The traditionalist Hanafi school of thought, which was represented by Birgivī Meḥmed Efendī, and which revealed itself more clearly in the Qāḍīzādelis movement, was fed in such a context.

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[37] Kalaycı, *Relationship* 72–74.

[38] Al-Subkī, *Rasāʾil* 83.

[39] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* iii, 378. The following words of Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafā al-Qūnawī, who lived in Cairo in the sixteenth century, confirm that even three centuries after al-Subkī, "to be an Ashʿari" may have simply meant "to be a good Muslim": "Because al-Ashʿarī's followers are much more in number than those of al-Māturīdī's, people with 'correct creed' are called 'Ashʿari.' But with this, nobody aims to claim the superiority or inferiority of one sect to the others." al-Qūnawī, *Tarjama* 35b.

[40] Melchert, *Formation* 117.

The second important political development was seen after the Ottoman-Safavid struggle. In Khorasan, where the Safavids ruled, there was a considerable Ashʿari population. For three centuries the Ashʿariyya was represented there in a form of philosophical theology. The most important resistance against the Safavid policy of Shiʿitization came from the Shafiʿis. Mollā Ṣadr al-Dīn, the grandson of al-Taftāzānī, was killed, together with his 60 students, after they refused to accept Shiʿism.[42] In this process, many students of al-Dawānī were forced to migrate out of the region. One of the most important destinations of this migration was Istanbul. More than 20 students or followers of al-Dawānī conveyed his views to the Ottomans. But, al-Dawānī's views did not find sufficient support in Ottoman scholarly circles. His views on Ibn al-ʿArabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* are sometimes used by Khalwatī-Sīvāsīs in a narrow context.[43]

There were also other Ashʿari-Shafiʿis who did not move from Khorasan and disguised themselves by reverting to *taqiyya* under the guise of Shiʿism. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Shafiʿis in Herat were accused by the Hanafi Mollā ʿAlī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1606) of wavering between the Shafiʿiyya and the Rafidiyya.[44] The fact that in the post al-Dawānī period Khorasan came under the rule of the Safavids and was reshaped on the basis of Shiʿism was a serious blow to the Ashʿariyya, which was present in the region in the form of philosophical theology. From the second half of the sixteenth century onward, philosophical theology began to lose its influence in the Sunni geography and came under the control of Safavid Shiʿism. The philosophical theology, synthesized with Ibn al-ʿArabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the oneness of being), became, in the seventeenth century, part of the search for a new synthesis, representing the beginning of a different current. Philosophical theology provided the basis for inquiries into the synthesis that Iranian thinkers such as Mollā Ṣadra (d. 1050/1641) and Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) tried to establish between Shiʿism, speculative Sufism, and philosophy.

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[41] Majdī, *Ḥadāʾiq* 492–493.

[42] Kamālpāshā-zāde, *Tawārīkh-i Āl-i ʿOs̱mān* ix, 121b–122a; Kamālpāshā-zāde, *Tawārīkh-i Āl-i ʿOs̱mān* x, 29.

[43] Öztürk, *Qadı-Zade movement* 401–403.

[44] Al-Qārī, *Tashyīʿ* 237b.

After the exclusion of the philosophical Ashʿariyya, the doctrinal Ashʿariyya in the western Islamic lands became the only representatives of the Ashʿariyya, and thus the Ashʿariyya transformed back into their classical theological form. Particularly the works of such figures as Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d. 895/1490), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), Ibrāhīm al-Laqānī (d. 1041/1632), and ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī (d. 1078/1668) came to the fore in this process. The texts produced by them represented the new face of the Ashʿariyya not only in Egypt, Syria and the Hejaz, where they lived, but also in Ottoman Turkey. Among these, the two authors whose works gained the widest circulation were al-Sanūsī and ʿAbd al-Salām al-Laqānī. The Maliki and Ashʿari al-Sanūsī was a figure who was engaged in mystic activities and who paved the way for the Ashʿariyya's spread in North Africa. Though al-Sanūsī shared the same theological identity, he severely opposed al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī, because they applied the views of philosophers. According to him, their views were entirely reflective of the words of the philosophers. Therefore, he emphasized that, in theological matters, nothing must be taken from their books, and he ruled that engaging with these books was infidelity.[45]

The political struggle of the Ottomans and Safavids led, one century later, to a religious and intellectual struggle. The intellectual struggle against the Safavids and Shiʿism was accompanied by a restriction on Ottoman religious thought. In this context, philosophical theology slowly began to fade in the religious thought of the Ottomans and, alongside this, a theological search, freed from philosophy, began to arise. In this context, the Maturidiyya came to the fore. In the course of time, in comparison to the Ashʿariyya, the Maturidiyya remained more distant to philosophy. Apart from a few exceptions, it did not go beyond theological discourse and never lost its systematic form, which it had inherited from the past. Therefore, the philosophical Ashʿariyya did not see the Maturidiyya as a real counterpart at all. For instance, in the philosophical theological texts that were shaped by such a discourse and taught by Ottoman scholars, the Maturidi views were given very little space.[46] However, after philosophical theology lost its influence and the doctrinal Ashʿariyya started to rise, the situation was reversed. The Ashʿariyya, to a large extent, lost its link with philosophy and returned once again to the pre-al-Rāzī classical theological discourse. The matters that philosophy had introduced into theology were not given any place in the texts produced in this era. The contents of theological books were reduced to only covering pre-Juwaynī matters. It was in just such a context that the Ashʿariyya and the Maturidiyya began to see each other as rivals, and to position themselves vis-à-vis each other. Texts discussing the controversies between Ashʿariyya and Maturidiyya that emerged in the sixteenth century, but which mainly reached their climax in the eighteenth century, basically developed on this ground. Against an Ashʿariyya that turned into a creed, the theological superiority of the Maturidiyya was highlighted.[47]

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[45] Sājaqlī-zāde, *Tartīb al-ʿulūm* 148.

[46] Mastjī-zāde, *Masālik* 38.

Bayāḍī-zāde (d. 1098/1687) was the first to comprehensively deal with the controversial points between the Ashʿariyya and the Maturidiyya. His approach represented a theological search independent from philosophy. In *Ishārāt al-marām*, Bayāḍī-zāde drew attention to the importance and necessity of theology. According to him, the theology of philosophers was in fact the theology that Hanafi jurists had referred to in their *fatwā*s about the illegitimacy of engaging in theology.[48] The same point was also mentioned by Mollā ʿAlī al-Qārī, whose works found a wide audience among the Ottomans. In the introduction to the commentary he wrote on Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-Fiqh al-akbar* he drew attention to the importance of theology but ultimately came out against dealing with philosophical theology. According to him, the real reason for the opposition of the scholars to theology was the fact that they paid attention to the words of philosophers, turned away from the Quranic verses, and engaged in philosophy together with "ignorant men" who considered themselves to be intelligent scholars. For this reason, ʿAlī al-Qārī counted the sciences of philosophy and logic among the forbidden sciences. He justified this point in an independent work that he wrote on this matter.[49] Kātib Çelebi (d. 1067/1657), who witnessed this process most closely, complained about the fact that the philosophical sciences had fallen out of favor, and he saw this as one of the most important reasons for the decline of the Ottoman *madrasa*s.[50]

This reaction against philosophy is reflected in the content, methods, and sources of texts composed both by the Maturidis and the Ashʿaris. The Maturidi Bayāḍī-zāde and the Ashʿari ʿAbd al-Salām al-Lāqānī were contemporaries and both, in their writings on the views of the Ashʿariyya, did not give any room to the discourse, problems, or representatives of the philosophical Ashʿariyya. Instead, they presented the views of representatives of the Ashʿariyya from the classical period. One century later, al-Zabīdī's approach was the most concrete example of a reaction to philosophical theology. In the context of his commentary on al-Ghazālī's *al-Iḥyāʾ*, and in the introduction (*muqaddima*) that he dedicated to discussing the Ashʿari-Maturidi relationship, he introduced a complete list of Ashʿari and Maturidi theological works. Apart from al-Rāzī's *al-Arbaʿīn* he did not mention any of the main texts reflecting the connection between Ashʿarite theology and philosophy in his list. The works composed by al-Shahrastānī, al-Rāzī, al-Āmidī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Ījī, al-Taftāzānī, al-Jurjānī, and al-Dawānī did not find a place in al-Zabīdī's perception of the Ashʿariyya.[51]

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[47] Kalaycı, Projections 52–62.

[48] Bayāḍī-zāde, *Ishārāt* 36.

[49] Al-Qārī, *Sharḥ* 18.

[50] Çelebi, *Kashf al-ẓunūn* i, 670.

With his anti-philosophy stance, Sājaqlī-zāde Meḥmed Efendī (d. 1145/1732), known as a Hanafi and a Maturidi, was one of the most remarkable figures during this process. In his epistles composed to criticize philosophy, Sājaqlī-zāde made severe criticisms against philosophy and philosophers and accused them of falling into polytheism (*shirk*), since they turned away from the Quran and the *sunna* and only accepted reason as a guide.[52] This attitude was also reflected in his *Tartīb al-ʿulūm*, in which he classified the sciences. In this work, he mentioned the views of al-Ghazālī, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī against philosophy. It was al-Ghazālī who influenced him the most, both in the classification of the sciences and in his views about philosophy. Just like al-Ghazālī, he classified the sciences on the basis of benefit and damage, and he accepted logic as a legitimate science within theology. Sājaqlī-zāde, who used long quotations from al-Ghazālī's *al-Iḥyāʾ* and *al-Munqidh*, counted philosophy, together with magic, astrology, and divination (*jafr*), among the harmful sciences that were prohibited.

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[51] Al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-sāda* ii, 12–13. In al-Zabīdī's list, the following Ashʿarite works are mentioned: ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī's *Kitāb al-Asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt*, al-Lālakāʾī's *Kitāb al-Sunna*, al-Qushayrī's *al-Risāla* and *Iʿtiqād ahl al-sunna*, Ibn Fūrak's *al-Madkhal al-awsaṭ*, Abū l-Qāsim al-Naysābūrī's *al-Kāfī fī l-ʿiqd al-ṣāfī*, Yūsuf b. Zūnās al-Fandalāʾī's *ʿUmdat al-ʿaqāʾid wa-l-fawāʾid*, al-Juwaynī's *Muʿtaqad ahl al-sunna* and *Lumaʿ al-adilla*, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bakkī's *Taḥrīr al-maṭālib fī sharḥ ʿaqīdat Ibn al-Ḥājib*, al-Juwaynī's *Lumaʿ al-adilla* and Ibn al-Tilimsānī's commentary on it, Muḥammed b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī's commentary on al-Juwaynī's *Lumaʿ al-adilla* and Abū l-Wafā's commentary on it, Ibn al-Turkī's *Mukhtaṣar sharḥ al-Sanūsī*, al-Lāqānī's *Sharḥ al-jawhara*, Aḥmad b. Muḥammed al-Ghanīmī's commentary on *Umm al-barāhīn*, Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī's *ʿAqīda*, ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Salām's *al-Tanbīh wa-l-ʿaqīda* and an anonymous commentary entitled *Manār subul al-hudā*, al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār*, *Kimiyāʾ al-saʿāda*, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā*, *al-Maʿārif al-ʿaqliyya*, *Lubāb al-ḥikma al-ilāhiyya*, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, *al-Mufaṣṣaḥ ʿan al-aḥwāl*, and *Iljām al-ʿawāmm ʿan ʿilm al-kalām*, al-Rāzī's *al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* and *Kitāb Asrār al-tanzīl*, Abū l-Khayr al-Ṭālaqānī's *Maḥajjat al-ḥaqq wa-munjā l-khalq*, Ibn ʿAsākir's *Tabyīn kadhib al-muftarī*, and Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Labbān's *Taʾwīlāt al-mutashābihāt*.

[52] Sājaqlī-zāde, *Risāla fī l-falsafa* 117–119; *Risāla fī l-ṭaʿn fī l-falsafa* 231–235.

Sājaqlī-zāde's classification of the sciences on the basis of benefit and damage was a repetition of the classifications of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn. Thus, his attitude against philosophy was not original. However, the main points that made Sājaqlī-zāde important were his reaction to the theologians who accepted the method of philosophical theology and, in this context, the framework he drew for theology. In his early life, Sājaqlī-zāde showed interest in theology and wrote a commentary, *Nashr al-Ṭawāliʿ*, on al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*. But, he later became a student of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and inclined toward Sufism. He compared this situation with what al-Ghazālī had experienced and pointed out that he had left theology forever. For this reason, he wanted to collect and destroy all copies of the commentary he had written on al-Bayḍāwi's commentary, in order to not leave behind any works about theology.

The theology that Sājaqlī-zāde had once shown interest in, but later abandoned, was philosophical theology. Therefore, he severely opposed the representatives of philosophical theology, such as al-Bayḍāwī, al-Rāzī, and al-Dawānī. He criticized their works that were written using the method of philosophical theology. However, what disturbed him the most was the fact that al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī secretly used the philosophers' views in their Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*). He composed a work specifically to draw attention to these points and gave examples from al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī.[53] According to him, philosophy dominated the general character of al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr*, which was held in high esteem before the Ottoman scholars. Therefore, many views of philosophers, which were contrary to the core of religion, were secretly given a place in the work in question. Sājaqlī-zāde was highly disturbed by the fact that some people, who were unable to distinguish philosophical views from Islamic creed, read the *tafsīr* of al-Bayḍāwī and assumed philosophical views to be Islamic. So, he pointed out that the secret inclusion of philosophy in al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* was more harmful than the Muʿtazili views that al-Zamakhsharī concealed in his *al-Kashshāf*. Thus, he discouraged students from reading al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* if they were not familiar enough with the philosophers' views.[54]

The reaction of Sājaqlī-zāde was not against theology itself, but against philosophical theology. In his classification of the sciences, theology was among those fields that were religiously useful. In this regard, the framework he drew for theology largely corresponded with the approach of al-Ghazālī in his *al-Iḥyāʾ*. Sājaqlī-zāde divided theology and all works composed in this field into three stages. The first stage was the doctrinal works that only contained doctrinal matters, such as *al-Fiqh al-akbar* by Abū Ḥanīfa, *Qaṣīdat badʾ al-amālī* by Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ūshī, and *al-ʿAqāʾid* by al-Nasafī.[55] According to him, Mollā ʿAlī al-Qārī's commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar* was the best work of this stage and must absolutely be found in the library of every *madrasa* teacher (*mudarris*). The second stage consisted of the works that dealt with doctrinal matters, together with their proofs, and rarely or merely superficially mentioned the views of other groups. This was the stage of *iqtiṣād* and *kalām* (theology), and al-Ghazālī's *al-Risāla al-qudsiyya* was an example of this. As for the third stage, it was a stage that required a more qualified struggle with opponent groups and deeper engagement with the proofs. This was the rank of *istiqṣāʾ*. Sājaqlī-zāde pointed out that, in this third stage, al-Taftāzānī divided theology into two parts and defined the first as the theology of the earlier theologians (*al-mutaqaddimūn*) and the second as the theology of the later theologians (*al-mutaʾakhkhirūn*). Most of the discussions made in the first part were about various Islamic groups, particularly the Muʿtazila, but in the second part, the views of philosophers were opposed, and these matters were added to the theological books. Although Sājaqlī-zāde gave examples of books from the first two stages, in the last stage he kept silent and did not refer to any book.[56]

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[53] Sājaqlī-zāde, *Risāla fī l-radd* 1–80.

[54] Sājaqlī-zāde, *Tartīb al-ʿulūm* 166.

To sum up, the exclusion of philosophy from theology, and the attempts to establish a theology independent from philosophy, gradually narrowed the framework of Sunni theology in the late Ottoman Empire. Theology, as the most important base for the struggle with other religions and movements, lost its dynamism and its field of maneuver in this process. This process, during which the relationship between theology and philosophy was cut off and theology turned into a creed, was a period in which Islamic religious thought crystallized in a real sense. This was one of the most important reasons why Muslims were caught by surprise and unprepared for the intellectual challenges of the modern West. Thus, the reformist approaches that emerged almost concurrently in all regions of the Islamic world where Sunnis were dominant, from Egypt to India, from Anatolia to Saudi Arabia, and from North Africa to Crimea-Kazan, were directly connected to this process of crystallization.

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[55] Ibid., 144–145.

[56] Ibid., 145–146.

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CHAPTER 41

The Malaysian Scholar Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (b. 1931) on Islamic Education: An Evaluation in View of Classical Islamic Sources

Hans Daiber

The intention of this paper is to present an analysis of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's ideas on knowledge and education in the light of Islamic thinkers since the time of Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889). We will discuss the sources mentioned by al-Attas, the peculiarities of his concept of education, and possible parallels in early Islamic thought. Al-Attas's work is an important contribution to the ideal of "Islamic education", which became the curriculum of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur. He founded ISTAC in 1987 and was its director until 2002.

When we study Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's ideas of education in his monograph, *The concept of education in Islam* (1980), we find similarities and differences to the "Western" concept of education. Both concepts share a concern for the ethical aspect of education, the shaping of man that is not restricted to mere knowledge and includes his role in a good society. This common ground might be due to universal aims of education, which we find in different cultures, each containing different details that are determined by the specific times and places of a culture.

In Europe the concept of education has been heavily debated since the turn of the millennium. The introduction of a new university curriculum, shared by all members of the European Union and leading to bachelor's and master's degrees, tends to reduce universities to mere schools for specialists mainly serving the economy of the State. Critical voices emphasize the necessity of a concept of education that shapes man, gives him orientation, opens him to a multiplicity of interests, and makes his life and his role in society meaningful. These voices refer to movements of humanism existing in Europe since the twelfth century, or to what is labeled cultural and communicative memory.[1] They refer to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and his concept of responsibility

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[1] Cf. Assmann, Cultural memory.

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(*Mündigkeit*), which is understood as a constant ethical reflection on man's behaviour and his position in society.

Here, we concentrate on the peculiarities of the Islamic concept of education. They are a mirror image of Islamic thought and give a special accentuation to universal trends of man's education, in German "*Bildung*," a term that is explained as the totality of cognition, knowledge, and experiences, combined with sound judgement and good taste.

Our starting point will be al-Attas's description of the concept of education,[2] which he has discussed on several occasions since 1977.[3] His monograph *The concept of education in Islam* (1980) was translated into Arabic in 1998 and forms a chapter in his book on *Islam, secularism and the philosophy of the future* (1985).[4] His *Prolegomena to the metaphysics of Islam* from 1995 bears witness to the "*Bildung*" of a Muslim and to the Islamic concept of education.

I shall focus my paper on the earlier Islamic traditions in al-Attas's concept of education and his new assertions. The Islamic texts that al-Attas mentions as his sources—such as the Quran, old Arabic dictionaries like the *Lisān al-ʿArab* by Ibn Manẓūr (d. 710/1311 or 1312),[5] the books of definitions of technical terms written by al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) and al-Tahānawī (d. twelfth/eighteenth century),[6] and works on theology like al-Taftāzānī's (d. 792/1390) commentary on the Creed by al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142)[7] or al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) works[8]—give a basic idea of the Islamic background of al-Attas's concept of education.

At the beginning of his discussion, al-Attas reminds the reader of the scientific structure of the Arabic language, which in his eyes is corroborated by the Quran and the *ḥadīth*, as well as by the numerous dictionaries and lists of technical terms used by the Arabs in early Islamic times.[9] Their explanations, as well as the explanations of commentators on the Quran, are considered to be correct and exclude any semantic changes during the centuries to come. The meaning of ambiguous expressions, according to al-Attas, can be explained by *tafsīr*, and their "ultimate" meaning can be explained by *taʾwīl*. The Quran and the prophetic tradition appear as archetypes of knowledge and exclude historical developments—they do not require a historical contextualization.

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[2] On al-Attas's concept of education see the description in Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 121–123.

[3] His book *The concept of education in Islam* is an enlarged commentary on his paper "Preliminary thoughts on the nature of knowledge and the definition and aims of education", presented at the First World Conference on Muslim Education, Mecca, March 31-April 8, 1977. The paper was published in 1978 in Jeddah in a collection of selected articles edited by al-Attas, *Aims* 19–47. It is worth reading al-Attas's introduction to this volume, 1–15.

[4] Ch. VI. The text was already published in 1978 in Kuala Lumpur, in al-Attas's book *Islam and secularism* (especially in the chapter "The dewesternization of knowledge" 127–160).

[5] See Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 135.

[6] See ibid., 100, 104, 139, 328, and 342.

[7] See ibid., 84 and 115.

[8] See ibid., 115–116, 163, 174–175, 177–178, 228, 232–234, 240–242, 283, 365, and 368.

[9] On al-Attas's concept of the Arabic language and its scientific nature see Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 330 ff.

On this basis, al-Attas postulates the existence of an "Islamic vocabulary" orientated toward the language of the Quran, which "Islamized" both the Arabic language after the Jāhilī period and non-Arabic languages of Muslim peoples.[10] In his opinion, the result of this "Islamization" are "Islamic languages" that share the same *meanings*. Here, al-Attas criticizes the "modernist movement," which lacks "intellectual and spiritual leadership" and which, under the influence of non-Islamic worldviews, created semantic confusion, leading to the "de-Islamization" of the Arabic language. This he considers as a loss of *adab*.[11] *Adab* is more than *tarbiya* ("education"), more than the "process of instilling something into human beings" and turning them into rational and at the same time spiritual beings, who are able to judge, discriminate, and clarify.[12] This capacity includes the ability of the educated to understand formulations and their meanings (*maʿnā*) (i.e., the recognition of the place of anything in a system, and its relation to other things).[13]

This reminds us of al-Ghazālī's complaint about the loss of the original meanings of terms among scholars of his time,[14] and his increasing tendency to replace philosophical terminology with concepts from *kalām*.[15] Moreover, it reminds us of the interesting discussion in Ibn Qutayba's *Adab al-kātib*. This is a handbook written by a historian and scholar in the third/ninth century for secretaries at the caliphal court entrusted with administrative tasks. In the introduction, Ibn Qutayba criticizes those people who are "scholars" (*ʿulamāʾ*) without knowledge, who want to be progressive and use terms and concepts without, in fact, knowing their real meaning (*maʿnā*).[16] Ibn Qutayba mentions their allusion to Aristotle's books and to logical terms taken from Aristotle,[17] and he refers to Muḥammad Ibn al-Jahm al-Barmakī's boast of the saying *awwal al-fikr nihāyatu al-ʿamal* ("the first in thought is the last in action"). In Ibn

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[10] See al-Attas, *Concept* 8–10.

[11] See ibid., 10–12.

[12] See ibid., 13–14.

[13] Ibid., 15. Cf. Wan Daud, al-Attas 46–48.

[14] See al-Attas, *Concept* 11.

[15] See Griffel, *Apostasie* 264 (n. 20).

[16] See Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-kātib* 1, 7–9, and 2, 9–11.

[17] Ibid., 3, 11 ff. (translation Lecomte, Introduction 53–54; also in Soravia, Ibn Qutayba en Al-Andalus 552–553).

Qutayba's view, none of this reaches the level of wisdom (*ḥikma*) and eloquence (*al-khiṭāb*) of the Arabs in religion, law, law of inheritance, grammar, or the sayings of their Prophet and Companions.[18] Ibn Qutayba praises knowledge (*ʿilm*) and speculation (*naẓar*) and gives an idea of his concept of *adab*, combining knowledge with ethics.[19]

To this concept of *adab*, al-Attas adds his own emphasis on the process of getting knowledge and on its recipient, the rational being (*al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*), who is able to articulate with his audible speech and articulation of the "meaning" (*maʿnā*) the "inner, unseen reality," the *ʿaql* or *qalb*.[20] Al-Attas explains "meaning" as the recognition of the place of anything in a "system." This implies the clarification and understanding of the relation a thing has with other things, its *order*.[21] Here, al-Attas refers to al-Jurjānī's and al-Tahānawī's books on definitions and their, ultimately Avicennian, distinction between essence and existence. "Essential relation" and "specific difference" are considered as something immutable, otherwise there would be constant change, which would make the recognition of things impossible.

This reminds us of the criticism of the sophists by the Islamic philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 339/950 or 951) and of al-Fārābī's own view about the truth of existing things, as he developed it in his monograph on the ideal state, *Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*.[22] These things are identical with the meaning (*mafhūm*) of their terms, and in their essence and meaning they are created by an external, divine creator. According to al-Fārābī, knowledge of what derives from the divine first cause, through mediation of the Prophet and ruler, is philosophical truth. This philosophical truth is imitated by religion, and this imitation is not only an easily comprehensive picture of what is based in philosophy on philosophical proofs; it is also the reality of philosophical truth, the ethical realization of the theory of philosophy and its universals. Philosophy—that is, scientific cognition—becomes moral insight. It becomes reality in the shape of the imitation of religion and its laws, the rules that regulate man's actions.

Here, we detect a common interest of al-Attas and al-Fārābī concerning epistemology and its indebtedness to divine inspiration. Al-Attas does not mention al-Fārābī and merely speaks of the "concerted agreement that all knowledge comes from God".[23] And whereas al-Fārābī inserts—in the footsteps of Plato, Aristotle, and Alexander of Aphrodisias—a long discussion of the soul and its faculties, al-Attas confines himself, in the footsteps of al-Jurjānī, to mentioning the soul as interpreter and as something that "arrives … at the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge".[24] He adds the role of *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl* ("an intensive form of *tafsīr*")[25] as "methods of approach to knowledge and scientific methodology".[26] Here, the Quran is considered the "final authority that confirms the truth in our rational and empirical investigations." It conveys knowledge to man, in other words, "recognition of the proper places of things in the order of creation such that it leads to the recognition of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence".[27] Knowledge is knowledge of God the Creator, as He is revealed in the Quran. The concept of God's secret (*ghayb*) and Ibn Sīnā's concept of God, who can be known from His creation only in a doubtful manner (*bi-tashkīk*),[28] here is purposely not discussed. Instead, al-Attas adds to "recognition" the "acknowledgement of the proper (that is real and true) places of things in the order of creation such that it leads to the recognition of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence".[29] Al-Attas here has in mind the necessary action (*ʿamal*) on the part of man in the world of empirical things, including religious and ethical aspects of human existence.[30]

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[18] Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-kātib* 5, 7–6, 2. Cf. the translation in Stern, "First" 240–241. The interpretation in van Ess, *Theologie* iii, 206 is not correct.

[19] See Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* i, 117–130; paraphrase by Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 254–266. On *naẓar* as a source of knowledge see Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl* 87–89 (translation in Lecomte, *Traité* 99–101); cf. Lecomte, Introduction xx–xxii.

[20] Al-Attas, *Concept* 14.

[21] Ibid., 15.

[22] See on the following Daiber, al-Fārābī; Daiber, al-Fārābīs Aristoteles; Daiber, *Ruler as philosopher*.

His evaluation of the recognition of truth as the recognition of proper behaviour, of man's duty or obligation, of his conduct that conforms with truth, is remarkable. This meaning of truth means consonance with the requirements of wisdom (*ḥikma*) and justice (*ʿadl*).[31] Wisdom is understood as knowledge given by God, which enables man to have "correct judgement" with regard "to the proper places of things". The assessment of knowledge as ability to judge, bestowed on man by God, followed by right action (i.e., the conduct of man who keeps to his obligation), has its roots in Islamic theology and in the definition of belief as "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) and "action" (*ʿamal*)—as al-Attas acknowledges,[32] with references to rather late sources, al-Jurjānī's *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt*,[33] al-Taftāzānī, an older contemporary of al-Jurjānī, and the commentary on the Creed (*ʿAqāʾid*) by Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 536/1142).[34] In fact, the correlation of knowledge and action already exists in the Quranic equation of *ʿilm* "knowledge" and *īmān* "belief"[35] and in the discussions on the significance of *ʿamal* "work" for "belief".[36]

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[23] Al-Attas, *Concept* 16.

[24] Ibid., 17.

[25] Ibid., 7.

[26] Ibid., 18; cf. Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 343–345.

[27] Al-Attas, *Concept* 18. On the concept of the "proper place," which al-Attas based on Hujwirī's definition of *ʿadl*, see al-Attas, *Concept* viii, n. 4; cf. Wan Daud, review of al-Attas, *Islam* 121.

[28] See Daiber, Limitations 32–33.

[29] Al-Attas, *Concept* 19.

[30] Ibid., 19 bottom.

[31] Ibid., 20.

Moreover, we can add, with regard to the combination of knowledge and moral action as part of religion, a famous and already mentioned forerunner, al-Fārābī. He developed an epistemology on the basis of Neoplatonism and Aristotle, as well as Aristotle's commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias. According to this epistemology, theoretical insight is divine inspiration coming from God to the prophet-philosopher as emanations of the divine active intellect. It becomes reality in the shape of rules and laws prescribed by religion. These laws and rules describe God's will in the shape of symbols and pictures also understandable to non-philosophically minded people. These laws and rules of religion determine the conduct of man, and they are the fulfilment of theoretical insight, the actualization of philosophy. Al-Fārābī aligns this with Aristotle's epistemology, according to which man can only think in pictures of the visible. The symbols of religion, the pictures of human thinking, the laws and rules shape man's conduct and his moral actions.[37]

Al-Fārābī offers a combination of the knowledge bestowed by God on man and the moral actions of man, comparable with what we find in al-Attas's statements. Al-Attas continues his discussion with the introduction of the term *adab*, instead of *tarbiya*, as a key term for the description of the "discipline of body, mind, and soul," which has the task to "assure the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potentials".[38] *Adab* is knowledge of the purpose of seeking knowledge—namely, knowledge of the purpose of inculcating goodness in man. This goodness of man is based on knowledge and action. It is the result of man's lower animal self-recognizing and acknowledging its proper place in relation to the higher rational self that constitutes the *adab* of the lower self.

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[32] Ibid., 19–20.

[33] See al-Jurjānī, *Taʿrīfāt* 96, 10–12, and 14–16.

[34] See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ ʿalā l-ʿAqāʾid* 15–16; translation by Elder in al-Taftāzānī, *Commentary* 10–11.

[35] See Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 29–30, 97–99.

[36] See the chapter on "Belief and work" in Izutsu, *Concept* 159–161. Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 240–242 neglected this aspect; cf. my remarks in Review of Rosenthal, *Knowledge* 413–415.

[37] See the references given in n. 22.

[38] Al-Attas, *Concept* 22. Cf. al-Attas's "acceptance speech" on occasion of his appointment as the first holder of the al-Ghazali Chair of Islamic Thought at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in 1994, published under the title "Islam, science and knowledge" 116–118.

Adab, or the process of *ta'dīb* "education" leading to *adab*,[39] appears in al-Attas's doctrine as the shaping of the lower capacities of man—in other words, the shaping of man's animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyya*) by his rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*).[40] This term, which should replace the term *tarbiya*, makes man a good man in terms of his relation to his family, people, community, and society.[41] In a comparable manner, al-Fārābī emphasized the role of the individual and his soul and its capacities, which, in the struggle between the rational soul and its lower parts, strive for happiness in this world and in the hereafter.[42] Al-Fārābī gives a differentiated picture of the role of the individual in a hierarchically structured society, in which the lower serves the higher. Society consists of the leader and the led, *imām* and *ma'mūm*. The highest position of the *imām* is the philosopher-ruler, who receives his inspiration from the divine active intellect. Al-Fārābī does not use the term *adab* in his monograph on the perfect State (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*),[43] apparently because he did not intend to offer a handbook on morals and behaviour for the members of a society, comparable to the "mirrors for princes" as they were composed by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and his epigones.[44] On the contrary, he offered a kind of epistemology intended to emphasize the necessity of self-education by constant reflection in an endless process of assimilation to God.[45]

Al-Attas has differing accentuations, but he shares with al-Fārābī the evaluation of man as a being striving for knowledge, which comes from God, and for good action and conduct in society, in accordance with his knowledge. Accordingly, *adab* is "recognition and acknowledgement of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various grades and degrees of rank, and of one's proper place in relation to that reality and to one's physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials".[46] Al-Fārābī would not have opposed this; however, he would have avoided the term *adab* as a concept in its narrow sense.[47]

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[39] See al-Attas, *Concept* 25.

[40] Ibid., 23. On al-Attas's psychology cf. Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 49–50.

[41] Al-Attas, *Concept* 26.

[42] See al-Fārābī, *Mabādi'* section iv, ch. 10 (on the faculties of the soul) and ch. 13, 4–7; Daiber, Prophetie 730–732.

[43] On *ta'dīb* in al-Fārābī see Haddad, Arab theory 242–243 (quoted in Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 140); Haddad, *Alfarabi's theory* 127.

[44] See Richter, *Studien*; Lambton, Islamic mirrors; Daiber, *Kitāb al-Ādāb*.

[45] See Daiber, *Ruler* 17.

[46] Al-Attas, *Concept* 27.

Al-Fārābī stressed the necessity of constant reflection in combination with divine inspiration—par excellence in the person of the prophet-ruler, who transmits his knowledge and experience to the ruled. Moreover, he invites the reader of his monograph on the perfect State, *Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* (*The principles of the insights*[48] *of the citizens of the best state*), to be critical towards any political system. He does this by ending his book with a long chapter on "ignorant" and "erring" cities, partly in the footsteps of Plato's *Republic*, whereas his ideas about the perfect State are restricted to general remarks on the intellectual qualities of the just ruler. Al-Fārābī's divine inspiration stimulates the creative phantasy of man's constantly critical reflection on the correlation of scientific cognition and moral insight that is practical prudence within the perfect State, a universal World State, made up of ruler and ruled, consisting of smaller units of nations and communities, which serve each other.

Al-Fārābī is not as idealistic as al-Attas, who speaks of the possibility of education, *taʾdīb*, in the sense of "inculcation" of knowledge[49] in a process that "makes man recognize and acknowledge his position in relation to God, his true Possessor, and that makes him act in accordance with this recognition and acknowledgement".[50]

In al-Attas's view, *adab* should be understood in its original and early meaning as something related to man's emulation of the *sunna* of the Holy Prophet as an "embodiment of excellence in conduct"[51] and as something fused together with *ʿilm* and *ʿamal*, "knowledge" and "action."[52] The loss of *adab* is considered by al-Attas to be the reason for the loss of justice and for the "error in knowledge of Islam and the Islamic vision of reality and truth" among Muslims today,[53] including their leaders, "who are not qualified for valid leadership" and "who do not possess the high moral, intellectual and spiritual standards required for Islamic leadership".[54] Here, al-Attas stresses the indispensability of a "constant guidance by the learned and the wise within it (sc. the society) so as to ensure its salvation".[55] According to al-Attas, the learned and wise are those who "exercise constant vigilance in detecting erroneous usage in language". By doing this they can avoid semantic change leading to "general confusion and error in the understanding of Islam and of its world-view".[56]

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[47] On the development and changing use of *adab* see Gabrieli, Adab.

[48] On this translation of *ārāʾ* see Daiber, Philosophy.

[49] Al-Attas, *Concept* 32.

[50] Ibid., 30.

[51] Ibid., 34–35.

[52] Ibid., 34.

[53] Ibid., 33.

[54] Ibid., 34.

Al-Fārābī did not discuss such confusions stemming from semantic changes and the erroneous use of terms. For him, existing things are identical with the meaning (*mafhūm*) of their terms, and in their essence and their meaning are created by an external, divine creator. Here, al-Attas equally presupposes an original meaning of terms, which is the truth, and which should be preserved. Comparable with al-Fārābī, who keeps to the necessity of the guidance by a ruler and wise man with prophetic qualities, al-Attas postulates an "Islamic leadership" with "high moral, intellectual and spiritual standards". Additionally, he considers education to be the task of the individual and not of the State[57]—modifying this view in other places with references to the good action and conduct of man in society. Finally, he considers the Prophet Muhammad to be the Universal and Perfect Man, who can become a "model to emulate in life".[58] Here, too, al-Attas has modified the view of al-Fārābī, who did not identify the prophet-ruler with the Prophet Muhammad but instead speaks of the emulation of God by man under the guidance of the prophet-ruler.

Consequently, al-Attas talks about the duty of man and woman in the Islamic university[59] to reflect the Holy Prophet in terms of knowledge and right action, so that they might resemble the Prophet in quality as nearly as possible.[60] For this reason, and in view of the fact that all knowledge comes from God, the religious sciences, in a wider sense "Islamic thought," are necessary for all Muslims (*farḍ al-ʿayn*).[61] "Rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences", including human sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences, and technological sciences, are obligatory for some Muslims only.

The prevalence of the religious sciences is based on the fact that the Quran, the revelation of God's wisdom to the Prophet Muhammad, is the starting point of the Islamic concept of education. For this reason, the study of the Arabic language of the Quran, its explanation, and the acquisition of its ultimate meaning by *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl*, are central in religious studies, in addition to the study of

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[55] Ibid., 37.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 38.

[58] Ibid., 39.

[59] On al-Attas's concept of an Islamic university see Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 169–171.

[60] See al-Attas, *Concept* 39–40.

[61] See Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 197–199, 243–245.

sunna, *sharīʿa*, *tawḥīd* (theology), and *taṣawwuf* ("Islamic metaphysics", including psychology, cosmology, ontology, and "legitimate elements of Islamic philosophy").

On the basis of the cited preconditions, and on the basis of the Islamic doctrine of the Quran and its language as ultimate and archetypical realities, al-Attas's concept of an Islamic philosophy of education appears to be consistent. Consequently, errors and confusions in human knowledge are due to wrong interpretations of the Quran, its meaning, and its Arabic language. The Quran is not considered to be a literary document with its own history and prehistory, and any developments in the Quranic language are not caused by historical developments; they are the result of human error and confusion.

Education is emulation of the Prophet and his *sunna* through an increase of knowledge, which ultimately comes from God and results in the good action of man. This explanation implies the characterization of education, formulated by al-Attas as *taʾdīb* leading to *adab*, as an ongoing process of increasing knowledge and improving action. A comparison with the European concept of education, in German *"Bildung"* in contrast to *"Ausbildung"*, shows common features and significant differences. Both concepts share the concept of education as a shaping of man through an increase of knowledge and through reflection on the ethical behaviour of man in society. They differ in so far as the creative phantasy of man is replaced in the Islamic concept by a kind of intuition[62] that is nourished by the inspirational power of the divine revelation to the Prophet—that is, of the Quran—whose archetypical value is undoubted. This can eventually restrict the possibility of man's critical reflection (i.e., his open-mindedness to a multiplicity of interests that make his life meaningful and give him orientation and self-identity, also in the confrontation with other cultures). An illustrative example is the history of the Islamic culture, which in the view of orientalists is the result of an encounter between Greek-Sasanian, Jewish, and Christian cultures that led to the development of a new religion. Al-Attas calls this shaping "Islamization",[63] which, according to him, pertains to language, thought, and reason and does not allow foreign influences, "the infusion of alien concepts".

In al-Attas's view, the other, the alien, the different, that is not Islam, is not something inspiring and enriching, but leads to de-Islamization and finally to secularization.[64] Islam is primarily the unfolding of God's wisdom as revealed in the Quran. Here, al-Attas's concept of Islamic education differs from the European humanistic concept of education, which focuses on the shaping of man and his identity in the dialogue with the other, the alien. Thus, the shadow of the Quran does not allow the rise of "Arabic humanism".[65]

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[62] On its role in al-Attas's concept of education see ibid., 46–48, 271–273.

[63] On al-Attas's concept of Islamization see ibid., 291–293, 371–373.

[64] See al-Attas, *Concept* 45.

We conclude: In view of al-Attas's interest in foreign cultures, including Western cultures, which he criticizes as secular civilizations and, at the same time, whose knowledge he considers to be "core knowledge" (*farḍ ʿayn*),[66] and in view of his ideal of education understood as an ongoing process of increasing knowledge coming from God and improving action of man in his emulation of the Prophet Muhammad, al-Attas turns out to be an Islamic humanist.[67] Similar to European humanism, he rediscovered the importance of a single word, a term. Different from European humanism, its archetypical meaning in Islam is shaped by the Quran, which is considered to have universal validity. Al-Attas's concept of education deserves due attention in contemporary discussions by European Muslims on "Islamic education".[68]

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[65] On this concept and on examples of "Arabic humanism" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see Kreutz, *Arabischer Humanismus*.

[66] See Wan Daud, *Educational philosophy* 198 and 200.

[67] We are aware of the fact that "Islamic humanism" has many faces; see Goodman's historical monograph *Islamic humanism*. On the concept see Schöller, Zum Begriff des "islamischen Humanismus." See now Daiber, Humanism.

[68] See the collection of articles (partly including remarks on the historical background) in Aslan, *Islamische Erziehung*.

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General Notes on the Indices

The indices consist of (1) Index of Proper Names, (2) Index of Geographical Names and Toponyms, (3) Index of Book Titles and Other Texts, (4) Index of Scriptural References, (5) Ḥadīth Index, and (6) Index of Topics and Keywords.

The Index of Proper Names is organized according to the name by which a figure is commonly known, with cross references as necessary. It includes the names of mortal figures (incl. Prophets and Biblical characters).

The Index of Geographical Names and Toponyms lists earthly places as well as (educational) institutions and other organizations. Otherworldly locations (e.g., paradise and hell) appear in the Index of Topics and Keywords.

The Index of Book Titles and Other Texts includes book titles and texts in their original language as well as manuscripts, followed by the author (wherever possible).

The Index of Scriptural References lists all references to specific Quranic verses and Biblical verses. More general discussions of topics in the Quran and the Bible appear in the Index of Topics and Keywords.

The Ḥadīth Index includes the topics related in a specific prophetic tradition, while discussions relating to the science of *ḥadīth* (e.g., transmission of, scholars of, literature on) appear in the Index of Topics and Keywords under "*ḥadīth*."

Finally, apart from keywords and topics, the Index of Topics and Keywords includes the names of groups of people (e.g. ʿAbbasids, Muʿtazilites), angels and other "beings" (e.g., God, Dionysos, Hārūt and Mārūt, or *jinn*) as well as non-earthly places. When texts are mentioned in relation to such a figure, these are cited in the index by the original titles only.

The following general criteria apply to all indices. Some cross-references ("see"/"see also") may refer to both entries in the same index or, in some cases, to entries in one of the other indices. For example, certain entries in the Index of Topics and Keywords refer to individuals in the Index of Proper Names as well as to titles of works in the Index of Book Titles and Other Texts. Page references in bold type indicate passages in which the subject of the entry was covered in more detail. The sorting rules are: the Arabic definite article "al-" (and "l-" respectively) was neglected at the beginning of names. It was also neglected when following "Ibn", "ʿAbd" or "Abū", or *Kitāb*, "b.", ayn (ʿ) and hamza (ʾ). Letter-by-letter sorting follows the Brill standard, ignoring any spaces and punctuation.

Some more specific notes are given at the beginning of each index.

Index of Proper Names

This index includes the names of mortal figures (incl. Prophets and Biblical characters). The names of groups of people (e.g. ʿAbbasids, Muʿtazilites), angels and other "beings" (e.g., God, Dionysos, Hārūt and Mārūt, or *jinn*) have been listed in the Index of Topics and Keywords.

The following rules for sorting medieval Arabic names have been applied:

1. Persons whose names start with "Abū" are sorted under "Abū"
2. Persons whose names start with "ʿAbd/ʿAbdallāh" are sorted under "ʿAbd/ʿAbdallāh"
3. Persons most known by their father's given name are sorted under "Ibn"
4. If persons are not subject to the sorting rules mentioned under 1–3 they are sorted by their given names, *unless* the last component of the name indicates a place or tribal name (beginning with a definite article "al-" or "l-" and ending with "ī" or "y"). In the latter case sorting is on the place/tribal element.
5. Exception: if authors have referred to a person by another name element consistently or if a person is more known by another name, sorting has been done under that name. In these cases cross-references have been made.
6. Neglected in sorting:
    a. "al-" and "l-" at beginning of names and following "Ibn", "ʿAbd" or "Abū"
    b. "b." – always
    c. ayn (ʿ) and hamza (ʾ) – always

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