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HIDDEN EMPIRES: REVOLT, LEADERSHIP, AND UNDERGROUND NETWORKS IN THE EMERGENCE OF EARLY SHIʿI MUSLIM SECTARIAN IDENTITIES

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation undertakes a comparative survey of Shiʿi revolutionary movements from the uprising of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd (d. 67/687) and the origins of the Abbasid revolution through to the rise of the Fatimid Empire, the coming to power of the Buyids, and the beginnings of the "Shiʿi Centuries" at the turn of the 4th Hijri / 10th Common Era century—a period that witnessed multiple expansionary Shiʿi dynasties rule from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean through to the Levant, Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf, Iranian Plateau, and Central Asia. This dissertation argues that the phenomenon of secret underground Shiʿi organizations, *daʿwa* (missionary) institutions, and the occultation of hidden imams were adopted by a wide range of Shiʿi and pro-ʿAlid movements during a period of "Shiʿi confessional ambiguity" by movements that were often intentionally indistinguishable from one another due to their underground organization and that *later* branched into Zaydi, Twelver, Ismaʿili, and other Shiʿi denominations. The roots of underground revolutionary Shiʿism can largely be dated to the revolt of al-Mukhtār and the Kaysāniyya Shiʿi movement that emerged from his supporters who claimed that their Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700-1), went into occultation. It could also be seen over 200 years later in the case of the hidden Fatimid Imam al-Mahdī, the last of the line of hidden imams or "*al-Aʾimmat al-Mastūrīn*" of that period in the Fatimid literature who emerged in 297/909, and prior to him with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, the eleventh Imam in the Twelver Shiʿi tradition, who went into occultation in 260/874, as well as the hidden (*mustatir*) "proto-Zaydi" Imams, including Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 189/805) and al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhim (d. 246/860), among many other cases detailed in this study.

The study argues that while generic Shiʿi sectarian identity was an early phenomenon and distinct ʿAlid political loyalties could be found during the very early years following the passing

of the Prophet Muḥammad, intra-Shiʿi sectarian divisions did not form until later. Specifically, it was not until after the “Anarchy at Samarra” in 247 Hijri / 861 Common Era—occurring during what some scholars have termed the “insipient decline” of the Abbasid Empire—that the diverse factions and family lines within Shiʿism began their gradual transformation into distinct exclusive sects and interpretations of Shiʿi Islam. The distinction between processes of sectarian crystallization for Shiʿism in the early Islamic period, as I argue, therefore, was connected to the processes of state building, ʿAlid coalition formation, consecration of exclusive genealogical lineages, and dissident revolutionary underground network development undertaken by Shiʿi groups across the Near East up until the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries. Once imperial repressive pressures relatively eased during the middle Abbasid period, the frequency of hidden Shiʿi Imams declined and previously underground competitive pressures emerged out into the open between Shiʿi factional networks and familial ʿAlid lines claiming universal sovereignty through the Imamate and restricted lineages that took on more clear exclusive claims to legitimacy. This contentious process of previously underground Shi’i factional competition, in turn, manifested in the proliferation of various exclusionary Shiʿi dynastic sovereign governments and the emergence of distinct Shiʿi sectarian crystallization.

CHAPTER ONE:
The Question of Dynastic Leadership, Power, and Sectarian Emergence

Introduction

Two of most influential global Muslim empires in the early Islamic period were the Abbasids and Fatimids. Alongside the Umayyads, the Abbasids and the Fatimids have come to define the dynastic history of leadership and authority in early Islam. The Abbasids (r. 132–656 Hijri / 749–1258 Common Era), centered in the Muslim heartlands of Iraq and Iran, seized power from the previously dominant Umayyad dynasty and ruled as sovereigns with vast imperial resources, oversaw the construction of major new cities from Baghdad to Samarra in Mesopotamia, waged campaigns against the formidable Byzantines, and financed the famed translation movement that contributed greatly to global science and philosophy.[1] The Fatimids, an impressive Mediterranean land and maritime power centered in North Africa and the Levant, ruled from 297–567H / 909–1171CE, founded the imperial cities of Cairo and al-Mahdiyya, sponsored advanced centers of learning such as the still standing and renowned al-Azhar university and seminary in Egypt, and famously battled the Crusaders, all while extending their rule across the Red Sea and over Mecca and Medina.

While the Abbasids and Fatimids were impressive transnational empires and Islamic cultural powerhouses, they were both, notably, also direct inheritors of underground Shiʿi revolutionary movements—a significant fact that has been largely lost sight of in both the current literature and popular discourse. The secret underground networks of Shiʿi Muslims, a politically marginalized early Islamic movement who considered themselves partisans of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib

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[1] Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʻAbbāsid Society* (London: Routledge, 1998); Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, History of the Near East (Harlow: Pearson, 2004); Wolfdietrich Fischer and Helmut Gätje, eds., *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982).

(d. 40/661) and from whose ranks the Abbasids and Fatimids arose, made risky yet successful gambits for power and constructed vast empires stretching from North Africa to West Asia and through to Central Asia and beyond. These Shiʿi revolutions quite unexpectedly succeeded in undertaking such significant political projects despite being subject to systematic persecution and marginalization by the status-quo powers they challenged. Notably, prior to building these two new empires, the revolutionary leaders of each of these respective Shiʿi underground movements attracted mass followings by claiming to represent a salvific hidden imam (or *mahdī*/*qāʾim*) from the family of the Prophet Muḥammad whose identity was hidden from the public.[2] This peculiar phenomenon of claiming hidden leadership interestingly occurred in both cases despite the fact that some 160 years separated the revolutions that brought to power the Abbasid and Fatimid dynasties.

While it is not necessarily surprising that such underground movements hid the identity of their leader from the authorities and the public from fear of persecution, it is noteworthy that the leader's identity—in both instances—was also hidden from the main Shiʿi factions and underground networks active in the revolutionary movements as well. Why did these underground organizations pledge allegiance to unknown religio-political leaders and how did this strategy come to be replicated despite its known risks and dangerous consequences, including, for example, the Abbasids coming to power to the chagrin and opposition of most other Shiʿi revolutionary groups? Moreover, how did these religious claims and underground organizational structures impact the emergence of Shiʿi sectarian identity and the nature of dynastic Shiʿi empires in early Islamic history?

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[2] The Imam within Shiʿi thought was considered as the legitimate sovereign successor to the Prophet Muḥammad and representative of God on earth, although the nature of what this meant cosmologically and politically was intensely debated between and amongst differing Shiʿi circles across time. For more on Shiʿi conceptions of Imamate, see: Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shi'ism* (U.K.: Mouton Publishers, 1978); Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Maria Massi Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shiʿite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam: Abu Ja'far Ibn Qiba Al-Razi and His Contribution to Imamite Shi'ite Thought* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1993).

In order to approach these questions, this dissertation undertakes a comparative survey of Shiʿi revolutionary movements from the uprising of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687) and the origins of the Abbasid revolution through to the rise of the Fatimid Empire, coming to power of the Buyid dynasty, and the beginnings of the "Shiʿi centuries," which witnessed Shiʿi dynasties rule from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean to the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia. It argues that while generic Shiʿi sectarian identity was an early phenomenon and distinct ʿAlid political loyalties could be found during the very early years following the passing of the Prophet Muḥammad,[3] intra-Shiʿi sectarian divisions did not form until later.[4] It was not until the "Anarchy at Samarra" in 247/861—occurring during what some scholars have termed the "insipient decline" of the Abbasid Empire[5]—that the diverse factions and family lines within Shiʿism began their transformation into distinct sects and interpretations of Shiʿi Islam. The Abbasid insipient decline resulted in the systemic weakening of the dynasty's military strength and provided structural openings for previously underground Shiʿi movements to stake their claims publicly out in the open and to confront not just the Abbasids but also rival Shiʿi factions.[6]

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[3] See, for example: Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Reflections on the Expression Dīn ʿAlī: The Origins of the Shiʿi Faith," in *The Study of Shiʿi Islam: History, Theology and Law*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 17–46; Dakake, *The Charismatic Community*.

[4] It is important to note here that this dissertation is approaching the historical sociological aspects of Shiʿi sectarian identity. This is not to say that other definitions of sectarianism cannot exist or are not important—or that internal narratives of later Shiʿi sects are inconsequential—but rather to demonstrate that socio-political sectarian identities formed an important aspect of lived Shiʿism and contributed to the rich pluralism, historical institutions, and development of Shiʿism throughout time.

[5] This period is marked by the murder of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil and the factional strife which sapped the Abbasid caliphate and in particular their ability to raise standard armies and express repressive discipline across the empire. See Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr Ṭabarī, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī : Incipient Decline: The Caliphates of al-Wāthiq, al-Mutawakkil, and al-Muntaṣir A.D. 841-863/A.H. 227-248*, trans. Joel L. Kraemer, vol. 34 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

As this dissertation importantly demonstrates, the phenomenon of "hidden Imams," secret underground organizations, and occultation was by no means the exclusive purview of the later Twelver Shiʿis but rather a trait shared by a wide range of Shiʿi Imamis and ʿAlid groups many of whom were later claimed by Zaydis, Twelvers, Ismaʿilis, and others alike. The roots of this phenomenon can largely be dated to the revolt of al-Mukhtār, and the Kaysāniyya Shiʿa movement that emerged from his supporters who claimed that their Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700-1) went into occultation. It could also been seen over 200 years later in the case of the hidden Fatimid Imam al-Mahdī who emerged in 297/909 and prior to him with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (b. 255-6/869-70) who went into occultation in 260/874 as well as hidden "proto-Zaydi" Imams including Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 189/805).[7]

This is not to say there was necessarily a linear line of imams or actors from the Kaysāniyya to the Fatimids—although certain relationships and linkages can be found over this time period—but rather that these patterns were the result of larger interconnected factors. These factors included the highly coercive means exercised by imperial powers, whether Umayyad or Abbasid, against Shiʿi dissidents which led to rebel secrecy and the adoption of underground organizations as a strategy to avoid repression. Once the imperial repressive pressures relatively eased during the middle Abbasid period, the frequency of hidden Shiʿi Imams sharply declined and competitive pressures emerged out into the open between Shiʿi factional networks and familial ʿAlid lines claiming universal sovereignty through the Imamate. This second factor, in particular, was important in the process of intra-Shiʿi sectarian crystallization. It was not enough for imperial pressures to lessen, but additionally, Shiʿi dynasties and claimants put forward simultaneous—and exclusive—claims to universal Islamic sovereignty through arguing for the primacy of their kinship and descent from the Prophet Muḥammad. In short, the process of competition between various ʿAlid leaders and Shiʿi factions did not have the chance to openly express itself as stable or continuous sovereign dynastic rule until shortly before the Minor Occultation period. It is only afterwards that we witness a hardening of Shiʿi sectarian identities as multiple Shiʿi and ʿAlid dynasties competed with each other and expressed sovereign authority by raising armies, taxing, and administering legal systems.

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[6] It is important to note here that while Abbasid power was weakened following the Anarchy at Samarra it had not completely collapsed. The Abbasids were still able to defeat several revolts and exercise repressive capacities including against the Zanj revolt but doing so was increasingly difficult and tenuous for them. The weakness of the Abbasid imperial center allowed many revolts, revolutionary movements, and different Shiʿi dynasties to establish sovereign rule over diverse parts of the Islamic world.

[7] Using the term "proto-Zaydi" can be problematic as it can misrepresent the inevitability of his Zaydi identity and be used as a tautological rather than historically contextualized understanding of evolving sectarian identity. I do not mean it in this sense, rather, I use the term here (or elsewhere when necessary in the dissertation) as a convenient referent and indicator as well as to reflect how Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallah was claimed by later Zaydi Shiʿis as a mainstream Imam.

As a result, Shiʿi confessional identity formation and imperial-dynastic genesis, I argue, were covariant. The phenomenon of hidden leadership and underground elite networks were in large part the consequence of two structural factors: 1) undelineated criteria of leadership selection and the determination of which line from the Family of the Prophet Muḥammad held the exclusive genealogical and legitimate authority to lead the Muslim *umma*; and, 2) the highly repressive environment of the status-quo caliphal powers that incentivized anti-status quo actors to effectively build cohesive revolutionary coalitions and underground organizations that could reproduce themselves and confront the incumbent caliphal-dynastic power. While there was consensus in the broader Shiʿi camp regarding the primacy of the family of the Prophet Muḥammad for the position of imam or caliph of the Muslim community, disputes over who constituted the *Ahl al-Bayt* and Family of the Prophet, over various interpretations of the merits of patrilineal versus matrilineal descent, and about other genealogical debates were ongoing and far from resolved.

Moments of revolution and establishing ruling dynasties represented high-stakes junctures of decision-making with important implications for access to resources, power, and legitimacy which, according to the universally accepted position in Shiʿi thought, was the exclusive right of the imam and his divinely granted authority. The genesis of both sectarian groups and imperial dynasties were highly linked since it was through the consecration of Prophetic kinship lines—and the confirmation of which imam or caliph had the sovereign right to rule—that both Shiʿi sectarian identity and ruling political dynasties simultaneously emerged. Therefore, before the gradual decline of Abbasid rule in 247/861, the cohesive organizational infrastructure of the clandestine networks behind much earlier revolts, where the charismatic Shiʿi leadership was hidden but nevertheless revered, represented proto-sectarian Shiʿi factions. These factions and particular branches of the Banū Hāshim later enabled and shaped the particular manner in which various forms of Shiʿi religious denominations would crystallize as well as determine which caliphal/imamate rulership lines would become embedded in new state structures.

This argument, therefore, highlights that the study of dynastic power and revolutionary politics is inseparable from questions of sectarian religious identity in the formation of diverse Shi’i confessional groups. This is not to say that sectarian identity is the exclusive product of such socio-political factors. Rather, this dissertation more accurately examines the intersection of Shiʿi doctrinal beliefs and commitments with political and social institutions of the time period. Indeed, without certain doctrinal beliefs—such as in *walāya* and the continuation of prophetic charisma; principles of kinship succession and family lineage to the Prophet Muḥammad; and, the belief in *ghayba*—these underground organization or revolutionary movements would not have existed in the form they did. It is primarily, if not exclusively, among the Shiʿa that these particular phenomena are expressed so durably and over such a long period of time. These Shiʿi doctrines and theology serve therefore as the foundation of making these patters normal and repetitive across time and space.

This dissertation also examines how, despite their shared revolutionary or underground Shiʿi origins, why one group, the Abbasids, eventually became known as the champions of "Sunni orthodoxy," while the Twelvers,[8] Ismaʿili Fatimids, Zaydis, Nuṣayrīs, and Qarāmiṭa split into competing Shiʿi sects following different lines of Imams or representatives of the Imams? How can we define Shiʿism in this early period and why do so many sectarian movements and dynasties within Shiʿism emerge within this time? This dissertation looks to explore the question of the emergence of Shiʿi sectarian identity and the complex web of intra-Shiʿi sectarian splits through a comparative historical approach that examines the relationship between power, orthodoxy, empire, social institutions, doctrine, authority, and underground networks. As Ahmed El Shamsy succinctly argues: "the history of orthodoxy cannot be simply a history of ideas, but a history of how, in particular situations, claims to truth came to be enshrined in social practices, such as rituals, and in institutions, such as the 'community of scholars,'" and, in this case, underground missionary *daʿwa* institutions (Arabic for “calling/invitation” to the truth) and other socio-political organizations.[9]

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[8] The term "Twelver" is somewhat problematic as a label since it refers to several interconnected yet nonetheless socially distinct Shiʿi groups, including Twelver "Jaʿfari" Shiʿis who constitute the vast majority of modern Twelver Shiʿis (i.e. the majority of Shiʿis in present modern Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Bahrain Afghanistan, and other states) to whom belongs a developed "Jaʿfari" law school named eponymously after the sixth Shiʿi Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. There also exists Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawī Twelvers centered in the Levant, particularly Syria, as well as groups such as the Bektashi and Alevi Twelvers who constitute the majority of Shiʿis in Anatolia and certain regions of Eastern Mediterranean including the Balkans (these groups, in their present communal forms, emerged after the historical period examined in this study). All of these Shiʿi communities accept the same exact succession of twelve ʿAlid Imams, the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, belief in *walāya*, and other core doctrinal beliefs, however they do differ in key areas as well, including the divine status and cosmological role of the Imams. But perhaps the most important area of differentiation is these groups ascription or lack thereof to a school of Islamic law (*madhhab*) based on the scholastic principles of jurisprudence (*usūl al-fiqh*) to which the vast majority of other Muslims belong. Apart from the Twelver Jaʿfari Shiʿa, the other aforementioned Shiʿi groups do not ascribe to a legal *madhhab* for their mainstream adherents. Unless otherwise noted, in this work, "Twelver" will refer to Twelver Jaʿfari Shiʿis for ease of the reader and understanding of the complex array of Shiʿi groups covered in this study.

In particular, by understanding the broad scope of early Islamic revolts, we hope to gain insights into the patterns, mechanisms, and structural contours through which revolts operated. The Abbasid revolution, as has been noted, was in reality an umbrella revolution in which the Abbasids were one faction among many and were able to seize power through skillful coalition building and utilizing ambiguity to their advantage.[10] As Marshall Hodgson argued: “the whole upheaval had been the great Shīʿite opportunity,” and “seemed to mean a great Shīʿite triumph.” However, “when the ʿAbbasids repudiated [the Shiʿa], therefore, the revolution became instead the great Shīʿite disappointment; and a fundamental reorientation was only natural, perhaps even more for them than for other groups.”[11] Therefore, if we do not survey the broader range of revolutionary movements and groups that contributed to the Abbasid and later Fatimid *daʿwa*s, we will have an incomplete and ultimately unsatisfactory picture of the politics of Shiʿi revolutions and the nature/question of disputes over legitimate authority within Shi’ism. Just as importantly, the transition from a broad revolutionary coalition to stricter state hierarchies (when a revolution provides the opportunity for new elites to capture or construct a state) is highly relevant to the question of sectarian identity since such political processes require strict differentiation of claims to legitimate authority that in many ways lies at the heart of religious narratives.[12]

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[9] Ahmed El Shamsy, “The Social Construction of Orthodoxy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Timothy J. Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 97. Throughout this dissertation, I have largely chosen to keep *daʿwa* untranslated except at certain points. Many works, usually on Ismaʿili Shiʿism, have usually translated *daʿwa* as the “mission” and *dāʿī*s as missionaries. See, for example: Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, *A Code of Conduct: A Treatise on the Etiquette of the Fatimid Ismaili Mission*, trans. Verena Klemm, Paul E. Walker, and Susanne Karam (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011). While missionary activity can certainly be used to describe other *daʿwa* projects by other Shiʿi actors, it may not be an accurate marker in all places for other Shiʿi *dāʿī*s who did not necessary have a proselytizing mission rather than one of defensive protection.

[10] Elton Daniel, “ʿAbbāsid Revolution,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam III*.

[11] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, “How Did the Early Shî’a Become Sectarian?,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 1 (January 1, 1955): 10.

Importantly, the *daʿwa* organizations of the Abbasids and Fatimids were not built overnight or in isolation but were part of larger, diverse, interconnected webs of underground Shiʿi institutions and politics that proliferated in the early Islamic period. The revolutionary missionary institutions (*daʿwa*), during the underground stage, harbored internally competitive factions claiming charismatic authority and leadership on behalf of the Imam, and it was often the case that the internal divisions were unclear even to the *daʿwa* members themselves until critical moments of revolutionary manifestation and the presentation of a clear personality for the position of Imamate or Caliphate. Once the decision for armed rebellion was taken and segments of these clandestine organizations moved above ground, simultaneous contested leadership claims emerged, creating factional divisions within the heretofore more cohesive underground movement and contributing to the process of dynastic, imperial, and sectarian crystallization.

An important caveat that should be mentioned here is that while this dissertation looks at the intersection of underground political strategies and the emergence and formation of Shiʿi confessional identities, it by no means advances a theory that is necessarily denying the religious or spiritual ontological claims of various Shiʿi religious traditions. The argument does not seek to reduce Shiʿi identity belief as political strategy, but rather to understand the sociological and historical patterns and mechanisms that crystallized—and eventually helped to reify—the particular understandings of diverse Shiʿi religious interpretations based on context and time.

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[12] This pattern of a broad revolutionary coalition which then must quickly narrow once it reaches power is seen in many cases including the Abbasids who quickly eliminate rival contenders within their family including Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr's civil conflict with his uncle ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAli and shortly after that his elimination of Abū Muslim as well as his crushing of the uprising of "Muḥammad "Nafs al-Zakiyya," among other post-victory conflicts the Abbasids faced. This phenomenon is also seen amongst the Fatimid Imams who kill Abū ʿAbdāllah al-Shīʿī and other top Dāʿīs (revolutionary officials) who prepared the grounds for the Fatimid government and did most of the fighting on their behalf but posed a threat to the new caliph once established. See: Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, History of the Near East (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2004), 123-132; Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad Al-Nafs Al-Zakiyya in 145/762: Ṭālibīs and Early ʿAbbāsids in Conflict*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 159-168.

For these Shiʿi groups, the question of political and spiritual sovereignty (*wilāya/walāya*) of leadership rested at the very core of their beliefs.[13] Often, they moved to express these beliefs by attempting—sometimes successfully—to install their candidate from the family of the Prophet to the position of universal caliphate or imamate. To do so, diverse Shiʿi groups adopted extensive institutions known as *daʿwa* or sometimes *wikāla* organizations and underground strategies that had latent armed revolutionary potential. These institutional experiences are an integral part of the story of Shiʿism, the consecration of different prophetic kinship lines, and the early divisions that created separate paths and identities for Muslim sectarian groups such as the Twelvers, Ismaʿilis, Zaydis, Nuṣayrīs, and others.

The Fatimids and Abbasids, therefore, only represented two particular claims to charismatic leadership of the family of the Prophet and were challenged by a number of rival claimants and factions each of which put forward their own candidates for leadership. The battle over lineages (*nasab*) and which candidate from the *Āl Muḥammad* was the rightful universal leader were intensely contested by members of the Abbasid, Fatimid, Ṭālibid, Ḥusaynī ʿAlid lines, among others. Most of these groups that laid a claim to leadership initially shared very similar, if not nearly identical, beliefs regarding the primacy of the family of the Prophet, dissident mahdistic ideology,[14] and organization similarities via underground networks and institutions that claimed to represent a hidden Imam. The roots of these early dissident secret organizations, as this study will discuss, were initially planted in direct response to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and can be witnessed in certain Shiʿi groups in Kufa, such as the *Tawwābūn*, following the Imam's martyrdom.

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[13] Most key concepts in Islamic thought take time to solidify and change in meaning or particular form throughout different historical contexts. By *wilāya/walāya* I do not necessarily mean that the most advanced (or the contemporary consensus) definition of the word can necessarily be consistently found in the earliest manuscripts but that the general meaning of the concept—love and some form of political and spiritual sovereignty applied to the legitimate representatives of God—was usually directly or indirectly meant by the use of the word. Conceptions of *walāya* are diverse of course both between Shiʿi groups and within them as well. Further, potential distinctions between the term *wilāya* have *walāya* have been discussed in the scholarship, including in Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 231–276, however this dissertation uses them interchangeably unless otherwise noted depending on the different technical implications a change in meaning could have in context. See: Paul Walker, “Wilāya,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

In addition to the Fatimids and Abbasid underground networks, the Twelver Shiʿa *wukalāʾ* financial agents also ran an underground movement of their own—with close chronologically parallels with the Fatimid Ismaʿili *daʿwa*—composed of a dispersed multi-layered system tasked with the same exact mission of the Ismaʿilis: to simultaneously protect and promote the identity of their hidden Imam. In fact, this dissertation argues, they should be treated as the extension of one larger ambiguous anti-Abbasid Imāmī underground structure at the time of the Minor Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, not as two distinct movements separated after the death of the Sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, as much of the current literature de facto treats them (likely as a result of back-projection). In fact, there is no evidence of an underground Fatimid Ismaʿili socio-political organization before 260/873-4.[15] Concurrently, the Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs who were a part of the Twelver Shiʿi community but rejected the leadership of the "*wakīl*s," also hid the identity of their *bāb* effectively enough that the Twelver Imamis al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. ca. 310/922) and ʿAbdallāh al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī (d. 301/913-14) in their heresiographies mention a list of successor candidates to Ibn Nuṣayr none of whom was the actual *bāb*, Ibn Jundab.[16] Around this same period (shortly before the start of the Minor Occultation) in 250/864, Ḥasan b. Zayd—after being invited by local elites—also successfully established a state in northern Iran on the shores of the Caspian Sea (Ṭabaristān/Daylam).[17]

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[14] The term "mahdistic" is the adjectival reference to the Islamic belief in the *mahdī*. This term is used in part in order to differentiate from the concept of messianism. While this dissertation sometimes uses these terms (mahdistic and messianic) interchangeably to refer to general eschatological notions, they can refer to distinct figures and concepts. Many Islamic, and probably all Shiʿi traditions consider the *Mahdī* a unique end-times savior figure separate from the Messiah who is usually understood to be the Prophet Jesus and will return with the *Mahdī* at end-times.

[15] Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98ff. Interestingly, the Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdi is said to have been born in 260/874, the very year of the occultation of the Twelver Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī.

While a handful of works in the academic literature have focused on individual Shiʿi groups in their revolutionary or underground stages, there is a lacuna in the literature for a comparative macro-survey of revolutionary Shiʿi underground movements, their interconnections with one another, and their relationship to power, knowledge, empire, and sectarian identity. Surveying the main manifestations of Shiʿi revolutionary and underground organizations, as is undertaken in this current study, can yield new insights and patterns that can significantly complement the existing scholarship on early Islamic history and Shiʿi sectarian identity in particular. This is especially the case as much of the literature on sectarian identity has tended to focus on intellectual, doctrinal, and legal history (and thereby attempted to place sectarian identity in these scholarly frameworks) with a lighter emphasis on the long-term impacts of revolt, revolutionary messianic thought, underground *daʿwa* institutions and hidden ʿAlid leaders, and attempts by Shiʿi actors to establish governing structures and empires. This is not to discount extant invaluable studies on Shiʿi intellectual and doctrinal history but to rather complement and triangulate research findings in a more inclusive rigorous manner to more precisely examine the historical development of Shiʿi political institutions and sectarian developments.

Furthermore, the phenomena discussed in this dissertation have been lost sight of in the literature because of often incomplete or inaccurate understandings of the definition and concept of “religion” and “sect” in the first place. By disassociating political organizations and *daʿwa* networks from religious and sect studies, the interlinked nature of how political mobilization and institutional organizations have enabled and created sectarian identity structures have been largely ignored. Much of the current literature has tended to define sectarian developments by focusing on the evolution of certain terminologies, legal *madhhab* formations, and the development of differing intellectual and doctrinal camps. While these studies are very crucial to the overall narrative, this study provides a theoretical lens for understanding the interconnections between Shiʿi revolutionary activity, sectarian identity, and state-building by highlighting the socio-political mechanisms of consecration and crystallization of *Ahl al-Bayt* kinship succession principles and Islamic leadership. And these fault-lines were defined, in large part, through the dynamic intersection of underground movements, mahdistic ideology, moments of revolution, and imperial aspirations.

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[16] Yaron Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʻAlawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History, and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 14.

[17] Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī fī Akhbār Ad-Dawlat Ad-Daylimiyya*, ed. M. S. Khan (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1995).

In order to contribute to these questions, this dissertation will track how and why different Shiʿi factions battled over leadership claims and in turn examine the overlap and conflict between factional or sectarian institutions and underground networks. The domain of this study—and the traces of its historical past—is in a ways trapped in the manuscripts or edited volumes that have come down to us at this time; therefore, use of philological methods and source criticism are an absolute necessity. By tracking our prosopographical, historical, and sociological information through theoretical methods found in the fields of history and sociology, this dissertation hopes to contribute in a rigorous manner to the current literature and the question of sectarian genesis. In particular, this dissertation applies combines historical re-constructivist study with social network theory models to the novel innovations that various Shiʿi underground revolutionary movements successfully produced and replicated over time.

The study of underground Shiʿi revolutionary movements and the early spread of powerful Shiʿi dynasties across the Near East contributes to several notable areas of scholarship. It is an important period not only for our understanding of the evolution of sectarian identities in Islam but also for larger transformative processes of social, political, and cultural change in the Islamic world and its global reverberations. These understudied Shiʿi dynasties therefore represent a large gap in our understanding both within Islamic history as well as global history and the nature of political and social order in diverse world regions including the Persianate world, the Caspian regions, the Eastern Mediterranean and Levantine regions, the Caucasus, greater Iran, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf littoral zones, among other world regions. In short succession, a series of Shiʿi dynasties emerged in the 3rd/9th centuries onwards including the Daylami South Caspian dynasties of the Buyids, Ziyarids, and Musāfirids—an immediate consequence of the Shiʿi ʿAlid armies of Ṭabaristān such as those of Ḥasan b. Zayd and Nāṣir li-l Ḥaq, in addition to the Kākūyids—which effectively ruled vast territories from the Caucasus through Iran and Iraq to Central Asia; the Shiʿi Hamdanids in the Levant with bases in Aleppo and Mosul, as well as the Shiʿi ʿUqaylids, the Mirdāsids, and other important dynasties in the Eastern Mediterranean region; the Ismaʿili Qarāmiṭa in Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and even Multan, India;[18] and the other Zaydi (or pseudo-Zaydi) Shiʿi states in Yemen and North Africa.

Numerous scholars have remarked on the Islamic cultural efflorescence of the Shiʿi Centuries, including Joel Kramer who writes that in the "renaissance of Islam which flourished under the enlightened rule of the Buyid dynasty," there was a "classical revival and cultural flowering within the soil of Islamic civilization… that embraced the scientific and philosophical heritage of antiquity as a cultural and educational ideal.”[19] This resurgence marked a crucial period of syncretic intellectual breakthroughs and high literature. It was to the Shiʿi Hamdanid *Amīr* Sayf al-Dawlā, the renowned Arab commander and bulwark against the Byzantines so celebrated in modern Arab imagination, that perhaps the most renowned poet of the Arabic language al-Mutannabī devoted many of his poems: “Whither do you intend, great prince? We are the herbs of the hills, and you are the clouds / Whether at war or at peace, you aim at the heights, whether you tarry or hasten / The awe inspired in the hearts of Saif al-Daula the King, the object of our hopes, is itself a sword.”[20] It was also Sayf al-Dawlā who extended his patronage to Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, the “second master” (after Aristotle) in the Islamic philosophical tradition, whom had contributed so foundationally to global thought through engagement with Greco-Arabic intellectual thought, political philosophy, and ontology, among other sciences. Given these larger civilizational influences, this study therefore looks to explain the processes which interlink the earlier periods of repression, underground organization, and Shiʿi revolutionary activity with the subsequent Shiʿi centuries and dynastic influence. This dissertation therefore hopes to highlight the importance of Shiʿism in Islamic and global history—being both influenced by and influencing its larger environment—by providing a study of the development of historical political institutions and sectarian identity in the period in question through the prism of power networks, ambiguity, dissident ideology, salvific redemption, factional politics, and production of scholarly categories of orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

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[18] In the extant literature, there is a debate regarding the nature of the Shiʿi state in Multan whose sovereignty was contested by the official Fatimid *daʿwa* and either a group of the Qarāmiṭa or another rival sect of Ismaʿilis who rejected the Salamiyya authorities; Abbas H. al-Hamdani, *The Beginnings of the Isma'ili Da'wa in Northern India* (Cairo: Sirovic, 1956); Ahmad Nabi Khan, "Fresh Light on the Emirate of Banu Samah or Banu Munabbah and the Emergence of Ismailis in Mulatan," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 20, no. 1 (January 1, 1983): 29–41.

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[19] Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), vii. Kraemer’s work, in turn, was in part inspired by Adam Mez’s impactful study *The Renaissance of Islam*, trans. Salahuddin Khuda Bukhsh and D. S. Margoliouth (London: Luzac, 1937).

[20] Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn Mutanabbī, *Poems of Al-Mutanabbi*, trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 54-56.

Underground Daʿwa Networks, Kinship, and Walāya within Shiʿism

The widespread phenomenon of Shiʿi revolts following the uprising of Imam Husayn b. ʿAli in 61/680 through the "High Caliphate" period of the 2nd–3rd Hijri centuries, and the success of many of these revolts and secret underground *daʿwa* organizations in establishing political rule raises a series of interesting questions. Namely, what conditions and factors make some of these marginalized and underground missionary organizations resilient over time, and in some instances, powerful enough to overthrow incumbent dynasties? Furthermore, how did particular successes among *daʿwa* organizations have broad impact on the very nature and understanding of religious sects?[21] How were they able to challenge and survive against powerful incumbent dynasties, including the Umayyads and the Abbasids? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to focus on how these *daʿwa* organizations—through the utilization of belief in *walāya* and the charismatic Imam—in fact re-constituted pre-existing sets of tribal, familial, and social identities and affiliations into new relationships, institutions, and power networks with explicit religious beliefs, charismatic hierarchies, and messianic and mahdistic visions of the future.

The struggle for power and legitimacy within the early Islamic community—and ultimately the struggle to define and become the universal Islamic leader of the Muslim community—was closely interlinked with questions of succession to the Prophet Muḥammad and specifically what it meant to be in his family (*ahl*/*āl/dhurrīya*, etc.). Political theology and kinship lines—including the important concepts of *imāma* and *walāya*—were, accordingly, at the core of not only ideational contestation between different Muslim groups but also significant driving mechanisms for the reshaping of social and political order according to differing visions of Islamic rule. Processes driving the emergence of Shiʿi sectarian identity were, therefore, closely related to the battle for universal Islamic leadership, which was, in turn, embedded in larger structural factors such as the relations of Arab with non-Arabs (and the *mawālī*), competition between Arab tribes in the context of the post-Islamic conquest social order, and the conversion of new Muslims and their place in these new systems, among other socio-political issues. Sectarian identities, in short, were deeply embedded in the socio-political order and were covariant with the exercise of political sovereignty and the scholarly production of knowledge meant to explain or legitimate particular interpretations of sovereignty.

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[21] For more on periodization, see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 233 ff.

Interpretations of who was fit to rule and what qualifications one should have to rule the Islamic *umma* may seem at first theoretically straightforward. However, as will be discussed, they were quite messy and contentious. The study of this subject is difficult and challenging due to issues of back-projection, dating, and the multiple ambiguities associated with expressions of power in Islamic scholarly narratives, which were themselves ongoing dynamic processes unfolding in real time. Moreover, there were a diverse number of models proffered by Shiʿi leaders and Imams with unique interpretations of leadership, theology, statecraft, and institution-building that were manifested by a plethora of underground institutions and Shiʿi representative factions of prophetic kinship lines over time.

The agents of the Imams studied in this dissertation who ran such underground Shiʿi movements used various self-referential terms to describe themselves and their activities. The titles used included *dāʿī* (inviter [to truth]), *wakīl* (trustee/manager), *wazīr* (aide/confidant), bāb (gate [to the divine]), and *safīr* (ambassador/representative), among others. These terms were often used interchangeably and occupied a similar conceptual space, although they tended to take on more reified meanings over time for different communities given growing sectarian complexification and resulting political differentiation occurring between Shiʿi factions.

In general, however, the term *dāʿī* was used to describe the Abbasid and Fatimid underground agents or representatives within these networks' official literature,[22] while the terms *wakīl* and *safīr* were used by the Twelver Shiʿa and *bāb* by the Nuṣayrīs.[23] All of these terms are drawn from Qurʾanic diction with a range of meanings and were utilized in the early Islamic period onwards, albeit in a variety of contexts and evolving connotations.[24] For example the root *d-ʿ-w* appears 212 times in the Qurʾan and *daʿwa* and its cognates such as *dāʿī* refer mainly to the pure "calling" of "invitation" of God's representatives and prophets to Allah and the truth (*dāʿīyan ila-llāh bi-idhnihi*).[25] They can additionally refer to sincere prayer and invocation to Allah but can also conversely mean those inviting to misguidance and disbelief in Allah, although the latter meaning is used less often in the Qurʾan.[26]

Importantly, the term *daʿwa* and its Qurʾanic subtext also came to be attached the underground ideological mission and institutions of revolutionary movements who invited the believers to their message and claim to represent the truth.[27] The early ʿAlid charismatic leader of Ṭabaristān in northern Iran, Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884), was referred to as *al-Ḍāʿī al-Kabīr* in addition to "*al-Dāʿī ilā-l Ḥaqq*" (the "inviter/caller to the truth"), which was both al-Ḥasan's regnal title as well as his brother's, Muḥammad b. Zayd who succeed him. These titles can be found in the numismatic evidence of their reign.[28] The Abbasids, moreover, provided lists of their *dāʿī*s as well as their *duʿat al-duʿat* in their official literature, which referred to different member-ranks in the Abbasid organization.[29] Therefore, the leaders of these organizations deeply embedded their discourse in Qurʾanic language and projected the very ethos of their movements as the ultimate divinely guided project for the Muslim community.

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[22] ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz Dūrī and ʻAbd al-Jabbār Muṭṭalibī, eds., *Akhbār Al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʻah li-al-Ṭibāʻah wa-l Nashr, 1971); Abū Ḥanīfah Nuʻmān b. Muḥammad, *Iftitāḥ Al-Daʻwa*, ed. Ḥusām Khaḍḍūr (Damascus: Dār al-Ghadīr lil-Ṭibāʻah wa-al-Nashr, 2007). There are a range of other organizational titles such as *nuẓarāʾ* and the *ḥujjā* which are used by the Abbasids and Fatimids as well which will be discussed in relevant portions of this study.

[23] Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba* (Qum: Ansariyan, 2012); Muḥammad b. ʻAlī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn Wa-Tamām al-Niʻmah*, ed. ʻAlī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 1975); al-Ḥusayn ibn Ḥamdān Khuṣaybī, *al-Hidāyah al-Kubrā*, ed. Abū Mūsā wa-l Shaykh Mūsá, vol. 7, Silsilat Al-Turāth al-ʻAlawī (Diyār ʻAql [Lebanon]: Dār li-Ajl al-Maʻrifah, 2007).

[24] For a discussion on the uses of Qurʾanic terminology and how they can transform overtime, see: Fred M. Donner, "Qur'ānicization of Religio-Political Discourse in the Umayyad Period," no. 129 (July 16, 2011): 79–92.

[25] See Qurʾan, *al-Aḥzāb*: 46. Quotations of the Qurʾan in this work are usually taken from Yusuf Ali or Marmaduke Pickthall's English translations of the Qurʾan.

[26] See Qurʾan, *Ghāfir*: 42-43; *al-Baqara*: 221, for example: "*tadʿūnanī li-akfura bi-llāh*" ("you invite me to disbelieve in Allah").

[27] For an in-depth discussion on the term *daʿwa,* see: Ahmad Pakatchi, "*Daʿwa*," *Encyclopaedia Islamica*. Also see: Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 98–116.

These Shiʿi underground organizations, moreover, contained a particular belief that made them unique: *walāya* (or alternatively *wilāya*). The root of *wilāya/walāya*, *w-l-y* permeates the Qurʾan in 12 derived forms and has a broad range of meanings but at its core relates a notion of closeness and proximity; therefore, it can mean both guardian and protected client simultaneously through the same word (*mawlā*). In the Qurʾan it also mentions that Allah is the *walī* [guardian] of the believers (2:257), and the term is also used by the Prophet Muḥammad in his famous address following his farewell Hajj (*hijjat al-widāʿ*) at Ghadīr Khumm when he stated: "whoever takes me as his Guardian (*mawlā*), ʿAli is also his Guardian (*mawlā*)."[30]

As discussed in the literature, *walāya* is a foundational belief in Shiʿism whose origins can be dated during the lifetime of Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. More specifically for Shiʿism, belief in *walāya* means adherence to the spiritual and political supremacy of Imam ʿAli in one specific sense and in a larger sense reflects the love and divinely rooted bonds between the Prophet and the *Ahl al-Bayt* with the community of true believers. This concept is a distinguishing feature for early Shiʿis and exists until today (the Arabic word Shiʿi itself being derived from the phrase

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[28] For a Qurʾanic reference on which this title was based, see for example verse 14 in chapter 13 (al-Raʿd): "*lahu daʿwat al-ḥaq.*"

[29] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, *Akhbār Al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya*, 221–23.

[30] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*, ed. Huda Khattab, trans. Nasiruddin Khattab, 3 vols. (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2012), Book 5, Hadith #713. For a comprehensive study of the speech of the Prophet Muḥammad at Ghadīr Khumm as recorded across a variety of primary sources, see: ʻAbd al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr fi-l Kitāb wa-l Sunna wa-l Adab*, 11 vols. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1952).

Shiʿat Ali, or "partisan/supporter" of Imam ʿAli). What this devotion and love for Imam Ali means is defined quite concisely by Maria Dakake, who is quoted below at length:

> [The] concept of *walāyah* represents a principle of spiritual charisma that lies at the heart of all major Shiʿite sectarian beliefs and most comprehensively embodies the Shiʿite religious ethos. It is a concept that has been part of Shiʿite rhetoric and doctrine from its earliest incarnation, and therefore represents the core concept linking generations of Shiʿite believers over centuries of substantial doctrinal and political change… [*Walāya*] denotes an all-encompassing bond of spiritual loyalty that describes, simultaneously, a Shiʿite believer's allegiance to God, the Prophet, the Imam and the community of Shiʿite believers, collectively. This concept, therefore, suggests a profound spiritual connection and ontological affinity between the Imams and their followers, between Shiʿite leadership and Shiʿite community, between the *Ahl al-Bayt* and those who made their cause with them. This concept, I will argue, was the ideological conduit for extending a belief in the charisma and elite spiritual status of ʿAli and the succeeding Imams to the community collectively and to ordinary Shiʿite, individually.[31]

Without *walāya*, it is safe say, there would be no Shiʿism—at least not in the way that it has existed for well over a millennium. The concept of *walāya* engenders hierarchies and spiritual authority. These hierarchies play a crucial role in both state formation and sectarian identities. As argued in the literature, a genuine *belief* regarding cosmology and leadership centered on the notion of *walāya* rests at the foundational core of Shiʿism.[32] However, that belief in the divine mercy, love, and friendship-bonds with the Prophets and Imams that typifies *walāya* does not in and of itself tell us about the origins of sociological sectarian identities—all of whom claim to adhere to *walāya* (diversely defined)—and how different Shiʿi communities have formed and reproduced their social institutions across time. Tracking such a difficult and complex question exclusively within the realm of philological study or intellectual history is challenging since various Shiʿi movements, factions, and sects use similar terminology and share similar beliefs in the 3rd/9th century or prior, including the belief in the cosmological and esoteric readings of the doctrine of Imamate and the encompassing sovereignty of the divinely appointed leader. This can also be seen in the terminological overlap that the Ismaʿili Fatimids, Twelver Shiʿis, Nusayrīs, and even the Abbasids among other groups use such as the *ḥujja* ("proof of God"), *qāʾim* (the one who rises/avenger), and the *mahdī* (salvific guide and redeemer) among other titles, which will be further discussed in chapter five.[33]

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[31] Maria Massi Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shiʿite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 7.

[32] Hussein Ziai, "Knowledge and Authority in Shīʿī Philosophy," in *Shīʿite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, ed. Linda Clarke (Binghamton: Binghamton University, 2001), 359–74; Mohammad Sagha, "Al-Ghadir: The Fountainhead of Shi'ism," Visions: A Leading Source on Global Shi'a Affairs at Harvard University, August 20, 2019, https://shiablog.wcfia.harvard.edu/blog/al-ghadir-fountainhead-shi%E2%80%99ism.

While the aforementioned four parties—the Fatimid Ismaʿilis, Abbasids, Twelvers, and Zaydis—are some of the main areas of focus in this dissertation, such a history would be incomplete without recognizing and taking into consideration the broader trajectory of Shiʿi revolutionary movements, starting from the Tawwābūn and Mukhtāriyya in Kūfā following the murder of Ḥusayn b. ʿAli in 61/680 and the ensuing movement of the Kaysāniyya, the revolts of the Khurammiyya that were overpowered by Abū Muslim (d. 137/755) and the Abbasids, the revolts of Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya (a Ḥasanid) and ʿAbdāllah b. Muʿāwiya (a Ṭālibid), and the uprising of ʿAli b. Muḥammad, an ʿAlid *mahdī* claimant leading the highly effective Zanj revolt,[34] among others.[35] All of these revolts must be taken note of—even though not all will be comprehensively treated—due to the interlinked nature of revolutionary movements in the Islamic Near East and the importance of taking the broader spectrum of movements into consideration when theorizing larger identity and power relationships.

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[33] For more background on these terms, see: Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of Mahdī in Twelver Shīʿism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Jassim M. Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background* (London: Muḥammadi Trust, 1982); Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*; Hasan Ansari, *L'imamat et l'Occultation Selon l'imamisme: Étude Bibliographique et Histoire de Textes* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

[34] See: Alexandre Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1999), and Aḥmad ʻUlabī, *Thawrat al-Zanj wa-Qā'iduhā ʻAlī ibn Muḥammad: (255-270 H/869-883 M)* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1961).

[35] For a survey of "extremist" groups as treated in the Twelver Shiʿi heresiographical (*firaq*) and historical literature, see: Niʻmat Allāh Ṣafarī Furūshānī, *Ghāliyān: Kāvishī dar Jaryānhā va Bar'āyandhā tā Pāyān-i Sadah-ʾi Sivvum* (Mashhad: Āstān-i Quds-i Raẓavī, 1999).

For the historical period in question, this study defines four interconnected waves of Shiʿi revolts that led to the establishment of various Shiʿi dynasties and sectarian groups, staring with (1) the revolt of Imam Husayn b. Ali in 61/680 and afterwards al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī (d. 67/686); (2) the interregnum period between the crushing of al-Mukhtār's Shiʿi uprising in Kufa—and the various Shiʿi-led revolts including ʿAbdallah b. Muʿawiya's short lived government (for which we have numismatic evidence) and the uprising of Yaḥyā b. Zayd (d. 125/743)—which eventually led to the establishment of the Abbasid caliphate in 129/749; (3) the wave of ʿAlid counter-revolutions against the nascent Abbasid state as seen in the revolts of leading ʿAlids like Nafs al-Zakiyya, Husayn b. Ali *Sāḥib al-Fakhkh*; Yaḥyā b. Umar, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (Ibn Ṭabāṭabā) and Abu-l Sarāyā, Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (Muḥammad Dībāj), Zayd "al-Nār,"[36] and other notable ʿAlid uprisings; and, (4) the fourth wave that coincided with the collapse of Abbasid military and bureaucratic strength—marked by the "Anarchy at Samarra"—and the establishment of a Shiʿi ʿAlid state in Ṭabaristān by Ḥasan b. Zayd and his successors starting in in 250/864, the Zanj state in Basra led by a self-proclaimed ʿAlid *mahdī*, Muḥammad b. ʿAli in 255/869;[37] a "Qarmaṭī" Ismaʿili state in Iraq and the Persian Gulf led by Abu Saʿīd al-Jannabi in 286/899 who was initially residing in region undercover as a merchant; and, the Fatimid state in modern Tunisia in 279/909, among others.[38] Table 1 presents these four Shi'i revolutionary waves.

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[36] See Robert Gleave, "The Rebel and the Imam: The Uprising of Zayd al-Nār and Shiʿi Leadership Claims," in *The ʿAbbasid and Carolingian Empires*, ed. Deborah Tor (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 169–87.

[37] J. Walker, "A Rare Coin of the Zanj," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 3 (1933): 652.

[38] In addition, the Idrisid dynasty, led by an ʿAlid survivor of the battle of Fakhkh, was established in modern day Morocco in 172/789 with the Awraba Berber tribe as his core base within a larger Berber coalition. Idrīs b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 175/791) was reported to have been sent to the region by another survivor of Fakhkh (169/786), Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh: "Yaḥyā is said to have made use of secret Shīʿī affinities within the Egyptian ʿAbbāsid administration to have Idrīs and Rāshid, his *mawlā*, or client, brought covertly from Egypt to the Maghrib;" Chafik T. Benchekroun, "Idrīsids," *Encyclopaedia of Islam III*.

Table 1: Periodization of Four Revolutionary Waves of Shiʿi and ʿAlid Revolts

Wave Number	Wave Description	Time Period	Select Leaders
1	Revolt of Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAli & immediate aftermath	61/680–67/687	Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAli; Mukhtār al-Thaqafī
2	Interregnum revolutionary period following Imam Husayn’s uprising and before rise of Abbasid Empire	67/687–129/749	ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿawiya; Ibrahim al-Imam; Zayd b. ʿAli; Yaḥyā b. Zayd
3	ʿAlid counter-revolutions against the Abbasids	129/749–250/864	Nafs al-Zakiyya; Yaḥyā b. Umar; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā
4	ʿAlid victories and start of the Shiʿi Centuries	250/864–334/945	Ḥasan b. Zayd; Nāṣir li-l Haq; the Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdi; Abu Saʿīd al-Jannābī

From the Anarchy to the Sirdāb of Sāmarrāʾ: Shiʿi Sectarian Crystallization (247/861 - 260/874CE)

Two events occurring within a decade between the third and fourth waves of Shiʿi revolts, both in the Abbasid capital of Samarra, provided the grounds for the explosion of dynastic-sectarian movements that saw the contestation of rival lineages, movements, and messianic leadership claims foundational for processes of sectarian crystallization. The first was the “Anarchy at Samarra” and the collapse of Abbasid caliphal authority. The magnificent capital at Samarra—*surra man raʾa* (“a delight for he who sees it”)—was built in large part for the Abbasid caliph to escape the factional pressures of Baghdad. The impressive city was built with truly enormous wealth and marked a high achievement in Islamic architecture and design. But the urban refuge of Samarra was to become itself a confining prison when the slave-soldiers (*ghūlam*) of the caliph—a relatively new institution at that time—morphed from his loyal defenders to a Praetorian Guard marked by petty factional interests and raw displays of power who engaged in constant and highly destabilizing *coup d'états*. The collapse of consistent centralized decision-making power and the hollowing out of the center, signaled by the "Anarchy at Samarra," (following the murder of the Caliph al-Mutawwakil in 247/861 by his Turkish slave-soldiers) provided the structural opening for the ʿAlid *Dāʿī* Ḥasan b. Zayd to establish perhaps the first long-lasting and stable post-Abbasid Shiʿi state on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea shortly thereafter in 250/864.[39]

The second event at Samarra marking a turning point in the crystallization of Shiʿi sectarian identity was the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, in that city in 260/874, that occurred, according to certain reports, in a *sirdāb* (literally "underground"), the last place the Twelfth Imam was seen before entering occultation (*ghayba*). This event produced a high degree of ambiguity with multiple factions claiming to represent a hidden Imam and the Mahdi who neither revealed the Imam's identity nor made it always clear who they themselves were. The Ismaʿili *daʿwa,* as its own sources attest, was established in either in 261/875 or 264/878,[40] at least one year after the occultation of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan and the beginning of the leadership of the financial agents of the Twelfth Imam said to mark the period of "Minor Occultation." This study argues that these two movements were in reality intra-Imami Shiʿi disputes that only split definitively during the time of the Minor Occultation. The proto-Fatimid faction utilized the ambiguity of the hidden identity of the Mahdi and used almost identical messages and codenames as other Shiʿi factions in the community (including the *safīr*s/*wakīl*s of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan) in order to put forward its own candidate for Islamic leadership, who was much later said to be a descendent of Ismaʿil b. Jaʿfar.

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[39] Other Shiʿi governments did exist prior to this time. Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd established a short-lived statelet in Kufa, the Ṭālibid ʿAbdallah b. Muʿāwiya also ruled autonomously and issued coinage, and of course the Abbasids themselves were the product of a Shiʿi revolution. Additionally, we had the case of Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm's governments for which numismatic evidence survived, as well the Idrisid state in modern Morocco all of which pre-date Hasan b. Zayd's state. However, most of these projects with the exception of the Abbasids—which took on an anti-ʿAlid and eventually anti-Shiʿi tenor—were quite short-lived and did not have much of a chance to become stable much less flourish. The case of the Idrisids is also more complicated since although the leader was an ʿAlid survivor of al-Fakhkh it is unclear to what extent Shiʿi thought and belief was propagated in the early period of Idrisid rule. For more on the assassination and historiographical debates regarding Idrīs b. ʿAbdallah, see: Najam Haider, "The Community Divided: A Textual Analysis of the Murders of Idrīs b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 175/791)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128, no. 3 (2008): 459–75.

[40] Abū Bakr b. ʻAbd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz Al-Durar Wa-Jāmiʻ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid, (Cairo: al-Maʻhad al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6: 19; Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 14.

Kinship Principles, Network Brokerage, and Power Politics

It was not by coincidence that the caliphate, the imamate, and the various sultanates that emerged at this time period were determined at the top by the struggle over dynastic kinship succession principles, which formed an ongoing factor in shaping and consecrating Shiʿi sectarian boundaries, theology, and leadership. Accordingly, while there are a myriad of ways to define sectarianism in Islam (whether by law school, theological school, leadership succession principles to the Prophet, or other markers), a key factor in determining sectarian identity within Shiʿism was the consecration of legitimate kinship lines and the principle of succession to the Imamate. Generally speaking, the process of differentiating Shiʿi Imamate kinship lines was muddied and ambiguous during periods of repression and underground organization, while moments of open rebellion and state-building pushed intra-Shiʿi distinctions to the fore.

An understudied aspect of the formation and success of Imamate kinship lines, moreover, were the alliances forged between Imami lines with other tribal or para-tribal elements such as *mawālī* networks where charismatic Imams and Dāʿīs acted as unifying network brokers among divided tribes or peoples. In multiple cases across space and time, Shiʿi leadership kinship lines forged coalitions with other (non-Imami) micro-kinship groups in the initial stages of revolutionary or sectarian group cohesion. Often the Shiʿi imams or dāʿīs acted as charismatic unifying figures in fractious tribal or ethnic contexts and offered an arbitrating role. This concept is significant as it demonstrated the network brokering role for Shiʿi Imams that could be activated to unify potentially highly divisive revolutionary movements including a myriad of tribes, family groups, ethnicities, regional affiliations, and other identities. Importantly, however, this process of network brokerage by Shiʿi imams in turn shaped larger processes of separating specific lines of succession among the larger family of the Prophet. This impacted Shiʿi sectarian genesis since the revolutionary tribal or para-tribal allies of the imams formed new *exclusive* coalitions and institutions of power and hierarchy with specific Prophetic kinship clans, such as the Abbasids and Fatimids.

Revolutions and the alliances formed to undertake revolt, therefore, played a key role in the question of which descendants, kinship lines, and figures from the broader category of "family of the Prophet" were the true inheritors of the Prophet, and how these standards were determined. There are generally two important concepts involved in the study of kinship and familial ties (*qarāba*), including for intra-Quraysh notions of family ties: that of *nasab* and *muṣāhara*. As Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi writes: "in general, *nasab* refers to a relationship by blood and *muṣāhara* to a link or alliance by marriage." These two constituted the primary prism through which kinship ties were understood in Arabian society: "the first [*nasab*] conveys the sense of genealogy, provenance or paternal lineage, ties by blood or by alliance, noble birth and affinity. The second [*muṣāhara*], as rich in meaning as the first, evokes in its original sense the idea of fusing and thus affinity, relationship through women, an alliance by marriage."[41] Roy Mottahedeh discusses this and related terms in the context of the fourth/tenth century, stating "the capacities of men are often described in terms of *nasab* and *ḥasab*. *Nasab* is genealogy, the influence of a man's pedigree on his condition. *Ḥasab* is the honor acquired through deeds." As he continues:

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[41] Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam*, 29. While these specific terms are directly applicable to early Arab communities, I would argue they are also important in non-Arab contexts in the Near East and beyond. For a discussion of Arabic kinship terms in the modern context, see: Fuad I. Khuri, "Arabic Status and Kinship Terms," in *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Iḥsān ʿAbbās on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Wadad Kadi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), 277–93.

> In formal terms, to accept someone as a client (*maulā*, pl. *mawālī*) meant to allow this person to claim the *nasab* of the patron; as al-Jāḥiẓ points out, the non-Arab *mawālī* can say that through clientship: 'we have acquired a *nasab* that the Arab approves, and we have an origin (*aṣl*) in which the non-Arab takes pride. Yet it required generations before the transfer of *nasab* was so complete that a man could claim the same biological origin (*aṣl*) as the patrons of his ancestors. In the long run, therefore, clientship… contributed to an important loyalty of category—kinship… but in the short run, at least in the period we are considering, self-conscious clientship was used only to express the ties of loyalty that a freedman was presumed to have to his former master, not to express any transfer of *nasab* that would imply a transfer of capacity.[42]

This discourse, moreover, is not as simple as lineage/pedigree versus meritocracy: "According to most definitions, the majority of deeds that were calculated to form a man's *ḥasab* had been performed not by the possessor of *ḥasab* but by his ancestors. Al-Jāhiz plainly states that the 'excellent deeds of the fathers (*ābāʾ*) and the former actions of ancestors (*ajdād*) are the *ḥasab* of the sons."[43]

Moreover, there were several important notions among Arab tribes relating to kinship of paternal and maternal lines that become significant especially in marriage strategies among elite Arab families. As Robertson Smith writes, a sub-tribe or clan was often referred to as *baṭn* (i.e. the mother's belly), which could have meant a "tribe constituted or propagated by mother-kinship."[44] Even general terms for community or society, *umma*, and familial relations, *raḥim*, refer to the mother and the mother's womb respectively. Asad Ahmed has further underscored the importance of matrilineal descent in his work, writing that "a further proof that cognate lines counted for more than is often assumed is the lists of the names of ʿAlid mothers, daughters, and sisters from the first century and a half preserved in ʿAlid and non-ʿAlid genealogies." However, a change occurred as the “notion of legitimacy had begun to shift drastically in favor of exclusive patrilineal claims during the early ʿAbbasid period. [It] remains so until our time.”[45]

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[42] Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in An Early Islamic Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 98–100.
[43] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 100.
[44] W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1907), 38.

Within Shiʿi groups, the various potential kinship lines of succession to the Prophet Muḥammad’s family (such as the Ḥusaynid, Ḥasanid, Fatimid, Abbasid lines) were quite numerous,[46] but they were all located within the Hāshimid Qurayshī clan of ʿAbd al-Manāf,[47] and, in reality, from the descendants of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim.[48] But the conflict over kinship succession lines did not take place in a vacuum. The ways in which different family branches of the *Ahl al-Bayt* differentiated themselves from one another was intimately linked to how they forged their relationships with their followers and elite agents—sometimes through marriage ties—leading to unique interpretations of political institutions and hierarchies across the spectrum of Shiʿism and revolutionary-latent Hāshimid kinship lines.

Kinship differentiation markers among the family of the Prophet can be seen in the use of the term “Fatimid,” which is attested in the sources for the first time during the uprising of Ṣāḥib al-Nāqa ("the Man with the She-Camel") in 289/902.[49] The use of the term "Fatimid" was an explicit critique against the Abbasid prophetic lineage claim and was a critique accepted by most Shiʿis at the time. This position was predominant among Imami Shiʿis who argued that the Imam and the Mahdi could only come from the line of the daughter of the Prophet, Fatima bt. Muḥammad.[50] Thus, we find that Zayd b. Ḥasan, a descendent of Imam Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib (also known as Zayd al-Nār), unsuccessfully sued Abū Hāshim (the grandson of Imam Ali through a wife other than Fatima) and took his case to the jurists in Medina in order to inherit his father's *ṣadaqāt* funds through his status as the oldest living descendent of ʿAli through Fatima (*asinnu walad ʿAli min Faṭima*), whereas Abū Hashim argued that the *waṣīya* belonged to ʿAli, not Fatima, and that he (Abū Hāshim) was the eldest descendent of ʿAli.[51] It is after this failed case that Zayd reportedly outed the secret networks of Abū Hāshim to the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd, stating that he (Abū Hāshim) "had Shiʿa followers from the companions of Mukhtār" who forward him money (*lahu shīʿatun min aṣḥāb al-Mukhtār*). Abū Hāshim, according to this narrative, was then placed in prison in Damascus by al-Walīd for a period of time.[52]

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[45] Asad Q. Ahmed, *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijaz: Five Prosopographical Case Studies* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2010), 136.

[46] These include, for example, the ʿAlid line (descendants of Imam ʿAli through one of his wives), the Fatimid line (descendants of Fatima bt. Muḥammad and Imam ʿAli), Ṭālibid claimants (descendants of Abū Ṭālib, the father of Imam ʿAli and uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad), the Abbasid line (descendants of ʿAbbās, the uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad), as well as others various branches and subbranches.

[47] The importance of the Hāshimids, and in actuality descendants of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, is hard to overstate; in addition to the Prophet Muḥammad being part of this lineage, his forefathers were considered among the most noble and distinguished of Arabia even before the emergence of Islam. The Prophet’s grandfather, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, inherited the responsibility from his father Hāshim to generously provide water (*siqāya*) and food to pilgrims in Mecca and maintained the Kaʿba complex (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*), as did his son and by extension the Prophet’s uncle Abū Ṭālib in whose house the Prophet Muḥammad was raised. This legacy of *siqāya* and maintaining the Kaʿba was perceived as a significant responsibility and are mentioned in Qurʾan (Surah *Tawba*, verse 19). Classical commentators discuss how the verse was revealed to show the superiority of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib over his uncle ʿAbbās when the latter had boasted about his high station due to him exoterically helping physically maintain the Kaʿba complex (which he shared with other Hāshimid members); see: Abū-l Qāsim Furāt b. Ibrāhīm Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt Al-Kūfī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kāẓim (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Chāp va Intishārāt-i Vizārat-i Irshād, 1990), 165–69.

[48] Two of the other early caliphs in Islam were also descendants of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib: the mother of ʿUthmān b. Affān’s (the third caliph) was a granddaughter of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭālib, and ʿAbdallah b. al-Zubayr (one of the rival caliphs during the “first Fitna”) was one of the grandsons of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib through his father, the famous companion al-Zubayr whose mother was a daughter of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (therefore making Zubayr a first cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad). As discussed by Asad Ahmed, while patrilineal descent generally had primacy in early Arab Islamic societies, matrilineal descent was also determinative for key issues of family relations, inheritance, descent, and prestige: Ahmed, *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijaz*.

The debates on kinship and succession principles were therefore very latent and omnipresent in early Shiʿi texts on the imamate.[53] In addition to the belief that the imam should be an Arab and Arabic speaking from the tribe of the Prophet Muḥammad (Quraysh) which most of the larger Muslim community accepted,[54] Shiʿis generally believed the successor must be from Banū Hāshim—and almost always that the imam should be a descendant of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib—however there was ambiguity surrounding the exact lines and criteria of who constituted the family of the Prophet from Banū Hāshim.[55] After the coming to power of the Abbasids who were technically from Banū Hāshim and claimed this Shiʿi mantle of leadership, most Shiʿis rejected their legitimacy. Within early Shiʿi works, we find therefore extensive discussions restricting the kinship line of imamate, and the *mahdī*, to the sons of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and Faṭima bt. Muḥammad.[56] However, even here there were a number of opinions and different positions. While later Twelver scholars argued that imamate could only pass between brothers once (i.e. from al-Ḥasan to al-Ḥusayn) and that the imamate would rest exclusively with sons of al-Ḥusayn after the initial succession of al-Ḥusayn from al-Ḥasan, Zaydi writers largely accepted imams from both the Ḥasanid and Ḥusaynid lines, and the early Kaysānī Shiʿa followed the imamate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, the son of ʿAli from another wife aside from Faṭima.[57]

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[49] On the adoption of the term "Fatimid" (*Fāṭimīyyīn*) by the tribal forces rallying under the sons ("*awlād*") of the *dāʿī* Zikrawayh b. Mihrawayh, see: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1885), 3: 2219; Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh b. al-Dawādārī, *Kanz Al-Durar Wa-Jāmiʿ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid (Cairo: al-Ma'had al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6: 68; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 70; Heinz Halm, "Die Söhne Zikrawaihs Und Das Erste Fatimidische Kalifat (290/903)," *Die Welt Des Orients* 10 (1979): 30–53.

[50] This position has been recorded in the Sunni hadith canon as well; see discussions of the *mahdī* in Sunān Abī Dāwūd.

[51] While the content of the debate as reflected in the pro-Abbasid *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya* might be anachronistic, it does accurately reflect the contentious lineage disputes between the ʿAlids themselves and the early tensions between ʿAlids and members of the Prophet's family however defined; 'Abd al-'Azīz Dūrī and 'Abd al-Jabbār Muṭṭalibī, eds., *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah li-al-Ṭibā'ah wa-l Nashr, 1971), 174; Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, 129.

[52] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīyah*, 174–75.

[53] For a discussion on some of these criteria that were debated in the early Islamic context, see: Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, *Tārīkh-i Shīʿih va Firqihhā-ye Islām tā Qarn-i Chahārum* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ishrāqī, 1989), 47.

While some Kaysānī Shiʿis argued that the imamate went directly from ʿAli to his son Muḥammad, most probably chose Muḥammad as the imam only after the deaths of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli.[58] A poem ascribed to the ostensibly Kaysānī Shiʿi poet Kuthayyir ʿAzza (d. 105/723),[59] succinctly discusses these succession themes among one camp of the Kaysaniyya although at least two variants of the poem can be found in *Tārīkh-i Qumm* and *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, as well as Abu-l Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's (d. either 356/967 or shortly after 360/971) *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.[60] Kuthayyir states that the "imamate is from Quraysh," and that four rulers (*wulāt-l amr arbaʿa*)[61] are ʿAli and his three sons (i.e., al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya). They are the successors (*awṣiyya*), and one of the grandsons (*sibṭ*) has not tasted death, hidden (in *ghayba*) in Mount Raḍwā beside him honey and water.[62] This diversity of opinion could also be seen in questions of how to rank senior leadership within the Banū Hāshim, especially as will be discussed later in the study, between descendants of these three aforementioned sons of Imam ʿAli and claiming the title of a messianic redeemer (*al-mahdī*).

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[54] See, for example the hadith attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad: “The Prophet said, ‘Authority of ruling will remain with Quraish, even if only two of them remained’”; Muḥammad b. Ismāʻīl al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Medina: Dar al-Fikr, 1981), Book 61, Hadith #11.

[55] Wilferd Madelung, “The Hāshimiyyāt of al-Kumayt and Hāshimī Shiʿism,” in *Shi’ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (New Yotk: Routledge, 2003), 87–108.

[56] See, for example: Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar Ghaffārī and Muḥammad Ākhūndī (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1986); Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 2 vols. (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H); Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAli Ibn Bābiwayh, *al-Imāma wa-l Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra* (Qum: Madrasa al-Imām al-Mahdī, 1404H).

[57] Maher Jarrar, “Some Aspects of Imami Influence on Early Zaydite Theology,” in *Islam Studien Ohne Ende: Festschrift FürWerner Ende Zum 65. Geburstag*, ed. Rainer Brunner et al. (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), 201–23; Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*; Wilferd Madelung, “The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine,” *Shii Studies Review*, April 2018, 62–155.

As important kinship principles and hereditary succession were in Shiʿism, there are notions found among earlier Shiʿis that qualified hereditary succession, or that even emphasized *naṣṣ* as its own free-standing mechanism for succession. As Hossein Modarressi wrote: "many of the early Imāmite reports do not, in fact, mention the lineage among the conditions of the Imām but emphasize that he is the one most qualified and is designated by the previous Imām." Within the heresiographical literature, moreover, authors noted the differences between early Imāmī Shiʿis: "some held that the Imāmate is hereditary; others rejected this opinion and maintained that it follows the designation and not lineage. They also mentioned that the first view is supported by the majority of the Imāmites, which seems to be true."[63] Mohammad Javad Mashkour (d. 1415/1995) discussed the two major types of appointment of succession, or investiture (*naṣṣ*), present among the early Shiʿa: explicit investiture (*naṣṣ jalī*) and implicit investiture (*naṣṣ khafī*).[64] Those Shiʿis who believed in explicit investiture argued that the Prophet Muḥammad's appointment of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib as his successor was a clear matter that should have been understood by the Muslims on the day of al-Ghadīr. Those Shiʿis who advocated *naṣṣ khafī*, on the other hand, were among the Zaydis who argued that the appointment of ʿAli by the Prophet was a secretive matter—due to (political) expediency—only known explicitly by a few companions.[65] Those Shiʿis who believed in explicit investiture (*naṣṣ jalī*), moreover, narrated traditions that this form of appointment was also imbued with the material transfer of the previous Imam's weapons and books or writings whenever a transition occurred.[66]

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[58] Abu-l Ḥasan ʿAli b. Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī, *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1990), 91–92.
[59] For a discussion on Kuthayyir, see: Wadad Kadi, "The Development of the Term Ghulāt in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysāniyya," in *Shi'ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (London: Routledge, 2003), 188–89.
[60] Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Tihrānī (Tehran: Kitābkhānih-ye Ayātullāh Najafī, 1982), 666; for the other variant of this poem, see: al-Ashʿarī, *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, 193.
[61] In al-Ashʿarī, the "four just rulers" (*wulāt-l ḥaqq arbaʿa*).
[62] Al-Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, 666; al-Ashʿarī, *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, 193.

As Marshall Hodgson argued, the mechanism of "a *naṣṣ* imamate… was to create in effect a *sect*, with the purity and zeal of a sect."[67] This point accurately provided insight into the sociological and sectarian implications of *naṣṣ*, but there is still a question of when the doctrine of investiture became formalized or reified as the exclusive doctrine of appointment. Regarding this question, Rodrigo Adem writes that Hodgson's definitive dating of *naṣṣ* to the Imams Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733) and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) may be a back projection and that "instead, we must seek its genesis in the elaboration of Imāmī theology within the discursive context of early ʿAbbāsid era *kalām*, and in the terms of the incipient practice of *uṣūl al-fiqh* in particular."[68] He further questioned whether the doctrine of *naṣṣ* was instituted by the famous Shiʿi theologian Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795) as Wilferd Madelung, Josef Van Ess and others argue, and more definitively dates the earliest scholastic theory of *naṣṣ* to the later Shiʿi theologian Jaʿfar al-Sakkāk (d. mid-3rd/9th century), one of the companions of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.[69] While the debate over the dating of the solidification of the *naṣṣ* doctrine is still ongoing, it could provide evidence for more precise sectarian divisions given investiture is an exclusive doctrine that points to only one successor to the exclusion of others. Therefore, its formalization is an important indicator of Shiʿi sectarian developments and underlines the importance of kinship succession disputes in criteria for leadership within Shiʿism.

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[63] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 122.

[64] Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, *Tārīkh-i Shī'ih va Firqihhā-ye Islām tā Qarn-i Chahārum* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ishrāqī, 1989), 45.

[65] Mashkūr, *Tārīkh-i Shī'ih*, 45.

[66] Mashkūr, *Tārīkh-i Shī'ih*, 45.

[67] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shî'a Become Sectarian?," 12.

Challenging the Status-Quo: The Underground Daʿwa & Forging a Winning Coalition

The sociologist Harrison White began his work, *Identity and Control*, by writing that: "Identities spring up out of efforts at control in turbulent context."[70] As White asserted: "these control efforts need not have anything to do with domination over other identities. Before anything else, control is about finding footings among other identities… The control efforts by one identity are social realities for other identities."[71] This quest for identity amidst turbulence was especially profound in the early Islamic period. The nascent Islamic project spread fast and wide and had to deal, early on, with ruling over vast world regions, peoples, civilizations, and cultures. The Islamic conquests also forged new opportunities for the expression of changing (proto-) Arab and Muslim identities and religious expression that had never occurred in the past. Arab tribes, including many who would later become Shiʿi, migrated *en masse* to new cities and military garrison towns (*amṣār*) meant to act in a way as forward invasion bases, such as in Kufa and Basra in Iraq, and participated in organized Muslim conquests that stretched over decades. Others, including many indigenous Persian populations in Iran and Iraq were also attracted to the message of Shiʿism, and we see heavy representation of Iranians in many of the nascent Shiʿi communities, including Persian *mawālī* (protected clients of Arab tribes), in one of the very first Shiʿi uprisings, that of Mukhtār al-Thaqafi (d. 67/687).[72]

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[68] Rodrigo Adem, "Classical Naṣṣ Doctrines in Imāmī Shīʿism: On the Usage of an Expository Term," *Shii Studies Review* 1, no. 1–2 (2017): 44.
[69] Tamima Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Hakam (d. 179/795) and His Doctrine of the Imam's Knowledge," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2003): 76–77.
[70] Harrison C. White, *Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1.
[71] White, *Identity and Control*, 1.

In this context of a changing socio-political order, underground *daʿwa* institutions provided crucial venues for the re-imagining of identities and social relations that would in turn impact political rule. Importantly, it was from within these underground organizations that the patterns of winning coalitions determined emerging dynasties and empires established in the Shiʿi century. This winning coalition within the underground organization initially included an alliance between an ʿAlid or Hāshimid Imam (from Quraysh) and a non-Qurayshī tribal subclan. These subclans invited or were approached by either by a Hāshimid imam or an agent of the imam, and the introduction of a charismatic messianic leader (or even the idea of him) subsequently transformed the localized environment in profound ways, shifting the main political conflict to become centered around the acceptance or rejection of the promised Imam. This initial alliance therefore provided both an attraction and a repulsion in the local region in which regular tribal configurations and the status-quo were challenged. The introduction of a charismatic leadership capitalized on tribal fractures and those groups that chose to join the new revolutionary movement were able to transcend previous tribal differences through the unifying mediating power of the Shiʿi Imam and dissident messianic ideology.

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[72] The use of the terms "Persians" and "Iranians" to mark ethnicity and identity are quite complicated especially given modern connotations of ethnic Persians as those who speak the Persian language as a mother tongue and Iranians being a larger more inclusive marker referring to all ethnic groups in Iran (i.e. both Persians and non-Persians) who speak other languages in addition to Persian but nonetheless identity as Iranians such as Kurds, Lurs, Azeris, Mazandaranis, etc. This dissertation uses the terms Persian and Iranian interchangeably despite these complexities since the Arabic primary sources of the time generally use the word *al-Furs* (derived from *Fars*, an Arabization of *Pars* which is related to Persian) or *ʿAjam*, and sometimes the term *Mawālī* to refer to Persians (and not *al-Irānīyūn*), while Persian language sources have long used the term Iran (*Arya*) and *Irānshahr* for self-description; for related debates, see: Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origin* (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989). Other Iranian groups, such as the northern Iranians are usually referred to as *Daylamī* or *Gīl/Gīlakī* peoples, will be discussed further in chapter three.

In the case of the Fatimids, for example, the Aghlabid governors of the Abbasids exercised power in the region through an alliance between the migrant Arab tribes in the area and certain indigenous clans of the Kutāmā Berbers; however, one of the dissident Kutāmā subclans that hosted the Fatimid agent, Abū ʿAbdallah al-Shiʿi, was able to create a revolutionary force by mergering previously disjointed clans of the Kutāmā together and eventually overthrew the Aghlabids through the unifying messianic message and leadership exercised by Abū ʿAbdallah. In the case of the ʿAlids of the South Caspian, the first *Dāʿī*, Ḥasan b. Zayd who established a state there, was invited by local Daylami elite families who had already launched a rebellion against the Tāhirid governors. The local elite who invited him were concerned that, based on prior experience, their rebellion could become fragmented across local tribal and family divisions. They needed an outside arbiter and charismatic leader who would not be seen as partial to any one of the entrenched local tribes or socio-political blocs. The *Dāʿī* was indeed able to do this. He effectively united many of the fractured Daylami clans and autonomously ruled the area for 20 years before his death with a coalition of local Daylami chieftains as his primary allies. Similarly, the ʿAlid leader and Mahdi of the “Zanj” revolt, ʿAli b. Muḥammad (r. 255/869–270/883), was able to accomplish a similar task by bringing together fragmented interests in southern Iraq and the Persian Gulf region. Just as in the case of the Daylamis, the sources record several unsuccessful slave revolts prior to the coming of an ʿAlid leader, including a series of unsuccessful majority-slave revolts the last of which had been put down by the Abbasids in the marshes of southern Iraq in 219/834.[73] The Ṣāḥib al-Zanj was therefore able to act as a coalescing force not only for a segment of the dissident slave populace but also disaffected local tribes and Abbasid regional government members.

This unity provided by outside Shiʿi actors is not total or all-inclusive over the local population by any means.[74] It simply re-defined the pre-existing political fault-lines to the new central issue of loyalty and dissidence to the person of the Imam and the *walāya* that bound ties of loyalty to him. The revolutionary Shiʿi Imam provided an opportunity for novel coalitions to emerge and an opportunity to reimagine identities and the status quo beyond the pattens that previously dictated the political order.

Therefore, multiple networks operating on different social layers intersected to produce conditions for Shiʿi revolutionary activity in which a very small, multi-tiered, secret cell of activists represented a hidden Imam from the Family of the Prophet and forged an initial alliance with an ethnic or tribal subgroup. This alliance served as the initial base network of the organization. The alliance between the elite small network claiming to represent an Imam from the progeny of the Prophet and an outside tribal clan tied together separate kinship groups, one of which were charismatic descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad (usually ʿAlids), together with a non-ʿAlid tribal subgroup, which were often peripheral to the status-quo political order. In the case of the Abbasids who claimed to succeed an ʿAlid Imam,[75] they forged an alliance, including through a marriage arrangement, with the Banū Muslīya of the Arab Yemeni Madhḥij tribe settled in Kufa (many of whom were marginalized after the defeat of Mukhtār's rebellion in that city).[76]

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[73] Gwyn Campbell, "East Africa in the Early Indian Ocean World Slave Trade: The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered," in *Early Exchange between Africa and the Wider Indian Ocean World*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave McMillan, 2016), 283.

[74] Many Kutāmā Berbers, for instance, were tied to the Aghlabid status quo and attempted to militarily defeat the Fatimid agent and their tribal rivals, but they were ultimately overpowered by the new Shiʿi infused power alliance.

[75] The Abbasids claimed to inherit the *waṣiyya* of Abū Hāshim, a grandson of Imam ʿAli through a wife other than Fatima bt. Muḥammad but they were also closely related to the Prophet Muḥammad through their ancestor ʿAbbas, one of the uncles of the Prophet.

The proto-Fatimid movement, by contrast, initially forged an alliance with the sub-clan of Banū l-ʿUlayṣ of the Kalb tribe as well as a less dominant contingent of the Banū l-Aṣbagh in Syria.[77] But once those initial uprisings failed, they found a tribal base in the Banū Saktān clan of the Kutāma Amazigh (Berber) tribe in North Africa, during which time the Fatimid Mahdi apparently disguised himself as a merchant in Sijilmāsā from 292/905–296/909 awaiting the military success of his representative *dāʿī* Abū ʿAbdallah al-Shiʿi in mobilizing the Kutāmā clans against the Aghlabid rulers in the region.[78] For Ḥasan b. Zayd, *Dāʿī-ye Kabīr*, as previously mentioned, it was local Daylami clan leaders of Kalār and Rustamdār who invited him to lead the Daylami rebellion against the Ṭāhirid rulers allied to the Abbasid caliphate in 250/864 in northern Iran.[79]

This kinship alliance was itself embedded or intersected with another institution, usually identified as the *daʿwa*, which operated on a separate institutional logic of revolutionary planning and underground activity rather than kinship alliances.[80] Many of these activists, even the very senior first members of the underground network, did not know the actual Imam's identity—and, in fact, the underground activists likely had not even chosen an Imam to keep secret in the first place in order to prevent factionalism within their ranks. One example includes the victory of the

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[76] Saleh Sa'id Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads: Neither Arab nor ʻAbbāsid* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 39.

[77] Abū Bakr b. ʻAbd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmiʻ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid, (Cairo: al-Maʻhad al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6: 68; Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 68–69.

[78] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 94–95; 102–103.

[79] al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī*, 13.

[80] It should be noted here that while tight-knit kinship alliances seem to form the core of the very earliest stages of various Shiʿi *daʿwa* organizations, the revolutionary *daʿwa* must eventually leverage these early kinship ties to expand beyond their base. It must grow beyond this incipient stage in order to become successful on a large scale and create a larger social base or army through which to establish dynastic rule.

"Abbasid revolution" (or more precisely the revolution that led to the Abbasids coming to power) and what Said Saleh Agha called "the strategy of non-commitment to any one specific Hāshimite" which "was a long-standing policy unwaveringly upheld by the Organization."[81] As he further argued:

> The Organization had a lowest common denominator with all proto-Shīʿite leanings and factions, in that it opposed the Umayyads and restricted the *Imāmate*, and the right of accession to the top office in the community, to the circle of the Family of the Prophet. But, within this holy circumference, the adamant position of the Organization, that the choice must be absolutely open, was truly unique…. The doctrine of *al-riḍā* on the other hand, presupposes a revolution led by anyone and inspired by the principles of fighting injustice, a revolt which, after its victory, would reach a consensus in choosing an Imām from a wider and unrestricted pool of eligible candidates from the ranks of The Family.[82]

While some of the logics presented by Agha regarding the revolution are the matter of scholarly debate and may be a back projection, they do reflect some of the strategic ambiguities and means through which the Abbasids were able to use revolutionary organizations and logics to gain power.[83] This can in part be seen after the defeat of the Umayyad armies in Central Asia and Iraq when there were at least three major revolutionary factions which had risen to the top or remained intact.[84] They were led by: Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī (the most powerful military leader and head of the Khurāsānī army, d. 137/755); Abū Salama al-Khallāl (leader of the original Mukhtāriyya-Hāshimiyya old guard, also known as *Wazīr Āl Muḥammad*, one of the previous tiles of al-Mukhtār, d. 132/750); and the Abbasid family. Abū Salama, according to some sources, was unaware of the deal that Abū Muslim had cut with the Abbasids so before the announcement of the Abbasid Abu-l ʿAbbās al-Ṣaffāḥ (d. 136/754) as the caliph and imam in Kufa in 132/749 he urgently lobbied to have an ʿAlid candidate assume the position of *al-riḍā* and the new imam-caliph but was coerced by the more powerful Abū Muslim-Abbasid alliance to choose their caliphal candidate.[85]

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[81] He continued: " Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads,* 100.
[82] Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 100–101.
[83] See debates, for example, in: D. G. Tor, "The Parting of Ways between ʿAlid Shiʿism and Abbasid Shiʿism: An Analysis of the Missives between the Caliph al-Manṣūr and Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 6, no. 2 (2019): 209–27, and Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*.
[84] As the work of Elton Daniel has shown, Abū Muslim was able to subsume several ʿAlid, Shiʿi, syncretic Zoroastrian-Islamic revolutionary movements, as well as Khārijī rebels in Khurāsān and centralize them under his Shiʿi banner against the Umayyads; *The Political and Social History of Khurasan Under Abbasid Rule, 747-820* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1979), esp. 78–84.

This can also be seen, for example, with the underground proto-Fatimid *daʿwa* and the Qarmaṭī-led split from the leadership in Salamiyya, Syria after the leadership announced the secret identity of the *mahdī* to from the *dāʿī*'s family instead of the person of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.[86] Authors such as Heinz Halm have discussed the evolving considerations behind Abu-l Shalaghlagh and the decision by this chief *Dāʿī* in Salamiyya who, according to some accounts within the Ismaʿili underground movement, appointed his nephew and "adopted son," Saʿīd b. al-Ḥusayn as the *mahdī* as a stratagem to take over the revolutionary organization and go against the doctrine that Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was the *mahdī* by placing his family in the place of the imam. After the Iraqi branch of the proto-Fatimid movement rejected Abu-l Shalaghlagh's claims and broke off correspondence with Salamiyya, Halm writes that the chief *dāʿī* Abu-l Shalaghlagh likely sent the newly revealed *mahdī*'s brother to try and convince the Iraqi branch to return under the fold of the central *dāʿī*. The leader of the Iraqi Ismaʿili movement, ʿAbdān, responded to the Syrian *dāʿī*'s messenger: "ʿAbdān let him know that they had discontinued the daʿwa because his father had deceived them. He had claimed a false pedigree for himself, and had made propaganda for the Mahdi, Muḥammd b. Ismāʿīl, 'and we,' he said, 'did likewise.'" However, ʿAbdān reportedly continued, "'when it became clear to us that none of this meant anything…. And that it was only your father behind the affair, we turned in repentance to God. It is enough for us that your father made us into unbelievers, do you know wish to make us into unbelievers once again? Vanish, and go back whence you came.'"[87]

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[85] Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 106.
[86] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 62.

So, in many cases there may not have been in reality a representative Imam to "know"—however, the elite organization agents did know at least many of the other top members of the organization. Each elite, in turn, generally headed a separate faction or social base. Therefore, for lower organizational levels of ʿAlid revolutionary sympathizers, they retained a generic belief in a salvific hidden imam and *mahdī* but participated in the revolution through their particular *daʿwa* commander. Strategic choices within the overarching *daʿwa* therefore had to be reached via councils and collective decision making which did not necessarily require total consensus but did require a powerful coalition of elites within the secret *daʿwa* to settle on a decision. For example, Abū Muslim was a highly effective independent underground agent and helped recruit a large army in Khurāsān which he eventually used in favor of the Abbasid claim to the caliphate; Abū Salamā by contrast led his own social base composed of the original core, or old guard, of the Mukhtāriyya-Hāshimiyya mainly centered in Iraq. While these elites were united in their opposition to the Umayyads, once the Umayyads collapsed, their factions fell out with one another and Abū Salama was assassinated by the Abū Muslim-Abbasid alliance before the Abbasids themselves eventually turned on Abū Muslim and murdered him. Additionally, for moments of revolutionary activism, these core layered networks came out into the open and formed larger alliances and armies with non-organization members who joined the revolution later due to various factors including resentment of the status-quo.

Therefore, the moment of open revolution—which included the all-important push to convincingly identify the once hidden Imam (or Mahdi/Qāʾim)—generally brought about a fracturing in the core *daʿwa* organization that had remained largely united up until that point.

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[87] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 62.

The senior membership and elite factions within the initial secret cell then had to battle over installing their candidate as the Imam and Mahdi and pitted their resources and new alliances they built over time against one another. This included, crucially, mobilizing new members of the *daʿwa* who were added in a layered manner to the organization during the underground period. These layered multi-network dynamics are described in detail later in this chapter in the section "Social Networks and the Three Planes of Emergence" (see Figure 1).

Secrecy, Power, and Revolution

Revolutionary moments are often approached through a dichotomy of stability and instability; rise and decline; strength and weakness. These descriptive markers can be helpful in many cases; however, they often mask the hidden subtext of battles occurring beneath the surface during moments of apparent strength and stability. Institutions of power, which ostensibly project stability on the surface, often in fact engender hidden conflict and perpetual factionalism, the outcome of which was usually impossible to know. The "Abbasid Revolution," for example, became victorious at a moment of relative strength for the Umayyads and their adept long-serving governor in Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār.[88] The actors and people studied in this dissertation are often situated in deeply uncertain moments of rapidly changing circumstances. The early Islamic conquests and subsequent attempts of establishing dynastic political order introduced powerful new dynamics that changed the "rules of the game," and perhaps the game itself, several times over for the early Muslim community. This deeply complex contested terrain of political order was understandable given the sheer size of the lands, peoples, and cultures over which Arab Muslim actors became dominant and attempted to institutionalize new forms of rule and incorporate and adapt already existing structures of the Late Antique Sassanian and Byzantine empires.[89]

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[88] As Saleh Sa'id Agha states: "The Revolution broke out into the open only four years after the end of one of the longest and reasonably stable Umayyad reigns. In Khurāsān itself, home of the Revolution, it ended one of the two longest terms in the governorship of the province—a term the first half of which had been marked by stability, flexibility, reform and promise. What signs of turmoil and trouble that might have been apparent earlier indicated nothing more than the usual disturbances—tribal trouble in the inside, and frontier clashes of a localized nature, which had abounded all through the Umayyad period. A mortal blow of existential proportions such as the one they received, inevitable as it might be reckoned in hindsight, was hardly seen coming"; *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads: Neither Arab nor ʿAbbāsid* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 323.

The topology of conflict in this period, however, was defined by more than moments of crisis, repression, and militant revolt. It was also defined by congenial attempts at coalition building between actors, interest groups, and factions on the ground. These groups, and the unique individuals who made them up, calibrated their loyalties and interests in diverse ways, creating sites of contestation for ingroup and outgroup identities. These sites of contestation for power, prestige, and primacy produced often clashing centrifugal forces that were mediated by layers of charismatic imams and caliphs, tribal elites, military commanders, moneyed interests, and other diverse actors. Fault-lines and moments of uncertainty, which produced the potential for a re-calibration of interests and alliances, were hardly predictable. They included dynastic succession disputes, tribal competition and factional warfare, imperial expansion and military campaigns, new population conversions to Islam, massive migration of Arab tribes across the Near East and Western Asia, court intrigue, and urbanization and the building of new cities, among other factors.

The complexity of these factors and the perception of structural openings by both revolutionary and status-quo actors—who often judged these moments of perceived opportunities incorrectly—necessitated gradual strategies of ambiguous adaptation. The adoption of underground institutions and secret identities was the result of unpredictable systemic forces beyond the grasp of any one actor or group. But political complexity or uncertainty, by itself, did not produce secret institutions or the strategies of ambiguity we see adopted by hidden Shiʿi leaders and elites. Rather, it was the particular type of kinship ties and tribal lineage, factional competition over representing the Imam, and the nature of Shiʿi charismatic authority found in *walāya* that produced the phenomenon studied in this dissertation.

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[89] For informative studies on these early Islamic dynamics, see for example: Abd Al-Aziz Duri, *Early Islamic Institutions: Administration and Taxation from the Caliphate to the Umayyads and Abbasids* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011); Michael Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Parvaneh Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008).

To be underground thus did not mean to be completely hidden from view or removed from sight; it more often meant hiding assets, relationships, and aspirations from the Other. The rivals were not only the Umayyads or Abbasids, but just as often, competing Shiʿi factions representing claimants to leadership who had convincing lineage and claims to governance. The need to adopt secrecy, moreover, was less often the consequence of marginalization or peripheralization. Rather, it was the consequence, in many cases, of being situated in positions of influence and, thus, in the crossfire of status-quo powers and rival factions. The famous Shiʿi court families of Banū Furāt, Banū Bisṭām, and Banū Nawbakht often backed competing groups of Twelver Shiʿis, with a member of the Fūrat family, for example, claiming leadership of the Numayriyya (i.e. the Nuṣayrīs) after the death of Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr who claimed to represent the Eleventh Imam's son as the *bāb*, and a member of the Nawbakhtī family leading the *wukalāʾ* and rival pro-occultation faction of the same Imam, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, as the *safīr*.[90]

In *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) recounts the tensions between the Banū Bisṭām and the Nawbakhtī leader and third *safīr* of the Twelver Shiʿi community, Ḥasan b. Rūh (d. 326/937), over a similar esoteric "*ghālī*" and claimant to the charisma of the Imams, Muḥammad b. ʿAli al-Shalmaghānī (d. 322/933) who was a respected scholar and leading member of the community up until his controversial esoteric claims.[91] Shalmaghānī had close ties with factions of the Abbasid court and had also spent time in Mosul under the protection of the Shiʿi Hamdanid dynasty after fleeing Baghdad under pressure from rival Shiʿi factions. Before the falling out, Ibn Rūh al-Nawbakhtī was a close associate of Shalmaghānī to the extent that on the day of al-Nawbakhtī's assumption of leadership as the *safīr*, he visited Shalmaghānī's house to pay respect alongside a group of other leading Shiʿi figures.[92]

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[90] According to Nawbakhtī's *Firaq*, Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. al-Hasan b. al-Furāt was one of the leaders of the three groups which claimed to succeed Ibn Nuṣayr; Hasan b. Musa Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1404), 94. Nawbakhtī himself hailed from the famous elite family mentioned above. For more on the *wukalāʾ* institutions and Nawbakhtī, see: ʻAbbās Iqbāl, *Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī* (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-i Ṭahūrī, 1966); Jassim M. Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background* (London: Muḥammadi Trust, 1982); and, Edmund Hayes, "The Envoys of the Hidden Imam: Religious Institutions and the Politics of the Twelver Occultation Doctrine" (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2015).

Yet, Shalmaghānī was apparently spreading the alleged "great secret" (*sirr ʿaẓīm*) of transmigration of souls (*tanāsukh*) among the Banū Bisṭām, claiming that the spirit (*rūh*) of Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib transferred to Ḥasan b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (the *safīr*) while the spirit of Faṭima, the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad, transferred to the daughter of the second *safīr,* Abū Jaʿfar al-ʿAmrī.[93] Al-Ṭūsī describes how despite the pressure from al-Nawbakhtī on the Bisṭām family to repudiate (*laʿn/barāʾa*) Shalmaghānī for these blasphemous claims, they continued to follow him. They were seemingly convinced of Shalmaghānī's argument—also taken up by Ibn Nuṣayr—that the open *laʿn* was a proof of his righteousness and his carrying of a message which only the prophets and angels could bear. However, in part through Ibn Rūḥ's lobbying, Shalmaghānī was eventually put to death by the Abbasid court.[94] Ironically, Ibn Rūḥ al-

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[91] Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba* (Qum: Ansariyan, 2012), 475–79.

[92] Niʿmatullāh Ṣafarī Furūshānī and Muḥammad Taqī Ẓākirī, "Kāvūshī Dar Kitāb-i al-Taklīf-i Shalmaghānī," *Shīʿih Pazhūhī* 1, no. 1 (2015): 25–44.

[93] Al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, 477.

[94] Ibn Rūḥ himself spent some five years in prison due to intrigue and factionalism in the Abbasid court until being released by the Caliph al-Muqtadir in 317/929.

Nawbakhtī's epistle announcing *laʿn* on Shalmaghānī was written in 312H while Ibn Rūḥ himself was in Abbasid prison—demonstrating complex layered power dynamics.[95]

Therefore, it is not surprising that the leaders of the Shiʿi revolts often were tied to the imperial courts of the Umayyads and Abbasids. These ties went beyond the already existing shared ancestry (traced through branches of the ʿAbd Manāf of the Quraysh) and actively undertook marriages to reinforce clan-kinship ties. Mukhtār al-Thaqafī, the leader of the Kufan Shiʿa who had supported Imam Husayn, and would later go on to establish a short-lived Shiʿi state,[96] had been nearly executed after he was detained and tortured by the Umayyad governor of Kufa ʿUbaydallah b. Ziyād following Muslim b. ʿAqīl's abortive revolt there on behalf of Imam Husayn. Muslim had stayed in Mukhtār's house when he first arrived in Kufa. Despite the massive repression of pro-Husaynid elements in Kufa, Mukhtār was released from prison due to his family ties. Mukhtār's sister, Ṣafiyya was married to ʿAbdallah b. ʿUmar, the son of the second Caliph, and it was ʿAbdallah who successfully petitioned the Umayyad caliph Yazid to release his brother-in-law. We can also see these court dynamics in play for the early Abbasids: the grandfather of the first two Abbasid Caliphs, al-Ṣaffāḥ and al-Manṣūr, ʿAli b. ʿAbdallah, was a reported favorite to the Umayyad Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik until tensions purportedly arose between them when ʿAli b. ʿAbdallah married the caliph's divorced wife, Lubāba bt. ʿAbdallah, the granddaughter of Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib.[97]

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[95] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba li-l Ḥujja* (Qum: Dār al-Maʿārif-i Islāmī, 1411), 307–8. This letter was carried via Abū ʿAli b. Hammām to Abū Muḥammad al-Ṣaymarī who spread it to the community. Also see Abu-l Qāsim b. ʿAli Akbar al-Khuʾī, *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa Tafsīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt* (Najaf: Muʾassisa al-Imām al-Khuʾī al-Islāmiyya, n.d.), 50–53.

[96] The use of the word "state" can be controversial in a pre-modern context. Here I do not mean a modern nation-state in its technical sense but rather a sovereign governing entity with claims to authority, use of arms, taxation, and other related prerogatives. For relevant debates, see: Fred Donner, "The Formation of the Islamic State," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 2 (1986): 283–96.

[97] Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, 123.

In addition to pressure of intra-Shiʿi dynastic and kinship rivalries, the nature of underground organizations was certainly motivated by fear of political persecution by central authorities.[98] There was good reason to be situated underground. The price for opposition to the caliph, especially from movements laden with claims to universal sovereignty and totalizing political theology such as the Shiʿa could be extremely high. Examples abound of Shiʿi or ʿAlid leaders and followers subjugated to extreme punishment, including torture, prolonged imprisonment, starvation, crucifixion, execution, and other physical suffering.

As recorded by Abu-l Muẓaffar Yūsuf Ṣibt b. al-Jawzī (d. 654/1257) from the historian al-Haytham al-ʿAdī (d. 207/822), we find an account of the horrendous conditions that were imposed on the Ḥasanid survivors of the rebellion of the proclaimed *mahdī*, Muḥammad *Nafs al-Zakiyya* (d. 145/762). This includes the torture of the father of the *mahdī*, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan who was the grandson of Imam Ḥasan b. ʿAli, and the great-grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 10/632):

> They were locked by Abū Jaʿfar [al-Manṣūr] in a subterranean passage under the face of the earth, unable to distinguish between day and night. And the subterranean passage is located close to al-Kufa Bridge, and it is a place that is visited (by pilgrims); they did not have a well for water nor a drinking tank. They [were forced] to urinate and relieve their bowels in the place, and if one of them died he was not buried and (his body) was consumed [...] while they were watching [...] the decay started at their feet and then went up their bodies until it reached their hearts and then they died.[99]

Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) provides us with details of how some of the survivors of the Zanj revolt, led by the ʿAlid ʿAli b. Muḥammad (d. 270/883) who claimed descent from Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740), were dealt with by the Abbasid authorities. Following the crushing of the Zanj revolt in 270/883, a group of survivors revolted a couple of years later in the Iraqi city of Wāṣit in 272/886. Following this unrest, the Abbasid prince at the time, Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq (d. 278/891) promptly responded by ordering the six captured surviving imprisoned leading commanders of the Zanj revolt, including one of the sons of Ṣāḥib al-Zanj, to be beheaded, which was swiftly carried out and their heads sent to al-Muwaffaq. The Abbasid agent who carried this act out called out these six commanders one by one and cut off their heads then deposed the beheaded bodies in a sewer which he had had sealed in the house of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir that was located in a neighborhood of Baghdad called *Dār al-Baṭṭīkh* (i.e. the Melon Market district) where the prisoners were being held.[100] Later, however, al-Muwwafaq wrote to Ibn Ṭāhir to have the bodies publicly crucified and displayed: "Accordingly, the bodies were taken out of the sewer; they had already become swollen, foul-smelling, and parts of their skin had fallen off… Three of the bodies were hung on the west side and three on the east [sides of Baghdad]… Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir rode out to the spot, and the bodies were hung in his presence."[101]

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[98] Here, the work of Leo Strauss who explores the "sociology of philosophy" can help provide insights on the relationship between power, persecution, and scholarship (or what he terms as the relationship between "compulsion and conviction") which provides the subtext to many of the sources and medieval authors Strauss studied; *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 7ff.

[99] Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762: Ṭālibīs and Early ʿAbbāsids in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 120.

The other three sons of leader of the Zanj revolt, ʿAli b. Muḥammad, "spent their lives in prison. They were *children* when they entered *and adults when they died*."[102] The Abbasid caliphs at the time therefore literally imprisoned children for life. Another relevant figure, who will be discussed later in this study, is Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Sahl (d. 280/893) who was a partisan of the Zanj revolt and a nephew of the famous Abbasid Vizier Faḍl b. Sahl (d. 202/817-8). He was accused of being a representative of a hidden ʿAlid Imam and was literally either impaled alive and burned to death over a fire, or was "tied between three spears, bound together at the end, and thus restrained was placed above the fire, without being put in contact with the flames and, fully alive, turned," until he burnt to death. "Then he was removed from the fire and tied to the gallows, between the two bridges in the eastern quarter of Baghdad," to be put on public display.[103]

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[100] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 2111.
[101] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Tabari Vol. 37: The ʾAbbasid Recovery*, trans. Philip M. Fields (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 152.
[102] Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century*, 123. Emphasis added.

Extended imprisonment or watchful house arrest was quite common for prominent ʿAlids, including Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799), the seventh Imam in the Twelver tradition, who died, likely poisoned by authorities, in an Abbasid prison in Baghdad.[104] Al-Kāẓim was imprisoned by various Abbasid caliphs, including al-Mahdī who imprisoned him in and transferred him to Baghdad before releasing him to return to Medina.[105] Later, Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809) again arrested Imam al-Kāẓim in Medina and transferred to Baṣra and then Baghdad where he was either alternatively directly imprisoned or forced to make regular court appearances. Later Twelver accounts record how various titles were attributed to Mūsā b. Jaʿfar, including the "Ornament of Worshippers Who Keep Awake at Night," (*Zayn al-Mutahajjidīn*, i.e. those who perform night prayers), but also the title "al-Kāẓim" (one who suppresses or conceals [anger or "*ghayẓ*"]) due to his patience (*ṣabr*) in the face of what the oppressors (*ẓālimīn*) brought upon him, until he was killed in the oppressors' prisons and chains.[106] Muḥammad b. ʻAlī Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) lists the various wardens of Imam al-Kāẓim who imprisoned, harassed, or constrained him, including Yaḥyā al-Barmakī (d. 190/803), but cites the Abbasid official who gave the Imam poison as the Chief of the Abbasid police (*al-shurṭa*), al-Sindī b. Shāhak. It is said that Ibn Shāhak poisoned Imam al-Kāẓim through either his food or drink which took three days to take its toll and eventually kill the Imam.[107] Likewise, a report is also found in *Kitāb al-Ghayba* of Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), citing a narration chain from Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941), which reports that al-Sindī b. Shāhak fed the poison to Imam al-Kāẓim via seven dates (*tamarāt*).[108]

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[103] Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, 124; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 2136.

[104] Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAli b. Īsā al-Irbīlī, *Kashf al-Ghumma fī Maʿrifa al-Aʾimma*, ed. Hāshim Rasūlī Maḥallātī (Tabriz: Banī Ḥāshim, 1962), 2: 748. For more on the life of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim, see: ʻAlī al-Kūrānī, *al-Imām al-Kāẓim, Sayyid Baghdad Wa-Hamīhā Wa-Shafīʻihā* (Karbala: al-ʻAtaba al-Ḥusaynīya al-Muqaddasa, 2010).

[105] Al-Irbīlī, *Kashf al-Ghumma*, 2: 777.

[106] Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H), 2: 235.

Similar narratives can be found about the son of al-Mūsā, Imam ʿAli al-Riḍā (d. 203/818) who was transferred to Marv by the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833) where he was under house arrest and in close quarters with the caliph. Al-Maʾmūn had actually appointed Imam al-Riḍā as heir-apparent, called him *al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad*—i.e. the fulfillment of the promised Imam of the Abbasid revolution—in order to ostensibly give the caliphate back to the ʿAlids from Abbasid hands and had changed the official government colors to green (associated with the ʿAlids) from the previous black which had been associated up until then with the Abbasids as their dynastic color.[109] These moves aroused opposition from various quarters in the empire, including an abortive revolt from al-Maʾmūn's governor in Basra, Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Hāshimī, who stated that "This is a breach with the revolution (*dawla*),' and calling publicly for the deposition (of al-Maʾmūn)," which the caliph put down.[110]

Imam al-Riḍa also aroused, we are told, the jealousy of the powerful Abbasid Vizier Faḍl b. Sahl (d. 202/817-8) and his brother Ḥasan b. Sahl (d. 236/850-1), although it is difficult to tell the actual nature of the court politics and the personal nature of the relations involved between these individuals.[111] Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) includes interesting reports in *Kitāb al-Irshād* which state that al-Maʾmūn poisoned Imam al-Riḍā: “It happened one day that (al-Riḍā) and al-Maʾmūn ate together. Al-Riḍā fell ill from the food and al-Maʾmūn pretended to be sick.”[112] However, it may be possible to read between the lines that both al-Maʾmūn and al-Riḍā had been targeted by poison by the same people who had targeted al-Faḍl, and in the aforementioned narration that al-Maʾmūn was not actually pretending to be sick but was poisoned alongside al-Riḍā. This may a possible scenario when we consider that Faḍl b. Sahl was assassinated by another court faction about a year (or less) earlier while going to the public baths. One of the assassins, we are told, “was al-Faḍl’s cousin” and the son of another powerful Abbasid vizier. Following the assassination of Faḍl, “the soldiers, the military commanders gathered and al-Faḍl’s men gathered at the fate of al-Maʾmūn. They said: ‘He (i.e. al-Maʾmūn) has assassinated him.’ They reviled him and demanded his blood. They brought fire to set the gate alight,” and were only discouraged after Imam al-Riḍa appealed to them to disperse.[113] Regardless, Imam al-Riḍā died or was killed while under house arrest or close surveillance of the Abbasid government which, given the general patterns of assassinations and killings, the Shiʿa generally believe was premediated political poisoning.[114]

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[107] Muḥammad b. ʻAlī Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Āshtiyānī (Qum: al-Maṭbaʻa al-ʻIlmīya, 1959), 4: 324.

[108] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba li-l Ḥujja* (Qum: Dār al-Maʿārif-i Islāmī, 1411), 32.

[109] M. Ali Buyukkara, "Al-Maʾmūn's Choice of ʾAlī al-Riḍā as His Heir," *Islamic Studies* 41, no. 3 (2002): 445–66; Michael Cooperson, a*l-Ma'mun* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005); Tamima Bayhom-Daou, "Al-Maʾmūn's Alleged Apocalyptic Beliefs: A Reconsideration of the Evidence," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 71, no. 1 (2008): 1–24;

[110] Matthew S. Gordon et al., *The Works of Ibn Wāḍih Al-Yaʿqūbī: An English Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 3: 1211.

Of course, perhaps the most prominent persecution which has remained alive in Muslim, and especially Shiʿi consciousness, is the killing of the grandson of the Prophet, Ḥusayn b. ʿAli in (61/680) and many of his family members, including young children, as well as fellow members of the Family of the Prophet and Banū Hāshim, who had been cut off from accessing the water of the Euphrates by the Umayyad army and were killed intensely thirsty (*ʿaṭshān*) in the desert heat. A report found in the *Tārīkh* of Aḥmad Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 294/897) describes the final moments before al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom and killing of his infant child by the army sent by the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd b. Muʾāwiya (d. 64/683):

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[111] Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H), 2: 269–71.
[112] Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād: The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams*, trans. I.K.A. Howard (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 1981), 478.
[113] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, trans. I.K.A. Howard, 478.
[114] ʿAzīz Allāh ʿUṭāridī, *Musnad al-Imām al-Riḍā* (Tehran: Maktaba al-Ṣadūq, 1972), 1: 135.

> Then they advanced, one after another, until al-Ḥusayn remained alone, with no one of his family, children, or relatives with him. He was standing by his horse, when an infant who had just been born to him was brought to him. He recited the call to prayer (*adhān*) in its ear and started to chew a date and rub it in its mouth. At that moment, an arrow came at him and landed in the infant's throat, killing it. Al-Ḥusayn pulled the arrow out of the infant's throat, and it began to splatter him with its blood…. Then he attacked the enemy and killed many of them. An arrow came at him, striking the upper part of his chest and coming out his back. He fell. The enemy rushed up and cut off his head—they sent it to ʿUbaydallāh b. Ziyād. They plundered his camp, despoiled his womenfolk, and carried them off to Kufa. When the women entered the city, its women came out crying and weeping. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn said, "These weep for us; but who has killed us?" Al-Ḥusayn's dependents and children were taken away to Syria, and al-Ḥusayn's head was impaled on a spear... The head was set before Yazīd, and Yazīd started beating its front teeth with a stick.[115]

In addition to the murder of al-Ḥusayn—and his first cousin ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib who was killed shortly before him in Kufa—many other prominent members of the Family of the Prophet were also killed in Karbala. Al-Mufīd counts seventeen additional Hashemites and members of the Family of the Prophet slain that day, including eight sons of Imam ʿAli b. Abi Ṭalib (i.e. half-brothers of Imam Ḥusayn).[116] According to his list, four of the sons of Imam ʿAli killed at Karbala were from his marriage with Umm al-Banīn bt. Ḥizām al-ʿĀmiriyya,[117] including famously al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAli known as Abu-l Faḍl the "Water Bearer" (*al-Saqqāʾ*) as he bravely carried out sorties against the vast Umayyad army who had blocked them from the Euphrates

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[115] Gordon et al., *The Works of Ibn Wāḍiḥ Al-Yaʿqūbī*, 935–36.

[116] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H), 2: 125–26. For more on the children of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, see: Asad Q. Ahmed, *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijaz: Five Prosopographical Case Studies* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2010), 138; and, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dimashqī al-Bāʿūnī, *Jawāhir al-Maṭālib fī Manāqib al-Imām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī (Qum: Majmaʿ Ihyāʾ al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmīyah, 1415H), 121–24.

[117] Ahmed, *The Religious Elite*, 138.

River in order to provide water for the thirsty children.[118] Moreover, according to al-Mufīd, Ḥusayn b. ʿAli had two sons killed that day; three sons of Ḥasan b. ʿAli, the second Shiʿi Imam, were killed, including al-Qāsim who was said to resemble the Prophet Muḥammad the most in appearance and demeanor; also killed were two sons of ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, three sons ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib (i.e. uncles of Imam Ḥusayn), and one son of Abū Saʿīd b. ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib.[119]

Other sources provide variant list of the names of the progeny of Imam ʿAli and the clan of the family of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Banū Hāshim, who were slain with al-Ḥusayn at Karbala. The existence of variant names in the primary source literature may be due to the fact that the progeny of the Imams and *Ahl al-Bayt* as well as their wives may have gone by multiple names as well as general difficulty in recovering accurate primary historical sources over the exact names of their descendants. The Damascene Shāfiʿī scholar Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad al-Bāʿūnī (d. 871/1466-7) includes among those slain at Karbala, for example, Muḥammad the younger (*al-aṣghar*) b. ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, who is not in al-Mufīd's list under that name, while the sons ʿAli from his marriage with Laylā bt. Masʿūd al-Thaqafī do match both lists, for example.[120] Other sources include the name of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAli b. ʿAbī Ṭālib who is said to have been killed fighting alongside Imam Ḥusayn at Karbala,[121] alongside additional names of other members of the Banū Hāshim. The historian and genealogical specialist Aḥmad b. ʻAlī Ibn ʻInaba (d. 828/1424) in his *ʿUmda al-Ṭālib*, for example, records there being six sons and grandsons of

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[118] Aḥmad b. ʻAlī Ibn ʻInaba, *ʿUmda al-Tālib fī Ansāb Āl Abī Tālib* (Qumm': Muʾasissa Anṣāriyān l-il Ṭibāʿa wa-l Nashr, 1996), 327–28. Also see: Kāẓim Miṣbāḥ, *Man Qatala al-Imām al-Husayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 2007), 323–27.
[119] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H), 2: 125–26.
[120] Al-Dimashqī al-Bāʻ ūnī, *Jawāhir al-Maṭālib*, 2: 122. For more information on Muḥammad al-Aṣghar, the son of Imam ʿAli, also see: Sayyid ʿAlī ʿĀshūr, *Mawsūʿa al-Imām al-Husayn* (Beirut: Dār Naẓīr ʿAbūd, 2011), 4: 165–66.
[121] ʿĀshūr, *Mawsūʿa al-Imām al-Husayn*, 4: 166.

ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, not four, slain at al-Ṭaff (i.e. Karbala) as recorded in *Kitāb al-Irshād* of al-Mufīd.[122]

Known as the "second Karbala," the battle of Fakhkh that took place near Mecca on the eighth of Dhu-l Ḥijja of 169/786 also witnessed dozens, perhaps up to one hundred, slain members of the Banū Hāshim clan.[123] The leader of the anti-Abbasid revolt, Ḥusayn b. ʿAli b. al-Ḥasan Ṣāḥib Fakhkh (d. 169/786) adopted white dress (*mubayyiḍa*) against the Abbasid black (*al-musawwida*).[124] Sources mention that the rebellion was prematurely launched since a more organized rebellion had been secretly organized and planned to occur at Mīna in Mecca and include support from thousands of Shiʿi pilgrims from Kufa.[125] Although the primary and secondary sources differ on the reasons for the presumed early launching of the revolt, it is possible the hand of Ḥusayn b. ʿAli had been forced and he may have been fearful that if he delayed longer his underground network would have been discovered by the Abbasids who were interrogating ʿAlids daily and keeping them on roll-call—ever fearful of a potential rebellion that the Abbasid *barīd* (postal and intelligence institution) had probably picked up rumors of, since in general the "agents of the postal service were 'in the station of being the seeing eyes and hearing ears' of the ruler. This necessitated that the agent of the *barīd* would know 'the schemes of women, boys, guards, bathhouses, tradesmen and craftsmen.'"[126]

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[122] Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmda Al-Ṭālib al-Sughrā Fī Nasab Āl Abī Ṭālib*, ed. Sayyid Mahdī al-Rajāʾī (Qum: Maktaba al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 2009), 30; Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H), 2: 125–26

[123] See: Aḥmad b. Sahl Rāzī, *Akhbār Fakhkh: wa Khabar Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh Wa Akhīhi Idrīs b. ʿAbd Allāh*, ed. Māhir Zuhayr Jarrār (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1995), Najam Haider, *The Origins of the Shīʾa: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 208–9. and "Fakhkh" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam III*.

[124] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 551–68. The white banners of Ḥusayn b. ʿAli, notably, were generally considered the ʿAlid flags and are also the color of the standards of the ʿAlid government of Ṭabaristān under Ḥasan b. Zayd and his successors; see: Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Ibn Isfandīyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Khāvar, 1366).

[125] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 553.

[126] As Abd Al-Aziz Duri writes, "it was not sufficient for the postmaster to simply transmit official reports. Rather, he was obliged to engage in scrutiny and espionage"; *Early Islamic Institutions: Administration and Taxation from*

But even so, the rebellion was launched just days before the start of the Hajj ceremonies to the extent that the Abbasid army led by Muḥammad b. Sulaymān sent to intercept the rebels actually performed the Hajj rituals before embarking to fight the ʿAlids—therefore the "premature" rebellion narrative may be overemphasized in the sources as a means to explain the defeat of the revolt.[127] When the rebellion was launched, it failed to garner popular support among the residents of Medina. The ʿAlids and their limited supporters, numbering some 300 individuals, abandoned Medina after eleven days, which actually demonstrates they held a qualitative edge over the city, and they subsequentially made for Mecca but were intercepted at Fakhkh where, similar to their forefather Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAli (d. 61/680), they were vastly outnumbered and massacred. Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli Ṣāḥib al-Fakhkh's rebellion was close enough to the Hajj—and the battle of Fakhkh actually overlapped with the days of Hajj—so it is logical al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli could have could have actually counted on the support of the Kufans and other Shiʿi sympathizers who had massed for the pilgrimage in the thousands. It therefore seems equally logical that the reason for the defeat was less with a premature launching of the rebellion and more with the fact that yet again the imam did not receive the necessary devotion from the Kufans just as been the case with the Imams al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 61/680) and al-Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740).

Notably, two younger brothers of Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762-3) who were leaders in the Fakhkh revolt survived the battle by blending in with the crowds as Hajj pilgrims, including Idrīs b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 175/791) Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 189/805). The former went on to establish the ʿAlid Idrisid dynasty in modern Morocco while Yaḥyā fled to Ṭabaristān in northern Iran where he was hosted by the Justanid Daylami dynasty before eventually being

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the Caliphate to the Umayyads and Abbasids (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 178–80. Also see: "Barīd," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*; and Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 435.

[127] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 558.

offered amnesty by Hārūn al-Rashīd and placed in house arrest or under surveillance alternatively in Baghdad and Yaḥyā's family estates at the outskirts of Medina. Eventually, Yaḥyā was transferred to Baghdad and placed under the supervision of the very same Abbasid Chief of Police who is reported to have poisoned Imam Mūsā al-Kaẓim some three years earlier, al-Sindī b. Shāhak. According to Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh's grandson, Idrīs b. Muḥammad, Yaḥyā died in Ibn Shāhak's prison in Baghdad due to thirst and starvation.[128]

During the time of the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809), we are also told by sources including Abū Faraj al-Iṣfahānī that the several other ʿAlids were killed both openly and discreetly by the caliph.[129] These figures include ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥasan al-Afṭas, a great-grandson of Imam ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn, "al-Sajjād," who was forcibly transferred from Medina to Baghdad where he was imprisoned and eventually beheaded by al-Rashīd's official. Another great-grandson of Imam al-Sajjād, al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad was called in to al-Rashīd's court, berated by him and physically beat by the caliph's agents with a metal pole until he died.[130] Also targeted was al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ismāʿīl, a descendant of Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib who was beat to death by Hārūn al-Rashīd's agent in Medina,[131] and Isḥāq b. al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, the great-grandson of Imam al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib who was imprisoned by al-Rashīd where he died, likely by poisoning.[132]

These aforementioned power disparities which forced ʿAlid and Shiʿi movements to organize underground was not always simply a strict binary between empire and underground institutions. There were a rich variety of institutions and organizations that existed outside of empires and underground institutions, and even *within* institutions we see great diversity and varied power relations. Instead, it would be useful to think of power relations occurring along a spectrum—both within institutions such as factional interests found within the caliphal court as well as between institutions such as between the Abbasids and the Twelver underground both of which were tied together in part through the elite financial Shiʿi court families in addition to kinship ties within the Hāshimid branch of the Quraysh. Nonetheless, being underground did ultimately reflect a power imbalance and the widespread persistent latent fear of torturous retribution.[133] This power disparity created outward institutions of nominal caliphal loyalty, such as loyalty in the armies of the caliph, Friday prayer sermons, dedicatory poetry, and scholarly tracts completed under caliphal patronage, but it also covered over dissidents who rejected the caliph, and the legitimacy of his dynastic claims, many of who operated undercover and secretly.

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[128] See Madelung's article "Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

[129] Abu-l Faraj ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqar (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1419H), 378–418; also see: Bahāʾ al-Dīn Qahrimānī-Nizhād, *Qiyām-i Sabz Jāmagān: Muhājarat va Nahżat-i Sādāt-i ʻAlavī Dar Īrān az Āghāz tā Taʾsīs-i Ḥukūmat-i ʻAlavīyān-i Ṭabaristān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1386SH), 191. On al-Iṣfahānī's death date, see: Sebastian Günther's article "Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam III*.

[130] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 410–411.

[131] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 413.

[132] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 418.

Unity through Secrecy

Shiʿi underground groups tended to mask over potential differences. This did not mean there were not differences within the underground—there certainly were. However, it was in the interests of the leaders of the underground institution to mask over divisions so that a united coalition and sustained alliances could mobilize their resources against formidable enemies. It was due to this reason that we see that within the Hāshimiyya underground organization, factions cut deals in secret from each other to preemptively nominate their candidate for the hidden Imam whose name was of course a secret.[134] This explains why the ostensible leader of the Hashimiyya-Mukhtāriyya Organization, Abū Salama, was taken off guard by the announcement of the Abbasids as caliphs in Kufa and scrambled to nominate an ʿAlid Imam instead.[135]

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[133] Traces of this power imbalance were formalized within Twelver Shiʿism as the doctrinal concept of *taqiyya* (i.e. “dissimulation”); Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Babawayh al-Sadūq, *Iʿtiqāʿāt Al-Imāmīya* (Qum: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1414), 107ff; Etan Kohlberg, “Some Imāmī-Shīʿī Views on Taqiyya,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95, no. 3 (1975): 395–402. The concept of dissimulation is not exclusive to Twelver Shiʿism, and can be found across different schools of Islam, including the understanding of *kitmān* (or *taqiyya*) as practiced by the famous companion of the Prophet, Ammār b. Yāsir, who concealed his faith in order to avoid torture and execution. See, for example, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī’s Qurʾan commentary (considered part of the classical Sunni canon) on Surah *Nahl*, verse 106 in which the Qurʾan discusses the permissibility of outward dissimulation with the tongue under the threat of force or torture as long as one’s heart truly believes; “Taḳiyya.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam II.*

The nomination and installment of the Abu-l ʿAbbās al-Ṣaffāḥ as the new caliph and "*al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad*" had taken the other leaders of the underground revolutionary organization by surprise. The arrangement was likely, as Salih Said Agha argued, the consequence of a deal cut in secret between Abū Muslim who headed a powerful indigenous underground military contingent in Khurāsān and the Abbasid Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad "al-Imām" when they met in Mecca between ca. 125-128/742-746:

> Each had something to offer to the other, and each had something for which the other voraciously hungered. Ibrāhīm boasted a Prophetic kinship but no direct genealogical descent, and an almost non-existent claim to the legacy, which the ʿAlids, as descendants, had almost exclusively claimed, unchallenged. He needed an operative on the field to place him on the map of genealogical claims. Abū Muslim was an operative on the field; but, on his own, outside the context of the Organization and his patrons, as the representative of his real grassroots constituency only, he lacked a connection to the symbolic legacy, in the name of which only—he knew—he could do something positive for his cause.[136]

Similar dynamics also occurred within the Fatimid *daʿwa*, leading to the so-called Qarmaṭī split when the head of the organization in Iraq, Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, was told, contrary to the official line up until that point, that the Imam Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl had died and that the head *dāʿī*s of the central organization in Salamiyya were not agents of the (now deceased) hidden Imam but in fact the Imams themselves. Qarmaṭ surmised that either an internal coup had taken place following the death of Abū Shalaghlagh in Salamiyya or that the whole project was a ruse from the beginning, which led to a permanent split among the Ismaʿilis. This split, in turn, was cemented in the first Fatimid uprising led by the sons of the *dāʿī* Zikrawayh in Syria carried out on behalf of the hidden Ismaʿili Mahdi.[137]

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[134] For more on the narratives of the alleged transfer of *waṣīya* and the Imamate from Abū Ḥāshim to the Abbasid line, see: Najam Haider, "The Waṣiyya of Abū Hāshim: The Impact of Polemic," in *The Islamic Scholarly Tradition: Studies in History, Law, and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allan Cook*, ed. Ahmed Asad, Behnam Sadeghi, and Michael Bonner (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[135] Abū Salama was the son-in-law of Bukayr b. Mahān (who carried the same *kunya* as their ʿAlid Imam, Abū Hāshim—a point we will return to later). Abū Salama had been transferred leadership of the underground organization while Bukayr was imprisoned ca. 126/744; 'Abd al-'Azīz Dūrī and 'Abd al-Jabbār Muṭṭalibī, eds., *Akhbār Al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah li-al-Ṭibā'ah wa-l Nashr, 1971), 248; Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 35.

[136] Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 70. The author continues that Abū Muslim and Ibrāhīm "al-Imam" had "cut a side deal, not much dissimilar to the one Muʿāwiyah and Ziyād ibn Abīh had cut, almost eighty-five years earlier. They must have been aware of the infamous but brilliant feat, and they probably modeled their bargain after that precedent. Here is where the roots of Abū Muslim's claim, that he was the son of Salīṭ ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, should be sought." Salīṭ, according to the sources, was a son of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās through one of his wives and was allegedly murdered by the main internal members of the Abbasid family who felt threatened by his claim to a stake in the inheritance of Ibn ʿAbbās; *ibid.* Also see: Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, 210.

We find, therefore, that while the stage for potential divisions were set during the underground organization phase of Shiʿi groups, moments of outward sectarian genesis were marked by the act of rebellion that forced choices to be made and secret identities revealed. It was the fallout from acts of rebellion, whether successful or unsuccessful, that leading Shiʿi candidates for Imamate and their followers chose their strategies to challenge, accommodate, or bide their time in response to the new candidate for Imam.

Social Networks and the Three Planes of Emergence: Tribes, Armies, and Imams

In approaching the question of the emergence of Shiʿi sectarian identity, social network theory and analysis has much to offer theoretically. There is a myriad of ways to define networks, but broadly defined, networks are interconnections (i.e. edges) between people, institutions, or "discrete" entities (known as "nodes"). Padgett and Powell's contribution to the question of "emergence" situated with social network theory is quite pertinent when thinking about the emergence of novel or "new" religions or sects. As Padgett and Powell argue in their theoretical framework, the emergence of novel innovations or inventions do not take place "in the wild" and cannot be “understood through abstracting away from concrete social context, because inventions are permutations of that context.”

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[137] Abū Bakr b. ʻAbd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz Al-Durar Wa-Jāmiʻ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid, (Cairo: al-Maʻhad al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6: 65ff; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi,* 62ff.

Innovation, and in our case, “speciation” of discrete sectarian movements, are indeed dependent on the complex layered social context they are embedded within. They are re-combinations of previously extant identities, ideas, and practices into new forms and institutions. As the authors succinctly state: “organizational genesis does not mean virgin birth. All new organizational forms, no matter how radically new, are combinations and permutations of what was there before. Transformations are what make them novel.”[138] Understanding how individuals can operate between their multiple identities and roles—and how this can lead to organizational innovation—means that “micropatterns of topological overlay among different types of social networks can induce cross-sectional behavioral effects… At the transactional level, the embeddedness or multiplexity of one type of tie in another can induce trust, normative reframing, or changes in time horizons.”[139]

Using these insights, we can use the mechanisms suggested by Padgett and Powell to approach the specific phenomenon of Shiʿi sectarian genesis in the context of its underground revolutionary history. The authors further elucidate that tracing novel inventions—in our case sectarian groups—can be achieved by understanding the transposition of “social relations from one domain into another. Sometimes this begins as a small-scale transposition, which then reverberates” and cascades into larger-scale recombinant sets.[140] Certain recombinant mechanisms are, therefore, able to link sets of actors *and* reproduce those new connections across time. It is this transposition of “social relations from one domain into another”[141] that can serve as the key to understanding the emergence of new Shiʿi sectarian groups (for a parallel model, see Figure 1 below from Padgett & Powell).

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[138] John Padgett and Walter Powell, “The Problem of Emergence,” in *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets*, ed. John Padgett and Walter Powell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2.
[139] Padgett and Powell, “The Problem of Emergence,” 6.
[140] Padgett and Powell, “The Problem of Emergence,” 6.

What are the multiple pre-existing networks that are then recombined and linked across multiple domains to create novel sectarian groups? There are three planes in which major networks operate: (a) internal networks; (b) external networks; and (c) genesis or payoff networks. I define these networks and domains for the different case studies—the multiple network contours of which were outlined in the introduction of the chapter—regarding the question of Shiʿi sectarian genesis. The case of the Abbasids and Fatimids as examples of the multi-layered network mechanisms are briefly sketched below (and will be expounded in further detail in chapters three and five), while the case of the Zaydi and Twelver Shiʿis organizations will be covered in chapters four and six respectively.

In the case of the Abbasids, the (a) internal networks are constituted of the “Founding Fathers of the Hāshimīya” organization who, through their *mawālī* linkages with Arab tribes, constituted the base layer of the organization. The secret initial activist cell made up of 20 members, the “Founding Fathers” as Agha calls them, were all non-Arab ʿAlid loyalists. Fifteen of these twenty members were *mawālī* of Yemeni tribes, including seven of them who were *mawālī* of the Banū Muslīya of Madhḥij.[142] The nature of these ties—the *mawālī* network of the Banū Musliya—was special because it allowed for a very innovative reorganization of tribal patron-client links that re-arranged basic social divisions predominant in the largely exclusivist

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[141] Padgett and Powell, “The Problem of Emergence,” 6. Regarding the distinction between “innovation” and invention, the authors write that “*Innovations* improve on existing ways (i.e., activities, conceptions, and purposes) of doing things, whereas *inventions* change the ways things are done. Under this definition, the key to classifying something as an invention is the degree to which it reverberates out to alter the interacting system of which it is a part,” *ibid*, 5.

[142] Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 6; 47.

Arab tribal hierarchy of the Umayyad domains at that time. This arrangement allowed for the *daʿwa* organization to serve as an equalizing corporation of sorts, catapulting non-Arabs (as well as Arabs from weaker peripheral tribes) to serve on more or less equal institutional footing and formally respected roles in the armies and bureaucracies later on.

Other dominant Arab tribes in this internal base network included members of the Hāshimids led by the Abbasids and the aforementioned Banū Muslīya alongside other predominant clans including the Yamānī Khuzāʿa and Ṭayyiʾ tribesman and the Muḍarī tribes of Khindif and Qays.[143] The Abbasid leadership both intermarried with the Banū Muslīya, who were their main tribal secret elite allies and base who made up their cell in Kufa, as well as incorporated a rich variety of Arab tribal clans and their *mawālī* non-Arab elements by providing them a means to re-organize and forge bonds through their fealty to the hidden Imam in the *daʿwa* organization.

The (b) Abbasid external networks are composed of the *daʿwa* organization itself, which has its own institutional logics of allegiance to a secret Imam, esoteric charisma of members, and political organizing skills of its members as a means of advancing within the organization. There is also a separate external network of elite Qurayshi families tied together through marriage and court politics via the institution of the caliphal court—the members of the Abbasid family spent significant time at the Umayyad court in Damascus and certain members also intermarried between the clans.[144] The marriage ties also connected Abū Hāshim, the grandson of Imam ʿAli through Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, to the Abbasids through his marriage to Fatima bt. Muḥammad b.

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[143] Agha, 279.

[144] The Abbasid ʿAli b. Abdallāh as mentioned earlier was in very good standing the court of the Umayyad Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik; Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, 123.

ʿAbdallah b. ʿAbbās.[145] Finally, (c) the payoff network is constituted of the revolutionary army and eventually the bureaucracies and institution of the caliphate itself.

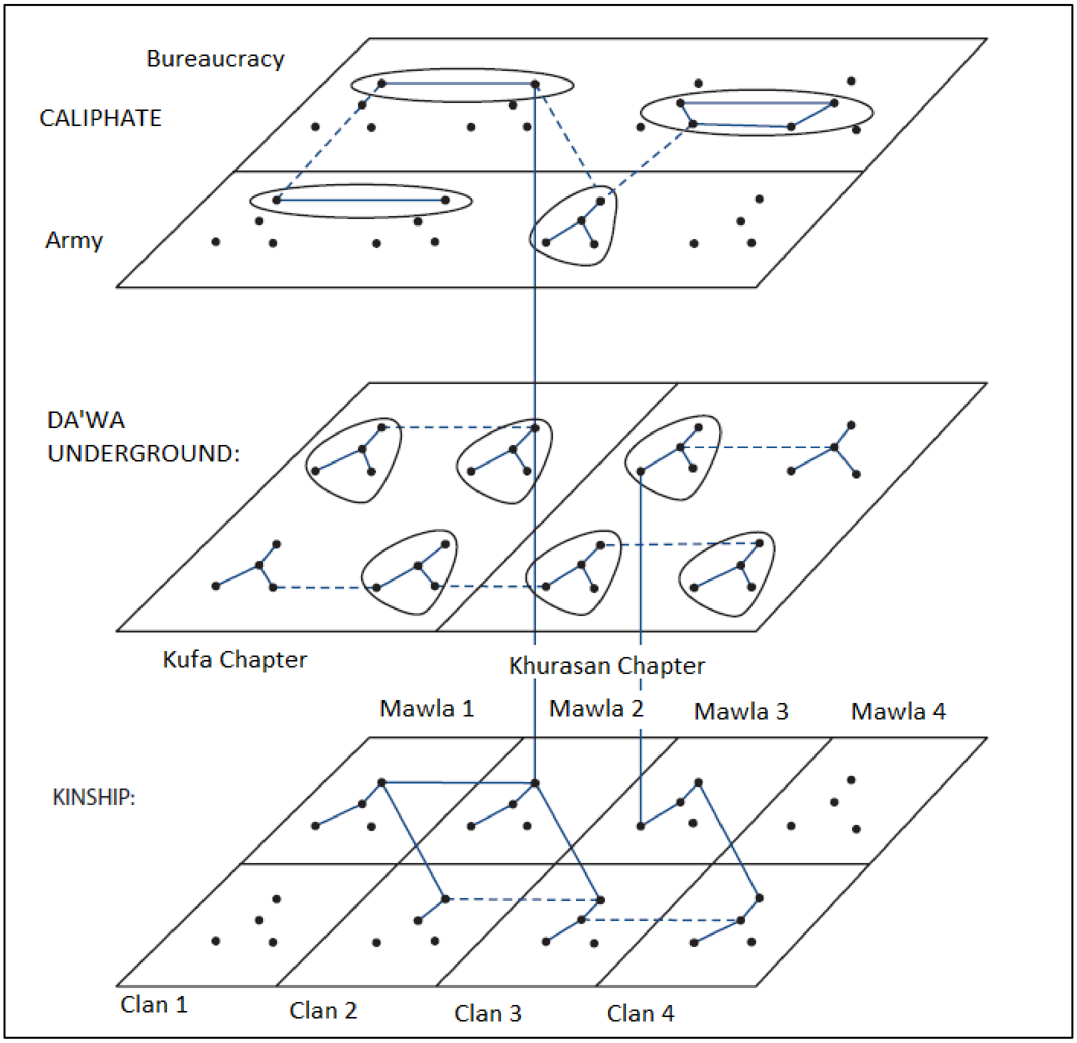
Bureaucracy
CALIPHATE
Army
DA'WA
UNDERGROUND:
Kufa Chapter
Khurasan Chapter
Mawla 1
Mawla 2
Mawla 3
Mawla 4
KINSHIP:
Clan 1
Clan 2
Clan 3
Clan 4

Figure 1: The Abbasid Revolution. In this "multiple network" setting, dots are individuals, solid lines represent constitutive ties, and dotted lines are "relational social-exchanges." Oblongs represent formal organizations such families. As Padgett and Powell explain "people in multiple roles are vertical lines connecting corresponding dots in domains of activity in which people are active." For model figure and conceptualization, see Padgett & Powell, "Problem of Emergence," pg. 6.

The Fatimids, who started their movement some 125 years after the coming to power of the Abbasids, faced similar structural and institutional challenges as the Abbasids and ran a very similar playbook but with slight adjustments. The internal networks were composed of a small core of members who initially identified themselves as descendants of ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib (the brother of Imam ʿAli) and representative *dāʿīs* of a "hidden Imam" but later claimed to be descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismaʿil b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and thus the Fatimid-Ismaʿili Imams themselves. They were led by one Abū Shalaghlagh, who according to some sources identified himself as the Imam, his nephew as the Mahdī, and his grandnephew as the Qāʾim to a small handful of senior *dāʿī*s; however, this was rejected by the so-called Qarmaṭī branch of Ismaʿilis who did not accept this lineage and rejected the *dāʿī*s. The Ismaʿili Imams' origins are quite obscure, intensely disputed from the very beginning, and have been the subject to extensive contemporary scholarship and debate.[146] As mentioned above, the Ismaʿili Fatimid Imams initially tried to revolt through an alliance with the Banū l-ʿUlayṣ clan in Syria. However, that uprising, led by the sons of the Fatimid agent Zikrawayh, failed. Another agent, Abū ʿAbdallah al-Shiʿi, was more successful and set up the first state in North Africa for the Fatimid Mahdi, who only revealed himself after the military victories were won. Abū ʿAbdallah al-Shiʿi's success was achieved through his alliance with the Banū Saktān clan of the Kutāma Amazigh tribes. These tribes and their chieftains later served in the genesis networks of the Fatimid army as the core conquest army and composed elite army commanders.

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[145] Sharon, 121.

The early Fatimid underground *daʿwa* operated with a central headquarters in Salamiyya in modern Syria to which the vast taxes collected from their adherents were forwarded. Aside from that center, there were a series of "islands" led by regional *dāʿīs* responsible for propagation in that region and collecting and forwarding taxes to the Syrian center and later to North Africa after the Fatimid was established there in 297/909.[147] Their *daʿwa* seems to have operated on teacher-student gradual doctrinal introduction primarily aimed at extant Shiʿi communities (to be examined in more depth in chapter three).[148]

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[146] See for example: Lewis, *The Assassins*; Hodgson, *The Secret Order of Assassins*; Farhad Daftary, "The Earliest Ismāīlīs," *Arabica* 38, no. 2 (1991): 214–245; and Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs.*

[147] Farhad Daftary, "The Ismaili Daʿwa Outside the Fatimid Dawla," in *L'Egypte Fatimide: Son Art et Son Histoire*, ed. Marianne Barrucand.

Conclusion

As this chapter outlined, underground movements harbored within proto-sects and power constellations morphed into empires and sovereign dynastic entities as well as sectarian institutions with sovereign leadership claims. The distinction between processes of sectarian crystallization for Shiʿism in the early Islamic period, as I argue, therefore, was not wholly distinct from the processes of state building, formation of revolutionary coalitions, and spread of dissident underground networks undertaken by Shiʿi groups across the region. The people and groups examined in this work were situated in contested terrains of power and ambiguities governed by visible and invisible forces that impacted both the nature of political order as well as sectarian interpretations of legitimate dynastic succession within the Shiʿi umbrella. This early expression of Shiʿism was confessionally ambiguous and captured a wide range of opinions and groups under a largely unitary Shiʿi identity; many of these Shiʿi identities, however, became exclusionary and distinct starting in the later part of the 3rd/9th century.

The historical development of Shiʿi movements should generally be understood as an interlinked phenomenon in which the changes in one group or faction reverberated across the broader spectrum—this can be clearly observed in competing terms and claims to legitimacy amongst the Shiʿa, including over the term "*al-mahdī,*" the "*qāʾim*" and the "*ḥujja*" among other terms. In order to study one group of the early Shiʿa, it is necessary to understand the wider context and truly intimate relationship between different Shiʿi factions by examining these competing planes of legitimacy and addressing intellectual and conceptual categories of heresy and apostasy, heterodoxy and orthodoxy, and examining how these terms functioned in the early Islamic context: what institutions play a role in creating sectarian divisions? How is orthodoxy formed and what exactly is heterodoxy? If Islam has no church or formal doctrine, then how does apostasy and orthodoxy operate? To answer such questions requires a multi-methods approach that situates intellectual or doctrinal developments in multi-layered social institutions and the socio-political context. A significant aspect of this context, as this dissertation will outline, was the phenomenon of hidden empires, revolts, and dissident messianic ideology in which debates over orthodoxy and political order were embedded.

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[148] Heinz Halm, *The Fatimids and Their Traditions of Learning* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2001).

In the following chapter, Chapter Two of this study, the idea of sectarianism and identity is discussed with an emphasis on the vocabulary found in the Qurʾan regarding sects and division. Also covered are early Islamic traditions on division including the well-known hadith of “seventy-two sects” (*hadith al-iftirāq*) and early Islamic heresiographical literature (*kutub al-firaq*). The chapter also undertakes a literature review on studies on sectarian identity formation within early Islam and Shiʿism. Chapter Three engages in a discussion of the concept of the *mahdī* and messianism among the early Islamic community as well as the idea of occultation and hidden underground identities (*ghayba* and *istitār*). The chapter continues to conduct a comparative survey study of revolutionary Shiʿi movements including the uprising of al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687), the Kaysāniyya, and the “Abbasid” revolution, in addition to the Zanj revolt, the Fatimid underground movement, and a number of additional lesser known ʿAlid revolts. Chapter Four is an extended case study of the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristan or Daylam in the Southern Caspian region; it surveys the institutional impact that the ʿAlid leaders had on the local Daylami elites and how a series of independent Daylami dynasties emerged out of the new military organizations that the ʿAlid Dāʿīs of Ṭabaristān instituted. The chapter includes a network analysis study of the battles and alliances that the various local and regional actors engaged in during the rule of the ʿAlids. Furthermore, the chapter argues that when the ʿAlid Dāʿīs began their rule, they were confessionally ambiguous Shiʿis who could not initially be categorized as Zaydi. Finally, Chapter Five covers Twelver Shiʿi organization and institutional strategies adopted by the emerging "orthodox" factions of the Twelvers; it engages in a network analysis study of two important hadith texts, *Kamāl al-Dīn* and *Kitāb al-Irshād*, that contain chapters on "those who saw the Twelfth Imam," Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī. The analysis undertakes a reconstruction of the institutional and sociological narrative networks that propagated a core doctrinal belief of Twelver Shiʿism—that the imam was alive and accessible—yet hidden from view.

CHAPTER TWO:
Sectarianism and Sectarian Identity in Islamic Studies

Introduction

The term sectarianism is a controversial and difficult term when it comes to discussing identities within Islam. Within the secondary literature of early Islam, moreover, sectarian identity and its formation are generally understudied and undertheorized. And when it comes to the conceptual category of "group identity," historians are consistently confronted with the problem of back projection. What did it mean to be a Shiʿi or Sunni in the early period? As historians of the period have argued, the identity for post-Muḥammad believers can be subject to historiographical issues of later Muslims interpreting their early history through their own contexts. Fred Donner, for example, has shown how the early Islamic community did not conceptualize the social boundaries of Islam and being a Muslim the same way that later Muslims did, and it is likely that the post-Muḥammad "believers' movement" constituted a monotheistic reform movement that only began crystallizing as "Muslims" (in a reified sense) under the later Umayyad period with certain imperial and governance reforms.[1] Similarly, discussions of sectarianism among writers in the early Islamic period, as will be discussed further below, were not necessarily approached from a strict Sunni-Shiʿi dichotomy. Although the term *shīʿa* and *sunna* are very early and found in the Qurʾan, early writers discussing divisions and splits in the nascent community of the followers of Prophet Muḥammad had more diverse understandings of factional affiliations among the community at the cusp of including the partisans of ʿUthmān, the partisans of ʿAli, the Murjiʿites, the Kharijis, as well as neutral parties (who some authors considered the faction of Islam [*fiʾat al-Islam*]) which will be discussed below.

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[1] Although this does not necessarily exclude the fact that "Muslim" was an early term used self-referentially by the followers of Prophet Muḥammad to denote unique bonds of loyalty but rather that the same term and identity marker had different meanings and reflected a different sense of identities and boundaries as Donner convincingly argues; Fred McGraw Donner, *Muḥammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

Even the term "Arab," commonly used to refer to the Arabic-speaking tribes that originally coalesced under the Prophet and undertook the early conquests, may be subject to the same ex-post facto usage, which anachronistically paints these tribes and early believers as "Arab Muslims."[2] Identity labels such as Muslim and Arab, while useful as referential markers, do nonetheless carry descriptive implications that influence our understanding of the post-Muḥammad (or early Islamic) period. Further, traditional reliance solely on classical theological tracts or heresiographies can be problematic since classical fields tend to abstract belief from historical and political sociology. Such sources also reflect in part the contemporary beliefs of the time periods they are written in and are not necessarily accurate representations of the past. Of course, this is not to dismiss heresiographies or much of the primary source material upon which this study relies, or to even claim that we can have a fully accurate representation of the past now, but to rather stress the importance of critical historical studies and triangulating the primary source material in a comparative perspective which also utilizes relevant methodologies and theories in the social sciences and humanities.

Within Islamic studies, the concept of sectarianism is used to cover a wide variety of different cases and contexts, and, generally within scholarship on the early Islamic period, sectarianism is discussed in relation to the origins and formation of social-religious communities, with a various set of studies putting forth different hypotheses on when "Shiʿis" and "Khārijīs" became different from "Sunnis," or, for example, on a specific movements' relationship with later sectarian formation, such as the Murjiʾa on early Sunnism or the Kaysaniya on Shi'ism.[3] While there have been very important individual studies on the emergence of various Islamic sectarian communities in the pre-modern period, the works completed on sectarian identity have relatively been more developed for Shiʿism as opposed to early Sunnism, Kharijism, or other denominations.[4] This may be due to the fact that it is often assumed in the literature that the majority of Muslims who are not Shiʿi or Khariji were automatically Sunni—which may in part be true for majority of later Muslims who categorized or conceptualized these groups, but it does not actually tell us much about these vastly diverse and pluralistic Muslim communities beyond certain very specific doctrinal commitments, such as the succession to the Prophet Muḥammad and status of the four "rightly guided caliphs" as well as the early companions to the Prophet.

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[2] Fred M. Donner, "Talking about Islam's Origins," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 81, no. 1 (February 2018): 1–23; Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 217–20; Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

Much remains to be explored in this highly important and consequential area of Islamic history and thought. Given the often misleading conceptual assumptions that are associated with Shiʿi or Sunni sectarian identity, authors can often incorrectly typologize and categorize a belief system through its sectarian affiliation and miss very important connections between and within Muslim denominations that would be ignored if viewing relations through a primarily exclusionary sectarian lens.[5] In order to re-imagine how sectarian identity and pluralism operate within Islam, it is necessary to re-approach the plural categories of identity and confessional commitments beyond the succession dispute. For example, it is possible to view diversity in Islam through mainstream legal schools that include Sunni Hanafi, Maliki, Shafiʿi, Hanbali, and Jaʿfari Shiʿi, Zaydi Shiʿi, and Ibadi methodologies, many of which can be closer to one another on certain issues than others within their Sunni, Ibadi, or Shiʿi "sects."[6] It is also possible to view confessional diversity through theological schools (Ashʿari, Muʿtazili, Twelver Shiʿi, Maturidi, etc.), through Muslim gnostic esoteric or perennial movements,[7] or through the widespread phenomenon of Sufi orders (many of which defy categorization through exclusively Sunni or Shiʿi labels).[8] This is not to mention of course many other layers of identity present within individuals and societies in the pre-modern period such as tribal affiliation, home region or hometown affiliation, urban-rural divides, linguistic-based identities, or ethnic or "racial" identities (that of course have different contexts in pre-modern periods), all of which can and do impact sectarian identities in different circumstances and contexts.

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[3] For example, W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998); Wilferd Madelung, "The Early Murji'a in Khurāsān and Transoxania and the Spread of Ḥanafism," *Der Islam* 59, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 32–39; Wadād Qāḍī, *al-Kaysānīyah fi-l Tārīkh wa-l Adab* (Beirut: Dar al-Thaqāfah, 1974); Sean Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Sabaʿ and the Origins of Shiʿism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[4] See, for example: Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shî'a Become Sectarian?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 1 (January 1, 1955): 1–13; Etan Kohlberg, "From Imāmiyya to Ithnā-'Ashariyya," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 3 (October 1976): 521–34; Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam*; Maria Massi Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shiʿite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); Najam Haider, *The Origins of the Shī'a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[5] See, for example Devin Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998). which demonstrates the intimate connections between Sunni and Shiʿi law schools and their formative periods of growth.

Additionally, in the contemporary literature, the term sectarianism often carries negative connotations related to religious violence, irrationalism, and primordial and, therefore, unbridgeable identity differences. Many of these connotations are related to certain modern post-enlightenment paradigms that portrayed religion as irrational dogma and secular thought as rational, scientific, and unifying for humanity. The history of many (but not all) early Orientalist studies of Muslim sects, moreover, have colonialist histories and Eurocentric underpinnings that complicate the scholarship and conceptual understanding of sects in Islam. Such studies often offer reductionist understandings of Shiʿism and Sunnism, which parallel axiomatic assumptions found in scholarly work on sectarianism in the European Christian context. This by no means dismisses the important contributions of scholars working on understanding sects and diversity within Islam but rather notes important trends, and often hidden subtexts, which can influence academic narratives.

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[6] For example, contemporary Zaydi Shiʿi jurisprudence shares more similarities in certain realms of ritual practice with Hanafi rites than with Twelver Shiʿi ones. Many other areas of personal status laws, marriage rulings, or prayer rules can be found to be closer between Twelver Shiʿis and Shafiʿis or Malikis, for example, rather than between Malikis and Shafiʿis, or other Sunni law schools.

[7] Including eclectic groups such as the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa*, the *Ḥurūfī*s, and others.

[8] For further background on Sufism and Sufi orders, see: J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993); Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995).

Despite these conceptual challenges, this dissertation uses the modifying terms "sectarian," "confessional," or "denominational" interchangeably to refer to similar phenomena of group identities and pluralism within a religion that are an intrinsic aspect present in all global religions (and all human societies for that matter). The use of these various terms is not an arbitrary intermixing of distinct concepts but instead represents an attempt to re-position the stricter etymological and theoretical meaning of sectarianism in order to address the difficulties that arise when addressing the presence of violence or harmful exclusionary practices (often generically identified as "sectarian"), which can be found in a religion as plural and diverse as Islam. As opposed to some authors who advocate for abandoning the use of the term "sectarian" due to the admittedly vague and multivalent use of the word within the literature, this dissertation argues that the term can in fact be useful if used in the correct context as an accurate signifier of confessional or group religious commitment that can shape decision making, identity, lifestyles, allegiances, power, beliefs, and much more.

Aligning more with the technical etymological definition of sectarianism, this dissertation posits that:

> Sectarianism is the belief or practice of a particular interpretation of religion as the ultimate true interpretation and practice of that religious tradition. By itself, it thus does not carry positive or negative connotations as commonly understood. Shiʿism and Sunnism for example are two sectarian readings of Islam—that does not make them necessarily violent or destructive. Sectarian readings are an intrinsic part of any religious tradition and reflect the plurality of interpretations that accompany all religions. These

> readings include different legal methodologies, various theological readings of Islam, and diverse ritual practices within and across Sunnism and Shiʿism.[9]

In this study, Shiʿi sectarianism more specifically refers to distinct interpretations of a religious tradition—in this case Islam—which claims exclusive interpretations of salvation, political sovereignty, leadership hierarchies, and the meaning of kinship lines of succession to Prophet Muḥammad. However, in a broader sense, sectarianism in Islam can express itself in extraordinarily diverse ways across social, intellectual, and political spheres and can have various theological implications depending on idiosyncratic doctrines and belief structures of disparate sectarian groups.

The impact of sectarianism is, therefore, completely dependent on how sectarian groups define themselves internally and vis-à-vis other denominational groups, the content of their thoughts, and the general socio-political context. Accordingly, in this work, ascribing the term sectarianism to a particular interpretation of a faith tradition is not to stigmatize a tradition or describe it as problematic but rather to stress its particular reading of religion as the claimed interpretation of truth. As Josef Van Ess writes, "the word which stands for Latin *secta* in the Arabic original, *firqa*, simply means 'group' and is not necessarily pejorative."[10] This is not to deny that most if not all sects believe their reading of religion is the ultimate true understanding of faith, as defined above. Therefore, within a particular sect, other sectarian readings of religion may be considered aberrant and become stigmatized. Such "insider" views of the meaning and position of religion and the claims of the sect, however, again depend on the particular interpretations of the sect, as various positions may exist regarding outside sectarian groups.

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[9] Payam Mohseni and Mohammad Sagha, "Five Myths of Sectarianism within Islam in the Contemporary Middle East," *Engaging Sectarian De-Escalation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center, August 2019), 17.

[10] Josef Van Ess, "Constructing Islam in the 'Classical' Period: Maqalat Literature and the Seventy-Two Sects," in *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Hinrich Biesterfeldt (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 481.

One of the core questions this dissertation explores is not so much why different confessional identities or readings emerge within Islam, or even within Shiʿism in particular, but rather how and why those differences become entrenched at particular times as mutually exclusive and rivaling identities. There has always been diversity in Islam, and there has always been diversity within Shiʿism, but there have not always been reified sectarian groups within Shiʿism, such as the Ismaʿilis, Twelver Jaʿfari Shiʿa, Zaydis, and others.

At this juncture, it is important to ask where and why sectarian communal differences emerge in Islam sociologically. Early Islamic history, as this work argues, demonstrates that a key component driving the emergence of sectarian differences concerns the question of sovereignty: the sovereignty of leaders or divine representatives (i.e. imams or caliphs) in governance and the important issue of collecting taxes, sovereignty in appointing representatives, and sovereignty in the final interpretation of doctrine and belief. At its core, sovereignty is an issue of authority and legitimacy. Shiʿis might call this sovereignty "*walāya*."[11] Ultimately the struggle over sectarianism is a struggle over orthodoxy and power, and the legitimacy to interpret religion, or ways of life (*dīn*).

When it comes to defining sectarianism, many definitions rely on ideational or doctrinal points of departure between sects. However, doctrinal and ideological differences cannot solely explain why and how sectarian splits occur. Doctrinal difference of opinion over leadership of the Muslim *umma*, debates over the *mahdī* or other epistemic or theological issues do not necessarily lead to sectarianism. As is often the case, differences of opinion that emerge within a sect can be contained within that sect as a particular school of thought, or, can lead to new effective reformulations of doctrine accepted by the other members of that sect. In other words, sectarian genesis requires more than just differences of opinion; they also require divergent authority structures and hierarchies. For example, the Usūli-Akhbārī (hermeneutical vs. literalist) debates within Shi'ism (particularly strong in the 17th–19th centuries) did not result in divergent sects within Twelver Shiʿism. Sectarian formation is driven both by doctrinal challenges and by claims to interpretive leadership. These two dimensions are necessary but not sufficient in leading to sect formation—processes of sect formation are context dependent as they are embedded across multiple domains, and historically contingent sequences of power relations and social, political, and scholarly networks.

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[11] Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam*.

Importantly, moments of sectarian genesis are more acute during "high-stakes" socio-political conflicts, when a change in dynastic rulership determines who gains access to vast global imperial resources and recognition as the Islamic sovereign. Revolts, caliphal succession designation, and civil strife represent such moment of impactful change. Such instances, which can have a far-reaching impact in the distribution of resources and power, bring great amounts of pressure on the social actors involved and make dynastic, and by extension, sectarian differentiation and who gets access to power all the more consequential. This is not to discount the impactful role that metaphysical or ontological claims to truth play in sectarian divisions; rather the point is to highlight when and how these disputes are accentuated and can result in institutional and sociological divisions. These high-stakes moments, highlighted most sharply during revolutions and the potential for state overthrow, therefore produce incentives for previously undifferentiated Shiʿi groups and lineages to emphasize and widen distinctions and exclusive claims to global following, power, and institutions. Islamic, and particularly Shiʿi political theology, in fact, emphasizes the need for the caliph, *mahdī*, or imam (or in some cases their representatives) to rule governments and administer social justice for the benefit of humanity.[12]

Identities and Sects in the Qurʾan, Hadith, and Early Islamic Literature

The Qurʾan utilizes several critical categories for labelling individuals, usually in reference to their proximity or distance from Allah and his messengers and representatives.[13] These two supra-categories can, broadly speaking, be separated into adherents of the truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*). As the chapter of the Quʾran, *Muḥammad*, explicates, Allah will cover the faults and improve the condition of those who believe, do righteous deeds, and believe that what has been revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad is the truth (*al-ḥaqq*). Those who believe (*āmanū*) follow the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) from their Lord. Alternatively, those who disbelieve and cover the truth follow falsehood (*bāṭil*), and Allah will turn their actions in vain and astray (47:1–3).

Within these larger supra-categories of truth and falsehood, moreover, the Qurʾan generally a diverse corpus of nouns and adjectives to describe the various groups of those who adhere to these varying camps. These categories include on the one hand rightly guided individuals, including: believers who achieve salvation (*qad aflaḥa al-muʾminūn* ["verily the believers are felicitous"]; 23:1), the God-conscious (*al-muttaqīn*, e.g. 2:2, or 11:49: *innā-l ʿāqibata-l muttaqīn* ["the best outcome is for the God-conscious"]), the ones with complete certainty (*mūqinūn*, e.g. 32:12), the righteous ones, or the ones who see God in prayer (*muḥsinīn*, e.g. 7:56), the Muslims (*muslimūn*, e.g. 3:102), and the felicitous ones (*mufliḥūn*, e.g. 58:22), the people of the right-hand side (*Aṣhāb al-Maymana* or *Aṣḥāb al-Yamīn*, e.g. 56:27).[14] On the other hand are disbelievers (*kāfirūn*; a label ubiquitously used throughout the Qurʾan for those who follow falsehood, e.g. 38:4, and 38:74 where it is applied to *Iblīs*, or Satan), oppressors (*ẓālimūn*, e.g. 3:128), polytheists (*mushrikūn*), and the ones who mislead (*muḍillīn*, e.g. 18:51), and the people of the left-hand side (*Aṣhāb al-Shimāl*, e.g. 56:41).

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[12] See Wilferd Madelung's article "al-Mahdī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*; also see: Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism*; Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[13] As a verse in the Qurʾan (*al-Nisāʾ*: 59) states: "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger (*al-Rasūl*), and those charged with authority among you (*uli-l amr minkum*)."

Interestingly, the Qurʾan does address the idea of sects and sectarianism in key passages. The definition of sects found in the Qurʾan can largely be understood as the dividing line between the supporters versus the enemies of Allah rather than a reified social group of people who say they believe but in their actions are lacking true faith (*īmān*). In addressing the *Aʿrāb* (plural for "Arab" but generally translated as the Arabic speaking nomadic Bedouin peoples), the Qurʾan states: "The wandering Arabs say: We believe. Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): Ye believe not, but rather say 'We submit (*aslamnā*),' for the faith (*īmān*) hath not yet entered into your hearts. Yet, if ye obey Allah and His messenger, He will not withhold from you aught of (the reward of) your deeds. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."[15] This form of submission, from the root *s-l-m*, refers to only the first step on the path towards the true path, or religion, of Allah which is the true *islām*: (إِنَّ ٱلدِّينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمُ).[16] Islam, here, is therefore universal and beyond the bounds of a particular time period or geographic space; the Prophet "Abraham was not a Jew (*yahūdī*), nor yet a Christian (*naṣrānī*); but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah) (*kānā ḥanīfan musliman*), and he was not of the idolaters."[17]

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[14] For a detailed treatment of these Qurʾanic concepts, see: Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002). Also see Abū al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī Akbar Khūʾī, *Prolegomena to the Qur'an*, trans. Abdulaziz Sachedina (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Jalal al-Din Suyuti, *Al-Itqān Fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriya, 1394), 5: 2, and Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tanzīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1407H), 2:111.

[15] Qurʾan, *al-Ḥujarāt*: 14 (translation Pickthall).

[16] Qurʾan, *Āl Imrān*: 19.

[17] Qurʾan, *Āl-i Imrān*: 67. On the idea of "*dīn ḥanīf*," see: Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr Fī Tafsīr al-Maʾthūr* (Qum: Kitābkhānih-ye Ayatullāh Marʿashī Najafī, 1404H), 2: 41. D. S. Margoliouth, "On the Origin and

The emphasis in the Qurʾan is therefore placed on the precedence and adherence to the path of the Prophets as the primary determination of righteousness and identity markers. Hence we also see the Qurʾan linking the notion of *milla* (alternatively translated as religion, path or people)[18] to the "religion of Abraham" (*millata Ibrāhīma ḥanīfan*) which is not that of the Jews or Christians (*naṣārā*).[19] In another verse the same phrase, religion of Abraham, is linked to those who are those who have submitted (from the same root as *islām*) their countenance to Allah (*aslama wajhahu li-llāh*).[20] Simultaneously, Islam is also seen in some of the Shiʿi *hadith* literature as bare needing the clothes and a foundation to be built off of. In a *hadith* recorded in al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) *Amālī*, the Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have said during his farewell Hajj (*ḥijjat al-wadāʿ*) that no one would enter Paradise (*janna*) except that they were "Muslims." The companion Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī asked the Prophet to clarify: "what is Islam?" to which the Prophet replied: "Islam is naked; its clothes are God-consciousness, its ornaments modesty, its roots piety, and its beauty religion… everything has a foundation (*asās*), and the foundation of Islam is love of the Family of the Prophet."[21]

There is, moreover, no sense of an ethnic marker of superiority in the Qurʾan. The immediately preceding verse states that God made mankind as males and females and in peoples and tribes (*shuʿūban wa qabāʾil*) in order that they may know each other; the most honored

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Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1903, 467–93; Uri Rubin, "Ḥanīfiyya and Kaʿba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of Dīn Ibrāhīm," in *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*, ed. F. E. Peters (New York: Routledge, 1999); Munʾim Sirry, "The Early Development of the Quranic Ḥanīf," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 56, no. 2 (2011): 345–66.

[18] Van Ess, "Constructing Islam in the 'Classical' Period," 482.

[19] Qurʾan, *al-Baqara*: 135. For a discussion on this verse and the relationship between rightly guided notions of universal prophetic unity versus wrong sectarian or reified religious interpretations of the guidance of Allah, see: Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Qaṣīr ʿĀmilī and Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg Tihrānī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 1: 479.

[20] Qurʾan, *al-Nisāʾ*: 125.

[21] "*Al-Islām ʿUryān libāsuhu al-taqwā*"; Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* (Qum: Dār al-Thiqāfa, 1414H), 84. For a similar variation of this *hadith*, see: Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Babawayh al-Ṣadūq, *Amālī al-Ṣadūq* (Beirut: Aʿlamī, 1400H), 268.

before Allah are the most God-conscious or pious (*inna akramakum ʿind Allāh atqākum*).[22] The Qurʾan therefore recognizes sects and divisions among peoples and communities but defines the true fault lines, as previously discussed, between the supporters, friends, and believers in Allah and those who reject the divine messengers and Allah's guidance: "'Belief' [*īmān*] is the real fountainhead of all Islamic virtues; it creates them all and no virtue is thinkable in Islām which is not based on the sincere faith in God and His revelations."[23] The true party or "partisans of Allah," the *ḥizb Allāh*, are the victorious (*ghālibūn*) and felicitous ones (*mufliḥūn*, e.g. 58:22)[24] as they are the "supporters of Allah" (*anṣar Allāh*, e.g. 61:14) who are promised the support of Allah if they support him (*in tanṣuru Allāh yanṣurkum wa yuthabbit aqdāmakum*).[25] Verse 14 in *al-Ṣaff* explicates on the notion of "supporting Allah" by providing the example of the Prophet Jesus who asked his companions, or disciples, "Who will be my helpers (*man anṣārī*) to (the work of) Allah?" to which they positively replied. Thereafter, the verse continues, a sect (*ṭāʾifa*) of the Israelites (*Banū Isrāʾīl*) believed and another sect disbelieved.[26] In this sectarian split, Allah states that he supported, of course, the former group over the latter. In his exegesis of this verse, Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143) points out that the 12 disciples were pure (*khāliṣ*) individuals, dedicated soldiers (*jund*), the first who believed in Jesus, and dedicated to the prophet in their goal to support Allah,[27] thereby separating the purified ones from among the Israelites from those disbelieved in the message of the Prophet.

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[22] Qurʾan, *al-Ḥujarāt*: 13.
[23] Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, 184.
[24] This phrase was also reportedly used by Imam Ḥasan b. ʿAli (d. 50/670) to refer to the station of the *ahl al-bayt* and family of the Prophet Muḥammad. In one of his speeches during his short caliphate, he is quoted saying: "*naḥnu ḥizb Allāh al-Mufliḥūn wa ʿitrat Rasūl Allāh*" (we are the felicitous partisans of Allāh and the progeny of the Messenger of God"; see: ʿAli b. Husayn al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab Wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2005), 3: 9.
[25] Qurʾan, *Muḥammad*: 7.
[26] فَـَٔامَنَت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنۢ بَنِىٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ وَكَفَرَت طَّآئِفَةٌ.
[27] Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan Haqāʾiq al-Tanzīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1407H), 4: 528.

Elsewhere, in the Qurʾan we also find the term *shīʿa* (partisans/followers) used seemingly generically to refer to diverse peoples as well as subsections of groups and partisans (e.g. 15: 10). Interestingly, the chapter *al-Ḥijr* opens by discussing how those who disbelieved in Allah would wish that they were Muslims, and proceeds to describe the reception of revelation and divine guidance in and among towns (*qarya*) and peoples (*umma*) before introducing the terms *Shīʿa* and *Sunna* in the chapter. In verses 10 and 13 respectively, the terms "*Shīʿa awwalīn*" and "*Sunna awwalīn*" appear to describe how Allah sent messengers or "remembrance" (*dhikr*) to various peoples or sects (*Shīʿa*) and how the sinners or criminals (*mujrimīn*) did not believe in what Allah sent despite examples from prior peoples or traditions (*sunna*).[28] Exegetes of the Qurʾan have understood the use of the word *shīʿa* in this verse the general sense referring to generic peoples and *sunna* as precedence.[29] The term *shʿīa* is also found in reference to the prophets Ibrahim and Moses. In the chapter *al-Ṣāffāt*, the Qurʾan introduces the Prophet Abraham as a *shīʿa* (follower) of Prophet Noah, seemingly referring to how Abraham followed the divine path and historical precedence of Noah in his struggles to guide humanity. As Faḍl b. Ḥasan Ṭabarsī (d. 548/1153) writes, the Prophet Ibrāhīm was the *shīʿa* of Noah in that he followed his path (*minhāj*) and precedence (*sunna*) in divine unity (*tawḥīd*), justice (*ʿadl*) and similar matters. Ṭabarsī also discusses how the Prophet "Ibrāhīm was the *shīʿa* of Muḥammad" despite preceding Muḥammad physically.[30]

The well-known story of Moses, additionally, is discussed in the Qurʾan (28: 15-22) when he happened upon a confrontation between two men, one of them from his party (*min*

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[28] Qurʾan, *al-Ḥijr*: 10-13.

[29] See, for example: Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Qaṣīr ʿĀmilī and Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg Tihrānī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 6: 320–22; and, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾan* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1412H), 7: 14.

[30] Faḍl b. Ḥasan Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Nāṣir Khusrau, 1372SH), 8: 701. For more on the concept of cyclical time and prophecy, see: Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*; Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

shīʿatihi), and other from his enemies (*min ʿaduwwihi*). Many commentators mention these two men were respectively from the Israelites or Hebrews and the Egyptians or companions of the Pharaoh.[31] When Moses took the side of his party who asked for his assistance, Moses struck and killed the enemy which many exegetes say was an accident. Hence, as Naṣr b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. ca. late 4th/10th century) notes in his commentary *Baḥr al-ʿUlūm*, the Qurʾan includes the phrase "*qaḍā ʿalayhi*" to mean that Moses did not mean to kill the enemy but that it unintentionally "occurred" as Moses was naturally strong and that he immediately repented for doing so afterwards, stating that he would never become a helper to the guilty (*lan akūna ẓahīran li-l mujrimīn*) which implies that the same party of Moses who he fought may have in fact been in the fault and guilty.[32]

The following verses in surah *al-Qaṣaṣ* discuss how in the next day, Moses again saw the same man presumably embroiled in yet another physical dispute. The man previously identified as from among his party/partisans was now simply referred to as the one who had been assisted by Moses the previous day and not as among his partisans (28: 19). When Moses is called upon by the same man to help him again, Moses intends to strike "the one was an enemy to them both"—but it is ambiguous if this was the man previously identified as from among the *shīʿa* of Moses or the other man embroiled in the dispute. The man who Moses previously helped now in this second encounter feared Moses and cried out: "do you wish to slay me just as you killed someone yesterday?" After the man whom he had previously helped betrayed him, Moses fled the city and prayed to be saved from the unjust or oppressive people (*qawm al-ẓālimīn*) whom he had encountered, a term exactly replicated by Moses' future father-in-law to describe the people that Moses fled from (28: 21-25). This narrative raises an important question: who are the true

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[31] ʿAli b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr Qummī*, ed. Sayyid Ṭayyib Mūsā Jazāyirī (Dār al-Kitāb: Qumm, 1368SH), 2: 137.

[32] Abu-l Layth Naṣr b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿUlūm* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), 2: 601.

"enemies" (*ʿaduww*) or oppressors mentioned in the Qurʾan and how are the fault lines of partisanship and salvation drawn? Were the oppressive people (*al-ẓālimīn*) the partisans of Moses or Israelites or the Egyptians?

Notably, laudatory references to the partisans, or *shīʿa* of ʿAli, are also numerous in mainstream Sunni sources which reflects the non-exclusionary sectarian nature of being among the *shīʿat ʿAli* which Sunni Muslims are encouraged to also consider themselves as. In a *hadith* found in sources such as Ibn ʿAsākir's (d. 519/1125) *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, Abī al-Zubayr narrated from the companion Jābir b. ʿAbdallāh that the Prophet Muḥammad stated that "the partisans of ʿAli will be the felicitous ones on the day of judgement" (*shīʿatuhu lahum al-fāʾizūn yawm al-qīyāma*).[33] Other *hadith* attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad state that: "ʿAli you and your partisans [*shīʿa*] will be well pleased, and well-pleasing (*rāḍīn marḍīyyīn*) on the day of judgement," which can be read in reference to the verse in surah *al-Fajr* (89:28): "Come back thou to thy Lord – well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him!"[34] In another *hadith* narrated through Anas b. Mālik (d. 93/712), the Prophet stated that Allah loves ʿAli, and that the angels seek forgiveness for the lovers (*muḥḥib*) and the partisans (*shīʿa*) of ʿAli until the day of judgement.[35] In Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm al-Ghundūzī al-Ḥanafī's (d. 1270/1853) *Yanābīʿ al-Mawwada* where this aforementioned *hadith* can be found, we also see a *hadith* narrated by the third caliph, ʿUthmān, in which the Prophet stated that: "ʿAli and I were created from one light, 4,000 years before Allah created Adam… and with me was prophethood (*al-nubuwwa*) and with ʿAli the trusteeship (*al-waṣiyya*)."[36]

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[33] Abī Qāsim ʿAli b. al-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tarjama al-Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib min Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mahmūdī (Beirut: Muʾassisa al-Mahmūdī li-l Ṭibāʿa wa-l Nashr, 1978), 2: 442; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafsīr al-Maʾthūr* (Qum: Kitābkhānih-ye Ayatullāh Marʿashī Najafī, 1404H), 6: 379. Moreover, as these sources mention, "the best of creation" referenced in the verse "Those who have faith and do righteous deeds – they are the best of creatures (*khayr al-bariyya*)" (98:7) applied to Imam ʿAli whom the Prophet Muḥammad called "*khayr al-bariyya*" in front of his companions. For references to the "felicitous" or "triumphant ones" (*al-fāʾizūn*), see surah *tawba* (9:20) that states: "Those who believe, and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in Allah's way are of much greater worth in Allah's sight. These are they who are triumphant (*al-fāʾizūn*)."

[34] Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 6: 379. For a discussion on some of the primary source literature on the merits of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, see: Hassan Abbas, *The Prophet's Heir: The Life of Ali Ibn Abi Talib* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), esp. 72ff.

[35] Sulaymān b. Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī al-Ḥanafī al-Ghundūzī, *Yanābīʿ Al-Mawwada* (1997: Muʾassisa al-Aʿlamī Li-l Maṭbūʿāt, Beirut), 2: 301.

Additionally, the Prophet Muḥammad is recorded to have said—as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) cites from Abū Bakr b. Mardawayh al-Iṣbahānī's (d. 410/1019-20) *hadith* collection—that the *shīʿa* of ʿAli are promised the *ḥawḍ*, the salvific pond of deliverance,[37] on the day of judgement where they will be esteemed and radiant, supported by the Prophet Muḥammad and Imam ʿAli.[38] Being a partisan (*shīʿa*) of ʿAli is explicitly advocated by these *hadith* which are narrated by Sunni authors and by companions highly regarded in the Sunni tradition. Therefore, according to these traditions, the marker "*shīʿa ʿAli*" is a label to be proudly worn by Sunni Muslims as a means to attain salvation—thereby demonstrating sectarian or partisan labelling without adhering to exclusionary sectarian definitions of Shiʿism or conventional understandings of what it means to belong to the Shiʿa Muslim community.

An associated term as it relates to sectarianism, *farīq* or *firqa* (party/faction/battalion), is also prominent in the Qurʾan. Coincidentally the root of the word, *f-r-q* (to part, disperse, divide, etc.) appears 72 times in the Qurʾan which is notable in light of a famous tradition found in the Islamic *hadith* corpus, including in canonical Sunni texts, known as "the tradition of division" (*hadith al-iftirāq*). The tradition, found in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889), narrates from Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (d. 60/680) who said: "The Apostle of Allah stood among us and said: Beware! The people of the Book before were split up (*iftaraqū*) into seventy two sects (*milla*), and this community will be split into seventy three: seventy two of them will go to Hell and one of them will go to Paradise, and it is the majority group (*al-jamāʿa*).”[39] Another version of this *hadith*, is found in Ibn Mājah’s (d. 273/887) compilation (under the chapter “the divisions of peoples/nations”; *bāb iftirāq al-umam*) is attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad in which he stated: “The Children of Israel split into seventy-one sects (*firqa*), and my nation will split into seventy-two, all of which will be in Hell apart from one, which is the main body (*al-jamāʿa*).”[40] In the latter tradition, *firqa* was used instead of *milla* to denote a sect, reflecting how these terms could often be understood interchangeably and was reflected in the titles of various heresiographical works as will be discussed shortly. The tradition of the proliferation of sects could also be found in the Sunni *hadith* collections of Abū ʿAbdallāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b ʿAli al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 320/938).[41]

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[36] Al-Ghundūzī, *Yanābīʿ al-Mawwada*, 2: 300.

[37] Reference to the "pond of salvation" (*hawḍ*) can be read in relation to the famous *hadith al-thaqalayn*, narrated by the Prophet Muḥammad and versions of which can also be found in the Sunni *hadith* corpus, that states that those who grasp firmly to the Book of Allah and the Family of the Prophet Muḥammad (or in some verseions the "traditions" (*sunna*) and do not separate from them (*lan yaftariq*) will be saved on the day of judgement; see: Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿmah*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar Ghaffārī, 2 vols. (Tehran: Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 1975), 2: 661.

[38] al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 6: 379.

While this tradition is quite widespread, not all scholars accept it, including Abū Muḥammad ʿAli b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) who rejects it based on the weakness of the authenticity of the chain of transmission.[42] Some scholars, while accepting the tradition of *iftirāq*, rejected certain parts of it, including Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 450/1111) who in his *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayn al-Islām wa-l Zandaqa* interprets these traditions inversely, arguing that all sects of the community of Prophet Muhmmad are saved *except* one, the *zanādiqa*.[43] Additionally, the Yemeni Zaydi scholar Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Wazīr (d. 840/1436) who engages deeply with the Sunni *hadith* corpus argues in his *al-*

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[39] Sulaymān b. al-Ash‘ath al-Sijistānī Abū Dā’ūd, *Sunan Abū Dā’ūd*, ed. Abū Ṭāhir Zubayr ‘Alī Za’ī, trans. Yāsir Qāḍī, 5 vols. (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008), hadith #4580.

[40] Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ed. Abū Ṭāhir Zubayr ‘Alī Za’ī, trans. Nasiruddin Khattab (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), hadith #3993.Vers

[41] Maḥmūd Muḥammad Mazrūʿa, *Dirāsāt fi-l Firaq al-Islāmiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 2016), 21–25.

[42] Abū Muḥammad ʿAli b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fi-l Milāl wa-l Ahwāʾ wa-l Niḥal* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānjī, n.d.), 3: 138.

[43] For more on this term, see: Melhem Chokr, *Zandaqa et Zindīqs En Islam Au Second Siècle de l’Hégire* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1993).

ʿAwāṣim wa-l Qawāṣim that the portion of the tradition of splitting of sects that states “all of the sects will be doomed except one” is a corruption (*fāsida*) and a plot of apostates (*min dasāʾis al-malāḥida*).[44]

Versions of this tradition, notably, are also found in Shiʿi *hadith* collections. Abū Jaʿar Muḥammad Ibn Bābawayh al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) records in *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿma* that the Prophet Muḥammad stated that the community (*umma*) will split (*sa-yaftariq*) into 73 sects, only one of which will be the saved sect (*firqa nājiyya*)—those who hold fast to the Qurʾan or decrees of Allah and the Family (*al-ʿitra*) of the Prophet.[45] Another reports found in Muḥammad Bāqir Majliī’s (d. 1110/1699) *Biḥār al-Anwār* states that the community of Prophet Jesus (*ummat ʿĪsā*) split into 72 sects (*firqa*), one of which is saved (*nājiyya*), and 71 of which are in (hell)fire, and, in a separate *hadith*, that the community of Prophet Muḥammad will split into 73 sects, only one of which will be in heaven (*janna*).[46]

The famous Twelver Shiʿi scholar Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) notes that companions of Imams Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733), Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), and Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) were among those who narrated the tradition of “the splitting of the community” (*hadith tafrīq hadha al-umma*). They included, namely, the companion Muḥammad b. Sūqa (d. ca. 140/757)[47] who narrated the tradition through a chain of narrators back from Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib.[48] Interestingly, Muḥammad b. Sūqa is mentioned as a trustworthy *hadith* authority (*thiqa*) in many non-Shiʿi books, including in *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* of Abū Ḥātim

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[44] Mazrūʿa, *Dirāsāt fi-l Firaq al-Islāmiyya*, 26.

[45] Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl al-Dīn*, 2: 662.

[46] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, ed. Muhamad Bāqir Maḥmūdī, ‘Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, and Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1983), 14: 346, 10: 114.

[47] This is the approximate death date according to Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Dhahabī in his *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, ed. Muḥammad Ayman (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 20006), 6: 281.

[48] Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, ed. Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī (Qum: Muʾasasa al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1986), 135. Muḥammad b. Sūqa is mentioned in *Rijāl al-Najāshī* under the entry for the Ḥafṣ b. Sūqa al-ʿAmrī who was his uncle and had scholarly writings attributed to him (“*lahu kitāb*”); importantly for al-Najāshī, Ḥafs was a narrator of traditions from Imams Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā al-Kadhim.

Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965).[49] Ibn Sūqa is said to have spent generously—some 120,000 dirhams according to some reports—on scholars (*ahl al-ilm*), and, as Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) notes, Muḥammad b. Sūqa narrated from Anas b. Mālik (d. 93/712) and had figures such as Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) narrate from him.[50] This demonstrates the intersecting networks of hadith narrators and acceptability of transmitters from across various social and scholarly groups over certain widely accepted traditions, such as *hadith tafrīq al-umma*.

Not surprisingly, some versions of the *hadith* found in Shiʿi texts state that the saved sect are not the "main body" (*jamāʿa*) but are rather—as narrated from ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib—his partisans (*shīʿatī*).[51] These traditions are juxtaposed, moreover, with traditions that state that the community of Muḥammad (*ummat Muḥammad*) are rightly guided and have the verse of Qurʾan in surah *al-Aʿraf* apply to them: "And of those whom We created there is a nation (*umma*) who guide with the Truth and establish justice therewith" (7: 181).[52] Therefore, the Shiʿis of ʿAli represent, naturally, the correct interpretation of Islam within the followers of the community of Muḥammad.

While term "main body," (*jamāʿa*), during later times could be interpreted in terms of mainstream Sunnism which became predominant demographically among the larger Muslim community, the notion of divisions among Muslims among early scholars was not exclusively framed as a "Shiʿi-Sunni" split as previously mentioned. Instead, when discussing divisions in the Muslim community the Umayyad official Maymūn b. Mihrān (d. 117/735-6),[53] for example, mentions the pivotal consequences of the fallout following the assassination of the third caliph ʿUthmān in 35/655 and how the Muslim community was split along the following lines: the partisans of ʿUthmān, the partisans of ʿAli, the Murjiʿites, the Kharijis,[54] and the faction or party of Islam (*fiʾat al-islam*). Ibn Mihrān argues that this last group, the "faction of Islam," unlike the Murjiʿites who remained neutral and did not take a side, "declared their solidarity with ʿUthman as well ʿAli. They left the matter of guilt open and avoided any discussion. What they wanted was *jamāʿa*, to live in harmony." But as Van Ess notes, "we do not know for sure how they understood their *jamāʿa*: as a 'concord' (that is, an abstract idea), or as 'majority' (the concrete demographic realization) [*al-sawād al-aʿẓam*] of this ideal."[55]

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[49] Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, ed. Muḥammad Khān (Ḥaydarābād: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1973), 7: 404.

[50] Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Aʿlām*, 6: 281, and Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, 7: 404.

[51] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 28: 11; also see versions of the *hadith* in: 9: 198, 14: 348.

[52] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 28: 6.

[53] For more on his life, see Fred Donner's article "Maymūn b. Mihrān" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

The *hadith* found in Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd's collections, as mentioned, prominently include the word *jamāʿa* as the "saved body/majority." The root *j-m-ʿ* is used in the Qurʾan in different forms to denote a collectivity, gathering, or to mean "all-together," among several other meanings (e.g., 26:65, 39:44). The term was also used in the lexicon of later Muslim authors in their discussion of early Islamic political history as the "year of consensus" (*ʿām al-jamāʿa*) which halted the Muslim civil war—the year in which ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib was assassinated and the peace treaty signed between his son, Ḥasan b. ʿAli, and his opponent Muʿāwiya (the latter was coincidentally one of the narrators of the tradition of the 72 sects).[56] This peace was highly controversial at the time and almost had Ḥasan b. ʿAli (d. 50/670) killed by an extremist in his own army, however it resulted in a series of differing interpretations both among his contemporaries as well as later Muslim authors.[57] A tradition recorded in *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* the states that "once while the Prophet was addressing (the people), al-Ḥasan (bin ʿAli) came and the Prophet said, 'this son of mine is a chief (*sayyid*), and Allah may make peace between two groups (*fiʾatayn*) of Muslims through him.'"[58] But this reading of the events is in part contested. As S.M.H. Jafri explains, albeit somewhat back-projecting Shiʿi-Sunni terminology:

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[54] Ibn Mihrān is equating the followers of Muʿāwiya as the followers of ʿUthmān in this larger scheme which is taking a longer look at the civil conflict flowing the assassination of ʿUthmān. The Kharijis, as is traditionally understood, do not emerge as a separate group until they formally split off from the army of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib following the battle of Ṣiffīn in 37/657 and the subsequent arbitration between ʿAli and Muʿāwiya. See: Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Crisis of Muslim History: Religion and Politics in Early Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005), 81–144; and, M. Hinds, "The Siffin Arbitration Agreement," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17 (January 1, 1972): 93–129.

[55] Van Ess, "Constructing Islam in the 'Classical' Period," 483–85.

[56] M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A New Interpretation, Vol. 1: A.D. 600-750* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 78

> The Shīʿīs thus defended Ḥasan's action [i.e. signing the peace treaty with Muʿāwiya] against those extremists who were blaming him for abdication; on the other hand, the Sunnīs accepted such an explanation as it conformed to their need for a reconciliation between the two opposing groups: the party of ʿUthmān, no represented by Muʿāwiya, that of ʿAlī, now led by his son Ḥasan. This "central body" [i.e. the Sunnis] later on received the title of the *Jamāʿa* (commonly rendered in English as the "orthodox" branch) in Islam, leaving behind and branding as sectarian a body of those [i.e. the Shiʿis] who could not and did not agree to reconcile themselves to this synthesis. Though Ḥasan prevented a bloody military solution of the conflict by abdicating in favour of Muʿāwiya, he did not thereby heal the split in the community. In fact, his abdication had far-reaching consequences for the later development of Shīʿism.[59]

The notion of preserving consensus or "togetherness" (*jamāʿa*) as the absence of political opposition is articulated by the later Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 96/715) in a supposed dialogue with ʿAli b. Ḥusayn (d. 95/713), the fourth imam in the Twelver Shiʿi tradition and the grandson of Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib.[60] According to a narration found in *Akhbār al-Dawlā al-ʿAbbāsiyya*, ʿAli b. Ḥusayn had travelled to Damascus to intercede on behalf of his cousin, a son of Imam ʿAli through a different matrilineal branch, Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. ʿAli (d. 98/716, and the imam for some of the Kaysaniyya Shiʿa) who had been imprisoned by the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd. In this dialogue, al-Walid related that Zayd b. Ḥasan (another grandson of Imam ʿAli) accused Abū Hāshim for striving to divide the united body politic ("*tafrīq al-jamāʿa*"), and, notably for making himself an Imam upon whom obedience is necessary ("*imāman muftariḍ al-ṭāʿa*") and who had gathered around himself Iraqi Shiʿis ("*shīʿa min ahl al-ʿIrāq*").[61] While the veracity of this report is questionable given it is situated in an official Abbasid political narrative that is staunchly anti-ʿAlid, the vocabulary found therein, particularly the accusation of diving consensus/society (*tafrīq al-jamāʿa*), is nonetheless noteworthy and potentially indicative of larger notions or political authority argued by early Muslim rulers who juxtaposed upholding unity/consensus against divisive sectarianism as a legitimating strategy. It is also revealing regarding the alleged underground organization and asset gathering being conducted by certain Shiʿi factions during the Umayyad period.

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[57] For the context on the signing of the peace treaty following the assassination of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and the notion of *ʿām al-jamāʿa*, see: S.H.M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London: Longman, 1979), 130–73; and, Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 170–77.

[58] Muhammad b. Ismāʻīl al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Medina: Dar al-Fikr, 1981), book 92, hadith # 56.

[59] Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, 156–57.

[60] For discussion on the meaning of "unity" or "consensus" (*jamāʿa*), see: M. Sharon, "The Development of the Debate around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984): 131–33; and, Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 52–53.

Similar themes can also be seen in a letter sent by the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833) to his agent Isḥāq b. Ibrāhim in Baghdad to initiate the Miḥna (i.e., the inquisition of scholars).[62] Al-Maʾmūn referred to the responsibility of imams and caliphs to make upright the religion of Allah which they are to guard as inheritors of the heritage of prophethood (*mawarīth al-nubuwwa*), and for which they must be vigilant in the obedience to Allah (*tashmīr li-ṭāʿa Allāh*) in order to act justly as the prophets did.[63] In justifying the inquisition, al-Maʾmūn writes about the inability and ignorance of the masses in being able to undertake reasoning and thinking.[64] Moreover, false religious scholars are misguiding the people; these wrongly guided scholars are therefore misappropriating the responsibility of the caliph for religious guidance are the people of falsehood, infidelity, and *division* (*ahl al-bāṭil wa-l kufr wa-l furqa*).[65] Again, by misappropriating the leader's prerogative of guidance, other religious leaders are the cause division and ignorance among the people—a prerogative that the caliphs and rightful imams must redress. Notable here is that in addition to the terms "Commander of the faithful," (*Amīr al-Muʾminīn*) and "Caliph," the term "Imam" is also used interchangeably in both Umayyad and Abbasid official discourse to denote their own leadership.

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[61] ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Dūrī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār Muttalibī, eds., *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya* (Beirut: Dār al-Talī‘ah li-al-Tibā‘ah wa-l Nashr, 1971), 176.

[62] For more on the *miḥna*, see: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 1112–41; Walter M. Patton, *Aḥmed Ibn Hanbal and the Miḥna* (Leiden: Brill, 1897); Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ‘Abbāsids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (New York: Brill, 1997); and, John Abdallah Nawas, *Al-Ma'mūn, the Inquisition, and the Quest for Caliphal Authority* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2015).

[63] al-Tabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 1112–41. On a discussion of these terms and the possible Middle Persian influence on the political theology expressed in the letter of al-Maʾmūn, see: Fritz Steppat, "From ʿAhd Ardashīr to Al-Maʾmūn: A Persian Element in the Policy of the Miḥna," in *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Iḥsān ‘Abbās on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Wadad Kadi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), 451–54.

Two of the terms found in these aforementioned examples, "necessary obedience" and "dividing consensus," are also found in Umayyad discourse regarding their interpretation and reception of later Shiʿi uprisings. The use of the term "necessary obedience" (*muftariḍ al-ṭāʿa*) is quite important as it sheds light on overall context of early Shiʿi emphasis on salvific leadership or ideas associated with *walāya* (albeit in a different language). The use of these terms in official caliphal discourse demonstrates how early Shiʿi scholars' view of the rightful leader (*al-riḍā*) from Family of the Prophet—and the Shiʿi emphasis on obedience to the representatives of God—was not a foreign claim to mainstream Muslim society but was used by various other claimants to likewise claim universal Islamic rule and successorship to the legacy of the Prophet Muḥammad.[66] Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) states that he personally read among the writings of Sālim, a scribe (*kātib*) of the Umayyad Caliph Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 125/743), a letter regarding the uprising of Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740). It was during Hishām's reign that Zayd rebelled in Kufa. The letter of Sālim refers to the love of the people of Kufa for the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and that the Kufans considered it incumbent upon themselves to obey them (*li-iftirāḍihim ʿalā anfusihim ṭāʿatihim*) and that this misplaced loyalty caused them to split the consensus or unity among society and rebel against the "(righteous Umayyad) imams" (*tafrīq al-jamāʿa wa-l khurūj ʿala-l aʾimma*).[67] This is while Zayd b. ʿAli himself called for *al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad* which also is a call for unity upon the chosen one from the progeny of the Prophet Muḥammad.[68]

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[64] Variously described as *al-jumhūr al-ʿaẓam*, *sawād al-akbar*, *ḥashw al-raʿiyya*, and *safla al-ʿāmma*.
[65] al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 1114.
[66] Dakake, *The Charismatic Community*.

Interestingly, while emphasis on the preservation of unity figures quite predominantly in Umayyad discourses, so too does the idea of the necessity of obedience to the Umayyad caliphs and their role as "lodestars to their followers and who never tire of enjoining obedience (*tāʿa*)."[69] It is stated in a letter written under the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd (d. 126/744), "that nobody can dispute their right without God casting him down, and nobody can separate from their polity (*jamāʿa*) without God destroying him." The letter also states that it is:

> Through the caliphate God has preserved such servants of His as He has preserved on earth: to it He has assigned them, and it is through obedience to those whom He has appointed to it that those who have been given to understand and realise it[s importance] attain happiness. God (blessed and exalted is He) knows that nothing has any mainstay or soundness save by the obedience though which He preserves His truth, puts His commands into effect, turns [people] away from acts of disobedience to Him… So he who holds to the obedience which has been apportioned to them is a friend of God and obeys His commands, attaining rectitude and being signaled out for good fortune in [both] this world and the next. But he who leaves off it, forsakes it and is refractory towards God in respect of it loses his share, disobeys his Lord and forfeits [both] this world and the world to come.[70]

As this letter demonstrates, the notion of divinely guided leadership and obedience was by no means limited to just the ʿAlid Shiʿi imams or leaders, but was a larger discourse predominant in the early Islamic context to which the early caliphs also laid claim in much of the same language and metrics of legitimacy argued by the Shiʿi imams. This demonstrates that the revolutionary discourse of ʿAlid Shiʿi opposition figures and leaders was embedded within the mainstream understandings of leadership and salvation—not as a reified, or narrow sectarian approach—and this in part describes the widespread appeal of these early Shiʿi movements and political discourse in Islamic lands stretching from North Africa to Central Asia.

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[67] Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, and Riyāḍ al-Ziriklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), 3: 328.

[68] al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, *I'lām al-Warā bi-A'lām al-Hudā* (Tehran: al-Maktaba al-'Ilmīya al-Islāmīya, 1970), 262; Sharon, "The Development of the Debate around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam."

[69] Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 42.

[70] Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 120–24.

While carrying a clearly negative connotation in the Umayyad discourse against ʿAlid opposition leaders, the notion of *farīq* (with the root *f-r-q*) could be used both positively and negatively in early Islamic discourse. A famous verse in surah *Āl ʿImrān* in the Qurʾan states: "And hold fast, all of you together (*jamīʿan*), to the rope (*ḥabl*) of Allah, and do not separate (*lā tafarraqū*)" (3:103). Here, division is used discouragingly to prohibit divisions among "those who believe" and the "*muslimūn*" who are mentioned in the previous verse (3:102). The believers are also discouraged from being incited by certain factions among "whose who received scripture" who are generally understood to mean mainly Christians and Jews in the early Arabian context: "If ye obey a party (*farīq*) of those who have received the Scripture they will make you disbelievers after your belief."[71] As Van Ess writes: "*firqa* was very close to *furqa*, meaning 'schism, dissention'. In fact, the numbers seventy or seventy-two, which marked the breadth of the split inside the community, had been taken, by analogy, from a paradigmatic event which was widely known in salvation history: the erection of the Tower of Babel." Moreover, "both numbers were symbolic, denoting plenitude and perfection seventy-two (as six times twelve)."[72]

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[71] For a discussion of the historical context behind the revelation of this verse that discouraged tribal antagonism between the Medinan tribes of Aws and Khazraj, see: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Nāṣir Khusrau, 1365SH), 4: 155.

[72] Van Ess, "Constructing Islam in the 'Classical' Period," 482.

Elsewhere, in the context of Prophet Abraham and his “people” (*qawm*)—among whom were polytheists (*mushrikīn*)—Abraham addresses them by asking: “which of the two factions (*al-farīqatayn*) hath more right to safety? (Answer me that) if ye have knowledge. It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong – that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance.”[73] One of these factions, or *farīq*/*firqa*, are therefore the rightly guided ones (*muhtadūn*) and those who have believed (*al-ladhīnā āmanū*)—a righteous and saved group or sect, in other words. Elsewhere, the Qurʿan mentions past communities to whom were sent the Prophets Moses and Jesus but instead of accepting the truth, one subsection of these communities repudiated the prophets and another subsection killed them (*farīqan kadhdhabtum wa farīqan taqtulūn*).[74]

As these references demonstrate, sects and partisanship are recognized in the Qurʾan and terms such as *farīq* or *shīʿa* in the Qurʾan (i.e. partisan, sect, group, or follower are intrinsically neutral and can take on both positive as well as negative implications depending on whether they follow the signs and path of the Prophets of God. It is impossible to avoid the idea of partisanship or sectarianism all together as these ideas are embedded in the early sources. Therefore, by focusing on how early Islamic authors understood partisanship and politics, we can gain a better understanding of the different approaches to the idea of sects and sectarianism in their evolving historical contexts. Importantly, as mentioned above, many of the divisions among the early Islamic community were largely disagreements over a shared vocabulary and understanding of divinely guided leadership; their main areas of difference were over placing blame on who was causing corruption and divisions among the community.

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[73] Qurʾan, *al-Anʿām*: 81-82. Ismāʿīl b.ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1419H), 3: 263–65.

[74] Qurʾan, *al-Baqara*: 87.

Heresiographies and Doxography in the Early Islamic Tradition

The rise of the heresiographical tradition, known as the genre of *firaq* or *maqālāt*, that outlined different schools and sects of Muslims, demonstrates the acute self-awareness of early Islamic writers of the vast diversity of beliefs, positions, and identities expressed by different segments of the larger Muslim community. The work, for example, of the famous theologian Abu-l Ḥasan ʿAli b. Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935-6) is entitled "The Doctrines/Beliefs of those who Profess Islam and the Disagreements of those Who Pray" (*Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*),[75] which bears resemblance, as has been noted by many scholars, with Abu-l Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Kaʿbī (d. 319/931), a student of Abū ʿAli al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/915), in his *Maqālāt Firaq Ahl al-Qibla*.[76] Al-Kaʿbī, moreover, drew from a rich variety of authors that preceded him. The tradition of doxographical writing and recording the history of theological ideas well preceded the later paradigmatic heresiologies, such as those of al-ʿAsharī, that we are more commonly reference.[77]

Other well-known or notable works in the heresiographical genre include *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* of ʿAbd al-Qāhir Ibn Ṭāhir al-Shāfiʿī al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037),[78] *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fi-l Milāl wa-l Aḥwāʾ wa-l Niḥal* of Abū Muḥammad ʿAli Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064),[79] *Kitāb Bayān al-Adyān* of Abū al-Maʿālī Muḥammad b. Niʿmat b. ʿUbaydallāh (d. after 485/1092) written in

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[75] Abu-l Ḥasan ʿAli b. Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī, *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, ed. Helmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980); George Makdisi, "Ashʿarī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History I," *Studia Islamica*, no. 17 (1962): 37–80.

[76] James Weaver, "A Footnote to the Composition History of Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn: The Internal Parallels in al-Ashʿarī's Material on the Shia," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 4, no. 2 (2017): 142–86.

[77] Josef Van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, trans. Gwendolin Goldbloom (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1: 71ff.

[78] 'Abd al-Qāhir Ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq wa Bayān al-Firqah al-Nājiyah Minhum*, ed. Muḥammad Fatḥī Nādī (Cairo: Dār al-Salām lil-Ṭibā' wa-l Nashr, 2010).

[79] Abū Muḥammad ʿAli b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fi-l Milāl wa-l Aḥwāʾ wa-l Niḥal* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānjī, n.d.). Also see: 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm, *The Heterodoxies of the Shiites, According to Ibn Hazm: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, ed. Israel Friedlaender (New Haven, 1909).

Persian,[80] and *Kitāb al-Milal wa-l Niḥal* (Book of Peoples/Nations and Creeds) of Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī (d. 548/1153).[81] Wilferd Madelung and Paul Walker also published an important critical edition and translation of the “Chapter on Satan” (*Bāb al-Shaytān*) in the *Kitāb al-Shajara* of Abū Tammām, a 4th/10th century Ismaʿili missionary (*dāʿī*) and disciple of the Ismaʿili Khurāsāī missionary Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 332/943). The work is a sharp polemic focused on the 72 “founders and instigators of heretical sects” in the eyes of Abū Tammām, clearly based on the well-known tradition of forsaken sects (*hadith al-iftirāq*), with the saved sect of course being the Ismaʿilis.[82]

Speaking on some of the changes that the genre or heresiography underwent, Van Ess notes that earlier authors of heresiography such as Abu-l Qāsim al-Kaʿbī “the first great Muʿtazili heresiographer,” and al-Ashʿarī “did not yet deal the religious reality in terms of true and false. Rather he collected the opinions and doctrines… but did not attack them for their differences. These idiosyncrasies did not become heresies or ‘objects of abomination’ (*faḍāʾiḥ*) until a century later, in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī’s*al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*.”[83] Important works penned by Shiʿi authors also carried similar titles, including Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Mūṣa al-Nawbakhtī’s (d. after early 4th/10th century) *Firaq al-Shīʿa*,[84] possibly written before 286/899,[85] followed shortly thereafter by Sa‘d b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī’s (d. 300/912) *Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa-l Firaq*.[86] Madelung posits that *Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa-l Firaq* may have been written between 286/899 and 292/90 based on al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī’s entry on the Qarāmiṭa and their revolutionary activities, which although plausible, is circumstantial evidence.[87] Al-Ashʿari al-Qummī was a prolific and prominent scholar who lived part of his earlier life during the time of Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (d. 260/874) and was a teacher of famous Twelver scholars such as Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941), and ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 329/941), the father of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991).

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[80] Muḥammad Ḥasanī ʿAlavī Abū al-Maʿālī, *Bayān al-Adyān*, ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl Āshtīyānī and Muḥammad Taqī Danishpazhūh (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Rawzanih, 1376).

[81] Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī and Muḥammad b. Fatḥullāh Badrān, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-l Niḥal*, 2 vols. (Qumm: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1375SH). For the Persian and English translations, see: Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī, *Tarjumih-ye Kitāb al-Milal wa-l Niḥal*, trans. Muḥammad ʿImādī Hāʾirī (Tehran: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-ye Mīrāth, 1395SH); Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects and Divisions: The Section on Muslim Sects in Kitāb al-Milal Wa ’l-Niḥal* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984).

[82] Wilferd Madelung and Paul Ernest Walker, *An Ismaili Heresiography: The “Bāb al-Shayṭān” from Abū Tammām’s Kitāb al-Shajara* (Leiden: Brill, 1998). Also see: Paul E. Walker, “Abū Tammām and His Kitāb al-Shajara: A New Ismaili Treatise from Tenth-Century Khurasan,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, no. 3 (1994): 343–52.

[83] Van Ess, “Constructing Islam in the ‘Classical’ Period,” 486.

[84] The original manuscript of al-Nawbakhtī’s *Firaq al-Shīʿa* was first edited and published by Helmut Ritter in Istanbul in 1931. For the editions consulted in this work, see: Hasan b. Mūsā Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAli al-Husaynī al-Shahristānī (Beirut: Dār al-Adwāʾ, 1404). For the Persian and English translations,

Mohammad Javad Mashkour cites six Shiʿi authors, according to biographical dictionaries and bibliographical listings, who wrote similarly titled heresiographical works within a fifty-year time span prior to and after his death. In addition to Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, these authors include, among others, Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. Ḥārūn al-Warrāq (d. 247/861-2), a famous theologian who wrote a work entitled *Ikhtilāf al-Shīʿa*,[88] as well as Abū Qāsim Naṣr b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Balkhī, a noted traditionist who authored a work entitled *Firaq al-Shīʿa*. Al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Balkhī narrated traditions to the famous author of a Shiʿi biographical dictionary, Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Kashshī (d. 350/961) who often refers to al-Balkhī’s *Firaq al-Shīʿa* in his own work, *Rijāl al-Kashshī*. Other Shiʿi authors, however, considered al-Balkhī to

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see: Ḥasan b. Mūsā Nawbakhtī, *Tarjumih-Ye Firaq al-Shīʿih-Ye Nawbakhtī*, trans. Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1353); and, al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Shīʿa Sects: (Kitāb Firaq al-Shīʿa)*, trans. Abbas Kadhim (London: ICAS Press, 2007).

[85] Wilferd Madelung, “Some Remarks on the Imāmī Firaq Literature,” in *Shīʿism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 154.

[86] Saʿd b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-Maqālāt Wa-l Firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr (Tehran: Intishārāt-i ʿIlmī va Farhangī, 1341).

[87] Madelung, “Some Remarks on the Imāmī Firaq Literature,” 154.

[88] Al-Warrāq is also mentioned as a noted author in the genre of heresiography by Abu-l Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-Masʿūdī in *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l Ishrāf*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Ismāʿīl al-Ṣāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣāwī, n.d.), 342. Ibn al-Nadīm referred to al-Warrāq as a learned Muʿtazili theologian “who then became subject to confusion (*takhlīṭ*), and this led to him being accused of dualism… [Ibn al-Nadīm used] the term *takhlīṭ* to describe those who were Muʿtazilīs at an earlier point in their lives, referring to them as ‘a group of Muʿtazilīs who innovated and forged their own path’ (*qawm min al-Muʿtazila abdaʿū wa tafarradū*) as opposed to ‘the true Muʿtazilīs’ (*al-Muʿtazila al-mukhliṣīn*);” see: “Abū ʿĪsā al- Warrāq,” *Encyclopaedia Islamica*.

be an extremist (*ghāl*).[89] Naṣr b. al-Ṣabbāḥ also narrated traditions to Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-ʿAyyāshī al-Samarqandī (d. 320/932) who authored an important early Twelver Shiʿi Qurʾan exegesis, *Tafsīr al-ʿAyyāshī*.[90]

Following al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, the Twelver Shiʿi scholar Abū Ṭālib ʿAbdallāh al-Anbārī (d. 365/975-6 in Wāṣit, Iraq) is also recorded by Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm (d. ca. 385/995), al-Najāshī, and al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) to have written a work entitled *Firaq al-Shīʿa*.[91] He was reported to have been a *wāqifī* Shiʿi prior to returning to the fold of the "Imāmiyya" (*ʿāda ila-l Imāma*). Among al-Anbārī's numerous works was the *Book on the Names of Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (i.e. Imam Ali), a work ostensibly on the overlap between Muʾtazili thought and the imamate (or possibly more directly on Imāmī Shiʿi thought) entitled *Kitāb fi-l Tawḥīd wa-l ʿAdl wa-l Imāma*, as well as books on Faṭima bt. Muḥammad, al-Ghadīr, Fadak, the famous hadith *al-manzila*, and reports or a history of the Abbasid caliphs.[92]

Al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) also mentions that the Twelver traditionist, Abū Muẓaffar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Naʿīmī authored a work on Shiʿi sects and historical reports regarding the Ṭālibids ("*firaq al-shīʿa wa akhbār āl abī Ṭālib*") which was known as *Kitāb al-Bahja* (the Book of Splendor).[93] Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī additionally reports that the scholar Abū Bishr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Muʿlā b. Asad al-ʿAmmī (d. after 350/961), in addition to authoring works on history and virtues of Imam ʿAli (*Manāqib Amīr al-Muʾminīn*), also penned a work on sects and divisions in Islam (*Kitāb al-Firaq*). Abū Bishr’s grandfather, Abū Haytham al-Muʿla b. Asad al-ʿAmmī al-Baṣrī (d. 218/833), is discussed as a narrator and scholar in several Sunni works, including Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAli Manjuwayh’s (d. 428/1036-7) *Rijaāl Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.[94] Notably, al-Ṭūsī states that he was informed about all of the writings and narrations of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm from the works of the scholar Aḥmad b. ʿAbdūn (d. 348/959-60) through the same Abū Ṭālib al-Anbārī previously mentioned.[95]

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[89] Abu-l Qāsim b. ʿAli Akbar al-Khuʾī, *Muʿjam Rijāl Al-Ḥadīth Wa Tafsīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt* (Najaf: Muʾassisa al-Imām al-Khuʾī al-Islāmiyya, n.d.), 19: 136; Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, "Kitāb-i al-Maqālāt-i Saʿd b. ʿAbdullāh Ashʿarī Qummī va Muqāyisih-Ye Ān bā Firaq al-Shīʿa-ye Nawbakhtī," *Adabīyāt va Zabānhā* Nov.-Dec., no. 33 (1975): 755.

[90] Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd 'Ayyāshī, *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, ed. Hāshim al-Rasūlī al-Maḥallātī (Tehran: al-Maktaba al-'Ilmīya, 1380). For the English translation, see: Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-' Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr Al-ʿAyyāshī: A Fourth/Tenth Century Shīʿī Commentary on the Qur'an*, ed. Wahid M Amin, trans. Nazmina Dhanji (Birmingham: AMI Press, 2020).

[91] Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, ed. Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī (Qum: Muʾasasa al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1986), 232; Mashkūr, "Kitāb-i al-Maqālāt-i Saʿd b. ʿAbdullāh Ashʿarī Qummī," 755.

[92] Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, 233.

[93] Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, 395.

This latter point is of importance since all three scholars mentioned by al-Ṭūsī as his chain of scholastic scholarly transmission—Aḥmad b. ʿAbdūn, Abī Ṭālib al-Anbāri, and Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm—are all recorded to have authored works of heresiography (*firaq*). These three authors cited by al-Ṭūsī were contemporaneous with each other and predated al-Ṭūsī by roughly one century but followed al-Nawbakhtī and al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī by about half a century. This suggests that al-Ṭūsī likely received their works in manuscript form and that al-Ṭūsī’s reception of al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī’s heresiographical works were mediated by Aḥmad b. ʿAbdūn who possibly synthesized or updated his colleague’s scholarship.[96] This group of scholars therefore, may represent the intermediary narrators and scholars who kept alive, and likely updated, the heresiographical works of earlier Shiʿi authors on the subject of Shiʿi sectarian divisions (*firaq al-Shīʿa*) before reaching scholars like al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī who passed away approximately within a decade of each other in the mid-5th/11th century.

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[94] Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAli Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. ʿAbdallāh al-Laythī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1407H), 2: 244.

[95] Aḥmad b. ʿAbdūn (d. 348/959-60), as the biographical dictionaries inform us, was one of the reliable sources and informants for al-Najāshī; Ibn ʿAbdūn compiled *hadith* works and authored books in several genres, including history, literature (*adab*). Ibn ʿAbdūn also composed a book on the speeches of Fatima bt. Muḥammad (*Kitāb Tafsīr Khuṭbat-l Zahrāʾ*); see: Abu-l Qāsim b. ʿAli Akbar al-Khuʾī, *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa Tafsīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt* (Najaf: Muʾassisa al-Imām al-Khuʾī al-Islāmiyya, n.d.), 2: 147.

[96] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shīʿa*, ed. Sayyid ʿAbd al-Azīz al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (Qumm: Maktaba al-Muḥaqiq al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1420H), 71–72.

As Mashkour notes, al-ʿAsharī al-Qummī's work had slightly alternative titles as recorded by different Shiʿi authors throughout history; Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAli Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) records the title as *Maqālāt al-Imāmiyya,* and Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) as *Maqālāt al-Imāmiyya wa-l Firaq wa Asmāʾuhā wa Ṣunūfuhā*.[97] Many of these works can be found referenced in the genre of typologized book catalogues or indexes, "*fahāris*," an Arabized version of the Middle Persian word "*pihrist*," or "*pihr ast*."[98] Saʿd b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ashʿarī is reported to have also written a *fihrist*, which Mahdi Khoddamiyan al-Arrani has reconstructed using a narrative tracing method based primarily off of al-Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) own *Fihrist* and al-Najāshī's (d. 450/1058) *Rijāl*, as well as consulting with several other primary Shiʿi sources such as biographical dictionaries and *hadith* works.[99]

Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Mūṣa al-Nawbakhtī, the author of *Firaq al-Shīʿa* also penned works entitled *al-Radd ʿala-l Ghulāt wa Ghayrihim min al-Bāṭiniyya*, and *Kitāb al-Ārāʾ wa-l Dīyānāt* which the historian Abu-l Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) reported to have access to in his work *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l Ishrāf*.[100] Al-Masʿūdī discusses al-Nawbakhtī, among other writers, on the topic of sects of Islam (*firaq al-Islām*) among the Muʿtazilis, the Murjiʾites, and the Khārijis, who wrote on doctrines and beliefs in order to refute their opponents (*al-mukhālifīn*). Al-Masʿūdī lists topics addressed by these various authors, including works on the refutation of the Khurramiyya and the doctrine of transmigration of souls,[101] such as Abū ʿAli Muḥammad b. ʿAb al-Wahhāb al-Jubāʾī's (d. 303/915-6) work, *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā Aṣḥāb al-*

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[97] Mashkūr, "Kitāb-i al-Maqālāt-i Saʿd b. ʿAbdullāh Ashʿarī Qummī," 756.
[98] I thank Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Husayn Jalali for informing me about the Middle Persian root of the word *fihrist*; see: Mahdī Khuddāmiyān al-Ārānī, *Fahāris al-Shīʿa* (Qumm: Muʾasissah Turāth al-Shīʿa, 1431H), 1: 35.
[99] Al-Ārānī, *Fahāris al-Shīʿa*, 1: 147–276.
[100] Al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l Ishrāf*, 342–43.
[101] On the "Khurramiyya," see Wilferd Madelung's article in *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*, and Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 279–388.

Tanāsukh wa-l Khurramiyya, which Masʿūdī states he personally read.[102] Madelung has also theorized that the first parts of the works of al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī were likely based on Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's (d. 179/815) work *Kitāb Ikhtilāf al-Nās fi-l Imāma*.[103] Tamima Bayhom-Daou, moreover, argues that al-Nawbakhtī may have altered some, but not all, of what he was drawing from Hishām.[104]

This information reflects the rich proliferation of works in the heresiographical genre among Shiʿi writers who were embedded within larger Islamic literatures. As discussed above, among Shi'i writers there existed numerous doxographical and heresiographical works (*maqālāt* and *firaq*) works as well that precede the well-known Nawbakhtī and Ashʿarī-Qummī books. This raises interesting questions about how a "book" became a central reference within a tradition, likely by largely synthesizing the previous literature written in the genre in an efficient or appealing manner—and editing some of the information as well—for scholars and readers who later pivoted to these texts likely at least initially understanding them as amalgamated texts as it seems Nawbakhti's work did by taking from Hishām b. Hakam, Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq, and others.

Literature Review on Sectarian Identity and Islam

Emergence of Islam

Before turning to the particular findings and research undertaken in this dissertation, it would be beneficial to provide a very brief survey of how scholars in the field understand the origins of Islam as a distinct religion or movement, as well as the debates around confessional splits within

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[102] Al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l Ishrāf*, 342.
[103] Wilferd Madelung, "Some Remarks on the Imāmī Firaq Literature," in *Shīʿism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 156.
[104] Tamima Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Hakam (d. 179/795) and His Doctrine of the Imam's Knowledge," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2003): 79ff.

Islam with a focus on the emergence of Shiʿi sectarian identity in particular. There has been a substantive and lively scholarly discussion on the origins of Islam stemming from the early Western Orientalist literature that has continued until today in contemporary academic scholarship. Much of the debate, along with ancillary related topics, revolves around questions of the authenticity or novelty of Islam versus "foreign influences" that impacted Islam, and, in a related vein, academic inquiries focus on how long and in which ways Islam became "reified" as a religion. In other words, how long did it take for Islam to become a proper religion with distinct boundaries?

In recent decades, some scholars of late antiquity and early Islam have penned numerous works that challenged the conventional classical narrative regarding the origins and early development of Islam. These revisionist works tend to focus either on foreign vocabularies found in the Quran usually with an emphasis on Syriac Christian or Hebrew Jewish influences on (proto)-Islam,[105] or on late-antique sectarian social milieus to demonstrate the confessional pluralism that defined the socio-cultural context of early Islam.[106] While some strands of scholarship questioned basic historical facts of the early period, today these debates generally take for granted the historicity of the Prophet Muḥammad, the early existence and centrality of the Qurʾan, and that there was an "Abrahamic" monotheism versus polytheism "subtext" to the revelation of the Qur'an in the Arabian Peninsula.

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[105] For a detailed historiographical and methodological discussion, see: Fred Donner, "The Qur'an in Recent Scholarship," in *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2008), 29–50. Also see: Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'an and Its Biblical Subtext* (New York: Routledge, 2010). Equally important influences in the late antique-era which influenced early Islam include Zoroastrian, Manichean, and other non-Christian and non-Jewish confessional religious belief systems but have been understudied with an emphasis placed on Syriac, Aramaic, Hebrew, and other literary sources. A notable exception which does not strictly focus on the question of the emergence of early Islam or the vocabulary of the Qur'an but nonetheless incorporates a diverse array of religious and linguistic sources focusing on this period is Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997). Another noteworthy work includes Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). It is important to further emphasize that the idea of "foreign vocabularies" are by no means a new or modern research finding but have been discussed at length in classical Islamic works, e.g. Suyuti, *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*. For further explorations on the dozens of Arabic regional and tribal dialects impacting the vocabulary of the Qurʾan and their etymological roots, see: Ismāʿīl b. ʿAmr, *Kitāb al-Lughāt fi-l Qurʾān*, ed. Salah al-Din al-Munjid (Cairo: Matbat al-Risala, 1365). and Mohammad Hadi Ma'rifat, *ʿUlūm-i Qurʾānī* (Qom: Mu'asisih-ye Farhangi-ye Tamhid-i Qum, 1378).

[106] Donner, for example, emphasizes the monotheistic reform project of Prophet Muḥammad as opposed to a reified notion of early Islam; see his *Muḥammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). A complementary philological approach to *Muḥammad and the Believers* is provided by Juan Cole, "Paradosis and Monotheism: A Late Antique Approach to the Meaning of Islām in the Quran," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 82, no. 3 (October 2019): 405–25. For a succinct discussion on the

Yet the scholarly camps differ on who exactly the early Muslims were (if they even existed as a religious identity) and what early Islam looked like. Therefore, the question in these works becomes why and how Islam is different from Judaism, Christianity or other "monotheistic reform movements" in the early period. Further, how long does it take Islam to become a separate religion, and how does this happen? Here again, there are different interpretations amongst scholars of early Islam. Many adhere to the basic sketch of early Islam found in the classical Arabic Islamic narratives that place a more or less cohesive Muslim identity at the origins of Prophet Muḥammad's message,[107] while others (skeptics) radically question or dismiss the early sources and argue that Islam was in fact either a Jewish or Christian offshoot whose early history was covered up by later Muslim authors,[108] while finally others take a middle ground methodological approach which takes the classical sources, alongside other pieces of evidence from non-Muslim sources, seriously while still engaging in critical attempts of re-construction of history.[109] This latter camp is probably the mainstream approach within contemporary academia and accept certain basic facts such as the historicity of the Prophet

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different academic camps on the question of early Islamic origins, see: Fred Donner, "How Ecumenical Was Early Islam?" (Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lecture in Arab and Islamic Studies, Seattle: University of Washington, 2013).

[107] See, for example: W. Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad: Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Martin Lings, *Muḥammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1991).

[108] On Islam as a "Jewish-Arab" conspiracy and written, as the authors put it "by infidels for infidels," see: Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); on the Qur'an's basis as a primarily Syriac Christian influenced text, see: Christoph Luxenberg, *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran* (Berlin: Schiler Verlag, 2007).

[109] See for example: Aziz Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*; Sean Anthony, *Muḥammad and the Empires of Faith* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

Muḥammad and early dating to the Qurʾan but recognize that social processes and Islamic sectarian identity evolved in complex, and often non-linear, ways over time.

Diverse Interpretations of Islam

Moving beyond the question of the origins of Islam itself, the question of the origins of confessional identity and divisions *within* Islam has also been subject to various debates within the field. Generally, these debates are focused on the issue of legal school (*madhhab*) formation, canonization of legal textual sources including *hadith*, as well as studies on the intellectual (i.e. doctrinal/dogmatic) developments in the history of Islamic theology, legal theory, and philosophy. While many of these works do not explicitly place the question of confessional identity and sectarian formation at the center of their inquiries, they nonetheless significantly contribute to these debates and present findings, which are necessary pieces of the larger puzzle of confessional divisions within Islam, including studies on the origins of differing ritual practices, alternative frameworks of *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, doctrinal beliefs, and the development of internal leadership or scholarly hierarchies.

Scholarship on *madhhab* formation and rise of canonization processes are key debates within the field of Islamic studies, and the study of Muslim confessional identities as legal *madhhab*s provide proscriptions for ritual observance of Islam that have demarcated Muslim identities and communities through outward practice. The works of Ahmed El Shamsy, Najam Haider, Jonathan Brown, Wael Hallaq, and Devin Stewart, among other authors, have provided important contemporary scholarly narratives in understanding the interplay between textual canonization, rise of *madhhab*s, ritual communal practices, the genre of *hadīth* studies, *uṣūl al-*

fiqh, *sharīʿa*, and *ijtihad*, among other areas.[110] The aforementioned scholarship is complemented by the careful study of early debates surrounding the "translation movement" by Dmitri Gutas and Kees Versteegh, among others, who discuss the importance of linguistics and language theory with the importation of critical Greek, Pahlavi, Sanskrit, and Syriac works into Arabic.[111] This is also a topic to which Marshall Hodgson also deftly contributed in his work *Venture of Islam* by demonstrating the Arabic language's status as a host language of sorts for various Semitic and Indo-European languages and field of sciences largely fragmented and isolated from each other prior to the early Islamic conquests. After being subsidized and translated by Muslim powers, these diverse world literatures were essentially standardized in scholarly Arabic, put into conversation with one another in ways previously unimaginable, and formed a corpus for long term intellectual studies still pertinent to global scholarship until this day.[112]

Turning to the question of textual canons, the process of canonization, as El Shamy argues, was in partial response to the instabilities facing the early Muslim community. In this context, there was a potential for vastly variant definitions of Islam to develop in distinct geographic zones among different communities, which could over time become too distinct and unrecognizable from one another. However:

> canonization offered a solution to this dilemma by enshrining revelation in a mixed category of textual sources – the canon – that could then be subjected to systematic

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[110] Ahmed El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Hadith: Muḥammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009); Wael B. Hallaq, *Sharī'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy*; Haider, *The Origins of the Shī'a*.

[111] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*; Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1997). For the important contributions of Ibn Muqaffaʿ who translated works from Pahlavi into Arabic, see: 'Abbās Iqbāl, *Sharḥ-i Ḥāl-i ʿAbdullāh b. al-Muqaffaʿ*, ed. ʿAbdukarīm Jurbuzihdār (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭīr, 1382), 57ff. For the influence of language theory on Shāfiʿī's thoughts, see El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, 77ff.

[112] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1: 410ff.

> analysis by a professionalized group of experts" who could systematize diversity of opinion within certain rigorous bounds of scholastic acceptability and reproduce scholastically rigorous logic and consistency over time.[113]

One of the key figures studied in the history of both *uṣūl al-fiqh* as well as canonization is Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820). As El Shamsy writes, al-Shāfiʿī "developed the first explicit theorization of revelation as divine communication encapsulated in the textual form of the Quran and its auxiliary, prophetic Hadith," which was a key step in arguing for the "exclusive status of the sacred texts and for the barring of communal practice from the determination of Islamic law."[114] This development, which was significantly augmented by al-Shāfiʿī's students and future generations of scholars influenced by him, greatly contributed to new institutions of *madhhab*s forming communities of "interpretation that defined itself in terms of a shared hermeneutic stance vis-à-vis the canon of sacred sources."[115]

Additional works that have contributed to the field include George Makdisi's *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* as well as *Ibn ʿAqil: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam,* which shed light on the crucial scholastic environment of early and middle period Islamicate societies as well as the importance of *uṣūl al-fiqh* as a scholastic disciple defining the scope, general acceptable rules, and contours of the fields of knowledge studied in Muslim institutions of learning.[116] His work on *jadal* and dialectic disputation provides an important insight into how the internal logic of leading Islamic genres of science were delimited through scholastic debate and refined through the gradual adaptation of technical concepts and terms disputed over extended periods of time and in turbulent socio-political contexts. These emergent disciplines, in turn, were important as the intellectual and scholastic subtext for the rise of Islamic "schools of law" and the larger scholastic milieus in which *uṣūl al-fiqh* and scholarly camps were embedded. Devin Stewart's *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy* also provides detailed information about the contiguous growth of Sunni and Shiʿi legal schools and the rise of the *raʾīs al-madhhab* in the case of the Twelver Shiʿis with al-Shaykh al-Mufīd and his student al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.[117] Stewart lists 45 notable Shiʿi scholars that Shaykh Mufīd and his student Shaykh Ṭūsī trained who would go on to solidify the legal school of Twelver Imami law.[118]

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[113] El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, 5.

[114] The adoption of this theoretical argument took time and the arduous work and emendations of many scholars before becoming mainstream. As El Shamsy further argues al-Shāfiʿī was not the first "source of this impulse" but he effectively synthesized developments in their "first systematic and enduring expression" in his writings; El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, 5. Wael Hallaq, in a similar vein, argues for the gradual mainstream adoption of al-Shāfiʿī's methods over time in large part through the work of future scholars and the penning of erudite commentaries on the *Risāla* which expounded on his original arguments in gradually more sophisticated ways; "Was Al-Shafiʿi the Master Architect of Islamic Jurisprudence?," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 4 (1993): 587–605.

[115] El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, 6.

[116] George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984); George Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqil: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997). Also see: George Makdisi, "Scholasticism and Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 2 (1989): 175–82.

Makdisi additionally asserts that even once the legal guilds (*madhhab*s) were established and gained financial independence through *awqāf* funds, they began to regulate dialectic theology (*kalām*) on their own terms, forcing the *kalām*-theologians "to join the Traditionalist organization of higher learning, subject to the legal guild's rules and regulations." But, as he argues "once securely established in the legal guild structure, Muʿtazilis and Ashʿaris continued their efforts to teach *kalām*, using as Trojan horses three disciplines taught in the legal guild colleges: *ḥadīth*, *waʿẓ*, and *uṣūl al-fiqh*."[119] While the divisions between theologians, philosophers, and jurists may not have been as stark and class-based as Makdisi mentions, he does touch upon the important institutional setting and eclectic intellectual and socio-political context of *madhhab* formation. What these debates demonstrate, generally, is that although the roots of the legal schools, canonization, and intellectual methodologies can be traced back to decades and even preceding centuries, the processes of canonization and crystallization can generally be placed in the 3rd – 4thH/ 9th – 10th CE centuries, which paralleled the developments in Shiʿi sectarian identity and the gradual hardening of boundaries that were taking place in the larger socio-political context.[120]

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[117] Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy*, 128.

[118] Stewart, 129–30.

[119] Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqil*, 59. As El Shamsy points out, Makdisi's main emphasis is on the social structure or institutional dimension of the legal schools in analyzing these interactions and dating of the development of the schools; El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, 169.

Diverse Interpretations of Shiʿism and Discussions on Methodology

Before discussing some of the contemporary academic debates regarding sectarian identity within Shiʿism, it would be useful to briefly outline some of the methodological approaches undertaken in this study for comparison to other works on early Shiʿi sectarian identity. This dissertation is a survey work covering a large span of time, approximately two centuries from the Abbasid revolution in 129/749 to the end of the Minor Occultation period 329/941, and cannot comprehensively cover all Shiʿi revolutionary activity during the time period in detail. The decision to conduct a survey study over a large period of time is an intentional one that enables the dissertation to focus on slow-moving processes and macro structural and organizational patterns found across Shiʿi revolutionary activity across time and space. It also means that the selected cases of Shiʿi revolutions and governments covered in the dissertation will serve as representative samples and moments that can potentially reflect larger patterns and provide insights into interconnected phenomena.

Moreover, the present study adopts a multi-methods approach that combines philology, narrative criticism, source-critical methods, and traditional hadith sciences along with reconstructivist socio-political history,[121] intellectual history, and social network analysis. The utility of adopting multiple methodologies rests with strengthening the confidence of our findings, especially if different methods can demonstrate similar outcomes. As Fowler et. al argue:

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[120] Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 151; El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, 172ff.

[121] See Alun Munslow's discussion on "history as reconstruction/construction" in his *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 2006), 36–56.

> The point is to argue for mixing multiple methods in the same research, in particular to mix statistical data on observed correlations with direct observation (as close as one can, with whatever tools are available) of hypothesized process. Each method gives a different slant or perspective into the phenomenon of interest. The more eyes we have to see with, the more confident we are that what we see is in the world, not in our mind. In particular, the closer we get to observing through different lenses the process we hypothesize, the more confident we become that this is indeed what is generating our data.[122]

Regarding the question of identity and change over time, this dissertation further utilizes a theoretical approach advocated by John Padgett and Walter Powell that distances itself from methodological individualism (i.e. forming axioms on fixed individual identities and entities) and adopts a framework of "novelty."[123] This interdisciplinary theory, partially inspired by the autocatalytic theory of life prevalent in the chemical sciences, can be used to explain the question of emergence (or "speciation") as a product of re-combinations of existing forms from a pre-existing "set" into a new species, or in this case, a new sectarian iteration. In other words, we can think of Shiʿi identities as branching continua that recombine at particular junctures into novel forms (i.e. sects). In this thinking, nothing is "new"; rather novelty emerges through the recombination of previously existing forms through processes of innovation or invention.[124] And even though these forms may have once shared common ancestry, new identities can take on a life of their own. The challenge for this study then becomes to define what the common pool or

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[122] James H. Fowler et al., "Causality in Political Networks," *American Politics Research* 39, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 468.

[123] See John Frederick Padgett and Walter W. Powell, *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[124] Padgett and Powell, "The Problem of Emergence," 5-7.

"pre-existing set" constitutes Shiʿism and how and why re-constitutions occur with Shi'i elemental components.

In order to do so, this dissertation proposes a tentative minimalist definition of Shiʿi identity that would create a broad domain space: the belief in the superiority and *exclusive* primacy of the family of the Prophet Muḥammad as a guiding requisite for leadership.[125] As will be discussed at length throughout this work, although heavily dominated by the ʿAlid branch, the concept of the family (*Āl*) of the Prophet was a highly contested category largely contained in the Muṭṭalibid line of the Banū Hāshim. This broader definition helps capture a more accurate and diverse subset of revolts and actors claiming to be representatives of the Prophet's family, such as the Abbasids and their ideological progenitors the Kaysāniyya (who supported the ʿAlid leadership of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya),[126] the Ṭālibids, and other subgroups such as the ʿAqīlids. This approach underlines how notions of the Prophet's family (*Āl Muḥammad*) were highly contested and open to interpretation—interpretations that were subject to doctrinal and even violent revolutionary disagreements. Following this minimalist definition of early Shiʿism, a multidimensional set of positions can be envisioned amongst the Shiʿa that can differ across issues such as the cosmological status of the Imams, propensity towards armed revolutionary action, Mahdist-eschatological expectations, and beliefs towards legitimate representation of the Imam, among others.

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[125] The idea that the leaders of the Muslim *umma* should be from Quraysh were present among early scholars and can be seen in traditions in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, for example, and a number of earlier *hadith* and eschatological works. In addition, the qualities of the Banū Hāshim as well as the *Ahl al-Bayt* were heavily emphasized in early literatures across different scholarly and communal camps. However, as discussed in this study, in contrast with others, the Shiʿis restricted leadership to the Banū Hāshim and later to either the descendants of ʿAli or only the sons of ʿAli and Fāṭima. See relevant discussions in Jassim M. Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background* (London: Muḥammadi Trust, 1982); and, Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[126] See: Kadi, *al-Kaysānīyah fi-l Tārīkh wa-l Adab*.

While there are abundant (and rich) works on individual aspects of early Shiʿism, less comparative survey studies have been undertaken to examine how sectarian splits occurred *within* Shiʿism itself. Methodologically, many notable works, such as Hossein Modarressi's *Crisis and Consolidation*, undertake narrative reconstruction for their take on the socio-political history,[127] while others are more delimited in scope (such as Haidar's *The Origins of the Shi'a*, which focuses mainly on important ritual developments in the city of Kufa). The scholarly field largely lacks broader survey research of the political history of early Shiʿism that treats the Twelvers, Ismaʿilis, Zaydis, and other groups together.[128] There are exceptions, of course, including Marshall Hodgson's "How Did the Early Shīʿa become Sectarian?," that undertook a historical political approach to various developments such as the coming to power of the Abbasids and the responses that various Shiʿi groups adopted in establishing in-group and out-group boundaries and the role that *naṣṣ*, or divine designation over the issue of succession, played in process of the Shiʿa becoming "sectarian."[129] The general point here in emphasizing the importance of comparative historical study is to combine different methodological and scholarly approaches and to synthesize and to apply rigorous social science theory alongside traditional philological and historical source-based approaches.

Additional studies in Shiʿi classical texts (including philological study), intellectual history, phenomenology, historiography, and law, as undertaken by scholars such as Wilferd Madelung, Hossein Modarressi, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Paul Walker, Sabine Schmidtke,

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[127] Although it should be noted that Hossein Modarressi does not explicitly state he is using a particular methodology.

[128] Maria Massi Dakake's *The Charismatic Community: Shi'ite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007) is an exception as an insightful early history of Shīʿism covers up to the period of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in particular and the intense authority disputes between the Shiʿa following his death. Najam Haider's work, *Shīʿī Islam*, is also a welcome comparative work which treats Twelvers, Ismaʿilis and Zaydis alongside one another and is meant as an basic introductory text to Shiʿi Islam from its origins until the contemporary period; *Shīʿī Islam: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[129] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shî'a Become Sectarian?" For a critical engagement with Hodgson's definition of *naṣṣ*, see: Adem, "Classical Naṣṣ Doctrines in Imāmī Shīʿism."

Devin Stewart, Farhad Daftary, and other leading scholars of Shiʿism, are quite rich and have vastly contributed to our understanding of the early period. By triangulating the philological and intellectual historical methods predominant in Shiʿi studies with a reconstructivist political history and new methods such as social network analysis, as this dissertation proposes, a more complete picture highlighting the patterns and implications of Shiʿi revolt and sectarian identity can be achieved.

Some philologically driven works do trace how terms like the *mahdī* develop in the early literature while referencing political developments. Wilfred Madelung's article on the Mahdi in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* is deeply insightful and informative but is quite brief (as expected from an encyclopedia article) and does not explore the tentative hypotheses it posits due to its brevity. Other works, such as Hossein Modarressi's *Crisis and Consolidation*, are erudite histories steeped in the primary sources, but, in the case of the aforementioned work, the author focused on the Twelver Shiʿi case and his work was meant to be a brief introduction to the second half of the work on scholar Ibn Qibā al-Rāzī. Said Amir Arjomand's scholarship is noteworthy due to its attempt to sociologically reconstruct early Shiʿi institutions, and he is cognizant of the importance of rebellions. However, his treatment of Shiʿism is teleologically oriented towards Weberian institutional categories and strict axioms that back-projects processes of sociological change in Shiʿism.[130] There are also serious categorical errors committed by Arjomand in defining Shiʿi scholars as apolitical actors overpowered by a Persian patrimonial ethos following the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, which also reproduces non-critical religion-politics divides. This framing ignores the broad span of religious Shiʿi political expression as well as the long development of Shiʿi political thought and historical theories of *wilāyat al-faqih* and deputyship (*niyāba*), that firmly based various functions of sovereignty in the delegative hands of the representatives of the Imam (whether jurists, mystic leaders, or others) during his occultation.[131]

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[130] Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Also of note is the work of Andrew Newman, Heinz Halm, Sean Anthony, and Ḥasan Ansari who respectively focus on the importance of *ḥadīth* and its historical context in the intellectual reconstruction of Shiʿi belief, and esoteric movements in Shiʿism, the legacy of Ibn Sabāʾ (and through him the notion of "*ghuluww*" in Shiʿism),[132] and the project of tracing developments in Shiʿi thought through comparative manuscript and text studies (i.e. a bio-bibliographic methodology).[133] These rich scholarly efforts contribute greatly to constructing a history that focuses on institutional and organizational developments as well. Finally, many of the socio-political histories (Jassim Hussain's *Occultation of the Twelfth Imām*,[134] Abdulaziz Sachedina's *Islamic Messianism*, and Modarressi's *Crisis and Consolidation*) were published in the 1990s or prior and generally have not been updated to incorporate advances or discoveries in the field, including secondary scholarship written in Persian and Arabic as well as key primary texts.

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[131] Norman Calder, "Accommodation and Revolution in Imami Shi'i Jurisprudence: Khumayni and the Classical Tradition," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 3–20; Ahmed Kazemi Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shi'Ite Islam: From the Office of Mufti to the Institution of Marja'* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thoughts and Civilization, 1996); Seyfeddin Kara and Mohammad Saeed Bahmanpour, "The Legal Authority of the Jurist and its Scope in Modern Iran," *Journal of the Contemporary Study of Islam* 1, no. 1 (February 21, 2020): 1–27; Mohammad R. Kalantari, "Protecting the Citadel of Islam in the Modern Era: A Case of Shiʿi Mujtahids and the Najaf Seminary in Early Twentieth-Century Iraq," *The Muslim World* 110, no. 2 (2020): 217–31, and Mohammad Sagha, "al-Ghadir: The Fountainhead of Shi'ism," *Visions: A Leading Source on Global Shi'a Affairs at Harvard University*, August 20, 2019.

[132] Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi'ism: Hadith as Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad*, Reprint edition (London: Routledge, 2010); Heinz Halm, *Die Islamische Gnosis: Die Extreme Schia Und Die ʿAlawiten* (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1982); Sean W. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Sabaʾ and the Origins of Shīʿism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Ansari, *L'imamat et l'Occultation Selon l'imamisme*. The work of Mushegh Asatryan has also continued the study of some aspects of the study of *ghuluww*: *Controversies in Formative Shiʿi Islam: The Ghulat Muslims and Their Beliefs* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017). Also of importance is the work of Hossein Modarressi in *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shiʿite Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003). Also see Najam Haider's *The Rebel and the Imām in Early Islam: Explorations in Muslim Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

[133] The bio-bibliographical method is perhaps unparalleled in the modern Shiʿi context by Muḥammad Muḥsin Āghā Buzurg Ṭihrānī in his *Dharīʿah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shīʿah* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1983). For a discussion of *al-Dharīʿah*, see Muḥammad Husayn Jālālī's work: Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī Jalālī, *Zindigī va Aṯār-i Shaykh Āqā Buzurg-i Tihrānī: 1293-1389 H* (Tehran: Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-ye Islāmī, 1382). I had the privilege of engaging with this multi-volume work with Ayatollah Muḥammad Husayn al-Jalālī who was one of Tehrani's closest students and owned a gifted autographed edition of the work. For al-Jalāli's biography of Tehrani, see: Jalālī.

[134] Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*.

Studies on the early Abbasids and Fatimids and their revolutionary organizations include Moshe Sharon's important *Black Banners from the East*,[135] Heinz Halm's masterful *Empire of the Mahdi*,[136] Saleh Sa'id Agha's *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*,[137] and works by Patricia Crone,[138] in addition to the earlier studies of Bernard Lewis,[139] Marshall Hodgson on the Ismaʿilis,[140] followed by more recent studies by Paul Walker,[141] Sumaiya Hamdani,[142] and Farhad Daftary.[143] Works on the Nuṣayrīs and others are much more scarce.[144] These detailed efforts have made significant strides in the study of Shiʿi revolutions. However, within the field, a work examining comparative Shiʿi revolutionary organization across all the main Shiʿi groups is yet to be written.

In this early period, as discussed in chapter one, the common feature of Shiʿi organizations was its underground nature, yet studies on Shiʿi *daʿwa* organizations are relatively scarce. This is all the more important since these diverse Shiʿi underground organizations share similar authority structures and institutional characteristics widespread if not universal amongst early Shiʿi groups. One of the main drivers of sectarian splits for the Shiʿa was the elite contestation occurring within these underground authority structures, especially during moments of revolutionary upheaval. These disputes generically seemed to take place mainly along *muqaṣṣira–mufawwiḍa* splits[145] (i.e. does the Imam have divine characteristics?) but just as importantly over which representatives could receive money on behalf of the Imams[146] These debates then unfolded in the ambiguous terrain of underground authority disputes, which due to their secretive nature usually spawned fantastical or shortcut explanations for what was in realty complex multidimensional elite and ideological contestation. The patterns that formed the micro-institutional building blocks for larger sectarian super structures can also be understood as phenomenon of the hierarchical *walāya* relationships. These relationships formed the foundations and contours of religious and spiritual institutions, and it was the close circle of students and representatives of the Imams who clashed over the correct interpretation and claims to legitimate authority.[147]

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[135] Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*.
[136] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*.
[137] Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*.
[138] Patricia Crone, "On the Meaning of the 'Abbasid Call to Al-Riḍạ̄," in *The Islamic World: From Classical to Modern Times*, ed. Clifford Edmund Bosworth et al. (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989), 95–111.
[139] Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972).
[140] Hodgson, *The Secret Order of Assassins*.
[141] Paul Ernest Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and Its Sources* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).
[142] Sumaiya Abbas Hamdani, *Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).
[143] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*; and "The Earliest Ismāīlīs," *Arabica* 38, no. 2 (1991): 214–245.
[144] A recent exception is Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs* although there are very notable earlier Orientalist works (mainly in French) on the Nuṣayrīs, they predate the publishing of the monumental *Silsilat Turāth ʿAlawī* in the 2000s. Also see: Hāshim 'Uthmān, *Hal al-ʿAlawīyūn Shīʿa?* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-A'lamī lil-Maṭbū'āt, 1994); Meir Bar-Asher and Aryeh Kofsky, *The Nusayri-Alawi Religion: An Enquiry into Its Theology and Liturgy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

Additionally, by also taking note of the supposed "*zanādiqa*" revolts, such as those of the Khurrammīya that were co-opted or sidelined by Abū Muslim (d. 137/755), this study will (tangentially) contribute to the research mainly undertaken by a scholars in 19th and early 20th centuries on the influence of pre-Islamic thought systems on sectarian identity in Islam, which had recently also been taken up by Patricia Crone.[148] In particular, there seemed to be a conceptual relationship between the idea of *ghuluww* and *zandaqa* that crystallized during the Abbasid period and was reflected in historical chronicles and heresiographical works.

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[145] These terms refer to the respective depreciation or aggrandizement of the Shiʿi Imams's status by their followers. However, the terms *muqaṣṣira* and *mufawwiḍa* are later ones that include certain elements of back-projection despite descriptively covering some of the roots of the esoteric-exoteric tensions in the Shiʿi community. See: Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam: Abu Ja'far Ibn Qiba al-Razi and His Contribution to Imamite Shi'ite Thought* (Princeton, N.J: Darwin Press, Incorporated, 1993).

[146] For the case of the Twelver Shiʿa, see: Edmund Hayes, "The Envoys of the Hidden Imam: Religious Institutions and the Politics of the Twelver Occultation Doctrine" (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2015).

[147] As Ahmed El Shamsy outlines more broadly, the teacher-student relationship forms the basis for many of the institutions of knowledge and subsequent context for debates on orthodoxy and heterodoxy within Islam; "The Social Construction of Orthodoxy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Timothy J. Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 97–117.

[148] Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1950); Geo Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism*, trans. Charles Kessler, (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1965). Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Much of the current literature, as previously mentioned, has defined Shiʿi sectarian identity as a function of differences over theological questions, namely the divinity of the Imam.[149] This is true to an extent. However, doctrinal and ideological differences cannot solely explain why and how sectarian splits occurred; after all, ideational challenges could always be absorbed or negotiated within a given thought structure. In other words, doctrinal difference of opinion whether regarding the divinity of the Imams or other epistemic or theological issues did not necessarily lead to sectarianism. As is often the case, differences of opinion that emerged within a sect could be contained within that sect as a particular school of thought, or, could lead to new effective reformulations of doctrine accepted by the other members of that sect.

Sectarian genesis required more than just differences of opinion; they also required divergent authority structures and hierarchies. Sectarianism was thus driven both by doctrinal challenges and by claims to interpretive leadership. It was the battles that occurred between the representatives of the Imam—battles of authority—that ultimately translated into clearly delineated leadership hierarchies and the phenomenon of sociological and institutional sectarian fractures.

The early Ismaʿili *daʿwa*, in this sense, can and should really be understood as a split that occurred among the broader umbrella of the "Imami Shiʿa"[150] after the Minor Occultation

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Press, 2012); Patricia Crone, *Islam, the Ancient Near East and Varieties of Godlessness*, vol. 3, Islamic History and Civilization (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

[149] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam*; Ḥasan Anṣārī, *Tashayyu'-i Imāmī dar Bastar-i Taḥavvul* (Tehran: Nashr-i Māhī, 1395). Najam Haider's work also incorporates the importance of ritual and communal practice in differentiating sectarian affinities: *The Origins of the Shī'a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[150] As noted by Daftary, the evidence of an Ismaʿili organization immediately following the death of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is scant; we only see a definitive movement emerge during the minor occultation period of the Twelver Shiʿis whose history prior to that is notoriously hazy and disputed; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 98–115. Also see relevant

(260/874) in the midst of Abbasid persecution attempts.[151] Many major *dāʿīs* of the early *daʿwa*, in fact, were from the then-fractured Twelver Imami community, some of whom were apparently thrown into doubt by the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, including Ibn Ḥawshab ("*Manṣūr al-Yamān*"), and others such as the Yemeni youth ʿAli b. al-Faḍl ,who believed the Ismaʿili *dāʿī* who recruited him at the shrine of al-Husayn was to take him to the proof "*al-ḥujja*" whom he may have initially thought was Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Askarī. Both of these men, who hailed from Twelver Shiʿi backgrounds, became among the highest-ranking early Fatimid Ismaʿili *dāʿī*s.[152]

It is important to also note here that the later self-identified Ismaʿili Imams initially proclaimed themselves as ʿAqīlīd *dāʿī*s (descendants of ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, the brother of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib), reflecting the broader notions of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and familial lineage that was so important within Shiʿi (as well as non-Shiʿi thought). As Halm elaborates, during the Minor Occultation period "the belief that there was a hidden twelfth Imam had not yet taken firm hold," which put many Shiʿis in doubt:

> Played into the hands of the Ismaʿili *daʿwa*. It was not by chance that the dāʿīs, with their fresh propaganda on behalf of the Mahdi, were sent first and foremost into the Shiʿite environments of Iraq and Iran…where naturally the shrine at Karbala was a teeming preserve for the Ismaʿili fishers of men. Here it seems that the dāʿis regularly lurked, waiting for a chance to approach the Shiʿite pilgrims.[153]

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discussions in Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason, 4 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[151] "Imami Shiʿa" understood here are those who believed in the singular position of the Imam as a reified charismatic, sovereign, and cosmologically chosen leader; this is a progressive position from those who believe in the superiority of the family of the Prophet, and those who believe that someone from the family of the Prophet should lead the Muslim *umma*.

[152] For biographical accounts see: Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn Qarashī, *'Uyūn al-Akhbār wa-Funūn al-Āthār*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth al-Fāṭimī, 1973), 4: 396-399; Muḥammad b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī, *Kashf Asrār Al-Bāṭiniyya Wa-Akhbār al-Qarāmiṭa*, ed. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Khusht (Riyadh: Maktab al-Saʿī, n.d.), 40; Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 32-36; Reza Rezazadeh Langroudi, "The Qarmaṭī Movement of ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl in Yemen (268-303/881-915)," *Studia Islamica* 109, no. 2 (2014): 196ff.

[153] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 32-34.

After the rapid spread of the crypto-Fatimid *daʿwa*, many of whose agents did not genuinely know who their Imam was or what his lineage was, permanent splits also emerged amongst the internal *daʿwa* with the emergence of the so-called Qarāmiṭa but not over doctrinal issues, such as the divine attributes of the Imam, but rather his identity.

Just as importantly, the Minor Occultation period saw an intense battle over religious authority on behalf of the Twelfth Imam between the so-called *safīrs*, Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr, Manṣūr al-Hallāj (d. 309/922),[154] Muḥammad b. ʿAli al-Shalmaghānī (d. 322/934), along with Jaʿfar b. ʿAli, the tenth Imam's son and rival claimant to the mantle of leadership after the death of the eleventh Imam.[155] The divisions between these Shiʿi groups was not necessarily over issues of doctrine, or even the notion of occultation (*ghayba*), which was mentioned in many primary and secondary sources as causing confusion and angst among the Shiʿa. Rather, it was over issues of identifying the correct *representatives* of the Imam. These multiple competing networks each claimed to represent the Mahdi whose identity and presence was both hidden from immediate view yet ever-present and on the tongues and in the hearts of the Shiʿi believers who actively mobilized in his name.

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[154] These disputes are classified by later Twelver authors as inauthentic claims to being the *bāb* ("door/entrance") to knowing the Imam (a term used by the Nusayrīs, al-Shalmaghānī, and others) in opposition to the rightly appointed "*safīrs*" or "*wakīls*" of the Twelfth Imām; see: Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba li-l Ḥujja* (Qum: Dār al-Maʿārif-i Islāmī, 1411).

[155] See Jassim Hussain who provides more information on these individual schisms; *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background* (London: Muḥammadi Trust, 1982), 58-66.

CHAPTER THREE:

Between Two Revolutions: Shiʿi Confessional Ambiguity, Underground Networks, and Hidden Imams from al-Mukhtār to the Fatimids

The Idea of the Mahdī, Ghayba, and Istitār

From the uprising of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687) in Kufa shortly following the martyrdom of Imam Husayn b. ʿAli in 61/680 through to the emergence of the Fatimid Empire 297/909, various Shiʿi movements engaged in cyclical patterns of revolutions with hidden imams undergoing periods of concealment (*istitār*/*satr*) and occultation (*ghayba*). The idea of a salvific messianic figure such as the *mahdī* was foundational to Shiʿi revolutionary thought and, as will be covered below, acted as a primary referent in the political discourse and ideas for the Shiʿa across the time and space covered in this study. The following section will discuss some of the major issues and themes relating to the interlinked ideas of the *mahdī*, *ghayba*, and *istitār*. It will cover these concepts and discuss narrations and understandings of them found in a variety of sources across diverse denominations of Islam, and focus on an understudied yet highly important text, the *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* of Abu-l Ḥusayn Ahmad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad (d. 336/947-8), known as Ibn al-Munādī. This text serves as an important work that provides a unique understanding of the *mahdī* and occultation and will be used as a lens to discuss relevant themes pertaining to the *mahdī* and occultation.

Following this discussion, this chapter will then provide a brief chronological overview of the patterns of revolution, concealment, and the dynamics of Shiʿi revolutionary coalitions which were either headed directly by an ʿAlid or, in many cases, an ʿAlid representative (*Dāʿī/Wazīr*). In studying how belief in *wilāya*, occultation and concealment intersected with revolutionary patterns within Shiʿism, the following sections will highlight the innovations that different Shiʿi revolutionary elites engaged in and the interconnecting roles between Shiʿi doctrinal beliefs and institutional strategies of organizing diverse socio-political factions. Many *daʿwa* institutions or underground revolutionary organizations studied in this chapter, as I argue, were arranged on the principle of hierarchical *wilāya*-based authority, which saw an ʿAlid or ʿAlid representative at the top leading a cross cutting coalition of *mawālī*, tribal, ethnic, and other kinship loyalty groups. The doctrine of *wilāya* as well as occultation led to particular notions of loyalty and hierarchy that was unique to Shiʿi groups. These groups attempted to replicate a prophetic leadership and loyalty model in the complicated context of the time that led to significant developments in the socio-political and intellectual history of Islam as well as world history. Finally, the chapter will turn to surveying specific case studies of Shiʿi revolutionary movements including that of Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī and the *Tawwābūn*, the Abbasid *daʿwa*, and the Fatimid *daʿwa*. The following chapter, chapter four, will discuss the case of the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān and the complex question of Zaydi Shiʿi identity and intra-Shiʿi confessional ambiguity.

The Idea of Occultation (Ghayba) and Concealment (Istitār)

While occultation (*ghayba*) and concealment (*istitār*) are often treated as separate concepts within the field—and they certainly can take on different implications over time depending on the contextual literary subtext—the distinction between them in the time period of our study is often one of degree and length rather than being theologically distinct concepts. This is especially the case as later Shiʿi authors from different denominations adopted particular interpretations of concealment or occultation specific to the experiences of their sect.[1] The extensive literature on occultation or concealment penned by Shiʿi authors points to the prevalent genuine belief in occultation within Shiʿism as well as its widespread occurrence in the time period of this study, preceding the occultation of the Twelfth Imam.

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[1] See, for example, Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī's *Istitār al-Imām*; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba li-l Ḥujja* (Qum: Dār al-Maʿārif-i Islāmī, 1411); Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuʿmānī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, ed. ʻAlī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktaba al-Ṣadūq, 1397H).

It is important to note, however, that not all Shiʿi authors or sects accepted the concept of occultation as a later doctrinal belief. We find, for example, polemics between authors of different Shiʿi denominations, including by Zaydi authors in Yemen refuting Twelver Shiʿi articulation of the *ghayba* in the early 7th/13th century.[2] However, mainstream Zaydi texts, including *al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardīya*, do explicitly recognize and theorize the hidden or concealed nature of some of their Imams, including notably for al-Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhim al-Rassī (d. 246/860) when he secretly sent out agents to call out for allegiance on his behalf after his brother Muḥammad b. Ibrāhim was martyred (*wa baththa al-duʿāt wa huwa alā ḥāl al-istitār*).[3] The Zaydi author Yaḥyā b. Ḥusayn Nāṭiq bi-l Ḥaqq (d. 424/1033), in his *al-Ifāda fī Tārīkh al-Aʾimma al-Sāda*, also writes that the son of Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740), Yaḥyā b. Zayd (d. 125/743), exited Kufa for Balkh in Central Asia disguised and undercover (*mutanakaran wa mustataran*) with a number of companions where he then organized and launched a rebellion against the Umayyads.[4] The Zaydi sources were far from the only Shiʿi group to report such episodes in their internal narratives regarding their leadership and the socio-political pressures they faced.

The idea of occultation (*ghayba*) has multiple dimensions. Firstly, in the sources under consideration, occultation generally refers to an imam or prophet who is alive yet hidden to society; he is not freely accessible and, in some cases, his identity is unknown, and a cover name or a title is used to refer to him. Many followers of prophets and imams often would deny their leader's death and claim they went into occultation.[5] The idea of two occultations, interestingly, can also be found in Shiʿi sources prior to the occultation of the twelfth Imam who had experienced a shorter and longer occultation.[6] As Etan Kohlberg writes: "even the belief in two concealments did not originate with the Ithnā-ʿashariyya. After the death of al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, one group among his followers claimed he had not died but had merely disappeared, that he would reappear and be recognized, only to disappear again before finally emerging as the Qāʾim."[7]

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[2] Maher Jarrar, "Al-Manṣūr Bi-Llāh's Controversy with Twelver Šīʿites Concerning the Occultation of the Imam in His Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-Ṯamīn," *Arabica* 59, no. 3–4 (2012): 319–31.

[3] Hamīd b. Aḥmad al-Maḥallī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardīya Fī Manāqib al-Aʾimma al-Zaydīya*, ed. Murtaḍā b. Zayd Maḥṭūrī Ḥasanī (Sana'a: Maktaba Badr, 1423), 2: 7.

[4] Yaḥyā b. Ḥusayn al-Nāṭiq bi-l Ḥaqq, *al-Ifāda fī Tārīkh al-A'imma* (Saʿda: Maktaba Ahl al-Bayt, 2014), 45.

Importantly, moreover, the duration of occultation can vary; in some cases, as certain Shiʿi authors argue, it can be 40 days as was the case of Prophet Moses when he withdrew from his community to Mount Sinai.[8] In other cases, such as for Prophet Idrīs, occultation was prolonged for hundreds of years until he eventually reappeared to save his followers (*Shiʿa*) who were being oppressed by the tyrant of the time. After saving his followers, our authors note that Idrīs promised his *Shiʿa* future salvation (*faraj*) and the uprising of the savior from his offspring (*bi-qiyām al-qāʾim min wuldih*), the Prophet Noah.[9] As Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates, Allah then "raised" Idrīs (*rafaʿa Allah*) unto himself.[10] This latter point of being raised to heavens is also often understood to be the case among Muslim authors regarding what occurred with Prophet Jesus who was considered by the vast majority of Muslim authors to have not been killed but rather still alive in the heavens and will return alongside the Mahdī to deliver salvation as the promised Messiah at the end-times—a *de facto* occultation in the eyes of many Muslims. Many prophets were, therefore, attested in various sources to live long lives such as Prophet Noah, who is said in the Qurʾan to have lived among his community at least 950 years.[11] Prophet Khiḍr, which many Muslim exegetes believed is the mysterious figure who guided Moses through various episodes in the Qurʾan, is similarly said to be alive and living amongst society for thousands of years, albeit not publicly accessible except to those who reach inner salvation and true spiritual vision.[12]

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[5] One of the earliest claimants, according to some narrations, that the Prophet Muḥammad had in fact not died and was indeed alive was the second Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, although he did not insist upon this claim. Later, others claimed that ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib had not died, and, as will be discussed further, similar statements were made about Imam ʿAli's son Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya in addition to many other charismatic ʿAlid leaders. See: Sean Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Saba' and the Origins of Shi'ism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 195–239.

[6] For more on the idea of shorter and longer occultations, see: Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Nuʿmānī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba* (Tehran: Ansariyan Publications, 2007), 228–34. Al-Nuʿmānī's work, in turn, is said to have been influenced by Ibrāhīm b. Isḥāq al-Nahāwandī (d. 286/899) who in 262/876 claimed to be the representative of the Twelfth Imam in Baghdad. Al-Nahāwandī composed a work on the *ghayba* that is said to have influenced al-Nuʿmānī's own compilation; Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*, 5.

[7] Kohlberg, "From Imāmiyya to Ithnā-ʿAshariyya," 531.

[8] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn Wa-Tamām al-Ni'mah*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 1975), 1: 145–53.

[9] Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn*, 1: 127–133.

[10] Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn*, 1: 127.

These different categories of individuals in occultation (*ghayba*) are also considered by one of the foremost Twelver Shiʿi scholars, al-Shaykh al-Ṭaʾifa al-Ṭūsī, in his *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, when he discusses those figures in occultation alive among society but inaccessible (*lā yaṣilu ilayhī*) and those who are alive but in the heavens (*wujūduhu fi-l samāʾ*).[13] He argues that there is no fundamental difference between these two categories except for that of degree of concealment. Just as the Prophet had to conceal himself (*istatara*) from the threat posed by his intended murderers by fleeing Mecca to Medina and hiding a cave along the way,[14] the Twelfth Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan must be in concealed (*mustatir*) from larger society given the threat to his life.[15] When the Prophet was concealed in the cave, he was concealed from both his allies (*awliyāʾih*) as well as his enemies (*aʿdāʾih*). The only other person with him was his companion and the later first caliph, Abū Bakr. It was possible, as al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī argues, that had it been expedient (*iqtaḍat al-maṣlaḥa*), the Prophet would have gone into greater occultation without any of his allies or enemies with him.[16] Al-Ṭūsī, therefore, argues that social conditions and expediency can play a role in the doctrine of occultation or concealment and that ignorant or oppressive tyrants can force even the Prophet Muḥammad to conceal himself, just as the Imam Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, the awaited savior al-Qāʾim al-Mahdī, had to do in his own time and whom the Shiʿa eagerly expect alongside the Messiah, Jesus.

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[11] Qur'an, *al-ʿAnkabūt*: 14

[12] Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 53ff; James Paul Jervis, "Al-Khāḍir: Origins and Interpretation. A Phenomenological Study" (PhD Dissertation, Montreal, McGill University, 1993); Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 39–41.

[13] Abu Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba* (Qum: Ansariyan, 2012), 147–49.

[14] Qurʾan, *al-Tawba*: 40.

[15] "*al-Nabī mā istatara min kull aḥad wa inamā istatara min aʿdāʾihi wa Imam al-Zamān mustatir ʿan al-jamīʿ*"; al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, 147.

The notion of occultation, as outlined above, is intimately linked with messianism, salvation, and end-times. Such ideas, furthermore, are hardly specific just to Muslims. For the peoples of the Near East, many of these aforementioned stories regarding prior prophets were presumably well known even before the advent of Islam. As an archetype, the idea of a salvific end-times leader who embodies true justice and the divine message, carrying it out to its full potential, is quite intrinsic to prophetic and world religious thought systems. In Zoroastrian thought, the Saoshant (an eschatological savior figure of virgin birth) was prophesied by Zoroaster,[17] and in Judeo-Christian thought the *messiah* (the one anointed in oil) is of course of paramount importance. The deep gnostic currents of southern Iraq and the Iranian plateau—particularly Manichaeism—undoubtedly also impacted how Muslims approached and imagined the end-times, particularly Manichaen claims of the coming of Jesus and appearance of false anti-Christs.[18] Buddhist traditions from the third century CE onwards, some of which reached Central Asia and the Iranian spheres, also spoke of the end-times savior, the *Maitreya Buddha*—

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[16] al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, 149.

[17] As Mary Boyce writes, "Zoroaster's community held ardently to hope in the coming of this man, to whom was given the title Saošyant, 'He who will bring benefit,' and gradually it came to be believed that he would be born of the seed of Zoroaster himself, miraculously preserved at the bottom of a lake, where it is watched over by the fravašis of the just"; "Astvaṯ.ərəta"; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

[18] "Manichean Eschatology," *Encylopaedia Iranica*.

a figure “residing in Tushita heaven who will descend to earth to preach anew the *dharma* (‘law’) when the teachings of Gautama Buddha have completely decayed.”[19]

Many Islamic *hadith*, not specific to just Shiʿis, moreover, also attested to the idea of the twelve rightly guided caliphs or *amīr*s after the Prophet Muḥammad.[20] A hadith found in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī’s as well as *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* and other mainstream Sunni sources narrates from the Prophet Muḥammad that “there will be after me twelve Amirs… all of whom will be from Quraysh.” And, in Ibn Ḥanbal’s *al-Musnad*, from Ibn Masʿūd, that: “The Prophet informed us that his successors will be twelve caliphs, whose number is similar to the number of the leaders (*al-nuqabāʾ*) of Banū Isrāʾīl.”[21] While these Sunni sources do not mention the twelfth successor to the Prophet will necessarily be the *Qāʾim* or the *Mahdī*, they surely increased sensitivities and expectations regarding the twelfth successor and did not rule out his role as a potential salvific redeemer.[22] Many *hadith* found across Shiʿi sects are much more explicit regarding the twelfth successor to the Prophet Muḥammad as the *Qāʾim* although all do not necessarily list the twelfth Imam’s full name.[23] However, messianic expectations did not surround just the time of the twelfth Shiʿi Imam Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan but can also be seen heavily throughout the entire early Islamic period leading up to, and indeed after, the period of the Minor Occultation. The expectations regarding the number “seven” were also very latent with messianic expectations, for example, and can be seen in the proto-Fatimid Ismaʿili discourse as well as the revolutionary fervor surrounding the person of Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim, the seventh Imam for many of the Shiʿa.[24]

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[19] “*Maitreya*,” Encylopaedia Britannica.

[20] “*Al-Mahdī*,” Encyclopaedia of Islam II; also see Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*, 1–30.

[21] Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam,* 19.

[22] Also see: ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Mūsavī, *Imām Mahdī Dar Rivāyāt-i Ahl-i Sunnat* (Majmaʿ-i Jahānī-ye Ahl al-Bayt, 1393SH).

[23] Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*, 20–30. There are, as always, rich discussions regarding the veracity of these reports and whether they pre-dated the start of the minor occultation period in 260/874, however it seems quite plausible that some of them were in fact early narrations especially given their intertextual presence across literary genres and confessional camps.

The Concept of the Mahdī

On the fifth of January 910, following the Fatimid conquest of Qayrawan and Raqqāda in north Africa, the Friday prayer sermons were read for the first time in the name of the new caliph (*khalīfa*), Commander of the Faithful (*Amīr al-Muʾminīn*), and notably, the Mahdī (*al-Imām al-Mahdī bi-llāh*). A few decades prior to that, in 260/874, another group of Shiʿa in Samarra claimed that the son of their eleventh *imam*, Ḥasan b. al-ʿAli (Imam al-Askarī) had gone into occultation—he was the awaited Mahdī (*al-mahdī al-muntaẓir*). In 132/749, when a revolutionary army stormed Kufa, the Abbasids proclaimed a certain Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣaffāh as the founding caliph of their dynasty and three and a half decades later, in 785 CE, the third Abbasid Caliph, Abū Abdallah al-Mahdī, took the reigns of power. Interestingly, Abbasid sources record that the Banū Musliya, the early core Abbasid *mawālī* supporters, spread traditions they supposedly heard from Bukayr b. Māhān[25] naming Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣaffāh as the future Mahdi and victorious savior ("*hadhā al-mujalī min banī Hāshim, al-Qāʾim al-Mahdī!*") during the still-underground stage of their movement.[26] The idea of the *mahdī* is a very broad one that can be utilized and appropriated diverse actors and movements throughout time. Even today, the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran explicitly establishes the *mahdī* as the rightful leader and the Islamic Republic simply a placeholder system until his return. The idea of the *mahdī* is in large part important because of the overall primacy of leadership debates in

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[24] Madelung, "The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine"; Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 87–88.

[25] Bukayr was the head agent of their underground revolutionary movement at the time.

[26] ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz Dūrī and ʻAbd al-Jabbār Muṭṭalibī, eds., *Akhbār Al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʻah li-al-Ṭibāʻah wa-l Nashr, 1971), 238; Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad Al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762*, 52.

Islamic political thought—which is why we see the title of the *mahdī* almost always interlinked with other leadership titles such as *Khalīfa* and *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*.

Etymologically, the term *al-mahdī* is derived from the Arabic root *h-d-y* "to guide" and can either mean the "guided one" or "guiding one."[27] Although the form *mahdī* does not appear directly in the Qurʾan, the root *h-d-y* appears 316 times in 12 forms throughout the Qurʾan, and the form *muhtadī*, *muhtad*, the "guided one"; and *hādī* "the guide" occurs in over 20 instances: وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ "And whoever Allah guides - he is the [rightly] guided" (Surah al-Isrā: verse 97); in a parallel *aya* in Surah Aʿrāf (7:178): مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي . Again, in Surah Aʿrāf verse 186 states: Whoever Allah sends astray - there is no guide for him: مَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

Outside of the Qurʾan, the term *al-mahdī* is quite ubiquitous in the early period. We see its application to the "four rightly guided caliphs" (*al-khulafā al-rāshīdūn al-mahdīyūūn*) in the Sunan of Ibn Mājā; the early poets Ḥasan b. Thābit and al-Jarīr used the term to eulogize the Prophets Muḥammad and Abraham respectively. Importantly, al-Farazdaq used the term in panegyric Umayyad court poetry to refer to the caliph al-Walīd (d. 96/715).[28] The term is also used by Sulayman b. Surad—the "Shaykh of the Shiʿa" in Kūfā—in reference to Imam Ḥusayn after his death, who he refers to as "*al-mahdī b. al-mahdī*," thus applying the term to both al-Husayn and his father ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. The avenger of the blood of Imam Ḥusayn, al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbaydah al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687), famously used the title of *al-mahdī* for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya.[29]

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[27] David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 2002), 138-9; Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras Hamori and Ruth Hamori (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 196–97.

[28] "al-Mahdī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

[29] Mukhtār, in turn was reported given titles by Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya including: " the *mahdī's* aid (*wazīr*), assistant (*ẓahīr*), trustee (*amīn*), messenger (*rasūl*), confidant (*khalīl*), elect (*muntakhab*)," and other titles; Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 259.

It is important to note that the ubiquitous nature of *mahdism* in the early Islamic period is due to the fact that the *mahdī* is an "archetype."[30] It is only because the idea of the *mahdī* represents the ideals of hopes of an active Muslim consciousness yearning for just leadership and a guide that *mahdism* can manifest in manifold persons and institutions throughout Islamic history. The most ubiquitous *ḥadīth*s on the *mahdī* is that he will fill the earth with *justice* (and in many variations, he will fill the earth with "justice just as it had been filled with injustice and tyranny"; Ar.: *yamla' al-arḍ ʿadlan kama maliʾat jawran wa ẓulman*). The *mahdī*, therefore, is positioned on the horizon of Muslim consciousness as the one who will rule justly overseeing the ideal system. For most of the Shiʿa, this means a continuation of the prophetic message which began with Adam on earth and continues through the chain of *wilāya*—the inner aspect of prophecy which today rests with the imam. After all, the prophets were sent to guide mankind and establish justice through their words and deeds. In fact, it is common to hear the refrain among Twelver Shiʿis today that if *mahdism* did not exist, it would mean that all the strenuous efforts of the holy prophets and their divine message were in vain.[31]

In important Zaydi texts as well, there are discussions of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya as the *mahdī* who arose in order to "enjoin the good and forbid the wrong" (*al-ʿamr bi-l maʿrūf wa al-nahī ʿan al-munkar*)[32] as a divine obligation (*farīḍa*) and blessing (*faḍl Allāh*) upon him.[33] We also see parallel emphases placed in both Shiʿi and Sunni *hadith* on the importance of leadership from the tribe or the Family of the Prophet "even if there were just two people left on earth.” In well-known Shiʿi *hadith* found in *al-Kāfī*, it is narrated that even if there were two people left (on earth), one would be an imam over the other (*law kāna al-nās rajulayn, la-kāna aḥaduhumā al-imām*), and in another *hadith* that if there were two people left on earth, one of them would be the *ḥujja*.[34] In *kitāb al-imāra* in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* there is also a *hadith* that states: “The Caliphate will remain among the Quraish even if only two persons are left (on the earth).”[35]

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[30] Henry Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, (Boston: Islamic Publications, 1983), 50–53.

[31] See, for example, remarks made to students al-Zahra University in Qom on the birth anniversary of the Twelfth Imam Muḥammad b. Ḥasan on the 15th of Shaʿban: "Imām Zamān Istimrār-i Ḥarakat-i Nubuvvat va Daʿvatha-ye Ilāhī Ast" [The Imam of the Age (i.e. the Mahdi]) is the Continuation of the Prophetic Movement and Divine Outreach], al-Zahra University, 02 May 2018, https://www.jz.ac.ir/.

[32] This key term is used in many revolts, including in the uprising of the ʿAlid Ḥasan b. Zayd in Ṭabaristān in 250/864, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

[33] Ḥamīd b. Aḥmad al-Maḥallī, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardīya fī Manāqib al-Aʾimma al-Zaydīya*, ed. Murtaḍā b. Zayd Maḥṭūrī Ḥasanī (Sana'a: Maktaba Badr, 1423), 1: 278.

The *mahdī*, moreover, is but one title in the lexicon of larger leadership figures in the literature, including: the *Qaḥṭānī*, the *Yamānī*, the *Qurashī*, *al-Saffāh*, *al-Manṣūr* and so forth.[36] Taking a broader look, the *mahdī* can be divided into various archetypes in Islamic thought and approached in various ways, including as the archetype of the perfect man and the spiritual guide and proof of Allah’s guidance to mankind (*al-hujja*, a theme prominent in Twelver and Ismaʿili Shiʿism). There are also extensive discussions, as mentioned prior, found in the genre of eschatological literature of the *mahdī* as end-times redeemer (*munjī*/*qāʾim*) who will carry out the major final battles between truth and falsehood.[37]

The use of the term *ḥujja*, both in a generic sense as “proof of God,” as well as an important and salvific leadership title, is evident in a variety of contexts in the early Islamic period. In *Akhbār al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsīya*, a dramatic scene was narrated when the head of the underground Shiʿi order at the time, Salama b. Bujayr,[38] the son of a veteran soldier who served in al-Mukhtār's army, delivered the news of the death of Abū Hāshim, the grandson of Imam ʿAli, to a core gathering of elite Shiʿis who had secretly accepted Abū Hāshim as their Imam. "Abū Hāshim has died," Salama announced to the gathering, "and we consider obeying him a duty upon us (*ṭāʿatuhu wājiba*) and our obedience to him in his death is just as obeying him in his life… blessed is the one who died upon the truth, inviting to the truth (*dāʿīyan ilā-l ḥaqq*)."[39] Salama then continued to make his argument before his peers: "the proof is incumbent upon you (*wajabat ʿalaykum al-ḥujja*)," and he introduces the next *ḥujja* as Muḥammad b. ʿAli, a descendent of al-ʿAbbās, the uncle of the Prophet.[40] In this discussion, core tenets of Shiʿi beliefs, including the necessary obeisance (*tāʿa*) embedded conceptually in *walāya* (although the exact term *walāya* is not in the text), are expounded upon and list of the Abbasid Shiʿa is recorded (*awwal dīwān shīʿa banī ʿAbbās*).[41] As discussed earlier, this discourse of "necessary obedience" to the imam is also found in earlier Umayyad texts, including in official scribal discourse urging obedience to the Umayyad imams and caliphs, including the Caliphs Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 125/743) al-Walīd b. Yazīd (d. 126/744).[42]

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[34] Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar Ghaffārī and Muḥammad Ākhūndī (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1986), 1: 180.

[35] Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, trans. Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, 4 vols. (Lahore: Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf, 1976).

[36] Cook, *Studies in the Muslim Apocalyptic*, 10. There exist, as well, anti-messianic figures such as the Sufyanī and the Dajjāl who are prominent in the eschatological literature as the end-times opponents and figures who misguide humanity from the true savior.

[37] Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Kitāb al-Fitan wa-l Malāḥim*, ed. Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad Anṣārī (al-Riyāḍ: Mu’assasat al-Nūr, 1388); Nu’aym b Hammad al-Marwazi, *The Book of Tribulations: The Syrian Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition*, trans. David Cook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017); Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād: The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams*, trans. I.K.A. Howard (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 1981), 541–554.

Historically, however, one of the paramount factors which impacted approaches to the *mahdī* was, certainly, revolutionary activity. Although the Abbasid and later Fatimid empires perhaps became the most easily associated with messianic ideology and claimed to harbor the person of the *mahdī*, a range of other groups and figures—many of which will be surveyed in the next section, including the Twelver Shiʿa, the Qarāmiṭa, the Nusayrī-ʿAlawis, and individuals such Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh “al-Nafs al-Zakiyya”—also believed in the Mahdi and/or authority figures who claimed to represent him. Importantly, the collection of the six-canonical *hadīth* works accepted by the Sunni law schools as well as the Shiʿi canonical *kutub arbaʿa* all post-date the Abbasid revolution and, just as importantly, the wave of non-Abbasid counter revolutions that gripped the Muslim world in the name of the *mahdī* and battled over the nature of the all-important arena of leadership of the Muslim *umma*. They were therefore collected and influenced in part by these events.

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[38] For more on Salama b. Bujayr, see: Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 7.

[39] Interestingly, this phrase used for Abū Hāshim is the same title (*Dāʿī ila-l Ḥaqq*) adopted by Ḥasan b. Zayd and Muḥammad b. Zayd, the ʿAlid rulers of the South Caspian covered in chapter four.

[40] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya*, 190.

[41] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, eds., *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya*, 191.

[42] Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, and Riyāḍ al-Ziriklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), 3: 328.

Central to this narrative, moreover, is the role and impact of governance and ideals of establishing an Islamic government on Islamic thought—not just through their sponsorship of institutions such as the *madrasa* but rather on how the legacy of state building impacts Muslim thinkers’ approach towards concepts such as the *mahdī*. Before the victory of the Abbasid revolution in 132/749, a highly impactful series of revolts in the name of the *mahdī* were launched, including: the uprising of al-Mukhtār in Kufa following the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn in 61/680, in which Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya (the son of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib from a mother other than Fāṭima) was labelled as the *mahdī*; the uprising of Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Muḥammad al-Mahdī in 145/763, both of whom bore important leadership titles (Nafs al-Zakiyya and al-Mahdī from the Ḥasanid line); the uprising of ʿAbdallah b. Muʿāwiya in 126/744, a Ṭālibid who claimed to inherit the *waṣiyya* of Abū Hāshim, the son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and was contested by the Abbasids; and, there was a series of important “nativist” revolts in Iran, which carried an eclectic mix of Manichean, Zoroastrian, and Islamic elements beneath a primarily Islamic superstratum.[43]

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[43] Many of these notions were in part absorbed by the revolutionary general who helped propel the Abbasids to power, Abū Muslim al-Khurasānī; Elton L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan Under Abbasid Rule, 747-820* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1979); and, Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 38ff.

All of these movements directly impacted how Muslims understood and interpreted the concept of the *mahdī*, especially in what we may call the primacy of the "political theology of leadership" in Islamic thought. Especially important here was the role of victorious revolutionary movements' attempt to challenge rival claimants once they assumed power. While the Abbasids certainly persecuted any armed uprising or pre-emptively violently harassed any potential rival movements from the *Ahl al-Bayt* or other groups, they were constrained by their very own ideological platform. They had to legitimize themselves as the rightful ones who deserve to rule based off the slogan *al-Riḍā min Āl-Muḥammad*, which they championed in the period of revolutionary struggle. Their ultimate inability to convincingly legitimate themselves over the long run led to a crisis of legitimacy in the Muslim world in which, as some scholars such as Patricia Crone argue, was filled with the institutionalization of the station of the "scholars"—an abstract and vague process as theorized in Crone's *God's Caliph*, no doubt, but one that hints at a larger dominant challenge within Islam and other religions for that matter.[44]

In Ahmed El Shamsy's work, *The Canonization of Islamic Law,* he touches upon a similar yet not wholly divorced process in the "the canonization project of al-Shafi'i" (d. 820), which he argues was "an attempt to extricate tradition from revelation, to delegitimize the former as the primary mediator of the revealed message and to enshrine the latter as a fixed, clearly demarcated category."[45] This process of canonization—aimed at establishing a methodological system around which scholarly interpretation and advancements could occur—was also intimately tied, I would argue, to parallel processes of scholastic institutionalization: attempts to establish systems to demarcate and regulate thought and interpretation which was, of course, highly contextual in the social and political space under consideration.

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[44] For pertinent discussions on the evolution of Shiʿi political and religious theology and the heresiographical literature, see: Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, *Farhang-i Firaq-i Islāmī* (Mashhad: Bunyād-i Pizhūhishhā-yi Islāmī-i Āstān-i Quds-i Raẓavī, 1368); Josef van Ess, "The Kāmilīya: On the Genesis of a Heresiographical Tradition," in *Shīʿism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 209–19; Douglas Karim Crow, "The Death of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and Early Shīʿī Views of the Imamate," in *Shi'ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (New York: Routledge, 2003), 41–86; and, Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Hakam (d. 179/795) and His Doctrine of the Imam's Knowledge."

[45] Ahmed El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 223. In the work, moreover, El Shamsy demonstrates further the importance of state patronage for al-Shafi'i's project to take root in Egypt.

Ibn al-Munādī's Kitāb al-Malāḥim

This section engages with an important and relevant yet understudied work that challenges many of our notions on *mahdism* and eschatology. It approaches the work in question, *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*,[46] as a lens thorough which to understand different confessional approaches and diverse ideas found within the Muslim world at the time regarding eschatology and the *mahdī*. Ibn al-Munādī's (d. 336/947-8) *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* was compiled during the Minor Occultation period following the weakening of centralized ʿAbbasid power and after a range of new Shiʿi dynasties established governments throughout the Near East. As such, it is a truly unique compilation that reflects ideas and beliefs largely discarded in the following centuries among different Shiʿi denominations. The text invites us to rethink prior approaches towards *mahdism* and brings new insights into *malāḥim* end-times eschatological literature, in the process opening new questions on the boundaries of sectarian identity and its relationship with messianic thought in the early-middle periods of Islam. Below, this section will discuss the background of *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* and issues regarding its manuscript history and the identity of its author. It will then turn to the content and specific *hadith*s recorded in *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* and compare them with canonical or other mainstream works found in important Sunni and Shiʿi primary sources in order to discuss larger issues at the intersection of mahdism and sectarian identity.

The Re-Discovery of Kitāb al-Malāḥim

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[46] I thank Ahmed El Shamsy for introducing me to this work.

Before continuing the discussion on Ibn al-Munādī, below are a few remarks on how this modern edition came to be published and how important the process of manuscript discovery and publication is in the field of Islamic history and thought. The editor of this work is a contemporary of our time, Abd al-Karīm al-‘Uqaylī.[47] He was born in 1378/1959 in the city of Amara in southern Iraq and studied in secular primary schools as well as at the university level in addition to his seminary studies, which he continued in Iran after fleeing the persecution of Ba'athist Iraq.[48]

This edition is based off a single manuscript that al-‘Uqaylī discovered in the personal library of the Twelver Grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi—the highest ranking *marja*ʿ of the Shiʿa world in the mid-20th century. The edition and the history of the manuscript are a product of the Shi'i seminary system which has an underexplored network of primary sources and libraries that are often attached to a Grand Ayatollah's personal collections. As the editor writes, the fact the edited edition is based on just one manuscript copied by a certain Ḥājī Muḥammad Shūshtarī over 150 years ago in the year 1270/1855, is a challenge in the editing process.[49]

Although this work was known to exist and Ibn al-Munādī has been quoted in many later writings, the only edition which has been edited was published in 1998.[50] Surprisingly (and luckily) the editor, Abd al-Karīm al-‘Uqaylī, was only able to obtain one manuscript of this work in the archives of Ayatollah Boroujerdi's (d. 1961) library that was copied by the hand of a scribe in 1271/1855.[51] This has caused him some explicit angst since it is highly challenging for an editor to have only one manuscript edition from which to work off. However, it is a valuable addition to the literature especially given the incredible trajectory this work has had in being discovered, as a non-canonical Twelver text, in the library of the leading Twelver Grand Ayatollah of the mid-20th century.

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[47] For his personal website, see: https://www.oqaili.com.

[48] Interestingly, he mentions his earliest training in the Islamic sciences was learning two variant readings of the Quran, the ʿĀsim and Shuʿba readings—which seems to be unique for Shiʿi scholars who have reached a modern consensus that rejects variant canonical readings.

[49] Ibn al-Munādī, *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*, 12.

[50] See Fuat Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 44. For a list of authors who quote from Ibn al-Munādī, also see David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 24; and, al-‘Uqayli, *Kitab al-Malahim*, 11-12. These diverse authors range from Ibn Abi Ya'la and al-Suyūṭī to Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī and Sayyīd ibn Tāwūs.

In modern scholarship, the main if not only author, within western academia who has brought attention to *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* of Ibn al-Munādī (d. 336/947-8) is David Cook, who has written a short and informed article on the work in 2011. He has also tangentially addressed the work in his 2002 monograph, *Studies of the Muslim Apocalyptic*. Part of the lack of attention to this work is that scholars focusing on the question of the minor *ghayba* and *mahdism* including AbdulAziz Sachedina, Hossein Modarressi, and Jassim Hussain have neglected to write on it. These authors published their work in the 1980s and early 90s, before the edited edition by al-ʿUqaylī was published in Qum in 1998.

The author of *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* is Abū al-Ḥusayn[52] Ahmad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad, known as Ibn al-Munādī (256/870 – 336/947).[53] It is possible that Ibn al-Munādī's *laqab* relates to the apocalyptic figure of the "*Munādī*" (also related to the "*sārikh*") who is an end-times figure tasked with making sure "that the believer receives certain information at a certain time."[54] We have varying degrees of biographical information about Ibn al-Munādī from Khatīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn Abi-Ya'la, al-Dhahabī, Ibn al-Nadīm, and Ibn al-Jawzī all of whom are favorable towards him.[55] This cross-denominational consensus on him is itself reflective of his appeal and unique character. From his *laqab*s, or honorifics, "*al-muqqarī*" and "*al-ḥāfiẓ*" as well as statements from Ibn al-Nadīm, we know he was a specialist of the Qurʾan and different readings of the Qurʾan.[56] Ibn al-Nadīm also asserts that Ibn al-Munādī had over 120 writings (*kitāb*) in various disciplines ascribed to him.[57]

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[51] The editor writes that he has prevented himself from making edits to the work which seem to him to be mistaken or out of place, such as the presence of a hadith on the *mahdī* having the name of the Prophet (i.e. Muḥammad) *and* his father (i.e. ʿAbdallāh). This hadith is unique to this work as far as the editor is aware; al-'Uqayli, *Kitab al-Malahim*, 12-14.
[52] His *kunya* is also listed as "Abū al-Ḥasan" in some sources; Aḥmad ibn Ja'far Ibn al-Munādī, *al-Malāḥim* (Qum: Dār al-Sīrah, 1418), 4. The confusion regarding his kunya between Abū Ḥasan and Abū Ḥusayn is somewhat ironic given Ibn al-Munādī's intervention in the debate over Ḥasanid or Ḥusaynid descent of the *mahdī* as we will shortly see.
[53] He is reported to have been buried in Baghdad in *maqbara al-khīzarān* (sic) which is in today's al-Aʿẓamīya district near the masjid of Abū Ḥanīfa; Ibn al-Munādī, 5.

In addition to his Qurʾanic specialization, Ibn al-Munādī was a major scholar of *rijāl* or biographical sciences, specifically on death dates of historical individuals and is considered a reliable source for many authors, including al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), and Yūsuf b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī (d. 743/1342), in providing death-dates for individuals' biographies.[58] Ibn al-Munādī penned a work entitled *Kitāb al-Wafayāt*, which has been referenced or preserved in al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*.[59] Of note, the paramount Shiʿi scholar Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) notes in *Bihār al-Anwār* that he discovered 18 *ḥadīth*s in what is now a lost work entitled *al-Muqtaṣṣ* (or *al-Anām*) *ʿalā muḥaddathī al-Aʿwām*[60] on end-times, which explicitly reference the emergence of the *mahdī,* his lineage from the Prophet's daughter Fāṭima, and how he will fill the earth with justice—an all-important discussion in debates over the identity of the *mahdī*.[61]

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[54] Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 307.
[55] Ibn al-Nadim writes that Ibn al-Munādī authored over 120 works in various sciences; al-'Uqaylī, *Kitab al-Malahim*, 6.
[56] Ibn al-Munādī, *al-Malāḥim*, 5. As al-'Uqaylī, the editor of the modern edition states, the majority of Ibn al-Munādī's works were in Quranic sciences; *ibid*, 8.
[57] Ibn Abī Yaʿlā further states that Ibn al-Munādī had about 400 compilations (*muṣnaf*); Ibn al-Munādī, 6.
[58] Ibn al-Munādī, 8.
[59] Ibn al-Munādī, 9. The work was also drawn upon by prominent luminaries including the Twelver Shiʿi Ibn Ṭāwūs.
[60] الأنام على محدثي الأعوام لنبأ ملاحم غابر الأيام
[61] Ibn al-Munādī, *al-Malāḥim*, 9–10.

Although he is included in *Tabaqat al-Hanabila*, it is not exactly clear if he subscribes to this legal school; Cook also mentions that Ibn al-Munādī's father was subjected to persecution during the Abbasid *miḥna*, but none of this information is conclusive regarding his *madhab* commitments. Cook calls him a "pro-Alid" but not a Twelver Shi'i.[62] The difficulty of boxing in Ibn al-Munādī into any of the current intellectual or sectarian categories we envision today is indicative, in part, of his quite unique personality and scholarship. It seems Ibn al-Munādī was a figure who wished to contribute to building a consensus among Muslims and face the threat, as he likely viewed it, of extremist interpretations of messianism, such as from the Qarāmiṭa who had ransacked Mecca and massacred pilgrims during his lifetime. As such, his work could be seen in the light of attempting to forge closer links with moderate Shi'is as well as Sunnis—however we define those terms at the time.

While it may be correct to label al-Munādī as a "Sunni" in the sense that he includes mainstream Sunni authorities such as Abū Hurayra and accepts the order of the first four caliphs and includes hadiths in their favor, he is also an independent scholar who also challenges and does not accept the precedence of what came to be later canonized "*sihah sitta*"—reflecting the highly contentious methodological and scholastic battle waged over the process of *ḥadīth* compilation and interpretation. Ibn al-Munādī brings forth original hadiths not found elsewhere and even in cases where the text parallels *ahadith* found in Abu Dawūd, such as *hadith*s saying an offspring (presumably including the *Mahdi*) of the Prophet Muḥammad will rule the earth and be an offspring of Faṭima, he brings in different *isnads* and *matn*s. This is despite the fact that he

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transmitted elsewhere from Abu Dawūd and was clearly familiar with his work.[63] In fact, we have an anecdote highlighting his tensions with the *ḥadīth* establishment from Ibn Abī Yaʿlā who writes that Ibn al-Munādī was verbally abused by the nephew of Sufyān al-Thawrī in his home, and, in his introduction to *Kitāb al-Fitan*, Ibn al-Munādī explicitly censures Sufyān al-Thawrī along with al-ʿAmash and others for not relating apocalyptic traditions because he was biased against them. So, in short, Ibn al-Munādī had serious issues with many of his scholarly colleagues.

Kitāb al-Malāḥim and the Mahdi

Overall, although the work does not explicitly back Twelver Shiʿi claims for the *mahdī* being the son of the eleventh Imām, Ḥasan al-Askarī and other more doctrinally consistent positions, it is in many ways a compromise text of which significant sections can be acceptable to Twelver audiences and overlaps with their doctrinal outlook. As Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī mentions, Ibn al-Munādī includes *hadīths* on the appearance of the *mahdī*, how he is a descendent of Fāṭima the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad, how he will fill the earth with justice (*yamlaʾ al-arḍ ʿadlan*), and other information about the *mahdī*'s biography. Al-Majlisī, writing in 17th century Safavid Iran, writes that he referenced the aforementioned *al-Muqtaṣṣ* (or *al-Fayḍ*) *ʿalā muḥaddathī al-Aʿwām*. This work was also referenced by the eminent 13th century Shiʿi scholar Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs in his *al-Ṭarāʾif* (d. 664/1266), as well as in the lesser known ʿAli al-Nabāṭī al-ʿĀmilī's *Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm* (d. 894/1489). This work, *al-Fayḍ*, the editor al-ʿUqaylī proffers, is an abridged version of another work by Ibn al-Munādī on the *mahdī* and the genre of *fitan* written at the end of Ibn al-Munādī's life in the 330s H.

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[63] He was also a transmitter from many other *ahl al-hadith* and persons like Ibn Rahawahi whom scholars largely consider Sunni today; Cook, *Apocalypse and Identity*, pg. 21.

As al-ʿUqaylī points out, the work in question, *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*, has a great degree of independent positions as well as a high impact in respective genres of Islamic eschatology and *hadith.* This can be traced, he argues, through the fact that it is harder to find sources for where Ibn al-Munādī is drawing from than to find future sources which in turn draw on Ibn al-Munādī.[64] Indeed, many unique positions are stated in this work, namely, it's conception of a pluralistic number of Ḥusaynid and Ḥasanid *mahdī*s, the reconciliation between the idea of Jesus as the Messiah and heavenly Mahdi, and even the notion that the *mahdī* is a descendant of Faṭima, although that is also found in Ibn Majā and Sunan Abī Dawūd.[65]

Further, Ibn al-Munādī brings in a unique hadith transmitted from the sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (the *hadith* also being paralleled in Shaykh al-Ta'ifa Tusi's *Ghayba*), which states that the tablets of Moses that came down to Prophet in his debate with Phinhas/Fayhas the Jew were given to Ali b. Abi Talib.[66] Ibn al-Munādī also brings in legitimating traditions come down from Cain/Abel stories (ascribing their lineage to Persian kings); traditions from Sātiḥ the *kāhin* (touching on pre-Islamic Arabia); and also, quite importantly, from what he claims is the Book of Daniel that were in circulation among "the Christians and Jews." In this rendering, the Book of Daniel gives a prophecy discussing the coming of the *sufyānī*; the appearance of *mahdī*; war with the Byzantines; the Dajjal; description of messianic age; the end of the world, and other typical genres found in the *malāḥim* literature.[67] This is a clearly Islamic framing of a legitimating tradition of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* and seen as a positive marker to push forward the legitimacy of the *ḥadīths* found in *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*.

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[64] Ibn al-Munādī, *al-Malāḥim*, 13.
[65] See "*Kitāb al-mahdī*" in Abū Dā'ūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dawūd*, ed. Muḥammad. 'Awwāmah, 5 vols. (Jiddah: Dār al-Qiblah lil-Thaqāfah al-Islamīyah, 1998).
[66] Cook, *Apocalypse and Identity*, 23.
[67] Cook, *Apocalypse and Identity*, 24.

Ibn al-Munādī puts forth other interesting theses on the *mahdī* as well. Firstly, he does not follow Twelver claims that the Mahdi will be exclusively from the line of al-Husayn and ascribes both Husaynid and Ḥasanid Mahdis (plural) to be governing in the end-times. The pluralization of *mahdī* in this sense is unique to Ibn al-Munādī, although we find multiple other references to the idea that there can be more than one *mahdī*. One of these references is found in the work of Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād's (d. 229/844) ninth century *Kitāb al-Fitan*, the oldest surviving complete Muslim apocalyptic text (ca. 204/820), which has a fleeting reference that "there will be two Mahdis from the Banū ʿAbd Shams, one of them Umar b. ʿAbd al-Aziz (d. 101/720)."[68] An interesting later reference is also found in Twelver Shiʿi works, namely in *al-Imāma wa-l Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra* of ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn b. Bābiwayh al-Qummī, the father of Shaykh Ṣadūq who compiled *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʾma*. In *al-Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra*, Ibn Bābiwayh narrates a *ḥadīth* that the fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, is asked whether Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700-1)—the proclaimed imam and *mahdī* of the Kaysaniyya—was in fact an imam, to which al-Bāqir responds: "no, but he was a *mahdī*" (*kāna mahdīyan*).[69] The implication here was that Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya was a rightly guided individual but did not inherit the stricter criteria of a full imam with the *waṣiyya* and *wilāya* of Imam ʿAli.

Ibn al-Munādī, moreover, explicitly states the "Ḥasanid" will initially defeat the Sufyanid in Mecca.[70] Ibn al-Munādī quotes an uncharacteristically long single narrative he sources to the "Books of Daniel" in which a descendent of Ḥasan b. al-Ali, a certain Muḥammad b. ʿAli (his name is notable as it is *not* Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallah), with the title Imām al-Ḥasanī, will fight the Byzantines alongside Jesus and establish a just government. In Nuʿaym's *Kitāb al-Fitan*, the term Ḥasanid is not used; however, a *ḥadīth* is related to the Prophet through Imam ʿAli who said: "The Prophet named al-Ḥasan a lord (*sayyid*), and from his loins will emerge a man whose name is the name of your Prophet who will fill the earth with justice just as it has been filled with injustice."[71] Lastly, and very importantly, Ibn al-Munadī includes a new interesting thesis reconciling narrations that the Mahdi is Jesus the Messiah (found in other *Kutub al-Ḥadīth al-Sitta* canonical works) and notions that the Mahdi is an independent progeny of the Prophet. He narrates that there is both a heavenly (*samawi*) Mahdi as well as an earthly Mahdi and these are two separate figures. The Twelver Shiʿis of course see this as one person and differentiate the Mahdi from the Messiah.

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[68] Nuʿaym, *Kitab al-Fitan*, 214.

[69] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Bābiwayh, a*l-Imāma wa al-Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra*, (Qum: Madrasa al-Imām al-Mahdī, 1404H), 60. Also see: Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762 Ṭālibīs and Early ʿAbbāsīs in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 428.

[70] Here Ibn al-Munādī again seems to be balancing various sentiments found in the Muslim community. After the rebellion of the Ḥasanid Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyyah, the Shiʿi supporters of the Ḥusaynid Imams doubled down on their claim that the *mahdī* must come from the descendants of al-Ḥusayn; Modaressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 19.

The independence of Ibn al-Munādī and the unique framing of his work is due both to his autonomous scholarly personality as well as him being situated between two eras: that of the late-antique and early Islamic Near East and a more sectarian-reified Islamic world. Ibn al-Munādī's compilation is, therefore, important as a marker of the transition from early Islamic currents and more fluid confessional identities that Muslims had into a more reified and sectarian future where these concepts become delimited in more exclusionary ways. His work represents attempts to reconcile conflicting traditions and even potentially provides us with creative understandings of how sectarian norms could have evolved differently.

Now that we have covered some of the important beliefs, expectations, and ideological issues related to the *mahdī* and eschatology across Islamic denominations and the fluid beliefs that existed between them, we now turn to a survey of some of the main instances of pro-ʿAlid revolts, their strategies of organization, and how the beliefs in *walaya* and concealment/occultation manifested socio-politically across different revolutionary waves from al-Mukhtār until the rise of the Fatimids, Buyids, Hamdanids, and other successful Shiʿi dynasties.

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[71] Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 214.

Surveying Shiʿi Revolutionary Movements: Hidden Imams among the Kaysāniyya, Abbasids, Fatimids, Zaydis, Twelvers, and Others

In the following discussion, a survey of the diverse manifestation of hidden Imams and revolutionary movements will be discussed with a few objectives in mind. First, these Shiʿi revolutionary movements will be analyzed in order to show how common the phenomenon of *istitār*, *ghayba*, and the hidden imam was among the Shiʿa and the larger Muslim body politic. It will demonstrate the rich, diverse, and complex reach of Shiʿi messianic expectations as well as their repetitive and cyclical nature in the early Islamic period up until the start of the Shiʿi centuries. Second, this section will discuss how Shiʿi beliefs in *walayā* and *ghayba*/*istitār* impacted Shiʿi organizations and revolutionary activity in the socio-political context of the time. These particular Shiʿi notions influenced, as discussed previous chapters, revolutionary strategies in two main ways. First, the underground nature of Shiʿi revolutionary actors demonstrated that the idea of hidden *mahdī* with a codename was readily acceptable as part of Shiʿi doctrines and beliefs and could be readily understood by the revolutionary actors and body politic within the coalition. Secondly, ʿAlid charismatic *walāya* played a central role in exactly how alliances were forged both in underground stages as well as the open revolutionary and post-revolutionary governments of the ʿAlids.

The idea of charismatic prophetic blood lineage impacted ʿAlid-*mawālī* and tribal relations in a number of cases as we will study. Namely, the ʿAlid *mahdī*, *dāʿī*, or revolutionary leader was able to bridge tribal or social fault lines as a network broker by re-arranging new coalitions that cut across fractures and empowered new factions loyal to the ʿAlid leader or his representative. These new loyalty groups participated in novel institutions, including *daʿwa* organizations as well as new ʿAlid-loyal armies, that provided opportunities for new constellations of power and incentives for in-group loyalty that transcended previous tribal or political loyalties in society. Additionally, many early *daʿwa* organizations during their strict secret underground stage were composed of unique ʿAlid-*mawlālī* relationships in which a member or representative of the Banū Hāshim allied with one particular tribal subclan, sometimes through marriage or sometimes through establishing a larger patron-*mawlā* relationship, in the early incipient stage of the revolution and which provided the core base from which the *daʿwa* eventually expanded.[72]

Therefore, while pro-ʿAlid sentiments were quite widespread in society, the purpose of various *daʿwa* organizations had a specific doctrinal and organizational purpose: forging more specific *walaya* relationships between specific ʿAlid leaders or family branches and loyal followers in society. An important caveat to note here regarding the following section is that I will be using Shiʿi sectarian identity markers that are anachronistic, i.e. "Kaysānī," "Zaydi," "Fatimid Ismaʿili," and so on, at a period in which these identities were not necessarily exclusive or solidified. This is done mainly out of a sake of necessity given the lack of proper terms to use in their place, as well as these labels' useful role as referential markers to organize our survey understanding of Shiʿi identity over time.

The Kaysāniyya, Mukhtāriyya-Hāshimiyya, and the ʿAbbasid Daʿwa

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[72] For more on this important concept and its diverse applications in society, see: "*Mawlā*," Encyclopaedia of Islam II; Michael Fishbein, "The Life of Al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd in Some Early Arabic Historians" (PhD Dissertation, Los Angeles, UCLA, 1988); Teresa Bernheimer, *The ʿAlids: The First Family of Islam, 750-1200* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 32–50; Ulrike Mitter, "Origin and Development of the Islamic Patronate," in *Patronate and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam*, ed. Monique Bernards and John Nawas (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 70–133; Elizabeth Urban, *Conquered Populations in Early Islam: Non-Arabs, Slaves and the Sons of Slave Mothers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

Probably the earliest instance we find in the historical record of a hidden ʿAlid revolutionary leader is among a faction of the Kaysāniyya Shiʿa as they were primarily called in the heresiography literature,[73] or, perhaps more accurately, what Moshe Sharon terms the "Mukhtāriyya-Hāshimiyya." These Shiʿa "constituted the basis of ʿAbbāsid activity," and rallied around Abū Hāshim, a son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, whom they claimed received the *waṣāya* from his father. As Sharon states, "the historical importance of Mukhtār's activity lies in the fact that he founded a movement which was the first to attach itself to a living leader of the ʿAlid family, to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah. Moreover, it was the sole Shīʿite movement with real political and military achievements."[74] The roots of this underground relationship were quite old, and by some estimations existed at least following the martyrdom of Ḥusayn b. ʿAli and the beginning of the revolt of ʿAbdallah b. Zubayr.[75] Without going into extensive details regarding the early ʿAbbasid *daʿwa*, what is noteworthy here is that the Mukhtāriyya-Hāshimiyya attempted to conceal the identity of their ʿAlid leader or imam after the death of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (in 81/700-1) onwards. It was not until the open revolt period of the "ʿAbbasid revolution" that certain factions within the underground organization put forward publicly Abu-l Abbās al-Ṣaffāh as the rightful *mahdī* and imam, a controversial choice for many of the adherents as well as elite officials of the *daʿwa*. This phenomenon of uncertain or surprise candidacy, as we see in many other Shiʿi revolutionary movements, is a constant occurrence.

Who were the leaders of this underground movement? And is it accurate to consider it one unified *daʿwa* with one particular candidate or individual rather than a coalition of different factions united by the generic idea of a Shiʿi *mahdī* ? We know that al-Mukhtār openly claimed to represent Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, whom he called the *mahdī*. However, following the defeat of his short-lived government centered in Kufa, his supporters, identified in much of the primary source literature (whether correctly or incorrectly) under the rubric of the Kaysāniyya, split into different factions. After the death of Ibn Hanafiyya, one group of the Kaysāniyya, the Karibiyya, argued that Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya was not dead but in occultation on Mount Raḍwa and would return as the Mahdi.[76] Other adherents of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya also believed that he was alive (*ḥayy yurzaq*)[77] and that he would return to establish the just government (*yurjaʿ li-yuqayyim dawlat al-haqq*). He would reportedly raise his banner between the *rukn* and *maqām* of the Kaʿba—a motif which has remained strong among Twelver Shiʿis until today regarding their belief about the coming of the *mahdī*, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, and specifically where he would physically announce his arrival in Mecca.[78]

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[73] See, for example Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʻa*; Abū al-Maʿālī, *Bayān Al-Adyān*.
[74] Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, 111.
[75] Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, 111–12.

Additionally, several groups are recorded to have emerged after the death of Abū Hāshim whom many Kaysānī Shiʿis followed as an imam after the passing of his father, Ibn al-Ḥanafiyaa. One group believed the Imamate was passed to Abū Hāshim's brother, ʿAli b. Muḥammad, and another group believed it went to a grandson of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli;[79] other heresiographers note that one Shiʿi group believed it went to Ibn Ḥarb, and one group believed it went to Bayān b. Samʿān (d. 119/737). The latter figure, Bayān, likely hailed from the south Arabian tribe of the Banū Nahd, a tribe many of whose members participated in al-Mukhtār's rebellion. Bayān b. Samʿān was said to preach a number of esoteric beliefs, and, although it is difficult to establish the veracity of the range of his beliefs given the nature of his sources, he is said "to have ascribed to the imāms prophecy through an indwelling particle of divine light; to have expected the return of various religious figures after death; and to have discussed the 'greatest name' of God."[80] Bayān b. Samʿān, alongside al-Mughīra b. Saʿīd, led a rebellion against the Umayyad governor of Iraq, Khālid b. ʿAbdallah al-Qasrī, for which he was literally burned alive after the uprising he led was defeated.[81] The legacy of Bayān is also important in the history of esoteric Shiʿi movements as leadership of his movement, the "Bayāniyya," is said to have passed to Jābir al-Juʿfī following his death.[82] Al-Juʿfī is a contested figure claimed by different Shiʿi denominations, in particular between the Twelver Jaʿfaris and Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawis, both of whom narrated many *hadith* from him and respect his legacy as an orthodox doctrinal figure respectively within their denominations even though what they narrated from his is vastly different.[83]

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[76] Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, *Tarjumih-ye Firaq al-Shīʿih-ye Nawbakhtī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1353), 52–55; Abū al-Maʿālī, *Bayān Al-Adyān*, 43; Wadad Kadi, *al-Kaysānīyah fi-l Tārīkh wa-l Adab* (Beirut: Dar al-Thaqāfah, 1974), 168–202; William Frederick Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shi'ite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 28–30.

[77] The use of the terms, "*ḥayy yurzaq*" as recorded in *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, was likely in reference to the Qurʾanic passage regarding martyrs. The verse states: "think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live (*aḥyāun*), finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord (*ʿinda rabbihim yurzaqūn*)"; *Āl ʿImrān*: 169.

[78] Kadi, *al-Kaysānīyah fi-l Tārīkh wa-l Adab*, 212.

[79] Kadi, *al-Kaysānīyah fi-l Tārīkh wa-l Adab*, 213.

For which ʿAlid imam or *mahdī* did Bayān b. Samʿān and al-Mughīra b. Saʿīd rise? Not surprisingly, the sources present a various range of answers to this question. Abū Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. shortly after 360/971) in *Kitāb al-Aghānī* states that it was in the name of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, while al-Wāqidī in *Kitāb al-ʿUyūn wa-l Ḥadāʾiq* mentions it was in the name of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallah *al-Nafs al-Zakiyya* (although this later choice is historically anachronistic). Marshall Hodgson posits that Bayān was likely "connected with the ʿAbbasids who inherited Abū Hāshim's party in Kufa in the name of all the family of the Prophet."[84] This view seems to be more accepted by authors such as al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī who states that the Bayāniyya "expected Abū Hāshim to return to the earth as the *Mahdī*, the 'Rightly Guided,' that is, the messiah."[85] The ambiguity surrounding Bayān and al-Mughīra's specific ʿAlid loyalties is of course not particular to just them but rather indicative of the contested nature of the Shiʿi imamate and the fluid nature of secretive underground organizations.

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[80] "Bayān b. Samʿān al-Tamīmī," Encyclopaedia of Islam II.

[81] Interestingly, it is said of the Mughīriyya, that they used targeted assassination techniques against their opponents, a tactic which widely became associated with the Ismaʿilis in the later middle Islamic periods; Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 36, 67. Of course, assassination techniques were not the exclusive purview of these groups and it was used by virtually all political actors, empires, and dynasties, however this point is notable for the emphases and narratives that authors crafted regarding these esoteric Shiʿi groups and the potential existence of the assassination trope as an emphasized *topos* for them.

[82] Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 56.

[83] For an in-depth monograph on the legacy and reception of Jābir in the larger Shiʿi literature, see: Saʿīd Ṭāvūsī Masrūr, *Pazūhishī Payrāmūn-i Jābir b. Yazīd Juʿfī* (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Imām Ṣādiq, 1389). I thank the author of this book for providing me with a copy of it during one of my research trips to Tehran.

The secret nature of the identity of the imam became doubly important after Abū Hāshim's passing as several groups claimed to receive his successorship and continuation of his imamate (*waṣīya*). One of the main areas of contest was between the Ṭālibid, ʿAbdallah b. Muʿāwīya who claimed to receive the *waṣīya* of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya along with the ʿAbbasid branch of the Banū Hāshim.[86] The ʿAbbasids claimed that Abū Hāshim's *waṣīya* passed to their line via the person of Muḥammad b. ʿAli.[87] The competition between these two branches was consequential for several reasons, namely that neither ʿAbdallah b. Muʿawīya nor the ʿAbbasids were descendants of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. While they were respected members of the larger clan of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Banū Hāshim, and descendants of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the doctrine of *walāya* was almost exclusively the purview of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and select of his direct descendants.[88]

The issue of succession to Abū Hāshim and the leadership of the Shiʿi revolutionary networks that al-Mukhtār had initially brought together was also complicated by the involvement of the Abbasids with ʿAbdallah b. Muʿāwīya's uprising against the Umayyads. After initially rising up in Kufa, Ibn Muʿāwīya's movement was crushed by the Umayyad governor, but he was able to flee and established a short-lived government in central Iran, for which we have numismatic evidence.[89] Muḥammad b. ʿAbdūs al-Jahshīyarī's[90] (d. 331/942-43) *Kitāb al-Wuzarāʾ* mentions that Ibn Muʿāwiya appointed the future Abbasid caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr (d. 158/754-5) as the *ʿāmil* or financial official tasked with collection of revenue in Idhāj (today's city of Izeh in Iran) in Khūzistān.[91] Other sources, such as Balādhūri's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* and al-Iṣfahāni's *Aghānī* mention that Ibn Muʿāwīya found refuge in Herat with Abū Muslim after his defeat at the hands of the Umayyads but was betrayed and killed by the latter who wished to appropriate Ibn Muʿāwiya's movement into his own *daʿwa*.[92]

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[84] "Bayān b. Samʿān al-Tamīmī," Encyclopaedia of Islam II.
[85] Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 39.
[86] Mashkūr, *Tarjumih-ye Firaq al-Shīʿih-ye Nawbakhtī*, 55.
[87] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, *Akhbār al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya*, 189–90.
[88] For a detailed discussion of this point, see: Dakake, *The Charismatic Community*, esp. 33–69.

This competition between various interpretations of Islam is often framed as a battle orthodoxy versus heterodoxy; but, these battles could have multiple layers given the power configurations they were situated within. When the caliphate had a stronger repressive capacity and would regularly dispatch armies to crush ʿAlid revolts from across the Islamic world, the nature of competition was different than when the central imperial power weakened and multiple dynasties, namely several Shiʿi ones, were ruling with normative claims to lead the Muslim world as universal sovereign imams. Before the mid-3rd/9th century, sources reflect many disagreements between different ʿAlid branches or Shiʿi factions, including the dispute between Abū Ḥashim b. Muḥammad al-Ḥanafiyya and Zayd b. Ḥasan under the Umayyads, as well as leadership disagreements between other senior ʿAlid descendants such as ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥasan (father of Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya; d. 145/763) and Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad (the sixth Shiʿi Imam in the Twelver and Ismaʿili traditions; d. 148/765).

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[89] Teresa Bernheimer, "The Revolt of ʿAbdallāh b. Mu'āwiya, AH 127-130: A Reconsideration through the Coinage," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 69, no. 3 (2006): 381–93.

[90] Muḥammad b. ʿAbdūs al-Jahshīyarī (d. 331/942-43), the noted scholar and Abbasid court official, interestingly, had himself been forced to go into hiding to avoid government repression following the crackdown and extortion on him by the Abbasid court which seized 200,000 dinars of his assets; ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fi-l Tārīkh*, 13 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Sādir, 1965), 8: 291, 328. Al-Jahshīyarī had been accused of association of Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAli al-Shalmaghānī (d. 322/933), a top Twelver Shiʿi scholar and financial agent on behalf of the hidden Imam before his conflict with the third head-representative (*safīr*) Ḥasan b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/937) and Shalmaghānī's execution by the Abbasid court. Shalmaghānī had been accused of extremist beliefs, including beliefs in the transmigration of souls (*tanāsukh*) and misattributing divinity (*ḥulūl*). The veracity of al-Jahshīyarī's relations with Shalmaghānī may certainly be true, however is hard to judge given the score-settling that factions brought down on one another when the court made decisions to crack down on individuals such as Shalmaghānī and the openings provided to score points between competing factions within the Abbasid court.

[91] Muḥammad b. ʿAbdūs al-Jahshīyarī's, *Kitāb al-Wuzarāʾ* (Cairo, 1938), 98; Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 98.

[92] Bernheimer, "The Revolt of ʿAbdallāh b. Mu'āwiya," 390.

At the famous meeting at al-Abwāʾ situated between Mecca and Medina, a senior group of Banū Hāshim, including descendants of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn b. ʿAli as well as descendants of al-ʿAbbās b. Abd al-Muṭṭalib, reportedly met following the death of the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd (d. 126/744). In this council, ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥasan, one of the most respected and senior members of the Banū Hāshim, urged the other elite from the Family of the Prophet to pledge allegiance to his son Muḥammad, whom he called the *mahdī*. While most in that session did so and Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad confirmed the senior station of ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥasan, Jaʿfar ultimately urged ʿAbdallāh to not have his son revolt since it was not the appropriate time (*lā tafʿalū fa-inna hadha-l ʿamr lam yaʾti*).[93] ʿAbdallāh, according to the report, reacted negatively to this comment but Jaʿfar insisted upon his position. Before leaving the meeting, the report stated that Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad predicted the death of ʿAbdallāh and his son Muḥammad at the hands of "the one with the yellow cloak," (*sāḥib al-ridāʾ al-aṣfar*; i.e. Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣur, the future second Abbasid caliph who was present at the meeting).[94] While the veracity of this report is somewhat questionable and may be a back-projection, it does highlight the tensions and potential differences between different branches and actors within the Banū Hāshim which indeed unfolded after the Abbasids came to power.

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[93] Abu-l Faraj ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqar (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1419H), 185–86; Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād* (Qumm: Kungirih-ye Shaykh Mufīd, 1413H), 189–93.
[94] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, 186.

Fallout from the ʿAbbasid Victory: Shiʿi and "Ghulāt" Revolts in Iran and Central Asia

One of the earliest revolutionary pushbacks, if not the earliest one, against the coming to power of the Abbasids came from the Shiʿi rebel leader Sharīk b. Shaykh al-Mihrī who revolted from the city of Bukhārā in Central Asia in 132/749.[95] He raised, some reports record, 30,000 men to fight the Abbasids, stating: "It was not based on this that we followed the Family of Muḥammad—to spill blood and act unjustly."[96] Abū Saʿīd Gardīzī (d. 5th/11th century) in *Zayn al-Akhbār* records that Sharīk was inviting people to the descendants of the Family of Abū Ṭālib (*bih Āl-i Abū Ṭālib daʿvat kard*).[97] In his *History of Bukhārā* (*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*), Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Jafar Narshakhī (d. 348/959) also states that Sharīk was an Arab Shiʿi who invited people to the leadership (caliphate) of the descendants of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib (*daʿvat kard bih khilāfat-i farzandān-i Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAli*), reportedly stating that "we are now free from the torture/repression (*ranj*) of the Marwānids (i.e. Umayyad caliphs), we should not now be repressed by the Abbasids (*Āl-i ʿAbbās*)."[98] Narshakhī also stated that the Amīrs of Bukhārā and Khwārazm, ʿAbd al-Jabbar b. Shuʿayb and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Harthama respectively, pledged allegiance to Sharīk and supported him. They agreed, notably, that their (secret) mission should be made public ("*īn daʿvat āshkār kunīm*").[99] In response, Abū Muslim sent his commander Ziyād b. Ṣāliḥ to confront the pro-ʿAlid rebels.[100] Ziyād's 10,000 strong Abbasid army was supported by reinforcements from Abū Muslim who established an army base (*lashgargāh*) outside Marv, while Sharīk's army base was established in Bukhārā whose residents were allied with him (*bā vay itifāq kardand*).[101] After a prolonged engagement, eventually Ziyād crushed the revolt and killed Sharīk as well as his son who was promised a pardon by Ziyād but executed regardless.[102] The immediacy of the pro-ʿAlid reaction to the Abbasid claim to power and the major revolt which was carried out against the Abbasids in the very same year they captured the caliphate reflects the serious discontent that the supporters of the revolution had against the Abbasid claim to leadership.

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[95] Some sources mentioned Shārik's tribal lineage was from the Qaḍāʿa Qahṭānī Yemeni tribe, Nuṣratullāh Saʿīdī, "Māhiyat-i Nukhustīn-i Qiyām-i Mā Vara al-Nahr dar Daurih-ye ʿAbbāsiyān," *Faṣlnāmih-Ye Takhaṣuṣī-Ye Fiqh va Tārīkh-i Tamadun*, no. 1–2 (1383SH): 91. However, it is possible that Sharīk was a client (*mawla*) given the proper Persian name of his father *mihr* meaning light/sun/friendship and also related to the ancient Zoroastrian Iranian festival of *mihrgān* ; see: "Mehragān," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*; and, Jenny Rose, "Festivals and the Calendar," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, ed. Michael Stausberg, Yuhan Vevaina, and Anna Tessmann (Somerset: Wiley, 2015), 381.

[96] ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi-l Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār al-Sādir, 1965), 5: 448.

[97] Abū Saʿīd Abd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī, *Zayn al-Akhbār* (Tehran: Dunyāy-i Kitāb, 1984), 268.

[98] Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Jafar Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ṭūs, 1984), 86.

[99] Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 86; Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan Under Abbasid Rule, 747-820*, 87.

[100] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 74

In addition to the killing of Sharīk, the Abbasid execution of Bihāfarīd was quite important given his standing and popularity in Khurāsān. Bihāfarīd was a charismatic Zoroastrian or recently converted Zoroastrian-Muslim who spread esoteric interpretations of religion. Certain reports mention that Bihāfarīd claimed to have experienced death, or a death-like state, and had returned to earth to propagate revelation.[103] Bihāfarīd undertook Islamic-influenced reforms of Zoroastrianism including banning close-kin marriage, the drinking of wine, certain whispered prayers while eating, and also instituting ritual prayer reforms alongside different dietary practices. He had likely converted to Islam, or at least pledged allegiance to Abū Muslim and wore the pro-revolutionary black in front of Abū Muslim.[104] However in his habitual routine, like Muqannaʿ after him, Bihāfarīd donned the mystic green although in the form of a special shirt. As we previously saw, this has precedence in the Qurʾan but also according to some authors "the color of the garment bestowed on Bihāfarīd by the unnamed divinity [who provided Bihāfarīd's journey to Paradise] is the quintessential color of Mithra, green," which reveals the possible confluence of trans-religious influences on Bihāfarīd and the movement he headed.[105] Given the popularity of Bihāfarīd and the overlapping social bases between him and Abū Muslim, the latter ordered two of his commanders to confront and kill Bihāfarīd which they did; however even at the time of the writing of his *al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm (d. ca. 385/995), stated Bihāfarīd still had followers in Khurasān.[106]

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[101] Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 86.

[102] Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 86–89; Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 87 –90.

[103] Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 144–45. For Zoroastrian visions of heaven and ascension narratives, see: Prods Oktor Skjaervø, "Kirdir's Vision: Translation and Analysis," *Archaeologische Mitteilungen Aus Iran* 16 (1983): 269–306. As Bahramian stated, Bihāfarīd "said that while he had been in occultation in heaven, where he had seen paradise and hell, God had clothed him in green attire and sent him back to Earth; he also claimed that God sent him revelations; "Bih Āfarīd," *Encyclopaedia Islamica*.

[104] See Ali Bahramian's article "Bih Āfarīd," *Encyclopaedia Islamica*.

The early execution of Bihāfarīd (d. ca. 131/749) by Abū Muslim alongside the killing of of ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya (d. ca. 131/748-9) in Abū Muslim's prison reflects Abū Muslim's appropriation of a larger wave of either Shiʿi, Zoroastrian reformist, or syncretic esoteric movements and his centralizing power to eventually empower the Abbasid family to come out on top of the revolution.[107] However, like Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shiʿi, the chief missionary (*dāʿī*) of the Fatimids some 160 years later, Abū Muslim (d. 137/755) was given a bad recompense by his imam on whose behalf he proselytized total obedience. Both the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphs ordered hidden soldiers in their royal courtyards to hack to death by their chief missionaries after accusing them of betrayal. The popularity and strategic visions of the head missionaries were crucial to leading their respective revolutions to victory; this was too much of a threat for the very imams and caliphs they practically installed in power.

Following the Abbasid assassination of Abū Muslim in 137/755, a series of revolts were undertaken which retained strong esoteric themes regarding the figure of Abū Muslim and have been called "*ghulāt*" by some contemporary writers. As one scholar argues: "an important factor in the success of the Abbasid movement was the support it received from the peasant and lower class population of Khurasan, attracted by the missionaries' rather unscrupulous exploitation of the esoteric and syncretic socio-religious doctrines peculiar to the ‘extremist’ (*ghulāt*) sects or groups.”[108] *Ghuluww* is not necessarily a purview of just certain Shiʿi denominations although it often is conflated exclusively with Shiʿism since many “extremist” *ghulāt* groups paralleled or were influenced by certain aspects Shiʿi theology and revolutionary activity. Some *ghulāt* groups certainly also considered themselves Shiʿis and followers of the Imams.[109]

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[105] Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 432.
[106] Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 483.
[107] For some of the discussions surrounding the religious and ethnic makeup of the Abbasid revolution, see: Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads*, 214–19.

Many of them, in fact, as will be discussed below, claimed to be a continuation or appropriation of the revolt of Yaḥyā b. Zayd b. ʿAli who had revolted against the Umayyads in 125/743 in Gorgān, Nīshāpūr, and the larger region of Khurāsān, including Isḥāq Turk and al-Muqannaʿ.[110] As such, these revolts reflect broader currents of doctrine and belief found among the social bases of the revolutionary wave that brought the Abbasids to power. Some of the “extremist” (*ghūlat*) revolts discussed below overlapped with more mainstream Shiʿi movements and Shiʿi revolutionary groups and contained notions such as occultation, messianic promises, hidden imams, and emphasis on esoteric divinely guided leadership, while some aspects of their beliefs, especially literal divine corporeal indwelling (*ḥulūl*) and metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) were strictly rejected by other Shiʿi movements.

Daniel elaborates that the “general term for the Abū Muslim sects is Rāwandiyya, meaning those who believed the imamate had passed from Ibrāhim [al-Imām] to Abū Muslim.” Some of the subgroups who ascribed to these doctrines, “believed in *tanāsukh*, i.e. that Abū Muslim’s divine spirit had passed on after his death to his various legitimate successors,” while “a more extreme group in Herat and Merv, called the Abū Muslimiyya or Barkūkiyya, asserted that al-Manṣūr had not killed Abū Muslim but rather a devil in his form, and that Abū Muslim was still alive."[111] Moreover, these "groups did not represent any single group or interest, but rather served as a consolidating force for several sources of discontent in Khurasan and the East. Some of them were closely associated with the *daʿwa*; others had been co-opted into the Abbasid movement,"[112] and they represented diverse political interests that could not be reduced to certain ethnic backgrounds or even doctrinal commitments.

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[108] *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 125.

[109] See, for example: Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987); Melhem Chokr, *Zandaqa et Zindīqs En Islam Au Second Siècle de l’Hégire* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1993); Ni‘mat Allāh Ṣafarī Furūshānī, *Ghāliyān: Kāvishī dar Jaryānhā va Bar'āyandhā tā Pāyān-i Sadah-ʾi Sivvum* (Mashhad: Āstān-i Quds-i Raẓavī, 1999); Tamima Bayhom-Daou, “The Second Century Shi’i Ghulat: Were They Really Gnostic?,” *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 5 (2003): 13–61.

[110] Yaḥyā b. Ḥusayn al-Nāṭiq bi-l Ḥaqq, *al-Ifāda fī Tārīkh al-A’imma* (Saʿda: Maktaba Ahl al-Bayt, 2014), 44–47.

The revolt of Sunbādh (Persian: Sunbād) "the Magian/Zoroastrian," a close Iranian associate of Abū Muslim,[113] in 137/754-5 posed a serious threat to Abbasid rule in part by rallying disaffected Abbasid soldiers (*aṣḥāb Abī Muslim*).[114] He was said to raise between sixty to one-hundred thousand rebels in retribution for the killing of Abū Muslim. He captured the cities of Nishāpūr and Rayy among others, and, according to al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), adopted the title of Iṣbahbadh, a Persian military governor title from Sassanian times.[115] Importantly, he also is said to have propagated an amalgamation of certain Zoroastrian, Mazdakian, and esoteric Islamic beliefs. Sunbādh's uprising is treated by later authors such as Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092) as appealing to various sectarian or religious currents, including the Khurramdīn followers who, Niẓām al-Mulk states, were organized by the wife of Mazdak who fled to Rayy from the city of Madāʾin after her husband was killed by the Sassanians and invited people to the religion or sect of Mazdak (*bih maẕhab-i shawhar mīkhand*).[116] Other sources, such as *Tārīkh-i Harāt* suggest that Sunbādh's name was Fādhūsbān b. Kanāranj and he was a local Zoroastrian wealthy landed elite (*dihqān*) in Nīshāpūr whose family was a major regional power under the Sassanians.[117]

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[111] For the reception of similar, docetic-parallel, ideas among Shiʿi groups considered by many to be *ghulāt*, see: Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shi'ism* (U.K.: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 248; Meir Bar-Asher and Aryeh Kofsky, *The Nusayri-Alawi Religion: An Enquiry into Its Theology and Liturgy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Yaron Friedman, *The Nusayrī-'Alawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History, and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); and, Asatryan, *Controversies in Formative Shi'i Islam*, 149–56.

[112] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 131.

[113] Abū Muslim also had the title of *Ṣāhib al-Daʿwa*, or head of the (underground) mission or revolutionary organization; Abū ʿAli Ḥasan Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāmih*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zavvār, 1965), 230.

[114] Aḥmad b. Abī Yaʿqūb al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī* (Martjin Theodoor Houtsma: Brill, 1883), 2: 441–42.

[115] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 119–121.

In addition to rallying with this indigenous religious group, Niẓām al-Mulk also states that Sunbādh strategically chose to locate to Rayy from Nishābūr and reached out to the Zoroastrians of Ṭabaristān in northern Iran to which Rayy was adjacent, and Sunbādh knew that the majority of the people of Ṭabaristān (also called "*kūhistān*" by Niẓām) were Shiʿa,[118] Mazdakites, and *Mushabahī* (i.e. anthropomorphists).[119] Sunbādh first undertook secret underground organization and when he chose to make his revolutionary call public (*khāst kih daʿvat āshkār kunad*), he killed the governor of al-Manṣūr in Rayy and seized the treasury of Abū Muslim which was being kept in the city.[120] Niẓām al-Mulk also writes that Sunbādh claimed that Abū Muslim was not dead and that he was Abū Muslim messenger.[121] Moreover,

> In a mixture of the doctrines of the Kaysāniyya and the Abū Muslim sects, he taught that al-Manṣūr had not killed Abū Muslim, who had really been able to escape by reciting God's greatest name[122] and thus transformed into a white dove. Abū Muslim was rather concealed in a secret fortress with Mazdak and the Mahdī, all three of whom would soon reappear.[123]

Here, the revolutionary latency of occultation and reappearance (*rajāʿ*) is emphasized; additionally, Abū Muslim would be foremost and Mazdak his deputy (*Abū Muslim muqaddam*

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[116] Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāmih*, 230.
[117] Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 32–34.
[118] Niẓām al-Mulk calls the Shiʿa by the derogatory term "rejectionists" in the text, or "*rāfiḍī*"
[119] This can be read as a derogatory term for "*ghulāt*" Muslims or recently converted individuals who still kept aspects of their previous local beliefs in theological beliefs.
[120] Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāmih*, 230.
[121] The phrase could also be read as Sunbādh was Abū Muslim's "prophet." the Persian word used is *rasūl*: "*daʿvat kard kih rasūl-i Abū Muslim būd*."
[122] "*ism-i mahīn-i khudā-ye taʿālā*" in Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāmih*, 230.
[123] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan Under Abbasid Rule, 747-820*, 129.

bud va Mazdak vazīrash).[124] Other beliefs ascribed to Sunbādh include his alleged intention to destroy the Kaʿba and replace the prayer direction (*qibla*) with the Sun as it had been before.[125] The later allegation of Sun worship was likely defamatory and played on anti-Zoroastrian tropes of fire and Sun worship found in some of the polemical sectarian literature.[126] Eventually, the general sent by the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775), Jawhar b. Marrār al-ʿIjlī defeated Subādh's forces near the vicinity of Hamadān and Rayy in Iran, and the latter fled northwards to the Caspian Sea region but was killed by a local governor who sent his head to al-Manṣūr.[127]

While the exact nature of the aforementioned claims and beliefs of Sunbādh are difficult to fully ascertain, the general narrative of amalgamated beliefs and revolutionary messianic ideology of Sunbādh and his followers—from which the Abbasids themselves drew upon seems quite convincing. But it would be misguided to view Sunbādh and his followers in the lens that Patricia Crone situates his rebellion:

> All this [regarding Sunbādh's beliefs] sounds quite hilarious to a modern reader, but it rests on two correct perceptions, namely that such Muslim doctrines as Khurramism contained (sic?) tended to be drawn from Shīʿism, and that the Khurramīs would use these Shīʿite doctrines to opt out of the religious community formed by the conquerors, not to join them. Whether it was as imam, God, the mahdi, or the associate of the mahdi that the Khurramīs of a particular area cast Abū Muslim, they were appropriating Islam in much the same fashion that African Christians were appropriating Christianity when they elevated figures of their own to the role of black Christ, predicting that they would return to liberate their people... Niẓām al-Mulk's account is hilarious because it expresses this insight as a story about a single individual consciously picking and mixing cultural ingredients without apparently having any convictions himself, to produce a devilish brew which everyone except the narrator and his readers is sufficiently stupid to accept.[128]

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[124] Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāmih*, 230.

[125] Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 439.

[126] For a more nuanced discussion of Zoroastrian beliefs and practices throughout time, see: Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge, 1979); Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism: Volume 1, The Early Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); and, Michael Stausberg, Yuhan Vevaina, and Anna Tessmann, eds., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* (Somerset: Wiley, 2015).

[127] al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, 3: 120.

[128] Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 39.

Aside from the oddly acrimonious and offensive nature of these remarks—which also take away autonomy from indigenous Christian readings of their religious tradition—these assumptions conflate notions such as *ghuluww* with Shiʿism and paint an uncomplicated, or perhaps crude, relationship and reception of Islam in Iranian lands among those identified as Khurramī. However, while some *ghulāt* groups considered themselves Shiʿi, not all Shiʿis believed in *ghulāt* doctrines.[129] Secondly, "Khurramism," as well as *ghuluww*, referred to a broad spectrum of beliefs; Khurramī interpretations of Islam also contained idiosyncratic readings not found within many other Shiʿi groups—which of these are Islamic or not according to Crone is not clear.

Finally, Crone states that the followers of Sunbādh internalized or "nativized" Islam in order to "use them against the colonists, from whose religious community they break away to form sectarian groups and dissident churches of their own,"[130] however Subādh was not colonized by the Abbasids. Initially, he was part of the Abbasid army and had only revolted after his main patron and political ally was assassinated in an elite power struggle. In fact, in the rebellion of Sharīk b. Shaykh mentioned above, Iranians and Arabs fought on both sides of the rebellion and local Iranian elite were split in their support of Sharīk and the Abbasids.[131]

In addition to the revolt of Subādh, the case of Isḥāq Turk is also notable to mention. He preached that Abū Muslim was not dead, but rather alive (*hayyun yurzaq*), i.e. in occultation, and constrained in the Alborz mountain range (*maḥbūs fī jibāl al-Rayy*). He would emerge at a time known to his followers, just as Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995) states the Kaysaniyya claimed about Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya.[132] Importantly, according to certain reports, Ishāq was a son of

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[129] See, for example: Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*.

[130] Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 39.

[131] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 88.

[132] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), 483.

Yaḥyā b. Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 125/743)—who had himself revolted against the Umayyads in Central Asia—therefore making Isḥāq a grandson of Imam al-Sajjad and an ʿAlid rebel.[133] Other accounts refer to him as a missionary (*dāʿī*) or representative of Abū Muslim, although this is not contradictory with his potential ʿAlid lineage, while others state he was a simple villager who moved up the hierarchy of Abū Muslim's army.[134] Ibn al-Nadīm writes that the Ishāq was called the "Turk" not due to his ethnic heritage but rather the fact that he proselytized the message (or perhaps prophecy? "*al-risālā*") among to the indigenous Turkish population in Transoxiana. Importantly, Ibn al-Nadīm claims that Isḥāq worked under the cover of the ʿAlawi (*al-ʿAlawiyya*) denomination (*tastatir bi-hadhā-l madhhab*), i.e. Shiʿism.[135]

Moreover, Isḥāq was affiliated with the movement of the white-clothed ones (*mubayyiḍa*, or in Persian *sifīd jāmigān*).[136] While some authors have considered the adoption of the color white to represent the religion of Zoroastrianism or that of the followers of Mazdak against the "Islamic" black,[137] it is important to remember that the white flags were adopted by revolutionary ʿAlids, including Ṣāḥib al-Fakhkh Ḥusyan b. ʿAli (d. 169/786) as well as the ʿAlid ruler of Ṭabaristān, Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884).[138] While Isḥāq is not recorded to have undertaken a revolt, he seems to have prepared the grounds for the *mubayyiḍa* and the uprising of al-Muqannaʿ: "although the movement [of Isḥāq] was temporarily forced 'underground,' it managed to carry on its mission, which eventually had dramatic results in Transoxiana with the revolt of al-Muqannaʾ."[139]

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[133] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), 483.

[134] Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 483; B.S. Amoretti, "Sects and Heresies," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 496.

[135] Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 483.

[136] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 132–133.

[137] B.S. Amoretti, "Sects and Heresies," 513.

[138] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 551–68

[139] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 133. Also see: "Esḥāq Tork," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

The anti-Abbasid revolt of the enigmatic "veiled one" al-Muqannaʿ (d. 163/780), who was previously involved in the Abbasid *daʿwa* and was an officer of Abū Muslim, also provides important insights in the revolutionary patterns of the period and some of the ʿAlid and Shiʿi intersections which we can see with these revolts. Al-Muqannaʿ, (the veiled one) whose given name is usually given as either Hāshim b. Hakīm or alternatively Hāshim-i Hakīm (i.e. Hāshim the wise) revolted in the vicinity in 161/777 after having "earlier fled from his village and remained in hiding until he had news of events in Transoxiana. Aided by thirty-six followers, he evaded [local] ptrols, built a raft, and escaped across the Oxus… he took refuge in a chain of mountain fortresses concentrated along the Zarafshān and Kashkā Daryā valleys," the most famous of which was Sanām, "large enough to contain running water and cultivated fields."[140]

Among certain beliefs ascribed to al-Muqannaʿ was that he ascribed to the doctrine of metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) and in his own divinity, although according to Ibn Athīr (d. 606/1310), he kept the claim of divinity a secret that he did not reveal to all of his followers; he is also said to have claimed that God substantiated himself in the form (*ṣūra*) of Adam, Noah and all of the Prophets and through to Abū Muslim (who they supposedly thought was more virtuous than the Prophet Muḥammad) and eventually to al-Muqannaʿ.[141] This may be why al-Muqannaʿ covered his face with a green silk veil—to cover the supposed manifestation of divine radiance and was likely inspired by a verse in the Qurʾan that mentions that the dwellers of paradise (*janna*) will be adorned with green silk clothes.[142] Again, the actual substance of some of these beliefs are difficult to ascertain especially as the sources we have on the revolt are generally inimical to the rebel leaders, however the overall esoteric platform of al-Muqannaʿ's revolt and many of the other ones mentioned is likely generically accurate. This provides a historiographical challenge of understanding what may have actually been extreme or considered *ghuluww* within these rebellions rather than simply esoteric or mystical interpretations that were more mainstream among Muslims.[143] While it may not be possible to solve this methodological issue, it is important to keep these considerations in mind when studying the history and transmission of such beliefs and ideas.

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[140] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 140. Also see: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 484. and "Moqannaʿ," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
[141] ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi-l Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār al-Sādir, 1965), 6: 38–39.
[142] Qurʾan (18:31): "*yalbasūna thiyāban khuḍran min sundusin*." Although in some narrations he covered his face with a gold mask in place of a green veil; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 6: 39; Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 147.

Importantly, al-Muqannaʿ denounced the murder of the ʿAlid Imam Yaḥyā b. Zayd and said he would kill his murderers.[144] His followers, raised the cry of "Oh Hāshim, assist us!"[145] and we are told the *sipīd jāmigān* or *al-mubayyaḍa* (i.e. "the white clothed"—perhaps referring to the pro-ʿAlid revolutionary groups who had also previously affiliated with Iṣhāq Turk) rallied to his cause.[146] Like the other revolts which transpired against the Abbasids in the region following their coming to power, al-Muqannaʿ was eventually defeated by them, but we are also told that al-Muqannaʿ’s followers believed that he would “someday return to earth, riding on a grey horse, to restore his rule.”[147]

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[143] This is not to say that mysticism or esoteric interpretations were not considered controversial for many Muslims in the past—figures such al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Hallāj (d. 309/922) and Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) were denounced by many scholars during their time, and even executed in the prior case. Simultaneously, however, such mystical figures garnered widespread followings and large proportions of Muslims were nonetheless drawn to them and esoteric teachings in general; see, for example: J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason, 4 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ʿArabi*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993); Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995).

[144] This raises some parallels of al-Muqannaʿ with Mukhtār al-Thaqafī who had avenged the murder of Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAli; Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 276; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 6: 39. The second part of this claim (taking revenge on the killers of Yaḥyā b. Zayd) is somewhat enigmatic since the Umayyads were the killers of al-Yaḥyā and had been overthrown by the Abbasids, but al-Muqannaʿ may have been referring to remnant pro-Umayyad elements or elites in the region not all of whom had been punished or replaced by the Abbasids after the victory of the revolution.

[145] The meaning of this slogan is a matter of scholarly debate. Was it a call to the original revolutionary organization of the Mukhtāriyya-Hāshimiyya?

[146] Abū Bakr Muhammad b. Jafar Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Tūs, 1984), 14; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 6: 39.

The Zanj Revolt and the ʿAlid Mahdī

The Zanj revolt that erupted in southern Iraq and the Persian Gulf littoral region in Ramadan 255/869—almost exactly five years to the day after Ḥasan b. Zayd established rule in northern Iran in Ramadan of 250/864—was one of the most serious threats to Abbasid sovereignty based on mass appeal and its close proximity to the imperial capital. Centered in the strategic alluvial plains of Southern Iraq, the revolt was led by an ʿAlid, ʿAli b. Muḥammad, known as “Ṣāḥib al-Zanj,” and was composed of large segments of Africans and African slaves, identified as the “Zanj” in the primary literature. The rebellion lasted almost 15 years during which time the rebels built their capital city, Mukhtārā, exercised temporary control over the key urban centers including Basra, Wāsiṭ, Ābādān, and Ahwāz and defeated several well-equipped armies sent by the Abbasids. As authors such as Muḥammad Shaban have argued, “the resources required to establish such towns, run a navy and army, and effectively participate in the regional economy would have been far beyond the capacity of allegedly unskilled, malnourished, non-Arabic speaking slaves.”[148] Importantly, the various Zanj revolts, similar to the revolt of the northern Iranian peoples, the Daylamis, had been unsuccessful until they effectively paired with an ʿAlid leader. The ʿAlid leadership was therefore able to provide a unifying influence for the various sub-actors, including the resistant portions of the slave population, dissident local tribes, as well as previous agents of the Abbasids who we are told joined the rebellion.[149] Moreover, as will be discussed below, the leader of the revolt claimed ʿAlid lineage from Imam ʿAli b. Husayn, “al-

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[147] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan*, 143.

[148] Campbell, “East Africa in the Early Indian Ocean World Slave Trade: The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered,” 283.

[149] Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century*, 129–42.

Sajjād," and he emerged from the underground ʿAlid Shiʿi networks which had shielded both his father, Aḥmad, and grandfather Īsā b. Zayd b. ʿAli b. Husayn b. ʿAli b. Abū Ṭālib. His father, Aḥmad, was known, appropriately, as *al-mukhtafī* (the hidden, or secret one) for hiding from the Abbasid authorities who had imprisoned him and his father for partaking in the revolt of Ibrāhim b. ʿAbdallāh, the brother of Muḥammad *Nafs al-Zakiyya*.[150] The leader of the Zanj revolt, ʿAli b. Muḥammad, was also identified in the literature as "the ʿAlid of Basra," (al-ʿAlawī al-Baṣrī), as well as al-Burquʿī ("the Veiled One").[151]

In the historiographical discussions and literature on the Zanj revolt, there are several debates regarding the nature of this uprising and how to categorize it: was it a slave revolt given the high number of mainly African slaves involved in the revolt, or one led by indigenous Arab tribes that also happened to attracted slaves in the region?[152] What were the reasons behind the revolt and why did it erupt at that historical moment? What ideology, if any, did the rebels express? Were there Khārijī elements in the revolt and did the Qarmaṭid branch of the Ismaʿili mission play a role in the uprising?[153] And, importantly, what was the true identity of the leader of the revolt?[154]

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[150] See Wilferd Madelung's article: "Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

[151] Abū Rayḥan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-Bāqiyya ʿan al-Qurūn al-Khāliyya*, ed. Parvīz Adhkāī (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1380H), 285. Given some shared traits, the revolt of al-Muqannaʿ ("the veiled one"), who would clothe himself in green silk and cover his face, also comes to mind here. Al-Muqannaʿ led an early rebellion against the Abbasids in the name of the slain general Abū Muslim Khurāsāni. His revolt embodied ʿAlid Shiʿi notions but is said to have been amalgamated with native Iranian pre-Islamic religions, including Zoroastrianism. This may be a simplistic reduction of his and his followers' beliefs and more research is needed to investigate the beliefs of al-Muqannaʿ and the Khurramiyya. As these "veiling" epithets, reveal however, it is important to further investigate the parallels between the veiling, or perhaps underground nature of his revolt and other ʿAlid Shiʿi revolts. See: Elton L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan Under Abbasid Rule, 747-820* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1979), 137–47; and, Patricia Crone and Masoud Jafari Jazi, "The Muqannaʿ Narrative in the Tārīkhnāma: Part I, Introduction, Edition and Translation," in *The Iranian Reception of Islam: The Non-Traditionalist Strands* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 116–55.

[152] Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 3 (1977): 443–61; Zakariyau I Oseni, "The Revolt of Black Slaves in Iraq under the ʿAbbāsid Administration in 869-883 CE," *Hamdard Islamicus* 12, no. 2 (1989): 57–65.

[153] Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 113.

[154] See pertinent discussions in: Ahmad 'Ulabī, *Thawrat al-Zanj wa Qā'iduhā 'Alī b. Muhammad: (255-270 H/869-883 M)* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1961), 45–72.

While this section will not be dealing with all of these complex issues, the Zanj revolt is of particular interest in this study given one of the often overlooked aspects of the revolt including its messianic orientation and the purported ʿAlid identity of its leader, ʿAli b. Muḥammad. Further, the patterns of ʿAlid revolts and the strategies of the actors involved in such revolts can be seen prominently in this case. What makes the Zanj revolt relevant, as well, is the fact that both the indigenous Zanj, as well as for ʿAli b. Muḥammad, had separately undertaken failed revolts against the Abbasids in the years prior to their more successful run in 255/869. The sources record several uprisings in which "Zanj" slaves—who worked in groups of 50 to 5-600 men (*shūrajiyyīn*) to clear the nitric salt deposits on the agricultural topsoil of the region—participated, including one in 70/689-90 and another in 75/694.[155] There were also short-lived revolts by other disaffected groups in the marshlands of southern Iraq (*baṭāʾiḥ*), including enslaved Indians from Sind from 820–834CE.[156]

The roots of the term "Zanj" is the subject of debate. Some scholars have noted it may be rooted in the Middle Persian *zangik* which was a generic term for Africans or of Indic language origin, *zanzbar*, referring to lands inhabited by Blacks.[157] Within the Arabic lexicon, while the word was probably most often used to refer to the East African coast, it could also be refence to interior regions or even West Africa, for which the term Sudan was often used. Authors such as "al-Masʿūdī include the Zanj among the people of the Sudan and al-Istakhrī (d. 951CE) describes the Sudan as the source for the black slaves sold in the Islamic countries."[158] As Fayṣal al-Sāmir notes, the term Zanj was sometimes uncritically applied by Arab authors to all Black slaves, and the lands of the Zanj extended from East Africa to Abyssinia (*ḥabasha*) and were composed of different tribes and peoples; therefore the Zanj were not understood as one ethnic group.[159] So although much of the literature describes the Zanj slaves in the Persian Gulf as East African in origin,[160] terminologically, there was not a consensus position on the geographic location of the Zanj in the primary sources. Indeed, several contemporary authors have noted that the slave populations in the Persian Gulf subregion and southern Iraq were from mainly from West, not East, Africa.[161] So while the label "Zanj" is used out of convenience, it is somewhat of a misnomer in reference to the "Zanj revolt" since there were large numbers of Arab tribesmen, Persians, as well as Abbasid officials who defected to join ʿAli b. Muḥammad and the slave population was quite diverse geographically as well as linguistically.

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[155] Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, 22. Trimingham, however, argues that the revolt of the 75/694 was primarily composed of the Zuṭṭ people, "cattle-keeping immigrants from Sindh" settled in the region by the Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj, and were joined by Black slaves in the area; J. Spencer Trimingham, "The Arab Geographers and the East African Coast," in *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-Colonial Times*, ed. H. Neville Chittick and Robert I. Rotberg (New York: Africana, 1975), 116.

[156] Campbell, "East Africa in the Early Indian Ocean World Slave Trade," 283.

[157] Campbell, "East Africa in the Early Indian Ocean World Slave Trade," 279.

[158] E. Savage, "Berbers and Blacks: Ibāḍī Slave Traffic in Eighth-Century North Africa," *The Journal of African History* 33, no. 3 (1992): 355.

The leader of the revolt, Ṣāhib al-Zanj, ʿAli b. Muḥammad (r. 255/869–270/883), was born in a village outside or Rayy called Warzanīn (Per.: Varzanīn) and claimed, as mentioned above, to be a son of Aḥmad b. Īsā b. Zayd, an important scholar claimed by the Zaydi Shiʿi tradition, also known as *al-mukhtafī,* "the hidden one," given his underground hiding in the vicinity of Rayy in northern Iran to avoid Abbasid repression.[162] Aḥmad's father, Īsā b. Zayd (d. 166/783), the son of Zayd b. ʿAli, the eponymous Imam of the Zaydi Shiʿism, and grandson of Imam ʿAli b. Husayn, *Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn*, "had gone into hiding in the houses of the Kufan Zaydī traditionist al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy (d. 168/784-5) after the failure of the revolt of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh [the brother of Muḥammad *Nafs al-Zakiyya*] in 145/762-3."[163] While some contemporary authors have cast doubt on ʿAli b. Muḥammad's lineage, others argue there actually may be credence to the claim since Aḥmad b. Īsā b. Zayd was indeed reported to be in hiding in the city of Rayy in Iran (near modern Tehran) around the same time ʿAli b. Muḥammad resided there.[164] Abū Rayḥan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī (d. after 440/1048) recorded an exchange which occurred between Ḥasan b. Zayd, the ʿAlid ruler of Ṭabaristan who had established Shiʿi rule in northern Iran just half a decade earlier. Ḥasan sent ʿAli b. Muḥammad a letter inquiring about his pedigree (*nasab*) in order to determine if he was a legitimate leader, to which the latter reportedly concisely responded: "if only you were concerned with my affairs as much I am concerned with your affairs, *wa al-salām*."[165]

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[159] Fayṣal Sāmir, *Thawrat al-Zanj* (Damascus: Dār al-Madā lil-Thaqāfah wa-al-Nashr, 2000), 23–24.
[160] See, for example: Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 112.
[161] Talhami, "The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered," 443–44.
[162] On his genealogy, see: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 1746; and, al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-Bāqiyya*, 426.
[163] "Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

In addition to his claimed ʿAlid lineage, we find references to ʿAli b. Muḥammad as the "Mahdi" in the coins struck by his government in the capital they built, al-Mukhtāra. The coins have struck on them, among other statements, the names of "ʿAli" [b. Abī Ṭālib], and "Muḥammad *Rasūl Allāh* (the Messenger of God)" followed by "al-Mahdī ʿAli b. Muḥammad," (i.e. Ṣāḥib al-Zanj).[166] The same coin, minted in 261/874-5, also interestingly includes statements often associated with the Khārijī sect including "there is no jurisdiction except God's, and no jurisdiction (belongs) to men,"[167] which they adopted as a slogan in the aftermath of the battle of Ṣiffīn (37/657) and the arbitration process between ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and Muʿāwiya. The first part of the slogan is adopted from Surah Yusuf, verse 40, "The decision rests with Allah only" (*ini-l ḥukmu illa li-llāh*). The coin also includes a verse in the Qurʾan favorited by the Khārijis, (9: 111): "Allah hath purchased (*Allāh ashtarā*) of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause."[168] The Khārijis often adopted a term derived from this verse self-referentially to call themselves the "Shurāt," those who "sell themselves" to Allāh and trade this world for the next and for salvation.[169] Primary and secondary authors have therefore discussed the supposed Khārijī identity of the leader of the Zanj revolt, and sometimes posited this to be his true sectarian affiliation. These authors include Theodor Nöldeke, J. Walker, and Bernard Lewis, the latter of whom states: "though the leader of the Zanj claimed ʿAlid descent he did not join the Shīʿa but rather the sect of the Khārijites, the egalitarian anarchists."[170]

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[164] See Hassan Ansari's article "Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd," *Encyclopaedia Islamica*.
[165] Al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-Bāqiyya*, 426. Parts of this report may be apocryphal but does provide insight into the pertinent connections, the importance of ʿAlid lineage, and the exchanges between ʿAlid leaders and revolutionary networks.
[166] Walker, "A Rare Coin of the Zanj," 652.
[167] Walker, "A Rare Coin of the Zanj," 652.

The aforementioned coinage, however, presents us with a difficult and seemingly contradictory message as it contains both pro-ʿAlid and Shiʿi references, literally elevating the name of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, alongside slogans affiliated with the Khārijīs. More decisive research remains to be conducted on this subject, however it is possible that ʿAli b. Muḥammad amalgamated ideas and political discourse in order to appeal to different populations and constituencies. These aforementioned verses and slogans, after all, are adopted or slightly modified from the Qurʾan and accepted as divine and true by Muslims. It is also possible that these Qurʾanic phrases which were attributed to the Khārijīs were strategically used by Ṣāḥib al-Zanj to appeal to those who may have been influenced by Khārijism as an anti-status quo movement and political egalitarian discourse and were critical of the Abbasids but were not hardcore Khārijī ideologues opposed to ʿAlid leadership. While it is true that many Khārijī movements did not exclude the possibility of exclusive ʿAlid leadership, their antagonism for ʿAli was a clear fault line and source of sectarian tension. Therefore, it is possible that ʿAli b.

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[168] This phrase was also said to be written, in green and red letters, on the flags (*liwāʾ*) of ʿAli b. Muḥammad; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 1749.

[169] Adam R. Gaiser, *Shurāt Legends, Ibāḍī Identities: Martydom, Asceticism, and the Making of an Early Islamic Community* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016).

[170] Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 113. Also see J. Walker, "A Rare Coin of the Zanj," 654–55.

Muḥammad was engaging in the attractive anti-status quo discourses opposing the Abbasids without seriously incorporating Khārijī dogma or elite power sharing with them. The historical example of Abū Muslim, one of the main leaders of the Shiʿi revolution that toppled the Umayyads, also comes to mind when he joined forces with the Khārijī rebel Shaybān b. Salama (d. 130/748) against the Umayyads.[171]

Importantly, the Shiʿi influences on the Zanj revolt, and the debates over its ʿAlid leader, ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ṣāḥib al-Zanj (d. 270/883), can also be seen in the later Shiʿi scholarly literature. In his entry on the Twelver Shiʿi scholar, Abū Bishr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Muʿla b. Asad al-ʿAmmī (d. after 350/961) who was previously discussed in this study as a Shiʿi writer in the genre of heresiographical literature, al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) states that Abū Bishr's grandfather, al-Muʿla b. Asad (d. 218/833), was a companion or follower of the Sāḥib al-Zanj, and that he also wrote histories on the Zanj.[172] Abū Bishr, in addition to writing a heresiography, *Kitāb al-Firaq*, as well as a work on the merits of Imam ʿAli, *Manāqib Amīr al-Muʾminīn,* is said to have used the history from his grandfather to present a history of Zanj revolt in his work *Kitāb Akhbār Ṣāḥib al-Zanj*.[173] This demonstrates that the memory of the Zanj revolt was present and retained the interest of Shiʿi scholars who likely understood the revolt as part of the wider ʿAlid wave of uprisings and resistance to Abbasid rule. A tradition, attributed to the later Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, the eleventh Imam for the Twelver Shiʿa, found in *Kashf al-Ghumma fī Maʿrifa al-Aʾimma* of Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAli b. Īsā al-Irbīlī (d. 692/1292-3) records the Imam saying that Ṣāḥib al-Zanj was not part of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, reflecting distance from the figure of ʿAli b. Muḥammad by some of the prominent later ʿAlid Shiʿi imams.[174]

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[171] Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan Under Abbasid Rule, 747-820*, 78–79.
[172] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shīʿa*, ed. Sayyid ʿAbd al-Azīz al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī (Qumm: Maktaba al-Muḥaqiq al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1420H), 71–72.
[173] al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shīʿa*, 72.

Reports found in al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-Dhahab* and al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* also reflect the larger Shiʿi revolutionary networks and ideology in which the proclaimed Mahdi ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ṣāḥib al-Zanj was embedded and the continued underground revolutionary activity undertaken by his supporters even after the Zanj revolt was brutally crushed by the Abbasids. In Muḥarram of 280/893, the Abbasid Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid arrested ʿAbdallah b. al-Muhtadī,[175] a son of the previous Abbasid caliph al-Muhtadī (the "guided one"), along with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, also known as Shaylama, on the charge that the latter was secretly propagating (*yadʿū*) for a man with a *hidden name*, and attempting to recruit soldiers, and presumably officers, from the Abbasid military (*jund*).[176] Shaylama was a previous supporter of ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ṣāḥib al-Zanj and had requested amnesty, which was granted to him by the Abbasids, when the Zanj revolt was defeated. Shaymala, interestingly, had also authored a history of the revolt and its leader, ʿAli b. Muḥammad, entitled *Akhbār ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ṣāḥib al-Zanj*.[177] Al-Masʿūdī writes that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, or Shaymala, was the nephew of al-Faḍl b. Sahl (d. 202/817-8), the famous vizier of the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833) also known as *Dhu-l Riʾāsatayn*.[178] This reflects the widespread appeal of revolutionary ʿAlid movements which drew from even elite privileged classes close to the Abbasid court.

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[174] Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAli b. Īsā al-Irbīlī, *Kashf al-Ghumma Fī Maʿrifa al-Aʾimma*, ed. Hāshim Rasūlī Maḥallātī (Tabriz: Banī Ḥāshim, 1962), 2: 424–25.

[175] His name is also recorded as ʿUbaydallāh; see: ʿAli b. Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Maʿādin al-Jawhar*, ed. Kamāl Ḥasan Marʿī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2005), 4: 194.

[176] al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 2135.

[177] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 4: 194. Popovic notes that the historical work on the Zanj revolt authored by Shaymala is not extant independently today but the historian al-Ṭabarī made use of it; Alexandre Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1999), 145. On Shaymala's history of the Zanj, also see Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), 184.

[178] Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, 145.

Even though he was granted amnesty after participating in the revolt of the ʿAlid Ṣāḥib al-Zanj, Shaymala was now again accused of again undertaking revolutionary activity in the name of the ʿAlids. During his interrogation, al-Muʿtaḍid leveled the claim that Shaylama was a secret agent on behalf of one of the caliph's Abbasid family members, Ibn al-Muhtadī. Shaymala refuted the charge and reportedly said: "I am loyal (or I have *wilāya;* lit.: '*atawwalā*') to the Family of Ibn Abī Ṭālib [i.e. ʿAli]." [179] In Masʿūdī's book, Shaymala is reported to have said: "I will never reveal the name of the person in favor whom I administered the oath and whom I recognize as an *imam*. Do what you will with me."[180]

How did the Abbasid caliph come to know of this alleged plot against him? Al-Ṭabarī is silent on the identity of the informants who reported on Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (Shaymala) but al-Masʿūdī writes that several of "the pardoned soldiers of the *ʿAlid army*," (*jamāʿa min al-mustaʾmana min ʿaskar al-ʿAlawī*) i.e. soldiers in the Zanj revolt,[181] "lodged complaints against Muḥammad; papers with the names of persons to whom he had administered an oath in favor of a descendent of ʿAli, son of Abū Ṭālib (*bayʿa li-rajul min Āl Abī Ṭālib*), were found in his possession."[182] The historical reports continue to state that even under torture from al-Muʿtaḍid, Shaymala did not reveal the name of the hidden ʿAlid he was an agent of, allegedly stating: "even if he were under my feet, I would not lift them from him [i.e. I would not move even a finger to reveal his position]."[183] The Abbasids had also arrested Shaymala's young nephew along with someone only identified as a pharmacist—perhaps thinking that it was a cover occupation for opposition activity. The authorities presumably tortured Shaymala's nephew into a false confession and imprisoned the nephew for a long time before eventually releasing him. The caliph, though, ordered Shaymala to literally be burned alive—according to Ibn al-Nadīm while crucified on a tent pole—decapitated, and his body hung on the "Lower Bridge" (*al-Jisr al-Asfal*) on the West Side (*al-Jānib al-Gharbī*) of Baghdad, orders which were duly carried out in the presence of the caliph himself.[184]

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[179] al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 2136.

[180] Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, 124.

[181] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 4: 194. Emphasis added.

[182] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 4: 194; Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, 123

[183] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 2136.

Before this execution, however, the caliph brought for Shaymala's alleged co-conspirators who denied that the Abbasid Ibn al-Muhtadī was the hidden imam.[185] According to al-Masʿūdī's report, the rebels:

> Planned to revolt on a certain day in Baghdad and attack the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid. They were led into the presence of this prince; the accomplices of Mohammad [b. al-Ḥasan, i.e. Shaymala], made no confession and simply said: 'As for Abū Ṭālib's descendant (*al-rajul al-Ṭālibī*), we do not know him; the oath was administered to us *without showing him* to us [lit.: 'we did not see him' (*lam narahu*)], and here,' they added designating Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, 'is the intermediary (*al-wāṣita*) between him and us.' The Caliph ordered them [to be executed];[186] but he spared Shaymala in the hope he would put him back on the track of the Talibite.[187]

This incident—following the looming challenge of the government of the Mahdi and leader of the Zanj revolt, ʿAli b. Muḥammad—demonstrates that ʿAlid and Shiʿi sympathies could penetrate even the close circles of the Abbasid caliphal court, and this must have created deep concern for the Abbasids who were wary both of threats from peripheral or "outsider" forces, regional revolts, and rival dynasties, as well as internal "coups" involving their family members and elites at the imperial center. In this case, the Abbasid Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid, as these reports demonstrate, believed that members of his own dynasty were secretly plotting to overthrow him. This reflected the complicated nature of the political institutions and actors of the time and how the level of secrecy undertaken by political opposition obscured the vision of the caliph who perceived political threats not just from non-Abbasid Shiʿis but also from coups from within his own house. Later, formal Twelver Shiʿi interests were represented in the Abbasid court in the late third to fourth century Hijri through powerful vizirate families including the Banū Bisṭām, Banū Furāt, and Banū Nawbakht and theses families played an important role in the debates over emerging Twelver Shiʿi orthodoxy.[188]

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[184] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 2135–36; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 184.
[185] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 4: 194.
[186] Popovich, working off the French translation of al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-Dhahab* translates this as "ordered them tortured," but the Arabic original in *Murūj* seems to state that the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid ordered his agents to kill the alleged rebels (*fa amara bihim fa-qatalū*).
[187] Emphasis added, and translation amended; Popović, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, 124; and, al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 4: 194.

Mukhtār and the Tawwabun

When can we speak of Shiʿism as a political organization? Surely Shiʿi belief is rooted at the very earliest period and embedded in the debates to the succession to the Prophet. But belief in the primacy of ʿAli and his line is not enough to form political institutions and a reified sectarian identity. Institutions, hierarchy, and ideology are integral elements to religious identity. This study attempts to outline one of the earliest instances of Shiʿi political institutions following the martyrdom of Husayn b. ʿAli in 61/680. To do so, this study engages in a comparative socio-political, ideological, and discursive analysis of two Shiʿi movements centered in Kufa (and modern Iran and Iraq) in the 1st/7th centuries: the followers of al-Mukhtār, known as the Mukhtāriyya, and the Tawwābūn under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad.

These movements played a paramount role in the formation and historical trajectory of Shiʿi thought, identity, political organization, and memory and emerged as alternative models for Shiʿi political action following the killing of the third Shiʿi Imam, Ḥusayn b. ʿAli. Although both groups aspired to loyal partisanship to the ʿAlid cause, they were fundamentally divided—yet simultaneously intimately intertwined—over the issue of representing the Imam and family of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Ahl al-Bayt*). Early Kufa was an incubator for Shi'a thought and organization;[189] the ideas, methods, and legacy of al-Mukhtār, Sulayman b. Surad, and other Shiʿis of Kufa stretched far beyond their immediate geographic and time environs. The underground and financial structures of the Tawwabun along with the theorizing and hierarchical organization of al-Mukhtār were adopted by the revolutionary group of Shiʿa known as the *Hāshimiyya*, which operated as the core base for the later so-called "Abbasid Revolution." In fact, the first head of the underground *Hāshimiyya* organization, Sulayman b. Bujayr, lived with the memory of Mukhtār and his uprising. Sulayman's father Bujayr was directly involved in Mukhtār's revolt as a commander who had staunchly stood with Mukhtār until the very end and was summarily executed by the Zubayrids.[190]

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[188] For a discussion on the Jarrāḥid-Furātid vizirate battles in the Abbasid court, see: Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in An Early Islamic Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 109ff. For more on Shiʿi vizirate families, also see: Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. 1: 303ff.

What this section argues is that the Abbasids were able to innovate on processes whose early prototype was exercised the charismatic Shiʿi leader al-Mukhtār and his followers who had led a briefly successful uprising against the Umayyads in Kufa some 70 years prior. This earliest non-Imam revolutionary primogenitor, Mukhtār, rose in direct response to the uprising of Imam Husayn b. ʿAli and the latter's attempt to establish a government in Kufa as his father ʿAli had done. Mukhtār's revolution established the first Shiʿi state based on a representative ʿAlid model and was followed by a series of other rebellions and attempts to establish states, many of which were short lived.[191]

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[189] Haider, *The Origins of the Shī'a*.

[190] The latter army stormed the city in an alliance with the Kufan the tribal elites (*ashrāf*) who had supported the killing of al-Husayn.

[191] The use of the term state here is the generic sense of what models of governance and sovereignty meant during this early time period: collection of taxes, military primacy over a proscribed geographic land, and claims to Islamic leadership legitimacy.

This section begins with contextualizing the roots of the Mukhtāriyya and Tawwābūn by discussing their social and political dispositions and backgrounds. It then focuses on each movement individually by exploring their etymological roots, identity, and how their decision making was affected by their backgrounds and ideological outlooks. The chapter then shifts into a discussion of political terminology and the intersection between political language and the concepts of mahdism and occultation. The study then engages in a comparative discursive analysis between the Mukhtāriyya and Tawwābūn with reference to their political organization and theorization, and finally ends with brief concluding remarks.

Mukhtār as an archetype of the Dāʿī

The divisions between the Mukhtāriyya and the Tawwābūn were directly reflected in the religious and political speeches of their leaders. While Sulaymān's discourse focused on the legacy of ʿAli, the family of the Prophet, and personal redemption, Mukhtār's was focused on political representation of an ʿAlid *Mahdī*, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. Linguistically, the forms of speech utilized by Sulaymān and Mukhtār reflected their political dispositions: while Sulaymān mainly relied on appeals through the *khuṭba*, Mukhtār was renowned for his utilization of *sajʿ* prose, which predicted future occurrences, and he was thus accused of being a *kāhin* (soothsayer).

The accusation of lying or dishonesty (*kidhb*) against Mukhtār by his opponents was a specific charge linked to the notion of *kihāna*, or false divination (and possibly "prophecy" in the general sense of a divine communicator), harkening back to stigmatized pre-Islamic beliefs and revealed the early power of allegations of unsanctified precognition that would later be often used to cleave sectarian divisions amongst Muslims. The secondary literature largely glosses over the implications of *kihāna* and *kidhb* leveled against Mukhtār, instead opting to focus on the *mawālī* elements of Mukhtār's army as explaining his "extremist" beliefs. This framing overlooks the actual nature of the religious accusations made against Mukhtār, which are rooted in pre-Islamic Arabian practices—not imported Persian beliefs, although incidents such as the hoisting of the supposed *kursī* of ʿAli do resonate directly with practices found among other communities in the Near East.[192] This tendency in the secondary literature could be the result of later Arabic heresiographical norms and the post-Abbasid explosion of the charge of *zandaqa* linked to Persian elements who were indeed represented heavily in Mukhtār's army.

This chapter further traces the importance of the Tawwābūn as a key influential group portions of which were absorbed and influenced the followers of Mukhtār after their defeat at the battle of ʿAyn al-Warda. Here, a new assertion is made that the Tawwābūn were perhaps the earliest adopters of underground organization techniques (including complicated financial and military structures), which likely influenced the later Kaysāniyya Shiʿis and the "Abbasid" revolution by providing effective models to be emulated. The importance of the Mukhtāriyya was, in turn reflected by the hugely influential messianic-eschatological thought of the Kaysāniyya as an offshoot of the Mukhtāriyya. The Kaysāniyya simultaneously pushed forward a politicized eschatological notion of the *Mahdī* and occultation that foreshadowed subsequent waves of revolutionary Shiʿism (including the so-called Abbasid revolution) and contributed to the development of key beliefs which now form fundamental Shiʿi doctrine, including the idea of the *mahdī*, *ghayba*, *rajʿa,* and *badāʾ*. Here, the concept of the *Mahdī* is traced from a general signifier denoting rightly guided leadership utilized across most Muslim denominations to more specific technical usage reflecting eschatological innovations adopted by the Kaysaniyya and sensitized to revolutionary militant action.

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[192] Torsten Hylén, "Emerging Patterns of Authority in Early Shiʿism: Al-Mukhtār and the Aesthetics of Persuasion," *Shii Studies Review* 2019, 3, no. 1–2 (2019): 5–36; and, Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 261–77.

While previous scholarship on Mukhtār and the Tawwābūn has primarily engaged in philological-historical reconstruction and source-critical methods, this study contributes to the existing field by engaging in a socio-political and discursive-ideological re-positioning of these early Shiʿi mass-political movements. By carefully situating these movements and the beliefs they represented in a historical context, this study traces the complex relationship between the development of ideas and religious-political identity. Finally, this study highlights how the form as well as content of religious-political discourse, as seen in the genres of *khuṭba* and "*sajʿ al-kuhhān*," can reveal to us how Shiʿi thinkers and political figures projected and framed their ideas on a central theme that has defined so much of Shiʿi political thought since their time: what does it mean to represent the family of the Prophet and the Imams?

The tumultuous politics of the second *fitnā*—following the death of the first Umayyad Caliph Mūʿawiya b. Abī Sufyān in 60/680—was shocking, to say the least.[193] This conflict saw the slaying of the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. ʿAli as well as the burning of the Kaʿba and the sacking of Medina at the hands of Muʿāwiya's son and successor Yazīd. Likewise, the Zubayrids under their caliph ʿAbdallah b. Zubayr undertook intense persecution of their opponents, even threatening to burn alive Muḥammad b. al-Hanafiyya, the veteran son of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib.[194] At this moment in time, more than 50 years after the death of the Prophet, at least three poles of power existed which split the Muslim community and heartlands. One of these poles was centered in Damascus and the Levant under the Umayyad caliphate, one in the Hijaz in the western Arabian Peninsula centered in Mecca under the Zubayrids, and one in modern Iraq and Iran centered in Kufa under the command of Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī. These three rulerships represented overlapping yet distinct notions of leadership and authority and claimed to inherit the true mantle of the Prophet and his political legitimacy.

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[193] Around 50 years earlier, the roots of this conflict were planted. For an account of the initial conflicts between the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet, largely colored by Shiʿi readings of early disputes in the Muslim community, see: Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad a Study of the Early Caliphate*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15ff; .

[194] Sean Anthony, "The Meccan Prison of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr and the Imprisonment of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya," in *The Heritage of Arabo-Islamic Learning Studies Presented to Wadad Kadi*, edited by Maurice Pomerantz and Aram Shahin (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

This chapter undertakes a comparative socio-political, ideological, and discursive analysis of the Shiʿa centered in Kufa comprising of al-Mukhtār's movement (the Mukhtāriyya) and that of the other primary leading Shiʿi movement, the Tawwābūn, under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad. These movements played a paramount role in the formation of early Shiʿi thought, identity, and political memory and impacted the entire trajectory of Shiʿi development as well as broader trends in the Muslim world. Despite the seeming shared objectives in avenging the blood of al-Ḥusayn, why did the Shiʿa fragment into two main groups? What were the causes, in other words, of Shiʿi factionalism in Iraq?

This section argues that these differences emerge, in large part, in answering the question of: what are the legitimate bounds of political action that the followers of ʿAli and his offspring can take? The respective answer of these groups is centered on a fundamental divide over the issue of representing the Imam and family of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and is directly reflected in their religious and political speech. Innovatively, Mukhtār brought to the fore a model of ʿAlid organization which supplanted the absence of a direct Imām with representative structures and religio-ideology. This enabled a coherent, centralized social movement to emerge with clear lines of authority and obedience.

Mukhtār thus aimed to establish a viable, successful government with a representative structure stemming from an ʿAlid *Mahdī* at the top, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700), who legitimated and directly installed his lieutenant (*wazīr*, *muntakhab*, *amīn*).[195] This representative,

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[195] Sean Anthony, "The Caliph and the Heretic" (Ph.D. thesis), 265.

Mukhtār, in turn installed his own officers and deputies under the direct legitimating umbrella of the ʿAlid, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya he was acting on behalf of. This political order was theorized and communicated through a discourse of politico-mystical rhyming prose (*sajʿ*). On the other hand, Sulaymān b. Ṣurad's objective, expressed through his *khuṭba*s, was to fight in order to gain martyrdom to make up for a lifetime of spiritual shortcomings, without a long-term view towards establishing a sustained Shiʿi political organization. Instead, he and his followers focused on their personal redemption and obligations, which left deep cultural imprints on Shiʿi thought throughout time.

The Mukhtāriyya and Tawwābūn

The intra-Shiʿi factionalism found between the early Mukhtāriyya and Tawwābūn reflects, to some extent, the high degree of elite divisions found within the early Muslim community. These two Shiʿi movements did not emerge spontaneously after the martyrdom of third Shiʿi Imam, al-Husayn b. al-ʿAli even though they manifest in that immediate context. Rather, both have deeper roots and a genesis leading to their factional formation after the death of al-Ḥusayn, some stretching back to the earliest moments of Islam and, for example, to the Muslim settling of Kufa. Despite both groups identifying as Shiʿi and espousing loyalty to Imam Husayn and Imam ʿAli, why did they legitimize their aspirations and political networks in various ways given seemingly similar identities and ideals? What ideologies and beliefs did they propagate to advance their cause? And what have been the consequences of these strategies and discourses in the development of Shiʿi thought and organization thereafter?

The main driving difference between the two camps can be reduced to the question of representation of the Imam. Mukhtār's political thought pushes for the notion of representation of the ʿAlids in a hierarchical structure: he accepts the authority of Muslim b. ʿAqīl, al-Husayn's directly appointed representative, and later that of Imam ʿAli's son, Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. Alongside this representation, Mukhtār believes in prioritizing the establishment of a political order while Sulaymān b. Ṣurad is almost exclusively focused on taking responsibility for failure to act for Imam Ḥusayn, revenge, and martyrdom. Sulaymān, moreover, refuses the authority of Muslim b. ʿAqīl, al-Husayn's directly appointed representative, and there is no evidence he joined Muslim in besieging Ubadallāh b. Zīyād in the governor's palace,[196] while Mukhtār rushed to back Muslim.[197] Sulaymān's discourse is instead focused on personal redemption, and his political underground organization (as will be discussed below) seemed to be instituted in order to organize an army to avenge the martyrdom of Ḥusayn, not to establish a longer lasting ʿAlid political enterprise as was Mukhtār's vision.

While the words and deeds of the Tawwābūn have deeply impacted Shiʿi culture and identity over the span of centuries—with enduring phrases such as *yā lithārāt al-Ḥusayn*—the legacy the Mukhtāriyya and Kaysāniyya more directly laid the foundations for the institutions and political ideology which shaped revolutionary Shiʿism both in the immediate context of the 1st/7th century Islamic heartlands and throughout time until present day.[198] From the continuous waves of Shiʿi uprisings following the killing of al-Mukhtār which the Abbasids eventually appropriated (claiming to represent Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya's heirless son Abū Hāshim), through to the 2012 "*Mukhtārnamih*" series,[199] Mukhtār and what he represented has powerfully lived on.[200] However, the long term impacts of these groups are far from dichotomous as without Sulayman's centralizing underground networks of resistance, the Shiʿa of the city would very likely not have been able to mobilize as effectively as they did and later merge with Mukhtār.

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[196] ʿAli b. Mūsā b. Ṭāwūs, *Al-Luhūf fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf*, (Beirut: Muʾasasat al-ʿIlmī Li-l Maṭbūʿāt, 1414/1993), 25. Also see the discussion in Miṣbāḥ, *Man Qatala Al-Imām al-Ḥusayn*, 209–17.

[197] IKA Howard, *The History of Al-Tabarī: The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiyah* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), 65.

[198] Of course, it is difficult to fully delineate the impact on political culture that these early Shiʿi factions had on later generations as both left lasting imprints, however this study argues that Mukhtār innovated theories of representation that lasted far beyond him and can be evidenced through later groups such as the *Kaysāniyya* and the Abbasid revolution.

[199] Directed by Davud Mirbagheri, also the critically acclaimed director of Iran's highly successful "*Shahīd-i Kūfih*" series on Imam Ali's life. Both of these TV series were broadcast prominently on Iran state TV and also found broad

The Tawwābūn

The Tawwābūn, according to al-Ṭabarī, formed immediately after the death of al-Ḥusayn at the hands of Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād, and took on its name from the Qurʾanic passage (2:54) addressing the Israelites who had committed apostasy in the forty day absence of Mūsā.[201] These "penitents" emphasized the station of leadership of the family of the Prophet in rich religious language along with the notions of duty and martyrdom. In a rousing speech to the Shiʿi partisans of Kufa from which the group came to be known, Sulaymān b. Ṣurad stated: "And remember Moses said to his people: "O my people! Ye have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf: So turn (in repentance) [*fatūbū*] to your Maker, and slay yourselves (the wrong-doers); that will be better for you in the sight of your Maker." The reference to this passage in the Qurʾan is quite suggestive and foreshadows the moral underpinnings and future direction of this movement which indeed did undertake what Mukhtār considered self-defeatist and destructive military strategy. The passage is concerned with the absence of Moses for 40 days to Mount Sinai and a

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audiences, especially among transnational Shiʿi communities, via their dubbing into regional languages such as Arabic and Urdu.

[200] Not only has Mukhtār's legacy of rebellion in the name of the slain Imam as well as claiming representation of *Āl Muḥammad* stretched far beyond the time and space which he occupied, but the memories of Mukhtār have remained consistently alive in Shiʿi thought resurfacing periodically during politically latent moments of Shiʿi activism. Some of these instances include the revitalization of the Persian translation and compilation of the life of Mukhtār in the *Mukhtārnāmih* in Safavid Iran, and in more recent times, Shiʿi-majority paramilitaries bearing his name to counter the Wahhabi *takfīrī* threat in Iraq. The editor of a late 20th century edition of *Mukhtārnāmih* places the manuscript he is working from in the early 10th century H., and believes the original translation of Abū Mikhnaf's work into Persian occurred in the 5th century Hijri; Muḥammad Changīzī, *Qiyām-i Mukhtār Thaqafī (Mukhtārnāmih)*, (Tehran: Markāz-i Nashr-i Farhangī-i Rajāʾ, 1368/1990), 14.

[201] Muḥammad b. Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, (Beirut: Dār al-Turath, 2008), v. 5, 554.

notion of the withdrawal of the prophet and leader from the sight of his community,[202] which, of course, draws parallels to the belief of occultation, or *ghayba* which were later adopted by the *Kaysāniyya*, a Shiʿi offshoot of the followers of al-Mukhtār. Counterintuitively, the first time this image had been invoked was by the second caliph ʿUmar, when he declared that the Prophet had not died. Instead, "ʿUmar asserted that Muḥammad had gone to his Lord as Moses had done, leaving his people for forty days and returning after he had been pronounced dead. Muḥammad would do likewise and would cut off the hands and feet of those who claimed that he was dead."[203]

The men who were to lead the Tawwābūn represented an older generation of ʿAlid loyalists many of whom knew ʿAli personally and fought on his behalf.[204] Five of these top leaders gathered in Sulaymān's house both to invite Husayn to Kufa initially, then later to form the Tawwābūn.[205] Many of these men, including Sulaymān, were veterans of the battle of Ṣiffīn in 37/657,[206] and were prominent distinguished followers of ʿAli. The leader, or "Shaykh," of the Shiʿa in Kufa, Sulaymān b. Ṣurad, is reported in some Shiʿi biographical dictionaries as well as in the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Saʿd to have been a companion of the Prophet.[207] He also served in ʿAli's army at the pivotal battle of the camel.[208] Ibn Saʿd writes that Sulaymān was among the first generation of settlers in Kufa—the city which Mukhtār's father Abī ʿUbayd famously established. Reports do not seem to mention that Sulaymān was part of Abī ʿUbayd's army, but he was likely among its early inhabitants and expereienced the institutionalized cursing of ʿAli at the pulpits under the Umayyads as well as the killing of Hujr b. ʿAdī (d. 52/672), a staunch supporter of ʿAli who was executed by Muʾāwiya for his refusal to curse ʿAli, and later the slaying of Muslim b. ʿAqīl (d. 60/680), Husayn's representative to the city.[209]

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[202] In a commentary attributed to the sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, on the Quranic verses 7:142-3 which discuss Moses' 40 day withdrawal to Mount Sinai, he states: "Musa was hidden from his self and passed away from his attributes (*sifātihi*)… He confided in his lord concerning the matter of seeing him because he saw the phantom of his words upon his heart… concerning [Moses'] saying 'Glory to you! I have turned back to you in *repentance*,' Jaʿfar said: He affirmed the transcendence of his lord, acknowledged toward him his own weakness, and disavowed his own intellect"; Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1996), 79-80. These attributes of "seeing" or lack there-of (*ghayba*) as well as repentance (*tawba*) are prominent in these early Shiʿi religious and political movements as can be evidenced in the rhetoric of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad. Later commentaries reflect the multifaceted forms these concepts could have in different contexts, including utilization of heavy spiritual themes regarding individual self-reflection.

[203] Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad*, 38. Madelung expounds this view in his later writings, see his "Introduction to Part I: History and Historiography" in *Study of Shi'i Islam, The History, Theology and Law*, ed. by Farhad Daftary, and Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (London: I.B.Tauris, 2014), 9. For further exploration of the relationship between the belief in *ghayba* and the Sabaʾīya, see: Sean W. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Sabaʿ and the Origins of Shiʿism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 154ff.

[204] As Mussayab b. Najabah asserts, not one among them was younger than 60 years; Fishbein, "The life of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd," 115.

[205] The others included: Ḥabīb b. Maẓāhir, ʿAbdallāh b. Wāʾil, Mussayab b. Najabah, and Rifāʿa b. Shaddād Bajalī. Only one of these individuals reportedly managed to join al-Ḥusayn on the plains of Karbalāʾ: Ḥabīb b. Mazāhir; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Al-Luhūf*, 23. Some accounts number the number of Shiʿa gathered that day at Sulaymān's house at one hundred individuals; Michael Fishbein, "The life of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd in some early Arabic historians" (Ph.D. thesis, UCLA, 1998), 118.

The failure of the senior Kufan Shiʿi leadership to support Ḥusayn reflected poorly on them, and was just the latest of a series of defeats they experienced. They had witnessed the disaster at Ṣiffīn, the institutionalized ʿUmayyad cursing of ʿAli from the pulpits of Kufa,[210] Ḥujr b. ʿAdī's summary execution by Muʿāwīya, the betrayal of Ḥasan b. ʿAli's army, and finally the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn by an army raised from Kufa itself among whom were some of the individuals who invited Ḥusayn to Kufa in the first place. For the top leadership, the long life they were granted was one filled with shortcomings and disappointments, not only to themselves, but also to the family of the Prophet. As Sulaymān states:

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[206] This fundamental battle took place between ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and Uthmān's governor in Syria, Muʿāwiya. For a detailed account of the battle, see: Naṣr b. Mazāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, (Qom: Manshūrāt Ayatullāh al-Marʿashī, 1404H).

[207] Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Shaykh Ṭūsī* (Najaf: Ḥaydariyya, 1381H), 936

[208] Muḥammad b. Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 4: 292.

[209] As Madelung wrote: "Ḥujr's execution caused widespread shock in the Muslim public and was condemned even by opponents of ʿAlī and his partisans. ʿAʾisha had tried in vain to intercede for him and sharply criticised Muʿāwiya. Insubordination and opposition to the caliph by any Muslim had so far been punishable by confinement and exile, not by death… The pious al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) considered the execution of Ḥujr one of the four pernicious crimes (*mūbiqa*) perpetrated by Muʿāwiya."; see: "Ḥujr b. ʿAdī l-Kindī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam III*.

[210] For the additional individual cursing of Muʿawiya of Imams Hasan and Husayn, see Tabari, 1: 3360.

> This world is an abode whose benevolent aspect has turned away and whose repugnant aspect has turned forward... [your brothers, i.e. some of the Shiʿa] say and make manifest to us that they will turn [to God] in repentance; and that you are disposed to pursue excellence, seek the world to come, and turn to your Lord in repentance from sin… the people of ʿAdhrāʾ [where Ḥujr b. ʿAdī and his companions were executed] who were killed have suffered no harm in not being alive today; they are with their Lord, being provided for—martyrs who went to meet God patiently, reckoning upon a reward; and so he rewarded them with reward of the patient.[211]

These shortcomings were not limited to the Shiʿi elite of Kufa: in the neighboring town of Baṣra as well, al-Ḥusayn attempted to organize his followers and the former followers of his father ʿAli, including one Mundhir b. Jārūd. Upon receiving a letter from al-Ḥusayn requesting his support, however, Mundhir (in some accounts fearing it to be a plot of his son-in-law ʿUbaydallāh b. Zīyād who was still the ʿUmayyad governor of Baṣra at the time), revealed the contents and network of ʿAlid supporters in the city to Ibn Zīyād, including the messenger al-Ḥusayn sent whom Ibn Zīyād promptly executed.[212]

It is important to note, however, that the movement of the Tawwābūn was far from a purely emotionally-based movement—they carefully planned to avenge the death of Ḥusayn. The "Penitents" undertook three years of underground activities and political outreach, and Sulaymān himself prevented an immediate Shiʿi revolt after the death of Yazīd. Instead, Sulaymān opted for organizational depth and a political structure which could direct the efforts of the Shiʿa in resisting a formidable enemy in the Umayyads. After announcing their intention to resist until death the Umayyad powers, the first step the Tawwābūn took was to undertake financial organization. In Sulaymān's house, a certain Khālid b. Saʿd Nufayl pledged to give "everything except for the weapon with which I shall fight against my enemy," as alms (*ṣadaqa*) to the Tawwābūn.[213] Sulaymān then directed all those who wished to give their wealth to the movement to direct their donations through ʿAbdālla b. Wāl al-Taymī.[214] Given the lack of resources the Kūfān Shiʿi had compared to the vast imperial revenue-collecting Umayyad government, the need for an effective socio-financial structure that could support the political activities of the Shiʿa was crucial. As Ṭabarī narrates from Abū Mikhnaf:

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[211] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Luhūf*.
[212] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Luhūf*, 29.

> The start of their affair was in the year 61 (680-81) when al-Husayn was killed. From that time, the people never ceased gathering the instruments of war, preparing for fighting and *summoning in secret* the people of the Shiʿa and others to seek vengeance for the blood of al-Ḥusayn. Group after group and band after band responded to them. Things continued in that way until Yazīd b. Muʿawiya died on Thursday, the fourteenth of Rabīʿ I 64 (emphasis added).[215]

Mukhtāriyya

The term Mukhtāriyya, ascribed to the followers of Mukhtār b. Abī Ubayd, is a more complicated term (in comparison with the use of term Tawwābūn) and emerges in part within the heresiographical literature which attempted to define sects and confessional splits within the Muslim community. Contemporaneous and self-referential identity which the supporters of Mukhtār appropriated, include: *Shiʿa Āl Muḥammad*; *anṣār al-ḍāʿīf* (supporters of the downtrodden); and *shurtāt Allāh* (God's "elite army").[216] Among the various groups which pledged loyalty to Mukhtār, additionally, were a range of Shiʿi elements some of which later on came to be called the Kaysāniyya. Some scholars assert that "*ghulāt*" elements, namely the Sabaʿiyya who harbored ideas regarding occultation and *rajāʾ* (or resurrection prior to the day of judgement), played a key intellectual and doctrinal role in shaping the ideas of what was to become the Kaysāniyya.

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[213] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Luhūf*, 84.
[214] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul*, 5: 555.
[215] Hawting, *The History of Al-Tabarī XX*, 89. Emphasis added.
[216] "Kaysāniya," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

In his short reign of 18 months from 66/685 – 67/687 during the second Muslim Civil War, Mukhtār had successfully fought on simultaneous fronts and scored major victories against the Umayyads in Syria. His was Shiʿi revolution with the explicit goal of establishing a legitimate independent state. Mukhtār seized power in Kufa about five years after the martyrdom of the al-Husayn on the plains of Karbala. During his reign he killed the top commanders of the army who had killed Husayn, including Umar b. al-Saʿd and Ubaydallah b. al-Zīyad. He had less luck against the Zubayrids, however, who viewed Mukhtār's independence as a threat to their own universal claims to the caliphate and lost two key battles against them in southern Iraq. These losses would prove to be Mukhtār's undoing. Faced with an alliance of Kufan notables and combined Zubayrid armies from the Hijāz and Baṣra, and given the unwillingness of his thousands of remaining soldiers to stage one final battle against the Zubayrids, Mukhtār and a small band of devotees prepared for one last stand in the face of certain death. Before riding out, Mukhtār reportedly made one final address:

> I am a man of the Arabs… Not being inferior to any man among the Arabs, I took this country and was like one of them—except that I sought vengeance for the members of the Prophet's family, while the Arabs were asleep about the matter. I killed those who participated in shedding their blood and have spared no effort in this matter until this very day. Fight, then, for the glory of your name, if you have no inner intention... Desire and fear are joined together: the love of life, and the soul's terror and fear. Either you continue in [pursuit of] glory and noble deeds, or the leaves [of trees which have withered away] are an example for you just as those who have perish.[217]

While this report may very well be apocryphal (how could these words have been narrated if both he and his companion were slain?), it nonetheless reflects the historiographical complexity regarding not only the person of Mukhtār, but also the uncertainly of commentators to make sense of the factors which underpinned Mukhtār's movement and early Shiʿi thought and politics—portraying Mukhtār as inspired by a mixture of mundane and religious motivations. The ambiguity and dualistic nature of our sources on Mukhtār reflect, in many ways, an inability to understand the true motivations and thought behind Mukhtār.

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[217] G. R. Hawting, *The History of Al-Tabarī: The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority and the Coming of the Marwānids,* Vol. 20 (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 104.

Mukhtār's exhortations emphasize his representation of the *mahdī* whom he claimed was Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, the veteran son of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. Aspirations that while hinged on revenge for Ḥusayn also aspire for broader political goals entrenched in esoteric religio-political discourse. The terms Mukhtār adopted for himself included: "aid (*wazīr*), assistant (*ẓahīr*), trustee (*amīn*), messenger (*rasūl*), confidant (*khalīl*), elect (*muntakhab*)." Moreover, the poet 'Ubayd Allāh b. Hammām al-Salūlī called Mukhtār "*wazīr ibn al-waṣī.*"[218] Interestingly, Mukhtār also proclaimed the possession of the *tābūt al-sakīna* (Ark of the Covenant) in the form of a chair which was ceremoniously carried by Mukhtār's army in their successful battle against ʿUbaydallāh b. Zīyād near the river Khāzir. Such vivid religious symbolism has led scholars to speculate on the role that the predominantly Persian *mawālī* played in Mukhtār's army.[219]

The Kaysāniyya, possibly named after a close companion of Mukhtār and the commander of his military forces *Shurṭat Allāh*, named Kaysān Abū Umrah, had split into different groups following the (apparent) death of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. One of these groups claimed that al-Ḥanafiyya, their Mahdi, went into *ghayba* and was dwelling in Mount Radwā in the Hijāz,[220] while another group of the Kaysāniyya pledged allegiance to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya's son

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[218] Sean Anthony, "The Caliph and the Heretic," (Ph.D. thesis), 265.

[219] The strong Persian element certainly was one of the keys to Mukhtār's military success and distinguished him from Sulaymān. The influence of these Persian Shiʿi elements in southern Iraq on this early eschatological thought and theorization remains shrouded, but possible avenues of research could follow along the lines of Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi's research on Manichean influences which were prevalent in this region. However, such work still requires a theory on how influence during this time period functions, since geographic proximity in and of itself cannot fully explain intellectual influence; Amir-Moezzi, "The divine man's Holy Spirit. Some new remarks regarding Imamate and prophecy," (presentation at the University of Chicago's Shiʿi Studies Group Symposium on the Practical Authority of the Imams and their Representatives, Chicago, IL, April 3-4, 2015).

[220] Interestingly, we also find narrations in Twelver *hadith* sources regarding Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAli "sitting on a throne of precious stones on mount Raḍwah, near Mecca, in the company of all the ancient prophets waiting for the coming of the *Mahdī*"; see pseudo-Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Dalāʾil al-ʿAimma* quoted in Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*, 210.

Abū Ḥāshim. The Imāmate of Abū Ḥāshim is extremely important. Since Abū Ḥāshim died heirless, the ʿAbbasids claimed that their religious figurehead Ibrāhīm al-Imām received his *wasīya* for the Imāmate from him.[221] Therefore, the early revolutionary ʿAbbasids are directly linked to the revolutionary movement of Mukhtār and appropriated much of his innovations and religious thought. In the *Kitāb al-Firaq* of al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī,[222] one of the earliest Shiʿi works of heresiography, the Kaysaniyya are also given the term "ʿAbbasiyya," reflecting these two groups' close affiliation by later generations.[223]

Mahdism, Ghayba, and the followers of al-Mukhtār

Since Mukhtār was slain much before the death of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, it is Mukhtār's inheritors who later apply the doctrinal concepts of occultation (*ghayba*), linking it with *mahdism*. As Wadad Kadi argues, the idea of occultation of the Imam and his return as a "Mahdī" before the day of judgement was an initial belief of the Sabaʾiyya, and this specific notion was linked to *ghuluww* which the heresiographers used to categorize sectarian affiliation. The Sabaʾiyya "flourished under the rule of al-Mukhtār in Kufa, and gave its name to his adherents, the Mukhtāriyya," whom Kadi argues "developed later into Kaysāniyya. The Kaysāniyya themselves took over the *ghuluww* belief of the Sabaʾiyya, and applied it to their Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya."[224] The association of return after apparent death becomes linked with the *ghayba* and the return of the *Mahdī* for the first time *after* the establishment of Mukhtār's reign during which he is able to ascribe supernatural qualities to Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. According to Ibn Saʿd, the use of the term "*mahdī*" is also confirmed by Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, who stated "I am a *mahdī*: I guide to growth and goodness. My name is the name of the Prophet of God, and my *kunyā* is the *kunyā* of the Prophet of God."[225]

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[221] Mohammad Javad Mashkur, *Farhang-i Firaq-i Islāmī* (Mashhad: Bonyad-i Pajuheshay-i Islāmī-i Ustān-i Quds-i Raẓavī, 1368 SH).

[222] ʿAbbās ʿIqbāl places the death of this work's author between 300-310H; *Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ṭahūrī, 1966).

[223] Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *The Shiʿa Sects*, trans. Abbas Kadhim (London: ICAS, 2007).

[224] Wadad Kadi, "The Development of the Term Ghulāt in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysāniyya" Akten des VII Kongress fur Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft, (1976), 315.

In order to better understand the meaning and significance of the term *mahdī*, thus, it is necessary to understand the multiple doctrinal, ideological, and socio-political streams which utilized this term—traces of which can be found in later theological texts. In ʿAli b. Ḥuasyan Ibn Bābawayh's (i.e. al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq the elder; d. 329/941) *al-Imāma wa al-Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra*, he devotes a section (*bāb*) on the Imāmate of ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn, the fourth Twelver Imām, and the invalidity of the Imāmate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya. In one of these *ḥadīths* traced back to the fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, he is asked whether al-Ḥanafiyya was an Imām, to which al-Bāqir responds: "no, but he was a *mahdī*" (*kāna mahdīyan*).[226] This clearly demonstrates that the notion of a *mahdī* was not exclusively linked only to the twelfth Imām who was also a *qā'im*, and *hujja*, since al-Ṭūsī's work is explicitly written (as evidenced in the title) for the purpose of dispelling doubts regarding the role of the twelfth Imām and the *mahdī and qā'im*.

In the following *aḥadīth*, a dialogue is recorded between the fourth Imam ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, in which ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn states that he received the *waṣīya* from his father before he started his journey to Karbala in order to refute Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya's claim to Imāma.[227] This shows that, even for earlier Twelver Shiʿi sources, the notion of the *mahdī* being exclusively linked to the twelfth Imām is not fully delineated or entrenched. Another instance of shared eschatological notions is reflected in the idea of the Mahdī as "the son of the chosen among the slave women"[228] (*ibn khayra al-imāʾ*). The mother of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya was well known to be a slave woman, as was the mother of the Twelfth Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥassan, as well as Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740) the eponymous founder of the Zaydī Shiʿi sect who was also referred to as a *mahdī*. This reveals to us that the usage of the term *mahdī* and even i*mām* by Mukhtār and Sulaymān is embedded in broader discourses with widely shared religious foundations but over whose interpretation wide divergences emerge.

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[225] Kadi, *Al-Kaysaniyya fī al-Tārīkh wa al-Adab* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1974), 123.

[226] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Bābiwayh, a*l-Imāma wa al-Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra,* (Qom: Madrasa al-Imām al-Mahdī, 1404H), 60. Also see: Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762 Ṭālibīs and Early ʿAbbāsīs in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 428.

[227] This hadith is also found in Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir al-Darajāt* (Tehran: Maṭbaʿa al-Aḥmadī, 1404 H.), 522.

The Kaysanīya's ascription of the title of the *mahdī* as an "imprisoned messianic redeemer" for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, some scholars assert, "resonates rather strikingly with Jewish beliefs concerning the Davidic Messiah" as well as with certain Zoroastrian parallels of the "Saoshyant" as well.[229] These parallels do not necessarily show a direct borrowing from Judaic or Zoroastrian religious concepts regarding the end-times, but perhaps reflect the prevalence and depth of such thought in the ancient Near East which pre-dated the rise of Islam and emphasizes the shared notions of religious and political eschatology which are found within these traditions. Although later sectarian delimitations may incline modern day observers to see mahdism as a purview exclusively of the Shiʿa and Twelvers, the development of the term and belief regarding the *mahdī* is truly cross sectarian.[230] The broad relevance of this term is also reflected in the joint articulations of Sulaymān and Mukhtār, as will be further discussed below, but take on markedly different connotations and are embedded in larger political projects which strive towards varied ends.

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[228] Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya*, 444.

[229] Anthony, "Kaysāniya."

[230] For an erudite discussion on the idea of the *Mahdī* in early Islamic thought and its cross-denominational prevalence, see: Jassim Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background*, (London, England: Muḥammadi Trust, 1982), chapter 1. The term *mahdī*, for example is a general marker of guidance and is was used by Sunnī commentators for the "four rightly guided caliphs" (*al-khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn al-Mahdīyūn*).

Discursive Competition: Rhetoric, Prose, Poetry and ʿAlid Representation

Linguistically, the forms of speech utilized by Sulaymān and Mukhtār reflect their political dispositions and ideology. While Sulaymān relied on appeals through the *khuṭba*, Mukhtār was renowned for his utilization of *sajʿ* rhyming prose which predicted future occurrences and was thus accused of being a false *kuhhān* (soothsayer). The discursive competition between Mukhtār and Sulaymān contributed not only to the development of Shiʿi eschatological belief, but also shaped future Shiʿi political organizational structures and strategies in very tangible ways. More specifically, the underground organization of the Tawwābūn and the messianic-eschatological thought of the Kaysāniyya (an offshoot of the Mukhtāriyya) simultaneously pushed forward a politicized notion of the *mahdī* and occultation. This conceptual pairing foreshadowed subsequent waves of revolutionary Shiʿism (including the Abbasid revolution) and contributed to the development of key beliefs which now form fundamental Shiʿi doctrine including the idea of the *mahdī*, *ghayba*, *rajʿa,* and *badāʾ*.[231]

Many of the religiously and politically imbued terms mentioned above were shared between Sulaymān b. Ṣurad and Mukhtār. This is not wholly surprising. Despite this overlap in content, however, their forms of political discourse and address are noticeably different and shed light on the audience and ideological direction that these Shiʿi leaders had in mind. The accusation of *kidhb*, or lying with regards to metaphysical claims, levied against Mukhtār, has a deep history in the Near East. As Tahera Qutbuddin points out, a prominent pre-Islamic genre is that of *sajʿ al-kuhhān* in which a poet, often in a mystical state, relayed semi-prophetic utterances which could include "interpretation of dreams, divination of future events [and] adjudication."[232] Mukhtār was accused of engaging in this frowned upon pre-Islamic form of practice as his renowned oratory often accurately predicted future victories or events, famously predicting the breaking of the siege on his castle by the Kufan *ashrāf* or elite when all hope seemed to be lost. Sulayman, on the other hand, engages in a much more established oratory tradition of *khuṭba* or *waʿẓ* which although as a genre spanned before and after the emergence of Islam, was considered more theologically sound as it was characterized by "containing general themes of piety, contemplation of the imminence of death, [and] obedience to God."[233]

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[231] These three beliefs are the most significant lasting contribution of the *Kaysanīya* according to Sean Anthony; "Kaysāniya," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

We have many examples of the utilization of these literary and oratory forms. On their way to exact vengeance for the death of Ḥusayn and battle Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād, the Tawwābūn visited the tomb site (*qabr*) of Ḥusayn b. ʿAli—also indicating the early roots of this practice of pilgrimage (*ziyāra*). Sulaymān made a rousing speech there, speaking about the fallen Husayn thus: "*Allāhuma arḥim Ḥusaynan, al-Shahīd b. al-Shahīd, al-Mahdī b. al-Mahdī, al-Ṣidīq b. al-Ṣidīq*"[234] (may God bless Husayn, the martyr, son of the martyr, the *mahdī*, son of the *mahdī*, the truthful, son of the truthful). Sulaymān here also interestingly links the notion of the *mahdī* and martyrdom directly with Ḥusayn's father, the first Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. The Tawwābūn also innovated several highly potent and long-lasting slogans, including: *yā lithārāt al-Ḥusayn*! which was their battle cry, adopted later by al-Mukhtār and has remained in circulation among the Shiʿa since then.[235]

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[232] Tahera Qutbuddin, "Khutba: The Evolution of Early Arabic Oration," in *Classical Arabic Humanities in their Own Terms: Festschrifts for Wolfhart Heinrichs*, eds. Beatrice Gruendler and Michael Cooperson (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 191.

[233] *Ibid*.

[234] Muḥammad b. Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, Beirut: Dār al-Turath, 2008), 5: 590.; Hawting, *The History of Al-Tabarī*, 132.

[235] This phrase has remained a staunchly entrenched Shiʿi slogan throughout time and could be seen on the headbands of young Iranian men fighting on the front lines of the Iran-Iraq war, for example. It was also the name of one of the leadings hardliner news websites in Iran.

After the death of Yazīd, when the Tawwābūn first began the religious and political mission, the first Shiʿi to rise up and speak at Sulaymān b. Ṣurad's house where prominent Shiʿa had gathered, addressed the men assembled in the abode in an eloquent *khuṭba* addressing the failings of the Kufan Shiʿa to help al-Ḥusayn:

> We were enamored of self-justification and praising our party until God put our best men to the test and found us sham on two of the battlefields of the son of our Prophet's daughter. Before that, we had received his letters and his messengers had come to us offering forgiveness, asking us to help him again in public and in private. But we withheld ourselves from him until he was killed so near to us. We did not help him with our hands, argue on his behalf with our tongues, strengthen him with our wealth or seek help for him from our clans. What will be our excuse for our Lord and at the meeting with our Prophet when his descendant, his loved one, his offspring and his issue has been slain among us? No, by God, there is no excuse unless you kill his murderer and those who assisted him or unless you are killed while seeking that. Perhaps our Lord will be satisfied with us in that, for I have no security against His punishment after meeting Him.[236]

Shortly afterwards, Sulaymān b. Ṣurād himself arose:

> Now, by God I fear that this time in which life has become so miserable and calamity so great and injustice so prevalent is assigned to be our last. What good is it for the most virtuous of this Party that we were yearning for the family of our Prophet to come, offering them help and urging them to come, but when they came we were weak and feeble and spineless, we delayed and waited to see what would happen, until the descendant of our Prophet, his offspring and his progeny, flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood, was killed in our very midst? He called for help but received none, he asked for justice but was not given any. The impious ones made him a target for arrows and a butt for spears until they had broken him, assaulted him and stripped him. Rise up indeed, for your Lord has been angered. Do not go back to your wives and children until God has been satisfied!

Three themes emerge in these initial speeches: (a) the shortcomings of the supporters of Ḥusayn in backing his movement; (b) the tyrannical viciousness and corruption of the killers of Ḥusayn; and, (c) the necessity of self-sacrifice (martyrdom) and atonement for the partisans of the House of the Prophet. More importantly, the Tawwābūn seemingly did not follow a living ʿAlid Imam and were fixated on the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn and a specific grievance, linking their trajectories to one issue rather than a larger worldview or aspiration to the future—they were in many ways stuck in the past. This type of political action this discourse urges is martyrdom and armed struggle, even in the face of certain death.[237] However, this did not preclude the Tawwābūn from undertaking careful planning and strategic thought despite the otherworldly rhetoric they adopted.

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[236] Hawting, *The History of Al-Tabarī*, 81-2.

Through al-Ṭabarī, we know that Mukhtār had enticed supporters of Sulaymān away by claiming the *mahdī* was Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, and that Mukhtār was acting as his representative:

> When al-Mukhtār called upon them to support him and to seek vengeance for the blood of al-Husayn, the Shi'ah said to him, "This Sulayman b. Surad is the shaykh of the Party; they have yielded to him and agreed upon him." But al-Mukhtār began saying to the Shiʿah," I have come to you from the *mahdi*, Muḥammad b. `Ali, Ibn al-Hanafiyyah, with his trust and confidence, chosen by him and as his *wazir*. And, by God, he kept on at them until a section broke away to join him, honoring him, responding to his call and expecting his success.[238]

Mukhtār thus attempted to undermine Sulaymān b. Ṣurad's support through a multi-pronged discursive strategy to point out both Sulaymān's lack of military competence as well as sustainable political vision. Mukhtār's criticism of Sulaymān was not just criticism of him an individual, but as an indictment of Sulaymān and the Shiʿi elders as a political class. Sulaymān and his companions, the old veteran guard of the partisans of ʿAli, had, despite their good intentions, repeatedly been bested by their foes Muʿāwīya, Yazīd, and Ubaydallāh b. Zīyād. Mukhtār reportedly told those around him: "Do you know what this one (meaning Sulayman b. Surad) wants? He only wants to go out and kill himself and you. He has no understanding of warfare and no knowledge of it."[239] Whereas martyrdom or *shahāda* plays a central role for the Tawwābūn, the rhetoric of martyrdom is not particularly prominent in the speech of Mukhtār. At the beginning of his political campaign to garner the support of Kufan Shiʿa, Mukhtār proclaims:

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[237] Sulaymān also couches personal redemption in the language of *jihād* and a turning away from worldly desires: "Fear of God is the best provision in this world, and apart from that everything perishes and passes away. So turn yourselves away from this world and be desirous of the abode of your well-being and the fight [*jihad*] against the enemies of God, the enemies of yourselves and of the family of your Prophet, so that you may approach God penitently and desiring Him"; *Ibid.*, 87.

[238] Hawting, *The History of Al-Tabarī*, 93.

> I have come to you from he who is in authority, the source of virtue, the legatee of the Legatee, and the Imam the *mahdi*, with an authority in which there is restoration of health, removal of the covering, fighting against the enemies, and fulfillment of favors. Sulayman b. Surad, may God have mercy on us and upon him, is no more than a useless old man and a worn-out thing. He has no experience of affairs and no knowledge of warfare. He only wants to get you to go out, and he will kill himself and you. But I only act following an example which was given to me and a command in which there was made clear to me the might of the one in authority over you, the killing of your enemies and the restoration of your spirits. Listen to what I say and obey my command, and then rejoice and spread the good news, for I am the best leader for the achievement of everything you hope for.[240]

Here, a premium is placed on political expediency, eschatology and messianism—along with taking revenge for the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn, of course. More importantly, Mukhtār promised more than good intentions—he promised victory and vengeance for the blood of al-Ḥusayn.

This section asserted that Shiʿi factionalism emerges as a result of divergences on the issue of Imāmic representation. These differences are rooted in questions of the acceptable bounds of political action while being able to legitimately claim loyalty to the family of ʿAli. While previous scholarship on Mukhtār and the Tawwābūn has primarily engaged in philological-historical reconstruction and source-critical methods, this study contributes to the existing field by engaging in a socio-political and discursive-ideological re-positioning of these early Shiʿi mass-political movements. Ideas and beliefs, in other words, are embedded in multi-layered contexts for the early Shiʿa, and their trajectories are in significant part affected by the structures, constraints, and space they are situated within. Form as well as content of discourse seen in the *khuṭba* and "*sajʿ al-kuhhān*" can equally reveal to us how early Shiʿi thinkers and political figures projected and framed their ideas on what has defined so much of Shiʿi political thought since their time: what does it mean to represent the family of the Prophet and the Imāms?

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[239] *Ibid*.
[240] Hawting, *The History of al-Tabarī*, 120.

The Rise of the Fatimids and the Consecration of ʿAlid Kinship Lines

A further important case that marks important developments in the history of Shiʿi and ʿAlid revolutionary movements is the case of the Fatimids. The coming to power of the Fatimid *mahdī* in Qayrawān in in 297/909 marked the establishment of at least the fourth enduring ʿAlid government—or government claiming to rule on behalf of the *mahdī*—following the Abbasid incipient decline. This occurred in the midst of the fourth wave of Shiʿi revolts which led to a series of enduring ʿAlid victories and start of the Shiʿi Centuries. The prior dynasties that successfully revolted and established rule included the ʿAlid *dāʿīs* in Ṭabaristān in northern Iran starting 250/864, the government of Yaḥyā b. Ḥusayn (d. 298/911), or Imam al-Hādī ilā-l Ḥaqq (d. 298/911) in Yemen beginning in 284/897, and the Qarāmiṭa established a government in the eastern Arabian Peninsula in 286/899.[241] The ʿAlid *mahdī*-led Zanj slave revolt also established rule in parts of southern Iraq 255/869–270/883—a relatively impressive period but still short-lived and precarious.[242]

These events marked a shift in the history of Shiʿism and signaled the second necessary condition to intra-Shiʿi sectarian solidification: the existence of simultaneous ʿAlid dynastic rivalries. The coming to power of the Fatimids, in particular, put forward a serious challenge to the question of ʿAlid legitimacy and rule. They had set up a vast transnational empire larger than the other contemporary Shiʿi dynasties during the Minor Occultation period, ruled over Mecca and Medina, and had a formidable *daʿwa* that stretched across the entire Muslim world from North Africa to South Asia.[243]

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[241] Wilferd Madelung, "Fatimiden und Bahrainqarmaten," *Der Islam* 34 (1958).

[242] Alexandre Popovic writes about the ʿAlid leader of the revolt, ʿAli b. Muḥammad, or *Ṣāḥib al-Zanj*, as "the prototype of a revolutionary: he was of obscure [ʿAlid] descent yet was accepted into the elite circles of his time." He had attempted failed revolts in al-Aḥsā, Hajar and Basra before eventually returning to the environs of Basra to lead the Zanj rebellion; "ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Zanjī," Encyclopaedia of Islam III. Also see: 'Ulabī, *Thawrat al-Zanj*. The question of whether the Zanj revolt could be termed a "slave revolt" has also come under question in the scholarship, as some authors argue that the core of the rebellion was led by free Arabs.

This section will discuss the formidable leadership claims of the Fatimids and ensuing counter-claims from a range of other ʿAlids and Shiʿi groups which contributed to the gradual sectarian crystallization within Shiʿism. The discussion of genealogy takes a central place in these intra-sectarian disputes between the Fatimids and opposing Shiʿi parties. But debates over genealogy and supremacy of certain branches or figures within the family of the prophet was not new; instead it was the larger context in which these debates over ʿAlid lineage and supremacy produced stricter lines of delineation between Shiʿi communities. Additionally, the section also provides evidence showing how the Fatimids were able to recruit many Shiʿis into their *daʿwa* without revealing the true identity of the Fatimid *dāʿī*s and how this came to an end after the emergence of their open government and the tensions which arose within the larger Shiʿi community, including those recruited by the Fatimid *daʿwa* itself.

The process of transition from the Fatimid secret underground organization to a dynastic imperial power is important as it demonstrates how it was possible for an entire Shiʿi sectarian movement to base its origins on an unclear or hidden genealogy. Yet, after the pronouncement of the Fatimid *mahdī*, they then felt compelled to demonstrate a clear ʿAlid lineage which was distinct from other Shiʿi lineages and to draw stricter lines between themselves and other ʿAlid leaders. Although their attempt may have not been totally successful, they were able to generally distinguish themselves and capture a large subset of believers in the Shiʿi community who accepted the authority of the new Fatimid *mahdī* and his descendants as opposed to the other rival Shiʿi leaders across the Muslim world.

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[243] Daftary, "The Ismaili Daʿwa Outside the Fatimid Dawla."

ʿAlid Shiʿi Reification and the Ismaʿili Fatimid Genealogy

Who exactly was the *mahdī* who proclaimed his universal Islamic caliphate in North Africa in 297/909? What do we know of his background and to which branch of the family of the prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) he belonged to? While later Ismaʿili Fatimid Imams claimed to be descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿil b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, this was neither their initial claim as agents of the hidden *mahdī* nor, interestingly, once they rose to power in North Africa in 297/909. Instead, as Heinz Halm has elaborated, there were at least three separate family genealogies circulating that the Fatimid caliphs had put forward regarding themselves at different times.[244] However, none of these became official genealogies in the early period of the Fatimid caliphate as the caliphs chose to abandon any one specific genealogy in favor of general claim of descent from the family of the prophet via the line of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar who was widely reported to have passed away during the lifetime of his father, Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.[245] Importantly, the early Ismaʿilis did not seem to use the term "*Ismāʿīliyya*" for themselves but that was rather a label that likely became normalized by later heresiographical authors who applied the term to them. Instead, the early Fatimids "seem to have designated their movement simply as *al-daʿwa*, 'the mission", or more formally as *al-daʿwa al-hādiya*, 'the rightly guiding mission.'"[246]

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[244] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 154–59.

[245] There were, however, according to some authors of heresiographical texts, a group of Shiʿis who denied that Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar had died during the life of his father (*ankarat mawt Ismāʿīl fī ḥayāt abīhi*). This group believed he was alive and hidden (*ghayb*) amongst the people due to fear of his life and would return as the *mahdī*. However there is no convincing evidence that this group of Shiʿa were involved in the later proto-Fatimid and Ismaʿili *daʿwa* which we can only date to the start of the minor occultation period in 260/874. See: al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-Maqālāt Wa-l Firaq*, 80. Also see: Farhad Daftary, "The Earliest Ismāīlīs," *Arabica* 38, no. 2 (1991): 220ff.

[246] Farhad Daftary, "The Earliest Ismāīlīs," *Arabica* 38, no. 2 (1991): 218; S. M. Stern, "Ismāʿīlīs and Qarmaṭians," in *L'Élaboration de L'Islam* (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France, 1961), 99–108.

The Fatimid narrative discuses two main periods regarding their imamate: the period of underground organization and hidden imams (*istitār* or *dawr al-satr*) that ended with the pronouncement of the *mahdī* in Qayrawān, and the period of open imamate (*dawr al-kashf*) that followed the caliphal pronouncement.[247] During the self-proclaimed period of *istitār* stretching decades before the coming to power of the *mahdī* in Qayrawān, the founding nominal imam of the underground proto-Fatimid Ismaʿili *daʿwa* was one "ʿAbdallah the Elder" (ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar). A highly pertinent discussion of the founding moment of the *daʿwa* is found in Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī's (d. likely ca. early 5th/11th century) *Istitār al-Imām wa Tafarruq al-Duʿāt fi-l Jazāʾir li-Ṭalabih*, an important Fatimid text composed to discuss the underground period of the Imam and officially sanction by the Fatimid Caliphs al-ʿAzīz (d. 386/996) and al-Ḥākim (died or disappeared in 411/1021).[248]

The origins of the *daʿwa*, according to *Istitār al-Imām* was in the city of ʿAskar Mukram, near modern Ahvāz, Khūzistān.[249] The story of the origins—as we will shortly see—are hotly contested until this day, but the narrative provides important information and insights nonetheless. There, seven "confused" *dāʿī*s (*mutaḥayyirīn*) gathered to discuss the difficult situation they were in.[250] In that gathering, they stated that: "we lost our imam" (*faqadnā imāmunā*!) and without him our prayers and fasts are not accepted, and we do not know who to give our religiously obligated taxes (*lā naʿruf man nuʿṭī zakātunā*).[251] They then decided to “seek” and find the imam through dispatching secret agents throughout Khurāsān, Iraq, Ḥarrān, and Yemen.

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[247] Henry Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (London: Islamic Publications, 1983), 96ff.

[248] Paul E. Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996–1021* (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2012); Paul E. Walker, "The Ismaili Daʿwa in the Reign of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Ḥākim," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 30 (January 1, 1993): 161–82.

[249] For more on this area and city, see: "ʿAskar Mokram," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

[250] The number seven is of significance here as it carries a particular eschatological importance within Shiʿism and particularly Ismaʿili literature. Within Ismaʿili thought, this includes the concept of the "seven nāṭiqs (speaker-prophets)" and cyclical notions of the progression of time and salvation. The "speaker-prophet," according to the literature, is "followed by a heptad of Imāms, the seventh Imām of which enjoys a special status as the 'completer' (*mutimm*) of the cycle." David Hollenberg, *Beyond the Qur'ān: Early Ismāʿīlī Ta'wīl and the Secrets of the Prophets* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 16.

The continuation of the narrative collected by Nīsābūrī provides us with crucial potential clues. The reported method that the agents (*duʿāt*) chose is both peculiar and fascinating. These agents gathered their network of followers (*awliyāʾ wa-l muḥibīn*) and assets and organized goods caravans to distribute merchandise specifically used in household cooking and consumption in order to gather intelligence from women and children. The goods they purchased with their capital included: peppers, spices, basil, spindles, and what women generally require for household goods (*mā yaṣlaḥ li-l nisāʾ min aṣnāf al-baqat*).[252] They then set rendezvous points throughout the various geographic regions (*iqlīm*) they had divided up to be searched in order to find the hidden imam. After combing through a region they would meet at the appointed area and ask each other: “did you get a hit” (*hal aṣabtum shayan*)? If not, they would then spread their net across other geographic zones. Once they attracted a gathering of women and children with their goods during these reconnaissance trips, they would ask them: is there a man among you with such and such characteristics? As the narrative states, they circled Aleppo and Upper Mesopotamia (*al-jazīra*), but did not find anything.

Eventually, one of the head *dāʿī*s who was at the original gathering at ʿAskar Mukram, Abu Ghafīr, scored a “hit” in the village of Maʿrrat al-Nuʿmān near *Jabal Sumāq*.[253] In this village, as he done elsewhere, he was shouting his wares to the people: “spindles, frankincense, mirrors!” Women and children gathered around him and his companion Jiyād b. al-Khathʿamī, another of the original *dāʿī*s also at ʿAskar Mukram. Once they attracted a crowd, they began to ask their usual set of questions: "is there a man amongst you with such and such features?" A woman and young boy among the crowd told the agents: "give us what you got and we will direct you!" The secret *dāʿī*s who were posed as merchants then gifted them aromatic gum (*maṣṭakā*), frankincense, and other "household goods used by women"—one can imagine them hurriedly piling them into the woman and boy's hands as they eagerly awaited an answer. The woman and child then told the agents that someone with those features, along with a young boy (*ghulām*), had just arrived at the "Monastery of the Two Sparrows" (Dayr ʿUṣfūrayn). The agents then rushed to the location they were directed to and saw the man they had been searching for; they told him they were seven of the agents (*duʿāt*) and they had been searching for him for a year after they lost him and remained confused (*baqū ḥāʾirīn*).[254] The man, ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar according to the narrative, complained of the poor conditions of the region he was living in including the lack of physicians and baths then told Abū Ghafīr to gather the rest of his agent network and come back to meet him for instructions. The text, *Istitār al-Imām*, then continues to speak of ʿAbdallāh's transfer to the town of Salamiyya. The narrative skips over crucial details regarding the biography of ʿAbdallāh and his descendants, which are provided in other sources, including about ʿAbdallāh's stay in the city of Basra which will be discussed further below.

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[251] Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī, “Istitār Al-Imām wa Tafarruq al-Duʿāt fi-l Jazāʾir Li-Ṭalabih,” in *Akhbār Al-Qarāmiṭa fi-l Aḥsāʾ, al-Shām, al-ʿIrāq, al-Yaman*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Dār Ḥassān, 1982), 113.

[252] Al-Nīsābūrī, “Istitār Al-Imām,” 113.

[253] Modern Maʿrrat al-Nuʿmān is located roughly equidistantly between the cities of Aleppo, Latakia, and Hums in the Syria.

It would be useful to pause here for a moment and reflect on the narrative provided to us by *Istitār al-Imām*. The important point here is not necessarily to compare and reconstruct all of the different aspects of ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar's biography, but rather to pay attention to the specific details provided by this source regarding the origins of the *daʿwa* and the progression of the institutions and revolutionary organizations of the underground mission. As the source states, the original seven agents "lost" their imam and entered a state of confusion, *ḥayra*, after the start of his occultation.[255] The use of the term “confused” agents in the text (“*duʿāt mutaḥayirrīn*”) reflects the terminological language matched in Twelver Shiʿi texts describing the state of affairs right after the onset of the Minor Occultation period. The title of the important Twelver Shiʿi scholar ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn b. Bābawayh al-Qummī’s (d. 329/941) text on the Minor Occultation, for example, is entitled *al-Imāma wa-l Tabṣira min al-Ḥayra*,[256] (*The Imamate and Enlightenment from Confusion* [*Ḥayra*]).[257] Although no proper dates are listed by al-Nīsābūrī, the general time frame is meant to be situated a few generations before the start of the Minor Occultation period. Regardless, the narrative raises critical questions, including whether it was the early Minor Occultation period of time (260/874–329/941) and reference to “*ḥayra*,” or “confusion,” that the agents mentioned in *Istitār al-Imām* are referring to which would push forward dating of the proto-Fatimid Ismaʿili *daʿwa* significantly.

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[254] Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī, "Istitār Al-Imām," 114.

A central question, therefore, is which imam was “lost” to these confused *dāʿī*s begin with? And why did they target the mass social subgroups of women and children as sources of information—why they perhaps searching for a child or the guardian of a child? The timeline and even the basic biographical information of key actors within the Fatimid period of *istitār* is notoriously difficult to establish. However, if we take the broader range of years offered by the sources credibly, these early encounters mentioned in *Istitār al-Imām* and other texts between factions of Shiʿi agents and the early pre-Fatimid line could have been as early as perhaps the time of Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) and Imam ʿAli b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 202/818)—or they could be as late as the start of the Minor Occultation period after the death of Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in 260/874. One thing seems to be certain regardless of the true date of the origins of the *daʿwa*: they did not become active until after the start of the Minor Occultation period (260/874).

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[255] Interestingly, however, the list of agents provided in the text is only six people: Abū Ghafīr, Abū Salama, Abū Ḥasan b. al-Tirmidhī, Jiyād b. al-Khathʿami, Aḥmad b. al-Mawṣilī, and Abū Muḥammad al-Kūfī; Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nīsābūrī, “Istitār Al-Imām,” 113.

[256] There are some debates regarding potential various versions of this text and accurate ascriptions to its authorship. Aqā Buzurg Tihrānī, drawing on evidence from al-Najāshī and elsewhere, argues that there is indeed a version of *al-Imāma wa-l Ṭabṣira min al-Ḥayra* that belongs to Ibn Bābawayh, whom he calls *al-Ṣadūq al-Awwal* (in order to avoid confusion from his more well-known son, al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq [i.e. *al-Thānī*], who is also called Ibn Bābiwayh). However, Tihrānī believes that the version (*nuskha*) of *al-Imāma wa-l Ṭabṣira min al-Ḥayra* that Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1111/1699) drew from in volumes 16 and 17 of *Biḥār al-Anwār* is a different text with the same title since it includes narrations from scholars and traditionists who died after Ibn Bābiwayh the elder, including Muḥammad Hārūn al-Talʿakbarī (d. 385 H), Abī Mufaḍḍal Muḥammad al-Shaybānī (d. 386 H), al-Ḥasan b. Hamza al-ʿAlawī, and others; see Muḥammad Muḥsin Āghā Buzurg Ṭihrānī, *Dharī‘ah Ilā Taṣānīf Al-Shī‘ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1983), 2: 341–42.

[257] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAli Ibn Bābiwayh, *Al-Imāma wa-l Tabṣira Min al-Ḥayra* (Qum: Madrasa al-Imām al-Mahdī, 1404H).

The ambiguity of the basic timeline of the period of proto-Ismaʿili *istitār* raises speculation that one group of *dāʿī*s at a crucial inflection point of leadership transition between ʿAlid imams—and when the prospect of occultation was raised—formed an underground Shiʿi faction and collaborative network preparing for the return of the hidden Imam and "empire of the *mahdī*." The birth date of the later Fatimid *mahdī* and first caliph Saʿīd b. al-Ḥusayn, in fact, matches the first year of the start of the Minor Occultation period in 260/874.[258]

There is a long list of Shiʿi groups which believed that the imam had gone into occultation, as covered earlier in this chapter, from the very beginning after the assassination of Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib. Given our period of interest, we can focus more specifically on groups that formed after the death of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in 148/765. Here, we find Shiʿi factions such as the Nāwūsiyya who believed that Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad had not died and that "he will not die until he revolts and rules the people and that he is al-Mahdī."[259] Another prominent group of Shiʿa were the *wāqifa* (sometimes called the *mamṭūra*)[260] who believed that Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim had not died and had gone into occultation.[261] Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, interesting, also seems to use the term *wāqifa* generically to refer to a group of Shiʿa who believed that Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī had not died but went into occultation (*ghayba*).[262] However it is also possible, according to this report in *Kamāl al-Dīn*, that there may have been an original group of *wāqifa* who survived from the time of Mūsā al-Kādhim and continued to attract followers throughout a few generations and this group later ascribed the doctrine of *ghayba* to al-Imam al-ʿAskarī and awaited his return as the *mahdī* and *qāʾim*.

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[258] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 100. By contrast, Twelver Shiʿi hadith note that the *mahdī* Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan was born in 255/869.
[259] al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Shīʿa Sects: (Kitāb Firaq al-Shīʿa)*, trans. Abbas Kadhim (London: ICAS Press, 2007), 122.
[260] Al-Nawbakhtī, *Shīʿa Sects*, 138–39.
[261] Muḥammad b. ʻAlī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn Wa-Tamām al-Niʻmah* (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 2011), 1: 79.

Many Shiʿi groups and factions such as these existed throughout time, and it is quite possible that one of these factions—likely much closer to the actual death of Imam al-ʿAskari and the start of the Minor Occultation—formed the proto-Fatimid *daʿwa* network. This proto-Ismaʿili network developed an internal literature, seemingly during the Minor Occultation period itself.[263] The few texts preserved from this period contain a range of technical terminology and ranks within their underground network. These spiritual and organizational positions are not always clearly defined in the literature and there exist ambiguities regarding key terms such as the *ḥujja*. Later post-imperial Fatimid texts apply the title of *ḥujja* was ascribed to the head *dāʿī* or agent of the Imam; whereas within the early texts, some references to the *ḥujja* can be understood as the Imam himself.

This can be seen in the layered composition of a pre-imperial Fatimid texts, including *Kitāb al-Kashf* which is a series of six treatises, as well as *Kitāb al-Rushd*.[264] A close look at *Kitāb al-Kashf* reveals differences between the treatises, including in the ordered rank of positions, for example, regarding the *bāb* and the *hujja*.[265] As Daftary elaborates,

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[262] Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn*, 85.
[263] For a detailed discussion on this early literature, see: Madelung, “The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine.”
[264] Madelung believes *Kitāb al-Kashf* was likely composed during the underground pre-Fatimid period and possibly compiled afterwards by Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yamān; Madelung, “The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine,” 72–77.
[265] Pseudo-Jaʿfar Manṣūr al-Yamān, *Kitāb al-Kashf*, ed. Mustafa Ghalib (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1984), 23.

> Initially, [*ḥujja*] meant the proof of God's presence or will, and as such it referred to that person who at any given time served as evidence among mankind of God's will. In this sense, the application of the term was systematized by the Imāmī Shīʿīs to designate the category of prophets and imams and, after the Prophet Muḥammad, more particularly of the imams. The original Shīʿī application of the term *ḥujja* was retained by the pre-Fātimid Ismāʿīlīs who also used *ḥujja* in reference to a dignitary in their religious hierarchy, notably one through whom the inaccessible Mahdī could become accessible to his adherents. The *ḥujja* was also a high rank in the *daʿwa* hierarchy of the Fātimid Ismāīlīs; there were twelve such *ḥujjas*, each one in charge of a separate *daʿwa* region called *jazīra*. In Nizārī Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa*, the term generally denoted the chief representative of the imam, sometimes also called *pīr*.[266]

There are also differing notions of the doctrinal understanding of cycles and the relationship between speakers, prophets, the *mahdī*, and the *qāʾim*. Madelung discusses these conflicting definitions, for example, regarding the relationship between "completers" (*muttimmūn*) and "speakers" (*nuṭaqāʾ*) in which Ismaʿili doctrinal position stated "the seventh completer is the speaker of the new era," however the "author of the *Kitāb al-Rushd* contradicted the doctrine… when he called the seventh speaker the eighth completer."[267] Newly re-discovered manuscripts recording letters and sermons by the early successful missionaries Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shīʿī and his brother Abu-l Abbās published by Paul Walker and Madelung also provide interesting details regarding the early proto-Ismaʿili mission in North Africa. The manuscript recording the sermons of Abū ʿAbdallāh predate the revealing of the Fatimid *mahdī* and are void of references to "ranks of the religious hierarchy" and contain generic Shiʿi revolutionary discourses which describe the "Mahdī [as] the one of Muḥammad's family who will rise," and that "God will manifest His religion at the hands of His vicegerent, the Mahdī, may the blessings of God be upon him."[268]

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[266] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 517.
[267] Madelung, "The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine," 73.
[268] Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker, eds., *Affirming the Imamate: Early Fatimid Teachings in the Islamic West* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021), 5, 7. I thank Paul Walker for providing me with an advanced copy of the book manuscript.

The narrative of the underground period of the Fatimid imams also has a whole set of additional challenges which came to fuller light after the announcement of their caliphate. For example, the proper birth names of ʿAbdallāh and his descendants do not match the identity of the hidden Imam, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, that the leaders at Salamiyya gave to their select elite agents, *duʿāt*, nor do they match the descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl that they later changed the narrative to. Even if they were cover names, they would have been known to the elite circle but this was apparently not the case, and the lineage and names of the Fatimid imams is not accurately stated in their pre-imperial literature according to what it should be consistent with the messianic Islamic and Shiʿi literature.[269] This created a particular problem, as Halm elaborates in *Empire of the Mahdi*, when in the first Friday sermon after announcing his caliphate, the new Fatimid *mahdī* announced himself as ʿAbdallāh Abū Muḥammad. That was not his original name, which all sources agree was Saʿīd b. al-Ḥusayn: "The meaning of this change in name becomes clear when we also take into account the name under which [the *mahdī*'s] son appeared. From now on the son, whose real name was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, is called only Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad… he thus becomes Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh" which was the full name of the Prophet Muḥammad. This was important since according to "old prophecies, the awaited Mahdi, the renewer of the Prophet's mission, will also bear the name of the Prophet."[270] As Halm elaborates:

> So now it turns out that the bearer of this name is not the Mahdi, but rather *his son*, and that the promised savior is thus not the Mahdi himself, but rather his son. A significant change in the doctrine announces itself in the name assumed by the Mahdi, a change which at first remains unexpressed, but which cannot remain concealed to the alert observer. Since he lacked an important attribute and sign whereby he might be recognized as the Mahdi; but these were, instead, available to his son. The Mahdi therefore tried from the beginning to divert the expectations

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[269] Madelung, "The Imamate in Early Ismaili Doctrine," 74.

[270] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 154.

> and hopes of the faithful away from himself and toward his son, the future successor to the throne.[271]

The genealogical pedigree and claims of the Fatimids were addressed in an official capacity later by the Fatimid Caliph ʿAbdallāh al-Mahdī himself in a famed letter to his followers in the Yemeni branch of the *daʿwa*. In his letter, the first Fatimid caliph acknowledges that his name was indeed Saʿīd but that this was a cover name. Instead, as he attests, his real name was ʿAli. This is quite confusing as neither the *mahdī* nor the father of the *mahdī* are said in the eschatological literature to bear this name—which raises the question of why the reason of a cover name should have been raised in the first place if it did not solve the genealogical problem. The letter provides a few other very challenging details to the narrative of the Fatimid origins. Quite explosively, the Fatimid Caliph claims that he was *not* the descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar but rather he was a descendant of "Jaʿfar's eldest surviving son ʿAbdallāh [al-Afṭaḥ]… whom he regards as the *ṣāḥib al-ḥaqq* or the legitimate successor of the Imam al-Ṣādiq."[272] This would make al-Mahdi's great grand-father, ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar, a son of Imam al-Ṣādiq's son ʿAbdallāh al-Afṭaḥ rather than Ismāʿīl or Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.[273]

The problem with this genealogy is that the historical sources unanimously record that ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq died shortly after his father and without any male children. As Halm elaborates: "by choosing this man as his ancestor, the Mahdi had thus found a gap in the prophetical genealogical tables, and he could avoid dealing with the claims of any possible real descendants." However, "on the other hand, it was generally known that al-Afṭaḥ had no sons.

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[271] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 155.

[272] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs*, 101.

[273] For a discussion of this letter, see: Abbas Hamdani and François de Blois, "A Re-Examination of al-Mahdī's Letter to the Yemenites on the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 115, no. 2 (1983): 173–207. This controversial article attempts to solve the problem presented by the Caliph al-Mahdi by proposing there were two lines of descendants from Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq: one from Ismāʿīl and the other from ʿAbdallāh which later merged again into one line. This conclusion has largely not been accepted in the field.

This was indeed why al-Mahdī soon abandoned this genealogy: it was too patently false."[274] According to Ibn Hazm, when al-Mahdī abandoned this previous claim, he then pivoted to claiming descent from Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl through an entirely different genealogy than his forefathers at Salamiyya. So, he was no longer the son of Husayn b. ʿAḥmad but rather from a totally different line, the son of Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. Problematically, however, "several authentic descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl defended themselves energetically against this claim."[275]

There was an additional purported genealogy centering around the enigmatic figure of Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, a non-ʿAlid, who was said by certain sources to be the true founder of Ismaʿilism, and the father of the Fatimid caliphs.[276] More specifically, he was said to be the father of ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar, the first leader of the *daʿwa* in Salamiyya, and a follower of the well-known Abu-l Khaṭṭāb. While there is of course debate regarding the veracity of this lineage claim, a certain Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son named ʿAbdallāh are known within the Twelver Shiʿi tradition as followers of Imam Muḥammad Bāqir and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq but the official Fatimid narrative asserts this figure was not their ancestor.

In the Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdi's letter written to the Yemeni community, he claims that Maymūn was in fact was one of the code name for the hidden *mahdī* during the period of *istitār*.[277] A letter written by the fourth Fatimid Caliph al-Muʿizz, moreover, asserts that "Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ" was the code name for ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar, the founding head of the *daʿwa* in Salamiyya.[278] Regardless, certain Ismaʿilis during the period of the Fatimid empire believed that the non-ʿAlid Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was indeed the Imam, at least for a while, during the underground period of the *daʿwa*. Additionally, certain Druze texts state that the Imams during the period of *istitār* were "*min walad al-Qaddāḥ*," the sons of al-Qaddāḥ.[279]

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[274] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 157.
[275] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 158.
[276] Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 44ff.
[277] Hamdani and de Blois, "A Re-Examination of al-Mahdī's Letter," 176. Also see: "ʿAbdallāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ," Encyclopaedia Iranica.
[278] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 104.

These issues are compounded even further since as the progenitor of the movement, ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar initially claimed he was a Ṭālibid descendant of ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, the brother of Imam ʿAli.[280] He was sheltered by clients of the ʿAqīlids in the Banū Bāhila district of Basra when he settled in the city, and he and his descendants continued to be known by this ʿAqīlid genealogy for generations. Halm lends credence to this being the likely true genealogy of the later Fatimid Imams, stating that:

> It is difficult to imagine that the Basran clients of the ʿAqilids would have supported an immigrant adventurer of uncertain identity as their patron; moreover ʿAskar Mukram [where ʿAbdallāh was previously based] was only 180 kilometers distant from Basra, and we may assume that patron and clients already knew each other. In addition, ʿAbdallāh the Elder had no reason to legitimate himself through a false family tree, and certainly not with such a one as this; why should he have invented it? His sons and grandsons were accepted and recognized as ʿAqilids, and there a number of indication that they were that in fact.[281]

Moreover, it is important to note that the underground network founded by ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar at this point, and up until they claimed the caliphate, had not publicly claimed to be Shiʿi imams; rather, they claimed they were the agents of the hidden imam. The entire split within the pre-Fatimid *daʿwa* network was over this very issue: the disagreement over the leadership of the *daʿwa* when a group of the proclaimed agents of the Imam hinted they may be the Imams themselves. When the chief *dāʿī* of Iraq, Ḥamdan Qarmaṭ came to know that the agents in

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[279] The origins of the Druze are rooted in Ismaʿili Shiʿi Islam although most Druze today would likely categorize themselves as a separate religion. For more on Druze references to Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, see: Lewis, *The* Assassins, 49.

[280] Abū Bakr b. ʻAbd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz Al-Durar Wa-Jāmiʻ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid, (Cairo: al-Maʻhad al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6: 19; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 10.

[281] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 10–11.

Salamiyya were using the imamate of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as a cover name and that the real Imam would be someone else, Ḥamdan and his companions, including the top *dāʿī* Abdān, broke off proselytizing activities. While Abdān was murdered on behalf the central *dāʿī*s of Salamiyya, his followers continued to believe and advocate for the doctrine of the return of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as the *mahdī*.

The controversy reared its head in North Africa, where an interesting exchange took place between the first Fatimid Caliph al-Mahdi, the chief *dāʿī* Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shiʿi, and Kutāma army chieftains. The account is preserved in ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī's *Tathbīt Dalā'il al-Nubuwwā*. Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shiʿi, as the sourced record, defeated the Aghlabids dynasty in the name of the *mahdī* and created a new power base of Kutāma and allied tribesman as the empire's standing army.[282] The exchange occurs shortly after the coming to power of the new Fatimid caliph and the clear disgruntlement of a range of top Kutāma chiefs and agents (*dāʿī*s) after disagreements with the policies and character of the caliph. Addressing the Kutāma chiefs, Abū ʿAbdallāh states his regret in campaigning and organizing to bring the new Fatimid caliph to power:

> You people, I have erred, as any man may err at some time. I am a Shiʿite from Kufa. At first, we believed in the imamate of [the seventh Imam] Mūsā b. Jaʿfar and his descendants.[283] But when [the eleventh Imam] al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī died [childless], Ibn Ḥawshab abandoned this belief, and so did we. Then someone came to us, recruiting for the imamate of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar… In this way it came about that I took this man here for the Mahdi, but he is not the Mahdi…[284]

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[282] Abū Ḥanīfah Nuʿmān b. Muḥammad, *Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa*, ed. Ḥusām Khaddūr (Damascus: Dār al-Ghadīr lil-Ṭibāʿah wa-al-Nashr, 2007).

[283] This is a clear reference to show he was not part of the *wāqifa* who stopped at Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar but stayed within those Imami Shiʿa who accepted ʿAli b. Mūsā and his descendants as the Imams.

[284] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 166.

While the fuller narrative provided by al-Hamadhānī here may be infused with an acrimonious tone, which may or may not have been present at the meeting, it nonetheless lays out compelling details about the origins of the *daʿwa*. Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shiʿi discusses how the proto-Ismaʿili *daʿwa* emerged from the center of the Imami Shiʿi community and followers of Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī shortly following his death. Abū ʿAbdallāh's colleague and friend, who he mentions, Ibn Hawshab (also known as Manṣūr al-Yamān), was also a follower of Imam al-ʿAskarī as were other key top agents in the *daʿwa*, including ʿAli b. al-Faḍl, who conquered parts of Yemen alongside Ibn Hawshab.

As discussed above, the details of the exact Ismaʿili Fatimid family line are notoriously complicated, in part, due to the multiple versions put forward by the Fatimids themselves. The point here is not to try to solve the specific ambiguities and problems within the genealogy, which several notable scholars have written on. Rather, it is to highlight how these genealogical ambiguities existed in the hidden underground period of the revolutionary *daʿwa* but began to become reified in the post-revolutionary period for an entire branch of Shiʿi Muslims who still believe in the legitimacy and leadership of the early Fatimid line of Imams until today.[285]

The ambiguous and hazy details of the origins of the Fatimids serve as a clear example of the larger sectarian and institutional ambiguity within Shiʿism before the Minor Occultation period. Many debates and letter exchanges, including the Caliph al-Mahdi's letter to the Yemeni community reflected the early controversy over the origin of the Fatimids and the strong emphasis placed on ʿAlid lineage to demonstrate leadership credentials. These debates continued well into the reign of the Fatimid empire, after a century of their coming to power, and included the well-known “manifesto of Baghdad” of 402/1011 that was composed by many “prominent ʿAlids, jurists, and others, denouncing the falsehood of Fāṭimid genealogical claims.”[286] This manifesto was carefully constructed and researched by the authors of that time—although not all of its claims are accepted by contemporary scholars—but it nonetheless still serves until today as key text with original historical material and evidence in the larger debate of legitimacy and leadership within Shiʿism and the role of the Fatimids in that larger story. The detailed debates which emerged regarding Fatimid origins after they came to power demonstrate the shifting space in which vague code names and genealogies would no longer suffice and the Fatimids and their opponents engaged in extended, protracted, and detailed scholarly debates on their genealogy and relation issues that had serious implications for Fatimid legitimacy and claims of leadership over the Muslim world.

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[285] Since the early period, the Fatimid Ismaʿili Shiʿa have experienced several sectarian splits. One of the most notable splits of which was the Nizari-Mustaʿli split in the late 11th century CE. Most Ismaʿilis today are Nizaris however there are also various communities of Mustaʿilis including Sulaymanī (mainly centered in modern Saudi Arabia and Yemen), and Dawūdī Bohras (mainly centered in India and South Asia).

Consecration of Twelver Shiʿi Identity

Several authors have noted the blurred line (or lack thereof) between Shiʿi groups in the pre-Minor Occultation period starting in 260/874, a phenomenon this study terms as “Shi’a confessional ambiguity.” These authors, as will be discussed below, have proffered various observations on the nature of the vague intra-Shiʿi sectarian lines in the pre-Minor Occultation period, but their studies have focused on different questions in the literature and have not theorized specific mechanisms in depth as to why it was difficult to establish divisions *within* the Shiʿi community and even between “extremist” (*ghulāt*) and non-*ghulāt* groups before the occultation of the twelfth imam. Shiʿi sectarian crystallization did not occur overnight but rather was as an evolving process triggered after the Anarchy at Samarra in 247/861 and the start the Minor Occultation period shortly thereafter in 260/874, as discussed in Chapter One.

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[286] Lewis, *The Assassins*, 60.

Etan Kohlberg, in an article published in 1976, argued that while “both the number 12 and the idea of *ghayba* are very early motifs in Islamic history,” it was not until the “mid-fourth/tenth century” that the consecration of the names and finality of the twelve imams, the last of whom is the Mahdī or Qāʾim, took place. It was only then, and with the doctrine of two occultations, one “greater” and another “lesser,” that distinguished “Twelver Shiʿism from the earlier Imāmiyya.”[287] Kohlberg elsewhere also noted that in the pre-Occultation period, in the Twelver heresiographical literature of al-Nawbakhtī and Qummī, “proto-Twelver sects… are usually identified as the *aṣḥāb* or *shīʿa* of a particular Imam. Only once are they called ‘al-shīʿa al-ʿalawiyya.’”[288] One of the key identifiers of the proto-Twelvers, moreover, was the term Qaṭʿiyya. This group of Shiʿis did not stop at Imam Muṣā Kāẓim but instead continued the line of the imamate by affirming Imam ʿAli b. Mūsā al-Riḍā and some of his direct descendants as his successors, and they were noted to be the majority (*jumhūr*) of the Shiʿa. The term Qatʿiyya was adopted both within the Twelver literature as well as outside of it with authors of heresiography such as the Muʿtazilī author Abu-l Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931) in his *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, Abu-l Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935-6) in his similarly entitled titled work,[289] and the Ismaʿili author Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī in his *Kitab al-Zīna*.[290] As Kohlberg further stated, “in sum: these heresiographers, who died between 299/911–912 and 324/935–936, show varying degrees of awareness of Twelver doctrine, but none uses the term “Ithnā ʿashariyya.”[291]

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[287] Etan Kohlberg, “From Imāmiyya to Ithnā-ʿAshariyya,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 3 (October 1976): 521.
[288] Etan Kohlberg, “Early Attestations of the Term ‘Ithnā ʿAshariyya,’” in *In Praise of the Few: Studies in Shiʿi Thought and History*, ed. Amin Ehteshami (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 229.
[289] For more on these authors and the relationship between their works, see: Racha el Omari, *The Theology of Abū L-Qāsim al-Balkhī/al-Kaʿbī (d. 319/931)*, ed. Emilie Savage-Smith, Hans Daiber, and Anna Akasoy (Ledien: Brill, 2016); Weaver, “A Footnote to the Composition History of Maqālāt Al-Islāmiyyīn.”
[290] ʿAbdallāh Salūm al-Sāmirāʾī, *al-Ghuluww wa-l Firaq al-Ghāliyya fi-l Hadāra al-Islāmiyya* (Baghdad: Dār Wāsit li-l Nashr, 1972), 290–91; Kohlberg, “Early Attestations of the Term ‘Ithnā ʿAshariyya,’” 230–31; and, Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 62.
[291] Kohlberg, “Early Attestations of the Term ‘Ithnā ʿAshariyya,’” 232.

However, the label “Twelver,” according to Kohlberg, can be established during the later part of the Minor Occultation period with confidence—at least since al-Masʿūdī’s *al-Tanbīh wa-l Ishrāf* written in 344/955–345/956.[292] The term can additionally be seen in a number of Buyid-era works such as Sharīf al-Murtaḍā’s (d. 436/1044) al-*Fuṣūl al-Mukhtāra* which drew from his teacher al-Shaykh al-Mufīd’s (d. 413/1022) *al-ʿUyūn wa-l Maḥāsin*.[293] This crystallization process demonstrates the post-Occultation consolidation of the Twelver Shiʿi community—based on several principles such as *ghayba*, *naṣṣ*, and the role of the imam as an infallible leader that had existed within prior Shiʿi communities—and the gradual solidification of the sectarian identity of Twelvers as a distinct community. As al-Murtaḍā argued: it was defensible for the Twelver community to be “called ‘Ithnā ʿashariyya’, because in our view this name is given to those who affirm the imamate of twelve Imams. Since we affirm this doctrine and no one else concurs with us, we alone are called by this name, to the exclusion of all others.”[294]

On discussing the efficacy of the term “Imāmī” Shiʿi, Edmund Hayes wrote that “although there were commonly held concepts of proper imāmic succession, the actual accepted lineages were always open to a certain amount of debate and retrospective reinterpretation.” This allowed the term “Imāmī” to be utilized in order “to label an intrinsically fluid pre-Occultation Imāmī community, defined by adherence to a general lineage of imāms, but not to a non-negotiable set of imāms or a crystallised set of doctrines.”[295] He also discusses the developments which can be traced in Shiʿi fiscal law as an important marker for sociological development and identifying a stricter sectarian turn within the Shiʿi community.[296] The doctrines and confessional lines, as Hassan Ansari further argued, crystallized after the start of the Minor Occultation and resulted in the transition from “Imāmī” to “Twelver Shiʿism” after they separated themselves from Zaydi Shiʿi tendences “probably before the year 290 H.” He further argued that, throughout the fourth century Hijri, a process of exclusion of Twelver esoteric (“*bāṭinī*”) movements, including the Nuṣayri-ʿAlawīs, was undertaken. Therefore, according to him, this non-esoteric strand of Imāmī Shiʿism came to be increasingly affiliated with Twelver Shiʿism with the establishment of a “legal-rationalistic” tendency in the Buyid-era, an issue also discussed by Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi.[297]

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[292] Kohlberg, “Early Attestations of the Term ‘Ithnā ʿAshariyya,’” 241.

[293] For more on the life and thought of these important figures, see: Martin J. McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd, d. 413/1022* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1978); Tamima Bayhom-Daou, *Shaykh Mufid* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); Ahmad Muhammad Maʻtūq, *al-Sharīf al-Murtadā: Hayātuhu, Thaqāfatuhu, Adabuhu wa-Naqduh* (Beirut: al-Mu’assasah al-‘Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 2008); Hussein Ali Abdulsater, *Shi’i Doctrine, Mu’tazili Theology: al-Sharif al-Murtada and Imami Discourse*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

[294] Kohlberg, “Early Attestations of the Term ‘Ithnā ʿAshariyya,’” 241.

[295] Edmund Hayes, “The Institutions of the Shīʿī Imāmate: Towards a Social History of Early Imāmī Shiʿism,” *Al-Masāq*, April 2021, 2.

Ansari also wrote that the divergences found between Shiʿis were mainly regarding the issue of the imamate and expressed themselves through theological debates from the third Hijri century onwards, over issues such as divine investiture or direct succession appointments (*naṣṣ*), and this was complicated moreover by “esoteric and extremist” Shiʿi interpretations over the issue of how investiture was transmitted. Within the *wukalāʾ* hierarchy of the Imāmī Shiʿis, moreover, he argued that it was shortly before 290 H that they merged the idea of the hidden imam with the idea of the messianic redeemer of the *qāʾim*, drawing mainly from *wāqifī* narrations.[298] Citing a passage from Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* written about the famous scholar Abū

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[296] Edmund Hayes, “Alms and the Man: Fiscal Sectarianism in the Legal Statements of the Shiʿi Imams,” *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 17 (2017): 280–98.

[297] Hasan Ansari, *L’imamat et l’Occultation Selon l’imamisme: Étude Bibliographique et Histoire de Textes* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), xix–xx. Also see: Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi’ism*.

[298] Ansari, *L’imamat et l’Occultation*, 6–9. *Wāqf* refers to different groups of Shiʿis who “halted” at a particular ʿAlid Imam instead of continuing on to another successor. Often, groups of *wāqifī* Shiʿis declared their Imam to be a *qāʾim* or salvific redeemer (although they did not necessarily use the title of *qāʾim*), or that he had gone into occultation to return in a messianic future. The number of *wāqifī*s, according to our sources, was especially pronounced following the (apparent) death of Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim in 183/799 and were derogatorily called *mamṭūra* by their opponents; see: Hasan b. Mūsā Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAli al-Husaynī al-Shahristānī (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1404H), 81–83.

Sahl al-Nawbakhtī (d. 311/924),[299] Ansari argued that Abū Sahl claimed that the son of the the Twelfth Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan was an "Imam" but *not* a Qāʾim.[300] However, the passage did not actually state that Abū Sahl said Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan was not a Qāʾim; instead, it can actually be read that the title of "al-Qāʾim" and "Imam" were understood as interchangeable, not mutually exclusive. The passage in *al-Fihrist* stated that Abū Sahl had an "unprecedented opinion about the Qāʾim" (*al-Qā'im min Āl Muḥammad*): Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī used to claim that the Twelfth "Imam Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan had passed away during the occultation," and that he was succeeded by his son and descendants until Allah determines when the Imam will be revealed (i.e. occultation will come to an end).[301] This was more likely the strange, or unorthodox opinion, reportedly ascribed to al-Nawbakhtī, not that he separated the person of the Imam from the Qāʾim—for that matter the title *ḥujja* is not used by al-Nawbakhtī either but that does not imply he was separating the concept of the Imam from the Ḥujja. Moreover, as has been covered throughout this study, the idea of an Imam and Qāʾim was by no means necessarily separate theologically and could be seen expressed across a variety of groups ranging from Kaysānī Shiʿis to even the followers of Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī and al-Muqannaʿ in Central Asia in the 2nd/8th century.

Additionally, individuals such as Abu-l Khattāb Muḥammad b. Abī Zaynab (d. ca. 145/762) and al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī (d. ca. 145/762) played a prominent role in Shiʿi history and were figures found in the larger Shiʿi literature and hadith canon. However, they came to be considered by some later Shiʿi scholars, particularly in the Twelver Jaʿfarī tradition, as controversial or extreme (*ghāl*). Abu-l Khattāb, one of the followers of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq was particularly revered by the Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawis and Isma'ilis. According to some of the heresiographical texts, he was accused of antinomianism. Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakthī writes that Abu-l Khattāb was the subject of a crackdown by the Abbasid governor Īsā b. Mūsā during the time of the Caliph al-Manṣūr: when Īsā b. Mūsā “heard that they permitted irreligious acts and claimed prophethood of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, he sent his force to the Mosque of Kufa, where they gathered. They resisted him, so had to kill them all.”[302] Abū al-Khaṭṭāb himself was captured and executed in Kufa where his body was crucified on the banks of the Euphrates. In Nuṣayrī literature, Abu-l Khattāb was also referred to as *al-Khālī* and also was situated as an important figure in the early esoteric Shiʿi text, *Umm al-Kitāb*, which is a work supposedly based on the discourses of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir, the fifth Imam in the Twelver and Ismaʿili tradition.[303]

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[299] For more on the life of this important Shiʿi scholar, see: Iqbāl, *Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī*, 95–125.

[300] Ansari, *L'imamat et l'Occultation*, 8.

[301] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), 251.

However, Twelver authors such as Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Kashshī’s (d. 350/961) severely censures Abu-l Khaṭṭāb despite recording how some followers close to Imam Ṣādiq sympathized with his massacre and plight at the hands of the Abbasids.[304] Kashshī also included a narration where a follower of Imam Imam al-Ṣādiq, Īsā Shalqān, asked the future Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar while he was still a youth (*ghulām*): “why did your father order us to [initially] obey Abu-l Khaṭṭāb but then to repudiate him?” Imam Mūsā responded (among other points) that Abū al-Khaṭṭāb indeed used to be considered a righteous follower of the Imam and was given faith (*īmān*) by Allah. But when Abū al-Khaṭṭāb made false attributions to Imam al-Ṣādiq (*kadhaba ʿala abī*), then Allah took away Abu-l Khaṭṭāb’s faith. When Īsā Shalqān narrated this response to Imam al-Ṣādiq, the Imam confirmed his son’s answer, and said he would not have answered any differently.[305]

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[302] al-Nawbakhtī, *Shīʿa Sects: (Kitāb Firaq al-Shīʿa)*, 125.
[303] “Abu’l-Khattāb Muḥammad b. Abī Zaynab,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.
[304] Muhammad b. ʿUmar al-Kashshī, *Ikhtīyār Maʿrifa al-Rijāl* (Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Mashhād, 1969), 293–96.
[305] Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtīyār Maʿrifa al-Rijāl*, 296.

This ambiguity regarding the intra-Shiʿi sectarian affiliation can be seen well into the Minor Occultation period as well. Nuṣayrī scholars such as Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Husayn b. Ḥamdān al-Khaṣībī who died during the later part of the Minor Occultation period (d. 358/969), authored several works that fit completely into the emerging Twelver Jaʿfarī orthodoxy but his later students such Abu-l Ḥusayn Muḥammad al-Jīlī transmitted an esoteric reading of his teacher considered by the mainstream Shiʿis to the extreme. As Yaron Friedman wrote, among al-Khaṣībī's "Imāmī-Shīʿī books is his main work, *al-Hidāya al-Kubrā*," that is his "only complete Imāmī work to have survived to the present day. The fact that its contents are almost free of any mystical elements backs the hypothesis that al-Khasībī used an Imāmī identity as *taqiyya*." As Friedman reasoned, "if [al-Khasībī] had not needed to keep his Nusayrī identity secret, he could have allowed himself to write mystical documents dedicated to the Ḥamdānid leader, as he did with the unorthodox [Buyid Amir] Bakhtiyār."[306] However, the Nuṣayrī split from the larger Twelver Jaʿfarī Shiʿa and into a more distinct community can be more definitely traced after the end of the Minor Occultation period with his student who formed the nucleus of a community and unique doctrines in the Eastern Mediterranean coastline and mountains of Syria, what Friedman called the "crystallization" of the "post-Khāṣibī period."[307]

Discussing the "history of the Ghulat," Mushegh Asatryan posited that "in the later part of the 2nd/8th century, the Ghulat were an organic part of the wider community…. Later on, sometime in the 3rd/9th century, the Ghulat's relations with the broader Shiʿi community began to deteriorate," following the occultation of the twelfth Imam. "Hence the Ghulat were not yet viewed by the Imāmīs as a distinct 'heretical' group that had 'split' from a 'majority'. They not only interacted on a regular basis with non-Ghulat, but were at times very close to the Imams themselves."[308] The reasons behind the eventual split were briefly hypothesized by Asatryan who stated that "the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries constitute a period when no normative form of Islam yet existed. The germs of future developments, however, were beginning to appear, as various groups tried to stake out their communal identity through various means: ritual, sacred space, purity rules, and cosmology."[309]

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[306] Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs*, 34.
[307] Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs*, 34.

The claim that there did not exist a normative Islam before the 3rd/9th century is of course a matter of perspective and definition; certainly, there were several competing movements and hierarchies that defined authority within Islam—and considered themselves to be "normative." The question is how and why certain notions of normativity emerged in the ways they did historically? Which of these "interpretations" of Shiʿi Islam were able to establish stable communities, hierarchies, ritual practices, acceptable doctrines, and long-lasting institutions?[310] As the authors in the section have also argued, there is largely a consensus that sectarian differences between different Shiʿi groups began to emerge after the start of the Minor Occultation period in the 3rd/9th century. However, there is not an agreement, or much of an extended discussion for that matter, on what socio-political factors led to sectarian differences between Shiʿis. This present study, thereby, aims to cover some of the relevant political and historical socio-institutional developments that shaped how diversity and disagreements between the Shiʿa unfolded over time and formed into exclusionary distinct communities.

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[308] Asatryan, *Controversies in Formative Shiʿi Islam*, 163.
[309] Asatryan, *Controversies in Formative Shiʿi Islam*, 177.
[310] El Shamsy, "The Social Construction of Orthodoxy."

CHAPTER FOUR:
Fortress Ṭabaristān: Dynastic ʿAlid Leadership, Zaydism, and Daylami Persianate Revivalism in the South Caspian

Introduction

The rise to primacy of the Buyid, Ziyarid, and Musāfirid northern Iranian dynasties in the 4th/10th century marked what some scholars have called the "Daylami intermezzo" in Iranian and Islamic history. This interlude saw rapid Daylami political expansion from the Caucuses to the borders of Central Asia, gaining the Daylamis—northern Iranian peoples who spoke their own distinct language—a fierce reputation for armed combat and military prowess. In Bardhaʿa, the Caucasus, where the Rūs raided against the Musāfirid dynasty in 332/943-4, even with the abandonment of all other Kurdish and volunteer troops, 300 Daylamis stood firm and were completely annihilated.[1] Two years later, in 334/945, the Daylami commander Aḥmad b. Būyah triumphantly marched into Baghdad, subjugated the Abbasid caliphate, and gained investiture for his brother ʿAli, who was ruling in Shiraz, as the *Amīr al-Umarāʾ,* or "chief of chiefs," of the Abbasid caliphate. This stunning success occurred despite the fact that for the previous two centuries the Abbasids had either directly occupied the Daylami homeland or were engaged in direct and proxy wars with the Daylamis via the Ṭahirids, Samanids, or other local actors.

The rise of the Daylami dynasties is an important chapter in Iranian and Near Eastern history. But it is also a highly consequential chapter in the history of revolutionary Shiʿism, intra-Shiʿi sectarian developments, and the larger story of evolving forms of imperial governance in the Islamic heartlands.[2] The introduction of ʿAlid family and political networks into northern

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[1] C.E. Bosworth "Military Organization under the Būyids of Persia and Iraq." *Oriens* (Vol. 18/19, 1965-66), 150. Also see: D.S. Margoliouth, "The Russian Seizure of Bardha'ah in 943 A.D.," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 1, no. 2 (1918): 88.

[2] The impact of Shiʿism and the ʿAlids remained integral to the history of the region beyond the contours of this current study. Future dynasties of ʿAlid families retained great influence and power even beyond the period of the

Iran starting in the early Islamic period, and in particular from the mid-2nd/ 8th century onwards, played a central role in the rise of Daylami imperial and dynastic power. The ʿAlid *Dāʿīs*, starting with Ḥasan b. Zayd (r. 250/864 - 270/884), established governments in the South Caspian region, re-arranged the pre-existing local Daylami power dynamics, and created new fault lines, factionalism, and novel logics of loyalty through their forming of new innovative army organizations and elite coalitions. This process, as I argue in this chapter, gave rise to a series of expansionary transregional Daylami and Gīlite dynasties including the Buyids, Ziyarids, and Musafirids whose power spread across West and Central Asia—stretching from Baghdad to Rayy to the Caucasus to Shiraz and the Persian Gulf through to Isfahan, Nishapur, and beyond.

This chapter moreover argues that the early ʿAlid *Dāʿī*s of Ṭabaristan were an avowedly Shiʿi but confessionally ambiguous expression of Shiʿism—not Zaydis in the unique sectarian sense (at least initially) as many later interpretations posit. Additionally, many of the ʿAlid leaders and networks introduced to northern Iran were part of underground hidden activity and organizational patterns ubiquitous to most other major Shiʿi groups in the time period. The ʿAlid imams some writers ascribe to the later Zaydi tradition matched the generic profile of other hidden imams and underground leaders that rival Shiʿi denominations, such as the Fatimid Ismaʿilis and Twelver Shiʿis, also claimed regarding their leaders. The Zaydi sources, in particular, also described an underground period (*istitār*) of their ʿAlid Imams and *Dāʿī*s, which by its nature obscured sectarian identity—at least until the aftermath of revolt and the establishment of a government that created in-group and out-group categories in full public view from the hidden intentions and identities blurring confessional Shiʿi lines and discrete identities.

"Shiʿi centuries. These included dynasties such as the Marʿashī family which governed as a dynastic power in the South Caspian and later were key allies of the Safavid imperial dynasty (r. 1501-1722 CE). For more background on this family, see: Mīr Taymūr Marʿashī, *Tārīkh-i Khāndān-i Marʿashī-ye Māzandarān,* ed. by Manūchehr Sutūdih, (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān).

Within Zaydi narratives, key ʿAlid leaders or Imams who are said to have undergone periods of underground hiding and revolutionary planning include Yaḥyā b. Zayd (d. 125/743), Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh (d. 189/805), al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 246/860), ʿĪsā b. Zayd (d. 169/784-5), and Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā *al-Mukhtafī* ("the hidden one"; d. 247/861).[3]

Hidden Imams, *Dāʿīs*, and ʿAlid leaders were, therefore, by no means an exclusive feature of the Ismaʿili or Abbasid *Daʿwa*s or of the well-known case of the Twelver Imami hidden Mahdi, but were rather a structurally replicated phenomenon reproduced by two main interconnected factors. The first was the highly repressive environment under the centralized forces and raised armies of the Umayyads and later Abbasids, which incentivized ʿAlid leaders to hide their identities and intentions out of fear of repressive capacities; and second, of the still undelineated sectarian lines *within* Shiʿism, which I argue had not crystallized until after the mid-third/late ninth century. It is only with the "Anarchy at Samarra" and the collapse of a routinized Abbasid government that could regularly raise armies to crack down on ʿAlid revolts that contested power vacuums emerged. These power vacuums allowed for multiple ʿAlid contenders and distinct lines of Shiʿi Imams and Dāʿīs to claim universal exclusive sovereignty and establish governments. With multiple active ʿAlid governments, the need emerged within ʿAlid Shiʿims to create more distinction between Shiʿi Dāʿīs and Imams who put forth similar claims to authority and universal legitimacy as successors to the Prophet Muḥammad. The establishment of a series of Fatimid, Zaydi, Qarmaṭid, and ʿAlid governments all in a short time frame from ca. 250/864 through the early 3rd/9th century in North Africa, Iraq, the Persian Gulf, the South Caspian and other regions attested to this phenomenon.

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[3] See relevant selections, for example, in *Kitāb al-Ifāda fī Tārīkh al-Aʾimmat al-Sāda* in Wilferd Madelung, *Akhbār Aʾimmat al-Zaydīyah fī Ṭabaristān wa-Daylamān wa-Jīlān* (Beirut: al-Ma'had al-Almānī lil-Abḥāth al-Sharqīyah, 1987), 80 ff. For the period of the "*istitār*" of Imam Qāsim al-Rassī, see: Hamīd b. Aḥmad Maḥallī, *al-Ḥadāʾiq al-Wardīya fī Manāqib al-Aʾimma al-Zaydīya*, ed. Murtaḍā b. Zayd Maḥṭūrī Ḥasanī (Sana'a: Maktaba Badr, 1423), 2: 7–24. On some of the other figures mentioned in Zaydi narratives also see Najam Haider, *The Origins of the Shīʿa: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 205; and, on "ʿĪsā's Life Underground," see: Haider, "The Community Divided," 172ff.

The process of post-revolutionary identity consolidation and exclusivist claims to legitimacy, therefore, directly contributed to sectarianization and exclusionary differentiation processes occurring within the larger Shiʿi community, distinguishing Fatimids from Zaydis from Imami Twelvers in much starker and sharper ways. Until then, the broader Shiʿi community, and even extended Shiʿi ʿAlid family networks, shared many of the same fundamental principles but had not been faced with the challenges of being in power for an extended period of time and the embedded nature of Islamic and Shiʿi political leadership that led to the emergence of exclusive hierarchies and claims to power between ʿAlid family lines. The emergence of distinct Shiʿi identities were, therefore, closely tied with questions of political sociology, state building,[4] and the emergence of rival Shiʿi "Others" and the processes of narrowing the boundaries of acceptable Shiʿi beliefs, practices, and loyalties.

This understanding of intra-Shiʿi sectarian crystallization is a different reading than much of the internal narratives of various Shiʿi sects that date their distinct socio-political sectarian identities much earlier with particular eponymous Imams such as Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740) for Zaydi Shiʿis, or Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar (d. 138/756) for Ismaʿili Shiʿis. This is not to say there were not Zaydi or other self-referential Shiʿi markers or labels extant earlier but that the bounds of exclusive confessional identity and sectarian communities *within* Shiʿism did not form so concretely until much later, starting after the mid-third century Hijra.[5] Before we can speak of exclusivist Twelver, Fatimid and Qarmaṭi Ismaʿili, Nuṣayri, and perhaps even Zaydi Shiʿi sectarian communities, we are confronted with a much more fluid and non-exclusive form of Shiʿism that drew together vast strands of Shiʿi-inclined Muslims and revitalization movements throughout Central and West Asia, North Africa, and beyond.[6] This is not to say there were not different factions, networks, or rival ʿAlid Shiʿi family hierarchies. We know much about the contestation between different branches and leaders within the ʿAlids and other Shiʿi social groups as well as contestation within the larger clan of the Banū Hāshim. Primary sources are replete with the competition over seniority of the ʿAlids from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, ʿAli b. Husayn (Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn), Abū Hāshim, Zayd "al-Nār," and dozens of other ʿAlid Shiʿis.[7] The point, rather, is that that these rivalries and differences had not coalesced into distinctive sectarian communities with exclusive political-theological authority claims meaningfully expressed via political institutions and the ability to project force, organize armies, or run governance structures.

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[4] By state I do not necessarily mean a modern "nation-state" in the full bureaucratic sense but rather a governing body, organization, and political institution which claims sovereignty over a geographic area in a generic historical sense.

[5] For some of these self-referential markers within Zaydism, see: Najam Haider, "The Contested Life of ʿĪsā b. Zayd: Notes on the Construction of Zaydī Historical Narratives," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 72, no. 2 (2013): 169–78.

One of the most prominent cases in which a "pre-sectarian" Shi'ism can be found, and is the focus of this chapter, is with these very same ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān. The ʿAlid governments, starting with Ḥasan b. Zayd's leadership, coincided with the beginning stages of collapse of Abbasid power and about a decade before a new transregional wave of Shiʿi revolutionary underground activity began following the death of the eleventh Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in

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[6] For more on revitalization movements and religio-cultural systems innovation, see: Ralph Linton and A. Irving Hallowell, "Nativistic Movements," *American Anthropologist* 45, no. 2 (1943): 230–40; Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 2 (1956): 264–81. Patricia Crone utilized one of the categorizations of revitalization outlined by Wallace and other scholars of anthropology, "nativism," which is concerned with confronting foreign influence. Crone utilized the term to represent "hostility to hegemonic foreigners in societies that have been subjected to colonial rule" specifically in Iran following the Arab Muslim conquests; Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 162.

[7] Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East: The Establishment of the ʿAbbāsid State* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1983); Robert Gleave, "The Rebel and the Imam: The Uprising of Zayd al-Nār and Shiʿi Leadership Claims," in *The ʿAbbasid and Carolingian Empires*, ed. Deborah Tor (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 169–87; Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*.

260/874. This marked the start of the minor *ghayba* period for many Shiʿis and was followed in the coming decades by the emergence of the Fatimid Empire as well as a network of other ʿAlid and Shiʿi revolts and governments in the region. The ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān, therefore, represent a very unique case of ʿAlid Shiʿism which predated the Minor Occultation of Muḥammad b. Ḥasan as well as the emergence of the Fatimid Empire but also extended beyond and during those key moments. Moreover, these ʿAlid governments and Dāʿīs of Daylam have been quite understudied in the secondary literature, especially since the mid-20th century, more so unfortunate given the fact that the field of Shiʿi studies has produced a large amount of works on the Twelver Shiʿis and Ismaiʿilis of the time period in question that can greatly help our triangulating of the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān in these larger socio-political and doctrinal debates.

To advance these aforementioned arguments, the chapter begins by discussing the South Caspian geographic and socio-political landscape before the establishment of ʿAlid governance. Next, it continues to explain the factors that gave rise to the emergence of the reign of the ʿAlids in northern Iran and analyzing the impact that the ʿAlid *Dāʿī*s had on the political and military structures of new dynasties. In particular, it examines the ideological threats the Shiʿī ʿAlids posed to Abbasid authority, the tribal and ethnic linkages between elite Daylami/Gīlite families, and the impact of the *Dāʿīs* on the military reconfigurations that enabled the eventual conquests of the Daylami and Gīlite dynasties. It then turns to questioning the Zaydi identities of the early ʿAlid *Dāʿī*s in Ṭabaristan and Daylam and argues that these *Dāʿī*s were strongly Shiʿi but initially confessionally ambiguous within the category of ʿAlid Shiʿism. Finally, the chapter surveys the internal dynastic factors with relation to the Justānids, Musāfirids, Ziyarids and Buyids and concludes with a case study of the Buyid dynasty as a product of ʿAlid politico-military structure and considers the impacts the Buyids had on administrative and political organization as the first dynasty (though not the first military figures) to subjugate the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad and institute tutelary government, one which would become a hallmark of the later middle Islamic periods.

The South Caspian before the ʿAlid Imāms

The reign of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs in northern Iran for the time period in question (the 3rd/9th – 4th/10th centuries) is of significance as it directly led to the establishment of three powerful dynasties in northern Iran, the Buyids, Ziyarids, and Musāfirids, and significantly impacted the pre-existing Justanīds. This chapter argues that by Islamizing the South Caspian, both by means of ideological proselytization and military resistance to the Abbasids, the ʿAlid *Dāʿīs* disrupted and reorganized old patterns of political and military alliances extant throughout the region. More specifically, the *Dāʿī*s centralized the concentration of power and authority in a fragmented tribal and dynastic socio-political landscape under new political organization of elite military officer corps and soldiery. This allowed for the development of broader dynastic organizations that extended beyond local tribal and regional structures and reorganized patterns of rule that led to the establishment of the aforementioned dynasties. The military engagements that the Daylamis undertook with the leadership of the ʿAlids further inculcated notions of loyalty and authority and empowered factions within pre-existing Daylami elites and dynasties that chose to resist and organize militarily with the Imams. These actors and factions—those which fought for regional independence under the Imams—formed the core of the new future military governments.

ʿAlid revolutionary Shi'ism in the region, therefore, re-arranged the local power dynasties into a new power unit unified under revolutionary Shi'ism; these new power units then made cross-factional coalitions with internal Daylami-Gīlite families as well as outside dynasties to strive for internal dynastic power. There were, generally speaking, three main networks in this larger context: (1) Daylami-Gīlite family and tribal networks (i.e. Justānids, Zīyarids, Qārinids, etc); (2) ʿAlid army networks led by charismatics *Dāʿī*s (Ḥasan b. Zayd, Nāṣir al-Uṭrush, and others); and, (3) outside power broker networks and proxy funding for local Daylami elites (i.e. by outside powers like the Samānids or Ṭāhirids). The combinations and relationships between these three overlapping networks essentially determined lower power hierarchies and, importantly, *which* Daylami elite coalitions would rule and in which ways.

One important takeaway here is that there were no "ʿAlid armies"—there were not enough ʿAlids to compose their rank and file. Ethnic, tribal, religious, or other social groups pledged allegiance to ʿAlid leadership and thereby entered into new institutions that had the ability to re-arrange their socio-political loyalties and that led to novel innovations. Those Daylamis who formed the ʿAlid-led armies were highly consequential as the new Daylami dynasties were based on the military officer family networks who served in the armies of the ʿAlid *Dāʿi* leaders, which will be discussed at length further in this chapter. In order to understand the impact of the ʿAlid governments (250/864 – 316/928)[8] on political and military formations in the South Caspian, a survey of the geographical and socio-political background of the region and peoples is necessary. Doing so will enable us to undertake comparative analyses and track changes that occurred simultaneous to the rule of the ʿAlid *Dāʿī*s.

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[8] Within this period, there an interlude of approximately 14 years (287/900 – 301/913-14) in which the Samanids are able to re-establish nominal Abbasid authority in Ṭabaristān. Further, intermittent clashes between Daylami dynastic powers and the ʿAlids on one hand and either the Tahirids, Saffarids, and Samanids on the other sometimes saw larger cities such as Āmul and Sārī under temporary Abbasid occupation but often meant the ʿAlid Dāʿīs and their Daylami-Gīlite allies retreated to mountainous impasses and were able to re-emerge and take back regions at the opportune moment; see Abū-l Futūḥ Ḥakīmīyān, *ʿAlavīyān-i Ṭabaristān* (Tehran: Intishārat-i Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 1348), 74–88.

Etymology and Geography

The terms most associated with what is now called the southern Caspian region in the 3rd/9th to the 5th/11th centuries are Daylam, Gīlān, Ṭabaristān, and Gurgān.[9] While the naming of Daylam and Gīlān began to take shape due to political developments in the 4th/10th century, as will be elaborated below, Ṭabaristān's general border with its western neighbor of Daylam/Gīlān was approximately the city of Chālūs. For the general time period in question, the term Daylam was probably what most outsiders most associated with the South Caspian people. As ʿAli Akbar Faqihī states, the etymological root of the word *daylam* can have several meanings. In Arabic, *daylam* generally means "dark" or "darkness" and, in Persian, can mean either a "large group" or "enemy," although the meanings can be interchanged between the languages.[10] As a people, Faqīhī states that until the 8th century Hijri, the Daylamis had a distinct group identity but afterwards became mixed with the people of Gīlan.[11]

Geographically, Daylam refers to the territorial region in the mountainous jungle areas of northern Iran.[12] This area is delimited by the Caspian sea in the north and divided from mainland Iran by the Alborz mountain range in the south, which provides a strong natural barrier from invading forces – although some medieval sources identified regions immediately south of the Alborz mountains as constituting Daylam as well, reflecting changing applications of geographical terms in accordance with the shifting power projection of the Daylamis, which is an example of the cultural and political circumstances reflecting on notions of geographical boundaries. Al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. 957),[13] the fourth century Hijrī Persian geographer, divided Daylamis into two branches—those living on the plains (i.e. on the coast of the Caspian) and those in the mountains—and stated that the "mountainous region are the primary Daylamis and the kings of the Daylamis live there and call it 'Rūdbār.'"[14] In *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, Ibn Ḥawqal (d. 988)[15] who immediately followed al-Iṣṭakhrī and was in conversation with his work, also divided Daylam into the "*sāhil*" (coast) and the "*jabal*" (mountain) yet placed the abode of the Daylami kings in the city of Ṭāram.[16] This classification marked two important focal points of the Daylami aristocracy and bases of regional rule where the Justānids and Musāfirids were respectively centered.[17]

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[9] Also referred to as "northern Iran" in this work.

[10] ʿAli Aṣqar Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyih va Āwżāʿye Zamān-i Īshān* (Gilan, Iran: Chāpkhāne-ye Gīlān, 1357), 36-37.

[11] Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyih*, 37.

[12] H. L. Rabino di Borgomale, "Les Dynasties Locales Du Gīlān et Du Daylam," *Journal Asiatique* 237 (1949): 301–50.

[13] A. Miquel, "al-Iṣṭak̲h̲rī" *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

Geography was key to the security dynamics and political developments of the region. Strategically, the Alborz mountain range provided the local dynasties relatively secure geographic positions from which to project power and defend against outside invaders. These local dynasties were able to use their mountain bases to elude the control of the Abbasid governors. In Ibn Isfandīyār's account of the Abbasid conquest of Ṭabaristān, one of these fortresses which enabled resistance, that of the local ruler Ispahbād Khurshīd, is mentioned:

> Now on the top of Darband-i-Kūla near the road to ʿAram there is a palace, now known as ʿAʾisha Kargīlī Dizh, where ten years' supply of water was stored up in reservoirs, with corn, bread, and other provisions, and which could be approached only by one gate of solid stone which it required 500 men to open and 500 men to shut; and when it was shut, no one could detect its position. There, the Ispahbad Khurshīd placed his wives, children, nobles and other dependents, while he himself with his retainers and a few loads of gold, set out for Daylam by way of Lārijān to obtain reinforcements… where he remained for two years and seven months while the Muslims besieged his stronghold." It was only with the onset of a plague which wiped out 80% of the inhabitants of the stronghold that the defenders capitulated.[18]

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[14] Modern day Rūdbār in situated in Iran's Gilān province, on the west side of the Sifīd-Rūd river.

[15] A. Miquel. "Ibn Ḥawḳal." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

[16] Modern day Ṭāram is further south than Rūdbār and, while still situated in the Alborz mountains, is located immediately east of the Iranian city of Zanjan.

[17] Āẕar, *Daylamiyān dar Gustarah-'i Tārīkh-i Īrān*, 7.

[18] Edward G. Browne, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabarist'an* (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1905), 121.

Vladimir Minorsky, when referring to the geographer Shams al-Dīn al-Muqaddisī (d. 380/990-1), writes that "in [al-Muqaddisī's] zeal to reform geographical terminology," he understood "Daylam," as "the totality of the territories around the Caspian. However, Daylam properly speaking—this true cradle of the Daylamis—was a mountainous region, (*une région montagneuse déterminée*) forming a sort of antechamber of Gīlān."[19] In a complementary article, Minorsky defines Daylam (or sometimes called "Daylamān") as the highlands of Gīlān:

> The valleys of the Shāh-rūd and its tributaries seems to be the cradle of the Daylamite tribe. Though belonging to the basin of the great river of Gīlān (the Safīd-rūd), 'Daylam proper' (*al-Daylam al-maḥḍ*) is in fact separated from it by the Alburz wall. The Daylamites also occupied the northern slopes of the mountain and its ramifications stretching towards the sea (see *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*), and Daylam formed here a wedge between Gīlān and Ṭabaristān.[20]

ʿAli Aṣqar Faqīhī confirms this, stating that in reference to the dialects spoken in northern Iran, Daylam is used in *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* in a general sense to include modern Gīlān, Mazandarān, and Gorgān,[21] and M.S. Khan adds: "It seems that the Arab geographers use the terms Ṭabaristān, Daylam, and Māzandarān for the same region," however, the use of the name Māzandarān is not found in the "old sources"[22] and seems to come into use during the Saljūq period.[23]

An interesting development which seems to take place for the historical period in question was the usage of the geographic marker Gīlān as distinct from Daylam. For contemporaneous historians and geographers, the application of these terms were shaped by political events and the limits of power projection that emerging dynasties and governments influenced, including the case of the Ziyarid family and Gīlān as the homeland and origin of the dynasty.[24] As Mehrabadi argues, there was no difference between Gīlān and Daylam as a geographical marker until the founding of the Ziyarid dynasty by Mardāvīj b. Ziyār.[25] Other sources, however, speak of Līlī b. Nuʾmān as the "king of the Gīlites" which reflected their organization as a political unit.[26] However, this term was a longstanding one that seemed to be used often interchangeably with Daylam. We see the term "*Gīl-i Gīlān*" used by Māzyār b. Qārīn as a regnal title in the preceding decades in early 3rd/9th century,[27] and the title "Jīl-i Jīlānshāh" was used by the Āl-i Jāmāsp dynasty in the pre-Islamic period according to Ibn Isfandīyār's *Tārikh-i Ṭabaristān*.[28] While the historical development of the terms Gīlān and Daylam require more in-depth investigation, the establishment of the Ziyarīd dynasty was an important lens for understanding the difference between the application of the terms Daylam and Gīlān both for groups of people as well as geographic regions and may offer clues for how political changes in dynastic sovereignty impacted this terminology.

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[19] Vladimir Minorsky, "La domination des Dailamites" (*Societé des Etudes Iraniennes* iii, 1931).

[20] Minorsky, "Daylam," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.*

[21] Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyih*, 42.

[22] Muḥammad Sabir Khan, al-Muntazaʿ min al-Juzʾ al-awwal mn al-Kitāb al-Maʿrūf bi't-Tājī fī akhbār ad-dawlat ad-daylimiyya of Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm bin al-Kātib aṣ-Ṣābī (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1995), 128.

[23] V. Minorsky, et. al. "Māzandarān." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

Tribes and Genealogies

In reference to the question of genealogical descent, Abū Isḥāq al-Ṣābī's *Kitāb al-Tājī* serves a unique and valuable resource as a contemporaneous Buyid history of the people of northern Iran in an attempt to explain the rise and prominence of the Daylamis and the phenomenon of the ʿAlid presence in this region.[29] Geographically, al-Ṣābī defines the abode of the Daylamis as broadly encompassing both the coastal and mountainous regions around the "Sea of

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[24] Mitra Mehrabadi, *Tārīkh-i Silsili-ye Zīyārī* (Intishārāt-i Dunyā-ye Kitāb, 1374 sh.), 11.
[25] Mehrabadi, *Tārīkh-i Silsili-ye Zīyārī*, 12.
[26] Wilferd Madelung, "The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 198–249.
[27] "Māzyār," *Encyclopaedia of Islam I.*
[28] Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 377.
[29] I rely particularly on the valuable commentaries and editing of two authors in particular: Muḥammad Ṣābir Khān and Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Zubaydī, *Al-Muntazaʿ min Kitāb al-Tājī, Tahqīq wa Sharḥ* (Baghdad: Dār al-Ḥurrīya, 1397/1977).

Ṭabaristān."[30] Al-Ṣābī's broad definition of the Daylām as the regions adjoining the Caspian was probably the most accurate reflection of how the word was generally understood and applied during the reign of the Buyids.

The other ethnic marker most closely associated with the Daylamis were the "Gīl," and al-Ṣābī reflects this by stating that the "two tribes" of Daylam and Gīl were descendants of two brothers who divided the land amongst themselves and that the original Arabic language they spoke was replaced by Persian (*al-Farsiyya*) since the Persians were numerous around them. Among those who intermixed with the Arab immigrants were the "*abnāʾ al-mulūk*, the *murāzaba*, and *aḥrār fārs.*" Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Zubaydī, in his commentary of *Kitāb al-Tājī*, states that the *murāzaba* is the plural of *marzubān* (or *marzbān*),[31] which is a Persian title used for the political authorities stationed at the border and afforded special military and civil powers distinct from authorities governing in interior lands.[32]

These three terminological categories may reflect the intention to glorify and grant prestige to the genealogy of the Buyids for whom the work was written. The original Arab tribe which the brothers hailed from, al-Ṣābī states, were the Banū Ḍabba.[33] Al-Masʿūdī, however, states that many of those with knowledge of genealogies claimed Daylami descent from Bāsil b. Ḍabba b. Udd, and the Gīlites from [the tribe] of Tamīm (perhaps reflecting the similar confederation formed between these two Arab tribes of Banū Ḍabba and Banū Tamīm).[34] There is also a story that "Bāsil b. Ḍabba married a woman in Persia and a son was born to him called Daylam."[35]

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[30] The use of the term Ṭabaristān to define what is today called the Caspian is interesting; al-Zubaydī states that the reason for this is the fact that Ṭabaristān is the largest land bordering the Caspian. Other common names used for the sea include *Baḥr Qazwīn* and *Baḥr al-Khazar*; *Al-Muntazaʿ*, 29.

[31] Confirming this, the *Loghatnama* of Ali Akbar Dehkhoda defines *marzbān* as "*ḥākimī ki dar sarḥad bashad.*" The use of this term in relation with the other terms written, however, may connote the local nobility, as can also be evidenced in the abundant use of this term in the names of local rulers.

[32] al-Zubaydī, *Al-Muntazaʿ*, 31. Khan defines these terms as "sons of kings, governors and free-born nobles of Persia"; *Al-Muntazaʿ*, 85.

[33] Khan writes that "the story of Banū Ḍabba being the ancestor of the Daylamites was first related Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī, (d. 204/819)"; *Al-Muntazaʿ*, 130.

Additionally, al-Ṣabī continues, the people of al-Daylam and al-Gīl mixed with their neighbors so that they now represented a mixture of people from Khurasān, Rayy, Qazwīn, Jabal, Isfahan, along with "Arab and non-Arab tribes of the world" (*ṭawāʾif min ʿarab al-dunyā wa ʿajamuhā*).[36] As Madelung highlights, moreover, the "Deylamites were certainly known among Arabs from the time of the Persian conquest of Yemen in about 570 CE, and during the early days of Islam the Deylamites… played a leading role among the Persian *Abnāʾ*, backing the new religion [Islam] in Yemen."[37] The term *Abnāʾ* here refers to the offspring of the Persian soldiers, who occupied Yemen under the Sāsanid invasion of Khosrow I in the late 6th century CE, and native Arab mothers. These *Abnāʾ* played significant roles as soldiers and formed a notable portion of the early Islamic community.

Social Organization

In addition to geographical factors, the social dynamics and organization of the region was critical in explaining the emergence of the the ʿAlid Dāʿī governments and the evolution of the post-ʿAlid independent Daylami military dynasties. Prior to rise of Islam and the eventual conquest of northern Iran by the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr in 141/757-8, several powerful indigenous dynasties, including the Bāvandids and Dabuyids (or Gāvbārgan), ruled as nominal vassals of the Sassanians and as semi-independent powers.

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[34] *Wa-l Daylam zaʿama kathīr min al-nās man dhu-l maʿrifa bi-l nasab anahum min walad Bāsil b. Ḍabba b. Udada* [the editor's diacritical marks indicate "*udada*" whereas the more correct name seems to be "Udd"] *wa anna al-Gīl min al-tamīm*; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab,* 4: 217. On the association between Banū Ḍabba and Gīlān in poetic expression see: *ibid*., 3: 274. As W. Caskel states "with their 'nephews' ʿUkl b. ʿAwf, Taym, ʿAdī, and Thawr b. ʿAbd Manāt b. Udd, Ḍabba formed a confederacy called al-Ribāb. The Ribāb were in alliance with Saʿd b. Zayd Manāt, the greatest clan of Tamīm"; "Ḍabba," *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*.

[35] Khan, *al-Muntazaʿ*, 130.

[36] Al-Zubaydī, *al-Muntazaʿ*, 32.

[37] Madelung, Wilfred, and Wolfgang Felix, "Deylamites," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

In the post-Islamic period, many of the sources point to Nāṣir al-Utrush (r. 301/913-14–304/916-17) as the most consequential Islamizing figure influencing the social practices and conversion of the Daylamis and Gīlites. The proselytizing activities of al-Uṭrūsh seemed to have an effect on social organization of some Daylamis, in particular the form of patriarchy and endogamy practiced. In al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-Dhahab*, the author writes that al-Uṭrūsh rose with the *maswada*[38] which Faqīhī states is a reference to the black banners and clothing of the "Abbasid" revolution.[39] Al-Masʿūdī states that at the time of the rising of al-Uṭrūsh, the people of Daylam and the Jibāl were in ignorance [of Islam], including the Magians, and he attributes to al-Uṭrūsh the building of mosques and the conversion of many of the native peoples of Daylam and Jibāl.[40] According to Ibn Isfandīyar, al-Uṭrūsh also rose with the explicit motive to revenge the spilled blood of Ḥasan b. Zayd by the Samānids.[41] At a more fundamental level, the social organization and practices of the South Caspian people directly affected their political and military organization. The towns of this region were, according to Ibn Isfandiyār, "well cultivated and thickly populated… each with its mosques, oratories, markets, judges, and men of learning."[42] Although the dense population centers of this region were situated close to one another, there was enough autonomy due to geographic outlay that a multitude of independent dynastic elite groups could exist.

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[38] "*Wa akhraj ʿanhā al-Maswada*"; ʿAli b. Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-l Maʿādin al-Jawhar*, (Qum: Dār al-Hijra, 1409), 278.

[39] Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyih*, 61. This is an interesting claim as most primary sources write that the flags of the ʿAlids were white, in opposition to the Abbasid black flags; see Ibn Isfandīyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*.

[40] al-Masūdī, 278-279.

[41] Muṣṭafā Majd, *Ẓuhūr va Suqūṭ-i ʿAlavīyān-i Ṭabaristān: Tārīkh-i Sīyāsī-Ijtimāʿī ʿAlavīyān-i Ṭabaristān 250H.-316H*, (Tehran: Rasānish, 1386/2007), 79.

[42] Browne, *Abdridged History of Ṭabaristān*, 28.

ʿAlid Aspirations, Daylami Realities: Socio-Political Dynamics in the South Caspian

This section outlines a very brief basic timeline of the ʿAlid governance in northern Iran. The discussions of the line of ʿAlid leaders and their evolution are framed partially by the concept of their roles as network brokers able—at least for a while—to bridge structural gaps in Daylami society and the factionalism which fragmented the very high amount of local elite powerholders. The ʿAlid Dāʿīs, consequently, were able to organize resistance to the ʿAbbasids through creating new inclusive and exclusive categories of loyalty that successfully re-arranged domestic players in Ṭabaristān and Gīlan into highly effective armies that not only expelled outside imperial powers (Abbasids, Ṭāhirids, and Samānīds), who had occupied the south Caspian region in one form or another for centuries, but then went on to rapidly expand across West and Central Asia as independent military dynasties. The section will therefore analyze some of the implications that the ʿAlid Dāʿīs had on military organization and the formation of new Daylami and Gīlite dynasties, and it will undertake a more detailed case study and analysis of the government of Ḥasan b. Zayd, *al-Dāʿī ila-l Ḥaqq* (r. 250/864 – 270/884).

Outline of ʿAlid governance in Northern Iran

The history of the ʿAlids, or descendants of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, and their governments in Ṭabaristān in the south Capsian region is intricately linked to Islamic political history and the conflict over legitimate leadership following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. The fierce disputes present in the early Muslim community, as evidenced in what are known as the first and second *fitna*s and subsequent waves of ʿAlid and "proto-Shiʿi" rebellions, marked a significant current of political dissent, armed rebellion, and sectarian identity formation in early Islam. As previously discussed, the overthrow of the Ummayads and the rise to government of the Abbasids in 132/749, in particular, marked a turning point in history of Hāshimid dissent and identity that sharpened the differences between different branches of the larger Hāshimī family of the Prophet as well as ideological and doctrinal beliefs that accompanied distinct positions on rebellion and dissent towards unjust government rulers.[43]

As this chapter demonstrates, the influence of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs in the rise of a series of southern Caspian dynasties and the shaping of an integral period of Islamic history known as the "Daylamite interlude/intermezzo" is significant. The rise of the Buyids, Zīyarids, and Musāfirids can be analyzed through the environment from which they emerged: within the intense rivalries of the southern Caspian region. These rivalries took place in a factionalized and militarized context, with competing claims to religious and political legitimacy. The Daylamis were known for their military prowess and resistance to the Arab invasions, and they had converted to Islam mainly through the activity of Ḥasanid and later Ḥusaynid ʿAlid Dāʿīs fleeing from mainland persecution from the Abbasid Caliphate. However, Muslim communities existed after the Abbasid conquest of the region, approximately one century before the establishment of the first ʿAlid-led state in the South Caspian. These early Muslim communities were largely a result of the Arab military garrisons placed in the region by the Abbasids after their conquest of Ṭabaristān. However, one of the main drivers of the conversion of the indigenous peoples was directly related to the different waves of ʿAlid migration and proselytization to the region sometimes following repressive or unfavorable conditions they faced.

As partially outlined by Ibn Ṭabāṭabā ʿAlawī Iṣfahānī (d. ca. late 5th century Hijri) in his *Muntaqala al-Ṭālibīya*, prominent ʿAlid migrants to Ṭabaristān and Daylam included Ḥasanid ʿAlids, namely ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, a descendant of Zayd b. Ḥasan b. ʿAli who travelled from Kufa to Daylam, as well as Husaynid ʿAlids, such as Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b.

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[43] Teresa Bernheimer, *The ʿAlids: The First Family of Islam, 750-1200* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 4–7.

ʿAli, a descendant of Umar al-Ashraf who was a son of the fourth Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn. Descendants of the Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733) also immigrated to Ṭabaristān as well as a very large number of the children of Imam Mūsā al-Kadhīm.[44] The region also received many close family members of Imām ʿAli b. al-Mūsā (d. 203/819), who fled to the region following the death of the Imām and as a result of the subsequent pressure applied on them by the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʿmūn.[45] These are just a few notable instances, and ʿAlid family branches moved to the region even before the establishment of Ḥasan b. Zayd, *Dāʿī ila-l Haqq*'s government. So, while some authors such as Madelung do not consider Islam or Shiʿism to have had much of a foothold among the indigenous Daylami population before the coming of Ḥasan b. Zayd, the ʿAlids certainly had a long history of settlement and intermixing in the region and high amounts of respect among large segments of the population. As the sources mention, many of inhabitants had strong pro-ʿAlid leanings and were receptive to Shiʿi Islam before the mid-3rd/9th century—if they were not already practicing a semiformal Islam influenced by Shiʿi beliefs before the start of the *dāʿī*-led governments of Ṭabaristān.

A most prominent ʿAlid refugee, Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh, a survivor of the Fakhkh uprising in 169/786 and a brother of Muḥammad Nafs al-Zakiyya, must also be counted as an influential figure and in many ways a precursor to Ḥasan b. Zayd.[46] The mountain fortress of Ṭabaristān was appealing to Yaḥyā just as the *Jabal Zirhūn* (Mount Zerhoun) in the *al-Rīf* mountain range (adjacent to the Atlas mountains) in modern-day Morocco was to his brother Idrīs b. ʿAbdallāh. Idrīs also survived the battle of Fakhkh and found refuge in *Jabal Zirhūn*, where he successfully based a flourishing ʿAlid-led state through establishing a new set of alliances with local Amazigh (Berber) tribes, including the Awraba tribe.[47] Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh had garnered loyalty pledges from a number of Daylamis and was placed under the protection of the local Justānid family leadership.[48] And although Ibn Miskawayh mentions that the Daylami leaders who had shielded Yaḥyā bin ʿAbdāllāh eventually handed him over to the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd due to a mixture of bribery, threats, and military posturing against them, Yaḥyā's activity in the region and the support he amassed foreshadowed the presence of future ʿAlid political and religious activity.[49] Al-Yaʿqūbī mentions that the head of the Abbasid army which extracted Yaḥyā bin ʿAbdāllāh was Faḍl b. Yaḥyā b. Barmakī, who met personally with Yaḥyā and offered him a promise of safety and residence in Baghdad, but Yaḥyā passed away a few months after he arrived in Baghdad (almost certainly through order of the Abbasids) while under house arrest.[50]

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[44] Ibrāhīm b. Nāṣir Ibn Ṭabāṭabā ʿAlawī, *Muntaqala al-Ṭālibīya*, ed. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Khurasān (Qum: Maktaba Ḥaydarīya, 1377), esp. 36–44. For a further detailed discussion and analysis on ʿAlid migration to the South Caspian regions, see: Muḥammad Shūrmīj, "ʿIlal-i Vurūd-i ʿAlavīyān Bih Ṭabaristān Tā Tashkīl-i Dawlat-i ʿAlavī 250H," *Tārīkh-i Islām Dar Āyyīn-i Pazhuhish* 17 (1387 SH).

[45] Majd, *Ẓuhūr va Suqūṭ-i ʿAlavīyān-i Ṭabaristān,* 78; see also Āẓar, *Daylamiyān dar gustarah-'i tārīkh-i Īrān*, 15.

[46] On Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh, see the chapter devoted to him in: Najam Haider, *The Rebel and the Imām in Early Islam: Explorations in Muslim Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 193–155. Also see: Madelung, "The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran," 208, and "Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh," Encyclopaedia of Islam II.

Writing on the invitation of the ʿAlids to the South Caspian, Ibn Isfandiyār writes that the local people considered *sadāt* as exemplars of Muslim justice and piety and approached the ʿAlid Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm who was residing in Rūyān and asked for his leadership, stating: "we pledge allegiance to you in the hopes that through your blessing (*barikāt*) God will remove this tyranny from us."[51] While Muḥammad declined leadership, he referred them to Ḥasan b. Zayd, who able to then successfully established the first ʿAlid government in northern Iran, in 250/864 with a base in the city of Āmul. Al-Ḥasan b. Zayd was subsequently succeeded by his brother Muḥammad b. Zayd (who also bore the title *al-Dāʿī ila-l Ḥaqq*). Ibn Ḥawqal writes that the Daylamis were unbelievers until al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. Muḥammad received allegiance from Daylamis,[52] and, with the coordination of Wahsūdān b. Justān, seized Sāriya and Āmul from the Ṭāhirids.[53] Al-Ḥasan and Muḥammad's rule and leadership lasted until 287/900,[54] during which they had to simultaneously battle a number of formidable opponents including the Abbasids, the Ṭāhirids, the Samānids, and the Ṣaffārids under Yaʿqūb b. Layth.

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[47] Quite possibly, Idrīs impacted the local power and tribal dynamics in similar manner that we see with later Fatimid and ʿAlid governments across North Africa and West Asia.

[48] Parvīn Āẓar also adds that Yahyā was initially rebuffed by the Bavānid ruler of Ṭabaristan, resulting in his going to Daylamān; *Daylamiyān dar Gustarih-'i Tārīkh-i Īrān: Ḥukūmathā-yi Maḥallī, Āl-i Ziyār, Āl-i Būyah* (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Muṭāla'ah va Tadvīn-i Kutub-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī-i Dānishgāhhā, 1384 SH), 14. The Justānids remain key players in the events which followed the hosting of Yahyā b. ʿAbdallah, including later support for the Dāʿīs Ḥasan and Muḥammad b. Zayd provided by Justān Wahsūdān; Wilferd Madelung, "The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran," 208.

[49] Āẓar, *Daylamiyān dar gustarah-'i tārīkh-i Īrān*, 14.

[50] Cited from *Tārikh-i Yaʿghūbī*; Muḥammad 'Alī Mufrad, *Ẓuhūr va Suqūṭ-i Āl-i Ziyār* (Tehran: Rasānish, 1386/2007), 57; see also Khan, *Kitāb al-Tajī*, 89-91; 151–152.

[51] The term *sādāt* as a general term means "noble descendants of the Prophet's family," and is interpreted in this context as ʿAlids, or the branch of the Prophet's family continuing through the union between ʿAlī and his daughter Fāṭima. Mitra Mehrabadi, *Sarguẕasht-i 'Alavīyān Ṭabaristān va Āl Ziyār: [bih Ravāyat-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān Ās̲ār-i Bahā' Al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥasan Ibn Isfandiyār]*, (Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Farhangī-i Ahl-i Qalam, 1381), 15-16.

The rule of these two brothers was, in turn, succeeded by the charismatic al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-Uṭrūsh al-Nāṣir li 'l-Ḥaqq (or "al-Nāṣir al-Kabīr"), who greatly expanded political, military, and religious activities across both Ṭabaristan and Daylam/Gīlān after an interlude of Samānid occupation of Ṭabaristān following the death of Muḥammad b. Zayd. Al-Nāṣir's reign is significant on many fronts as it seems to mark a more definitive turn of the local ʿAlid Dāʿī explicitly identifying as a Zaydī Shiʿi leader. His rule reflected a highpoint in the convergence of legitimacy in a charismatic figure, and he was reportedly widely revered due to his demeanor, personality, and leadership.[55] Al-Nāṣir li'l-Ḥaqq's armies were welcomed by the Justānids, wherein missionary activities were carried out from their capital of Hawsam[56] to neighboring non-Muslim residents, and, in 298/910, al-Nāṣir defeated a much larger and better equipped Sāmānid force at Chalūs at the battle of Jalāʾīn, after which al-Nāṣir's son reportedly put to death thousands of Sāmānid military prisoners, temporarily securing the eastern front.[57] Leveraging this victory, he also made peace with the neighboring Bāwanids in Ṭabaristān.[58]

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[52] Āẕar, *Daylamiyān dar Gustarah-'i Tārīkh-i Īrān*. 15.

[53] Fr. Buhl, "al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. Muḥammad," Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.

[54] However, their family remained a local player in Ṭabaristan even following Nāṣir li 'l-Ḥaqq's death, until 316/928. Strothmann, R. "Ḥasan al-Uṭrūsh." Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.

[55] al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī*, 170.

[56] Modern day Rūdbār.

The death of al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrush in 304/917 marked a fragmentation of authority, political weakness, and lack of family unity between his sons and his brother-in-law, Ḥasan b. Qāsim, who all laid claim to ʿAlid leadership. This intra-ʿAlid conflict between the sons and grandsons of al-Uṭrush Ḥasan b. Qāsim put an end to the network brokerage role that the earlier ʿAlid Dāʿīs played as different Daylami interest groups and military-family factions were able to put forth different candidates and have an increasing say over their respective ʿAlid candidates. Key players in this internal civil conflict, as will be discussed further below, were a range of Daylami military commanders including Ḥasan b. Fīrūzān, Mardāvīj b. Ziyār, the Buyid brothers, Asfar b. Shīrūyih, Mākān b. Kākī, and others, and, in this fierce dispute, Ḥasan b. Qāsim was killed by Mardāvīj b. Ziyār,[59] which marked an important turning point in the conflict with implications for the establishment of future Daylami dynasties.[60]

Ḥasan b. Zayd and the Implications of ʿAlid Government on Daylami Organizational Capacity

The establishment of the first ʿAlid government by Ḥasan b. Zayd in Ṭabaristān in 250/864 is indicative of the underlying incentives that provided the basis of the relationship between local elite Daylami and Gīlite families and ʿAlid leaders. The regional governor, on behalf of the Ṭāhirids (a dynasty loyal to the Abbasids) in the towns of Kalār and Chālus in Ṭabaristan

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[57] There seems to be a dispute over the actual date of this battle, with Madelung placing it in the year 301/914; Madelung, "ʿAlids of Ṭabarestān, Daylamān, and Gīlān." Al-Ṣābī, however, mentions the date of the battle of Jālāʾīn as 300/912-13; Khan; *Muntazaʿ*, 100.

[58] Ali Akbar Inayati, *Bāvandiyān: Kiyūsiyah*, (Tehran: Rasānish-i Nuvīn, 1391 SH); R. Strothmann, "Ḥasan al-Uṭrūsh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

[59] On the death of al-Qāsim, see: Awlīyāʾ Allāh Amolī, Tārikh-i Rūyān (Tehran: Bonyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1969), 114.

[60] For a survey of the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān, see: Ismāʿīl Mahjūrī, *Tārīkh-i Māzandarān* (Sārī: Chāp-i Asar, 1342), 89–121; Ḥakīmīyān, *ʿAlavīyān-i Ṭabaristān*; Parvīn Turkmānī Āẕar, *Daylamīyān Dar Gustariʾ Tārīkh-i Īrān* (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Muṭāliʿih va Tadvīn, 1384).

(bordering Daylam), began to appropriate large amounts of lands in the name of the caliph.[61] In response, a broad coalition assembled by the some of the local landed elite, represented by the brothers Jaʿfar and Muḥammad b. Rustam, instigated against the governor and his agents[62]—expelling them from the borders of Daylam to the Ṭāhirid stronghold of Sārī in Ṭabaristān. The Rustam brothers and the other Daylami leaders who had participated in the revolt against the Ṭāhirids, fearing their weakness in the face of a certain counterattack, reached out to a locally based ʿAlid, the Ḥasanid Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, to support their insurrection. As al-Ṣābī writes:

> Muḥammad and Jaʿfar, the sons of Rustam, and their followers fearing the consequences of what they had done, corresponded with their neighbors in Daylam and reminded them of their promise, the crime committed by Muāhammad b. Aws against them and their call to mutual help against the governor of the Caliph. They (the Daylamites) responded to their invitation after laying down certain conditions and settling (down) the affairs between them. They concluded a treaty and took an oath (to abide by it). All being united they needed to appoint a person who could keep them united, put their affairs in order and act as the leader of their party. So, Muḥammad and Jaʿfar the sons of Rustam, and those who had gathered around them sent for a person, from among the eminent ʿAlids who was known as Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm… although he refused, he would indicate to them a persona who was more resolute and more diligent than himself and he was al-Ḥasan bin Zayd al-Ḥasanī, then residing at Rayy… [Ḥasan] came to them and they took the oath of allegiance to him on behalf of all of Daylam.[63]

These early allies, Muḥammad and Jaʿfar, reportedly remained loyal to the *Dāʿī* and were appointed as governors of Ḥasan b. Zayd after he established his rule.[64]

The local elites of Kalār and Chālus viewed Ḥasan b. Zayd’s leadership as a strategic imperative to unite the various factions and coordinate resistance against the centralized Abbasid imperial apparatus. Despite the agreement that local powers had crafted, as evidenced above, there was a clear fear regarding the tenacity of the alliance. The ʿAlids, with their long history of pious opposition to the established caliphates of the Ummayads and Abbasids, were seen by the local population as trustworthy individuals whose primary concerns were not for the political capture of power in and of itself but rather to establish justice. The local dynastic powers and landed elites recognized a need for a network broker who could work beyond the embedded interests that defined the pre-existing elite groups and unite these fragmented groups against an enemy whose bureaucratic and imperial depth necessitated long-term political organization beyond fragmented alliances, which could be all-too easily split through bribes and inducements from a richer, more united, and powerful enemy.

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[61] The chief of the Daylamī delegation to Sayyid Mohammad was ʿAbdallāh b. Wandaummid; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Isfandiyār, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristān*, trans. Edward Granville Browne (Leiden: Brill, 1905), 161.

[62] These were Muḥammad b. Aws and Jābir b. Harūn; Khan, *al-Muntazaʿ*, 92-93.

[63] *Ibid*., 93. Also see: al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, 3: 1527.

[64] al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī*, 161. Khan further notes that Rustam, the father of Muḥammad and Jaʿfar was called “*Malik al-Jibāl* (King of the mountains).”

In terms of its importance for future Daylami political and military organization, the ʿAlid Dāʿīs contributed to several important long-term effects. The ʿAlids were able to configure and coordinate a multi-factional army, which fought on their behalf for ideological and political reasons, as well as to utilize popular mobilization and volunteers that militarized society under religious leadership. This process created independent military organizations led by local elite tribal/family heads in alliance with ʿAlid Dāʿīs, which would later form the foundation for the Ziyarid, Buyid, and Musāfirid dynasties. Stated differently, the ʿAlid strategy created a martial class of elites that was formed as a conglomeration of cross-tribal groups that incorporated pre-existing dominant families—a class that eventually served as the grounds for the establishment of new dynastic governments based on military expansionism. The ʿAlid leaders further affected Daylami military expansionism through expelling Abbasid and Samānid forces and creating independent statelets under the rubric of an Islamic identity and inculcating the religious notion of "rising with the sword" against injustice.

The political objective to bridge disjointed factions spread across the South Caspian was aimed at centralizing pre-existing local power networks. This centralization and "state-building" strategy simultaneously resulted in what some historical sociologists have called the "judge-boss" contradiction "present in any organization."[65] This basic problem can be applied to the establishment of the ʿAlid states of northern Iran as well. As John Padgett and Christopher Ansell write:

> The contradiction in state building or in any organization, is between judge and boss: founders cannot be both at once. Stable self-regulating maintenance of rules (i.e. legitimacy) hinges on contending actors' conviction that judges and rules are not motivated by self-interest. At the same time, the nightmare of all founders is that their organizational creation will walk away from them.[66]

The degree to which ʿAlid leaders could act—or at least be perceived—as impartial rulers who can govern beyond purely petty political interests was at the root of their success and failures in the South Caspian. It was only when the ʿAlid Dāʿīs became embroiled and perceived as self-interested factional players out to secure their own distinct interests that the elite coalitions that first supported the ʿAlids turned against them, and their leadership faded into irrelevance; this is most evident for the successive reigns of Nāṣir al-Utrush (or Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq) and Ḥasan b. Qāsim (or, al-Dāʿī al-Ṣaqīr), the former as an exemplar of unity and justice and the latter of division and factionalism.[67]

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[65] John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and The Rise of The Medici, 1400-1434," *American Journal of Sociology* (98, no. 6, 1993), 1260.
[66] *Ibid*., 1260.
[67] The memory of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq is still quite respected in Iran. I visited Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq's mausoleum in Amol, Mazandaran province of Iran, during one of my trips to the country where the entrance sign recognized Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq's shrine as a pilgrimage site for Zaydi Shiʿa (what it called "*chahār imāmī*") from all over the world and especially Yemen. The current site was renovated and is currently maintained by the Cultural Heritage Ministry for Mazandaran (*Idāri-ye Kul-i Mīraṯ-i Farhangī-ye Mazandarān*). While the original shrine structure from the early 4th/10th century no longer exits, the current foundations for the shrine of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq were financed and constructed by the descendants of Mīr Ghavām al-Dīn Marʿashī in the 9th century Hijra although they had been badly neglected before being renovated by the Cultural Heritage Ministry in recent decades. In January 2014, moreover, an international "tele-theatre" was held and produced on the life of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq in the Mazandarani city of Mahmudabad that was subsequently broadcast on Iranian state TV with delegates present in the audience from Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan, and Bahrain. The production stressed the role model of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq as a unifying

The reign of these two Dāʿīs was directly influential in the development of the Ziyarid and later Buyid dynasties. The successive reigns of al-Uṭrush and al-Qāsim were integral in the careers of Mardāvīj and ʿAli b. Būyah, both of whom founded the respective dynasties of the Ziyarids and Buyids and served in al-Uṭrush's armies. The fathers of Mākān b. Kākī and Ḥasan b. Fīrūzān[68] were slain fighting for al-Uṭrush against the Samānids at the battle of Falās in 289/901-2.[69] Mardāvīj, in turn, allied with Ḥasan b. Fīrūzān and served in his army against the *Dāʿī* al-Qāsim. Some sources also state that Abū Shujāʿ, the father of the three founding Buyid brothers, ʿAli, Ḥasan, and Aḥmad, had another two sons, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, who were killed either fighting in the armies of Ḥasan al-Uṭrush or Ḥasan al-Qāsim.

Mardāvīj and ʿAli b. Būyah served under the army of al-Uṭrush and participated in his campaigns against the Samānids. This put them into conflict with Ḥasan al-Qāsim, who succeeded al-Uṭrush as the ʿAlid Dāʿī and who, according to al-Ṣābī, bore enmity and "entertained a grudge in his heart against the Daylamite and the Jīlite chiefs on account of the help they had given to an-Nāṣir [al-Uṭrush] and his sons against him."[70] Fearing a betrayal from the Daylami tribal elites, al-Qāsim treacherously killed seven of their top chiefs at a reception. Amongst these elites, according to Ṣābī's narrative in *Kitāb al-Tājī*, was Harūsindān b. Shirzād, the maternal uncle of Mardāvīj and the "king of the Jīl."[71] According to a differing report in

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figure for Muslims of all denominations. At the end of the tele-theatre show, the international delegates issued a statement calling for unity among Muslims and rejecting *takfirī* (excommunicatory) movements in the Muslim world; see: "*Hamāyish-i Bayn al-Milalī-ye Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq dar Mahmūdabād Payān Yāft*," Tasnim News, 23 January 2014.

[68] Hasan b. Fīrūzān was the cousin of Mākān b. Kākī, and Ḥasan's daughter was the wife of Ḥasan b. Būyah and the mother of ʿAḍūd al-Dawla and Muaʾyyad al-Dawla; *Muntazaʿ*, 180.

[69] Browne, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabarist'an*, 195-6.

[70] Khan, *Muntazaʿ*, 109.

[71] Khan, *Muntazaʿ*, 110.

Tārīkh-i Rūyān, however, Harūsindān was actually killed by al-Qāsim in a battle against Nāṣir instead of at a banquet.[72]

Regardless, the dispute between al-Nāṣir and al-Qāsim led to the defection of a large portion of the Daylamis and earned al-Qāsim the enmity of a powerful coalition of disgruntled local elites. These elites, as Ṣābī writes, formed an alliance with the Samānids to fight al-Qāsim and in the ensuing battle, Mardāvīj personally killed al-Qāsīm by throwing a *zhūbīn* lance at him. At this point, the ʿAlid *Dāʿīs* in northern Iran lost their independent power, although the idea of ʿAlid legitimacy did not die out. Mardāvīj invited a son of al-Uṭrush, Abī Jaʿfar Muḥammad, to stay with him, although it was not possible for the ʿAlid "to administer the territories, (manage) the finances and (control) the army, and his activities did not go beyond (the leading of) prayers and (pronouncing of) legal judgement."[73] He would continue this role for the Ziyarids under Mardāvīj's successor, Wushmgīr as well.

A critical juncture thus occurred with the killing of al-Qāsim as a significant coalition of local elites turned against the ʿAlid leader. They perceived his role to be no longer as that of a unifying figure but rather as a threat to their own power and ineffective as a sovereign ruler. Al-Qāsim's rilvalry with al-Uṭrush's sons and grandsons, some of whom were proclaimed by other local players, such as Mākān b. Kākī, as the legitimate ʿAlid Dāʿī, further served a means of military factionalism and division as various local power players began backing their own candidates for rule.[74]

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[72] Amulī, *Tārikh-i Rūyān*, 114. These variant renderings of the killing of Harūsindān requires a deeper narrative analysis but may reflect al-Ṣābī's attempt, as a Būyid court historian, to portray the ʿAlid leader in a bad light in order to justify why the Daylamīs chose independence from the Imams and formed autonomous dynasties. If Harūsindān backed a rival ʿAlid candidate and was killed in a pitched battle, the justification for breaking away from al-Qāsim—in which the Buyid brothers participated—is perhaps rendered less legitimate. Although this reading is of course still highly speculative and requires a more detailed look at the relevant sources.

[73] Khan, *Muntazaʿ*, 113.

[74] *Ibid*., 108-9; For a brief period Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. Abu'l Ḥusayn was backed by Kākī before Kākī allied himself with al-Qāsīm against Mardāvīj.

Was Ḥasan b. Zayd, al-Dāʿī ila-l Ḥaqq, a Zaydi Shiʿi?

It was towards the end of the holy month of Ramadan in the year 250/864 when the local elites of Kalār (*ru’asa-ye Kalār*) in Tabaristān in the Alborz mountain range in northern Iran pledged their allegiance to Ḥasan b. Zayd, alternatively also called *Dāʿī-ye Kabīr* (d. 270/884). That year’s Ramadan coincided with the fall season, and the weather must have been cool and brisk in the mountain highlands—a welcome relief from the intense heat and humidity of the Caspian shore areas and lowlands during the summer season. Ḥasan b. Zayd, as mentioned earlier, had travelled to Kalār from the neighboring city of Rayy (near today’s Iranian capital of Tehran) at the invitation of the Daylami locals through the intercession of a local ʿAlid and relative of Ḥasan, Muḥammad b. Ibrahim.[75] Were the Daylami elite pledging allegiance to an exclusive Zaydi Imam and were they aware of intra-Shiʿi sectarian diversity—or were they choosing a specific line of Imams over another line of Imams? While most of the secondary literature identifies Ḥasan b. Zayd and his brother and successor, Muḥammad,[76] as Zaydi, [77] there is a serious question as to the veracity of this claim and if we can even speak of an operative category of Zaydism at this point in time, which will be discussed briefly in this chapter.[78]

Interestingly, while the religious markers taken up by Ḥasan b. Zayd were quite strong and very visible, they did not seem to indicate any specific Zaydi claims to authority or exclusive

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[75] Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Ibn Isfandīyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, ed. ‘Abbās Iqbāl (Khāvar, 1366), 229; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 1524– 32.

[76] In addition to Muḥammad, Hasan b. Zayd had another brother who also helped him establish ʿAlid government in Ṭabaristān, Husayn b. Zayd; see Ibn Isfandiyār, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristān*, 167.

[77] See, for example: Wilferd Madelung, “The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 198–249; MS Khan, “The Early History of Zaydi Shi’ism in Daylaman and Gilan,” in *Shi’ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Muḥammad Shūrmīj, Valīallah Murādīyān, and Ramiżān Riżāiyy, “Barrisi-Ye Taṭbīgī ‘Amalkard-i Ḥasan b. Zayd Bā Ḥasan b. ʿAlī Uṭrush Bā Ta’kīd Ba Rūykard-i Maẕhabī va Farhangī,” *Shīʿi Pazhūhī* 5, no. 16 (September 2019).

[78] I thank Hasan Ansari for bringing this question of the Zaydi identity of the early Dāʿīs to my attention during a presentation I gave on the ʿAlids of Ṭabaristān at a summer workshop on Zaydi thought and manuscripts at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in the summer of 2017.

Zaydi doctrinal beliefs or ritual practices. During the initial *bayʿa* given to al-Ḥasan in the environs of Kalār in the town of Saʿīd-Ābād in Ṭabaristān,[79] the pledge was made on three general principles universally accepted among Muslims: upholding God's holy book and commands, the traditions (*sunna*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, and commanding to virtue and prohibiting vice.[80] Interestingly, the pledge did not include the third part of the Shiʿi revolutionary slogan which was utilized in the Abbasid Revolution, "*Riḍā min Āl al-Bayt Muḥammad*." The full slogan, accordingly, is recorded as such: *kitāb Allāh wa-sunnat nabīhi wa-l bayʿa li-l riḍā min āl al-Bayt Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*.[81] This point is noteworthy as many other ʿAlid claimants to rule, including Husayn b. Aḥmad al-Kawkabī who briefly ruled in Rayy, Qazvīn, and Zanjān, utilized the specific terminology and title of *al-Riḍā* as is evidenced in coins attesting is rule, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Instead of claiming the title of *al-riḍā* like other ʿAlid claimants, Ḥasan b. Zayd pledged to uphold *amr-i [bih] maʿrūf va nahī-ye munkar*—a concept rooted in Qurʾanic proscriptions to urge people to good and discourage them from bad, which is usually understood to mean basic encouragement of Islamic ritual and doctrinal beliefs.[82]

Parts of this allegiance phrase given to Ḥasan b. Zayd can also be found in the uprising of Zayd b. ʿAli b. Husayn (d. 122/740), the grandson of Imam ʿAli, who revolted against the Umayyads in the city of Kufa over a 120 years earlier. As recorded in *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), Zayd was met by a group of Kufan Shiʿis outside of the city who urged Zayd to come with them back to Kufa: "we hope you are the victorious one [*al-*

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[79] Modern Marzan-Ābād in the vicinity of Chalus in Mazandaran; Shūrmīj, Murādīyān, and Riżāiyy, "Barrisi-Ye Taṭbīgī 'Amalkard-i Ḥasan b. Zayd Bā Ḥasan b. ʿAlī Uṭrush Bā Ta'kīd Ba Rūykard-i Maẕhabī va Farhangī," 111.

[80] "*Iqāmat-i kitab-i Allāh va sunnat-i Rasūl Allāh (AS) va amr-i maʿrūf va nahī-ye munkar*"; Ibn Isfandīyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, 229.

[81] Patricia Crone, "On the Meaning of the 'Abbasid Call to Al-Riḍā," in *The Islamic World: From Classical to Modern Times*, ed. Clifford Edmund Bosworth et al. (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989), 95.

[82] *Āl-i Imrān*: 110

manṣūr],"[83] an eschatological term prominent in the Islamic literature which was also to be the title of the future Abbasid caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775).[84] It was also included in a rallying cry of the Kufan Shiʿis one of whose slogans was "oh victorious one, kill!" (*ya manṣūr amit*!) during the uprising of Muslim b. ʿAqīl, Imam Husayn b. ʿAli's representative in 60/680,[85] and by the partisans of Zayd b. ʿAli during his revolt and actual battle in 122/740. The slogan, as al-Balādhurī as well as Abu-l Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 360/971) records, was the slogan of the Prophet Muḥammad, but was adopted it seems mainly by Shiʿi pro-ʿAlid partisans as a revolutionary rallying cry.[86] Some of the survivors of the Zanj revolt—which was, as previously discussed, led by an ʿAlid who claimed descent from Zayd b. ʿAlid—raised a revolutionary slogan in Wāṣit in 272/886 addressing one of their captured leaders, Ankalāy, as "*al-manṣūr*" in order to encourage him to revolt. Ankalāy had survived the crushing of the revolt and was a son of the ʿAlid ʿAli b. Muḥammad Ṣāḥib al-Zanj. The result of this brief uprising, however, was the swift execution and crucifixion of Ankalāy and the remaining imprisoned commanders of the Zanj revolt by the Abbasids.[87]

Returning to the discussion of the uprising of Zayd b. ʿAli in 122/740, the Kufan Shiʿis also told Zayd b. ʿAli that they hoped this time would be the time of the destruction of the Umayyads (*hadha-l zamān zamān halāk banī ʿUmayya*), and that the Kufans were the companions of ʿAli and Husayn (*aṣḥāb ʿAli wa aṣḥāb al-Ḥusayn*). Following this, al-Balādhurī records that Zayd returned to Kufa secretly undercover (*mustatiran*), and once in the city he was pledged allegiance by thousands of individuals from across the broader region including from

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[83] For more on the notion of the "*manṣūr*," see: Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād al-Marwazi, *The Book of Tribulations: The Syrian Muslim Apocalyptic Tradition*, trans. David Cook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 42–51.

[84] Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, and Riyāḍ al-Ziriklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), 3: 236.

[85] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871) 2: 255.

[86] aA-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 3: 244, and Abū-l Faraj ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqar (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), 133.

[87] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3: 2111.

Basra and al-Madāʾin.[88] In addition to the reference to "the victorious one" (*al-manṣūr*), what were the terms of the allegiance and other slogans adopted by Zayd and his followers? Zayd reportedly set the conditions of the allegiance (*bayʿa*):

> I invite you to the Book/Ordinance of Allah (*Kitāb Allāh*), the traditions of his Prophet (*sunnat Nabihi*), battling the oppressors (*jihād al-ẓālimīn*), the defense of the of the oppressed or downtrodden (*al-mustaḍʿafīn*), distributing [alms] to the dispossessed (*iʿṭāʾ al-maḥrūmīn*), and distributing the collective wealth (*fayʾ*)[89] to its [rightful] owners… and supporting us (*naṣarnā*), the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) against those who impose war on us.[90]

Those who pledged allegiance where then told: "upon you is the covenant of Allah and his pact to articulate our beliefs and to advise "in secret and out in the open (*fi-l sirri wa-l ʿalāniyya*) and in [times] of ease and hardship for surely there is ease after hardship."[91] The primacy of following the Qurʾan or ordinances of God as well as the traditions of the Prophet (*sunna*) in the pledge of allegiance are quite telling here. This reflected the broad base and appeal of the ʿAlids amongst Muslims and the ʿAlid Shiʿi strategy not to claim leadership of a narrow sectarian base but rather the larger Muslim community. The policies advocated by Zayd b. ʿAli were aimed at specific injustices The ʿAlids or Shiʿis therefore did not necessarily aim to be above or separate from the Muslim body politic but rather wished to represent a means of achieving justice in the same path of the Prophet Muḥammad. ʿAlid leadership and love of the *Ahl al-Bayt* therefore embodied a hope for a better future among Muslims and marginalized peoples of various backgrounds.

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[88] According to al-Balādhurī, moreover, between 12-15,000 people pledged allegiance to Zayd b. ʿAli from the aforementioned cities and their environs or suburbs (*nāḥiya*); *Ansāb Al-Ashrāf*, 3: 236–37.

[89] For more on this concept, see: "Fayʾ," *Encyclopaedia of Islam III*.

[90] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 3: 237–38. A appeal to realize the rights ("*iḥqāq ḥuqūq*") of the *ʿajam* Muslims, i.e. the non-Arab and Iranian populations, was also a major subtext or implicit theme in the speech of Zayd b. ʿAli according to the editors of *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*.

[91] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 3: 238. The last section of the phrase is in reference to the Qurʾanic verse (94: 5): "So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief."

In an important and revealing letter that Ḥasan b. Zayd wrote to be spread across all of Ṭabaristān (*bi kull-i mamālik-i Ṭabaristān*) shortly after establishing the base of his government, he outlined a series of religious policies indicative of his stance and sectarian leanings that cannot generally be considered exclusively "Zaydi" but were positions accepted by mainstream Shiʿi communities and in some areas perhaps leaned towards the standard mainstream positions absorbed in later Twelver Shiʿism rather than Zaydism, such as inclusion of *qunūt* in prayer which is an act of supplication made by raising ones hands in the ritual daily prayers. Among other policies, he instituted that the line *ḥayya ʿala khayr al-ʿamal* be read in the *adhān* and *iqāma* before prayer, that *bismillāh* be read aloud (rather than quietly), that *qunūt* be included in *fajr* prayers,[92] that five *takbīr*s be read for the prayer over the dead (rather than four), and that it not be allowed to wipe over the shoes (in place of removing shoes) for ritual ablution, among other positions.[93] This letter did not make any unique Zaydi claims to authority but was clearly staunchly Shiʿi and prefaced the entire discussion in the name of acting upon *kitāb Allāh*, *sunnat Rasūlallāh (AS)*, and that which is verified from *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in the foundations and branches of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn wa furūʿihi*) and pronouncing his superiority over the Muslim body politic (*umma*).[94] Ḥasan b. Zayd, moreover, prohibited anyone persecute Shiʿis as well as the Muʿtazilis. It is quite probable that this letter was in large part directed at empowering pro-Shiʿi factions within the local Daylami elite ruling families. These Daylami elites represented a complicated web of allegiances across their various Daylami domains that were populous and geographically rich enough to support a large number of local elites, semi-formal militias, and armies. Ḥasan b. Zayd's letter signaled a policy of creating stricter and more defined means of choosing sides and allegiances, which would be so impactful in the long-term socio-political organization of the region.

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[92] While not addressing this letter of Hasan b. Zayd specifically, see Najam Haidar's work for a thorough discussion on the differences between the various schools of Islamic law and practice (such as Hanafi, Shafiʿi, Zaydi, and Twelver) over certain doctrinal issues included prominently in Hasan b. Zayd's letter especially the reading aloud of *bismillāh* and including *qunūt* in ritual Islamic prayer; *The Origins of the Shī'a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. 57–137. For example, *Dāʿī-ye Kabīr*'s position that the *bismillāh* should be recited audibly across all five daily prayers is a minority Zaydi position; the majority Zaydi position is closer to the Shafiʿi position of reciting *bismillah* loudly for audible prayers and quietly for quiet prayers; Haider, 74–76.

[93] Ibn Isfandīyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, 239–40.

[94] Ibn Isfandīyār, 240.

Moreover, within key Zaydi texts, Ḥasan b. Zayd and his brother were not considered Imams. They were not included in lists of Imams provided by the authors of *Kitab al-Ifāda fī Tārīkh al-A'imma,*[95] *Kitāb al-Maṣābīḥ,*[96] as well as *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardīya fī Manāqib al-Aʾimma al-Zaydīya* which skips from Imam Qāsim b. Ibrahīm al-Rassī (d. 246/860) to Imam Hādī ila-l Ḥaqq (d. 298/911), who first established a Zaydi ʿAlid state in Yemen, therefore bypassing the three major ʿAlid Dāʿīs of Ṭabaristān: Ḥasan b. Zayd, Muḥammad b. Zayd, as Ḥasan b. Qāsim.[97] The aforementioned evidence, including the *Dāʿī*'s letter, which is indicative Ḥasan b. Zayd's general policies can be seen as part of the larger unified umbrella of Shiʿi beliefs that existed at the time.

Ḥasan b. Zayd and his successor Muḥammad b. Zayd became well known for their generous funding of ʿAlid families and Shiʿi causes. Al-Ṭabarī mentions a report that in 282 H that Muḥammad b. Zayd sent 32,000 dinars to Baghdad to his agent Muḥammad b. Ward al-ʿAṭṭār in order to distribute to his followers or kin in the regions of Baghdad, Kufa, Mecca, and Medina.[98] When the local Abbasid authorities discovered this, they interrogated al-ʿAṭṭār who said that he received a similar amount of money from the *dāʿī* annually. The authorities then reported this to the Abbasid Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid who ordered al-ʿAṭṭār to be freed and for him to write to his commander (*ṣāhib*) in Ṭabaristān (Muḥammad b. Zayd) to openly send whatever funds he liked to his agent in Baghdad—and that the Abbasids would even further assist them to facilitate or distribute these funds. As the report demonstrates, Muḥammad b. Zayd directed a secret financial network that was able to evade the central authorities and distribute funds to his Shiʿi supporters across the region. Abū Saʿīd Gardīzī (d. 5th/11th century) in *Zayn al-Akhbār* also records this event, noting that Ḥasan b. Zayd would send 30,000 dinars annually to Baghdad to be distributed among the ʿAlids ("*alavīyān*"). When the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid found out about this he told the *dāʿī*'s agent: "do not give [the funds] secretly, give [them] openly!" ("*pinhān madih*, *āshkār bidih*!") and the caliph took his list of recipients (*dīvān*) in order to help facilitate the distribution of the *dāʿī*'s funds.[99] Other sources also report Ḥasan b. Zayd's support for transregional Shiʿi and ʿAlid causes. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Ṭāwūs' (d. 693/1293-4) *Farḥat al-Ghārī fī Taʿyyīn Qabr Amīr al-Muʿminīn*, for example, reports that Ḥasan b. Zayd funded the construction of a walled enclosure (*al-ḥā'iṭ*) around the burial site of Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib which immediately prior to that only had a coffer (*ṣandūq*) above it.[100]

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[95] al-Nāṭiq bi-l Ḥaqq, *Al-Ifāda Fī Tārīkh al-A'imma*.

[96] Abī ʿAbbās al-Ḥasanī, *Kitāb al-Maṣābīḥ*, ed. al-Hūthī ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad (Sa'da: Muʾasasa al-Imām Zayd b. ʿAlī al-Thaqāfīya, 2002).

[97] Maḥallī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardīya Fī Manāqib al-Aʾimma al-Zaydīya*.

[98] It is not immediately clear whether "*ahl*" here means kin (i.e. other ʿAlids or Hāshimids) or if it means followers and supporters. Likely, it would have been distributed to both groups. Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk,* ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1885), 3: 2147-8.

This umbrella Shiʿi identity differentiated itself over key issues with emerging Sunni schools of thought as evidenced in the letter—and was staunchly anti-Abbasid—but did not yet have strict internal differentiators to distinguish between different Shiʿi groups, lines of Imams, and sectarian identity. Even the term Fatimid, which is of course most readily associated with the Ismaʿili Fatimid movement, was a larger revolutionary term and marker used in part to differentiate the pro-ʿAlid Shiʿism which rejected Abbasid claims to rule and relationship to the Prophet. Therefore, the connection to Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad was utilized to define Shiʿism not just through ʿAlid, Ṭālibid, and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalibid legitimacy but also through a direct bloodline connection to the direct person of the Prophet Muḥammad and his daughter. In poetry attributed to Sulayman b. ʿAbdāllah in 250/864, a governor of the Tahirids in Ṭabaristan who was forced out of the region by Ḥasan b. Zayd's armies, Sulayman laments his position and all of the Ṭāhirids for having to face the prospect of spilling the blood of the [descendants] of Fatima.[101] This phrasing is interesting (assuming it is not anachronistic) as it predates the earliest attribution of the term Fatimid in a revolutionary political sense to the underground Ismaʿili uprising of Ṣāḥib al-Nāqa in 289/902[102] and may possibly be indicative of larger framing narratives by Shiʿi ʿAlid descendants of Fāṭimā against Abbasid rule.

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[99] Gardīzī, *Zayn Al-Akhbār*, 185.

[100] The exact meaning of "*ṣandūq*" is a bit challenging to understand, however in the context it is discussed in the source, it seems to mean a less stable or make-shift enclosure as compared to the stable building and walls financed by the *Dāʿī* Ḥasan b. Zayd; see: Sayyid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Farḥat Al-Ghārī fī Taʿyyīn Qabr Amīr al-Muʿminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (Qum: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, n.d.), 139. Such policies were replicated and expanded in the Buyid era as well. For ʿAḍuḍ al-Dawla's construction of a new mausoleum in Gharī (Najaf) for the tomb of Imam Ali, see: Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī Fī Akhbār Ad-Dawlat Ad-Daylimiyya*, ed. M. S. Khan (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1995), 15; and his help to the residents of Najaf and Karbala (al-Gharī and al-Ḥāʾir): Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Ibn Miskaway, *Tajārub Al-Umam* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Surūsh, 2000), 6: 456-7.

The Enigma of "al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad" & the ʿAlid Revolutionary Daʿwa

Over 100 years after the Abbasids were propelled to power claiming that their candidate was "*al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad,*" the ʿAlid Husayn b. Aḥmad al-Kawkabī captured the northern Iranian cities of Rayy, Qazvin, and Zanjan and minted coins as *al-Dāʿī ila-l Riḍāʾ*.[103] Why did this phrase continue to be used in such similar ways over such a wide span of time? A certain enigma surrounds the usage of the phrase which has become so closely associated with the Abbasid Revolution, *al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad*. While at face value the meaning of the slogan may seem straightforward: "the satisfactory one from the family of Muḥammad," the exact meaning of what *al-riḍā* meant is subject to intense historical debate. Firstly, the phrase was often part of the three-part commitment, the other two of which are to *kitab Allāh* and the *sunna* (legacy/traditions/model) of the Prophet Muḥammad.[104] In the Qurʾan, the root *r-ḍ-w* appears 73 times in various forms, although not in the exact form *al-riḍā,* and generally means one with whom Allah is pleased or satisfied with. Well-known verses at the end of surah *al-Fajr* employ the terms *rāḍīya* and *marḍīya* to refer to those who enter eternal bliss due to the Allah's satisfaction of them: "(To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction [*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*]!" Come back thou to thy Lord – well pleased (thyself) [*rāḍīyatan*], and well-pleasing unto Him [*marḍīyatan*]!"[105] Some Shiʿi Qurʾan commentaries discuss that this verse was revealed in reference to Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAli who achieved the highest level of satisfaction from God,[106] but also that those individuals who truly loved the *Ahl al-Bayt* and rely upon Fāṭimā's name will be granted paradise due to their *wilāya* and fealty to ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and the Family of the Prophet who will intercede on their behalf.[107] Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) recorded narrations from Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733), the fifth Imam in the Twelver tradition, from his great uncle Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya who narrated from his father Imam ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) regarding the verse (93: 5) in which the Prophet Muḥammad and his Family (*kullanā Ahl al-Bayt*) will provide intercession (*al-shifāʿa*) for his community (*umma*) with this verse and thereby provide contentment (*riḍā*) to the believers.[108]

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[101] "*Fa-l ʿudhr ʿind Rasūlallāh munbaṣit / idhā iḥtasabtu dimāʾ al-Fāṭimīnā*"; ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fi-l Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār al-Sadir, 1965), 7: 133.

[102] Abū Bakr ibn ʻAbd Allāh b. al-Dawādārī, *Kanz Al-Durar Wa-Jāmiʻ al-Ghurar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid (Cairo: al-Maʻhad al-Almānī lil-Āthār, 1961), 6: 68.

[103] Aram Vardanyan, "Numismatic Evidence for the Presence of Zaydī ʿAlids in the Northern Jibāl, Gīlān and Khurāsān from AH 250 to 350 (AD 864-961)," *The Numismatic Chronicle* 170 (2010): 358.

According to the internal Abbasid narrative in *Akhbār Al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya*, "*al-Riḍā*" was a code name for their hidden Imam whose name and identity were hidden from everyone except for a chosen few. The call for *al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad* was therefore a call to a specific individual according to this later Abbasid telling.[109] As the *Akhbār* elucidates, if the members of the secret *daʿwa* were to be asked about the name of their hidden Imam during his time of revolutionary concealment, they were to respond: we are in *taqiyya* (dissimulation) and are commanded to conceal the identity (*kitmān*) of the Imam.[110] Notably, the *Akhbār* also includes a discussion said to have occurred between the caliph Muʿāwīya and Ibn ʿAbbās where Muʿāwīya argued that the caliphate transferred from the sub-clan of Banū Hāshīm to the wider tribe of Quraysh through the concept of "*riḍā al-ʿāmma*" and "*shūrā al-khāṣa*" (i.e. general satisfaction in the larger society, and specialized or elite electoral councils to actually choose the figure of the caliph).[111] Ibn ʿAbbās replied that prophecy and political rule or sovereignty cannot be separated and referenced the Qurʾanic verse: "We had already given the people of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and conferred upon them a great kingdom."[112] This verse therefore links scripture (or perhaps divine ordinance, "*al-kitāb*"), with wisdom and insight (*al-ḥikma*), along with sovereignty and political rule (*mulk*).[113] This passage in the Qurʾan, along with several others, serve as key Shiʿi arguments that prophecy is inseparable from political, social, and political rule—and that the succession to the Prophet had to have been through his close family who figure prominently in various verses in the Qurʾan.[114]

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[104] Crone, "On the Meaning of the ʿAbbasid Call to Al-Riḍā," 95.

[105] Qurʾan, *al-Fajr*: 27-28.

[106] Sayyīd Hāshim Baḥrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Biʿsat, 1416), 5: 657.

[107] Abū-l Qāsim Ibrāhīm Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*, ed. Muḥammad Kāẓim Maḥmūdī (Tehran: Chāp va Intishārāt-i Vizārat-i Irshād-i Islāmī, 1990), 1: 553–56.

[108] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr Fī Tafsīr al-Maʾthūr* (Qum: Kitābkhānih-ye Ayatullāh Marʿashī Najafī, 1404H), 6: 361.

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[109] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, *Akhbār Al-Dawla al-Abbāsīya*, 204.

[110] "*Nahnu fī taqiyya wa qad umirnā bi-kitmān al-Imām*"; Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, 204.

[111] Dūrī and Muṭṭalibī, 51.

[112] *Al-Nisā*: 54.

[113] For a discussion on the concept of prophetic families inheriting rule and leadership and its deep roots among Abrahamic faiths before Islam as well as into the Islamic period, see: S.H.M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London: Longman, 1979), esp. 1–57; and, Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. 8–16. For more on the concept of *mulk*, see: Sean Anthony, "Prophetic Dominion, Umayyad Kingship: Varieties of Mulk in the Early Islamic Period," in *The Umayyad World*, ed. Andrew Marsham (London: Routledge, 2021).

[114] See for example *Al-Shūra*: 23, "Say: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin (*al-mawaddat fi-l qurbā*).'" For debates on the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of who was mean by "near of kin" in relation to the Prophet Muḥammad and in particular whether the more immediate clan of Banū Hāshīm or the *Ahl al-Bayt* rather than the broader more general tribe of Quraysh, see Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ Al-*

If the slogan *al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad* was appropriated by the Abbasids and helped to unjustly propel them to power as is the claim of rival ʿAlid and Shiʿi groups, including the proclaimed *Mahdī* Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762) and a whole wave of anti-Abbasid revolutionary ʿAlid leaders, why did many of these leaders continue to use the same slogan *and strategies* of hidden underground identities and organization for so long afterwards when they had experienced traumatic loss at the hands of the Abbasids in earlier iterations?[115] At the very least, what the continued usage of the term *Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad* signaled was that the ongoing debates over leadership and political sovereignty were as serious as the years leading up to the Abbasid Revolution and were far from resolved—structural conditions, namely confessional ambiguity within Shiʿism meant that these shadow boxing rounds would continue. And in this boxing match of sorts over Shi'a revolutionary leadership, the Abbasids had landed an extraordinary blow by ascending the revolutionary organization of the *Hāshimīya*, but the fight was far from over even after the establishment of the Abbasid Empire from the pulpits of Imam ʿAli's *minbar* in Kufa in 132/749. Following the establishment of the Abbasid Empire, a series of counter-Abbasid revolutionary movements moved to overthrow them with many of these revolutions succeeding in setting up states over time throughout the region, including later Fatimid, ʿAlid, Zaydi, and other Shiʿi states across North Africa, Yemen, the Persian Gulf, the Indian Subcontinent, Iraq, Iran, and elsewhere.

In the long duration of ʿAlid discontent and counter-revolution following the establishment of the ʿAbbasid Empire, the *Dāʿī* Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 280/884) was far from the first

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Bayān Fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾan (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1412); Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr Furāt Al-Kūfī*, 1990; ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr Qummī*, ed. Sayyid Ṭayyib Mūsā Jazāyirī (Dār al-Kitāb: Qumm, 1368) 2: 275. As the general argument goes, *qurbā* could not refer to those who shunned, persecuted, or tried to kill the Prophet, which included most members and elites of Quraysh during the Prophet's early mission, but rather the core family who remained close to the Prophet in the hardest times and his bloodline successors, specifically the descendants of Fāṭima.

[115] For more on the rebellion and context of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's revolt, see: Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad Al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762: Ṭālibīs and Early ʿAbbāsids in Conflict*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

and certainly not the last ʿAlid claimant to rule. But what is interesting was the range of other ʿAlid actors who rose with the slogan of "*al-Riḍā min Āl Muḥammad*" in sharp succession around the same time Ḥasan b. Zayd. Interestingly, just two years after Ḥasan b. Zayd captured Āmol, Husayn b. Aḥmad al-Kawkabī stormed the city of Rayy with Justanid Daylami support[116]—the same Daylami dynasty that supported Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh's stay in the region as well as Ḥasan b. Zayd.[117]

Al-Kawkabī was aided alongside another ʿAlid, Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā al-ʿAlawī in the battle for Rayy and adjacent Qazwīn, which was undertaken under the "days of political disorder of the Abbasid Caliph Mustaʿīn ("*ayyām fitna al-Mustaʿīn*").[118] Numismatic evidence for Husayn b. Aḥmad's rule over Qazvīn, which matches the historical chronicle's dating of his campaign in the region, reveals a fascinating use of titles. The silver dirhams minted in name of al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad in 252 and 253 Hijri call him both *al-Qāʾim min Āl-Muḥammad* as well as *al-Dāʿī ila-l Riḍāʾ*.[119] Eventually, an army sent by the Abbasids under Mūsā b. Baghā dislodged Rayy, Qazvīn, and Zanjān from ʿAlid control.[120] In certain accounts, Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā was said to have been captured and sent to Nishāpūr where he was imprisoned.[121]

A few key questions arise from this array of evidence: how connected or autonomous were these ʿAlid leaders and their uprisings to one another? Various ʿAlid leaders seemed to have been backed simultaneously by local Daylami dynastic rulers such as the Justanids; was

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[116] Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fi-l Tārīkh*, 7: 177.

[117] Turkmānī Āẕar, *Daylamīyān Dar Gustariʾ Tārīkh-i Īrān*, 20.

[118] Yūsuf b. al-Amīr Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm Al-Zāhira Fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-l Qāhira*, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn Shayāl (Cairo: al-Muʾasisa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿĀma, 1392), 2: 333.

[119] Vardanyan, "Numismatic Evidence for the Presence of Zaydī ʿAlids in the Northern Jibāl, Gīlān and Khurāsān from AH 250 to 350 (AD 864-961)," 358.

[120] ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Khātūn Ābādī, *Vaqāyiʿ Al-Sinīn va-l Aʿvām*, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir Bihbūdī (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-ye Islāmīyih, 1352), 178. Khātūn Ābādī (d. 1105H), himself an ʿAlid descendent of Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, interestingly places these cities under the sovereignty of "*Dāʿī-ye ʿAlāvī*," Ḥasan b. Zayd, however numismatic and other evidence shows that these areas were under Husayn b. Aḥmad's rule with coins minted in his name, not Ḥasan b. Zayd.

[121] Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fi-l Tārīkh*, 177.

Husayn b. Aḥmad part of Ḥasan b. Zayd’s network, were the Justanids backing rival leaders in order to power balance or were other factors at play? And, just as importantly, what can we make of the titles used by these ʿAlid leaders? Overlapping ʿAlid revolts which similarly took advantage of the structural openings afforded by the “Anarchy at Samarra” include the revolts of Yaḥyā b. ʿUmar and Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad in 250 and 251 H respectively in mainland Iraq.[122] The chronicles record that Yaḥyā was able to rally a large amount of Bedouins, urban infantry contingents from Kufa and Ṭaff (Karbala), and calvary from Banū ʿIjl of Banū Asad tribe.[123] This period therefore saw a rapid expansion of ʿAlid leaders who were successfully able to different degrees to establish rule across Iran and Iraq.

Within this larger umbrella revolutionary moment, Ḥasan b. Zayd’s government represents a socio-political movement that is relatively well documented in its policies and beliefs and was rooted before the intra-Shiʿi sectarian turn which that begin with the start of the Minor Occultation period of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in 260/874. Importantly, the title of Ḥasan b. Zayd was “*Dāʿī ila-l Haqq*,” not Qāʾim, Mahdī, or Imam, as attested in both documentary and numismatic evidence.[124] He fit in the more general mold of charismatic ʿAlid revolutionaries, many of whom had risen with the sword to install independent governments in the name of true Islam and divine legitimacy but did not lay a particular *exclusive* claim to Imamate or a claim to particularly elevated lineage or hierarchy within the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Therefore, Ḥasan b. Zayd, it seems, was not an advocate of a specialized or particular sectarian Zaydi reading of Shiʿi Islam, which would separate Shiʿi groups from one another, but rather one among a larger wave of charismatic ʿAlid revolutionaries—operating within an *intra-Shiʿi* confessional ambiguity—who successfully organized an army and government against the imperial Abbasid governance system.

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[122] See: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-l Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1871), 3: 1516–1523; and ʿAli b. Husayn al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Maʿādin al-Jawhar*, ed. Kamāl Hasan Marʿī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2005), 4: 120–23.

[123] al-Ṭabarī, 3: 1519–1520.

[124] See for example a silver dirham bearing his title *al-Dāʿī ila-l Haqq* dated 253 H and minted in the city of Āmul; S.M. Stern, “The Coins of Āmul,” *The Numismatic Chronicle* 7 (1967): 211.

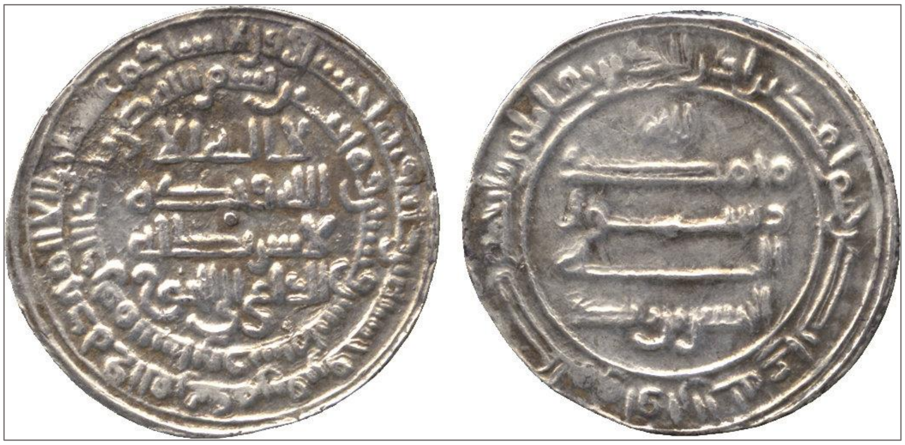

Figure 2: *Silver dirham minted in Gurgān in the name of al-Dāʿī ila-l Haqq, Ḥasan b. Zayd dated 269 H.*

Network Analysis: Foreign Enemies and Civil Conflict off the Caspian Shores

As previously discussed, the story of the emergence of a series of powerful Shiʿi Persianate Daylami dynasties was deeply influenced by the importation of ʿAlid *dāʿī*s. These *dāʿī*s were able to form supra-tribal armies and introduce new institutional logics among the Daylami tribal and local socio-political divisions which previously existed. They were able to do so not by being friendly to all Daylami elites nor moving to resolve conflict as a whole. They did so by helping redefine conflict by uniting a large segment of Daylamis under a pro-Shiʿi and anti-Abbasid platform and explicitly antagonizing the local pro-Abbasid Daylami elite. In confronting and defeating the pro-Abbasid (or pro-Tahirid, pro-Samanid, etc.) Daylami elite these ʿAlid leaders were essentially successful and broke approximately 200 years of differing levels of foreign rule or suzerainty over the South Caspian regions.[125] However, after a certain period, these ʿAlid armies eventually fragmented and different factions within them turned on one another. But instead of weakening the Daylamis and Gīlites, counterintuitively, the ensuing conflict and civil war led to the emergence of a set of powerful dynasties, the Buyids and the Ziyarids, and marked the high point of the Daylami Intermezzo. Why was this the case? How was the power hierarchy determined within the northern Iranian Daylami and Gīlite armies of the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s initially? Which generals, commanders, and local elites exerted influence in the ʿAlid-led armies, and how did this change with time?

We can divide the history of the ʿAlid governments of northern Iran roughly into two eras. The first era stretches from the beginning of the establishment of Ḥasan b. Zayd's government in 250/864 until the end of the reign of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq al-Uṭrush's rule in 304/917. During this time period, the ʿAlid rulers were able to create cohesive armies in Ṭabaristān which largely accepted their leadership. The ʿAlids were able to create this cohesion, as previously mentioned, by unifying and arbitrating fragmented disaffected local elites marginalized under direct or indirect Abbasid rule. However, after the death of al-Uṭrush we witness the beginning of a second era that saw an internecine civil conflict unfold in northern Iran where local army factions were no longer united under the ʿAlids. Rather, different Daylami and Gīlite army factions began choosing rival ʿAlid *dāʿī*s as leaders and began contesting for supremacy against one another. To better understand how these processes unfolded, we turn to network analysis to help untangle the confusing web of battles, precarious alliances, treacherous betrayals, and the involvement of outside actors such as the Samanids and Saffarids that engulfed the South Caspian during the rule of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs.

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[125] Ṭabaristān and northern Iran was not always occupied during these more than two centuries between the initial Muslim Arab conquest under Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ that first subjugated parts of the South Caspian region in 30/650-1 up until the establishment of Ḥasan b. Zayd's government 250/864. During notable periods, especially in the Umayyad era, local autonomy under different Daylami rulers was asserted. However, since the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr's successful campaign of conquest in Ṭabaristān starting in 141/759, Abbasid or Abbasid-allied dynasties exerted control over the region until the coming of the ʿAlids and Ḥasan b. Zayd to the region. See: Madelung, "The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran."

The historical sources and chronicles, including sources such as Ibn Isfandīyār's *Ṭārīkh-i Ṭabaristān,* provide a very rich but dizzying array of local chieftains, difficult proper names, battles, and alliances that emerged throughout the time of the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s of Ṭabaristan. While certain authors, including Wilferd Madelung, Vladimir Minorsky, and MS Khan, have written in some detail on the local context of northern Iran, the larger narrative of the driving factors behind the changes happening in northern Iran is often lost in the stream of details and factual data provided by the authors. In order to help elucidate some of these complexities, we can take advantage of social network analysis and presenting network maps of how conflicts and alliances took shape.

The graph below (Figure 3) is a network map of battles that took place throughout the time of the ʿAlid rule of Ṭabaristān. Nodes represent army commanders and edges (i.e. lines) represent a battle that took place. The army commanders are classified into five categories: (a) ʿAlid *dāʿī*s, (b) Gīlite (and Daylami) tribal leaders, (c) Samanid army commanders, (d) Abbasid army commanders, and (e) Saffarid army commanders. The Abbasids, Samanids, and Saffarids were all outside, nominally Sunni, powers who supported and collaborated with one another as well as with certain Daylami elites in order to overthrow the new ʿAlid and Daylami-Gīlite Shiʿi alliances in the region. After a certain period, however, the Abbasids and their allies were not able to re-assert authority in Ṭabaristān and even if they supported local actors, such as Mardāvīj b. Ziyār, they were not able to exert autonomy even if some of Mardāvīj's later coins to pay nominal homage to the Abbasid Caliph.

As the graph demonstrates, at the center of network of battles are the Daylamī and Gīlite elite as well as the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s. These were the main power players and actors. There were not enough ʿAlids alone to staff the armies of Daylam, so the local people and elites served at the core of the armies and after the establishment of ʿAlid governments a new Daylamī and Gīlite elite is empowered from under the rallying leadership of the ʿAlids. But, once the ʿAlid-led armies become successful over time, the second generation of Daylami elites perhaps no longer felt the need to have their interests represented by one ʿAlid *dāʿī* but to rather compete amongst themselves for supremacy in the South Caspian. These Daylami and Gīlites, such as Mardavīj and the Buyid brothers served in the armies of the *dāʿīs* but also had their fathers, uncles, and elder family members serve under Nāṣir al-Utrush and possibly earlier *dāʿī*s as well.

Figure 3: Network of Battles and Actors in the South Caspian

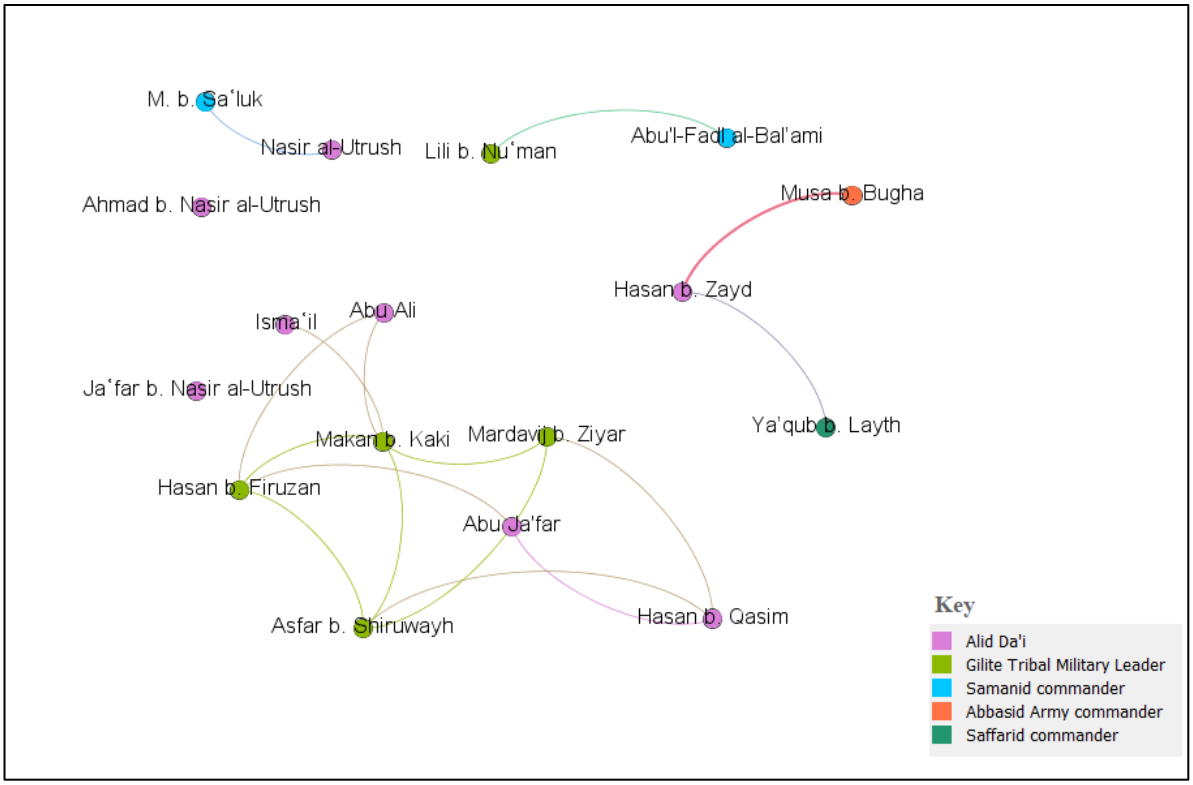
M. b. Saʿluk
Nasir al-Utrush
Lili b. Nuʿman
Abu'l-Fadl al-Bal'ami
Musa b. Bugha
Ahmad b. Nasir al-Utrush
Hasan b. Zayd
Ismaʿil
Abu Ali
Jaʿfar b. Nasir al-Utrush
Makan b. Kaki
Mardavij b. Ziyar
Ya'qub b. Layth
Hasan b. Firuzan
Abu Ja'far
Asfar b. Shiruwayh
Hasan b. Qasim
Key
🟪 Alid Da'i
🟩 Gilite Tribal Military Leader
🟦 Samanid commander
🟧 Abbasid Army commander
🟩 Saffarid commander

Figure 3: Network diagram of battles fought in the South Caspian (Ṭabaristān). Nodes are identities of commanders; edges represent individual battles

Therefore, the story of the development of the Daylami dynasties unfolded in two interconnected stages. First, the coming of ʿAlids and the sovereign *dāʿī*s to Ṭabaristān in the mid-third/ninth century enabled the anti-Abbasid Daylami elites—who, while sharing in their wish for autonomy from the Abbasids were unable to effectively unite—to now form more cohesive power bloc and unified armies under ʿAlid leadership. Prior to that point, local Daylami uprisings had been fragmented and crushed by the Abbasids or the Tahirids, such as the formidable rebellion of the Māzyār b. Qarīn against ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir and the Abbasid Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim starting in 224/839. Some of Māzyār's family members who were serving as his local army commanders were bribed by the Abbasids, including Māzyār's brother Kūhyār, whose defection was crucial in ending the rebellion.[126] As a general pattern, the large number of local chieftains spread across the geographically diverse and densely populated region enabled the Abbasids to usually be able to bribe and split rebel coalitions. However, with the coming of the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s, a respected third party arbiter could work to prevent splits or defections between parties who were suspicious of one another. This, in addition, to the general gradual weakening of Abbasid central power (the "Abbasid incipient decline" after 247/861), contributed to growing local Daylami autonomy led by a new power elite who had served the Shiʿi ʿAlid armies.

On a macro-political level, as we have seen therefore, ʿAlid leaders organized factions within Daylami dynastic elites and acted as the main fracture line in the creation of coalitions and political identity for choosing either resistance or cooperation with Abbasid imperial power. The ʿAlid Dāʿīs did not serve as unifying figures in the sense that they completely absolved partisan politics in the South Caspian; rather, they redefined the main arenas through which factionalism took place—namely along the lines of military resistance and organization. The political factionalism which emerged under the ʿAlid leaders and their armies was different from the factionalism which existed prior to that period and took shape around the polarization of the imam. Within this inter-Daylami coalitional friction, it was the factions within existing elites and dynasties which chose to resist and organize militarily with the Imams that formed the core of the new future military governments. Specifically, the later coalitions around two successive ʿAlid Dāʿīs, Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-Uṭrush (d. 304/917) and Ḥasan b. Qāsim (d. 316/928), determined the founding dynastic core of the Ziyarid and Buyid dynasties.

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[126] As Vladimir Minorsky writes: "The Arabs very skillfully exploited the rivalries and enmities in the entourage of Māzyār. First of all his nephew Ḳarīn b. Shahriyār" defected to the Abbasids and was then followed by Māzyār's brother "Kūhyār who had been promised Māzyār's place." Kūhyār switched sides to the Abbasid army in Ṭabaristān. As Minorsky continues: "Māzyār seems to have lost his courage when he found himself surrounded by the Arabs and betrayed by his followers," and he surrendered to the Abbasids in despair. He was then taken to Samarra and tortured to death on the order of al-Muʿtaṣim. After Māzyār's death, "Kūhyār's treachery served him little. He was slain as a traitor by his cousin Shahriyār b. Maṣmughān who commanded the Dailamīs in the service of Māzyār." See: "Māzyār," *Encyclopaedia of Islam I.*

In the second stage of the story of the emergence of Daylami dynasties, we see that once the pro-ʿAlid local Daylami elites—who had now effectively defeated their rival internal pro-Abbasid Daylami rivals—were able to become the most powerful regional force, they pivoted to internal fighting amongst themselves. This internal conflict was driven by the need to establish local primacy and power hierarchy and it takes place when the second generation of Daylamī elites comes of age and is more comfortable collaborating with outside powers over their internal disputes. Mardavīj and the Buyids' fathers and/or uncles served under Nāṣir al-Utrush and possible the earlier Imams as well. In the sources, however, another interpretation of why conflict arose in the post Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq period relates to the personality of Nāṣir's successor, the Dāʿī Ḥasan b. Qāsim. Abū Isḥāq al-Ṣābī's *Kitāb al-Tājī*, for instance, claims that Ḥasan b. Qāsim treacherously killed a number of top Gīlite army commanders but does not provide a reason aside from an enmity that existed between them.[127] After this, al-Ṣābī mentions that the majority of the army then defected to Daylami commander Asfar b. Shīruya and received Samanid support from Khurasān in order to fight the *dāʿī*.[128] The interpretation that the clashes were due to the personality of Ḥasan b. Qāsim is less convincing however, since it does not necessarily explain why the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s would feel the pressure or need to eliminate rival Daylami military commanders within their own camp in the first place. Why were the *dāʿī*s feeling pressure and threatened in the first place?

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[127] Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī fī Akhbār ad-Dawlat ad-Daylimiyya*, ed. M. S. Khan (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1995), 110.

More convincing answers seem to rest with similar processes discussed throughout this dissertation. The anti-Abbasid Daylami elite were more united when their rivals had higher repressive capacities, but once the rival or outside power threat diminished, an internal contestation over power and legitimacy arose. Did this mean that these processes and conflicts were all about material gains and money? Not necessarily. While for some actors mundane material wealth, prestige, and power were no doubt motivating factors, we cannot deny the role and agency of beliefs, doctrine, and ideology. The very charisma of the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s lay with their Shiʿi faith which quickly spread in the South Caspian region among the people and the elites. Northern Iran until this day remains a bastion of Shiʿism. Moreover, the Buyids retained their Shiʿi identity even though they could have potentially switched their sect affiliation. The Ziyarids, as well, largely remained either Shiʿi or remained confessionally ambiguous with the exception of Qābūs b. Wushmagīr, the fourth ruler of the dynasty, who implemented harsh anti-Shiʿi policies during his reign.[129] Zaydi imams even remained in parts of northern Iran until the reign of the Safavids when the last Zaydi imam in Mazandaran formally converted to Twelver Imami Shiʿism.

The ʿAlid rulers of Ṭabaristān were, thus, important in empowering the rise of Daylami elites who did not form the basis of their political organization and identity on suzerainty and political sponsorship of the Abbasids or Abbasid dynastic allies. Rather, the primary Daylami elite factions, which later spawned powerful independent dynasties ruling from the Caucuses to the borders of Central Asia, had an Islamized identity influenced by Shiʿism that was inculcated during the period of ʿAlid governance. Although these dynasties could cooperate or even support Abbasid allies at time in the internecine fights in the region, they were not dependent on Abbasid political sponsorship for the basis of their internal cohesion and military-dynastic structure. These dynasties were autonomous actors that could ally or oppose rivals, in other words.

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[128] al-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Tājī*, 110. Mardavīj b. Zīyār was part of this army faction as well.
[129] Mitra Mehrabadi, *Tārīkh-i Silsili-Ye Zīyārī* (Tehran: Dunyā-ye Kitāb, 1995), 150–152, 173–174.

Turning more specifically to the graphs, we see a few interesting findings. First, as both the battle and alliance graphs show (Figures 3 and 4), the networks are not exclusive to one another. In other words, the individual army commanders and ʿAlid *dāʿī*s are as equally likely to forge alliances as they are to fight battles against each other. For example, the local Gīlite commander Mākān b. Kākī was allied with Abū ʿAli the ʿAlid *dāʿī* (and grandson of the *dāʿī* Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq) at one point and battling him at another. However, outside powers such as the Samanids, while not providing support for ʿAlid Dāʿīs, do support key Gīlite and Daylami commanders, one of whom, Mardavīj ends up founding the Zīyārid dynasty. What Figure 3 highlights, moreover, is just how intense the internecine civil war in Daylam was and how there was a serious uncertainty about whose one's friends and enemies actually were, even amongst family members.

Figure 4: Network of Alliances between Actors in the South Caspian

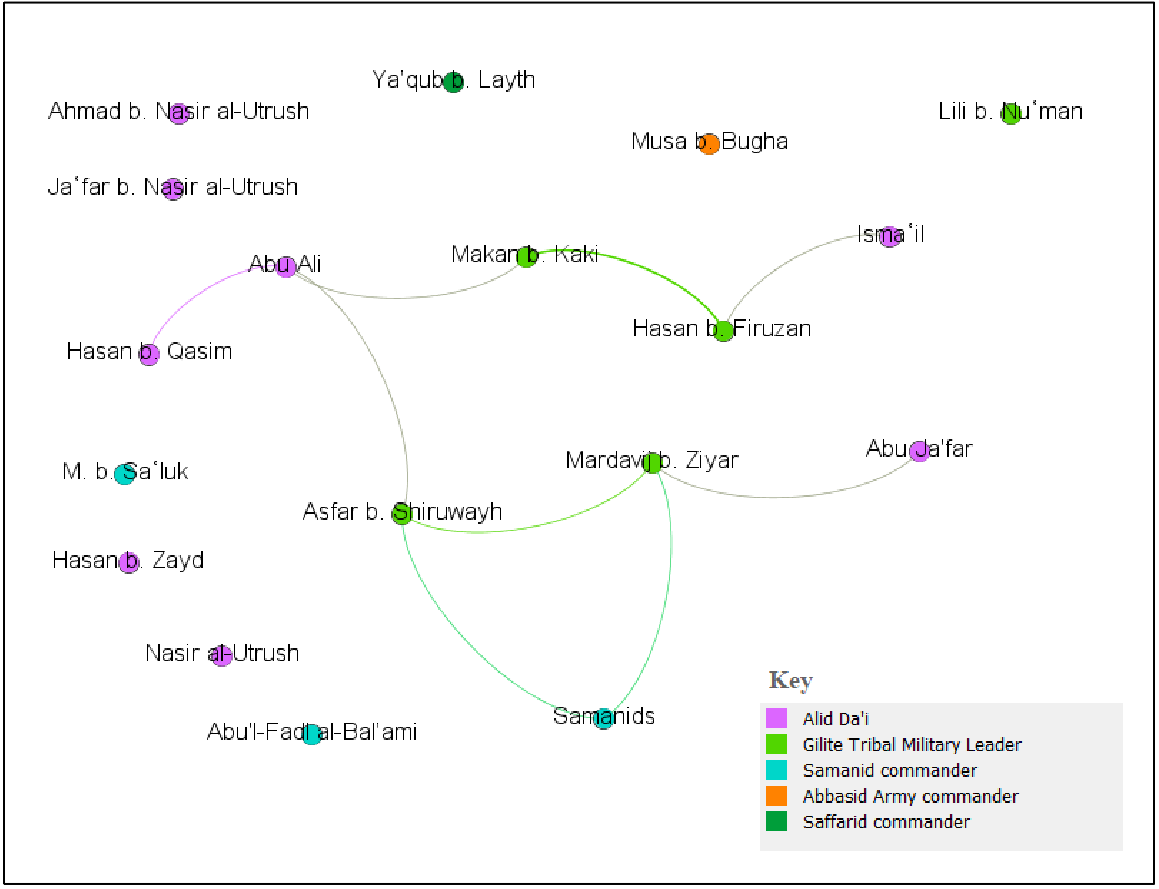
Ya'qub b. Layth
Ahmad b. Nasir al-Utrush
Lili b. Nuʿman
Musa b. Bugha
Jaʿfar b. Nasir al-Utrush
Ismaʿil
Abu Ali
Makan b. Kaki
Hasan b. Firuzan
Hasan b. Qasim
M. b. Saʿluk
Mardavij b. Ziyar
Abu Ja'far
Asfar b. Shiruwayh
Hasan b. Zayd
Nasir al-Utrush
Samanids
Abu'l-Fadl al-Bal'ami
Key
Alid Da'i
Gilite Tribal Military Leader
Samanid commander
Abbasid Army commander
Saffarid commander

Figure 4: Network map of alliances formed between actors. Nodes represent individual actors; edges (lines) represent alliances formed.

The networks found in the graphs moreover can be divided into three main groups: (a) Daylami-Gīlite elite family and tribal networks, (b) ʿAlid army leader networks, and (c) outside dynastic proxy power-broker networks. These networks acted, in essence, as a filter or refraction for the most powerful internal "pro-autonomy" Daylami factions—whose origins were in those Daylami elites who wanted autonomy from the Abbasids—to rise to power.

Table 2: Social and Political Power Networks in the South Caspian

Network layer 1: Daylami-Gīlite elite family and tribal networks	**Network layer 2: ʿAlid army leader networks**	**Network layer 3: Outside dynastic proxy power-broker networks**
Bavanids	Ḥasan b. Zayd	Abbasids
Justanids	Muḥammad b. Zayd	Tahirids
Līlī b. Nuʿman	Nasir li-l Haq (al-Uṭrush)	Samanids
Ziyarids (& Mardāvīj b. Ziyār)	Ḥasan b. Qasim	Saffarids
Musafirids (Sallārids)	Jaʿfar b. al-Utrush	Ghaznavids
Buyids	Ahmad b. al-Utrush	
Mākān b. Kākī	Abū ʿAli Muḥammad	
Ḥasan b. Fīrūzān	Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad	
Asfār b. Shīrūya	Ismaʿil b. Jaʿfar	

Figure 5 (below), moreover, highlights the five stages in the development of the Daylami elites who formed the core of the new Persianate Daylami dynasties during the "Daylami Intermezzo" prior to and after the coming of the ʿAlid *dāʿīs* and leaders. Stage one reflects the united power and dominance of the Abbasid empire and their dynastic allies such as the Tahirids and Samanids, with a power base in Khurāsān, who were able to occupy the South Caspian and subjugate local Daylami opposition to them. The anti-Abbasid or pro-autonomy Daylami elite partook in notable uprisings against the Abbasids and their local rulers, but their rebellions were divided and their coalitions were fragmented by a more unified Abbasid front. In the second stage, the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s successfully established rule in Ṭabaristān in 250/864, just a few years after the murder of Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil in 247/861. The ʿAlids provided a crucial role as a network broker and arbiter between the previously fractious anti-Abbasid elite and effectively united opposition to push out the Tahirid allies of the Abbasids and established autonomous governance. In the third stage, the ʿAlid rulers of Ṭabaristān established sovereign governance and were able to maintain general unity in their Daylami and Gīlite army base. These unifying ʿAlid leaders included Ḥasan b. Zayd (r. 250/864–270/884); Muḥammad b. Zayd (r. 270/884–287/900); and Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq al-Uṭrush (r. 301/914–304/917).

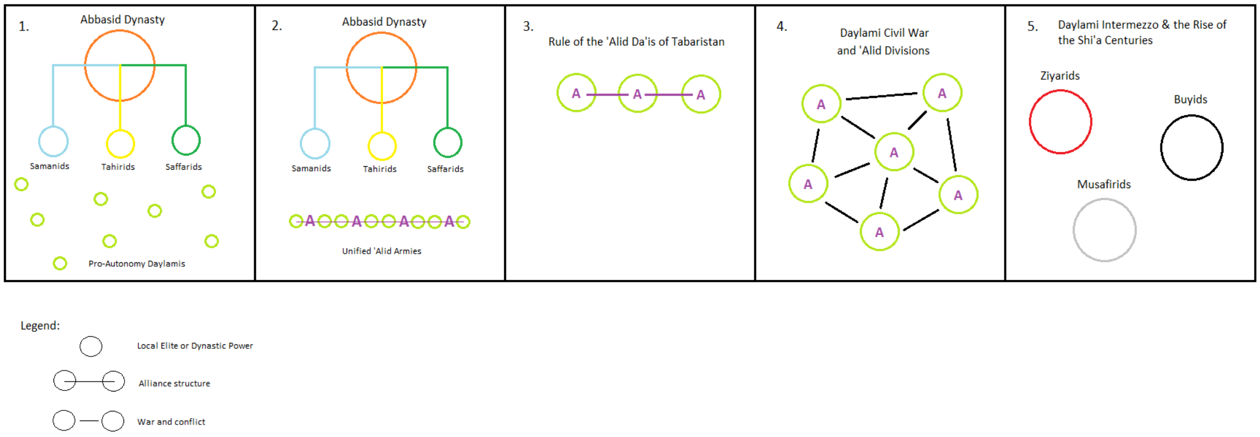
1.
Abbasid Dynasty
Samanids
Tahirids
Saffarids
Pro-Autonomy Daylamis
2.
Abbasid Dynasty
Samanids
Tahirids
Saffarids
Unified 'Alid Armies
3.
Rule of the 'Alid Da'is of Tabaristan
A
4.
Daylami Civil War and 'Alid Divisions
A
5.
Daylami Intermezzo & the Rise of the Shi'a Centuries
Ziyarids
Buyids
Musafirids
Legend:
Local Elite or Dynastic Power
Alliance structure
War and conflict

Figure 5: Five Stages of Daylami Development Prior to and After the ʿAlid Rule of Ṭabaristān

However, the coming to power of the ʿAlid *Dāʿī* Ḥasan b. Qāsim in 304/917 marked the beginning of an intense civil conflict (stage four) in which there was no consensus choice over which ʿAlid leader would rule over Ṭabaristān and how much power would be delegated to such a figure. Different factions of Daylami and Gīlite elites led by figures such as Asfār b. Shīruwayh, Mākān b. Kākī, Līlī b. Nuʿmān, and Mardāvīj b. Zīyār backed at least six different ʿAlid leaders, some of whom were the grandsons of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq, in about a 12-year period. Eventually, a prominent military commander from an elite Gīlite family, Mardāvīj b. Zīyār (d. 323/935) put an end to ʿAlid power in the South Caspian by temporarily leveraging an alliance with the Samanids and personally killing the Dāʿī Ḥasan b. Qāsim in 316/929. The next and final stage of Daylami dynastic development—the emergence of autonomous, powerful, and expansionary Daylami dynasties—was marked by Mardāvīj winning the civil war and establishing his dynasty, the Ziyarids, which conquered considerable parts of the South Caspian Iran. The Buyid brothers who had served in the armies of the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s originally then joined the ranks of Mardāvīj's army, and in turn, eventually split from the Ziyarids and were able to establish their own autonomous dynasty in Iran and Iraq. The Musāfirid dynasty also emerged circa 304/916 in western Ṭabaristān and the Caucasus. Their origins were in those members of the older Justanid Daylami dynasty that were anti-Abbasid and joined the armies of the unifying ʿAlid leaders. They were somewhat divorced from the Daylami civil war; nonetheless they established their independence around the time of the death of Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq.[130]

What follows below is a brief survey of these aforementioned four independent Daylami/Gīlite dynasties, three of which (Musāfirid, Ziyarid, and Buyid) were formed after the introduction of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs and their armies in the Caspian region and one of which (Justānid) existed beforehand but yet was the base for the entry and expansion of the ʿAlid leaders. According to Madelung, the earliest mention of the Justānids in the sources is around 176/792 with the sheltering of the aforementioned ʿAlid Yahyā b. ʿAbdallāh.[131] The significance of these northern Iranian dynasties—at least for Islamic and Persianate historiography—thus comes to the fore with the entrance of explicitly anti-establishment ʿAlid leaders. The earliest Justānid to openly accept Shiʿism was Wahsūdān b. Justān b. Marzubān who mounted an assault on Abbasid Rayy with his ʿAlid allies in 252/864-5 (discussed above).[132] This early alliance caused frictions within the Justānid family and eventually led to the establishment of a rival dynasty, the Musāfirids.

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[130] Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), see entry #71.
[131] Madelung, *The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran*, 12.
[132] Āẕar, *Daylamiyān dar Gustarah-y Tārīkh-i Īrān*, 20.

Different factions thus emerged following the death of the aforementioned Wahsūdān, and his sons split into two distinct groups: those who wished to ally with the Abbasids and those of which wished to continue support of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs. Justān b. Wahsūdān, the eldest son, allied himself with the Dāʿī Ḥasan b. Zayd and in 259/869-70 fought a joint battle against the Abbasids. Later, Justān b. Wahsūdān supported al-Nāṣir li-l Ḥaqq (d. 304/917) against the Samānids. Following the death of Justān, his brother ʿAli b. Wahsūdān allied with the Abbasid caliph and was awarded with the governorship of Isfahān and expanded his influence over Rayy, Damāvand, Qazvīn, and Zanjān.[133] Additionally, ʿAli b. Wahsūdān imprisoned Ḥasan b. Qāsim (*al-Dāʿī al-Ṣaqīr*) in the fortress at Alamūt. The third son of Wahsūdān, Khusraw Fīrūz, freed Ḥasan b. Qāsim from prison and focused on fighting Muḥammad b. Musāfir who had killed his brother, ʿAli.

The Musāfirids are considered by many scholars to be an offshoot of the Justānids since the founder of the dynasty, Muḥammad b. Musāfīr, was married to the daughter of Wahsūdān b. Justān.[134] Muḥammad b. Musāfīr blamed his brother-in-law, ʿAli, for his father Wahsūdān's death and proximity to the Abbasids and killed ʿAli, subsequently reducing Justānid power to the contours of Rūbār.[135] Later, Muḥammad b. Musāfir was the subject of conspiracy himself as his wife (a Justānid by blood) collaborated with their two sons to oust him, which split the dynasty into two branches: one based in Shimirān and Ṭarum governed by Wahsūdān and the other branch in Adharbayjān by Marzbān. Interestingly, there was orientation towards Ismaʿilism in the Musāfirid dynasty and their fortress at Alamūt was captured by Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ in 1090 CE.[136]

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[133] Āẕar, *Daylamiyān dar gustarah-'i tārīkh-i Īrān*, 21.

[134] The Musāfirids were alternatively known as the Sallārids or Kangarids; C.E. Bosworth, "Mosaferids," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*; Āẓar, *Daylamiyān dar gustarah-'i tārīkh-i Īrān*, 22.

[135] There are ambiguities regarding the death of Wahsūdān. Madelung believes a coordinated assassination took place while Āẓar, relying on Ibn Isfandiyār, takes a neutral stance, stating that Wahsūdān's death took place under suspicious circumstances following his possible reversion from allegiance to Ḥasan b. Zayd; Āẓar, *Daylamiyān dar Gustarih-ye Tārīkh-i Īrān*, 20.

As the split between the Musāfirids and Justānids demonstrates, the main arena through which factionalism and dynastic division occurred was over the political decision of support for the ʿAlid Dāʿī s and opposition to the Abbasids. Although the Musāfirids were not always strong ʿAlid allies and balanced their own dynastic interests, they harbored pro-Shiʿi and ʿAlid sentiments and were staunch opponents of the Abbasid regime. The juncture at which the Musāfirid faction split with the Justānids was when the Justānid leadership under ʿAli b. Wahsūdān allied with the Abbasids against the ʿAlids. The Musāfirid faction within the Justānids which opposed this was powerful enough to extend its power over Gīlan as well as the Caucuses and utilized their ideological and political opposition to arrange a formidable military dynasty. It was from this dynasty that the famous Daylami stand and sacrifice of 300 soldiers against impossible odds to ward off the invasion of the Rūs in the Caucasus took place 332/943-4.

The Buyid dynasty, moreover, as briefly discussed above, emerged out the fractious Daylami civil war, among the elite Iranian factions serving in the armies of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs. The question then naturally emerges of what caused the disunity that led to the ʿAlid civil wars that spread across the region following the death of Nāṣir li-l Ḥaqq. Surely, it was not the first time that disagreements between ʿAlid leaders emerged in Ṭabaristān. Indeed, during Nāṣir li-l Ḥaqq's reign, his brother-in-law and future *Dāʿī*, Ḥasan b. Qāsim, revolted against him. But after subduing the rebellion, Nāṣir was able to buy back the peace through reconciliatory measures with the supporters of Ḥasan. After Nāṣir's death, however, there was no senior figure to mediate the factionalism between different ʿAlid contenders to rule. But, perhaps just as importantly, the sources discuss how there was intense factionalism within the senior army leadership of Nāṣir li-l

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[136] Heinz Halm, *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 94.

Ḥaqq’s Daylami and Gīlite leadership. Within this new fragmented landscape following al-Nāṣir’s death, the local army elite exercised increasing autonomy and employed different mechanisms to strengthen their factions and eventually establish dynastic rule, one that did not abandon ʿAlid Dāʿīs as legitimating figureheads but ensured they would no longer act as independent sovereign rulers.

As Moḥammad ʿAli Mufrad writes, “Mardāvīj would spend enormous amounts for his own soldiers, for this reason many soldiers from the surrounding areas joined his army, of which the most of them were formed from the tribe of Gīl and Daymam.”[137] Among those drawn to the largess of Mardāvīj and served under him were ‘Ali b. Būya and his brother, al-Ḥasan, both of whom were previously serving as soldiers under Mardāvīj’s vanquished enemy, Mākān, and prior to that in the army of Nāṣir al-Uṭrush.[138] The Buyid brothers quickly climbed the scales of the military organization, and Mardāvīj granted the request and appointed ‘Ali b. Būyah as a military governor of the Iranian city of Karaj. The military class that the first generation of Buyid rulers fostered was the foundation of their success and relatively long rule within the environment from which they emerged. The new Daylami dynasties affected particular forms of politics which had significant long-term consequences, including the new tutelary systems in which the Buyids pledged nominal loyalty to the Abbasid caliph as well as, at certain points, to ʿAlid or Zaydi imams.[139] For their soldiers, moreover, “the Buyids were able to establish a more permanent loyalty partly because soldiers became enmeshed in the calculus of *ni‘mah,*” and partly because “the Buyids ruled long enough to foster a generation of soldiers who regarded themselves as the special protégés of the Buyids, for whom these Kings were almost foster parents."[140]

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[137] The author cites Mas‘ūdī’s *Murūj al-Dhahab*; Mufarad, *Ẓuhūr va Suqūṭ-i Āl-i Ziyār*, 83.
[138] Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and leadership in an early Islamic society,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 80.
[139] H. Busse, “Iran under the Buyids,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol.4, 250–304.

A further takeaway from these categorizations and network analysis relates to how a long-term consequence of occupation can impact dissident politics within a region and empower certain domestic factions to undertake strategies to not only resist foreign occupation, such as the Abbasids and Tahirids, but to expand beyond their homelands and eventually capture the seat of Abbasid caliphal authority itself in Baghdad. The process in which the ʿAlid *dāʿī*s came to Daylam and spread Shiʿism was through the exercise of dynastic power. But even once the *dāʿī*s themselves lost most of their power, the long-term implications of their rule remained as seen in the resurgence of ʿAlid dynastic ruling families in the region, as well as in their religious and cultural legacy given the still strong Shiʿi culture and undercurrents present in the South Caspian.[141]

The Impact of ʿAlid Shiʿism on Persianate Revivalism Articulations of Legitimacy

The spread of Shiʿism through charismatic ʿAlid leaders in the South Caspian region had the important impact of giving the Daylamis an identity within the Islamic polity and a greater sense of universal placement within Islamic empire. Although Shiʿism and the ʿAlids alone were not responsible for the Islamization of the northern Iranian region, it had the most direct impact on the formation of its most notable political dynasties, both organizationally and ideologically. This influence was accomplished by reiterating and conceptualizing resistance to the Abbasid Empire through the formation of trans-dynastic armies with aspirations that went beyond just regional independence. This shaped the worldview of the Daylamis and socialized them within a broader context of Islamic empire. The notions of sovereignty and rule that these northern Iranian dynasties articulated can be thus conceptualized along overlapping Iranian (including pre-Islamic Iranian identity) and Islamic notions of legitimacy, both of which could be expressed in universal as well as specific ways. These were not, therefore, exclusive domains as both pre-Islamic and Islamic notions of sovereignty were linked to divine concepts and "political soteriology"; as al-Azmeh argues, "the unicity of power, its unilateral character, and therefore the imperative of absolutism, is the hinge of this artificial human assembly which constitutes the body social."[142]

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[140] Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, 82.

[141] H. L. Rabino di Borgomale, "Les Dynasties Locales Du Gīlān et Du Daylam," *Journal Asiatique* 237 (1949): 301–50; Charles Melville, "The Caspian Provinces: A World Apart Three Local Histories of Mazandaran," *Iranian Studies* 33, no. 1/2 (2000): 45–91; Sayyid ʿAli Mūsavī-Nizhād, ed., *Majmūʿih-ye Maqālāt-i Hamāyish-i Baynulmilalī-ye Nāṣir-i Kabīr* (Majmaʿ-ye Jahānī-ye Ahl al-Bayt, 1392SH).

Even when ʿAlid Dāʿīs ceased to effectively express independent sovereignty, Mardāvīj and his Daylami-Gīlite officer corps continued the social and political organization they inherited but found the need to shift to new forms of legitimization as they asserted their own dynastic independence from the ʿAlids while still keeping Shiʿism and its positive reputation as one of their legitimating discourses. Thus, notions of Iranian imperial identity, which were already latent in the immediate historical memory of the Daylamis. was revived. Ṭabaristān and Daylam were key core areas to various Iranian empires from the very earliest Achaemenid period onwards, including during the Sassanian Empire.[143] Additionally, there is evidence that Mardāvīj sought recognition of the Abbasid caliph, and coinage produced under him is minted in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Qāhir bi-llāh "Abū Qāsim b. Amīr al-Muʾimnīn" followed by Mardāvīj b. Zīyār's name underneath on the obverse of the coin in Karaj in the year 322/934.[144]

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[142] Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 122.

[143] Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*.

[144] George C. Miles, "Coinage of the Ziyārid Dynasty of Ṭabaristān and Gurgān," *American Numismatic Society* 18 (1972): 119–37; Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 177.

These forms of legitimation—that of pre-Islamic imperial powers and that of Islamic authority—are often considered as contradictory and antagonistic within the modern literature, with Mardāvīj portrayed as being intent on abolishing the caliphate and reviving the Persian Empire. In reality it is perhaps more plausible he would have acted more similar to the Buyids had he captured Baghdad, reflecting his contemporaneous ideological, political, and social currents.[145] The Buyids, likewise, had various forms of legitimization that they employed at different times and for different groups of people that were part of their domains.[146] The Buyid Amirs would not use the same language and notions when they tried to legitimate themselves in front of their Daylamite army base as they would for the more general Sunni population under their rule. Mardāvīj heavily invested in reviving Iranian notions of kingship by fitting himself reportedly with an ostentatious crown of jewels and sitting on a gold and silver throne, and stating (likely anachronistically): "I shall restore the empire of the Persians (*al-ʿajam*) and destroy the empire of the Arabs."[147]

Mardāvīj, moreover seems to be the first figure after the Islamic conquests of Iran to revive the title *Shāhanshāh*.[148] The title *Shāhanshāh*, meaning "king of kings" is a pre-Islamic Persian title with potential Sasanian imperial implications, although the term predates the Sasanians as well. Madelung asserts this is title appealed especially to the Daylamis who were recent Iranian Shiʿi converts to Islam.[149] Daylami soldiers comprised critical components of the Sasanian armies and royal marriages also existed between the Sasanian family and the local dynastic Daylami powers. Proper Persian and Daylami names of the region's inhabitants reflect the strong connections that the Daylamis had with other parts of mainland Iran and the deep Persianate-influenced culture of the peoples who were reported to have been Zoroastrian as well before the Islamic conquests.[150]

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[145] Further evidence of Ziyārid willingness to cooperate with the Abbasids and attempt to integrate some of their pan-Islamic legitimacy can be seen through the alliances of Wushmgīr b. Ziyār (albeit temporary) with the Samanids and Abbasids against the Buyids; Khan, *Muntazaʿ*, 113-114.
[146] Ṣādiq Ḥujatī, *Tārīkh, Tamadun va Farhang-i Īrān Dar ʿAṣr-i Āl-i Būyih* (Tehran: Nashr-i Kitāb-i Parsih, 1393).
[147] Wilferd Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title Shahanshah by the Buyids," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 28 (1969), 86.
[148] Muḥsin Raḥmatī, and Sayyid ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Shāhrukhī, "Mardāvīj va Andīshih-ye Iḥyā-ye Shāhanshāhī-ye Sāsānī," *Pazhūhishha-Ye Tārīkhī* 4, no. 1 (1391): 17–38.
[149] Madelung writes that "'Persian culture, memories of the glories of the Persian empire, were alive among them"; "The Assumption of the Title Shahanshah by the Buyids," 88.

It was not just Mardāvīj who employed the title *Shāhanshāh*. According to some sources, ʻAli b. Būyah, the first chief Buyid *amir,* is said to have been the first to take on the title *shahanshah*; however, this title is not adopted on his coinage, which lends credence to the argument that this title was aimed for inner Buyid and Daylami supremacy rather than general mass consumption. Further, the use of this title as a marker for the strongest Buyid prince is evidenced through the person of ʻAḍūd al-Dawla "since he considered himself the chosen heir of his uncle [ʻAlī b. Būyah]... and based his claim to supremacy among the Buyids on this legacy."[151] ʿAdūd al-Dawlah adopted this title when he became the crown prince as a sign of his right to succession, even though he still recognized his father as the true central Buyid figure given his precedence in age after ʿImād al-Dawla died childless.

Thus, the title "king of kings" can also be considered a marker of the Buyid family to distinguish themselves from the other Daylami elite families who could have just as plausibly inherited the political and military successes of the Buyids, such as the aforementioned elite military families of Kākī and Firūzān. Consequently, the title of "the king of kings" was perhaps as much a facet of inner-Buyid struggles for legitimacy as it was associated with reviving Persian glory. The implication in the title "king of kings" was therefore not only relevant for reviving notions of Iranian pride but also in establishing the supremacy of one over-arching "chief Buyid

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[150] Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, esp. 287–318; Ḥujatī, *Tārīkh, Tamadun va Farhang-i Īrān Dar ʿAṣr-i Āl-i Būyih*, 49–70.

[151] Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title Shahanshah by the Buyids," 89.

amir" who would hold the three distinct centers of power together and have final say in important matters.

What made the Buyids distinct from their rival Daylami dynasties was that the Buyids were largely defined as a great power through its relationship with Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and the city of Baghdad in particular. It was in Baghdad that the dynasty's fate was sealed, and it was in Baghdad where the key to mass legitimacy rested for the Buyids—this was where they reach their zenith and their nadir. It would be inaccurate to state that the blessing of the Abbasid caliph for the Buyids ensured the utmost loyalty of all the subjects under their domain, but it was through the relationship with the Caliph that the Buyids took on their greater aspirations and a more legitimate place among the multitude of dominant powers in the Islamic world. The Buyids saw themselves as Muslims and legitimate protectors of Islamic Empire; they placed themselves within the universalizing discourse of Islamic authority, in addition to Iranian notions of legitimate political authority and sovereignty, and developed notions of Muslim kingship accordingly.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the influence of the ʿAlid Dāʿīs and governments of the South Caspian on the military-political organization of the Daylami/Gīlite people from the 3rd/9th – 5th/11th centuries in order to understand the trans-regional and trans-tribal patterns of loyalty, institutions, and authority which were formed during this period. The chapter also covered the question of Zaydism as an early Shiʿi sectarian community and argued that the early ʿAlid Dāʿīs of Daylam cannot likely be categorized as Zaydis but rather fit the mold of a confessionally ambiguous Shiʿi ʿAlid dissident revolutionary movement that had not yet formed into a Shiʿi sect. It therefore seems that the category of Zaydism began to emerge more concretely only when other Shiʿi leadership networks began to simultaneously crystalize following a collapse of centralized Abbasid strength which was evidenced, for example, with the emergence of Fatimid and Qarmaṭid interpretations of Shiʿism and states in the region as well as the establishment of solidified institutions in the Twelver Imami community. The decision to form exclusive sectarian identities was highly linked with institutions of power, deciding in-group and out-group categories, and choosing power hierarchies; these choices did not become meaningful until later.

This study concluded that the establishment of ʿAlid governments and Shiʿism in the South Caspian created factions within pre-existing local dynastic elites and acted as the main fracture line for choosing resistance or cooperation with Abbasid powers. The factions within existing elites and dynasties which chose to resist and organize militarily with the Dāʿīs—or at least oppose the Abbasids at significant juncture points of political coalition-making—formed the core of the new future military governments. This did not mean strategic differences did not arise among the Daylami political military elites and the ʿAlid Dāʿīs. Rather, it meant that the redefined politics and mixture of Daylami elite families, ʿAlid leadership, and Shiʿi political authority produced a powerful recombination with a deeply laden potential for effective martial dynastic organization. This recombination led to a drive for regional independence formed in large part on divisive partisanship based on military expansionism and the cultivation of a class of elite military officers within the Daylami elite.

The ʿAlids, therefore, were able to unite and re-define previously disjointed or unstable alliances of local family and dynastic factions under singular leadership and the institution of the Dāʿīs. While this was done ostensibly to counter Abbasid imperial strength through unifying and leading disparate factions, a direct consequence of their leadership was the creation of a military corps and elite blocs that would eventually found their own political dynasties, carrying with them a form of governance based on their own experiences of elite coalition building and military-dynastic based prioritizations for political decision making.

CHAPTER FIVE:
The Twelver Underground: Court Politics, the *Wukalāʾ*, and Narrative Networks

Introduction

With the death of Imam al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-ʿAskarī in 260/874, many of the Shiʿa entered a period of *ḥayra*, or "confusion"—a term adopted by contemporary Shiʿi scholars of that time to denote the widespread confusion which had gripped their community.[1] This confusion saw the serious fractures among Shiʿi adherents and confronted the community with serious challenges. Despite this period of uncertainly and mass confusion, however, a group of Imami Shiʿis consecrated their identity as Twelvers and formed key doctrinal consensus around the notion of "occultation" (*ghayba*) which defines their confessional identity until present day. Was this just the work of scholars who penned religious texts, or, perhaps, of hadith transmitters (traditionists, or *muhaddithūn*) who propagated religiously imbued oral traditions backing the theory of occultation? Or were there other individuals or social groups that were integral to the adoption of the belief in occultation that were not directly involved in scholarly production of knowledge but nonetheless were integral in its adoption and survival?

This section covers how the Twelver Shiʿi community consecrated their confessional boundaries following the occultation of the twelfth Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan in 260/874. It examines how many of the ambiguous boundaries demarcating different groups of Shiʿis became solidified amidst the competition of major rival claimants to leadership of the Muslim world. These Shiʿi contenders included nascent Fatimid, Qarmāṭian, and Zaydi dynastic movements that established long-lasting governments in the Near East starting in the mid-third/ninth century. Other individuals who figured prominently as rival imams or representatives to the hidden imam,

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[1] For a discussion of works written by Shiʿi scholars on the challenges of this period of confusion (*ḥayra*) during the minor occultation, see: Modarresi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 97–98.

Imam Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (d. 260/874), also included "al-Jaʿfar al-Kadhhāb," Muḥammad b. ʿAli al-Shalmaghānī (d. 322/934), Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922), Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr al-Numayrī (d. shortly after 260/874), and Ḥusayn b. Ḥamdān al-Khaṣībī (d. 358/969), among others.

One of the primary challenges facing the nascent Twelver community was not just over establishing the doctrine of occultation within Shiʿism—that idea, despite its various controversies, had been one of the well-known expressions of Shiʿi thought from the very early Islamic period.[2] It was just as equally challenging, if not more, to establish the *identity* of the hidden imam and *exactly* who his truthful representatives were. As the primary sources of both the later Ismaʿili Fatimids and Twelver Shiʿis attest, the names of their hidden *imams* were both kept secret by respective agent networks even though many *hadith* were circulating that the name of the redemptive savior and *mahdi* would be "Muḥammad" and previous ʿAlid revolutionaries such as Muḥammad *Nafs al-Zakiyya* had born similar names and titles.[3] Therefore, how could the Shiʿi faithful distinguish between the representatives of these two underground movements whose agent network hierarchy was underground and who both claimed to represent the generic title of the hidden Muḥammad *al-mahdī*? How would they know if the agent approaching them claiming to represent the *mahdī* was part of the proto-Fatimid, Twelver, or another Shiʿi factions?

This chapter covers the story of a diverse set of networks acting under formal and informal institutions that rallied around the pro-occultation doctrine, identified Muḥammad b. Ḥasan as the hidden *mahdī*, and, importantly, accepted the authority of the organizations headed by the four head agents (*al-wukalāʾ al-arbaʿa*) ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-ʿAmrī (d. before 267/880),

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[2] Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*; Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*.

[3] Mihrān Maḥmūd al-Zuʿbadī, "Ḥaraka Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya al-Daʿwa Wa-l Tanẓīm," *Dirāsāt. ʿUlūm al-Insānīyah Wa-al-Ijtimāʿīyah.* 43, no. 4 (2016): 1709–22.

Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān al-ʿAmrī (d. 305/917), Ḥasan b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/938), and ʿAli b. Muḥammad al-Sammarī (d. 329/941).[4] The future sections study Twelver strategy during this time period through a prism of their formal and informal networks and demonstrate that the proto-Twelver informal networks were able to organize through the elite leadership of the formal *wakīl* institution. These ties were bound in large part through money, travel (pilgrimage), and religious edicts.

In particular, this chapter explores narrative networks found in Shiʿi hadiths found in al-Shaykh al-Mufid's *Kitab al-Irshād,* al-Shaykh al-Kulayni's *al-Kāfī*, and al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿma*. Through mapping the networks of individuals (as will be discussed in the social networks sections below) who claimed they saw the twelfth Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, we find very interesting patterns, namely a sort of repulsing and separating energy pushing apart distinct unique lines of transmission. This means the lines of transmission and networks of people narrating their witnessing of the twelfth Imam were largely non-overlapping and unique. This demonstrates that Twelver community strove to separate their imam and *mahdī* from other potential contenders in a sharp manner.

This strict delineation of names exclusively affiliated with loyalty to Imam Muḥammad b. Ḥasan differs from the abundance of figures found in the Shiʿi biographical dictionaries of *rijāl* (namely the "*rijāl arbaʿa*") that are full of narrations including other Shiʿi factions. Hadiths found in orthodox Twelver Shiʿi books are still full, until today, of narrators from the *Fatḥī*,

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[4] The minor occultation lasted from 260/874–329/941 in which four consecutive top representatives of the Imam (*al-wukalāʾ al-arbaʿa*) had direct contact with the hidden Imam, although the Shiʿi community did not have unmediated public access to him. The Major Occultation commenced with the death of the last formal representative of the Imam in 329/941 and continues until today in which Twelver Shiʿis believe the Imam is still alive albeit without formal representatives and is hidden from the people. For more information on the notion of occultation, see: Jassim Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*. For narrations on the minor/major (*qasīr*/*tawīl*) concept of occultation, see al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, 6: 518 and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuʿmānī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktaba al-Ṣadūq, 1397H).

Wāqifī, or even esoteric "extremist" (*ghulātī*)[5] movements who differed from the orthodox line of the Twelver Imams but who were heavily present nonetheless in Shiʿi hadiths accepted by the Twelver community. With the narrations concerning the identity of the twelfth Imam, this was no longer the case. This finding provides evidence for the relatively non-delineated nature of proto-Twelver Shiʿism—which certainly had many core consistent doctrines, beliefs, and rituals—but had broader notions of inclusivity regarding following the imam and the diversity of factions choosing different candidates as the imam or *mahdī* prior to the Minor Occultation period. While the Twelvers themselves did not directly establish dynastic rule during the Minor Occultation period, they responded to the larger conditions in which other Shiʿi dynasties had claimed sovereign authority and were freely collecting taxes in the name of the *mahdī*. These evolving Twelver Shiʿi institutions pushed back against the encroachment of sovereignty by these new dynastic lines and preserved their hierarchy via the *wakīl*s and later scholars who believed in collecting *khums* on behalf of the hidden Imam.

In particular, this study emphasizes the non-centralized, underground, and transregional aspects of Shiʿi organization that have been lost sight of in the predominant analyses that emphasize the centralized apparatus of the *wikāla* (the financial agent religious tax collection system of the Shiʿa) when discussing Imami social and political organization during and around the Minor Occultation period. While the *wakīls*, or financial agents on behalf of the Imam who will be discussed further below, gradually faded away after the end of the Minor Occultation, the community survived regardless, pushing us to focus on the importance of other aspects of Imami organization which complement and potentially parallel that of the *wakīls*.

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[5] The term "extremist" or "*ghāl*" are a matter of perspective of course, but are utilized here to refer to mainstream orthodox Twelver views of variant groups as found in the primary source literature.

The *wakīls* themselves were subsections of the larger Shiʿi community embedded in larger structures which cut across various social and cultural dimensions and hailed from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. These other subsections of the Imami community were critical for the discursive strategy articulating pro-occultation thought that were adopted by other Imami elites for the propagation of the pro-occultation ideas of the Shiʿa. Additionally, these individuals provided a mechanism for intelligence gathering critical for ensuring the security of the community within a repressive environment. Through an application of network analysis theory that sheds light on the composition and nature of Imami organization, this work argues that such a complex and multi-layered structure was critical to how the pro-occultation faction survived and transformed into the Twelver community. It is therefore the broader Imami networks and organization that contributed to the survival of the community after the critical juncture marking the onset of the greater occultation of the Imām and the termination of the *wakīls*. In other words, this chapter focuses on the role that Shiʿi socio-political organizations, institutions, and networks contribute to the formation and survival of the Twelver beliefs and communal identity. It outlines the contours of a broader Imami Shiʿi socio-political organization and a network of Imami institutions emphasizing, in particular, the role that lay Shiʿi partisans played in the larger structure of Twelver social organization.

This chapter therefore proposes a theoretical framework for envisioning the Imami community as multi-layered underground network and discussing the different levels of the complex and multifaceted Shiʿi structures so integral for the success of the community. The discussion of these aspects in the chapter begins with a background of the political and social context facing the Twelver Imamis, including their larger placement in the Islamic political order, rival Shiʿi groups, and the pan-revolutionary context of the post-Abbasid period. The discussion thereafter continues with an exploration of social network theory, its relevance and utility for the study of Shiʿi underground movements, and the how data taken from primary *hadith* collections and biographical dictionaries can be used methodologically lead to new insights. Finally, the paper focuses on a presentation of the results brought forth by social network analysis and analyzes the importance and implications of the findings and proposing future avenues of research on underground movements and social network analysis.

The Strategic Context of the Pro-Occultation Twelver Imami Shiʿa

The Twelver Shiʿa were just one of the many factions of the Shiʿa following the death of the eleventh Imam Ḥasan al-Askarī in 260/874.[6] The Twelvers, who as their name denotes were those who espoused belief in the occultation of the twelfth Imam Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (b. 255-6/869-70) and were situated within a highly tense atmosphere of competing Shiʿi and pro-ʿAlid groups each of which put forth its own claims to rule and adopted its own strategy for survival and expansion, including but not limited to different factions who eventually coalesced into Zaydis, Ismaʿilis and others who emerged, and of course, the Abbasid caliphs themselves who initially drew on strands of revolutionary Shiʿi Kaysaniyya ideology and initially claimed charismatic succession from Abū Hāshim, the son of Muḥammad b. al-Hanafīya even if they had since pivoted from messianic esoteric ideas.[7] Considering the broader social and political context facing the pro-occultation faction at this time is thus crucial in understanding how Imami organization took shape.

While the history of organized, systematic Shiʿi underground movements can at least be traced back to the time of the Tawwābūn in the late 1st/7th century under their leader Sulaymān b.

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[6] See: al-Nawbakhti's *Firaq al-Shīʿa* for a fuller discussion of the various factions.

[7] The influence of the Kaysaniyya is a largely understudied aspect of early Shīʿism. The group's notions on *ghayba, badāʿ,* and *rajāʿ* are key shared doctrinal concepts with immediately tangible political consequences for a range of Shiʿi sects, including the Imamis and Ismaʿilis. For more information, see Wadad Kadi's *al-Kaysaniyya fi al-Adab wa al-Tārīkh*.

Surad,[8] this section focuses on the developments of Imami Shiʿi underground organization since the coming to power of the Abbasid government during the lifetime of the sixth Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). The developments unfolding during al-Ṣādiq's imamate were fundamental in shaping future Imami attitudes and rebalancing their political positions. The new caliphs very well understood the potential threats which members of the family of the Prophet could pose to the ruling establishment, particularly given that they based their authority on a similar charismatic principle of legitimacy as the Imamis which reflected the belief in divine sovereignty resting with the legitimate Imam from among the family of the Prophet Muḥammad.[9] This prompted al-Ṣādiq and those who followed him to distinguish themselves from the Abbasids and narrow the legitimate bounds of Shiʿi belief.

The implications of the success of the revolution which brought down the Umayyads and propelled the Abbasids to power, therefore, seem to have compelled al-Ṣādiq to undertake policies which the imams after him largely continued, including: (a) to differentiate between the present imamate and caliphate; (b) to create public ambiguity vis-à-vis armed rebellion and aspirations for caliphal rule; and, (c) to begin organizing underground communication and financial networks to reinforce the legitimacy of the Imam's standing and garner independence for an Imami community increasingly placed under intense scrutiny by the Abbasids.

This section argues that the strategic course that the Shiʿi pro-occultation faction undertook emerged, in large part, at the intersection of sectarian competition with rival Shiʿi groups as well as with the Abbasid dynasty which often engaged in violent crackdowns on the community. Not only did the pro-occultation faction of the Shiʿi leadership have to convince the

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[8] ʿAli b. Mūsā b. Ṭāwūs, *al-Luhūf fī Qatl al-Ṭufūf*, (Beirut: Muʾasasat al-ʿIlmī Li-l Maṭbūʿāt, 1414/1993), 25. Parallel discussions also exist in al-Ṭabarī's chronicle.

[9] *Akhbār al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsīya* (Beirut: Dār al- Ṭalīʿa li-l Ṭabāʿa wa-l Nashr, 1997), 186.

Imami community of the existence of the twelfth Imam—itself an arduous task[10]—but also had to contend with the government in power and a range of rival Shiʿi groups each with their own Imāms, ideology, and identity.

Imami organizational strategy must, therefore, be situated in the intensely revolutionary context of this period. Although the roots of Imami organization surely stretch farther back, the victory of the Abbasid revolution marked a turning point in Imami organization and created a new set of incentives and socio-political reality in which all parties had to adjust their strategic outlook. The establishment of the Abbasid caliphate sharpened identity differences between branches of the Prophet's family and disrupted the balance of power which existed between these groups while they were under Umayyad repression. From a prior position in which the Ṭālibids, different ʿAlid family branches, and the Abbasids seem to share a certain degree of charisma and resistance to Umayyad rule, the rise of one branch of the Prophet's "family" to the caliphate radically shifted the calculus facing these various branches by propelling one group to power to the exclusion of others. Ironically, the overthrow of the Umayyads who were seen as oppressors of the Prophet's close family triggered a process of a reconfiguration of power relations between these very groups related to the family of the Prophet. The Abbasids struggled to legitimize their credentials vis-à-vis other closer branches to the Prophet as the most legitimate heirs while at the same time staking claims as universal Muslim caliphs.

After the downfall of the Umayyads and the seizure of political power by the Abbasids, it is reported that Abū Salama al-Khallāl, an early propagandist and part of the revolution was unaware of the ʿAbbasid's ultimate intentions to sideline the ʿAlids. Abū Salama attempted to

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[10] Within internal Shiʿi documents, there is an emphasis that the name of the Twelfth Imam must remain a secret as to prevent assassination attempts on his life. The secret nature of the Imam 's existence poses a unique challenge to the inner core and Shiʿi elite who were privy to his name and some of whom who had access to him during the minor occultation, but had to keep this information guarded even from the larger Shiʿi community much less society at large.

"transfer the caliphate to the ʿAlids by corresponding with Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, Umar al-Ashraf[11] and ʿAbd Allah al-Maḥḍ, offering it to each of them. Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq rejected the offer bluntly by burning Abū Salama's letter and warned ʿUmar al-Ashraf and ʿAbd Allah al-Maḥḍ against accepting it."[12] While this report may be apocryphal, it nonetheless reflects some of the major factional splits which defined political Shīʿism during this time period and the initial ambiguity regarding the legitimacy of the Abbasids.

This was in tandem with Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's differentiation "between caliphate and imamate" as to "allow an Alid *imam* and his Shiʿi followers to live at peace in a Sunni society."[13] Although it may be too early to call this a "Sunnī society" in light of the debates over sectarian affiliation and confessional ambiguity within Shiʿism as well, Kennedy's point may still be germane in highlighting the implications of al-Ṣādiq's disengagement from explicit oppositional politics against the governing establishment. This demarcation of the all-important difference between not only "caliphate and imamate" but also of the Imami community from other Shiʿi groups including those who would become Zaydis and other revolutionary sects laid the foundation for the imam's strategy of distinction, avoiding direct confrontation, and providing the Imamis with space to develop within a lesser repressive environment. This may have also provided the Imam with leverage over other aspects of his political and cultural program and the ability to operate fairly openly in Medina since he was not an active threat.

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[11] ʿUmar al-Ashraf was the son of the fourth Imam, ʿAli b. al-Husayn, making him the paternal uncle of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.

[12] The author also points to how al-Ṣādiq's policy did not "satisfy a considerable body of his adherents" and perhaps contributed to a flourishing of political schisms within his followers, many of them with "extremist theological views" such as Abū al-Khaṭṭāb who was, interestingly enough, initially a wakīl of the Imam and as some allege, wished to undermine al-Ṣādiq's influence by "propounding his political and revolutionary ideas to al-Ṣādiq's son Ismāʿīl, who was more inclined to such thoughts than his younger brother Mūsā"; Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*, 31-33.

[13] Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 199.

By not declaring open rebellion, the identity of the Imami community became further defined and believers which went against the dictates of this policy were easily distinguished and outwardly disassociated from his Shiʿi leadership. Imami strategy transformed into a multilayered approach focused on the cultivation of formal and informal networks as social vehicles for the continuation of their thought, belief, and identity. Indeed, statements attributed to al-Ṣādiq reflect a very important notion that the right to rise with the sword is an exclusive right of al-Ṣādiq's line. In a direct repudiation of the Shiʿis al-Mufīd cites as Zaydis[14] and the revolutionary figure al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, al-Ṣādiq states:

> I have the sword of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. I have the standard of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and his breast-plate, his armour and his helmet… Indeed the victorious standard of the Apostle of God is with me, as are the tablets and rod of Moses. I have the ring of Solomon, the son of David, and the tray on which Moses used to offer sacrifice… We have the weapons in the same way that Banū Isrāʾīl had the Ark of the Covenant. Prophecy (*nubūwwa*) was brought to any house in which the Ark of the Covenant was present; the Imamate will be brought to whichever of us receives the weapons… The one (destined to) rise up (*qāʾim*) from among us, will fill it (so that it fits him exactly) when he puts it on, if God wishes.[15]

While al-Ṣādiq was not the first Imam to undertake this policy of disengagement from rebellion—none of the Imams (in the Twelver line) after Ḥusayn b. ʿAli engage in open rebellion during their tenure—al-Ṣādiq's theorization lays the groundwork explicitly in relation to the Abbasids, Zaydīs, and any other future political contenders.

The Centralized Wikāla System

While historical analyses focused on political and sociological developments within the Twelver community during this period are limited, some authors point to the importance of the "*wikāla*" system to the survival of the Imami community. Most of these analyses tend to focus on the formalized apparatus of the *wikāla* system: that is, the four consecutive *safīrs* and the *wakīl*s who worked to collect funds under their auspices. The *safīr*s were the administrators and representatives of this financial apparatus who were said to be in direct contact with the Imam.

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[14] By the time al-Mufīd is writing, more concrete identities between Shiʿis have formed therefore the meaning of "Zaydi" here is not necessarily in the strict sectarian sense and may be a back projection.

[15] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 415-16.

The term *wikāla* describes the phenomenon of appointed financial agents who collected financial dues (*khums* and *zakāt*) from Shiʿi believers on behalf of the authority of the Imāms. The *wikāla* network, which was at least nominally headed by four consecutive safīrs,[16] was highly sophisticated in that it had to collect dues from members across the Islamic world all while under the constraint of the ʿAbbasid government. Moreover, it had to operate and survive in the context of intense power struggles between different coalitions of rival Muslim groups which were actively recruiting supporters away from the Imamis, such as the Fāṭimids, the ʿAlid Zaydīs of northern Iran, and the Qarāmiṭa, among others.

As Jassim Hussain argues, the initial issue facing the *wikāla* network after the death of the eleventh Imām was the contradictory double objective of concealing and confirming the twelfth Imām simultaneously. The Imam had to be protected from government assassination attempts, while his existence and messages had to be propagated in order to secure the faith and trust of Imami members for their recognition of the twelfth Imām. Moreover, the *wikāla* network became all the more important with the reduction of ties between the Imam and his followers. During the long imamate of the tenth Imām al-Hādī (220-254H), much of which (from 230-254H) was spent in Sāmarrāʿ under the watchful eye of the Abbasids and enforced attendance of the caliphal court, the absence of direct contact between the Imam and his followers led to an increase in the religious and political role of the *wikāla*. Hussain argues for the central importance of the *wikāla* system to the extent that:

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[16] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād,* 537.

> Gradually the leadership of the *wikāla* became the only authority which could determine and prove the legitimacy of the new Imam. For example the ninth Imam, al-Jawād, gave his testament concerning his successor to his chief agent Muḥammad b. al-Faraj… when al-Jawād died in 220/835 the prominent leaders of the organization held a secret meeting at the house of Muḥammad b. al-Faraj to determine the next Imam, who was proved to be al-Hādī.[17]

Hussain also argues that the *safīr*s aimed to prevent the fragmentation of the Imami community during the increasingly precarious situation of the Imami leadership and eventual occultation. They did so by utilizing *hadith*s indicating that the line of Imāms would end at twelve, the last of whom would go into full concealment. Additionally, the *safīr*s continued the act of tax collection with the onset of the occultation and had to perform "miracles" before receiving the money in order to prove their legitimate representation of the Imām. Otherwise, they were "driven out of the organization."[18]

Other scholarly treatments on the *wikāla* system, while focusing on how the system was relevant for doctrinal developments in Twelver Shīʿism, still emphasize the formal organizational aspects of the *wikāla* system.[19] Hossein Modarressi, for example, states that it was the seventh Shiʿi Imam, Mūsā al-Kāẓim who established the practice of appointing *wakīls*.[20] The appointment of *wakīl*s followed the institution of the *khums* tax by Mūsā al-Kāẓim which the fifth and six Imams did not previously collect.[21] By the death of the eighth Imām ʿAli al-Riḍā (d. 203/818), he states that "the Shiʿite community was already well established both socially and doctrinally… the office of Imāmate now also regularly received the gifts, alms, and charitable donations and endowments that faithful Shīʿites regularly sent to the Holy Threshold (*al-nāḥiya*

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[17] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 81.
[18] Jassim Hussain, *Occultation of the Twelfth Imam*.
[19] See Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 10-18.
[20] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 10.
[21] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 12.

al-muqaddasa)."[22] Its "systematic collection as a mandatory tax," Modarressi claims, "seems to have started in 220/835 when Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād ordered his financial representatives to collect the *khums* on certain types of income."[23] This system of financial representation was further developed in a sophisticated manner with subsequent Imāms appointing or dismissing financial representatives at will.

As such, Modarressi does not theorize much on the institution of the *wakīls* themselves except to point out how they became the main means of the Shiʿi community's contact with the Imām, especially since they were generally under house arrest or severely limited in their activities by the ʿAbbasid authorities. Instead, Modarressi focuses on the doctrinal developments and beliefs of the Imamis and situates the *wakīl*s within the broader context of theological, religious, and political trends in reference to Shiʿi beliefs regarding the Imām and just government.

Hussain, on the other hand, seems to overemphasize the importance of the *wakīl*s by situating them as the sole determinants of authority to the extent that they even approve the appointment of the Imāms. More fundamentally, Hussain seems to use the concept of the *wakīl* system to cover phenomena that transcend the institution itself. While he correctly points to a range of social and political developments the Imamis underwent, he overemphasizes the role of the *wakīls* and ignores the importance of the larger Shiʿi community and its members in question.

In a more conceptually expansive approach, Grand Ayatollah Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Ṣadr (d. 1999) stresses the functional importance of the *wikāla* organization and describes in detail how it interacted with and was geared towards the larger Shiʿi community.[24] In his three volume work on the Minor and Major occultation, al-Ṣadr makes a distinction between the *wakīl*s and

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[22] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 11.

[23] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 11.

[24] Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Ṣadr, *Tārīkh al-Ghayba al-Suqrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf Li-l Maṭbūʿāt, 1992), 609–30.

*safīr*s. He conceptualizes the *safīr*s as individuals who were in direct contact with the Imām and received his written dictates. The responsibility of the *safīr* was to protect the popular base of the Shiʿa: they were the link through which the Shiʿi community was connected to the Imām. The priority of the *wakīl*s was to complement the *safīr* in this task through secret organizations serving the dispersed Shiʿi community and through the provision of a secondary layer and connection to the Imām through their link to the *safīr*s. This made their role in educating the larger masses of outsized importance. Secondly, just as the *safīr* had to protect the Imām, the *wakīl*s had to conceal and protect the position of the *safīr*, including concealing his name and personality. By placing the *wikāla* system within the concerns of the broader Shiʿi community, al-Ṣadr is able to reflect how the *wikāla*'s function was a product of its larger organizational context, something this study attempts to expound upon.

Early Imami Institutions and Networks:

The Multilayered and Complex Organizational Structure of Imami Networks

This study's contribution to the literature in the field is to argue for an understanding of Imami socio-political organization during the Minor Occultation by highlighting the functional importance of Shiʿi lay partisans and "informal organization" in the larger context of Shiʿi socio-political organization. The *wikāla* system, I argue, was embedded in a larger network of Imami society in which several formal and informal types of institutions and organizations functioned to consolidate the larger position and group identity of the Imamis.[25] Indeed, as a subject that has been largely overlooked in the field due to a tendency to discuss different aspects of Imami organization separately, informal Imami organizations had a significant impact on broader discursive argumentation regarding the doctrine of occultation — and served as reinforcing social mechanism to resist repression and push forward Twelver Shiʿi claims to truth.

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[25] Hayes, "The Envoys of the Hidden Imam." Also see: Verena Klemm, "Die vier sufarā' des Zwölften Imām Zur formativen Periode der Zwölferšīʿa," *Die Welt des Orients* 15 (January 1, 1984): 126–43; Hussein Ali Abdulsater, "Dynamics of Absence. Twelver Shiʿism during the Minor Occultation," *Zeitschrift Der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 161, no. 2 (2011): 305–34; Mushegh Asatryan, "Bankers and Politics: The Network of Shi'i Moneychangers in Eighth-Ninth Century Kufa and Their Role in the Shi'i Community," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7, no. 1 (May 12, 2014): 1–21.

Imami socio-political organization operated on a transnational multilayered and decentralized axis that nonetheless had a pivot of centralization—the person and the concept of the Imām as the ultimate authority. Beyond the Imām, however, there are four main organizational layers that stem beyond the *wikāla* system in which the Imamis operate during this period in question, including: (a) Shiʿi court families and elite political figures; (b) traditionists and theological scholars; (c) merchant and professional networks; and, (d) lay partisans. These sub-groups, as this chapter demonstrates, are not strictly bound but are rather situated in a larger connected macro-network with one another. These layers are organizational manifestations which the Shiʿa implemented to adapt to the challenges of their time and are the political and social manifestations of deeply theological and religious concerns on questions of who represents the Imām and how. As I will show through network analysis, the theory of pro-occultation was supported by a broad coalition of actors, groups, organizations, and institutions which cut across generations, class, occupation, and geography. The *wakīls* were only one—albeit important—component of this phenomenon.

During the Minor Occultation period, Imami socio-political organization was divided along formal and informal institutions, both embedded as underground movements under the Abbasid Empire. While institutions broadly defined are "rules and procedures (both formal and informal) that structure social interaction by constraining and enabling actors' behavior," informal institutions refer to "socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels. By contrast, formal institutions are rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official."[26] Accordingly, all four layers of Imami organization outside of the *wakīls*—the Shiʿi court families, the traditionists and theological scholars, the merchant and professional networks, and the lay partisans—are informal institutions. The *wikāla* system, due to its official sanction by the person of the Imām, on the other hand, is formal. Most scholarly work on this time period, as previously discussed, has thus focused on the formal rather than informal aspects of the Imami underground community.

Table 3. Formal and Informal Shiʿi Institutions

Formal Institutions	**Informal Institutions**
Wikālāʾ Network	Shiʿi court families and elite political figures
	Traditionists and theological scholars
	Merchant and professional networks
	Lay partisans (community members)

Macro Imami socio-political organization during the time period of this study, I argue, is largely a product of the historical dispute between claims to legitimate leadership of the Muslim world. Shiʿi theological developments—like many other confessional groups—stressed the exclusive right of the Imām to leadership in the Islamic world, explicitly delegitimizing the Abbasid caliphate or anyone other than the Imāms who might occupy the throne of political power. This position led to a consistent level of distrust on behalf of the Abbasids towards the Shiʿa and resulted in a range of policies to prevent potential Shiʿi rebellions or coups. Thus, a major impetus in shaping Imami institutions and organization was the threat of Abbasid repression which took seriously Shiʿi legitimist claims to leadership and authority and undertook violent means to intimidate and dismantle Shiʿi networks.[27]

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[26] Helmke and Levitsky, 727.

Underground movements, in turn, are social networks of both formal and informal institutions which, due to state repression, are forced to employ clandestine institutions, methods, symbols, and tactics to survive. As I argue, all layers comprise the underground Imami movement during the Minor Occultation period, a situation which was not unprecedented for the Shiʿa. The earliest evidence in the sources for underground Shiʿi organization perhaps is found with the Tawwābūn in Kufa. This early *daʿwa* movement had senior leadership led by Sulaymān b. Ṣurad, whose seniority is reflected in the title "Shaykh of the Shiʿa," and a secret financial and religio-political propaganda apparatus.[28] While this study does not engage in a comprehensive organizational history of the Shiʿa, it is nonetheless important to note the roots and depth of Shiʿi organizational methods that far pre-dated the Minor Occultation period and emerged due to the politically antagonistic environment which pitted the Shiʿa against the central government in a high stakes and often vehemently violent context.

Shiʿi Court Families

These elite political families with Shiʿi sympathies played critical roles in the history of the Imamis during the minor *ghayba* period. Notable Shiʿi families include: the Banū Bisṭām, Banī Abī-l Baghal, Banū Furāt,[29] Banū Nawbakht,[30] Banū Karkh, and Banū Wahab.[31] While each of these families deserves an in-depth study, they collectively acted as a social pillar of Imami organization. These families served in high ranking positions, linking the Shiʿa with the caliphal court and influenced policy. Through their prestige and reach, their members spanned across various Shiʿi social positions, one of them becoming the third *safīr*, Husayn b. Rūḥ b. Abī Baḥr al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/938). In our sources, we see these families acting as important sources of intelligence to minimize the effect of Abbasid crackdowns. In a cryptic report conveyed in *Kitāb al-Irshād*, we catch a glimpse of how information was disseminated:

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[27] See, for example, see Nader Naderi, "The Absolutist State: The Case of the Early Abbasid Caliphate" (PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1998).

[28] See Hawting, Tabari 88-90

[29] Javad Ali, "Beiden Ersten Safīre Des Zwölften Imams," *Der Islam* 3, no. 25 (n.d.): 215.

[30] For more information on the Nawbakhtī family, see: Abbas Iqbāl, *Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī*, (Tehran: Kitābkhāni-ye Ṭahūrī, 1345/1945).

[31] For more detail on these families, see: Modarressi Tabataba'i, Hossein *Maktab Dar Farāyand-i Takāmul: Naẓarī Bar Taṭavvur-i Mabānī-i Fikrī-i Tashayyuʿ Dar Sih Qarn-i Nukhustīn* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Kavīr, 1386), 319-341.

> An announcement was issued: 'It is prohibited to make visitations to the cemetery of Quraysh and Karbalāʾ.' Some months later the vizier[32] summoned al-Baqṭānī. He said to him: "Go to (the families) of the Banū Furāt and the Barsiyyīn[33] and tell them not to visit the cemetery of Quraysh.[34] The caliph has ordered that everyone who visits it should be searched out and arrested.[35]

This report reflects that there was a high-ranking vizier, whose identity is not mentioned, sympathetic to the Shīʿis in the court of the caliph who related crucial information to a certain al-Baqṭānī. We do not know exactly who al-Baqṭānī was or what occupation he had, but he served as a link to the Banū Furāt which had a heavy presence within the Abbasid court and in Imami circles. It is possible the vizier in the court came from the Furāt or Barsiyya family since he chooses to disseminate this information to them. Was the order just directed to the Banū Furāt and Barsiyyīn or was this a general prohibition to visit the tomb by all Imamis? It seems the implication is that these critical families which were connected to the state would be saved and perhaps their immediate networks. As elites who spanned across top Shiʿi and non-Shiʿi social and political organizations, informing these individuals would have a significant impact that went beyond their immediate selves as well.

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[32] I.e. a vizier in the court of the Caliph sympathetic to the Shīʿa.

[33] These are two prominent Shiʿi family names.

[34] According to Hussain, the "cemetery of Quraysh" was a reference to the tombs of the 7th and 9th Imams in Baghdad, popularly known as "*Kāẓimayn*" today.

[35] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Mufīd, translated by I.K.A Howard, *Kitāb al-Irshād: the Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams*, (Ansariyan Publications: Qum 1981), 540. Commenting on this report, Hussain states that "this order is believed to have come from the Imam himself"; *The occultation of the Twelfth Imam* , 195, ft. 105.

Traditionists and Theological Scholars

In terms of formulation of doctrine and articulation of belief, the traditionists (*hadith* transmitters, or *muḥaddithūn*) as well as other categories of scholars such as the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) played fundamental roles. The influence of the scholarly class in Qum cannot be understated and we see clear evidence for a strong set of ties which bound together Qum and Baghdad during the Minor Occultation. In the broader fight for legitimacy in the Muslim world, the scholars and traditionists focused their efforts on intellectual battles and shaping the terms and discourse through which the debates over legitimacy were held. Further, for the purposes of this chapter, the intellectual production and preservation by the traditionists captured a meta-discourse drawn from different layers and segments of Imami society. Many of the traditionists, including ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al-Kulaynī, directly report from different layers of Imami society, including from *wakīls* and normal community members who narrated their miraculous experiences. This reflects how traditionists personally knew these individuals and were intimately connected with a diverse set of the Shiʿa. Undoubtedly, this affected the nature of the reports they collected as their sampling base was wider that revealed how *hadith* transmitters were not simply narrating from one another in closed circles.[36]

For example, ʿAllān al-Kulaynī narrated a range of eyewitness stories from many Shiʿi community members not found in Shiʿi biographical dictionaries, including al-Ḥasan b. ʿĪsā al-ʿUraydī. Al-ʿUraydī reported that after Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī died a man from Egypt brought money to the representatives of the Imam ("*al-Nāḥiya*")[37] in the city of Mecca. When he arrived there, he received differing reports from people, some of whom said al-ʿAskarī died without an heir, others claimed his heir was his brother Jaʿfar b. ʿAli. So, al-ʿUraydī he sent a representative to Samarra ("*al-ʿAskar*") to investigate the matter and submitted the money to the *wakīl*s of the imam.[38] Other narrations were provided by ʿAllān al-Kulaynī to demonstrate the legitimacy of the representatives of the imam, including a *hadith* from an unknown "Ibn al-ʿAjamī." This man sent *thulth* funds to the representatives of the imam but he did so after he removed a portion and for his son, Abi-l Maqām, which reduced the total amount he sent to the imam's representative.[39] Ibn al-ʿAjamī did not informed anyone about this. Astonishingly, he was written a letter in response after receiving the funds: "so where is the money you withdrew for Abi-l Maqām?"[40] Eyewitness reports such as these by ʿAllān al-Kulaynī are quite numerous and reflect his contact with a wide network of community members and agents of the imam who related stories about the difficulties and competition over leadership of the Twelver Shiʿi community.

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[36] See, for example: Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, ed. ʻAlī Akbar Ghaffārī and Muḥammad Ākhūndī (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1986), 1: 514–525.

[37] On a discussion of the enigmatic meaning of *nāḥiya*, see: Edmund Hayes, "The Envoys of the Hidden Imam: Religious Institutions and the Politics of the Twelver Occultation Doctrine" (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2015), 150–53.

Additionally, as will be discussed in further sections below in more detail, key figures such Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941), author of *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, represented transfers of knowledge and authority from the scholarly heartlands of Qum to the city of Baghdad.[41] On an intellectual and belief level, the transmitters of *hadith* as well as the theologians attempted to create coherent systems of thought which could explain or reflect orthodoxy.[42] As such, their roles were crucial on the intellectual and theological battle-front, especially in the highly competitive atmosphere of competing claims to legitimacy and truth between various Islamic sects and political authorities. The Imami scholarly centers in Qum and

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[38] al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, 1: 523.

[39] *Thulth* funds refer to the discretionary portion of a deceased person's estates or assets that can be spent according to the will of that deceased portion, whereas the other 2/3 should be distributed to the deceased individual's living immediate family.

[40] al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, 1: 524.

[41] For more detailed study, see: Andrew Newman, *Formative period of Twelver Shi'ism*.

[42] For a nuanced discussion of the process of orthodoxy and the role of different intellectual sciences, see Ahmed El Shamsy, "The Social Construction of Orthodoxy," *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, esp. 107-108.

Baghdad also provided crucial support for the *wikāla* structure,[43] and there are strong links between scholarly, courtly, and financial representatives of the twelfth Imām, with many prominent families such as the Nawbakhtīs having members span across these categories.

Husayn b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī, for example, was the third head of the financial *wakīl* network.The Nawbakhtī family stretched across both the scholarly classes in Qum and Baghdad and were astute political players in the Abbasid court. An example their attempts to delineate orthodoxy can be seen in the Qummī and Nawbakhtī scholarly elite conflict with the famous mystic Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) who attempted to gain adherents to his own cause from among the Shiʿa in Qum until he was forcibly expelled from the city and his ideas refuted by the Shiʿi elite.[44] Although the indictment of heresy against al-Hallāj was reportedly supported by the third head *safīr* of the Twelvers, al-Nawbakhtī,[45] he was far from the only figure to petition against al-Hallāj in the Abbasid court. As Massignon wrote, an earlier indictment against al-Hallāj was brought forth by the Zāhirite scholar Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Khalaf, known as Ibn Dāwūd (d. 297/909-910),[46] in Baghdad and was supported by a broad coalition of actors. A list of 84 witnesses signed off as supporters of the execution; the names that have been preserved included prominent Zāhirite and Mālikī jurists (*fuqahā*) and Qurʾan reciters (*qurrāʾ*), among others.[47] The judge (*qāḍī*) Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf (d. 322/934) also issued a *fatwa* condemning al-Hallāj that read: “this proposal represents a diabolical rebellion (*zandaqa*), which calls for the mandatory death sentence, for we do not have to invite the *zindīq* to repentance."[48] Ibn Kathīr praised Qāḍī Abū ʿUmar character (*akhlāq*) as well as for his edict to execute al-Ḥallāj, calling it the greatest deed ("*akbar ṣawāb*").[49] The formidable front that had formed against al-Ḥallāj, therefore, was much more broad than any one actor and reflected the complicated politics of pressure and lobbying by powerful social and scholarly groups that wished to project certain forms of orthodoxy and suppress voices that were deemed threatening.

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[43] Arjomand, *Crisis of Imamate*, 507.

[44] Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) 1: 322-330.

[45] Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, 1: 317.

[46] Massignon dates Ibn Dāwūd’s indictment again al-Ḥallāj “before 289H”; Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, 1: 20.

[47] Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, 1: 575–78.

Merchant and Professional Networks

The first two *safīrs* were reportedly from a merchant family and the elder al-ʿAmrī, who served in the household of the tenth and eleventh Imām before leading the *wikāla* organization of the twelfth Imām, is said to have used his butter business to smuggle money for the Imām. Of the reports we find in *Kitāb al-Irshād*, there is a strong relationship between the merchant and professional class of Shiʿa and the *wakīls*, the latter of which have intimate knowledge of the financial standing of these community members. As wealthy members of the community, the merchants, shop keepers, and even money changers make significant financial contributions to the *wikāla* organization. Their transnational character also contributes to the geographical spread and strength of the Imamis as well as filling in an important intelligence gathering role.

Lay Partisans

Lay partisans, or mass supporters of the Twelver line of imams are perhaps the most malleable and dynamic factor in larger Imami socio-political organization—and the most underemphasized. Little emphasis has been made on the functional importance of the Shiʿi mass followers, however they figure quite prominently in the *hadith* literature and have a direct impact on Twelver doctrine and belief as eyewitnesses of investiture appointments (*naṣṣ*) between the Imams, and payers of religious taxes such as *khums*.[50] In al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's *Kamāl al-Dīn*, as will be presented further below, these lay partisans make up over half of the individuals in the hadith chains of those who personally witnessed the twelfth imam or experienced one of his miracles.

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[48] Another judge in Baghdad, Abū Jaʿfar Buhlūl Tanūkhī, by contrast proffered a Ḥanafī opinion that "there is no legal obligation to put [al-Ḥallāj] to death as long as he has not acknowledged (by *iqrār*) that he believes in this proposal." Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, 1: 545.

[49] For more on the jurist Abū ʿUmar al-Mālikī, see: Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyā Wa-l Nahāya* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1408), 11: 195.

These lay partisans, in particular, impact discourse and forms of argumentation. The symbols and rhetoric adopted by the *wikāla* system as well as by the theologians and scholars is impacted by the lay partisans and is reflected in the *hadīth* they transmit via the language and signs of the lay partisans. We learn, for example of the symbol of "*al-gharīm*." In a report narrated through ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al-Kulaynī, a certain Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ states that: "when my father died and his affair came to me, my father had been holding bills of exchange (which had been given) by the people (instead of money) as part of the money owed to the creditor (*al-gharīm*)—i.e. the leader of the affair (*ṣāḥib al-amr*), peace be on him." At this point in the longer *hadith* al-Mufīd personally interjects with an explanation that the expression is a code "which the Shiʿa had known for a long time amongst themselves. Their addressing him [i.e. the twelfth Imām] by it was a form of *taqiyya*."[51]

Organizationally, the lay partisans form the social base of the larger Imami organizational structure. They demonstrate the relevance of the Twelvers Shiʿis and reflect their wide reach in society. A certain Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan, seemingly a soldier in the army of Udhkūtkīn, a Turkish officer, narrates in the first person that “I did not yet profess the (doctrine of) the Imāmate, nor did I have any love for them at all” until

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[50] Muḥammad Riżā Jabbārī, *Sāzmān-i Vikālat va Naqsh-i Ān Dar ʿAṣr-i Aʾimih* (Qum: Muʾasisih-ye Āmūzishī va Pazhūhishī-ye Imām Khumaynī, 2003), 76–77; Muḥammad b. ʻAlī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Kamāl Al-Dīn Wa-Tamām al-Niʻmah*, ed. ʻAlī Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 1975), 2: 434.
[51] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 537.

> Yazīd b. ʿAbd Allāh [a Shiʿi] died. In his illness, he made (me a trustee) of his will that his horse, his sword and his belt should be given to his Master (i.e. the Imām). I was afraid that if I did not give the horse to Udhkūtkīn, he would punish me. I valued the horse, sword and belt in my own view for seven hundred *dīnars* and I told no one about it. I gave the horse to Udhkūtkīn. Suddenly there was a letter which came to me from Irāq: “Send seven hundred dīnars, of the price of the horse, sword and belt which were ours before you.”[52]

This narrative reflects both the reach of the financial agent system of the twelfth Imām as well as the means through which individuals would join the Shiʿi community despite their backgrounds in different institutions, even those belonging to the governing apparatus.

These lay partisans also figure importantly in the construction of narrative structures which form around the hidden Imām. These structures revolve around the belief narratives that partisans of the Imām report to validate his representative institutions and are formed on the credibility of the miraculous mundane, including receiving predictions regarding life and death, knowledge about hidden assets and forgotten wealth; health related cures; and receiving permission for going on pilgrimage. It is through the reports from the mouths of the ordinary believers that credence is lent to the occultation of the Imām, and as importantly, his formal representatives. These representatives navigate through the often admittedly shaky beliefs of lay partisans who report anxiety and consternation which is solved through the hidden Imām and his representatives:

> A letter from Abū Muḥammad [the eleventh Imām] peace be on him, came about entrusting a salary to al-Junayd, who assassinated Fāris b. Ḥātim b. Māhawayh, to Abū al-Ḥasan and my brother. After Abū Muḥammad [the eleventh Imām], peace be on him, died, a message came, renewing the salary of Abū al-Ḥasan and his

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[52] Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 538.

> companion. Nothing came with regard to the affairs of al-Junayd. I was troubled at that but then (another message) came later announcing the death of al-Junayd.[53]

This *hadith,* referring to the assassination of an internal Shiʿi community member who al-Ṭūsī later refers to as a *ghālī*, addresses the larger problem endemic to the Shiʿi community of this time of elements which claim representation on behalf of the Imām and tended to ascribe deific attributes to his person. This narration is telling as it reflects the links that al-Junayd, the assassin of Fāris, had with the *wikāla* network. The ability for the underground network to financially support the assassin reflects a degree of sophistication and adaptability which the Imām or the *safīrs* had in directing the *wakīl*s. It also shows that the financial network doubled into a sort of intelligence/security apparatus as well. Finally, it reflects the wariness of the *wikāla* to internal spiritual opponents who challenged the normative legitimating structures of the Twelver financial-religious structure.

A different report touches upon the important task incumbent on all able-bodied Muslims to undertake the Ḥajj pilgrimage, which was fraught with extreme uncertainty and attacks by tribes and organized violent groups. As a certain ʿAli b. Ḥusayn al-Yamānī reported:

> While I was in Baghdad a caravan of Yamānīs was being prepared for departure. I wanted to go with them. I wrote to ask permission for that and (the message) came: "Do not go with them. No good will come to you through going with them. Stay in Kūfā." I stayed and the caravan departed. The Banū Ḥanẓala attacked them and destroyed them. I wrote to ask permission to make a journey by water and was not given permission. I asked about the boats which were leaving that year by sea but I knew that no boat was safe, for a group of people called al-Bawāriḥ used to attack them and stop them.[54]

Another report highlights the overarching moral-legal structure of the *wikāla* system, in which representatives reject a contribution since part of the money belonged to others—although seemingly without the contributor initially remembering that the funds included others' rightful assets:

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[53] *Ibid.*, 540.
[54] *Ibid.*, 534-5.

> A man from the Sawād handed over money and it was returned to him. He was told: "Take from it what is due to your nephews. It is four hundred dirhams." The man had possession of an estate in which his nephews had a share which he had withheld from them. He reflected. When he took out the four hundred dirhams which belonged to his nephews and handed over the rest, it was accepted.[55]

These reports contain traces of the daily complexities facing lay Shiʿi partisans and relay affirmations of belief in the hidden Imām. These narrations generally follow along the lines of first outlining a challenging situation (i.e. how to submit religious alms to the right authority, choose to go on pilgrimage, etc.), often reflecting the inner state of belief or doubt, then move on to reveal how the hidden Imām held hidden knowledge regarding their affairs of life, death, and forgotten knowledge. Through demonstrating the power of the twelfth Imām and his representatives, these reports confront the real faith challenges facing the Shiʿa and reformulate answers to these challenges through the narratives of the miraculous mundane.

Social Network Analysis and the Source Material

On a basic level, social network analysis is concerned with exploring the interconnectedness of individuals or objects. Interconnectedness can mean different things in different contexts, but in this project it refers to the links between individuals in *hadith*s. The analytical benefit of network analysis lies in the visualization of complex human relationships by laying emphasis on repeated interactions between individuals and groups, and just as importantly, visualizing large amounts of ties and relationships that would otherwise be unfeasible to conceptualize. The network analysis in this section is based on a relational database compiled of individuals in relevant *hadīth* chains pertaining to eyewitnesses of the twelfth Imām, his representatives, and his miracles, and cross-examining entries in Imami biographical dictionaries and a range of other historical sources. Given the large amount of extant data and the complexity of the nature of relations, network analysis is a useful methodology to highlight new observations on larger social relations and trends.

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[55] *Ibid.*, 533-4.

Accordingly, rather than focusing on examining religious doctrinal arguments from this time period, networking *hadith* chains provides a potentially innovative and different way to conceptualize the phenomenon of Imami socio-political organization in an attempt to gain greater historical and sociological understanding of the players involved in the Minor Occultation period and to better contextualize religious doctrine as well. Of course, *hadith*s themselves are only one testament to this historical moment, but they are worthy of study as important phenomena with religious as well as sociological implications.

Further, social network theory assists with larger concerns of how and why the Imamis utilized underground resistance, who some of the key players in the Imami social movement were, and how organizational strategies unfolded. The Imami pro-occultation faction was embedded within a larger context which confined and defined their movement; by using network analysis we can get a better idea of how the Imamis dealt with their socio-political environment and preserved their identity and cause.

By tracking social trends reproduced on a micro-interactional level as evidenced in available source material through mundane daily life, it is thus possible to reconstruct certain crucial aspects of Imami organization and political strategy from the 2nd/9th-4th/11th centuries. As some scholars argue: “Quantitative techniques like network analysis and network visualization can be a useful aid for rendering aspects of social structure visible at a large enough scale to observe the ‘strict, nonrandom regularity’ that small-scale random phenomena tend to create in their collective action."[56] For So and Long, this means putting "mathematical interpretations of social structure into dialogue with thick historical description and close readings of cultural material, resisting any kind of strict bifurcation of distant empirical *explanation* and close hermeneutic *interpretation*."[57]

Large scale social network analysis has thus provided the ability to conceptualize relations that are too numerous for us to grasp without use of systematic software. Embedding network analysis within a larger historical narrative—which itself engages with a range of auxiliary methods such as source-criticism—can thus contribute to current research in meaningful and tangible ways. In this project, network analysis highlights the dispersed nature of the individuals involved with the Imami organization—including the prevalence of non-*wakīl*s and the role of traditionists—and significantly emphasizes the prominence of lay partisans in supporting the Imami pro-occultation efforts. My finding thus contributes to new theorizations on the nature and functionality of the Imami networks, which may otherwise not come to the attention of researchers.

Finally, this project advances the existing literature by applying what John Padgett calls "triangulating on causal process." As he states:

> The point is to argue for mixing multiple methods in the same research…Each method gives a different slant or perspective into the phenomenon of interest. The more eyes we have to see with, the more confident we are that what we see is in the world, not in our mind. In particular, the closer we get to observing through different lenses the process we hypothesize, the more confident we become that this is indeed what is generating our data… [58]

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[56] R.J. So, and H. Long, "Network Analysis and the Sociology of Modernism," *Boundary 2* 40, no. 2 (2013): 155.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] J. F. Padgett, "Causality in Political Networks." *American Politics Research* 39, no. 2 (2011): 468.

This study thus expands the contours of our current understanding of Imami social organization during the Minor Occultation period and applies a method that heretofore has not been applied to studying the history of Imāmism during this early formative period.

Method and Sources

This section applies network analysis methodology to the study of Imami social organization during the Minor Occultation by coding the *hadith* chains (or *isnād*s) in primary source material relating to those who claim to have seen the twelfth Imām. These claims were made by individuals in their support of the theory of occultation and the existence of the Hidden Imam. After coding the *hadith* chains, biographical dictionaries and indexes were consulted to identify the characters within the *hadiths* in order to cross-reference any biographical information such as occupation and location of residence of all the individuals mentioned. This is done in order to enrich our understanding of the players involved and to analyze this information in a systematic manner in hope of discovering possible patterns and relations that may be lost sight of by simply analyzing the hadith or the individuals on a non-macro level. Finally, social networking software was used to map the dyads within the *hadith* chains and create graphic visualizations of the extent and nature of the relations among the transmitters of hadith and their prosopographical universe.

There may exist, of course, an inherent bias within the *hadith* due to the vested interest of authors to portray narrations in a way that conforms ideologically with emerging Shiʿi doctrine. Given that these works were mainly written after the start of the occultation and in the context of a heightened polemical atmosphere, we cannot rule out the existence of selection bias and unsound *hadith*. However, the implications of such inherent bias is not problematic for the purposes of my research as we are not necessarily concerned with supporting who was "right or wrong" regarding the subject of the occultation from an objective doctrinal standpoint. Rather, the objective is to examine the pro-occultation group that eventually is to become mainstream and identify the individuals who made up this network. For this purpose, the data can be quite useful for the network relations it portrays among pro-occultation actors in the *hadith* chains. In other words, while the soundness or credibility of *hadith* is certainly a crucial question to ask, and is a worthy study in its own right, this study is not concerned with validating or refuting *hadīth*s individually but rather with using them as evidence to trace how claims were put forth by the pro-occultation faction and decipher how they were understood by those exposed to these *hadith*s.

The primary dataset is constructed through *hadith*s gathered by Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'manī (d. 413/1022), also known as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd. His work *Kitāb al-Irshād*, written sometime before 380/990,[59] is centered on providing a narrative for the lives of the twelve Shiʿi Imāms. As Andrew Newman states, the book covers the lives of the "Imams, not as full biographies to be sure but – utilizing traditions that were available in the… collections of Twelver traditions, especially *al-Kafi* – focusing on the disputes on the line of succession and particular qualities for which they were noted."[60] Written probably some fifty years after the end of the Minor Occultation in 329/941, this text provides relevant insight into a Buyīd Baghdād that was experiencing a flourishing of Twelver thought and identity. The final chapter of *Kitāb al-Irshād*, on the twelfth Imam, has sections relating to evidence for the existence of his personality, which number 48 hadiths that al-Mufīd mainly took from the section on the *hujja* (*kitāb al-ḥujja)* in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī* which we can trace through al-Mufīd's chains of transmission citing al-Kulaynī.[61] in the chain of transmission in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī* were in turn likely taken from *Kitāb Akhbār al-Qāʾim* of ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al-Kulaynī, either via oral chain of transmission or in written form. This work, *Kitāb Akhbār al-Qāʾim*, is cited by Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058),[62] but today, this work but is no longer extant in full manuscript form although it seems to have been preserved in part of whole in *al-Kāfī*.

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[59] I.K.A. Howard mentions that al-Mufīd was born either in 948 or 950 and wrote *Kitāb al-Irshād* before he was 40 years old. Howard comes to this conclusion since Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) mentions *al-Irshād* in his *Fihrist*, however is outlived by al-Mufid (d. 413/1022); *Kitāb al-Irshād*, xxvii.

[60] Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, 84.

This subset of *ahaādīth* can be divided into different categories, with a minority reaching back to earlier Imāms establishing that the successors to the prophet to be twelve, the last of whom is the *qāʾim*, or messianic redeemer. The remainder of the *hadīth*s includes direct and indirect reports of persons seeing the Imām and exchanging letters with him; payers of *khums* and *zakāt* witnessing miracles regarding knowledge of their assets by the Imām's financial agents; and, miraculous foresight and knowledge passed on to Shiʿis such as predictions of death and birth.

Regarding *rijāl* books (biographical dictionaries) used in conjunction with *hadith* literature, I am cross referencing the names I encounter in the *hadith*s with the eight earliest Shiʿi books of *rijāl*,[63] inclusive of: (1) Ahmad ibn Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barqī's (d. ca. 280/894)[64]

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[61] Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, ed. ʻAlī Akbar Ghaffārī and Muḥammad Ākhūndī (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1986), 1: 329–32.

[62] Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Najāshī, *Rijāl Al-Najāshī*, ed. Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī (Qum: Muʾasasa al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1986), 260. Al-Najāshī also states that ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al-Kulaynī was killed on the way to Mecca where he was travelling to for the Hajj pilgrimage. ʿAllān al-Kulaynī, al-Najāshī records, had asked the Imam for approval to go on Hajj but was told to call of his trip that year which he apparently ignored and took the trip regardless. For more on ʿAllān al-Kulaynī see: Ansari, *L'imamat et l'Occultation Selon l'imamisme*, 209–15.

[63] For Alī Khamenei, a core component of these eight mentioned works are the "*chahar kitāb-i aṣlī-i ʿilm-i rijāl*" or four key books of Shiʿi *rijāl* sciences and are composed of: Najāshī's work in addition to Ṭūsi's two works and the work attributed to Kashshī; *Chahar Kitāb-i Aṣlī-i ʿIlm-i Rijāl* (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr-i Farhang-i Islāmī, 1369/1990), 14-15.

[64] According to other Ithnā' ʿAsharī biographical sources such as al-Najashī, al-Barqī's family had Kufan roots but were descended from *mawālī* of the Ashʿarī tribe after they fled to a village near Qum called Barqarūd after being involved with the failed uprising of Zayd ibn ʿAli. Aḥmad al-Barqī was a companion of the ninth and tenth Imams and his father, Muḥammad al-Barqī was a companion of the eighth Imam. It is also thought that al-Barqī's *al-*

Ṭabaqāt al-Rijāl; (2) Muḥammad b. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kashshī's[65] (d. 350/961—hailing from Kashsh, a town in Central Asia near Samarqand[66]—*Kitāb al-Rijāl* (alternatively known as *Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*)[67]; (3) Abū al-ʿAbbās Ahmād b. ʿAli al-Asadī al-Najāshī's (d. 450/1058) *Fihrist Asmāʾ Moṣnafī al-Shiʿah* (or *Rijāl al-Najashī*); (4) two of Ṭusī's works: *al-Abwāb* and *al-Fihrist*; (5) Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn Ghaḍāʾirī's (d. fifth century hijri) *Kitāb al-Ẓuʿafāʾ* (or *Rijāl ibn Ghaḍāʾirī*); (6) Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī's (d. 726/1325) *Khulāṣāt al-Aqwāl fī Maʿrifah Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*; and (7) al-Ḥasan bin ʿAli b. Dāwud's (d. 707 H) *Rijāl ibn Dāwūd*.

These biographical dictionaries represent an early subsection of Shiʿi *rijāl* literature, some of whose composition overlaps or even pre-dates the compilation of *Kitāb al-Irshād* and provide a strong contemporaneous and later scholarly base through which to trace information regarding relevant individuals. In addition, the rich *rijāl* biographical science compilations of some of the most notable Shiʿi scholars of the contemporary period were consulted, including: *A'yān al-Shiʿa*, a 14 volume work by the Lebanese Ayatollah Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1371/1952)[68]; *Mu'jim al-Rijāl*, a 14 volume work by the Iranain-Iraqi Ayatollah Abū Qāsim al-Khoei (d. 1413/1992); *Ṭabaqāt Aʾlām al-Shiʿa*, a 17 volume work by the Iranian Ayatollah Aqā Bozorg Tehrānī (d. 1389/1970)[69]; and, *Qamūs al-Rijāl*, a 12 volume work by the Iranian Ayatollah

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Maḥāsin was the first significant collection of the Twelver Imams' reports; Andrew J. Newman, *The formative period of Twelver Shīʿism: Ḥadīth as discourse between Qum and Baghdad* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 51.

[65] The personality and background of al-Kashshī is quite intriguing. There is a difference of opinion among the other Shiʿi authors of Rijāl books as to the quality of his reports. Ṭusī praises him in his *al-Rijāl* and *al-Fihrist* as reliable (*theqha*) – quite naturally given the fact that it is through al-Ṭusī's reproduction that we presently have the text of Kashshī. Al-Najāshī and al-Hillī, with nearly identical entries on him, report that Kashshī was a companion of Muḥammad bin Masʿūd al-ʿAyāshī al-Samarqandī and studied with him in his house and adopted [reports] from him (although Ibn Dāwūd names Kashshī as a young companion (*ghulām*) of al-ʿAyāshī). The reports of these latter authors on Kashshī are mixed, calling him reliable but simultaneously citing his work as full of errors and Kashshī as narrating from weak sources.

[66] Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tarikh al-Buldān*, (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 1422 H), 124.

[67] The original of this work is not extant, and what we have comes through al-Ṭusī, or what he dictated to a student of his, and it is thought the title *Maʿrifah al-Rijāl* comes from this transcription.

[68] Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf li-l Maṭbūʿāt, 1419/1998).

[69] Muḥammad Moḥsin Aghā Bozorg Tehrānī, *Ṭabaqāt Aʿlām al-Shīʿa* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1430/2009).

Muḥammad Taqī Tustarī (d.1414/1957).[70] Out of the 102 distinct names which appear in my dataset in al-Mufīd's *Kitāb al-Irshād*, I have been able to collect significant information on 84 of these names, including a mix of occupations, approximate death dates, information on factional leanings and kinship ties with other individuals, and other miscellaneous facts.

Visualizing Imami Networks – *Kitāb al-Irshād*

Network Methods, Findings, and Key figures

This section presents the visual results of the network analysis which was carried out on the *hadiths* from al-Mūfid's *Kitāb al-Irshād*. The nodes in the egocentric network charts are distinct individuals in the chain of *hadith* narrations. The edges, represented by lines in the network diagrams, reflect links in the *hadith* chains. For example, in Figure 6, ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al- Kulāynī is represented by a yellow node representing his occupation as a traditionist. Each line which is connected to "ʿAli b. M"[71] at the center represents someone who is either narrating from him or to him.

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[70] Also known as "al-Shustarī."

[71] The network graphs include shorter forms of individuals' names for the sake of visual clarity. For example, "ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al- Kulāynī" becomes simply "ʿAli b. M."

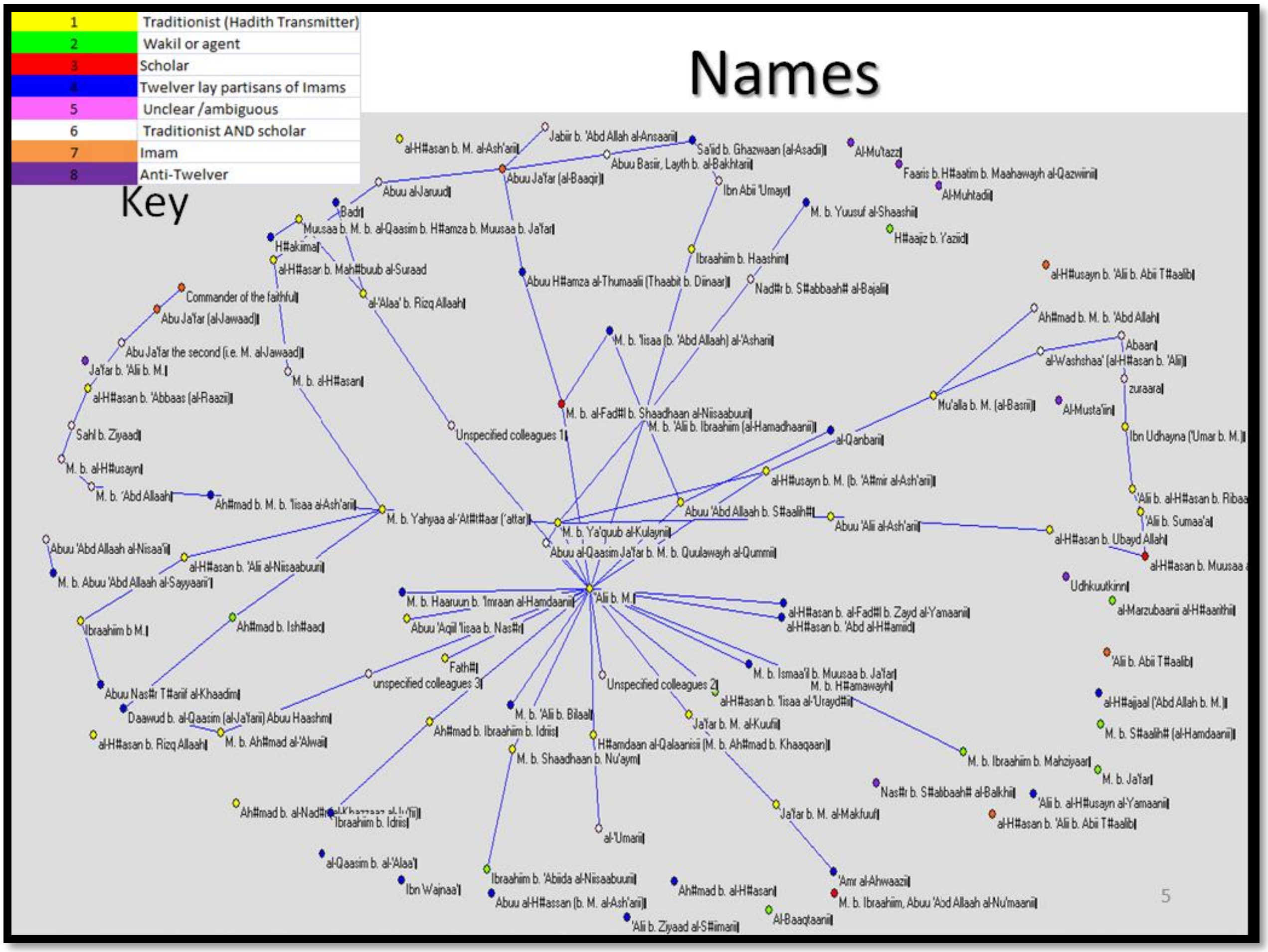
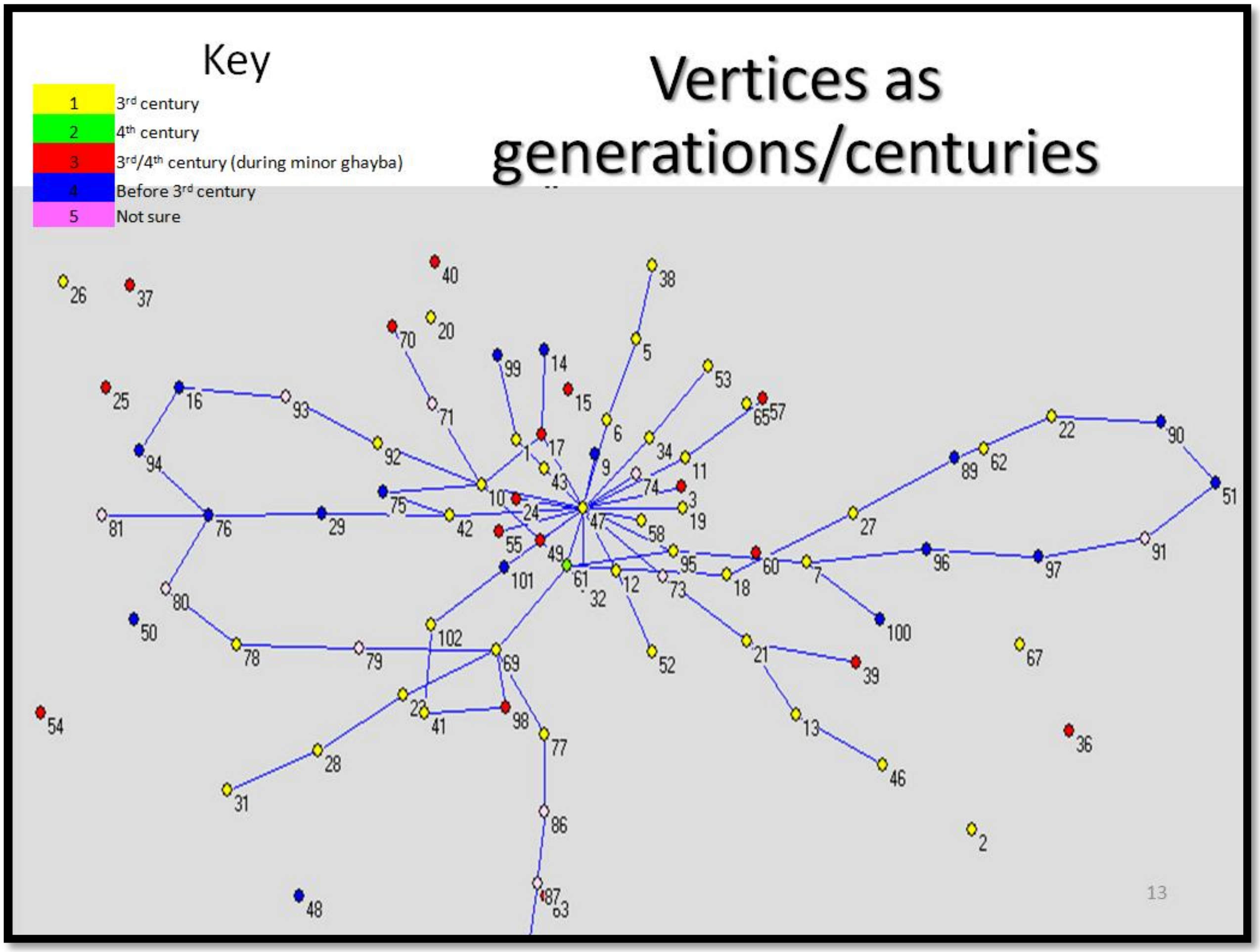

1 Traditionist (Hadith Transmitter)
2 Wakil or agent
3 Scholar
4 Twelver lay partisans of Imams
5 Unclear /ambiguous
6 Traditionist AND scholar
7 Imam
8 Anti-Twelver
Key
Names
al-H#asan b. M. al-Ash'arii
Jabiir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansaarii
Sa'iid b. Ghazwaan (al-Asadii)
Al-Mu'tazz
Abuu Basiir, Layth b. al-Bakhtarii
Faaris b. H#aatim b. Maahawayh al-Qazwiinii
Abuu Ja'far (al-Baaqir)
Abuu al-Jaruud
Ibn Abii 'Umayr
Al-Muhtadii
M. b. Yuusuf al-Shaashii
Badr
Muusaa b. M. b. al-Qaasim b. H#amza b. Muusaa b. Ja'far
H#aajiz b. Yaziid
H#akiima
Ibraahiim b. Haashim
al-H#asan b. Mah#buub al-Suraad
Abuu H#amza al-Thumaalii (Thaabit b. Diinaar)
Nad#r b. S#abbaah# al-Bajalii
al-H#usayn b. 'Alii b. Abii T#aalib
Commander of the faithful
al-'Alaa' b. Rizq Allaah
Abu Ja'far (al-Jawaad)
Ah#mad b. M. b. 'Abd Allah
M. b. 'Iisaa (b. 'Abd Allaah) al-'Ashari
Abaan
Abu Ja'far the second (i.e. M. al-Jawaad)
al-Washshaa' (al-H#asan b. 'Alii)
Ja'far b. 'Alii b. M.
M. b. al-H#asan
zuraara
al-H#asan b. 'Abbaas (al-Raazii)
Mu'alla b. M. (al-Basrii)
Al-Musta'iin
M. b. al-Fad#l b. Shaadhaan al-Niisaabuurii
M. b. 'Alii b. Ibraahiim (al-Hamadhaanii)
Unspecified colleagues 1
Sahl b. Ziyaad
al-Qanbarii
Ibn Udhayna ('Umar b. M.)
M. b. al-H#usayn
al-H#usayn b. M. (b. 'A#mir al-Ash'arii)
M. b. 'Abd Allaah
Ah#mad b. M. b. 'Iisaa al-Ash'arii
Abuu 'Abd Allaah b. S#aalih#
'Alii b. al-H#asan b. Ribaa
M. b. Yahyaa al-'At#t#aar ('attar)
Abuu 'Alii al-Ash'arii
'Alii b. Sumaa'a
M. b. Ya'quub al-Kulaynii
Abuu 'Abd Allaah al-Nisaa'ii
Abuu al-Qaasim Ja'far b. M. b. Quulawayh al-Qummii
al-H#asan b. Ubayd Allah
al-H#asan b. 'Alii al-Niisaabuurii
al-H#asan b. Muusaa
M. b. Abuu 'Abd Allaah al-Sayyaarii
Udhkuutkinn
M. b. Haaruun b. 'Imraan al-Hamdaanii
'Alii b. M.
al-Marzubaanii al-H#aarithii
al-H#asan b. al-Fad#l b. Zayd al-Yamaanii
Ibraahiim b M.
Ah#mad b. Ish#aaq
Abuu 'Aqiil 'Iisaa b. Nas#r
al-H#asan b. 'Abd al-H#amiid
Fath#
'Alii b. Abii T#aalib
M. b. Ismaa'iil b. Muusaa b. Ja'far
M. b. H#amawayh
unspecified colleagues 3
Unspecified colleagues 2
Abuu Nas#r T#arif al-Khaadim
al-H#asan b. 'Iisaa al-'Urayd#ii
al-H#ajjaal ('Abd Allah b. M.)
M. b. 'Alii b. Bilaal
Daawud b. al-Qaasim (al-Ja'fari) Abuu Haashim
Ja'far b. M. al-Kuufii
M. b. S#aalih# (al-Hamdaanii)
Ah#mad b. Ibraahiim b. Idriis
al-H#asan b. Rizq Allaah
M. b. Ah#mad al-'Alwaii
H#amdaan al-Qalaanisii (M. b. Ah#mad b. Khaaqaan)
M. b. Ibraahiim b. Mahziyaar
M. b. Shaadhaan b. Nu'aym
M. b. Ja'far
Nas#r b. S#abbaah# al-Balkhii
'Alii b. al-H#usayn al-Yamaanii
Ah#mad b. al-Nad#r
Ibraahiim b. Idriis
Ja'far b. M. al-Makfuuf
al-H#asan b. 'Alii b. Abii T#aalib
al-'Umarii
al-Qaasim b. al-'Alaa'
Ibraahiim b. 'Abiida al-Niisaabuurii
'Amr al-Ahwaazii
Ibn Wajnaa'
Ah#mad b. al-H#asan
M. b. Ibraahiim, Abuu 'Abd Allaah al-Nu'maanii
Abuu al-H#assan (b. M. al-Ash'arii)
'Alii b. Ziyaad al-S#iimarii
Al-Baaqtaanii
5

Figure 6. Full names of individuals in occupational partition in *Kitāb al-Irshād*.

There are a sizeable amount of names which do not share an edge, or connection, with other vertices and thus show up as isolated nodes in the network map. This is either because the *hadith* chain is just one name and does not show up in other chains, or the name is included because it might have been in the narration portion of the *hadith*, but not necessarily in the actual chain of narration. These isolated nodes can thus be extant in text (*matn*) of the *hadith*, but not linked within the *hadith* chains.

The center of these network graphs represent the relative strength and density of ties between the individuals in the dataset. In essence, these graphs are relationally based on ties of individuals to each other. The density of names in the center represents a density of interconnectedness and relations around the personality of ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al-Kulāynī. Figuring prominently at the center of this network are third century traditionists and Shiʿi lay partisans from Qum and Baghdād. ʿAli b. Muḥammad was a prominent traditionist situated near Qum, Iran just as Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī, his student, was at one point. Al-Kulāynī is the primary medium through which ʿAli b. Muḥammad's *hadiths* are transmitted to al-Mufīd. A further figure of great importance in the network is Muḥammad. b. Qūlawayh al-Qumī, who had very strong, repeated ties with Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī (27 interactions). These aforementioned three individuals all hailed from communities in or around Qum (Kulāyn being near Qum), reflecting the town's important position in scholarly *hadith* propagation. Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī's immigration to Baghdad thus represents a significant transfer of intellectual capital to the imperial capital at Baghdad supporting the theory of occultation.

Figure 9 is a visual representation of the network chart center as the densest iteration of hadith transmission, reflecting the core of the individuals propagating *hadith* in support of the occultation. The diverse segments of the Shiʿi community whom ʿAli b. Muḥammad is able to utilize in his reporting of pro-occultation *hadith* is quite noteworthy and reflects the multilayered coalition of traditionists, lay partisans, and financial agents who backed the occultation. The graph also reflects the nature of the ties which connected these different segments of Shiʿi society together in which ʿAli was able to deftly navigate in the propagation of pro-occultation narratives.



Key

1	3rd century
2	4th century
3	3rd/4th century (during minor ghayba)
4	Before 3rd century
5	Not sure

Vertices as generations/centuries

26
37
40
38
20
70
5
99
14
53
25
16
93
71
15
6557
6
17
92
1
34
11
94
43
9
74
3
75
10
24
19
81
76
29
42
47
58
55
49
60
7
96
97
91
27
89
62
22
90
51
95
18
101
61
12
73
32
80
100
50
102
21
67
78
79
69
52
39
23
41
98
77
13
36
54
28
46
31
86
2
48
87
63

Figure 7. Generational partition in *Kitāb al-Irshād*.

Partitions

From these names in my dataset, I created three partitions or divisions within the group of individuals. These partitions divided individuals into three categories of: (1) geographic residence; (2) centuries in which these individuals lived (based on death dates); and (3) occupations and factional leanings.

Occupations

My first partition looks at the different occupations, or perhaps better put, “social positions” that individuals in the *hadith* chains occupy. Out of the total percentage of occupations, traditionists are a plurality of 30%, Imāmi lay partisans are 25%, and finally agents/*wakīl*s are about 9%. With the exception of the “anti-Twelvers,” the different occupations have been referenced or described earlier in this chapter. The “anti-Twelvers” individuals oppose the Imami Shiʿi and are either Abbasid agents or from rival Shiʿi sectarian groups. None figure in the *hadith* chains, but are rather figures mentioned in the text (*matn*) of the *hadith*s. One of the most significant findings here is the high portion of Imami lay partisans, or community members, who are represented in the *hadith* chains.

Table 4. Occupation Distribution of Individuals in Kitāb al-Irshād Hadith Chains

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Traditionist	31	30.7
Wakil	9	8.9
Scholar	3	3
Twelver lay partisan	25	24.8
Unclear/ambiguous	17	16.8
Traditionist & Scholar	3	3
Imam	6	5.9
Anti-Twelver	7	6.9
Total	101	100

A full 50% of the *hadiths* (24/48) in my dataset have to do with relating the experiences of community members who attest to the extraordinary nature and signs of the existence of the twelfth Imām, usually narrated in terms of personal encounters with the Imām and his representatives. Moreover, what Figure 9 shows is that the ʿAli b. Muḥammad is connected with several different layers of the community, beyond just other traditionists. This challenges the notion of *hadith* transmitters as simply narrating from one another, but highlights their connections across the larger Shiʿi community and shows that Twelver *hadith* transmitters were deeply embedded in their communities and channeled the experiences of mass followers of the Imām who reported their experiences to them. ʿAli b. Muḥammad thus accepts the credibility of these reports from lay partisans and places them alongside narrations linking back to holy figures such as the Imāms. Figure 8 reflects the whole network, while Figure 9 focuses on the center of the graph for presentation purposes.

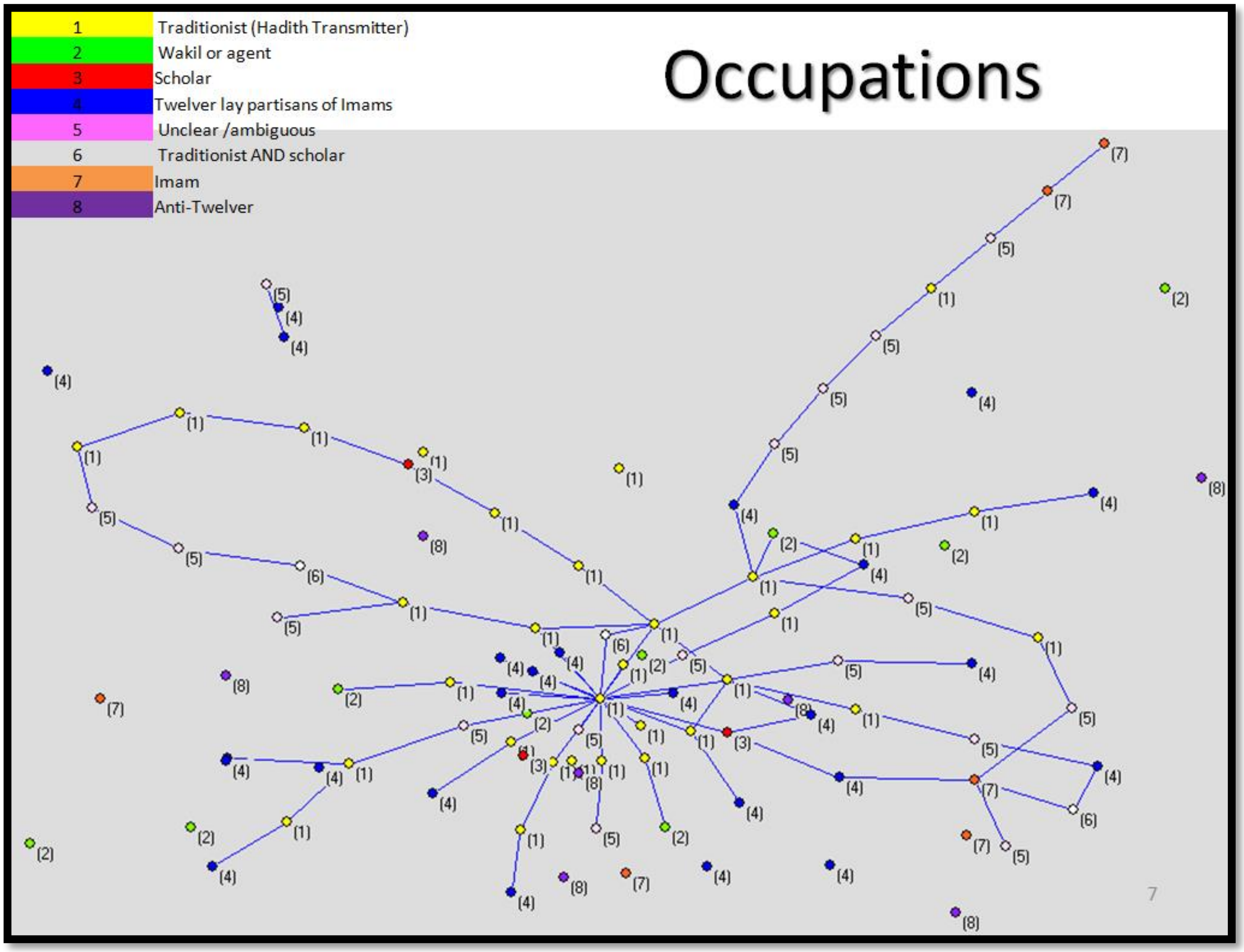
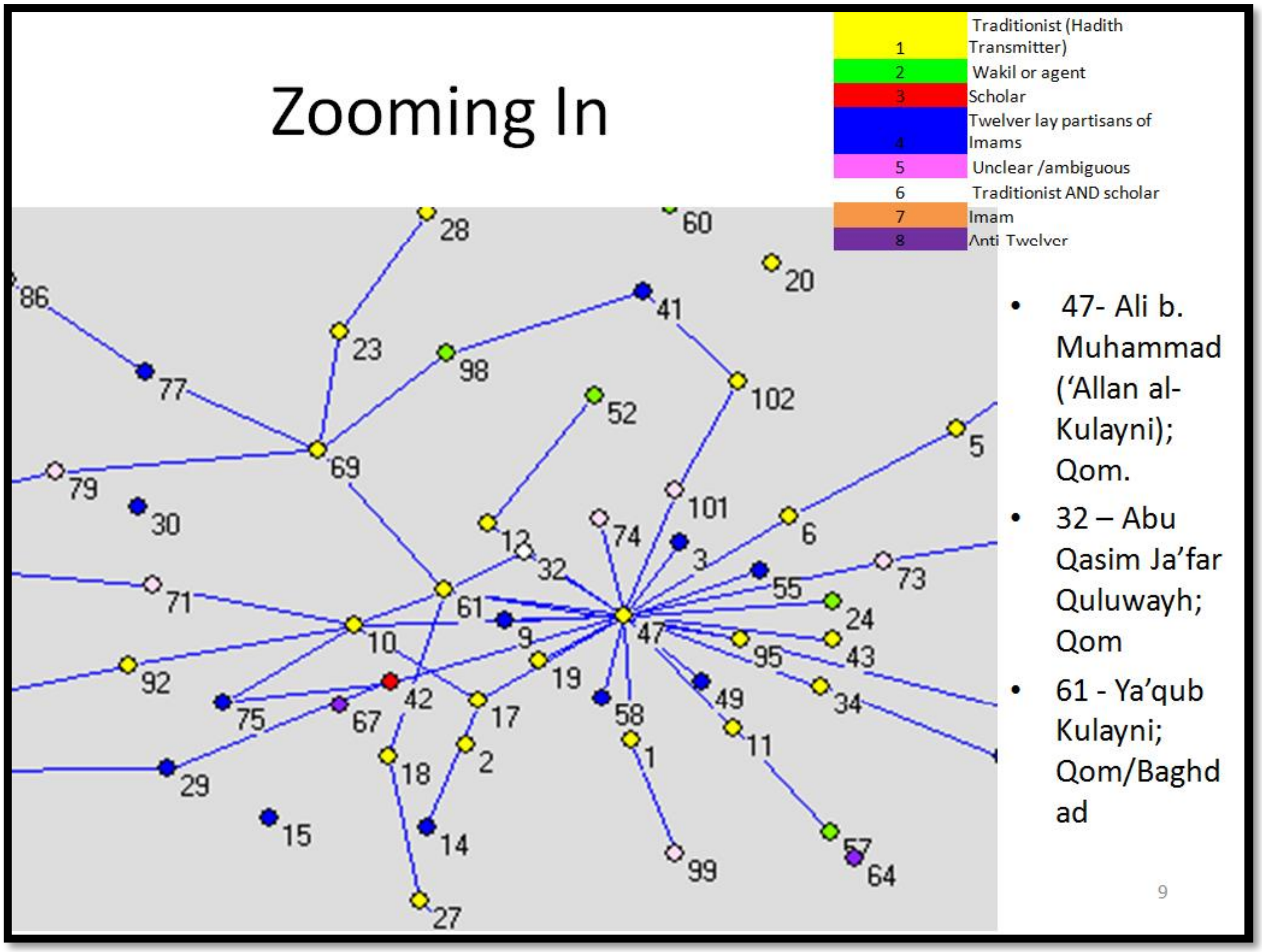

Occupations
1 Traditionist (Hadith Transmitter)
2 Wakil or agent
3 Scholar
4 Twelver lay partisans of Imams
5 Unclear /ambiguous
6 Traditionist AND scholar
7 Imam
8 Anti-Twelver
7

Figure 8. Network graph of occupations in *Kitāb al-Irshād*.



Zooming In

1	Traditionist (Hadith Transmitter)
2	Wakil or agent
3	Scholar
4	Twelver lay partisans of Imams
5	Unclear /ambiguous
6	Traditionist AND scholar
7	Imam
8	Anti Twelver

- 47- Ali b. Muhammad ('Allan al-Kulayni); Qom.
- 32 – Abu Qasim Ja'far Quluwayh; Qom
- 61 - Ya'qub Kulayni; Qom/Baghdad

9

Figure 9. Occupations partition with a special focus on the network center and the three individuals represented by numbers 47, 32, and 61. These links reflect, in particular, a "Baghdād-Qum axis" of *hadīth* transmitters who transferred both ideas regarding the occultation and teacher-student relations between these two important cities.

Geography

Geographic markers are important since they situate the study of occultation-era Shiʿa organization in more precise boundaries and can inform us about the relevance (or irrelevance) of the geographic spread of networks on the political and social structures of the Shiʿa. Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifā al-Ṭūsī outlines five geographical areas that composed the *wikāla* network during the Minor Occultation period, with each area subject to its own particular network of leaders and sub-organization. These areas included: (1) Iraq at the center; (2) Egypt, the Hijaz (the western coast of modern day Saudi Arabia), and Yemen; (3) Azerbaijān and Arrān (in eastern

Transcaucasia); (4) Qum and Dīnawar (central and western Iran), and; (5) Rayy and Khurāsān (north-central and eastern Iran).[72] I used his conceptualization of the space in which the *wakīls* functioned to guide my own construction of geographic categories based on information I collected, which differs from the five areas al-Ṭūsī proposes. Since I did not find individuals in my *hadith* chains from Azerbaijān and the Caucuses, I dropped category #3 from above, and likewise Egypt from category #2. Lastly, I renamed category #5 to include all of Iran (hence the title "Greater Iran") outside of the Qum region which is mainly for linguistic ease and clarity instead of using a Rayy-Khurasān title.

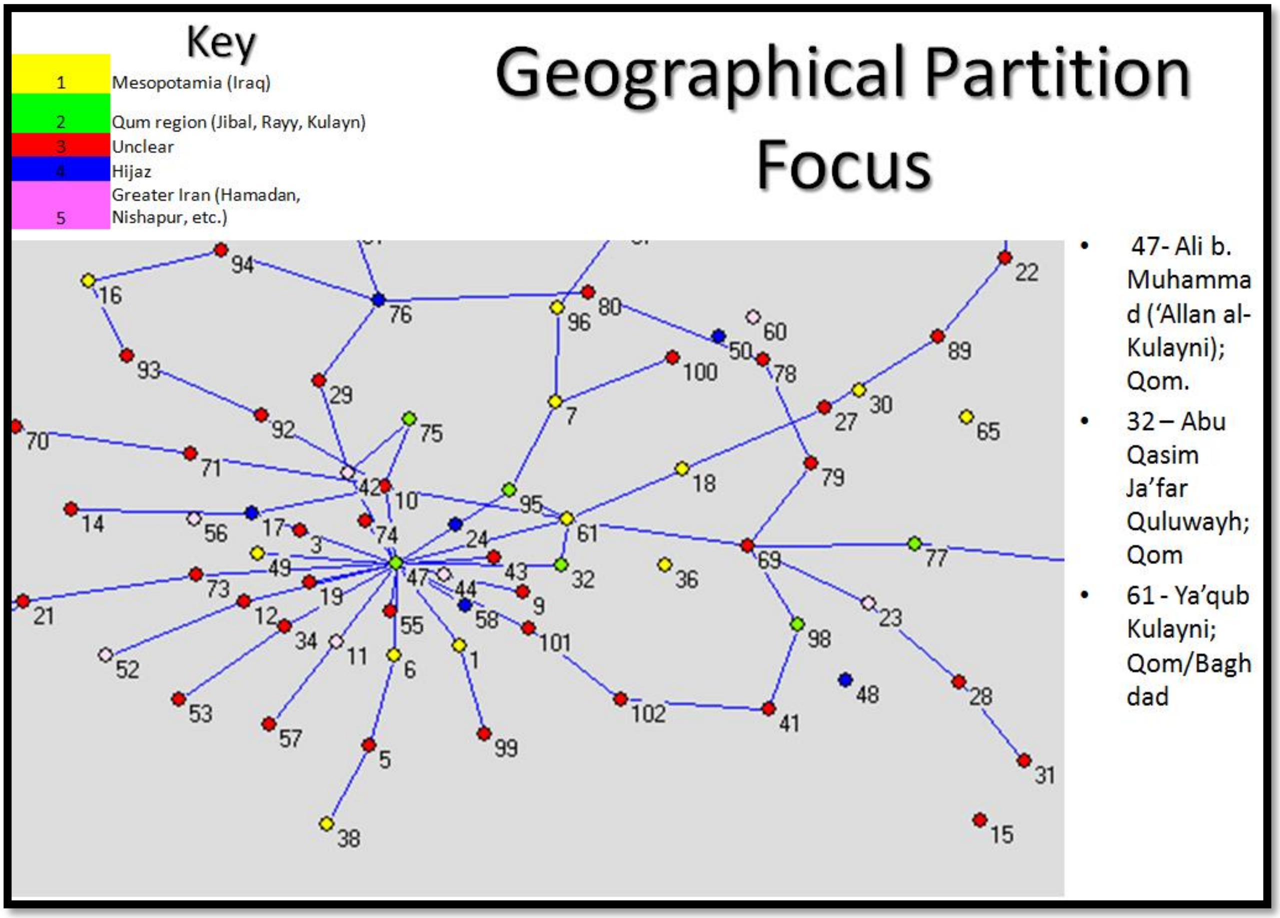

Key
1 Mesopotamia (Iraq)
2 Qum region (Jibal, Rayy, Kulayn)
3 Unclear
4 Hijaz
5 Greater Iran (Hamadan, Nishapur, etc.)
Geographical Partition Focus
94
16
76
96
80
60
50
78
22
89
93
29
100
7
30
27
65
92
75
70
71
42
10
95
18
79
14
56
17
3
74
24
61
69
77
49
47
43
32
36
73
44
9
23
21
12
19
58
101
98
52
34
11
55
6
1
48
28
53
57
102
41
5
99
31
38
15
• 47- Ali b. Muhammad ('Allan al-Kulayni); Qom.
• 32 – Abu Qasim Ja'far Quluwayh; Qom
• 61 - Ya'qub Kulayni; Qom/Baghdad

Figure 10. Focus on center of network graph on geographical locations of individuals.

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[72] Hussain, *The occultation of the Twelfth Imam* , 91-97.

The information on the geographical residence of individuals in my dataset proved to be the most elusive; I was not able to find 54% of locations of individuals. However, among those I was able to identify, 26% of the individuals were from Mesopotamia, 6% from the Hijaz, and 15% from Qum and greater Iran. This area needs more time for research since it might be possible to ascertain more about individuals through their relations with others and trying to establish where the interactions described in the *hadith* texts took place. I did not use the presence of a city or region in an individual's name to serve as a marker of their primary abode of residence. Often, the presence of a geographic marker within a name such as "al-Baghdādī," is a reflection of origin at one point in his family's history, not of his primary residence. People move and their names could move with them therefore using geographical markers within names is not necessarily sufficient to determine an individual's primary location.

The ties at the center of the geographic diagram does show the prevalence of traditionist links between Baghdad and Qum. Al-Mufīd, a Baghdādi Arab, prominently features the *hadiths* of the Qummīs Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulāynī (#61) and Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh (#32), and was also taught *hadith* sciences by the esteemed al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, a Qummī by birth. [73] Further, the relationship between Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulāynī and ʿAli b. Muḥammad ʿAllān al-Kulaynī is quite telling. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb Al-Kulāynī was native to the Qum area but later moved to Baghdād and passed away there. He may have collected many *hadith* from ʿAli b. Muḥammad while he was still situated in Qum which he then brought with him to Baghdad (in the data set there are 17 direct links between Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī and ʿAli b. Muḥammad), thus reflecting some of the transfers of knowledge and personnel that transpired between Qum and Baghdād through the axis represented by ʿAli b. Muḥammad—Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī—Muḥammad. B. Qūlawayh al-Qumī—al-Shaykh al-Mufīd.

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[73] In addition, as Newman highlights, three of the earliest collections of Twelver *ahadīth* are the *al-Maḥasin* of al-Barqī, the *Baṣāʾir al-Darajāt* of al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, and al-Kulaynī's *al-Kafī fī ʿIlm al-Dīn*. All three authors are Qummis with the latter immigrating and passing away in Baghdād; Newman, *The formative period of Twelver Shīʻism*, xix.

The personality of Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī (#61) is quite important as his massive *hadith* collection, *al-Kāfī* (the "sufficient"), is considered among the first legitimate comprehensive collection of *hadith* for Twelver Shiʿis and is still taught as one of the four foundational *hadith* collections (*al-Kutūb al-ʿArbaʿa*) in Shiʿi seminaries today. Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulāynī represents a key link, as someone raised near Qum who kept ties with the scholars/community there, and later settled in Baghdad where he influenced a whole generation of traditionists including al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and Muḥammad. B. Qūlawayh al-Qumī (#32), both of whom were al-Mufīd's teachers (with al-Qumī acting as the primary medium through which al-Kulāynī's traditions reached al-Mufīd). [74] This is of course just one manifestation of the importance of geographic associations and ties, but it demonstrates some of the relations and alliances which formed during this period between different scholars from these areas in order to form doctrinal, and perhaps socio-political, supremacy within the various Shiʿi groups of the time.

Generations

The third partition looks at the generational divide, which is fairly straight forward. This reflects the time periods in which these *hadith* were propagated. The network reinforces the primacy of the figures in the third and fourth Islamic centuries (66% of the figures live in these two centuries), showing the contextual nature and rootedness of the *hadith* propagation endeavors for proving the existence of the twelfth Imām. This is quite significant, since often *hadith* transmitters try to stretch the chains of transmission as far back to the actual time of the Prophet or earlier Imāms as possible in order to establish an indisputable link to the holy figures. The concentration of 2/3 of the figures in the third and fourth centuries demonstrates the highly contextual and timely nature of the propagation effort, instead of an attempt to prove the existence of the twelfth Imām through trying to go farther back in time

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[74] Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 577.

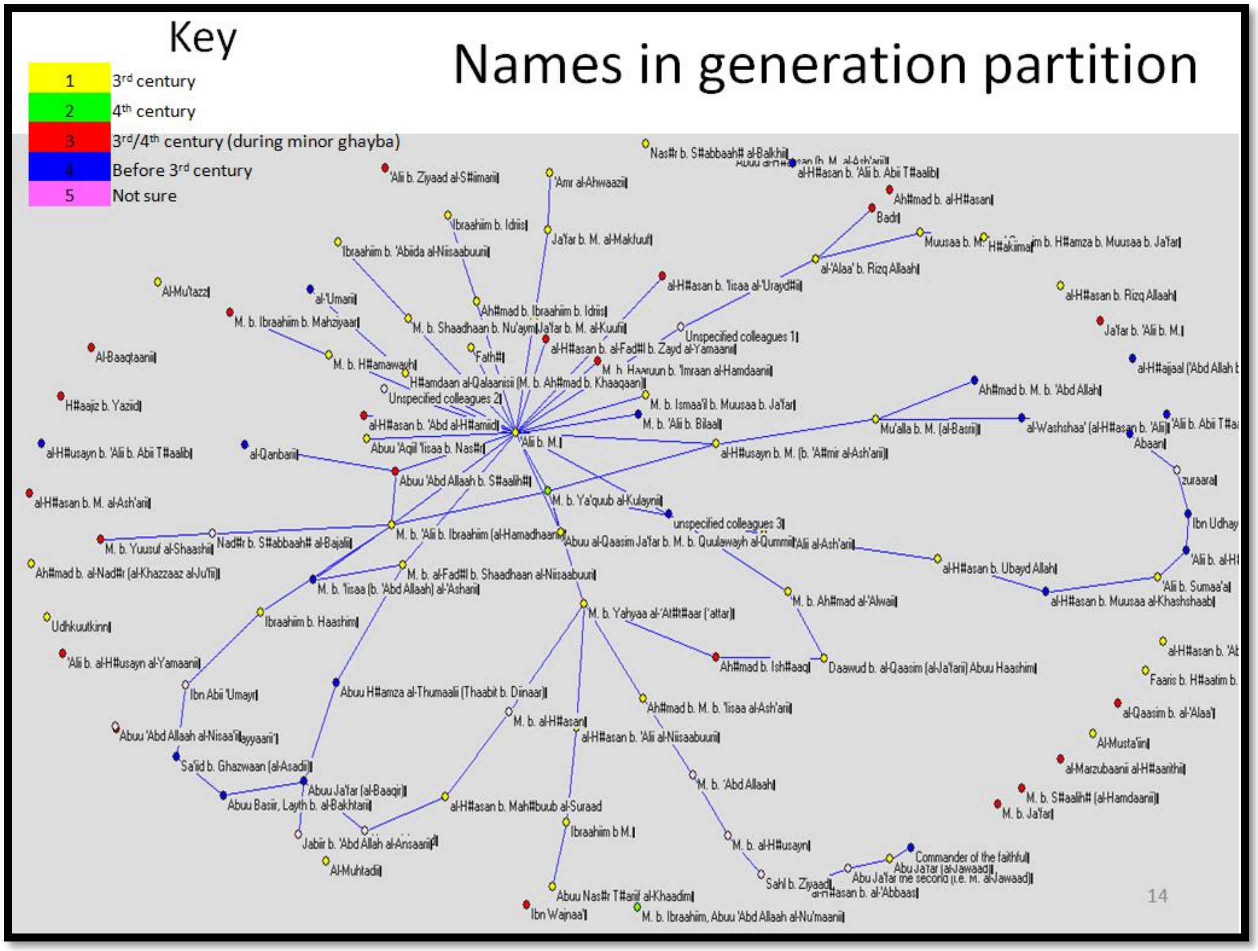
Key
1 3rd century
2 4th century
3 3rd/4th century (during minor ghayba)
4 Before 3rd century
5 Not sure
Names in generation partition
Nas#r b. S#abbaah# al-Balkhii
al-H#asan b. 'Alii b. Abii T#aalib
Ah#mad b. al-H#asan
Badr
Muusaa b. M.
H#akiima
m b. H#amza b. Muusaa b. Ja'far
al-'Alaa' b. Rizq Allaah
al-H#asan b. Rizq Allaah
Ja'far b. 'Alii b. M.
al-H#ajjaal ('Abd Allah b
'Alii b. Ziyaad al-S#iimarii
'Amr al-Ahwaazii
Ibraahiim b. Idriis
Ja'far b. M. al-Makfuuf
Ibraahiim b. 'Abiida al-Niisaabuurii
al-H#asan b. 'Iisaa al-'Urayd#ii
Al-Mu'tazz
al-'Umarii
M. b. Ibraahiim b. Mahziyaar
Ah#mad b. Ibraahiim b. Idriis
M. b. Shaadhaan b. Nu'aym
Ja'far b. M. al-Kuufii
Unspecified colleagues 1
Al-Baaqtaanii
Fath#
al-H#asan b. al-Fad#l b. Zayd al-Yamaanii
M. b. H#amawayh
M. b. Haaruun b. 'Imraan al-Hamdaanii
H#amdaan al-Qalaanisii (M. b. Ah#mad b. Khaaqaan)
Unspecified colleagues 2
M. b. Ismaa'iil b. Muusaa b. Ja'far
H#aajiz b. Yaziid
al-H#asan b. 'Abd al-H#amiid
M. b. 'Alii b. Bilaal
Ah#mad b. M. b. 'Abd Allah
Abuu 'Aqiil 'Iisaa b. Nas#r
'Alii b. M.
Mu'alla b. M. (al-Basrii)
al-Washshaa' (al-H#asan b. 'Alii)
'Alii b. Abii T#a
Abaan
al-H#usayn b. 'Alii b. Abii T#aalib
al-Qanbarii
al-H#usayn b. M. (b. 'A#mir al-Ash'arii)
zuraara
Abuu 'Abd Allaah b. S#aalih#
al-H#asan b. M. al-Ash'arii
M. b. Ya'quub al-Kulaynii
unspecified colleagues 3
Ibn Udhay
M. b. Yuusuf al-Shaashii
Nad#r b. S#abbaah# al-Bajalii
M. b. 'Alii b. Ibraahiim (al-Hamadhaanii)
Abuu al-Qaasim Ja'far b. M. b. Quulawayh al-Qummii
'Alii al-Ash'arii
'Alii b. al-H
Ah#mad b. al-Nad#r (al-Khazzaaz al-Ju'fii)
M. b. al-Fad#l b. Shaadhaan al-Niisaabuurii
al-H#asan b. Ubayd Allah
M. b. 'Iisaa (b. 'Abd Allaah) al-'Asharii
'Alii b. Sumaa'a
al-H#asan b. Muusaa al-Khashshaab
M. b. Ah#mad al-'Alwaii
Udhkuutkinn
Ibraahiim b. Haashim
M. b. Yahyaa al-'At#t#aar ('attar)
al-H#asan b. 'Ab
'Alii b. al-H#usayn al-Yamaanii
Ah#mad b. Ish#aaq
Daawud b. al-Qaasim (al-Ja'farii) Abuu Haashim
Faaris b. H#aatim b.
Ibn Abii 'Umayr
Abuu H#amza al-Thumaali (Thaabit b. Diinaar)
Ah#mad b. M. b. 'Iisaa al-Ash'arii
M. b. al-H#asan
al-Qaasim b. al-'Alaa'
Abuu 'Abd Allaah al-Nisaa'ii
al-Sayyaarii
al-H#asan b. 'Alii al-Niisaabuurii
Al-Musta'iin
Sa'iid b. Ghazwaan (al-Asadii)
al-Marzubaanii al-H#aarithii
M. b. 'Abd Allaah
Abuu Ja'far (al-Baaqir)
M. b. S#aalih# (al-Hamdaanii)
Abuu Basiir, Layth b. al-Bakhtarii
al-H#asan b. Mah#buub al-Suraad
M. b. Ja'far
Ibraahiim b M.
Jabiir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansaarii
M. b. al-H#usayn
Al-Muhtadii
Commander of the faithful
Abu Ja'far (al-Jawaad)
Abu Ja'far the second (i.e. M. al-Jawaad)
Sahl b. Ziyaad
al-H#asan b. al-'Abbaas
14
Abuu Nas#r T#arif al-Khaadim
Ibn Wajnaa'
M. b. Ibraahiim, Abuu 'Abd Allaah al-Nu'maanii

Figure 11. Full names of individuals in the generational partition.

Visualizing Imami Networks – *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿma*

This section presents network analysis results taken from narrations found in Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAli Ibn Bābawayh al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq’s (d. 381/991) well known *hadith* collection *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿma*. This work is considered one of the key collections of traditions and narrations for the Twelver Shiʿa on the topic of occultation and Twelver beliefs about the *mahdī*. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, notably, was one al-Shakyh al-Mufīd’s (the author of *Kitāb al-Irshād* covered in the previous section, d. 413/1022) main teachers. While they had certain disagreements regarding the use of juristic reasoning and dialectic theology, and al-Mufīd wrote a critique entitled *Taṣḥīḥ al-Iʿtiqād al-Imāmīya* (“Emendation of the Beliefs of the Imami Shiʿa”) responding to his teacher al-Ṣadūq’s work entitled *Iʿtiqādāt al-Imāmīya* (“The Beliefs of the Imami Shiʿa”), they nonetheless shared the same outlook on the doctrine of occultation and both authored crucial works on the topic and compiled chapters on “those who saw the Twelfth Imam.”

The narrations analyzed below are taken from chapters 42 and 43 of *Kamāl al-Dīn* entitled “Narrations on the Birth of al-Qāʾim” (i.e. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī), and “Those Who Saw al-Qāʾim and Spoke with Him.” The total number of narrations is 44 and includes 156 unique narrators.[75] The partitions and categorization of the narrators found in the *hadith* chains are the same as in the previous section on *Kitāb al-Mufīd*, with the addition that in this data set, data on the category of “trustworthiness and untrustworthiness” (*thiqa/qayr thiqa*) was also collected. These categorizations were taken from the previously mentioned eight key biographical dictionaries of the Twelver Shiʿa (*rijāl thamānīya*).[76]

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[75] This compares with the 48 narrations and 101 unique narrators in the network analysis for Shaykh Mufīd’s *Kitāb al-Irshād*.

The results of the network analysis show a few very interesting and striking results. First, whereas lay partisans made up a quarter of the narrators in *Kitāb al-Irshād*, they made up over half of the narrators in *Kamāl al-Dīn* (see Table 3). While there are some overlaps with the narrators found in *Kitāb al-Irshād*, most of the individuals are unique to Shaykh Ṣadūq which reflects a similar strategy of narration collection and the available social subset that bore witness to seeing the Twelfth Imam, Muḥammad al-Ḥasan.

Table 5: Occupation Distribution of Individuals in Kamāl al-Dīn Hadith Chains

Occupation	**Percentage (%)**
Traditionist	9.62
Wakil	5.77
Scholar	3.85
Twelver Lay Partisan	55.13
Unclear/Ambiguous	8.98
Traditionist & Scholar	12.82
Imam	3.21
Traditionist AND Wakil	0.64
Total %	**100%**
Total Number of Individuals	**156**

What Figure 12 shows below was the interlinked nature of different layers of Imami society with one another and how this was reflected into *hadith* collections. As the figure demonstrates, many scholars and traditionists were networked with one another, which is to be expected, since they studied and took narrations from one another. What is more surprising is how certain regular community members (lay partisans) played roles as key links that in narrating *hadith* to these traditionists. As Figure 13 demonstrates, Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (at the bottom of the map) played a key role as a collector and hadith broker, in a sense, between other important scholars and figures, but he just as importantly chose narrations from lay partisans, or community members, such as Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm who was situated as a key link in the otherwise scholarly-dominated chain of narrators.

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[76] If there was a disagreement between the authors in the biographical dictionaries regarding a narrator's trustworthiness, the decision of the majority of authors was taken as that individual's label of trustworthiness. If there was an even amount of authors who mentioned an individual was trustworthy or untrustworthy, i.e. it was a split decision, that individual would be categorized as "split" in terms of trustworthiness.

Figure 12: Macro View of the Occupation Partition in Kamāl al-Dīn

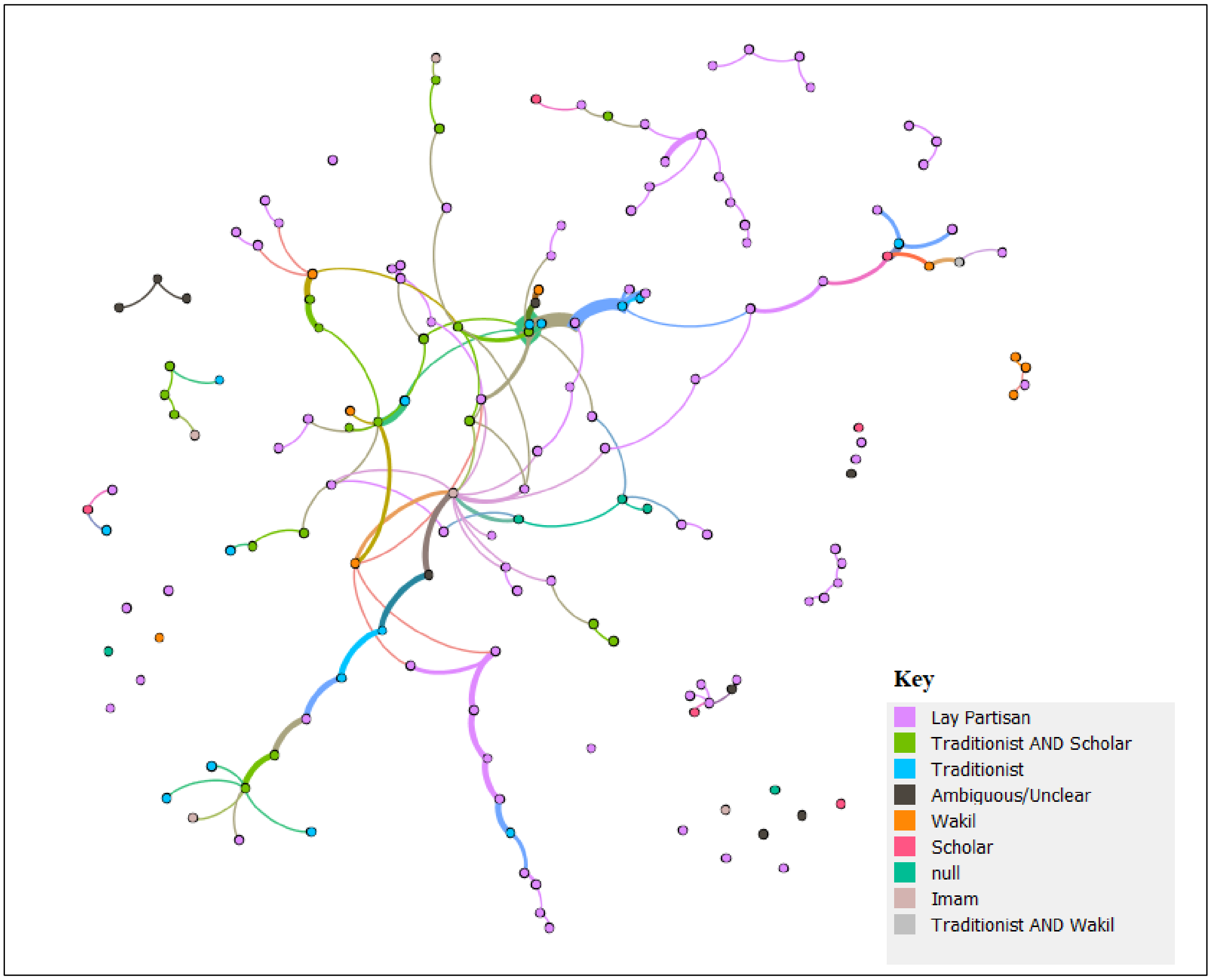

Key
Lay Partisan
Traditionist AND Scholar
Traditionist
Ambiquous/Unclear
Wakil
Scholar
null
Imam
Traditionist AND Wakil

Figure 13: Subsection of Occupation Partition in Kamāl al-Dīn

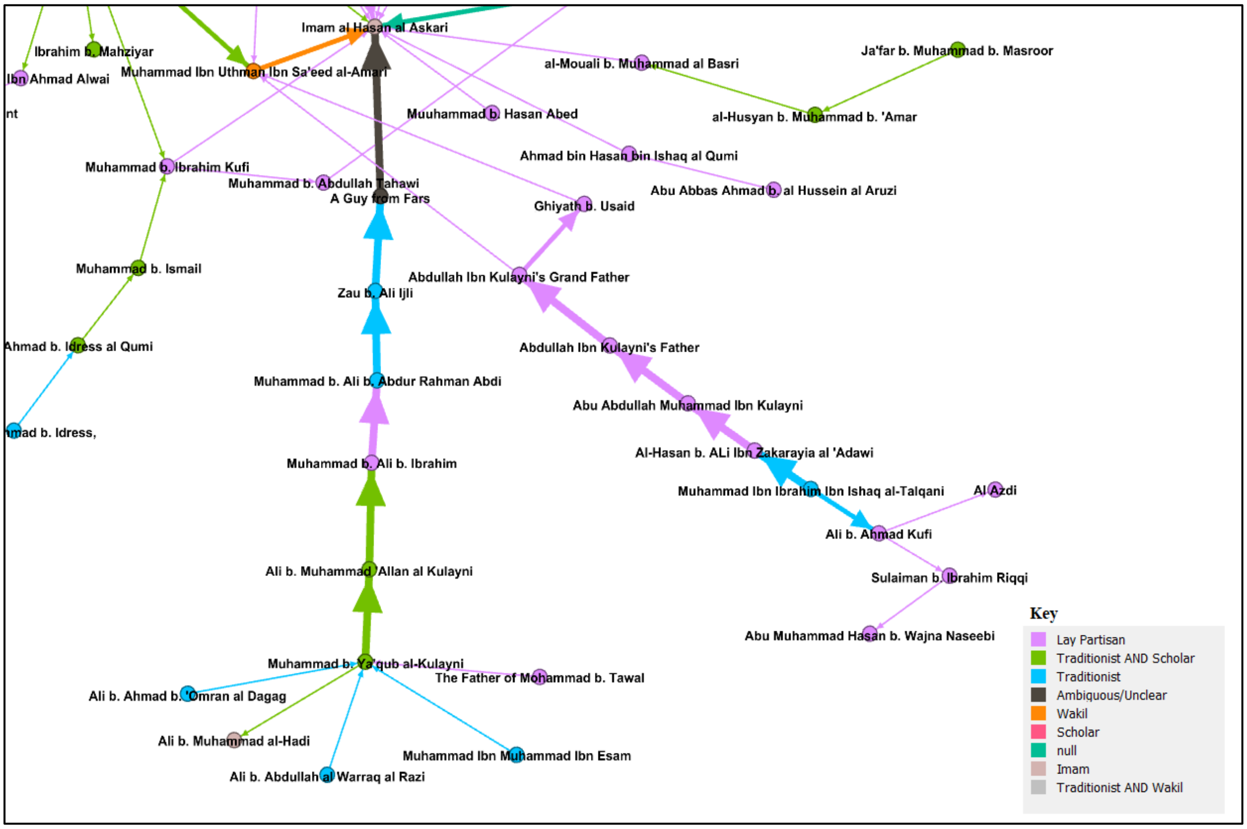
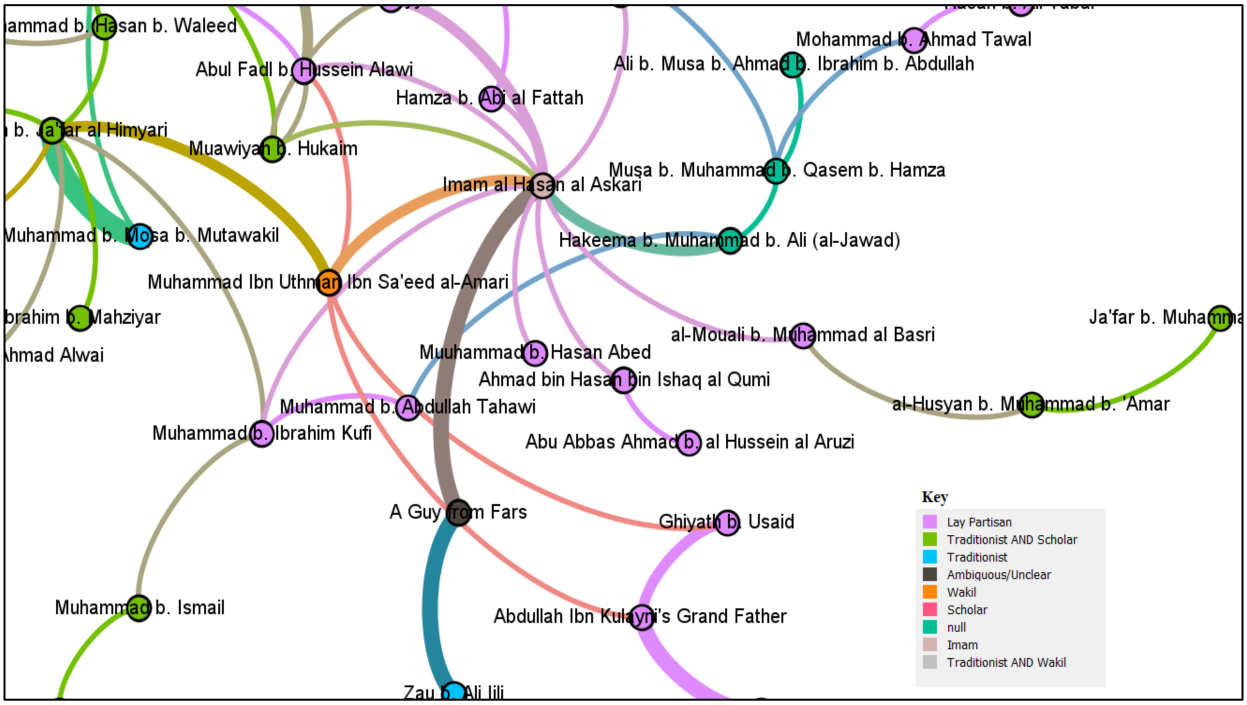

Imam al Hasan al Askari
Ibrahim b. Mahziyar
Ibn Ahmad Alwai
Muhammad Ibn Uthman Ibn Sa'eed al-Amari
al-Mouali b. Muhammad al Basri
Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Masroor
nt
Muuhammad b. Hasan Abed
al-Husyan b. Muhammad b. 'Amar
Ahmad bin Hasan bin Ishaq al Qumi
Muhammad b. Ibrahim Kufi
Muhammad b. Abdullah Tahawi
A Guy from Fars
Abu Abbas Ahmad b. al Hussein al Aruzi
Ghiyath b. Usaid
Muhammad b. Ismail
Abdullah Ibn Kulayni's Grand Father
Zau b. Ali Ijli
Ahmad b. Idress al Qumi
Abdullah Ibn Kulayni's Father
Muhammad b. Ali b. Abdur Rahman Abdi
Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Kulayni
mad b. Idress,
Muhammad b. Ali b. Ibrahim
Al-Hasan b. ALi Ibn Zakarayia al 'Adawi
Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Ishaq al-Talqani
Al Azdi
Ali b. Ahmad Kufi
Ali b. Muhammad 'Allan al Kulayni
Sulaiman b. Ibrahim Riqqi
Key
Abu Muhammad Hasan b. Wajna Naseebi
Lay Partisan
Traditionist AND Scholar
Traditionist
Ambiquous/Unclear
Wakil
Scholar
null
Imam
Traditionist AND Wakil
Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Kulayni
The Father of Mohammad b. Tawal
Ali b. Ahmad b. 'Omran al Dagag
Ali b. Muhammad al-Hadi
Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Esam
Ali b. Abdullah al Warraq al Razi

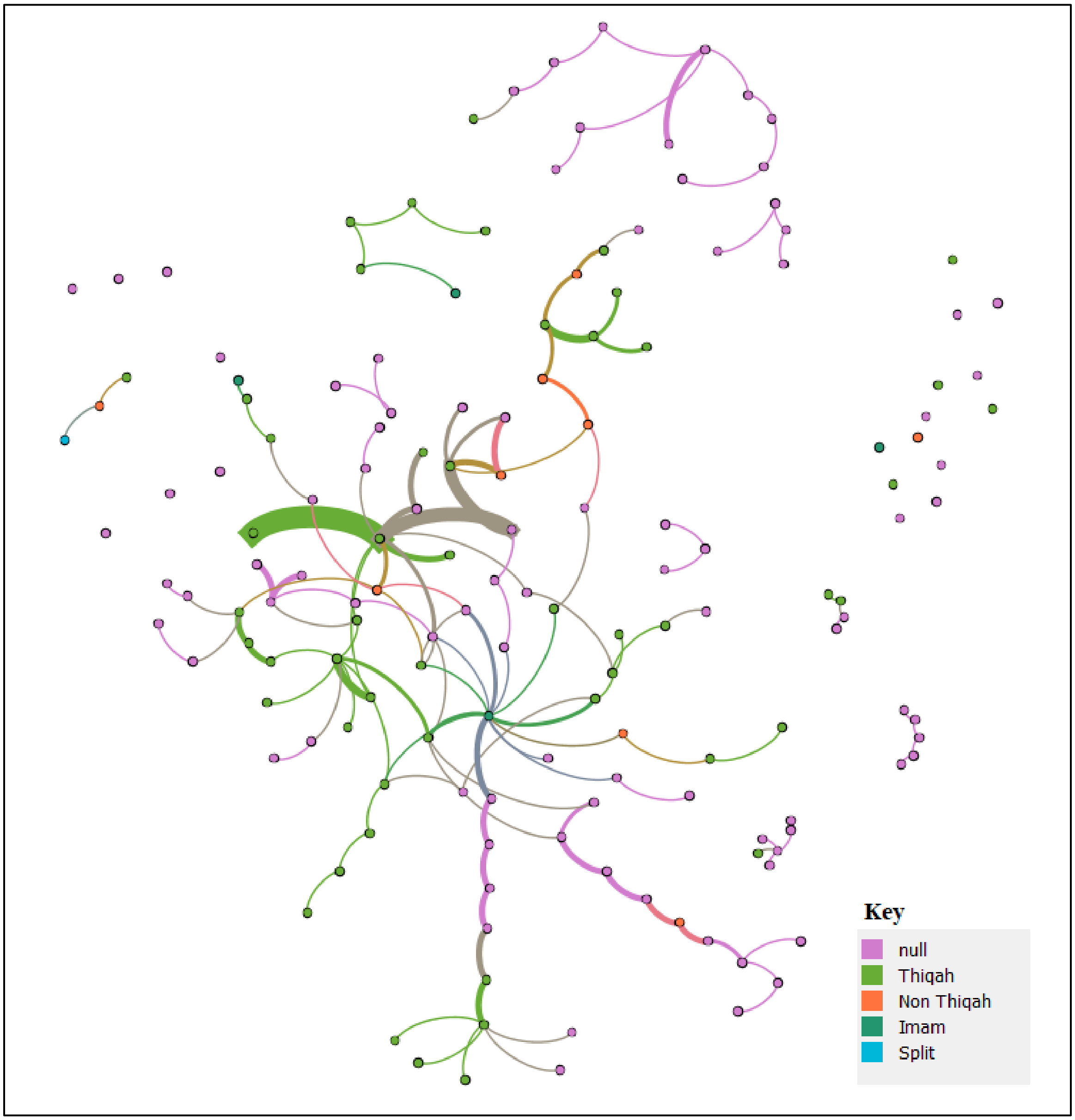
Figure 14: Subsection of Occupation Partition in Kamāl al-Dīn


ammad b. Hasan b. Waleed
Abul Fadl b. Hussein Alawi
Mohammad b. Ahmad Tawal
Ali b. Musa b. Ahmad b. Ibrahim b. Abdullah
Hamza b. Abi al Fattah
b. Ja'far al Himyari
Muawiyah b. Hukaim
Musa b. Muhammad b. Qasem b. Hamza
Imam al Hasan al Askari
Muhammad b. Mosa b. Mutawakil
Hakeema b. Muhammad b. Ali (al-Jawad)
Muhammad Ibn Uthman Ibn Sa'eed al-Amari
brahim b. Mahziyar
Ja'far b. Muhamma
al-Mouali b. Muhammad al Basri
hmad Alwai
Muuhammad b. Hasan Abed
Ahmad bin Hasan bin Ishaq al Qumi
al-Husyan b. Muhammad b. 'Amar
Muhammad b. Abdullah Tahawi
Muhammad b. Ibrahim Kufi
Abu Abbas Ahmad b. al Hussein al Aruzi
Key
Lay Partisan
Traditionist AND Scholar
Traditionist
Ambiquous/Unclear
Wakil
Scholar
null
Imam
Traditionist AND Wakil
A Guy from Fars
Ghiyath b. Usaid
Muhammad b. Ismail
Abdullah Ibn Kulayni's Grand Father
Zau b. Ali Ijli

Figures 15 and 16 focus on the “trustworthiness” of narrators by later Shiʿi authors of biographical dictionaries as found in the *Rijāl Thamāniyya* corpus mentioned in the previous section. This category focuses on whether the narrator in question was a reputable person: were they known for openly breaking Islamic norms? Did they have a good reputation? And could their word and narrations be taken as trustworthy? These determinations were relatively more scarce—only 42% of individuals had information regarding their trustworthiness in the primary Shiʿi biographical dictionaries. However, these maps are still very interesting and useful as they reflect certain patterns of *hadith* transmission in the larger universe of transmitters, and they also reveal how key chains of transmission were closed networks. This can be seen in Figure 16, for example on the left-hand side of the map showing trustworthy figures in green, including figures such as Hamdān b. Salmān al-Nīsābūrī and Muḥammad b. Amīr al-Azdī narrating from the eighth Imam in the Twelver line, Imam Mūsā al-Kādhim.

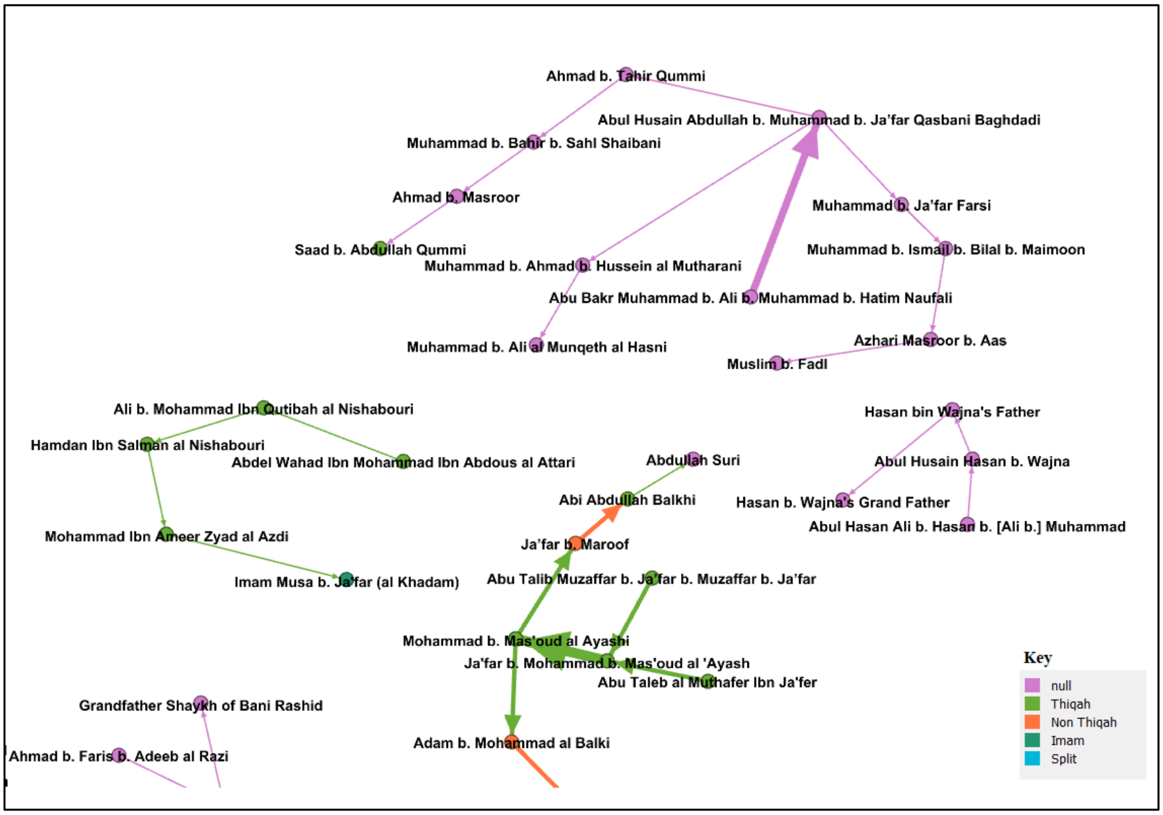
Interestingly, these network maps also show also demonstrate several closed networks made up of a majority of individuals of unknown trustworthiness. In the top right of the map in Figure 16 we find a dozen individuals all of whom are unknown narrating *hadith* from one another with the sole exception of Saʿd b. Abdullāh al-Qummī (d. likely 300-1/912-14) who was brokering these *hadith* to his larger community of Twelver scholars and transmitters. Al-Qummī is the famous author of the extant heresiographical work *al-Maqālāt* and was the teacher of Shaykh Ṣadūq’s father who was also a well-known scholar in his own right.

Figure 15: Macro View of the Trustworthiness Partition in Kamāl al-Dīn


Key
null
Thiqah
Non Thiqah
Imam
Split

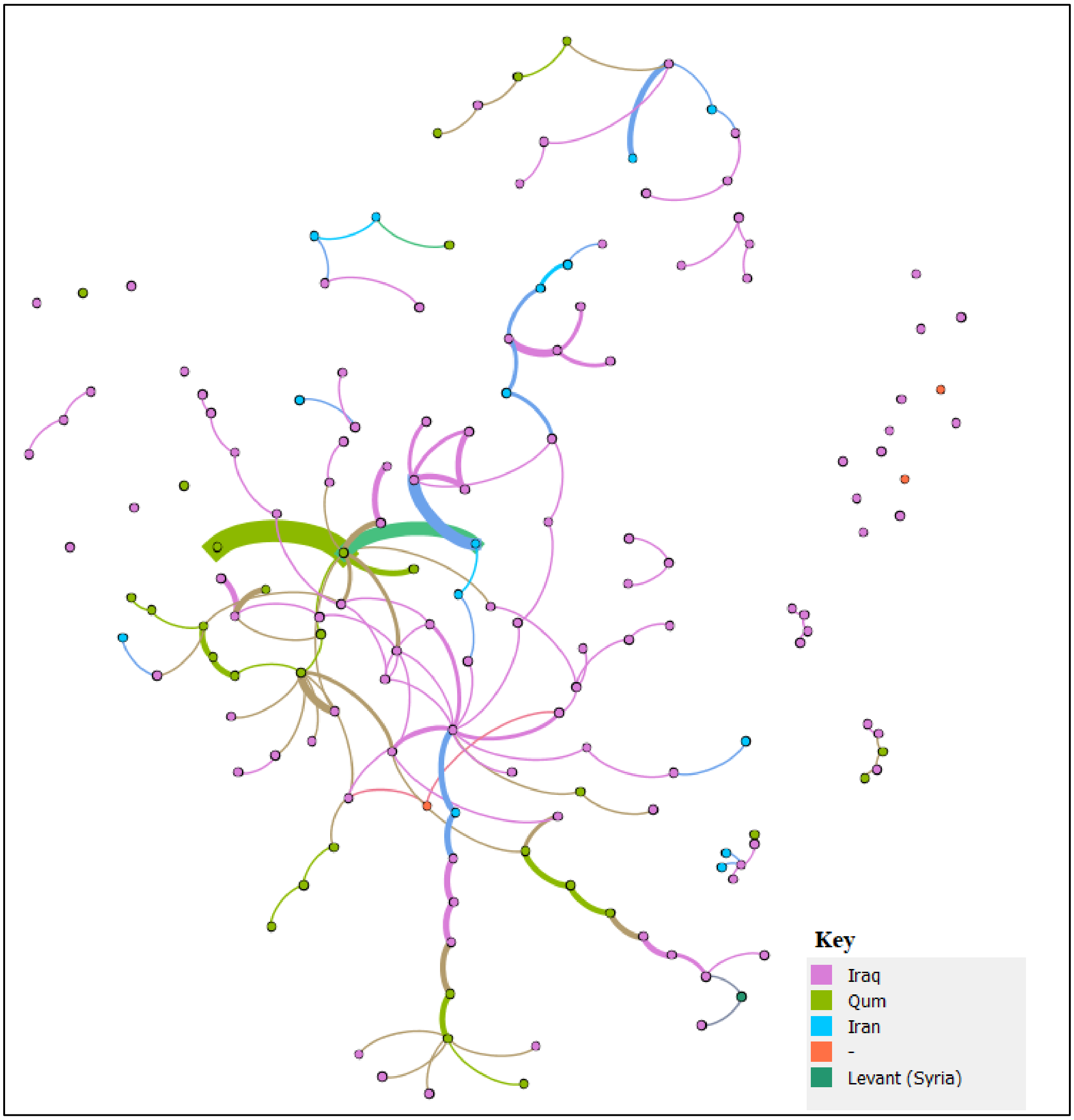
Overall view of the "trustworthiness" network map. Thiqa (green): trustworthy; Non-thiqa (orange): non-trustworthy; Null: No information found in the biographical dictionaries.

Figure 16: Closed Networks in the Trustworthiness Partition in Kamāl al-Dīn


Ahmad b. Tahir Qummi
Abul Husain Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Ja'far Qasbani Baghdadi
Muhammad b. Bahir b. Sahl Shaibani
Ahmad b. Masroor
Muhammad b. Ja'far Farsi
Saad b. Abdullah Qummi
Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Hussein al Mutharani
Muhammad b. Ismail b. Bilal b. Maimoon
Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ali b. Muhammad b. Hatim Naufali
Muhammad b. Ali al Munqeth al Hasni
Azhari Masroor b. Aas
Muslim b. Fadl
Ali b. Mohammad Ibn Qutibah al Nishabouri
Hasan bin Wajna's Father
Hamdan Ibn Salman al Nishabouri
Abdel Wahad Ibn Mohammad Ibn Abdous al Attari
Abdullah Suri
Abul Husain Hasan b. Wajna
Abi Abdullah Balkhi
Hasan b. Wajna's Grand Father
Abul Hasan Ali b. Hasan b. [Ali b.] Muhammad
Mohammad Ibn Ameer Zyad al Azdi
Ja'far b. Maroof
Imam Musa b. Ja'far (al Khadam)
Abu Talib Muzaffar b. Ja'far b. Muzaffar b. Ja'far
Mohammad b. Mas'oud al Ayashi
Ja'far b. Mohammad b. Mas'oud al 'Ayash
Abu Taleb al Muthafer Ibn Ja'fer
Grandfather Shaykh of Bani Rashid
Adam b. Mohammad al Balki
Ahmad b. Faris b. Adeeb al Razi
Key
null
Thiqah
Non Thiqah
Imam
Split

Subsection of the Trustworthiness network map. Thiqa (green): trustworthy; Non-Thiqa (orange): non-trustworthy; Null: No information found in the biographical dictionaries.

Figure 17: Macro View of the Geography Partition

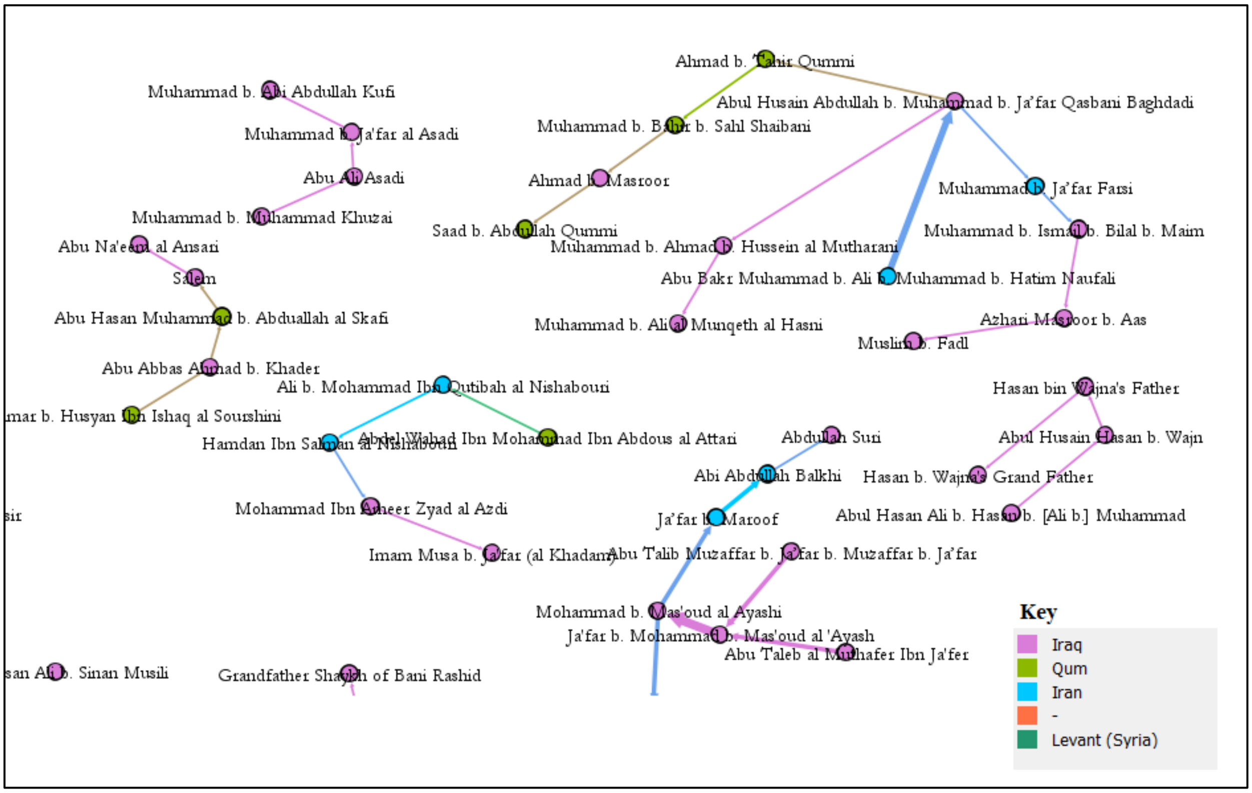


Network map of geographical origin of transmitters.

In the dataset for geographical partitions, the majority of the geographical background of the narrators was found to be in Iraq (68.5%), while 28.9% were from Iran (19.2% from Qumm, and 9.6% from the rest of Iran). This replicates the pattern found in the previous dataset in *Kitāb al-Irshād* and the strong ties between Iran and Iraq, particularly between the cities of Baghdad, Samarra, Qum, and Kulayn (near modern Tehran). In Figure 18, below, we find that Saʿd b.

ʿAbdullah al-Qummī who was connected to many lay partisans and community members and brought in *hadith* from their experiences, had drawn from a series of narrators connected to the communal network spread across Iran and Iraq. We also find closed networks both within Iraq (i.e. between Abū ʿAli Asadi – Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Asadi and others on the left) as well as closed mixed networks from Iraq and Iran (i.e. between Abū Ḥasan Muḥammad – Abū Abbās Aḥmad b. Khiḍr and others). This shows closed networks of transmitters both in local areas as well as transregionally that demonstrates an interesting spread of connected independent narrators.

Figure 18: Subsection of Geography Network, Pt. 1


Ahmad b. Tahir Qummi
Muhammad b. Abi Abdullah Kufi
Abul Husain Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Ja'far Qasbani Baghdadi
Muhammad b. Ja'far al Asadi
Muhammad b. Bahr b. Sahl Shaibani
Abu Ali Asadi
Ahmad b. Masroor
Muhammad b. Ja'far Farsi
Muhammad b. Muhammad Khuzai
Saad b. Abdullah Qummi
Muhammad b. Ismail b. Bilal b. Maim
Abu Na'eem al Ansari
Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Hussein al Mutharani
Salem
Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ali b. Muhammad b. Hatim Naufali
Abu Hasan Muhammad b. Abduallah al Skafi
Muhammad b. Ali al Munqeth al Hasni
Azhari Masroor b. Aas
Muslim b. Fadl
Abu Abbas Ahmad b. Khader
Ali b. Mohammad Ibn Qutibah al Nishabouri
Hasan bin Wajna's Father
mar b. Husyan Ibn Ishaq al Sourshini
Hamdan Ibn Salman al Nishabouri
Abdel Wahad Ibn Mohammad Ibn Abdous al Attari
Abdullah Suri
Abul Husain Hasan b. Wajn
Abi Abdullah Balkhi
Hasan b. Wajna's Grand Father
sir
Mohammad Ibn Ameer Zyad al Azdi
Ja'far b. Maroof
Abul Hasan Ali b. Hasan b. [Ali b.] Muhammad
Imam Musa b. Ja'far (al Khadam)
Abu Talib Muzaffar b. Ja'far b. Muzaffar b. Ja'far
Mohammad b. Mas'oud al Ayashi
Ja'far b. Mohammad b. Mas'oud al 'Ayash
Abu Taleb al Muthafer Ibn Ja'fer
san Ali b. Sinan Musili
Grandfather Shaykh of Bani Rashid
Key
Iraq
Qum
Iran
-
Levant (Syria)

Moreover, given that the narrations found in *Kamāl al-Dīn* were taken from those who directly saw or could attest to the miraculous qualities of the Imam al-Mahdi, we find that his father, Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī figures quite prominently at the center of the network map (see bottom right of Figure 19 below). These networks demonstrate a strong Iran (mainly from

Qum)—Iraq (Baghdad and Samarra) axis. They also show a large amount of network links between the Qummis (seen at the top of Figure 19), Muḥammad b. ʿAli Majilawayh, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār, and al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli Nīsābūrī. This network was connected to the figure of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh, an Iraqi who narrated hadith from servants with intimate knowledge of the Imam's household, and were also connected to Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī through multiple lines, including the Iraqi link of Jaʿfar b. Malik al-Farazī and the link of Abu-l Faḍl b. Ḥusayn al-ʿAlawī.

Figure 19: Subsection of Geography Network Pt. 2

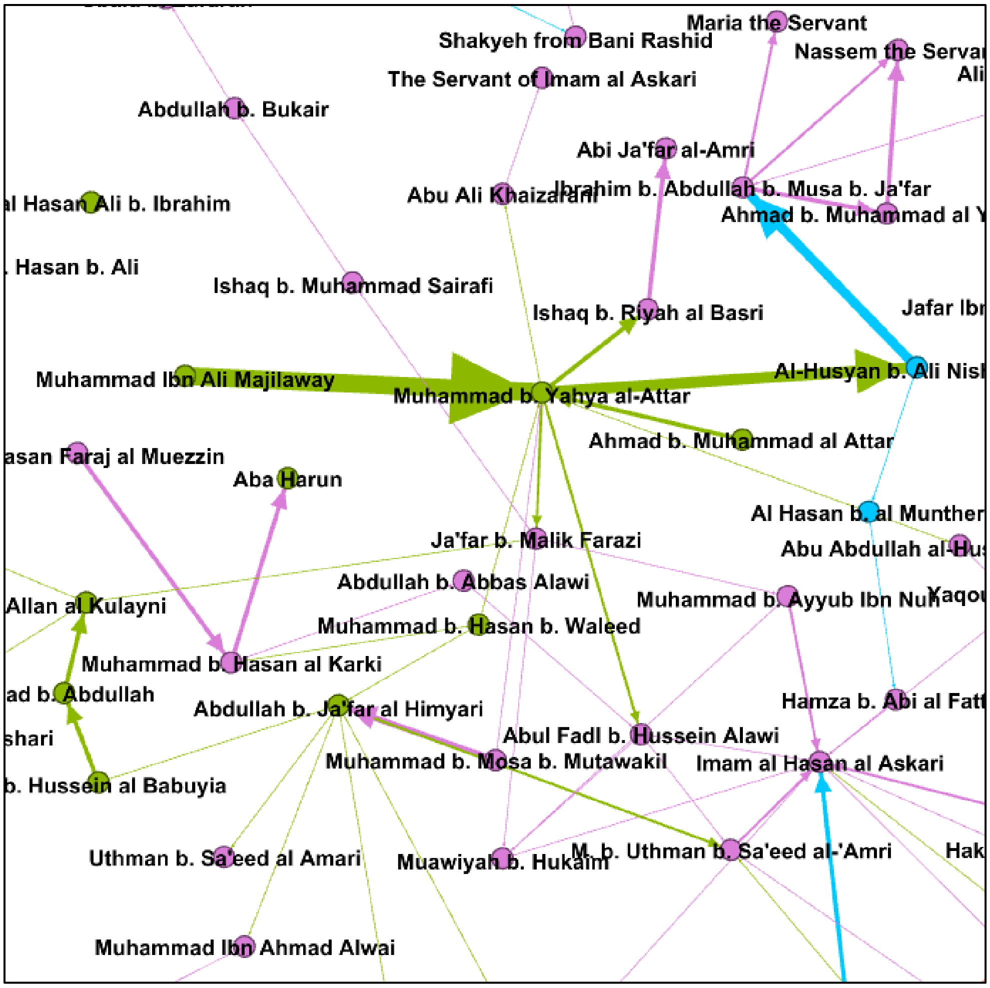

Maria the Servant
Shakyeh from Bani Rashid
Nassem the Servai
Ali
The Servant of Imam al Askari
Abdullah b. Bukair
Abi Ja'far al-Amri
Abu Ali Khaizarani
Ibrahim b. Abdullah
b. Musa b. Ja'far
Ahmad b. Muhammad al Y
l Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim
. Hasan b. Ali
Ishaq b. Muhammad Sairafi
Ishaq b. Riyah al Basri
Jafar Ibr
Muhammad Ibn Ali Majilaway
Al-Husyan b. Ali Nisl
Muhammad b. Yahya al-Attar
Ahmad b. Muhammad al Attar
asan Faraj al Muezzin
Aba Harun
Al Hasan b. al Munther
Ja'far b. Malik Farazi
Abu Abdullah al-Hu
Abdullah b. Abbas Alawi
Muhammad b. Ayyub Ibn Nuh
Yaqou
Allan al Kulayni
Muhammad b. Hasan b. Waleed
Muhammad b. Hasan al Karki
ad b. Abdullah
Abdullah b. Ja'far al Himyari
Hamza b. Abi al Fatt
shari
Abul Fadl b. Hussein Alawi
Muhammad b. Mosa b. Mutawakil
Imam al Hasan al Askari
b. Hussein al Babuyia
Uthman b. Sa'eed al Amari
Muawiyah b. Hukaim
M. b. Uthman b. Sa'eed al-'Amri
Hak
Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Alwai

Figure 20: Degree Map for a network graph subsection

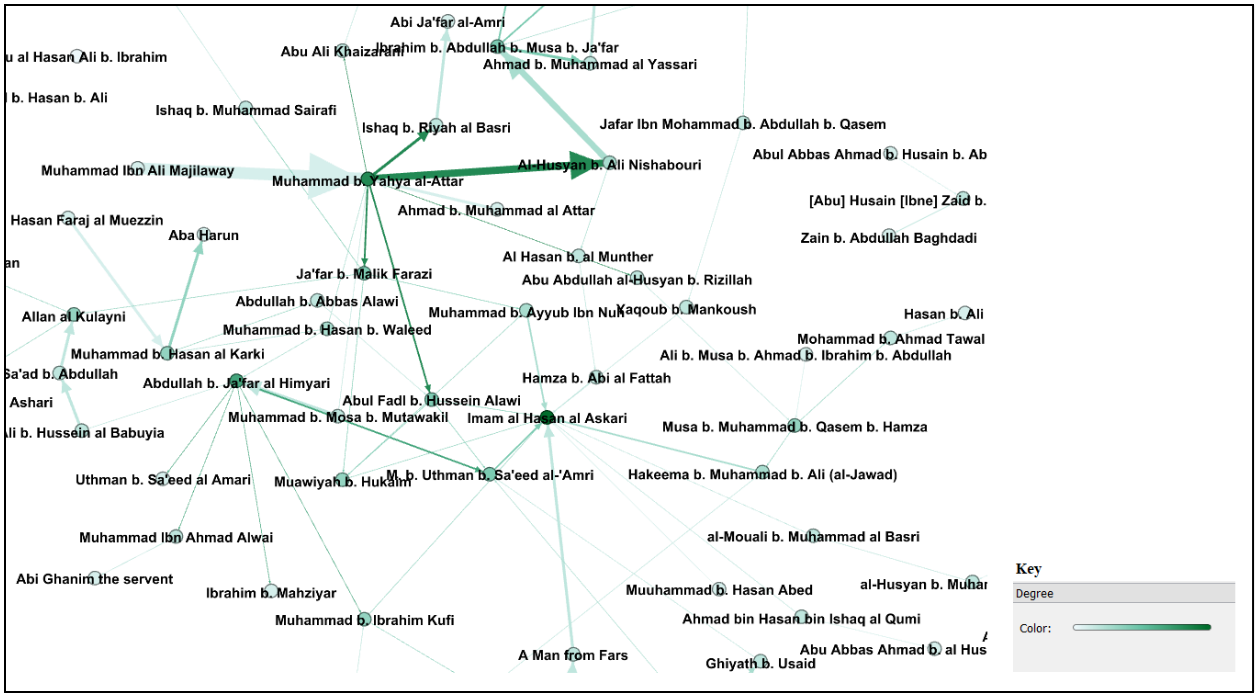

Abi Ja'far al-Amri
u al Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim
Abu Ali Khaizarani
Ibrahim b. Abdullah b. Musa b. Ja'far
Ahmad b. Muhammad al Yassari
l b. Hasan b. Ali
Ishaq b. Muhammad Sairafi
Ishaq b. Riyah al Basri
Jafar Ibn Mohammad b. Abdullah b. Qasem
Abul Abbas Ahmad b. Husain b. Ab
Muhammad Ibn Ali Majilaway
Al-Husyan b. Ali Nishabouri
Muhammad b. Yahya al-Attar
Ahmad b. Muhammad al Attar
[Abu] Husain [Ibne] Zaid b.
Hasan Faraj al Muezzin
Aba Harun
Zain b. Abdullah Baghdadi
an
Al Hasan b. al Munther
Ja'far b. Malik Farazi
Abu Abdullah al-Husyan b. Rizillah
Abdullah b. Abbas Alawi
Allan al Kulayni
Muhammad b. Ayyub Ibn Nuh
Kaqoub b. Mankoush
Hasan b. Ali
Muhammad b. Hasan b. Waleed
Mohammad b. Ahmad Tawal
Muhammad b. Hasan al Karki
Ali b. Musa b. Ahmad b. Ibrahim b. Abdullah
Sa'ad b. Abdullah
Abdullah b. Ja'far al Himyari
Hamza b. Abi al Fattah
Ashari
Abul Fadl b. Hussein Alawi
Muhammad b. Mosa b. Mutawakil
Imam al Hasan al Askari
Musa b. Muhammad b. Qasem b. Hamza
Ali b. Hussein al Babuyia
Uthman b. Sa'eed al Amari
Muawiyah b. Hukaim
M. b. Uthman b. Sa'eed al-'Amri
Hakeema b. Muhammad b. Ali (al-Jawad)
Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Alwai
al-Mouali b. Muhammad al Basri
Abi Ghanim the servent
Ibrahim b. Mahziyar
Muuhammad b. Hasan Abed
al-Husyan b. Muhar
Muhammad b. Ibrahim Kufi
Ahmad bin Hasan bin Ishaq al Qumi
A Man from Fars
Abu Abbas Ahmad b. al Hus
Ghiyath b. Usaid
Key
Degree
Color:

Figure 20, the degree map, shows a darker green color the more numerous connections, i.e. narration chain links, exist between individual nodes. As can be seen on the map the Qummi connections between Ḥusayn b. ʿAli Nīshābūrī, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār, and Muḥammad b. ʿAli Mājilaway form a heavy "narration highway" central to the propagation of pro-Occultation hadith. The figure of Abu-l Faḍl ʿAlawi, a direct narrator who saw the twelfth Imam when visiting Imam al-ʿAskarī, for example, serves as one of the connections between the Qummi narration highway and the person of Imam al-ʿAskarī.

Finally, the network maps show certain macro similarities with those found in al-Shaykh al-Mufīd's work, namely the highly interconnected core of the maps which is an interesting finding and shows a pattern of highly connected narrative networks closed off from outside influence who coalesced around the doctrine of occultation. The narrations in *Kamāl al-Dīn*, have some differences from *Kitāb al-Irshad* as well. Al-Ṣadūq includes a higher amount of closed networks outside the main interconnected core which demonstrates (see Figures 15 and 18, for example) that while the main core acted as a very tight network, al-Ṣadūq still incorporated certain outside-network narrations. Sometimes, these came from a family of trusted family members who independently brough forth testimony of seeing the imam. For example, in the right-hand side of Figure 18, we see a closed network of the Iraqi Ḥasan b. Wajnā, his father and his grandfather. Al-Ṣadūq also incorporated closed networks from lesser-known figures who could be vetted by senior clergy such as Saʿd b. ʿAbdallāh al-Qummī who served as a network broker for outsider narrations into the Twelver accepted mainstream.

Conclusion

This study focused on larger Imami socio-political organization and strategy during the Minor Occultation period, attempting to answer the question: how did the pro-occultation faction of Shiʿa survive as a community after the death of the eleventh Imām? Through a historical approach and application of social network analysis, this paper placed different Shiʿi networks, organizations, and institutions within a larger theoretical framework and categorized the different transnational manifestations of Shiʿi organizations. This was done by locating historical socio-political networks which coalesced behind a doctrinal belief in the hidden twelfth imam and describing their formal and informal functions. By bifurcating the formal and informal functions of Shiʿi institutions, this can enable us to approach the question of Shiʿi organization and strategy in a more complicated theoretical manner and lead us to understand the dynamics under which social movements emerge, especially alongside the threat of political repression. A further aspect to this study is thus exploring the role that underground movements and financial networks can play in the Shiʿi context and how the Imamis developed their strategies amidst Abbasid political supremacy and repressive capabilities.

Just as importantly, this chapter attempted to highlight the importance of relatively understudied aspects of Imami organization, namely the lay partisans of the Imam, whose impact of the formation of Shiʿi discourse is pronounced both numerically as well as meaningfully. The role of lay partisans in shaping the reference point for *hadith*s is prominent in this study as is their impact on narrative structures. Just as importantly, this chapter also highlighted the role of key *hadith* network brokers who were in close contact with regular community members and lay partisans who attested to the doctrine of the occultation of the twelfth imam, including scholars highly respected in their own right during their time such as ʿAllān al-Kulaynī and Saʿd al-Qummī, and mediated the experiences and testimony of the community to the scholarly realm and contributed to the larger narrative corpus on the doctrine of occultation. It is hoped that this project is a first step towards a larger push and imagination of early Shiʿi social and political history and studying the historical context which undergirds the development of Twelver Shiʿism.

CONCLUSION

By the middle of the 4th/10th century, a range of dynasties adhering to the previously marginalized denomination of Shiʿi Islam became entrenched over vast territories stretching from North Africa to the Levant, Mesopotamia, Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, up through the Iranian Plateau, the Caucasus, and regions of Central Asia—an era that can be termed the high period of the Shiʿi Centuries. Moreover, these dynasties adhered to various reified sectarian readings of Shiʿism including Twelver, Zaydi, and Ismaʿili Fatimid and Qarmatian Shiʿism. For the peoples living during this time, this was a shocking development. While there had previously been short-lived Shiʿi statelets in the region, no viable Shiʿi state had ever been established in the Near East prior to this period.[1] In the preceding centuries, Shiʿi political activity had largely been situated underground, and the confessional boundaries between Shiʿi groups were less clearly demarcated. This dissertation focused mainly on the developments leading up to the start of the Shiʿi centuries by taking a comparative survey approach and examining Shiʿi revolutionary behavior, institutions, and beliefs from the uprising of al-Mukhtār (66/685 – 67/687) until the Minor Occultation period and the capture of Baghdad by the Shiʿi Buyid dynasty in 334/945.

This dissertation had a few key areas of focus and research findings. Firstly, the study demonstrated how widespread and diverse the notion of *ghayba*, hidden imams, and underground revolutions were in the early Islamic period and focused on their dynamic interplay until the mid-4th/10th century. It emphasized and brought renewed attention to the relationship between power, invisibility, and secrecy in the early Islamic period by demonstrating how these factors had real implications in shaping political behavior and sectarian and historical institutional changes. The research undertaken highlighted patterns and the general conditions that shaped Shiʿi and ʿAlid revolutionary behavior and embedded those phenomena in the general socio-political environment of the time, including imperial politics, tribal kinship dynamics, and innovations made in revolutionary organization within ʿAlid-*mawālī* social networks. The research demonstrated how new alliances and multi-layered networks emerged through the relationships that ʿAlids and those affiliated with the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) made with social sub-groups and marginalized actors. These social and ideological alliances cut across multiple formal and informal social institutions that were able in some instances to effectively change the status quo and establish new political and institutional realities on the ground.

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[1] The possible exception to this, as discussed earlier, may be the Idrisid dynasty in modern Morocco which was established by an ʿAlid survivor of the battle of Fakhkh in 169/786. Also, while the Abbasids technically came to power as part of a larger Shiʿi and pro-ʿAlid revolutionary movement, they adopted rhetoric fiercely opposed to ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib and the ʿAlids early on which put them at odds with the rest of the Shiʿi world; see Tor, "The Parting of Ways between ʿAlid Shiʿism and Abbasid Shiʿism." Finally, successful Shiʿi movements that were able to govern, such as al-Mukhtār's and Ibrāhim b. ʿAbdallāh's (d. 145/763), were not durable for an extended period of time and they were overthrown or defeated by imperial powers such as the Umayyads and Abbasids.

The study also situated Shiʿi and ʿAlid revolutionary activity in the larger field of early Islamic history rather than to approach the subject purely through the "Shiʿi studies" subfield. There are certain tendencies within Shiʿi studies to overspecialize or separate the study of Shiʿism from its larger surroundings. While the study of Shiʿism is indeed a legitimate subfield within Islamic studies that requires specialization, this dissertation took a middle ground approach in that it approached Shiʿism on its own terms regarding its unique characteristics and beliefs but also embedded Shiʿi political and historical sociological developments as interconnected phenomena within the larger socio-political environment of the Islamic world and Near East. The dissertation took seriously the particular beliefs or interpretations of concepts found in]Shiʿi Islam, including the special status of the imam and the messianic redeemer (*mahdi*, *qāʾim*), as well as the beliefs in *walāya* and occultation (*ghayba*). This study demonstrated the impact of these ideas, how they were expressed in diverse ways socio-politically, and how they in turn influenced Shiʿi historical sociological development in unique ways. Additionally, the dissertation focused on the patterns found in institutional dynamics of underground Shiʿi movements, alliance building, and the layered organization of multiple *daʿwa* networks operating on behalf of the hidden imam. This comparative look at different Shiʿi underground movements, *daʿwa* institutions, and hidden imams revealed certain findings that can advance the field and our knowledge of the subject.

The research demonstrated how a range of different actors from the Fatimids to the Abbasid-Abū Muslim alliance, to proto-Zaydi imams, to the leader of the Zanj revolt (*Ṣāhib al-Zanj*), to the financial agents (*sufarāʾ/wukalāʾ*) of the Mahdi utilized hidden identities as embedded aspects of their institutions and as a means to establish political hierarchies or social order. This affected the way in which Shiʿi revolutions unfolded, especially after the weaking of the central Abbasid state, and how different networks of Shiʿi actors crystallized into separate sectarian groups within Shiʿism. This crystallization process was impacted by the establishment of new Shiʿi dynasties and the exercise of overt political power that forced previously underground movements to take sides and form sharper insider-outsider dichotomies within Shiʿism. While some ʿAlid leaders and Shiʿi *daʿwa* or underground networks were able to successfully establish governments in the shadow of Abbasid insipient decline, others were not. Therefore, this marked a crucial transition period in intra-Shiʿi sectarian development as Shiʿi groups either exercised open sovereignty or had to refute multiple sovereign interpretations of Shiʿi government and ʿAlid leadership. The start of the Shiʿi centuries and the expression of Shiʿi dynastic power, therefore, impacted the broader umbrella movement of Shiʿism, including even Twelvers who did not establish a government on behalf of the Imam and *mahdī* but had to refute the Fatimid *mahdī*, the Qarmatid *mahdī*, and other claimants to the title. This process of assertation and refutation of universal imams and *mahdī*s therefore contributed to constructing the boundaries drawn between previously confessionally ambiguous Shiʿi groups.

Regarding the development of later sectarian splits and the divisions found within the larger web of Shiʿism, this conceptualization emphasized the importance of two events occurring in close proximity to each other as a turning point in the history of Shiʿism: "from the Anarchy to the *sirdāb* of Samarra." The first event, the "Anarchy at Samarra," occurred in 247/861 and involved the murder of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil by a faction of the Turkic Abbasid slave-soldier army, which sparked a fierce intra-Abbasid army conflict and signaled the beginning of the gradual weakening of Abbasid power. The imperial restraints that had always kept a steady stream of pressure on dissident activity and ʿAlid opposition were partially weakened, which in turn allowed Shiʿi revolutionary movements to move above ground, including the ʿAlid *dāʿīs* in Ṭabaristān in northern Iran starting 250/864, the Rassid dynasty established by the ʿAlid Yaḥyā b. Ḥusayn (d. 298/911), or Imam al-Hādī ilā-l Ḥaqq (d. 298/911), in Yemen beginning in 284/897, and the Qarmatid states in the eastern Arabian Peninsula starting in 286/899, among other cases. Notably, ʿAlid leaders were not the only ones to assert autonomy in this time period; others, such as the Tulunid dynasty, considered perhaps the first semi-autonomous dynasty in Egypt and the Levant, established themselves in 254/868 as well, which points to some of the opportunities open to dynastic aspirants from different backgrounds.

The second event occurred over a decade later in the city of Samarra was the passing of Imam Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-ʿAskarī in 260/874. This period marked the occultation of Imam Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī who was, according to some accounts, last seen in an underground tunnel or cellar (*sirdāb*)[2] attached to his father's house.[3] The occultation of the twelfth Imam invoked a period of confusion ("*ḥayra*") for a large number—perhaps even the majority—of Imami Shiʿa at the time and opened an additional space for competition in the already expanding rivalry between different branches of ʿAlids, *mawālī* networks, social factions, and interpretations of Shiʿism. Both of these events were necessary conditions leading to the process of intra-Shiʿi sectarian crystallization that began to gradually take shape during this period.

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[2] A word derived from Persian *sard* (cold) and *āb* (water), i.e. cool underground environment with an artificial water reserve (*hawḍ*) or well; *Lughatnāmih-ye Dihkhudā*.

These research findings demonstrate how the emergence of Shiʿi sectarian identities and certain ʿAlid dynastic imperial movements were co-variant in 3rd/9th century following the Abbasid incipient decline. To be clear, this is not to say that Shiʿism was a product of the 3rd/9th century—it existed before then—nor is the argument that the establishment of a dynasty always led to a sectarian movement. Rather, the study posits that at this historical moment, the ability for some Shiʿi groups to establish dynasties impacted the larger category of Shiʿism and forced lateral competition between a series of ʿAlid and Shiʿi actors that had prior been either underground or confessionally ambiguous due to the overarching force projection of the Umayyads and Abbasids. This meant that divergent networks and readings of Shiʿism, including among Twelvers, Ismaʿili Fatimids and Qarmaṭians, and Zaydis, roughly began crystallizing around the same period and that different networks, interpretations, and authority hierarchies that were largely hidden—or at least not well delineated—took distinct routes gradually after the Abbasid decline and the start of the Minor Occultation period. This historical reading places the

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[3] Today, an underground tunnel, that some believe is the same historical one of the Imams' residences is preserved in the al-ʿAskarī shrine complex in Samarra where the Twelver Imams Alī al-Hādī and Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī are buried. The structures of the shrine, including its golden domes, were bombed by al-Qaeda militants in 2006 and 2007 in a bid to provoke sectarian violence and civil war in the country. According to shrine authorities, the door housing the entrance to the *sirdāb* was damaged, but the underground remained safe and secure. Since then, the complex has undergone renovations and is visited by millions of pilgrims from across the world annually. See: "*al-Sirdāb al-Muqaddas*" ["the Holy Underground"], al-Amāna al-ʿĀmma al-ʿAtaba al-ʿAskariyya al-Muqaddasa, n.d., [(Website of) the General Secretariat of the Holy Askari Shrine Complex] http://www.askarian.iq/pages?id=11.

emergence of Shiʿi sectarian diversity later than when much of the primary and secondary literature dates the internal divisions within Shiʿism that are essentially placed after succession disputes following the deaths of certain Imams—although there are some recent exceptions by authors discussed earlier in this dissertation who have highlighted the ambiguity of Shiʿi sectarian groups until the Minor Occultation period but they have not investigated these sectarian developments in a historically comparative manner.

As this dissertation argues, while Shiʿi sectarian groups can certainly refer back to a shared heritage and larger umbrella identity, Shiʿism was internally confessionally ambiguous until at least the late 3rd/9th century. Therefore, for example, the Isma'ili sectarian movement—as a clearly delineated group separate from other Shiʿi groups—did not emerge following leadership disputes after the death of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in 148/765, nor the Zaydis after the death of ʿAli b. Husayn b. Abi Ṭālib (d. 95/713) and the uprising of Zayd b. ʿAli (d. 122/740). Moreover, Twelver Shiʿis also experienced a period of confusion (*ḥayra*) following the occultation of the twelfth Imam when it was unclear whether Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan would return shortly, who his representatives were, or if he would undertake open revolutionary activity, and other such affiliated issues that were not immediately clear or resolvable to the community.[4] These collective narratives found among different Shiʿi denominations can back-project certain sociological or institutional developments and de-emphasize the historical nature of uncertainty and the contested battles over alternate lines of succession and leadership within the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

A further contribution of this dissertation was the use of network analysis in order to gleam more insights into Islamic history as well as to demonstrate how this can be a useful approach to the study of early Islam. Network analysis can methodologically contribute to gaining more accurate understandings of political groups and players. It can contribute both quantitatively and qualitatively to highlight the hard-to-grasp alliances and clashes that occurred between Shiʿi revolutionary factions, chains of *hadith* transmitters, and large groups of people in order to visualize patterns more clearly. This was demonstrated in different case studies in the dissertation, including for Twelver Shiʿi narrative networks as well as for Daylami local elite networks before and after the rule of the ʿAlid rulers of the South Caspian.

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[4] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*.

At this juncture, it is important to emphasize that this argument put forth in the dissertation does not necessarily contradict religious doctrines or beliefs found between different Shiʿi denominations regarding their own origins and trajectory but rather examines and analyzes the historical sociological development of Shiʿi sectarian identities and political institutions. Esoterically, many Muslims believe that all prophets from Adam onwards were Muslims.[5] A verse in the Qurʾan states, for example, that the Prophet Abraham was a Muslim: "Abraham was not a Jew (*yahūdī*), nor yet a Christian (*naṣrānī*); but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah) (*kānā ḥanīfan musliman*), and he was not of the idolaters."[6] Further, the notion of "Muḥammadan light" (*Nūr Muḥammadīya*), which many Muslims adhere to, is the belief that the first creation of Allah was the Prophet Muḥammad and his light, and it was based on the love that Allah had for Muḥammad (and in some understandings Muḥammad and his *Ahl al-Bayt* and the "*panj tan*")[7] that the cosmos was created.[8] Therefore, the Prophet Muḥammad was not only the last of the prophets for many Muslims, but also the first. These esoteric and cosmologically rooted understandings defy historical or sociological categorizations of sectarian identity and are one of the many interpretations of the relationship between time, history, identity, and religious affiliation. This dissertation therefore does not judge the truth claims of differing religious interpretations but rather focuses on the study of the socio-political context of the time and the development of historical political and social institutions within Shiʿi Islam.

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[5] Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Henry Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (London: Islamic Publications, 1983).

[6] Qurʾan, *Āl-i Imrān*: 67. What "Muslim" meant here in the Qurʾan and in the early Islamic period is of course intensely debated and there are a range of responses to this question. See: Donner, *Muḥammad and the Believers*.

[7] I.e. the five core members of the Family of the Prophet, sometimes referred to as the *Ahl al-Kisā*: the Prophet Muḥammad, Fatima bt. Muḥammad, ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, Ḥasan b. ʿAli, and Ḥusayn b. ʿAli; see: Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*, 54–65.

[8] Rubin, "Pre-Existence and Light—Aspects of the Concept of Nūr Muḥammad"; Rubin, "More Light on Muḥammad's Pre-Existence."

Although this dissertation covered a critical historical span, there are many areas of research that remain to be explored regarding the story of the Shiʿi centuries, especially in what can be termed the "post-underground" turn in Shiʿism. After the post-underground revolutionary turn in the 4th/10th century, the number and claims of hidden Imams decreased and underground organizations, while still extant, became less dominant; moreover, a range of influential dynasties came to power which identified with Shiʿism yet did not claim to represent a hidden Imam. These Shiʿi dynasties included, among others, the Buyids ruling over much of Iran and Iraq (r. 320/932–454/1062); the Hamdanid dynasty ruling over large areas of Iraq and the Levant (r. 293/906–394/1004); the Uqaylids ruling over parts of Iraq, greater Mesopotamia and northern Syria (r. ca. 380/990–564/1169); the Ziyarids ruling in the South Caspian region (r. 319/931–483/1090);[9] the Kakūyids ruling in western Iran and Kurdish regions (r. ca. 398/1008–443/1051); the Musāfirids ruling over western Ṭabaristan, Daylam, and the Caucasus (r. before 304/916–483/1090);[10] and, the Mirdāsids ruling over northern and central Syria (r. 415/1024–472/1080). Additionally, the Zaydi Imamate starting with Imam al-Hādī (d. 298/911) established rule in Yemen and southern Arabian Peninsula and different lines of Zaydi Imams continued to reign in

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[9] The founder of the dynasty Mardāvīj b. Zīyār (d. 323/935) served in the army of the later ʿAlid *dāʿī*s of Ṭabaristān and was likely a Zaydī Shiʿi. Future Ziyārid rulers were also likely Shiʿi Muslims although at least one of them, Qābūs b. Wushmgīr (d. 402/1012), was a Sunni. See: Mitra Mehrabadi, *Tārīkh-i Silsili-ye Zīyārī* (Tehran: Dunyā-ye Kitāb, 1995).

[10] Some of the dynastic rulers of the Musāfirids may have later been influenced by the Ismaʿili *daʿwa*, and the Musāfirid center of Alamut was eventually captured by the Ismaʿili Nizārī leader, Ḥassan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124) in 483/1090.

Yemen for over a millennium (r. 284/897–1382/1962). The Ismaʿili Fatimids, as well, ruled over North Africa, Egypt, and the southern Levant, and the western Arabian Peninsula (r. 297/909–567/1171). With the exception of the Ismaʿili Fatimids and the Zaydi Imams of Yemen, these other dynasties were nominally Shiʿi yet did not claim the Imamate and, with some exceptions, usually did not claim to represent a living or hidden Shiʿi Imam.[11]

These historical developments raise a series of questions which deserve further research and expansion. What was the relationship of the rise of these dynasties and the underground revolutionary period of Shiʿism? And, what did it mean for Shiʿi dynasties such as the Buyids and Hamdanids to pay nominal allegiance to the Abbasid caliphate? Or even, in the case of the Buyids, to simultaneously support the Abbasids as well as Zaydi Imams whom they hosted and supported in Baghdad?[12] Moreover, how was conflict and cooperation regulated between these diverse Shiʿi dynasties and did these interactions shape the development of Shiʿi sectarian identities and beliefs? Approaching these questions can assist us in thinking about the intersection of dynastic power and sectarian identity during the later parts of the Shiʿi centuries when Shiʿi dynasties reigned over vast areas of the Muslim world and contributed to Islamic civilization and global history.

By undertaking a comparative study of Shiʿi and ʿAlid revolutionary movements in the early Islamic period, this dissertation explored the relationship between sovereign dynastic entities as well as sectarian institutions with sovereign leadership claims. The study argued that the process of intra-Shiʿi sectarian crystallization was embedded in formal and informal institutions that had both secret and hidden as well as open and exoteric aspects impacted by power disparities and imperial politics of governance. The socio-political factors examined in this study impacted evolving notions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and how differences of opinion or leadership claims were able to express themselves through social institutions and the political exercise of power. The process of socio-political sectarian crystallization within Shiʿism was, therefore, heavily impacted by the constraints and openings available to Shiʿis under both the Umayyads and the Abbasids. Throughout various waves of revolutionary activity, the larger Shiʿa community underwent varying changes that eventually crystallized into major sectarian groups beginning at the end of the 3rd/9th century. The history of political and sectarian institutions, moreover, were foundationally rooted in ideology and beliefs, the most important of which were notions of *wilāya* and *ghayba* (occultation), which formed the starting point of relationships within Shiʿi communities and influenced hierarchies within both underground institutions as well as overt imperial political projects.

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[11] For more on these dynasties and their reigns, see: Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*.

[12] Aḥmad b. ʿAli Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajārub al-Umam* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Surūsh, 2000), 5: 69; John J. Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 to 403H./1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 86.

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