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AL-ʻUṢŪR AL-WUSṬĀ

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In This Issue

Alison L. Gascoigne *Medieval Archaeology of the First Nile Cataract* **37**

Shawkat M. Toorawa *Travel in the Medieval Islamic World* **46**

Jonathan Brown *Crossing Sectarian Boundaries in the Fourth/Tenth Century* **55**

Richard W. Bulliet *The History of the Muslim South* **59**

Book Reviews **65**

Ramaḍān and ʻAbd al-Raʼūf: Al-Nuqūd al-Islāmīyah fī al-matḥaf al-yūnānī al-rūmānī bi-l-Iskandarīya

Holland: Weights and Weight-like Objects from Caesarea Maritima

Contributors and Credits **67**

العصور الوسطى

Al-‘Uṣūr al-Wusṭā
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Between the two dams:

the forgotten medieval and post-medieval archaeology of the first Nile cataract

Alison L. Gascoigne

The Upper Egyptian town of Aswan, situated on the first cataract of the Nile, has at various times represented the border between Egypt and her southern neighbour, Nubia, a status which has historically shaped many aspects of Aswan's culture and identity. The construction of the Low Dam to the south of the town resulted in innundation of land upstream. The dam was erected between 1898 and 1902; subsequent heightenings in 1907-12 and in particular in 1929-34 led to more extensive flooding, up to the Sudanese border. The resulting high water levels threatened many of the archaeological sites and historic monuments of Egypt's southern Nile valley. In the area immediately above the first cataract, the construction of the Aswan High Dam between 1960 and 1971, some 7 km south of the Low Dam, led to the lowering of the water level between the two barriers from c. 1964, bringing areas previously flooded out of the water once more.

The damming of the Nile stimulated several large-scale archaeological surveys in the area, starting with the first Nubian survey under George Reisner in 1907-9, during which a wide range of sites was recorded, from predynastic cemeteries to possible Roman camps. Much effort was famously expended in the rescue of Philae temple, the moving of which to the nearby island of Agilka was completed only in 1980. However, those surveys connected with the building of the Low Dam explicitly excluded medieval remains; nor did they, understandably, encompass sites that were above the projected high water mark. The small area between the dams thus remains largely unknown, having also been omitted from the high profile UNESCO salvage campaign that recorded disappearing cultural remains above the High Dam. Its monuments are often stated to be submerged and its surviving sites are largely ignored or forgotten. Yet there is some truly sensational archaeology here, including a poorly understood but intriguing fortified complex of massive dimensions, two much damaged historic mosques, and a wealth of more recent remains associated with abandoned Nubian villages, the inhabitants of which were evacuated in the face of rising flood-waters (fig. 1). The following brief account aims to bring this small but important frontier area and its cultural remains back to scholarly attention.

The fortified complex of Hisn al-Bab

The most notable site in this area is Hisn al-Bab, on the east bank of the Nile midway between the

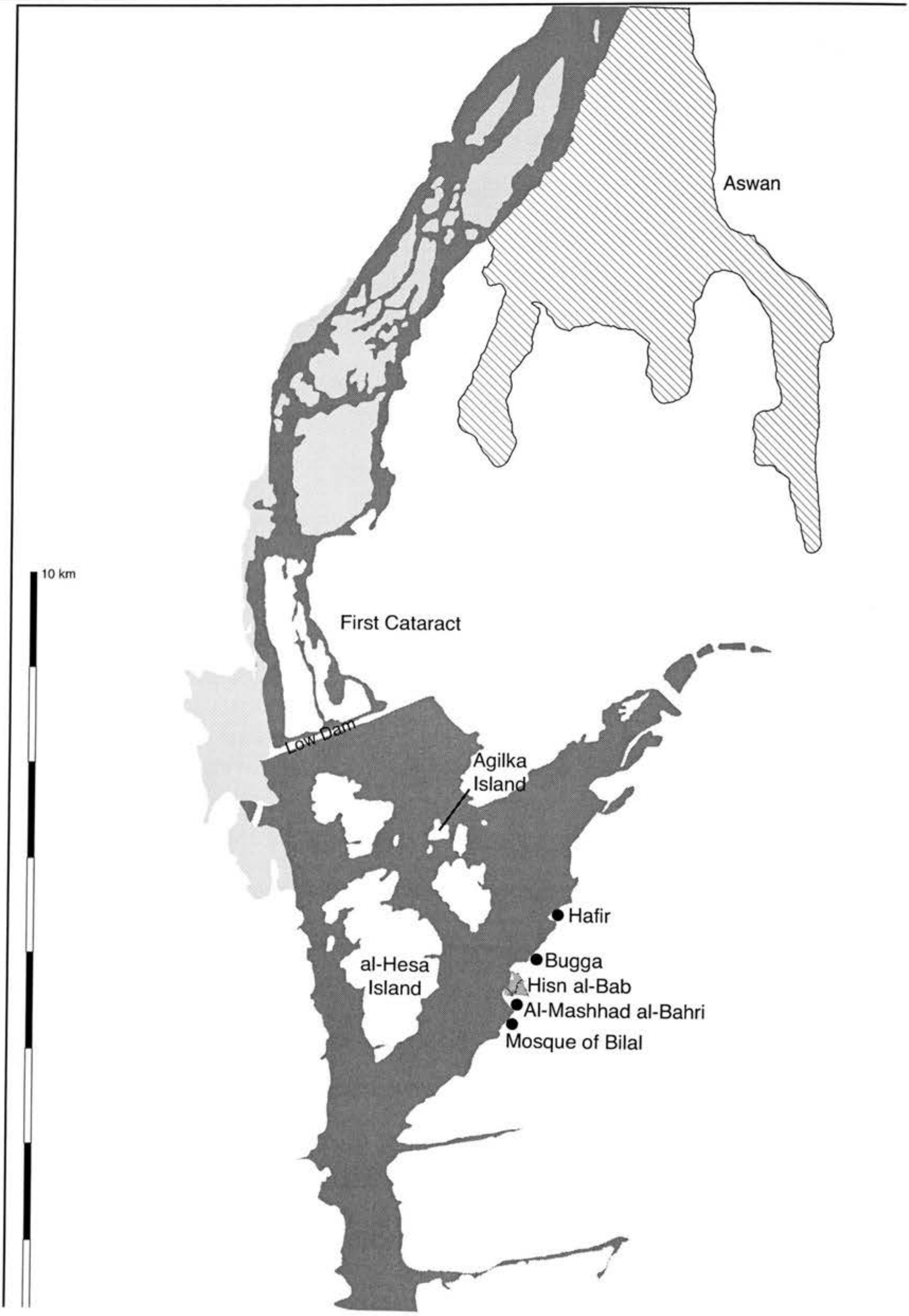

Aswan
10 km
First Cataract
Low Dam
Agilka Island
Hafir
Bugga
al-Hesa Island
Hisn al-Bab
Al-Mashhad al-Bahri
Mosque of Bilal

Figure 1. Map of the area between the Upper Egyptian town of Aswan and the High Dam, marking the principal sites discussed in the text.

Low and High Dams; it was the subject of an archaeological survey directed by the author and Pamela Rose of Cambridge University in January 2007. Prior to this, excepting brief accounts in Ugo Monneret de Villard's great work on medieval Nubia, and by papyrologist Adam Łatjar, almost no information on this extremely significant multi-phase monument was available. Two massive fortified enclosures were constructed on the clifftop overlooking the Nile at the southern end of the first cataract; an irregularly shaped early Islamic-era fort overlies a ruinous late Roman structure, reusing the lines of some existing walls, and recycling the masonry of others. The use of the earlier structure can be dated by means of associated occupational debris to the sixth and seventh centuries. The date of the later complex is difficult to fix due to a lack of associated cultural material – activity within the fort during early Islamic times seems to have been minimal – but construction may have taken place in the eighth or ninth century. The medieval walls are well preserved, with towers standing to c. 8 metres in places; great curtain walls run down the precipitous slope of the cliff, and are connected by a north-south wall along the crest of the scarp (fig. 2). Little evidence for significant levels of occupational activity is preserved on the steep, rocky interior; some rough stone terraces can be traced, as well as fragmentary evidence for the structures they supported; these should most probably be associated with the late Roman phase of activity.

The layout and architectural style of the later fort is interestingly paralleled most closely by the so-called fortified settlements of Lower Nubia, Ikhmindi, Sabaqura, Shaykh Da'ud, Nag' al-Shayma, Faras and Kalabsha, although there is a perplexingly similar site, Qal'at al-Babayn, just south of Edfu, to the north of Aswan. Arabic written sources apparently indicate that Hisn al-Bab was under Nubian control at least in principle, despite its proximity to or situation on the frontier; indeed it appears to occupy a 'no-man's-land' between the two sovereign territories. The location and configuration of the complex indicate that it is likely to be the locale referred to as al-Qasr by medieval historians, being the site where the exchange of goods agreed under the *baqt* treaty between Egypt and Nubia took place. The lack of material culture associated with the later fort might thus indicate temporary, intermittent or seasonal activity on the site, rather than the continuous habitation implied by the archaeological deposits at the Nubian fortified enclosures (and indeed at Qal'at al-Babayn), the walls of which enclose housing, churches and some depth of occupational debris.

The Mosque of Bilal/al-Mashhad al-Qibli and al-Mashhad al-Bahri

At the water's edge, hard by the southern wall of Hisn al-Bab, lie the remains of an historic mosque, al-Mashhad al-Bahri; a short walk to the south is another, the once-beautiful Mosque of Bilal, also known as al-Mashhad al-Qibli. Although known to scholarship, their continued, albeit ruined, existence has largely been overlooked. One or both of the complexes were photographed by Maxine Du Camp (1852) and Francis Frith (1856-59), and sketched by Amelia Edwards (1877), George Moritz Ebers (1878) and Gabriel Hanotaux (1931). These images show extensive, multi-domed structures with minarets. Sadly, no detailed architectural survey of either monument took place until that of Hassan al-Harawi in 1933, acting under the auspices of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments et de l'Art Arabe for Egypt's Public Works Department, by which time the sites were subject to seasonal flooding; the early images and descriptions are thus the only remaining indication of the extent and importance of the original complexes (fig. 3). The Comité's programme of salvage and repair priviledged the minarets – presumbly by this time little was left of the surrounding structures. Indeed, the Comité's consolidation work involved the construction of huge concrete

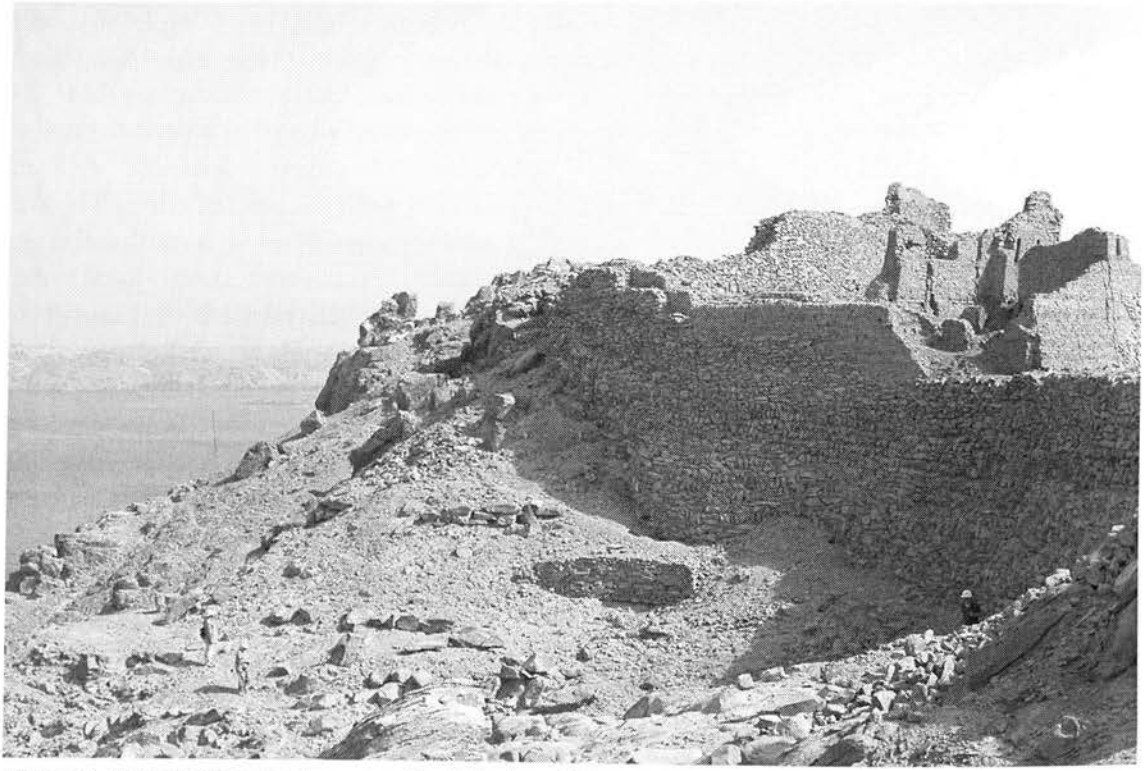


Figure 2. View looking north across the interior of Hisn al-Bab, with the great walls and towers of the early Islamic-era fort overlooking the Nile, and stone terracing along the slope.

rafts apparently across the location of the central mosque buildings (in particular in the case of the more southerly complex), indicating that (as described in the Comité bulletins) little was left of them at that time, and even less after completion of the work. Both minarets were subsequently photographed and described by K.A.C. Creswell, and formed part of a group that he suggested was constructed on the authority of Fatimid vizier Badr al-Gamali in the late eleventh century. Their style has been re-evaluated more recently by Jonathan Bloom, who proposed instead a local origin inspired by contacts with the Hijaz, the complexes being sponsored by the 'commercial bourgeois of Upper Egypt'.

The minaret of the southernmost complex, known as the Mosque of Bilal or al-Mashhad al-Qibli, has now completely collapsed, although the outline of the foundations and some associated rubble is visible on top of its concrete raft, and stone foundation blocks from the main hall of the mosque can be seen in situ in the shallow water at its base. The more northerly minaret, that of al-Mashhad al-Bahri, still stands (fig. 4). This is apparently largely due to the heavy-handed but effective 1933 Comité consolidation, which involved the sealing of the doorway and the windows onto the stairway with bricks and concrete, the repointing of the brickwork and scoring of the joints, and, most structurally, the driving of lengths of steel rail-track horizontally through the tower at various heights. The resulting heavy restoration of the base can be clearly seen in Creswell's subsequent photograph (fig. 4c). At some point since Creswell's visit in 1944, and presumably as a result of the c. 15 years of seasonal flooding suffered by the tower (up to the high water mark still visible at the level of the window on fig. 4d), the outer masonry of the lower part of the minaret fell away, leaving the upper cylindrical tower supported only on the lengths of rail. The three protruberances that can be seen in each side of the collapsed square tower are likewise the ends of rails that were less successful in supporting the outer masonery towards the base of the structure. The areas of brickwork currently remaining in place around the sealed doorway are part of the Comité concrete-bonded reconstruction, which is much harder than the original brickwork and mortar, and has thus survived much more intact. Consolidation was also undertaken of other surviving parts of the complex, comprising the rebuilding and propping of parts of the *qibla* wall.

One of these two complexes seems likely to equate to the Mashhad of al-Rudayni mentioned by several medieval authors, although which is unclear; we might speculate that the Mosque of Bilal, with (albeit circumstantial) evidence of its status provided by Ayyubid- and Mamluk-era pilgrims' inscriptions inside the *mihrab* and minaret, is perhaps the more likely candidate. The Cordoban traveller al-Bakri (1067), en route from Qus to 'Aydhab, noted that: '...The mosque of [*ar-rudaynî*] is the last post dependent on Aswan and a station for the horses (*ribât*) of Aswan'; al-Bakri's horse station indicates some official/military presence, perhaps associated with Hisn al-Bab/al-Qasr. Al-Rudayni's complex was still important enough to be worth mentioning two centuries later, when the scholar Abu al-Fida (1273-1331) wrote that: 'Near Aswan there is the mosque (*masjad*) of *ar-Rudaynî* a large shrine on the east bank of the Nile, at one (days') horse ride from Aswan'. Assuming the complex of al-Rudayni to equate to one of the mosques discussed here, its location to the *south* of the fortress, and its role in the transport and/or military systems

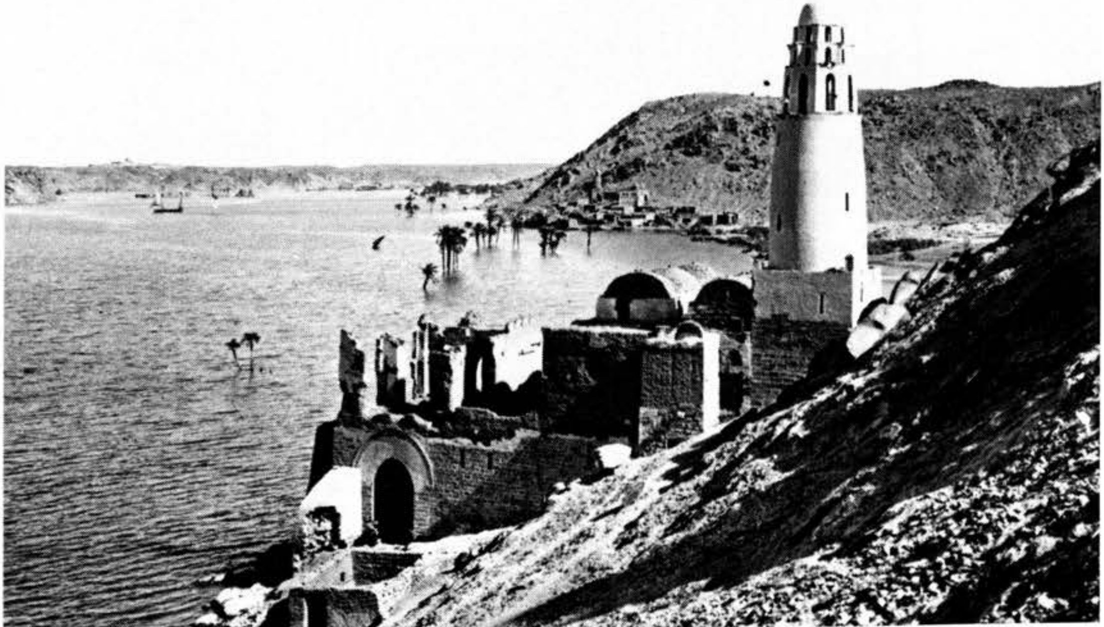


Figure 3. Anonymous photograph of the Mosque of Bilal, taken in 1924 and recently purchased in Aswan. Note the view of al-Mashhad al-Bahri across the inlet, and in particular the keep/house-like structure with Nubian-style architecture, to its right; also the southern curtain wall of Hisn al-Bab on the slope behind.

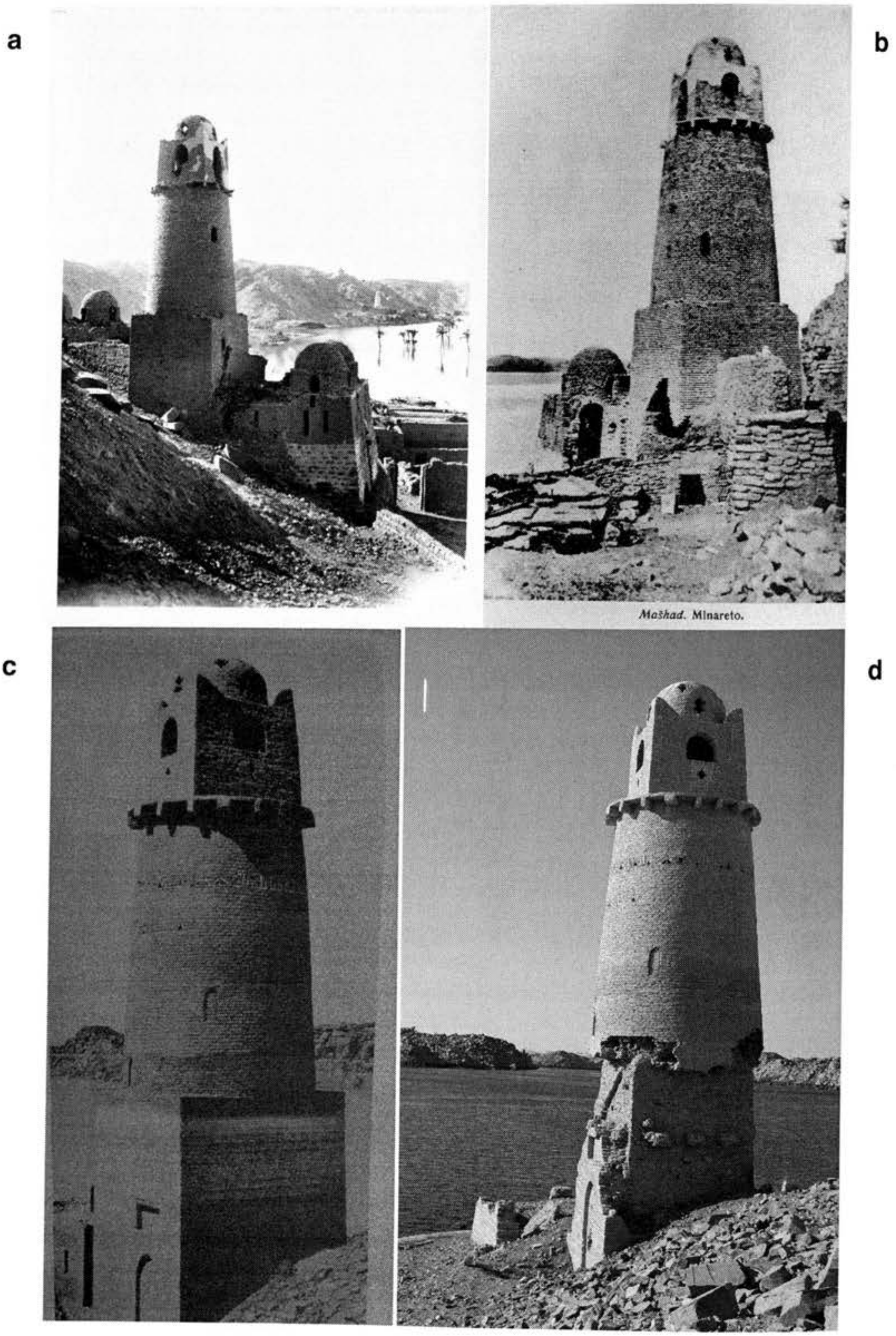


Figure 4. Changes in the condition of al-Mashhad al-Bahri and its minaret through time. a. anonymous photo taken in 1924, purchased in Aswan. b. photo taken by Monneret de Villard before the renovation of 1933. c. photo taken by Creswell, presumably during his 1944 visit. d. photo taken by the author, January 2007.

of Aswan, is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the fortress seems to have been under Nubian control at least intermittently, and this complex state of affairs reinforces the idea of a zone of interaction and transition rather than a clearly defined frontier.

The situation regarding religious boundaries between Muslim Egypt and Christian Nubia is no more straightforward. Abu Salih, writing prior to 1200, states that: 'There is a church of the glorious angel Michael (*Mikhâ'il*), which overlooks the river, and is situated between the land of Nubia and the land of the Muslims; but it belongs to Nubia. Near it there is a mosque which has been restored; and also a castle which was built as a fortress (*ḫisn*) on the frontier between the Muslims and Nubians, and is at the extremity of the Nubian territory'. The mosque and the castle are familiar to us, but the church of St Michael is a complication (and the restoration adds another interesting detail). Perhaps the early visitors who mistook the Mosque of Bilal for a Coptic monastic complex were not completely mistaken– Christian carved stonework was found on the site, although al-Harawi considers and rejects the possibility that the Mosque was a converted Christian structure. To add to the confusion, survey maps, including that of Reisner, mark the ruins of a monastery in close proximity to al-Mashhad al-Bahri, and it is not impossible that closer examination of the remains on the ground may shed some light on this. Vantini, furthermore, states that: 'During the Fatimid period in Egypt, a monument known as the 'memorial shrine' (*mashhad*) of al-Rudaini was built near al-Qasr, and this is mentioned by several writers. The memorial mosque was built on the foundation of an old church.' More evidence regarding the location of this Christian complex, and its relationship to the mosques and fort, is clearly required in order to expand our understanding of

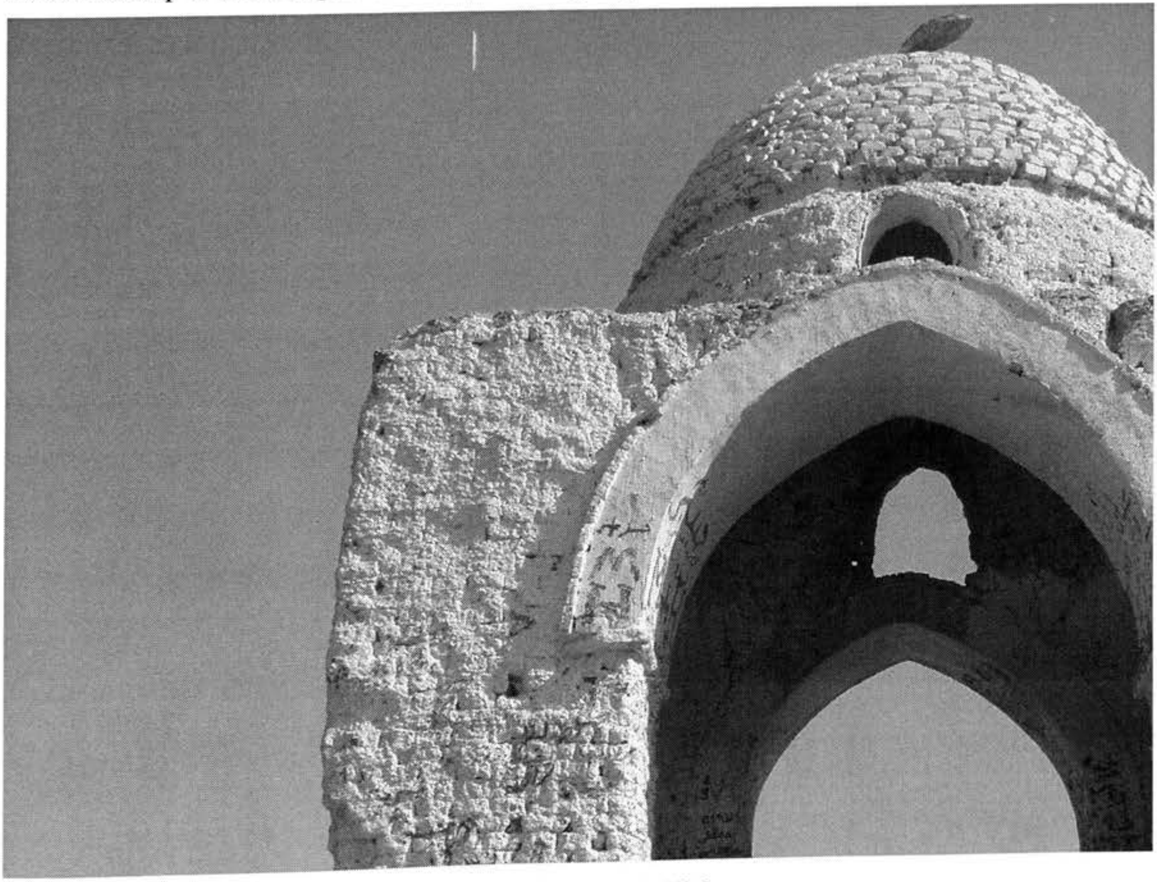


Figure 5. The small shaykh's tomb above the Mosque of Bilal.

the complex cultural and political interactions taking place in this key region.

Traces of evacuated Nubian communities

The fort and the two mosques sit within a landscape rich in evidence for more recent domestic, religious and agricultural activity. The hilltop above the ruins of the Mosque of Bilal is capped with a small shaykh's tomb, apparently of some age, but obviously a focus for recent or current religious or ritual activity. The structure is difficult to date: it appears in the background of late ninteenth-century photographs of Philae but seems likely to be somewhat older than this. The central part of the dome has collapsed and been rebuilt, and graffiti on the interior of the newer brickwork, mainly recording the names of pious visitors in *nashki* script, might date on the basis of style to the later nineteenth or earlier twentieth century. The plateau around the shrine is an extraordinary landscape densely carpeted with man-made rock configurations, including small and larger heaps of gravel or rock cairns, sometimes with a central stick or straw; numerous east-facing rock-outlined apses or *mihrab*s; and waist-high dry-stone enclosures containing further rock heaps. Much more limited traces of similar activities can also be seen at particular places within and around Hisn al-Bab itself.

Perched on the slope at regular intervals along the river bank are the remains of several deserted Nubian villages and hamlets such as Bugga and Hafir (figs. 1, 6), evacuated as the waters rose in 1933-34. Although the structures below the high waterline in these abandoned settlements have dissolved into piles of stones – including a few reused Pharaonic blocks presumably from Philae or Bigga temples – those higher up are still relatively well preserved, and exhibit beautiful vaulting in the Nubian style, and in some cases wall paintings (fig. 6). On the island of al-Hesa,

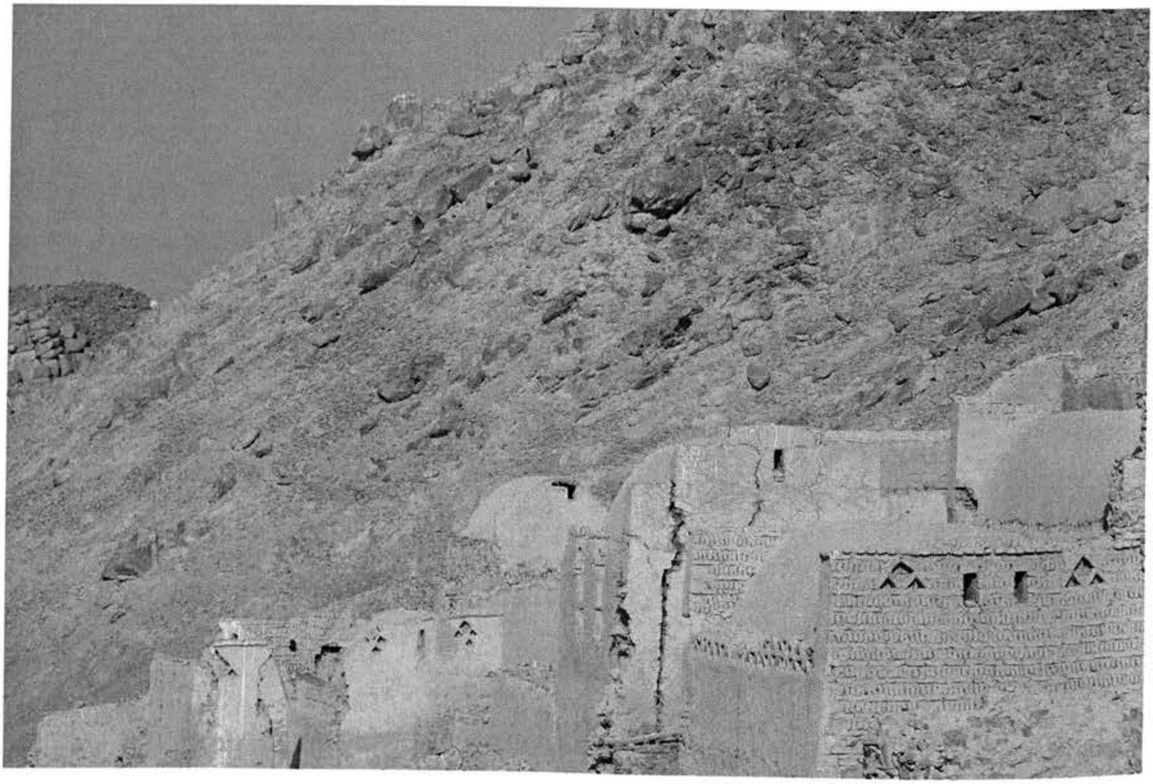


Figure 6. Abandoned houses in the Nubian village of Bugga, just north of Hisn al-Bab.

midway across the Nile, are well preserved field systems, complete with irrigation channels and the remains of *shaduf* installations for raising water into the terraced fields. These evocative remains serve to recall the displaced populations and vanished ways of life resulting from the dams, and in the light of the total submergance of the villages south of the High Dam, are in need of archaeological recording.

There is little doubt that more archaeological evidence remains to be (re-)discovered between the High and Low Aswan Dams; the west bank, for example, has not yet been investigated in any detail. This small area is indicative of the riches left unrecorded by the salvage campaigns, and still overlooked today.

Thinking about Travel in the Medieval Islamic World

Shawkat M. Toorawa

In thinking about the later travels of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231), I discovered that the fascinating and complex subject of ‘Travel in the medieval Islamic world’ (here the ninth to sixteenth centuries) has received very little critical and theoretical attention. Scholarship has tended to be descriptive, has focused disproportionately on a handful of travelers, and has been content with the sub-division of travel into one or more of four categories: (i) scholars’ travel in search of knowledge (*al-riḥlah fī ṭalab al-‘ilm*—including the travel undertaken by *muḥaddithīn*; (ii) pilgrimage to Mecca (*ḥajj*); (iii) travels of adventure and exploration (*riḥlah*); and (iv) mercantile travel (*lil-tijārah*). Some scholars add (e)migration (*hijrah*). This taxonomy is useful but could benefit from elaboration.

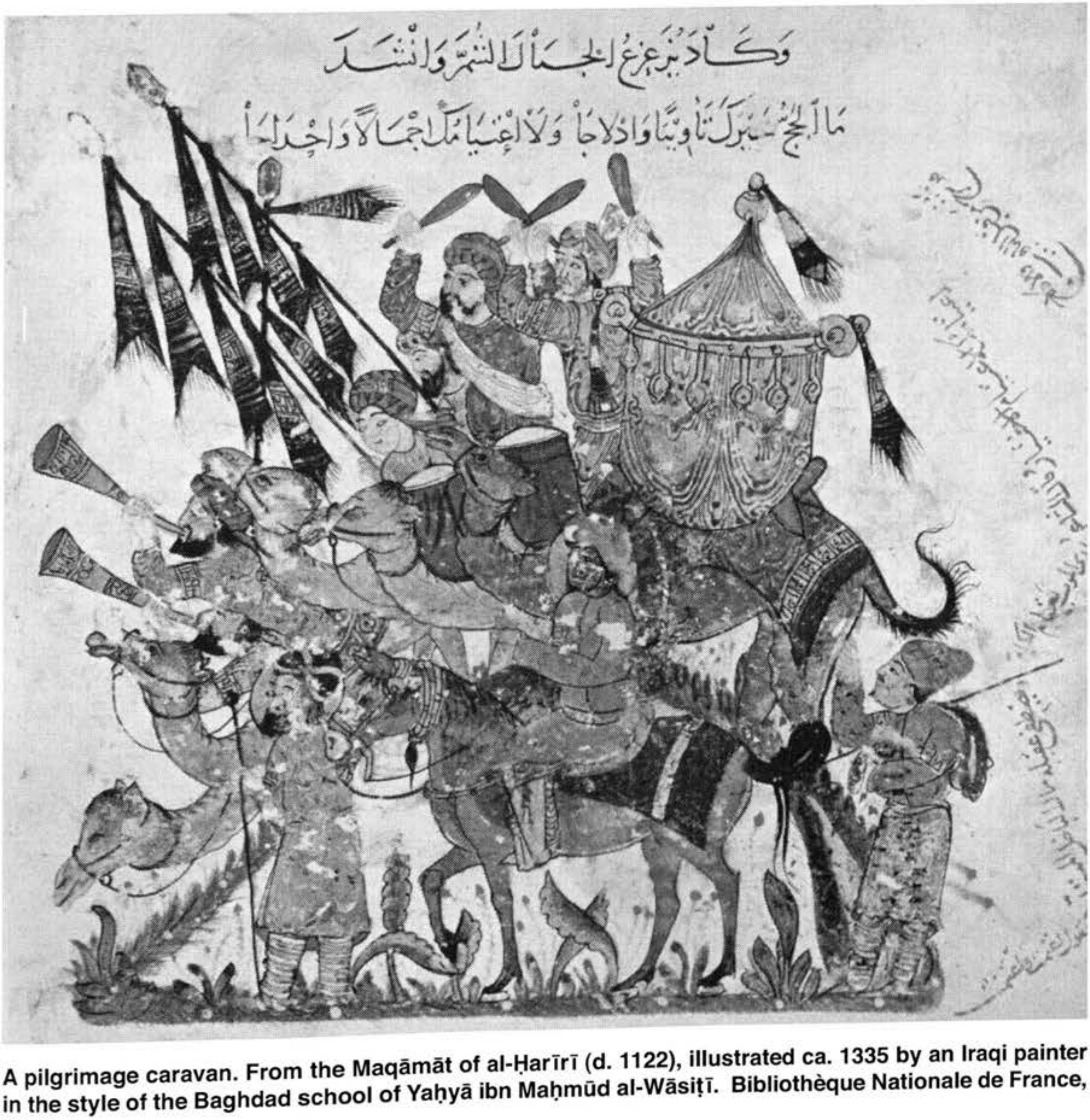
In the preface to their thoughtful 1990 edited volume on travel, Dale Eickelmann and James Piscatori opened with the most sustained (if brief) reflection to date on what travel might be and might mean for medieval Muslims:

> The subject of Muslim travel is unexpectedly complex. One might assume that religious doctrine prescribes certain kinds of travel, and that the ritual movement of Muslims leads to a heightened identification with Islam and with fellow Muslims. But the chapters of this book question that conventional wisdom. In looking for the answers to the basic questions that underlie the discussion—What does travel mean to Muslims? What are its motivations? What are its effects?—we are struck by a pervasive intricacy and even ambiguity.

Eickelmann and Piscatori enlarge the erstwhile narrow readings of the Arabic term *riḥlah* (lit. travel) to include “travel for learning *or other purposes*” (emphasis mine); and to pilgrimage and travel in search of knowledge they usefully add *ziyārah* (visits to shrines), and emigration (*hijrah*). But, because their focus is the travel of Muslims in particular, their purview is limited and does not include the travel by non-Muslims in Islamic lands.

In the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, medieval travel is treated principally in a volume devoted to ‘Abbāsid period, which appeared in 1994. But of J. F. P. Hopkins’s twenty-seven pages on “Geographical and Navigational Literature,” only two are devoted to ‘travelers’ proper, perhaps because, so Hopkins claims, “The medieval Muslim traveler travelled for trade or in search of learning, not to see the world.” Hopkins does, however, specifically mention: the anonymous ninth-century merchant’s compilation, *Akhbār al-Sīn wal-Hind* (Accounts of China and India), as a work on human geography; Ibn Faḍlān’s tenth-century account of his embassy to the Bulghars; Buzurg b. Shahriyār’s tenth-century *mirabilia* work, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind* (Wonders of India), which, Hopkind maintains, “sometimes strain credulity to breaking point”; and the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century travels of Ibn Jubayr (d. 614/1217) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (d. ca. 779/1377), respectively. But he implies, by his silence about other travel and other travelers, that these are unique, and does not characterize the travels undertaken under rubrics other than pilgrimage, travel in search of knowledge, and adventure.

The 1994 entry on "Riḥla" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* defines the term as "a journey, voyage, travel; also a travelogue," but nevertheless focuses exclusively on travel in search of knowledge and pilgrimage, and references only the writings of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah. No other traveler or form of travel is mentioned. This is unfortunate since the author, Ian R. Netton, as both editor of a 1993 collection and author of a 1996 volume on travel in Islam, was well positioned to discuss the subject in greater depth. The *Encyclopaedia of Islam* article on "Safar," which is defined as "journey, travel," also from 1994, is sub-divided by author R. Peters into "1. In law" and "2. In Islamic life." The first rubric is a brief discussion of the rules in Islamic law governing such issues as ritual prayer and ritual purity during a journey. The second rubric consists in nothing but



A pilgrimage caravan. From the Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122), illustrated ca. 1335 by an Iraqi painter in the style of the Baghdad school of Yaḥyā ibn Maḥmūd al-Wāsiṭī. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

the following:

> "2. In Islamic life. See for this, 'Funduq'; 'Khan'; 'Riḥla'; 'Tijāra'. For envoys and ambassadors, see 'Elçi'; 'Safīr.2'. For the pilgrims to Mecca, see 'Ḥajj'.iii.A. To the *Bibls.* of these articles, add I. R. Netton (ed.), *Golden Roads* [...], London 1993."

In his 1998 encyclopedia entry on "travel literature," C. E. Bosworth proves to be the scholar who has so far been the most explicit in identifying forms of travel and its motivations. After mentioning the embassies of Ibn Faḍlān and Abū Dulaf as examples of travel outside the Islamic world, he writes:

> Within the Islamic world, however, there was much travel by pilgrims, heading for Mecca and Medina or the Shiʻi shrines; by scholars seeking out famous teachers or institutions of learning; by Sufi mystics attracted by a charismatic shaykh; by religious propagandists, such as the Ismaʻili ones; by officials and diplomatic envoys; but above all, by traders.

To pilgrimage (to Mecca and shrines), travel in search of knowledge, embassy, adventure, and trade, Bosworth has added the travel of religious propagandists and the travel of Sufis in search of masters.

I should like to propose the following rubrics as a way of thinking more critically and accurately about the travel of individuals in the medieval Islamic world.

1. Religion

    A. Pilgrimage to Mecca
        i. annual (*Hajj*)
        ii. year-round (*'umrah*)
    B. Visit to shrines (*ziyārah*)
        i. annual, on saints' birthdays (*mawlid*, *'urs*)
        ii. year-round, to get blessings (*barakah*)
    C. Collecting Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*)
2. Learning (religious and non-religious)
    A. Travel in search of knowledge (*al-riḥlah fī ṭalab al-'ilm*)
        i. seeking famous teachers
            a. individuals
            b. attached to institutions (see (ii) below)
        ii. travel to institutions
            a. mosques (*masjid*)
            b. colleges of law (*madrasah*)
            c. sufi retreats (*ribāṭ*)
            d. hospitals (*bimāristān*)
            e. study circles (*ḥalaqah, majlis*)
3. Embassy
    A. Within the Islamic world
    B. Outside the Islamic world

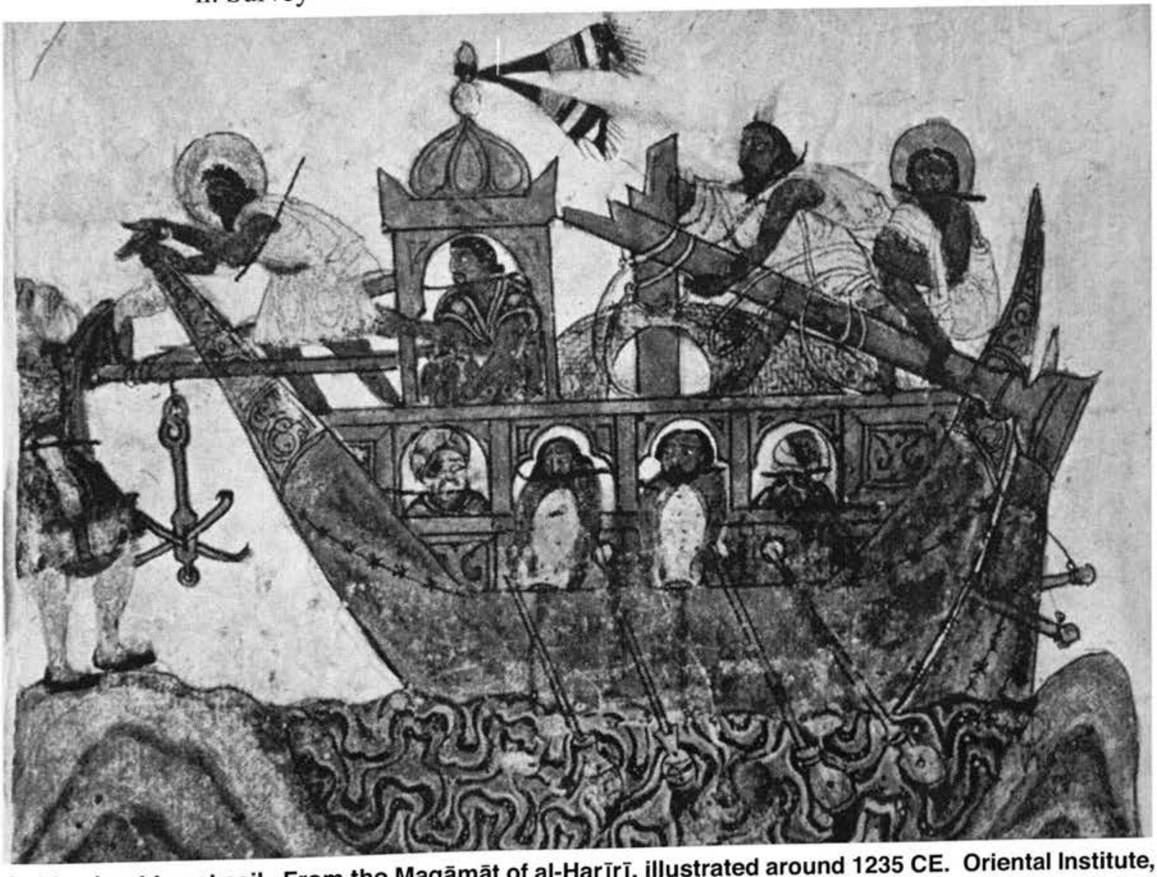
4. Trade, commerce
    A. Over land
    B. Over sea

5. Propaganda
    A. Religious
        i. missionary
            a. Sufi
            b. Shi'i
    B. Political

6. Government posting
    A. Public
    B. Covert

7. Employment
    A. Government (see [6] above)
    B. Private (see also [14] Patronage)

8. Exploration
    A. Scientific
        i. Geography
        ii. Survey



A ship about to set sail. From the Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī, illustrated around 1235 CE. Oriental Institute, St. Petersburg. Courtesy of the Yorck Project.

    B. Adventure
9. Wanderlust/Tourism

10. Marine/Naval
    A. Real
    B. Imaginary

11. Forced
    A. Exile/banishment
    B. Flight (including *Hijrah*)
    C. Migration
    D. Slavery

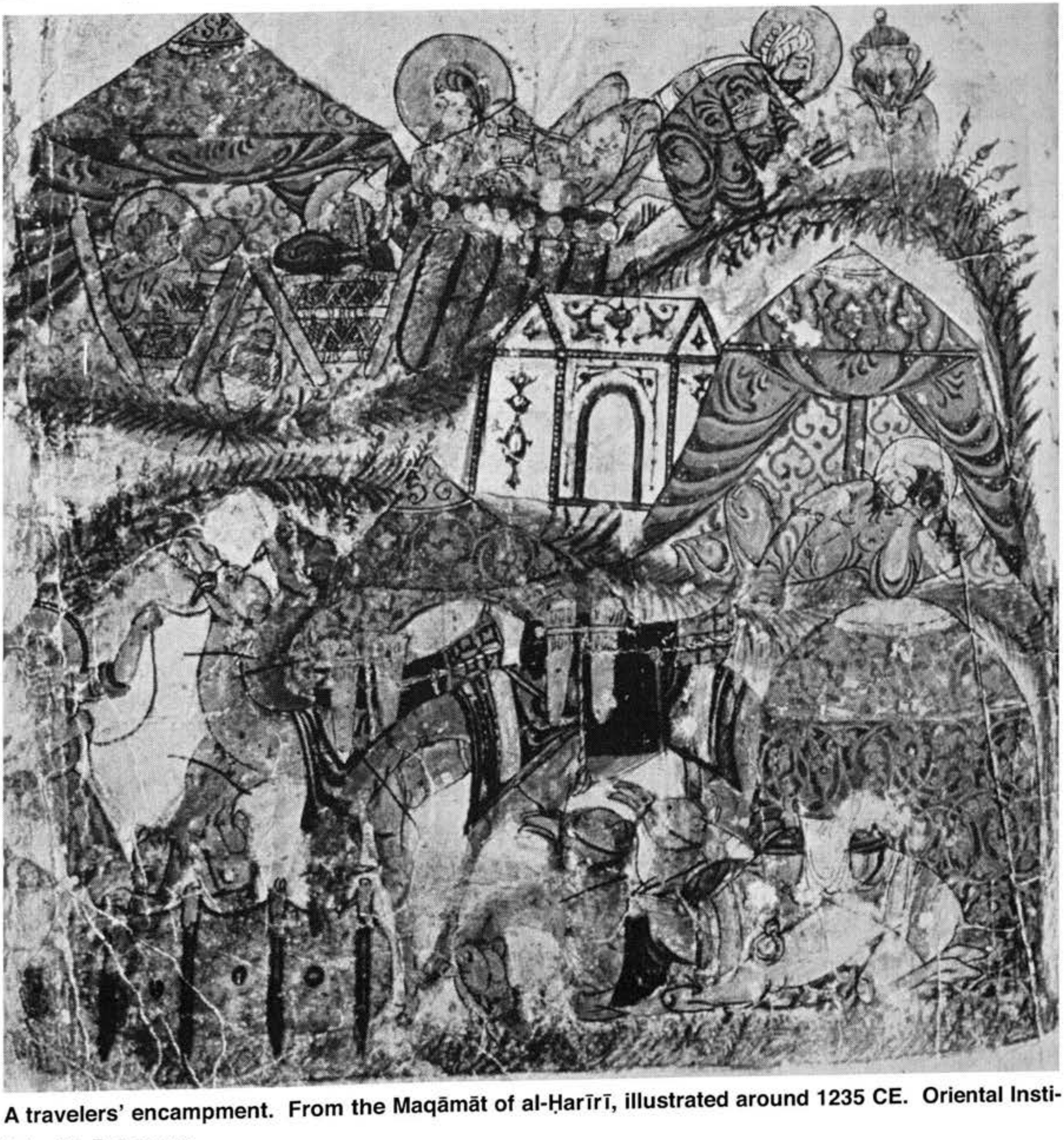
12. Warfare
13. Migration, emigration
    A. Voluntary
    [B. Forced: see (10) above]
14. Patronage
    A. Travel to patron
    B. Travel with patron

These rubrics are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but they will, I hope, provoke deeper and more expansive thinking about medieval Islamic travel. To illustrate how useful such thinking can be, let us consider (14) Patronage.

Patronage is the support (financial and political), encouragement (moral, social and economic), and championing of an individual or group engaged in an activity without which they would otherwise have difficulty performing that activity. Patronage in the classical and medieval Islamic world, though well documented, has not been studied in any detail. The earliest form of patronage appears to have been that of the poets of pre-Islamic Arabia by their respective tribes. By extolling the tribe's successes in battle and the valor, virtues and virility of its heroes, living and fallen, a poet acquired prestige and often great fame. In addition, the poet was called upon to declaim satires of the tribe's enemies, often in public poetic contests. And yet, it was the activities of poets who composed under quite different circumstances, the tribally unaffiliated, wandering (*suʻlūk*) poets, and those individuals attached to the North Arabian vassal courts of Byzantium and Sassanid Persia, who in fact presaged the system of patronage that would rapidly supplant the tribal one. As Islam spread, centers of cultural patronage sprang up all over the Islamic world. In addition to the court of the caliph, patronage was granted by senior officials, regional governors and wealthy notables. To these patrons gravitated itinerant litterateurs and scholars who composed poems and works, often for the highest bidders and often in response to the egotistic needs of a given patron. The sources describe in great detail the soirees held in the homes of these patrons; some, such as the courtier ʻAlī b. Yaḥyā Ibn al-Munajjim (d. ca. 275/888), were writers and scholars of distinction themselves.

By surrounding themselves with men of letters and learning, patrons conferred prestige on themselves and demonstrated their discernment, refinement and devotion to literature and scholarship. For patrons who were unlearned or even illiterate, patronage was a way of offsetting (or deflecting attention from) that apparent deficiency. Thus, the Turkish prince Bakjam (d. 329/941) patronized the courtier, anthologist (and chess master) Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī (d. ca. 335/945) when the ʻAbbāsid caliph al-Muttaqī (d. 333/944) abruptly terminated his patronage averring that the only companion he needed henceforth was the Qur'an.

Patronage could extend to entire groups, the caliph al-Ma'mūn's (d. 218/833) support of the Muʻtazilah rationalists for instance, or the minister Ibn Hubayrah's (d. ca. 560/1165) support of the entire Ḥanbalī guild of law. The Saljuq sultan Malik Shāh (d. 485/1092) supported astronomers, Sufi orders, and colleges of law; in his patronage of the latter, he was rivaled by his own chief minister, Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092). Patronage did not only come from officials: the bon vivants ʻAbd Allāh b. Jaʻfar and Ibn Abī ʻAtīq supported musicians in eighth-century Medina. Individuals, merchants and landowners were often the source of support for religious scholars,



A travelers' encampment. From the Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī, illustrated around 1235 CE. Oriental Institute, St. Petersurg.

particular mosques (especially through the institution of the eleemosynary *waqf*). And ordinary folk patronized prayer leaders and preachers through small gifts and stipends.

But it was the patronage of the very wealthy that motivated travel. It was the lure of a Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809) in Baghdad, a Sayf al-Dawlah (d. 356/967) in Aleppo, an Ibn al-ʻAmīd (d. 360/970) in Shiraz, a Saladin (d. 589/1193) in Jerusalem, that made men travel considerable distances. They not only sought out these patrons, they often also travelled with them, from one regional or seasonal court to another, on military campaigns, on diplomatic missions, and in flight from enemies and aggressors.

The poet Abū Tammām (d. ca. 232/845) converted, and left his Christian family in Syria for Cairo where he studied poetry. He returned to Syria around 213/829 a few years later and was patronized by the caliph al-Muʻtaṣim (d. 227/842) and other senior officials in Baghdad. Abū Tammām also travelled to many regional courts including ones in Armenia and Nishapur. Unhappy with his takings (and the weather!) in Nishapur, Abū Tammām decided to return to Syria. During his journey home, he was snowed-in in Hamadhān. There, relying on the library of a friend, he composed his celebrated anthology, *al-Ḥamāsah* (Bravery) while he waited for conditions to clear. The last few years of his life, Abū Tammām spent as postmaster of Mosul, a position obtained for him by the secretary al-Ḥasan b. Wahb. Abū Tammām's younger Kufan contemporary, Muslim b. al-Walīd (d. 207/823), was similarly made a postmaster in the east, in Jurjān, by a benevolent secretary of the caliph al-Ma'mūn after his many years at Hārūn al-Rashīd's court in Baghdad. Another contemporary of Abū Tammām, the Baghdadi musician Ziryāb (d. 230/845), travelled west to North Africa and was then invited to Cordoba by its ruler. During his time there he would play a major role in the articulation and elaboration of a new Andalusian culture.

The poet al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965) travelled often and for many reasons. He was born in Kufa, spent several years as a lad among the Bedouin of Lower Iraq, and a few years in Baghdad before leaving for Syria in 318/930. He spent three years there as an itinerant panegyrist, before being arrested and imprisoned for brigandage. He was released in 325/937 and, continuing his search for patronage, attached himself to various minor officials. When Sayf al-Dawlah took Aleppo, al-Mutanabbī fled to Damascus by way of Tripoli, but when Sayf al-Dawlah took Antioch in 327/948, al-Mutanabbī celebrated this in a poem, and was consequently retained by the prince at his brilliant court. This meant not only livelihood for almost a decade, but required that the poet (as was the custom) often accompany the ruler on his military campaigns. Having made a number of enemies (including Sayf al-Dawlah himself), al-Mutanabbī fled in 346/957 to the court of Kāfūr in Egypt. Here too relations between poet and patron quickly soured and al-Mutanabbī fled once again, to Kufa. A year later he was in Baghdad but was forced by the situation created by his rivals to return to Kufa. He was then invited by Ibn al-ʻAmīd to his court in Arrajān, and by ʻAḍud al-Dawlah (d. 372/983) to his court in Shiraz. A longing for Iraq and Syria saw al-Mutanabbī on the move again but he was ambushed and killed on his journey home.

The royal poet Abū Firās (d. 357/968) was a cousin of Sayf al-Dawlah's and a bitter rival of al-Mutanabbī's. He travelled to Manbij when he was appointed governor there and was also twice taken captive by the Byzantines, once in 348/959 when he managed to escape, and once from 351/962 to 355/966 in Byzantium itself. That stay inspired his so-called "Rūmiyyāt" poems. Another companion of Sayf al-Dawlah was the author Abū Bakr al-Khawārizmī (d. 383/993), who was born in Khwarazm, in the extreme east of the Islamic empire (present-day Uzbekistan) and who travelled extensively. In addition to the court in Aleppo, he also attended the court of al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʻAbbād (d. 385/995) in Rayy as well as other courts in Iran, including Nishapur where he settled and died.

The prose stylist al-Tawḥīdī (d. 411/1023) aspired to the patronage of Ibn al-ʻAmīd and al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʻAbbād. His difficult personality ended his brief associations with them and he returned to Baghdad, but not without having acquired material for his works, including his celebrated *Akhlāq al-wazirayn* (The Faults of the two viziers) The philosopher and historian Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) was tutored, and then tutor, at the Būyid dynasty's courts in his native Iran—Shiraz, Rayy, Isfahan, Hamadhān. He later joined the court of ʻAḍud al-Dawlah in Baghdad. When the ruler died and Miskawayh's fortunes changed, he returned to Iran. Like al-Tawḥīdī's, his works reveal his wide travel and exposure to patrons and their courts.

Al-Bīrūnī (d. ca. 442/1050) was born in Khwarazm where he served local rulers in the capital Kath, and also in Jurjān, until circumstances forced him to leave. He went to the court of Maḥmud of Ghaznah (d. 421/1030) in southeastern Afghanistan, where he was retained and where he earned his reputation as the one of the world's great scientists. At about the same time, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), the famous historian of Baghdad, travelled extensively in search of ḥadīths before returning to his hometown and embarking on a very successful teaching and preaching career. But this was not the only form of travel al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī was to undertake. Like so many other Muslim scholars, he went on a *riḥlah*, leaving Baghdad in 445/1053, and travelling to Syria and Mecca, before returning in 447/1055. The timing of this pilgrimage may have been connected to animosity he experienced in Baghdad. That was certainly the reason for his flight in 452/1060 for Damascus, which he had to flee in turn eight years later. He did return to Baghdad, where he died.

The Hebrew poet Moses b. Ezra (d. 525/1135) was forced to flee Granada when he found himself penniless after the fall of Islamic Spain to the North African Muslim Almoravids who had grown impatient with their Spanish Muslim allies. He went to the Christian north where he wrote poems to his friends complaining about his exile. Al-Muʻtamid b. ʻAbbād (d. 488/1095), the ruler-poet of Seville who was exiled by the Almoravids to Aghmat, also composed poetry (regarded as his finest), in which he describes his captivity and imprisonment. And the Granadan poet and jurist al-Ilbirī (d. 459/1067) wrote a famous lament about the destruction of a retreat near Elvira where he was exiled. The popular poet and goliard Ibn Quzmān (d. 555/1160) was patronized by the princes of Cordoba until its fall to the Almoravids. He then travelled to Seville and Granada for supplementary patronage. Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī (d. 684/1285) was a polymath who studied in Murcia, Granada and Seville, before emigrating to Marrakesh when Cordoba fell in 633/1236 to the Christians of northern Spain during the *Reconquista*, and then again to Tunis in 639/1242.

Just as a number of poets fled the Almoravids, the blind poet al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 488/1095) fled Qayrawān to escape another group, the invading Banū Hilāl. In 449/1057 he went to Ceuta, then on to Islamic Spain where he was poet to a number of rulers. He returned to North Africa after a series of personal tragedies, settling in Tangiers in 483/1090. For his part, Ibn al-ʻAdīm (d. 660/1262), who served as a judge in Aleppo, was forced to flee to Cairo in 658/1260 when the westward moving Mongols invaded the Levant. (Baghdad had fallen to them in 656/1258).

ʻUmārah al-Yamanī (d. 569/1174) was born in coastal Yemen and visited Aden as a trader. There he met travelling *dāʻī*s or Fatimid propagandists from Egypt. In 550/1155 he was made emissary to the Shiʻite Fāṭimids (297/909–567/1171) in Cairo. After the fall of the Fāṭimids to the Ayyūbids (569/1174–743/1342), ʻUmārah was briefly a poet to the new Ayyūbid ruler, Saladin, until the latter had him executed for his alleged sympathy for the fallen Fāṭimids. The great sufi thinker Ibn al-ʻArabī (d. 638/1240) was born in Murcia but left Islamic Spain in the late twelfth century and travelled widely, including Syria and Anatolia, in search of teachers and knowledge, but also sometimes fleeing persecution. In Egypt, for instance, he was nearly put to death for heresy. Maimonides (Mūsā b. Maymūn, d. 601/1204) fled Cordoba for Fez with his family when the new Muslim rulers outlawed Judaism. In 560/1165 the family fled again, to Palestine, then to Alexandria and Cairo. After two decades in private medical practice, Maimonides became court physician to a number of Ayyūbid officials and royals.

It is clear from the above sampling of travelling and travelled individuals that the world of medieval Islam occasioned and facilitated multiple forms of travel; it should be equally clear that patronage was a very significant motivator of travel. But the importance and impact of patron-motivated travel can be demonstrated by looking at the travels of the polymath ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī: all his *early* travels are all in search of knowledge, instruction, teachers and books; and all his *later* travels are all motivated by, or at the behest of, patrons.

The foregoing makes clear the importance of travel in the medieval Islamic world, and the role also of patronage in motivating such travel. Yet, not everyone travelled. There is, alas, still no study comparing the works of scholars who stayed put, the historian of Egypt al-Kindī (d. 350/961) for instance, and the works of those who were peripatetic, ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī for instance. Might one make the argument that the former's *Wulāt Miṣr wa-qudātuhā* (The Governors and Judges of Egypt) "produces a jejune and repetitive literary effect" whereas the latter's *Kitāb al-Ifādah wa al-iʻtibār* (Book of Utility and reflection) is fascinating and perceptive precisely because the latter had seen the world and the former had not? If so, we might need to revisit Wolfhart Heinrichs's suggestion that in the case of the literary theorist ʻAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. ca. 474/1081), who never left his home province, "It is not unlikely that, by foregoing the receptive mode of study with many teachers, he stimulated his own original thinking." The issue of the influence of effect of travel on literary output—both in terms of quality, but also in terms of quantity—as with so much else in the history of medieval Islam and medieval Arabic and Arab-Islamic literary history, remains to be investigated. We cannot properly understand anyone who traveled in the world of medieval Islam, without understanding the motivations for that travel.

Crossing Sectarian Boundaries in the 4th/10th Century:

Ibn ʻUqda, a Man for All Seasons

Jonathan Brown

It is well known that the sectarian boundaries of classical Islam had not formed in the first, second or even third centuries AH – it was not until the dawn of the fourth century that we can say that the major boundary markers had been set. By the early 300's AH Ibn Ḥanbal and his cohort had established the central tenets of the *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʻa*, with scholars such as Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ashʻarī beginning to integrate rationalism and speculative theology into the expanding Sunni tent. Between 260/874 and 329/941 the final occultation of the twelfth Imam transpired, providing the defining element of Imami Shiʻism.

During the first two centuries of Islam, it was therefore not at all unusual for scholarly interactions and influences to occur that would seem impossible in the sectarian milieu of classical Islam. Early scholars and *ḥadīth* transmitters later seen as pillars of Sunni Islam could, for example, be seen receiving *ḥadīth*s from, or studying with, Shiʻite or Kharijite teachers. Sometimes such common ground was explained through necessity. The 2nd century Kufan *ḥadith* scholar Jābir al-Juʻfi (d. ca. 128/746) was so deeply ensconced in the moil of early Shiʻite thought that even later Imami Shiʻites preferred to keep their distance from him. But he appears in major Sunni *ḥadīth* collections (AD, T, IM). As one 3rd century Sunni critic (Wakīʻ) said, "if not for Jābir al-Juʻfī, the people of Kufa would be without *ḥadīth*s." At other times Sunni scholars believed that a Shiʻite's sectarian leanings did not affect his overall probity and reliability – Ibn Maʻīn (d. 233) says of one Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣāliḥ: he may be a Shiʻite, but "he would rather fall from the sky than lie about half a word."

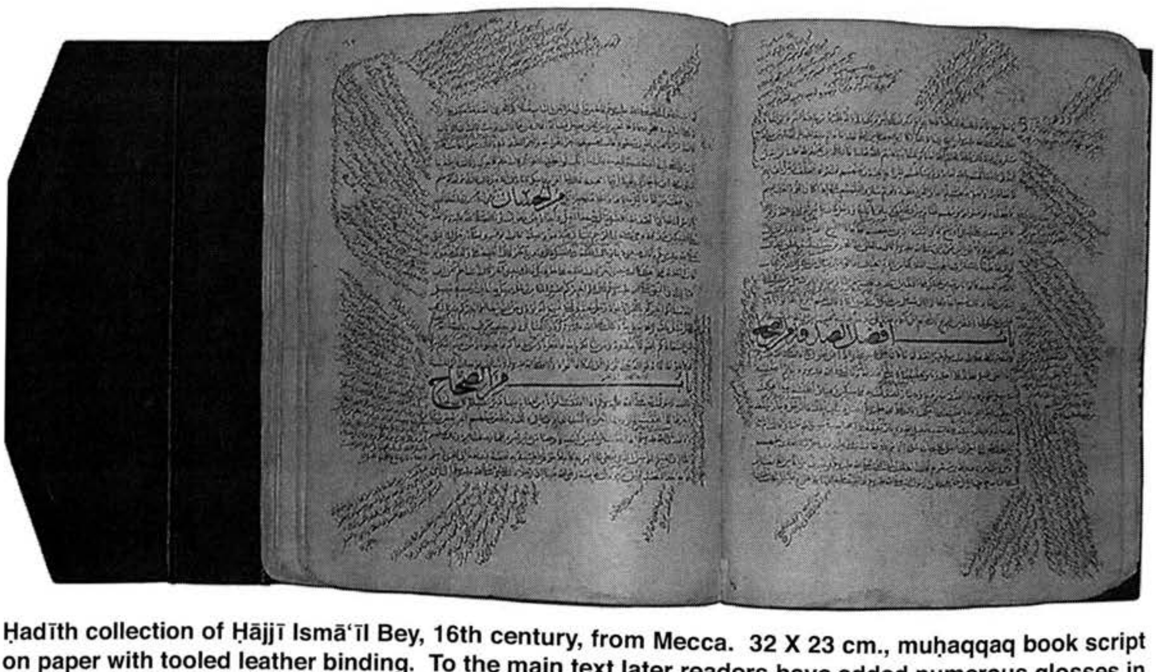
Abu al-ʻAbbās Aḥmad Ibn ʻUqda, the subject of this paper, is a fascinating case. A native of Kufa who died in 332/944, we need not attempt to determine his actual character or trace his life story; suffice it to say that he was widely esteemed by all for his colossal memory (being in command of a corpus of at least 500,000 narrations) and his astounding library (600 camel loads). Most importantly for us, Ibn ʻUqda represents a vestigial tract of common ground after the Islamic sectarian boundaries had reified. The Sunni, Imami Shiʻite and Zaydi Shiʻite traditions all accorded him great respect as a transmitter of revealed knowledge and as an architect of formalized Muslim scholarship; this despite their recognition of his strong sectarian leanings.

Sunni scholars and *ḥadīth* critics of the fourth century onwards leveled serious but not uncommon critiques at Ibn ʻUqda: he was a Shiʻite who narrated *ḥadīths* insulting the Companions in dictation sessions, with one ‘Abdān al-Ahwāzī saying that "Ibn ‘Uqda exited the boundaries of the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, and he should not be mentioned as one of them." Another accusation was that he brought *ḥadīth* notebooks of highly dubious authenticity into Basra and attributed them to Basran teachers.

These are noteworthy criticisms, but other Sunnis before and after Ibn ‘Uqda (such as al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī) were tarnished with comparably barbed accusations, and they remained none the worse for wear. What is salient about Ibn ‘Uqda is that the criticisms about him were not limited to such clichéd and abstract accusations. They were tangible and highly objectionable. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) blamed Ibn ‘Uqda by name for circulating the forged *ḥadīth* of the sun's reversal for Ali. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463) notes that one severe Shi‘ite (al-‘Abbās b. ‘Umar al-Kalūdhānī (d. 414)) took unacceptable *faḍā'il ḥadīths* narrated by Ibn ‘Uqda and attributed them to the widely admired Sunni chief judge of Kufa al-Maḥāmilī (d. 330).

But Sunnis heaped praise, as well as blame, on Ibn ‘Uqda. In his dictionary of criticized ḥadīth transmitters, Ibn ‘Adī (d. 365) calls him ‘a master of knowledge and memory, at the forefront of this science (ṣāḥib ma‘rifa wa ḥifẓ wa muqaddam fī hādhahi al-ṣan‘ā)." He adds that, if not for his commitment to mentioning all impugned transmitters in the book, he would otherwise have left such an esteemed scholar as Ibn 'Uqda out. Abū Ya‘lā al-Khalīlī calls Ibn ‘Uqda "one of the great *ḥadīth* masters (*min al-ḥuffāẓ al-kibār*)," adding, "and he is the *shaykh* of the Shi‘a." Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, no lover of Shi‘ites, calls Ibn ‘Uqda "the *ḥadīth* master of his age and the oceanic *ḥadīth* scholar (*ḥāfiẓ al-‘aṣr wa al-muḥaddith al-baḥr*)." Al-Dhahabī says he even devoted a small book to just his biography.

Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771) lists Ibn ‘Uqda among "the ḥadīth masters of the *sharī‘a*," noting that vaunted Sunni *ḥadīth* scholars like al-Dāraquṭnī, Ibn al-Ji‘ābī and al-Ḥākim all said "I've never seen anyone with more mastery of *ḥadīth* than Ibn ‘Uqda." Al-Ḥākim used Ibn ‘Uqda as a transmitter in his *Mustadrak*, and al-Daraquṭnī used him in his *Sunan*. In addition, other Sunni



Ḥadīth collection of Ḥājjī Ismā‘īl Bey, 16th century, from Mecca. 32 X 23 cm., muḥaqqaq book script on paper with tooled leather binding. To the main text later readers have added numerous glosses in the margins.

ḥadīth collectors such as al-Ṭabarānī and al-Silafī also included *ḥadīths* transmitted by Ibn 'Uqda. One story in particular seems to epitomize the grudging respect that Sunnis paid Ibn 'Uqda for his expertise in *ḥadīth*. In his *Tarikh*, Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-Ḥāfiẓ relates that one Ibn Sā'id narrated a *ḥadīth* the *isnād* of which Ibn 'Uqda rejected. Ibn Sā'id, however, had powerful connections, and Ibn 'Uqda was dragged before the vizier to be interrogated about his insulting criticism. The vizier wanted to know who could settle the matter, and no less a vaunted expert than Ibn Abi Hatim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) was called in to consult. He sided with Ibn 'Uqda.

Furthermore, not only did leading Sunnis approve of Ibn 'Uqda as a *ḥadīth* transmitter, they accepted him as a *ḥadīth* critic (this is otherwise really unheard of to my knowledge). Both al-Dhahabī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 897/1402) list him as one of the authoritative *ḥadīth* transmitter critics, although al-Sakhāwī notes how he is an example of a critic whose opinions need to be considered in the light of his ideological/sectarian stances. Ibn Ḥajar uses him as a critic source in at least three biographies in the *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*. The earliest surviving evaluation of the *Saḥīḥayn* as a dual unit comes from Ibn 'Uqda, and, in fact, he composed the earliest known *mustakhraj* on the basis of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Ibn 'Uqda is even used as an exemplar by later Sunnis, and his scholarly works and opinions are cited as compelling precedent by them. In his foundational work on the *ḥadīth* sciences, the *Jami'*, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī employs Ibn 'Uqda as an example of how it is acceptable for contemporaries to narrate from one another. In the anecdote provided by al-Khaṭīb, Ibn 'Uqda's Shi'ism is prominent. A scholar from Isfahan meets Ibn 'Uqda in Kufa and asks to hear *ḥadīths* from him. When Ibn 'Uqda discovered that the man was from Isfahan, he began railing against the city for being Nāṣibī and housing the enemies of the *ahl al-bayt*. To this the man replies that there are in Isfahan plenty of Shi'ites there who love Ali. Then Ibn 'Uqda examined in him on who he had heard from in Isfahan, responding angrily when he admitted that he had not heard from people that Ibn 'Uqda thought were superb. He was also upset that the man had not heard the *Musnad* of Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī, since "its well spring is from Isfahan."

In his seminal work on the *ḥadīth* sciences, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643) uses Ibn 'Uqda's allowing the narration by *ijāza* as proof of its acceptability (along with al-Khaṭīb and Dāraquṭnī). When Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī rendered Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's book in poetic form, Ibn 'Uqda's name even graces a verse.

In the Zaydī Shi'ite *ḥadīth* tradition, Ibn 'Uqda is seen as a founding figure (he seems to have espoused the Jārūdi Zaydī view). His book listing and identifying those people who transmitted *ḥadīths* from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (some 4,000 in all), is seen by Zaydī scholars like Sarim al-Dīn al-Wazīrī (d. 915/1508) as the starting point of Zaydī *ḥadīth* scholarship. Al-Wazīrī also notes that Ibn 'Uqda wrote a book on the *ḥadīth* of Ghadīr Khumm, mentioning a total of 105 chains of transmission for the *ḥadīth*.

Moving further away from Sunnism, Imami Shi'ites also held Ibn 'Uqda in high esteem, this on the basis of his book on the students of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq as well as his commitment to preserving and transmitting the *uṣūl*, or the *ḥadīth* collections copied from the various Imams. Etan Kohlberg notes that Imami Shi'ites respected him despite his Jārūdi Zaydī leaning.

Conclusion

It is not unusual to come across a major Sunni *ḥadīth* transmitter or prominent *ḥadīth* critic whose reputation was tarnished (in Sunni eyes, at least) by accusations of Shi'ism – we've just heard about charges leveled at al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī. What is interesting about Ibn 'Uqda is that he actually *was* Shi‘ite; no one debated that. This would have been acceptable two hundred or even one hundred years earlier, before the categories of Sunni and Shi‘ite had gelled. In the early to mid 4th century, however, as far as I know, Ibn ‘Uqda's case is unique. That he became and remained a respected figure to three competing sectarian traditions (Sunnism, Zaydism and Imami Shiism), suggests that Muslim scholarly society had criteria for expertise that could transcend sectarianism. It is interesting that we have no record of Ibn ‘Uqda contesting charges that he was a Jārūdī Shi‘ite – he was indeed a man for all seasons.

The History of the Muslim South

Richard W. Bulliet

Most narratives of Islamic history note that the Prophet Muhammad was preparing a military expedition to the north at the time of his death in Medina in 632. Some of them take this as a harbinger of the subsequent northward direction of Muslim expansion under the Rashidun caliphs. As if in fulfillment of this predictive moment, stories of the Arab conquests include extensive descriptions of northerly expeditions to Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, North Africa, Spain, and Sindh while saying little about southern locales like Yemen and Oman or about Muslims reaching African, Indian, Southeast Asian, or Chinese ports by sea. Nevertheless, over the subsequent centuries, Islam had just as powerful an impact on lands to the south of the latitude of Medina as on lands to the north. The disproportion between the extensive accounts of events in the north and the meager coverage of events in the south is the topic of this essay. It will suggest that the Muslim south has been neglected by historians who equate Islamic history with the history of the Islamic state. Understanding and correcting this false equation can suggest useful insights regarding Islamic history as a whole.

Let us arbitrarily define the dividing line between the Muslim north and the Muslim south as 25 degrees north latitude, roughly the latitude of the first caliphal capital, Medina. (Medina actually lies at 24.5 degrees north latitude.) A look at today's political map reveals that by this definition the Muslim south, which includes sizable populations in Indonesia, Bangladesh, southern India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Guinea, Yemen, Oman, and Sudan, is home to at least as many souls as the Muslim north, somewhere around 700 million people.

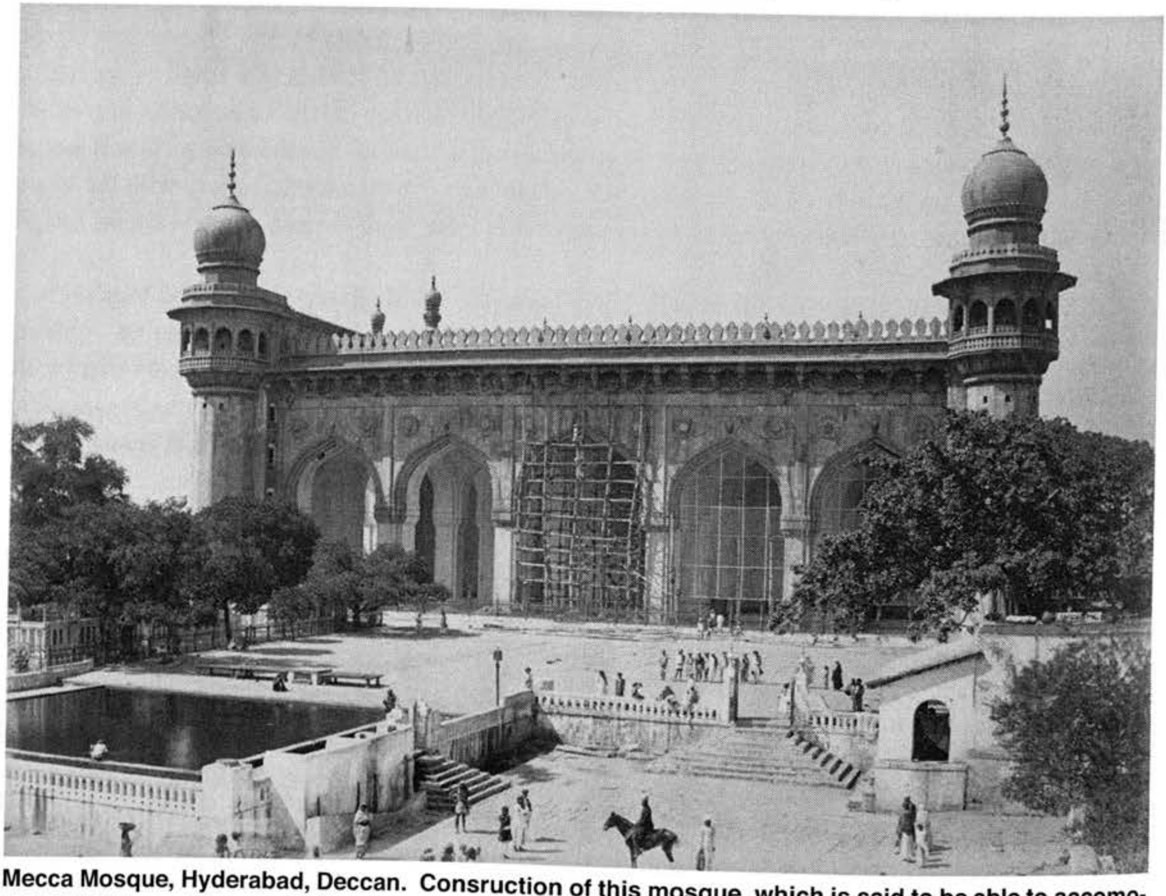
Historiographically, the Muslim north tends to be treated as a comprehensive historical unit consisting of North Africa and Spain, the Middle East, Anatolia and the Balkans, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and northern India/Pakistan. Taking the caliphate(s) and such post-Mongol successor states as the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Iran, and Mughal India as a unifying narrative thread, historians see these northern areas as interacting significantly over time. Indeed, the only part of the Muslim north that is regularly excluded from this narrative scheme is China. The Muslim south, however, is not treated as a politically interlinked region but rather as a series of discontinuous geographical areas: West Africa, East Africa, southern Arabia, Southern India/Bangladesh, mainland Southeast Asia, and island Southeast Asia.

Yet the political history of the Islamic state, whether caliphate or sultanate, is not the same as the history of the Muslim faith community. To be sure, the two histories corresponded closely in the earliest period, but within three centuries significant erosion of caliphal unity had become apparent.

Moreover, the spread of Islam through conversion eventually created Muslim communities in lands that had never been subject to military conquest by a Muslim power. Thus the history of the *umma*, the religiously defined universal community of all persons who subscribe to the Islamic faith, progressively separates from the history of the Islamic state.

Accounts of the institutional structure of Islam generally lay great stress on the caliphate and emphasize that the regimes that succeeded the weakening caliphate in the Muslim north based their authority either on a theoretical delegation of caliphal authority in the form of a sultanate (e.g., Ghaznavids, Seljuqs), or on the idea of a counter-caliphate (e.g., Fatimids, Spanish Umayyads). Alternative bases of political authority encountered in the Muslim south, such as the notions of imamate propounded by Ibadi and Zaydi Shi'ite sects in southern Arabia, the localized *jihad* states that propagated Islam through much of West Africa from the time of the Almoravids onward, and such lightly Islamized traditional kingdoms as Acheh in Sumatra, are usually described as aberrant or not mentioned at all.

If one substitutes the *umma* for the Islamic state as the focus of historical inquiry, the propagation of the faith in areas that were not subject to conquest, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, East Africa, and China, presents several problems. First, though specific narratives are often chronologically vague, the spread of Islam in these areas seems largely to have taken place after the year 1300. Indeed, it would appear that over half of all Muslims alive today are descendants of people who converted after that date. Yet even if one dismisses declarations about the post-Mongol "decline" of Islam as



Mecca Mosque, Hyderabad, Deccan. Consruction of this mosque, which is said to be able to accomodate 10,000 worshippers during prayer, was begun by Muḥammad Quṭb Shāh in 1614 and completed by Awrangzab in 1693. The domes topping the low corner minarets were added later.

tendentious and orientalizing, it is apparent that the most powerful Islamic states of the post-1300 era, the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals, did not play dominating political roles in the areas of the south where conversion was most extensive. This highlights the disjuncture between the history of the Islamic state and the history of the *umma*.

Secondly, the mechanism of Islam's spread in non-conquest areas, when explored at all, has usually been looked at in localized terms or accounted for by vague comments about "merchants and sufis." Thus the first half of the history of the growth of the *umma* reads as a byproduct of the expansion of the Islamic state, while the second half, though carrying equivalent demographic weight, reads as a series of local developments of mixed and uncertain causation.

Thirdly, while the idea of the *umma* retains its theological importance to the present day, in terms of real world politics it seems to lose its geographical focus in the later centuries. The demise of Baghdad as the center of Islam in 1258, the year the Mongols destroyed the city and killed the last Abbasid caliph there, simply confirmed an erosion of the caliphate's loss of status as the effective center of the *umma* that had been underway for three centuries. From time to time in later centuries, one or another geographically peripheral Muslim land evinced a desire to consider the Ottoman Empire as a substitute for the caliphate. But these episodes were few and far between. Most outlying Muslim polities relied on their own resources and on the political traditions, both Muslim and non-Muslim, of their particular regions.

One way of reorienting historical thought for the second half of the history of the *umma* is to openly acknowledge that the Muslim south (and parts of the Muslim north, such as China), had little or no historical experience of the caliphate. Even such early converting societies as Oman and Yemen remained largely aloof from the caliphate with their respective Ibadi and Zaidi imamates. For most other southern regions, conversion came about after the fall of the Abbasids. Even if the scholars in those regions knew that there had once been such an institution, an *umma*-wide caliphate was not part of either active memory or local Muslim tradition. Hence, it makes little sense to think of the caliphate, either theoretically or practically, as the core of the southern portion of the *umma's* feeling of unity either before or after the thirteenth century.

What functionally replaces the caliphate as the center of the *umma* is the *hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. As one of the five pillars of Islam, of course, the pilgrimage had always held a central place in Muslim religious consciousness. All Muslims were and are expected to participate in the ritual at least once during their lifetime if they are able. Moreover, the mention in historical chronicles—at least for the first several centuries—of the names of those appointed each year to supervise the pilgrimage (*amir al-hajj*) makes it clear that the ritual was fully under the jurisdiction of he caliphate.

But between the twelfth and the fourteenth century, the ways the pilgrimage is referred to in historical sources undergo four important changes. First, the term Custodian of the Two Holy Places (*khadim al-haramain*) gradually becomes common in political parlance. Second, individual pilgrims, particularly in the Muslim south, adopt the practice of adding the epithet *hajji* or *al-hajj* to their personal names. Third, pilgrimage narratives appear as a significant literary form. And fourth, multi-year sojourns in the holy cities for education and meditation replace the briefer pilgrimage stays of earlier times.

With respect to the first change, no caliph was ever titled *khadim al-haramain*, presumably because supervision of the pilgrimage had been assumed to be an inherent caliphal function ever since the caliphate began following the death of the Prophet. The title first occurs with Saladin (Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi) in an inscription of the late twelfth century, and it gained great importance under the Mamluk sultans who took control of Egypt and Syria after the fall in 1250 of the Ayyubid dynasty that Saladin founded. The Ottoman sultans picked up the title from the Mamluks when they conquered Egypt in 1516; and in 1982, three years after the brief but violent armed takeover of the grand mosque in Mecca by Juhaiman al-Otaibi in 1979, King Fahd made it a part of the titulature of the ruler of Saudi Arabia.

Substantive changes accompanied the adoption of the new title. The last Ayyubid sultan took over what had hitherto been the caliphal duty of providing an embroidered cloth cover (*kiswa*) for the Kaaba, the cubical stone building in Mecca that serves as a focus of pilgrimage ritual. Furnishing the *kiswa* remained an Egyptian duty until the 1960s when King Abd al-Aziz b. Saud ordered that it henceforth be made in Saudi Arabia. Along the same lines, the rulers of Egypt—Ayyubids, followed by Mamluks, followed by Ottomans—formally took on the obligation of providing grain and other foodstuffs for the two holy cities. Under the Ottomans an additional function gained prominence, namely, the organization and provisioning of the annual pilgrimage caravan from Damascus. This latter practice led, in the late nineteenth century under Sultan Abd al-Hamid II, to the Ottoman government raising money by popular subscription to build a railroad from Damascus to the Haramain.

Taken together, these shifts of title and function relating to the pilgrimage constitute both a usurpation of a traditional caliphal role and a testimony to the enhanced importance of the *hajj*. A sultan could not claim the spiritual authority inherent in the title "caliph," but he could effectively

Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali. The first recorded mosque on this site was built in the thirteenth century CE. Made entirely of mud brick, it has been periodically repaired or rebuilt; the present structure was erected in 1907.

replace the caliph as the facilitator and protector of a key pillar of Islam.

Moving from a grand title, *khadim al-haramain*, to a commonplace one, there is no way of determining when people first began to address returning pilgrims as *hajji* or *al-hajj*. However, a personal survey of more than ten thousand summary biographies of eminent Muslim religious figures who died before the year 1200 has not revealed a single instance of either of these titles being added to a name. Yet by the time of Ibn Battuta, whose famous travel account describes social life in many parts of the Muslim world in the early 1300s, the title had become fairly common. It subsequently became, and remains to this day, a highly esteemed marker of Muslim piety in a number of regions, particularly in the Muslim south.

The prominence of this title is undoubtedly connected with the final two indicators of the increasing importance of the pilgrimage, pilgrim narratives and extended sojourns in Mecca and Medina. Prior to the thirteenth century, scholarly biographies occasionally make mention of an individual frequenting (*mujawir*) the sacred places for a greater or lesser period of time, though not thereby acquiring the title *hajji*. There is even one instance of an eminent eleventh century scholar who stayed so long and served so prominently that he earned the sobriquet Imam al-Haramain, or Imam of the two holy cities. But he is the exception that proves the rule.

In general, lengthy sojourns in the holy cities were uncommon, very possibly because of unreliable supplies of the food needed to support a sizable year round urban population. Unreliable provisioning might also explain why colleges of higher Islamic learning (*madrasa*) did not appear in Mecca or Medina until the late twelfth century. The great mosques in these cities had always functioned in part as educational institutions, but the advent of buildings dedicated to this purpose and generously financed through *waqf* endowments set the holy cities on track to become major centers for study, particularly for pilgrims, in later centuries. Almost from the beginning this educational enterprise resonated strongly with the Muslim south. Six of the first thirteen (out of twenty-three) Meccan madrasas known for the period before the Ottoman takeover of Mecca and Medina in the sixteenth century were founded by Yemeni rulers or officials. Of the next ten, three were founded by rulers in India and three by local officials in the Haramain.

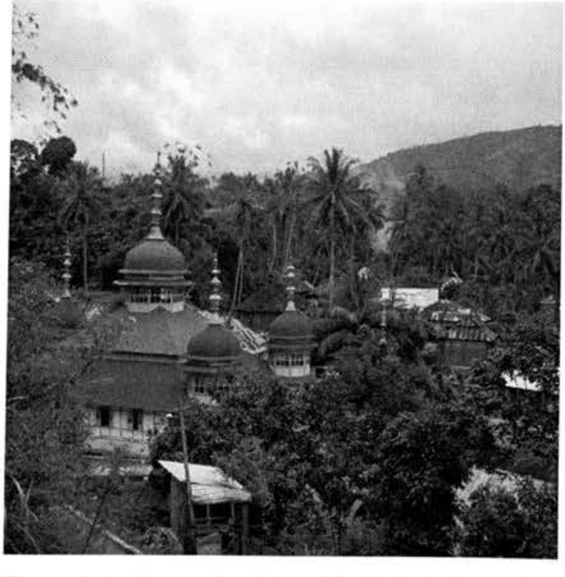
Pilgrimage narratives testify to the importance of the *hajj* in the minds of Muslims. None are mentioned in the *Fihrist*, the famous list of books known to the late tenth century Baghdad bookseller Ibn al-Nadim. So it is likely that the one authored by Ibn Jubair about his pilgrimage from Spain in the 1180s, just after the establishment of the first *madrasa* in Mecca, was among the first. In later centuries, however, such accounts became common, particularly in outlying regions like Morocco and India. Though some are contained within more extensive travel accounts, they all share the distinctive feature of having the Haramain as a fixed terminus. This became the lodestone of Muslim travel itineraries, imparting to them a unity that European travel narratives, which also became common in the post-Mongol era, generally lacked. Europeans typically wrote about traveling from a more or less common starting point, i.e., someplace in Europe, to some far away exotic locale. Muslims, by contrast, wrote about traveling from many different spots in the far-flung Muslim world to a single, familiar place. While the novelty or "discovery" value of the European narratives has long been recognized, the degree to which the Muslim narratives continually reinforce the centrality of the *hajj* for the Muslim *umma* has not been accorded similar attention.

For believers living in the Muslim south, association with tens or hundreds of thousands of fellow pilgrims during the pilgrimage season, not just in carrying out the prescribed rituals but also in traveling together by ship or caravan, confirmed the reality of the notion of the *umma*. In some instances, it is possible to pinpoint the holy cities as exchange points for educational or doctrinal influences: A Chinese pilgrim meets a Yemeni Sufi shaikh and brings a new understanding of Islam back home with him. More generally, however, it must be assumed that all pilgrims were profoundly affected by their experiences and returned home to enriched spiritual lives.

Trade formed the inseparable counterpart of pilgrimage in the history of the Muslim south. Though in the early Islamic centuries there are reports and occasional archaeological traces of Muslim merchants here and there across the African Sahel and on the Indian Ocean littoral from East Africa to China, trade in the Muslim south expanded greatly after the eleventh century and kept on growing well into the era of European imperialism. Unlike the history of the *hajj*, this story, and the accompanying story of colonies of Arabs from Yemen and Oman establishing themselves from Indonesia and Malaysia to Kenya and Zanzibar has received a good deal of attention. The same can be said of the role of Muslims in the growth of trade in sub-Saharan Africa, though the flow and social impact of African slaves mostly into other parts of the Muslim south requires more examination. Despite these studies, however, without the *hajj* as the centerpiece of the tale, trade history fails to convey the importance of human movement to the recentering of the *umma* after the demise of the caliphate.

In conclusion, even though the term "Muslim south" is purely arbitrary, it can serve to focus attention on a division between a history of Islam based on state institutions and one based on the human dimension of the concept of *umma*. Furthermore, by drawing attention to dynamic aspects of Islam in the post-Mongol era, it can help combat the stereotype of passivity so often ascribed to Islam in the later centuries. And finally, in the world of today where countries like Nigeria, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia attract growing political attention, and population-poor but oil-rich Arabian lands have disproportional impact on the world economy, the study of the history of the Muslim south can appeal to students and scholars whose homelands participated only marginally in the history of the Muslim north.

The Arabian peninsula is a key world region because of its importance to the petroleum industry and its position in world finance. In Islamic terms, it is also a key region, though this perception is customarily limited to consideration of its historical role as the original home of the faith. If one adds to this the perspective of the history of the Muslim south, it becomes apparent that Arabia has for centuries been the geographical linchpin linking the Muslims of Africa with the Muslims of South and Southeast Asia. *Hajj*, trade, and human migration, including the vast numbers of southern Muslim guest workers currently employed in peninsular states, may provide an enlarged focus for understanding Arabia's longer-term historical role.



Mosque in Bunga Tanjung, West Sumatra, Indonesia, the birthplace of Tuanku Imam Bonjol (Muhammad Syahab, Peto Syarif, 1777-1864). Syarif was part of a movement that strove to establish a form of Islam "purified" of local practices considered un-Islamic, and became leader of a movement of opposition to Dutch colonial rule in the Minangkabau region.

REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS
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Members of MEM are encouraged to submit reviews of recent books in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, or other Middle Eastern languages that they have read and that deal with subjects of interest to MEM's membership. In exceptional cases, UW will print reviews of books in English and other European languages, but the main focus will be books in Middle Eastern languages, because generally these are not reviewed in Western journals. *Al-ʻUṣūr al-Wusṭā* relies on the voluntary submission of reviews because review copies of books in Middle Eastern languages are usually not made available by publishers.

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ʻĀtif Manṣūr Muḥammad Ramaḍān and Samīra ʻAbd al-Ra'ūf. ***Al-Nuqūd al-Islāmīyah fī al-matḥaf al-yūnānī al-rūmānī bi-l-Iskandarīya (The Islamic Coins in the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria).*** **Cairo, Egypt: SCA, 2007. 600 pp. 42 plates.**

This is a useful and welcome catalogue. ʻĀtif Ramaḍān has brought to completion a project conceived by the late Samīra `Abd al-Ra'ūf. The book brings to a wider audience the 644 Islamic coins preserved at the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria. These coins range in dates from the Umayyad to the Ottoman periods (all issued by Islamic rulers, except for a smattering of Crusader and Venetian coins), and geographically from Islamic Spain to-post Mongol Iran. The work is divided into six sections: an introduction, which briefly describes the collection as well as identifying rarities and other important specimens; the Coinage of the Islamic Caliphates (Umayyad and Abbasid), containing 197 coins; the Coinage of the Maghrib and Islamic Spain, 22 coins; the Coinage of Egypt, Syria, and the Yemen (arranged dynastically), the largest component of the collection with 306 coins; the Coinage of Asia Minor and Anatolia, 45 coins; and the Coinage of Iraq and Iran, 75 coins. Each of the last five subsections is introduced by a general historical discussion and an overview of wider monetary contexts. The volume contains a bibliography divided into two sections, one featuring the Arabic literature on Islamic numismatics, and the other featuring European-language works. It ends with 42 plates, featuring illustration of 235 of the coins, primarily gold and silver specimens. The illustrations are not to scale, but are in general clear and legible.

The coins are identified, linked to existing scholarship, and thoroughly described in terms of epigraphic content. Each entry also contains the museum registration number, metallic type (gold, silver or copper), diameter (in millimeters), and weight (in grams). Unfortunately, not every coin's weight is provided. My survey of the Mamluk holdings, for example, revealed that weights were lacking for 29 out of 157 total coins. This complaint aside, this is a welcome addition of 644 additional specimens to the growing archive of published Islamic coins.

-Warren C. Schultz

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REVIEWS

Lionel Holland, *Weights and Weight-like Objects from Caesarea Maritima.* Hadera, Israel: Lionel Holland, 2009. 88 pp. 18 figures and 312 object illustrations. ISBN 9789655554052

This self-published work presents a lifetime's worth of thought, observation and analysis on the material culture of metrology. The author's name is familiar to students of Islamic weights and measures by way of his important article "Islamic Bronze Weights from Caesarea Maritima" published in the *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 31 (1986). It is a work both direct and valuable, the former in that the author does not hesitate to offer his unvarnished assessment of the ambiguous nature of the artifacts and of the limits of existing scholarship, and the latter in that the work nevertheless throws significant light on a very understudied and undervalued field of knowledge. These weights and weight-like objects, as far as can be determined, date from the Greco-Roman period to the medieval Islamic—do not look for precise dates because these artifacts do not provide them. The items themselves were collected in the vicinity of Caesarea Maritima over several decades. As readers of *al-‘Uṣūr al-Wusṭā* know, the debate over private collecting of found objects, its (il)legality, and the question whether scholars should study objects of unknown provenance is a wide-ranging and often virulent one. Holland's perspective on these issues is easily discerned.

The work is divided into twelve sections of various lengths: Introduction; Methodology; History of Caesarea Maritima; Scales; Greco-Roman Lead; Roman Imperial Bronze; Roman Imperial Lead; Islamic Bronze (41-51); Lead Weights—uncertain; Bronze Weights—uncertain; Other Materials; and Miscellanea.

Of these, the sections devoted to Scales (pp. 8-15) and Islamic Bronze (41-51) may be of most interest to readers of this bulletin. While assorted texts from the Muslim world discuss scales and balances (cf. EI^2, art. ‘Al-Ḳaraṣtun’ by K. Jaouiche) actual pieces of equal-arm scales and steelyards are relatively rare. This work provides thirteen illustrations of probable scale parts, all of which are contextualized in a succinct analysis of the mechanisms of weighing. The chapter of Islamic bronzes provides a useful classification typology of these objects, based upon their shapes and the probable weight series to which they belonged. Thus Holland presents a "dirham" series (barrels; cubes, polyhedra; "peeled orange; spheroid; and brick-shaped weights), and a "dinar" series (discoids; polyhedra; and spheroids). The terms may appear odd, but their applicability is established by the many objects illustrated.

In conclusion, this is a book designed to be used. I have no doubt that it will prove a useful aid for the historian or archaeologist who finds him/herself working with these enigmatic objects.

-Warren C. Schultz

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P. 40. Ḥiṣn al-Bāb, general view. Photo by Pamela Rose.
P. 41. Mosque of Bilāl. Author's collection; photographer unknown.
P. 42. Four photos of al-Mashhad al-Baḥrī: a. 1924, author's collection, photographer unknown; b. 1933, photo by Monneret de Villard; c. 1944, photo by K. A. C. Creswell; d. 2007, photo by author.
P. 43. Small shaykh's tomb. Photo by author.
P. 44. Abandoned house in Bugga. Photo by Piet Collet.
P. 47. Caravan, from Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, via Wikimedia.
P. 49. Ship, from Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī. Oriental Institute, St. Petersburg, Courtesy of the Yorck Project, via Wikimedia.
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P. 56. Ḥadīth collection, Sixteenth century, via Wikimedia.
P. 60. Mecca Mosque, Hyderabad, 1880s. British Library, Curzon Collection, via Wikimedia.
P. 62. Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 2006. U. S. Department of Agriculture photo, via Wikimedia.
P. 64. Mosque in Bunga Tanjung, 1971. Photo by B. Lawson. Courtesy of Tropen Museum, Royal Tropical Institute (Netherlands), TMnr20026482.jpg, via Wikimedia.

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